Thomas Mann

Tonio Kröger

and other stories

A new translation by David Luke

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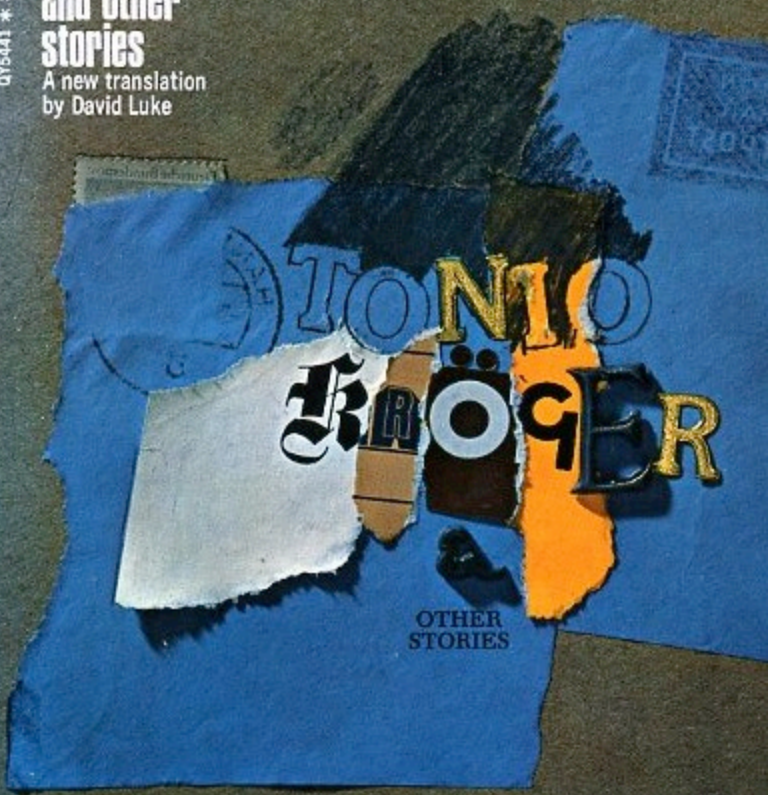

A CHRONICLER OF DECADENCE

In an essay written during the First World War, Mann described himself as "a chronicler and analyst of decadence, a lover of the pathological, a lover of death, an aesthete with a proclivity toward the abyss." . . . [Mann was] profoundly concerned with the phenomena of what was fashionably known as decadence, but was not really himself a decadent; his early themes are certainly morbid, even at times sickening, but his essential quest was for health and human equilibrium; death fascinated him, but at his best he gave to this theme a significance far exceeding that of the mere dissolution of a physical organism; and he was an aesthete who subjected his own aestheticism to merciless ridicule.

From the Introduction

TONIO KRÖGER AND OTHER STORIES

THOMAS MANN

Translated by DAVID LUKE

A NATIONAL GENERAL COMPANY

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INTRODUCTION

introduction

THE SHORT STORIES in the present selection, all written between about 1894 and 1903, represent the first period of Thomas Mann's literary maturation—a period of which the central and crowning feature was the monumental novel *The Buddenbrooks* • which appeared in 1901 when he was twenty-six and before long made him famous all over Germany. His international fame dates from about the time of the publication in 1924 of his second major novel, *The Magic Mountain*, and has for one reason or another eclipsed not only that of his elder brother Heinrich but that of every other writer of prose fiction in the German language (with the exception, since the late 1930s, of the posthumously recognized Kafka). In 1929 he was awarded the Nobel Prize—though not for *The Magic Mountain* but for *The Buddenbrooks*; and today, fifteen years after his death, it is still arguable that this youthful masterpiece was his greatest achievement. It was at all events slow to be matched by a work of equal weight. In the more than twenty intervening years Mann actually completed and published disappointingly few works of the first order. *Death in Venice* (1911, published in 1912) shows him again at the height of his powers, but on the whole this is a period of doubt, ruminative

• Strictly, the long established translation of this title (without the definite article) is incorrect English; we do not refer to the family next door as "Smiths." On the other hand, although "Schmidts" is the normal German equivalent of "the Smiths," "die Schmidts" is also possible; but the nuance differentiating the two is untranslatable. (On the translation of Thomas Mann in general, see below, pp. xxxv-xxxviii.)

reflection, unsuccessful experiments and abandoned projects. So far as actual successful performance is concerned, our attention must in the first instance be claimed by *The Buddenbrooks* and a handful of short stories or *Novellen* which immediately preceded and followed it.

What is the general thematic and stylistic character of these works in which Mann first came of age as a writer, and to what literary and intellectual climate do they belong? In an essay written during the First World War, Mann described himself as "a chronicler and analyst of decadence, a lover of the pathological, a lover of death, an aesthete with a proclivity toward the abyss." Even if applied to the attitudes underlying the writings of his middle twenties which we are here considering, these descriptions require considerable qualification. Mann was then already a good deal more than a mere chronicler; he was profoundly concerned with the phenomena of what was fashionably known as decadence, but was not really himself a decadent; his early themes are certainly morbid, even at times sickening, but his essential quest was for health and human equilibrium; death fascinated him, but at his best he gave to this theme a significance far exceeding that of the mere dissolution of a physical organism; and he was an aesthete who subjected his own aestheticism to merciless ridicule. Even if one knows of his subsequent career and the later writings which explicitly repudiate "the abyss," all this can still be said without undue hindsight on the evidence of the *Buddenbrooks* period itself. To his contemporaries at that time he appeared to be a cynical nihilist, but this reputation (though it persisted for decades) was based on a misunderstanding. His interest in "unpleasant" themes betokens not merely the influence of Naturalism, although it is true that the inclusion of subject matter previously regarded as unacceptable is a mark of the nineteenth-century "realistic" tradition generally and of the Naturalist movement in particular. Nevertheless, Mann's art is not exhaustively described by such labels. It is a synthesis which demands to be understood in terms of a diversity of trends and influences, both literary and philosophical.

The chief literary phenomenon of the late nineteenth century, in Germany as in France and elsewhere, was the bifurcation of literature into Naturalism and Symbolism. The former was a more extreme and doctrinaire extension of the realism which characterized post-Romantic literature in general. It was more specifically associated with philosophic naturalism or positivism—with scientific materialism, utilitarianism, the deterministic view of human behavior which the advancing

biological and social sciences appeared to entail. Literary Naturalism was an attempt to close the gap between literature and empirical reality, to widen the frontiers of the writer's compassionate attention; as such it had a certain revitalizing effect and made a contribution to drama and prose fiction which has still not been lost. In its more inflexible and would-be self-consistent forms, however, it was short-lived. In the hands of any significantly creative writer Naturalism had a natural tendency to transform and enlarge itself into Symbolism—not surprisingly, since in the last resort art and life cannot be equated and the positivist outlook is incompatible with the values of the imaginative writer as such. If Naturalism in literature is the direct correlative of positivism, Symbolism is its indirect or negative correlative. In a positivist epoch, the poet is in the first instance at a disadvantage. Poetry, like imaginative writing generally, has to become autonomous; it is no longer embedded in a widely accepted mythical or metaphysical or religious frame of reference external to itself. God (as Nietzsche triumphantly if regretfully announced) is dead; "nature" is no longer a divine language, the revelation (as it still was for Goethe) of a transcendent or even of an immanent divine force—instead, it has become merely a series of disconnected facts. The poet is thus in a defensive position: he is disinherited, his private individual enterprise has no backing —to a world moving in the opposite direction he appears to be running away. His task is to restore meaning, to create a new language of meaningfulness in the absence of the discarded one. Paradoxically, however, this situation is also an advantage to him—not only as a challenge but also because, since the old systems have disintegrated and empirical reality has been neutralized, any of its disparate elements may be recharged with meaningfulness in a new and individual way. Anything at all can become "symbolic." Thus Symbolism no less than Naturalism involves an extension of the potential materials of art.

It is not surprising however that in Germany, where the metaphysical tradition had always been stronger than that of empiricism, writers should have felt the need for a new comprehensive myth, an up-to-date mystique, a metaphysical ratification of their imaginative task. This need was above all met by Nietzsche, whose works were written during the 1870s and 1880s (his mental collapse occurring in 1889) and whose multifarious influence on the literature of the immediately following period remains incalculable. It was also in the last three or four decades of the century that the direct and indirect influence

of Schopenhauer reached its maximum, although his principal and central work *The World as Will and Representation* had appeared as long ago as 1818. The impact on the young Thomas Mann of both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer was profound. There is evidence that he knew Nietzsche's works at first hand not later than at the age of twenty (in 1895), and he may have had some acquaintance with them earlier. He does not seem to have discovered Schopenhauer until he was well on the way to completing *The Buddenbrooks*. But some elements of Schopenhauer's thought could have been transmitted to him already by Nietzsche. His enthusiastic surrender to both these thinkers (though later with some qualifications and reservations, so far at least as Nietzsche was concerned) was characteristic of an epoch which had come to doubt all established values and was searching for new beliefs.

Nietzsche's thought had been necessarily destructive as well as constructive. That nothing was sacred, everything suspect, an attitude of guarded self-conscious irony constantly required and single-mindedness difficult or impossible, was probably the first lesson Mann learnt from him. Nietzsche's polemic against traditional Christian theism had been persistent and absolutely radical, shrinking from no conclusions. The full implications of the decease of God must be faced, all consequential losses ruthlessly cut. The Christian concepts of good and evil, the ideals of humility and self-denial, charity, mercy and compassion, must be buried with their inventor and sponsor. For the more facile kind of positivism, the optimistic humanism that was a mere halfhearted secularized surrogate for the discredited faith, Nietzsche had nothing but contempt. The vast emptiness left by the death of God was a tragic challenge demanding an appropriate response: a response that would be adequately sophisticated, heroic, noble and grandiose, imaginative and creative. The earth, from now on, must not merely be made comfortable, but invested with inherited glory; man must not merely be made happy, but become the "Dionysian" superman, dancing on the grave of transcendent divinity. It is one of the significant coincidences of cultural history that in 1872 there appeared not only David Friedrich Strauss's textbook of post-Christian philistine secularism *The Old and the New Faith* (which ran into six editions in its first year) but also Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*—a bizarre but profound work which passionately condemned the pseudoculture of Wilhelmine Germany and everything else represented by such writers as Strauss (whom Nietzsche also specifically attacked in a separate, savagely brilliant

essay). *The Birth of Tragedy* appealed for a rebirth of the heroic and tragic spirit (as Nietzsche saw it) of ancient Greek culture at its finest period; it appealed for a rebirth of non-Christian myth, mysticism, metaphysics and symbolic art. Its metaphysical presuppositions are those of Schopenhauer, and its climax a peroration in praise of the music of Wagner. Thus, three years before Thomas Mann was born and nearly twenty before German Naturalist drama and Symbolist poetry began, the two alternative responses to the collapse of Christianity among representative intellectuals had already been stated and diagnosed, and one at least of them weighed and found wanting. Nietzsche himself, before long, came to see Schopenhauer and Wagner as the supreme intellectual seducers of his youth; repudiating certain important elements in *The Birth of Tragedy*, he passed through a reactive phase of radical positivism and skepticism, of ethical and even aesthetic nihilism based on destructive psychological analysis, before entering his third "period" in which the myths of the superman and the eternal recurrence were born. All three periods of Nietzsche's thought, however, set their mark upon the epoch in which Thomas Mann grew to maturity.

Nietzsche's final message had been an aristocratic humanism centered on the idea of human self-transcendence; a pantheistic monism stressing above all the divine self-sufficiency and innocence of the eternally repeated evolutionary cycle of history; a philosophy which might, with certain reservations, be called "vitalism" inasmuch as its supreme positive value was "life" and life's enhancement, its supreme negative value biological decadence, and its most far-reaching corollary a critique of intellectual consciousness as such. Insofar as intellect stands (as it stood for Schopenhauer) over against the life force, judging and condemning it, it must itself be held suspect and combatted, like the morality of self-denial and compassion, as a form of decadence, an antivital poison. By making "life" the central touchstone in relation to which everything—art, morality, science, politics—was to be evaluated and reconceived, Nietzsche was propounding the idea which dominated the ensuing epoch. To virtually all the representative writers in German at the turn of the century, "life" was a sacred word; it was to this period rather as the word "reason" had been to the eighteenth century or "nature" to the age of Goethe. Certain elements, indeed, of the thought of Goethe and his Romantic successors were here being, if not always consciously, revived. The Romantic nature-philosophers had extended the application of the term "life" to embrace the inorganic as well as the organic

sphere; in their contemporary, Schopenhauer, "life" (though negatively valued) acquired the same absolute comprehensiveness of meaning. The "will to life," in his system, was the basis of everything other than the intellectual and moral consciousness which emerges in man as the "will's" paradoxically self-generated antagonist. Both terms in Schopenhauer's famous phrase are in fact misleading: "impulse," "drive," "force" or even "desire" would have been less confusing, if less original, than "will" as a designation for something which both in his thought and later in Nietzsche's was universal, impersonal, instinctive, elemental and largely unconscious; and "existence" would have been more accurate, if more prosaic, than "life." At all events, "life" now meant a dynamic totality of which the particular phenomenon or empirical self was merely a transient manifestation. "Life" did not transcend the natural world, but it did transcend the individual. From this position Schopenhauer had derived his ethics of compassion and renunciation; but from it also the young Nietzsche derived his "Dionysian" monistic mysticism of pure immanence which leads straight into Symbolist aesthetics. At certain favored moments of heightened perception, of enhanced experience, the individual can lose his "illusion" of separateness and gain a sense of participation in the great unity of life—in relation to which even his empirical death can come to seem unreal, and "life" and "death" can be paradoxically assimilated to each other. Equally, at moments of imaginative disclosure, even the most insignificant empirical phenomenon may become a revelation of the "whole."

In considering the early work of Thomas Mann it is perhaps more illuminating to bear in mind these philosophical influences than to see him merely against the background of nineteenth-century realism and the Naturalist movement—that is, in terms of his indebtedness to Flaubert, the Goncourt brothers, Tolstoy, Turgenev and certain Scandinavian writers —though this background and those debts of course exist, and it would be wrong to suggest that Mann was not an outstandingly "realistic" writer in certain important and obvious senses. He is a realist in the thematically *in*clusive sense already mentioned; and negatively, also, in the total *ex*clusion of fantastic or dreamlike events from his fiction (with the solitary exception of one early story, *The Wardrobe,* an experiment in the semi-fairytale style which he never repeated).* His adherence to the

* His use, much later, of Old Testament legend in the *Joseph* novels and of medieval legend in *The Holy Sinner* might be counted as further exceptions, though the whole point of these works is their ironic mixture of myth and realism. The séance scene in *The Magic*

realist convention in this respect is one of the most palpable differences between his work and that of, for example, Kafka. It would also be very wide of the mark to suggest that Mann's novels and stories are merely disguised philosophical allegories, without objective and "lifelike" substance. Nevertheless it is important to appreciate that he achieved, in terms of prose fiction, an interesting synthesis between Naturalism and Symbolism (his method has been called "symbolic realism"). The nature of this synthesis can best be clarified by examination of some of the works of the early period which here concerns us; this will have to include some consideration of *The Buddenbrooks* itself as the stories peripheral to it cannot otherwise be properly understood.

The last four of the stories in the present selection were written after *The Buddenbrooks,* and the first two before it. *Little Herr Friedemann* and *The Joker* (*Der Bajazzo*) were included in Thomas Mann's first book, a collection (published in 1898 under the title *Der Kleine Herr Friedemann*) of half a dozen of his short stories, nearly all of which had already appeared in periodicals. These stories, together with two or three others published elsewhere, represent the pre-*Buddenbrooks* phase of Mann's art (1894–98). In general, the stories of this first phase, of which *Little Herr Friedemann* and *The Joker* are the best, show not surprisingly a varying degree of thematic and technical immaturity. In most of them, literary and intellectual influences predominate over that of the author's own experience of life (*The Joker* achieves a more successful balance). Evident in several of them is a certain fin de siècle taste for the sensational, for extreme, cruel, perverse situations: the man mortally ill with heart disease who waits for years to marry the girl he loves, and having at last obtained her family's consent, dies on the morning after the bridal night (*The Will to Happiness*); the grotesque, mentally stunted recluse who buys a small dog which he pets and bullies by turns, finally killing it with the bread knife (*Tobias Mindernickel*); the ludicrously fat, naive and elephantine husband whose young and beautiful wife, as a cruel private joke between herself and her lover, persuades him to exhibit himself as a variety turn at an enormous party, dressed up as a cocotte, cumbrously dancing and singing an appropriately idiotic song which the lover composes and accompanies—in the middle of which performance the husband suddenly realizes the truth of

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Mountain is a borderline case the discussion of which would take us too far.

which everyone else is visibly aware, and falls dead in an apoplectic seizure (*Little Lucy*); the sadistic society lady who mentally tortures a pathetic hunchback and deliberately drives him to suicide (*Little Herr Friedemann*). All this is more than the programmatic preoccupation of Naturalism with sordid social and biological realities. Naturalism is, in fact, already at this stage a literary convention which Thomas Mann can no longer take seriously. His early stories often read like conscious parodies of the typical Naturalist subject matter: the "scientific" deterministic view of man, the theme of his enslavement to milieu, heredity, primitive physical appetites (sex, alcoholism, etc.). This is particularly the case, for instance, in *Little Herr Friedemann:* the drink-sodden nurse drops the baby on the floor, he grows up a deformed cripple, his attempt to renounce sex and construct his life round intellectual pleasures only is inevitably unavailing against the sudden invasion of long-frustrated libidinal forces. But certain features of the story seem to reflect other contemporary influences. The beautiful and cruel femme fatale with whom Friedemann becomes sexually infatuated is a figure not unfamiliar in the literary and graphic arts of this period, both in and outside Germany (the wife in *Little Lucy* is a parallel example). A trace of Nietzschean vitalism may be discerned in the fatal fascination exercised upon a biologically impaired or inferior type by a representative of physical health and energy; analogous again, in this respect, are not only *Little Lucy* but also *The Will to Happiness* and even *Tobias Mindernickel*, as well as the subtler case of the marriage described in the later story, *Tristan*. If in fact we bear in mind Nietzsche's tendency to equate intellectuality with decadence or at least closely assimilate the two, then we may say that in one variant or another this theme of the confrontation of "life" (usually associated with health and normality) with someone (often a representative of intellectual values) who is in some way outside "life" or antagonistic to it is virtually constant in Mann's early work and occurs in all the stories here translated.

Little Herr Friedemann is also notable as an early example of an outstanding feature of Mann's mature technique, namely the pervasive irony of his narrative style. Mann may have learnt irony, as a language and a posture, in the first instance from Heine (whom he read as a schoolboy) and then from Nietzsche, but it became and remained for him something distinctively personal. The opening three paragraphs of the story, in describing the accident which determines the infant Friedemann's destiny, the reaction to it of his mother and sisters, the

soothing words of the doctor, describe them in a manner which not only exquisitely parodies Naturalism but makes the disastrous event itself seem not tragic but tragicomic. The narrator's apparently complete ironical detachment and unconcern, his complete omission of any compassionate comment, are the kind of thing that understandably earned Mann a reputation for cynical heartlessness. On a more sophisticated reading, however, it becomes apparent that even in this passage compassion is not in fact withheld, but expressed by contrary implication. Mann is in fact here already using the technique of emotional understatement or countersuggestive neutrality which was to remain characteristic of him. Even at the most tragic moments of his mature works, in *The Buddenbrooks* and *The Magic Mountain* for instance, he favors the admixture into his narrative of a deflating, chilling, clinical objectivity which, however, is not intended in such passages to ridicule the pathos of human experience and human emotions but paradoxically to heighten it and make it more poignant. (His description of the death of Hanno Buddenbrook is a famous example.) In *Little Herr Friedemann*, in any case, the ironic attitude is not kept up throughout the story: compassion later becomes explicit, in a manner that even verges here and there on sentimentality. It is in fact a fault inherent in Mann's very first literary efforts (one or two of which he with good reason never reprinted) that they rather uneasily combine a certain naive sentimentalism with a blasé world-weariness which suspiciously resembles a defensive affectation. The fusion and balance between emotion and sophisticated intellectuality which his maturer art was to bring has not yet been wholly achieved in *Little Herr Friedemann*. Nor is this story entirely free from his other early weakness, the already mentioned predilection for anecdotal sensationalism. It seems to have been something of a problem to the young Thomas Mann that he had prematurely learnt a stylistic virtuosity which could too easily disport itself in a rather derivative literary vacuum. He was able to solve this problem by turning more firmly, for his subject matter, to the materials provided by his actual personal experience, his family background, his childhood and youth in Lübeck. The fact that *The Buddenbrooks* was massively based on these materials is the main reason for its entire artistic success; and of the pre-*Buddenbrooks* stories the most satisfying and original is *The Joker*, for precisely the same reason: because of its predominantly autobiographical content.

Mann had also used the Lübeck milieu in *Little Herr Friedemann*, but merely to provide a setting which is not integral to

the story. The "old family house" and its garden, indeed, appear (with certain stylizing variations of detail) in several of these early works (*Little Herr Friedemann, The Joker, The Buddenbrooks, Tristan, Tonio Kröger*); this motif was based on Mann's memories of the typical patrician merchant's house in Mengstrasse which belonged to his paternal grandfather and later came to be known as the "Buddenbrook house," and/or on one or other of his father's houses where his early years were spent. In *The Joker*, however, the childhood memories are turned to more detailed account than anywhere else except in *Tonio Kröger* and in *The Buddenbrooks* itself. A further favorite autobiographical theme is of course the artistic sensibility of the fictional hero's mother, contrasted with the respectable semiphilistinism of his father (*The Joker, Tonio Kröger*). Mann's maternal grandfather, a Lübecker who had settled as a planter in Brazil and married a Portuguese Creole, had returned as a widower to Lübeck with his young daughter, Julia da Silva-Bruhns; she, at the age of eighteen, an exotic Latin beauty with considerable musical talent, had married the novelist's father, Consul (later Senator) Heinrich Mann. As a child, Thomas had felt very close to her; she would play Chopin to him (as in *The Joker*) as well as singing him lieder and reading him fairy stories. As in *The Joker*, too, the young Thomas Mann used to spend long hours producing his own operas on a toy puppet theater. His father had inherited the old-established family corn business; but it had done badly during the 1880s and Senator Mann had lost heart. He died in early middle age, when Thomas was sixteen, and the firm went into immediate liquidation (cf. *The Joker* and *Tonio Kröger*). His widow settled in Munich and Thomas joined her there a year or two later, in 1894. Munich now became Mann's permanent residence: apart from visits to Italy and other brief absences he lived there for nearly forty years, until his exile from Germany in 1933, and impressions of Munich are inevitably reflected in *The Joker* as well as in *The Buddenbrooks, Little Lucy, Tonio Kröger, Gladius Dei* and later works.

It is interesting to compare *The Joker* and *Tonio Kröger* as exercises in self-critical autobiography. In both stories the central figure leads a free-floating, unattached existence, such as Mann's share of the family inheritance, though modest, enabled him to lead in Munich even before *The Buddenbrooks* and later writings began to earn him any income (between 1894 and 1900 his experience of regular employment was limited to six months in an insurance office—a formality scarcely more

serious than "the joker's" brief apprenticeship in the timber firm—and a year or so as reader or junior editor for the well-known humorous weekly *Simplicissimus*). He could not be sure, in the mid-nineties, that he was going to be able to justify his existence as an artist. *The Joker*, written during his second or third year in Munich, reflects these uncomfortable doubts. It is, in fact, a thoroughly uncomfortable story. Outwardly it resembles *Little Herr Friedemann* (which was written at about the same time) only in the use of the Lübeck background and in one or two details of the narrative; but there are also deeper affinities. The narrator in *The Joker* is in fact just as much a marked and doomed man as the hunchback, though in a subtler and less obvious way which takes him some time to discover. He begins by thinking of himself as a Nietzschean aristocrat ("*ein Vornehmer*," one of the "children of light") and ends by realizing that he is a Nietzschean dropout—"*schlechtweggekommen*," as Nietzsche would have said, and full of "*ressentiment*." Like Herr Friedemann, he has built his socially unattached life round an "epicurean" aesthetic dilettantism, only to find in the end that this is insufficient to compensate for his human isolation. Only genuine creative talent will redeem the "decadent" outsider and to some extent reconcile him with society. This is how Tonio Kröger differs from these earlier protagonists, and his story could not be written until Mann had gained self-confidence by the creation of *The Buddenbrooks*. It may be noted here, moreover, that in 1905, exactly two years after the first publication of *Tonio Kröger*, Mann was able to consolidate his existence in more than one way by a successful and happy marriage to the daughter of a rich and cultivated Jewish family.

The Buddenbrooks had appeared in 1901; it had been Mann's consolidation as an artist—a culmination and a turning point. Before it, his most personal theme had been mere rootlessness, nonattachment, the rather negative theme of decadence without positive compensation and without the balancing substance of a social context. In deciding to explore his family background in greater depth, in its total social setting and backward in time for three generations, he was undertaking not merely to "chronicle" the phenomenology of decadence, as hitherto, but to "analyze" it—to trace it to its historical roots. He was proposing to take stock of his own origins, the origins of the decadent intellectual who was perhaps also, in this case, a real artist. The book itself ends tragically; no viable artist emerges. The last of the male Buddenbrooks, Hanno—intellectual, sensitive, profoundly musical, obviously unsuited to carry

on the family business—dies of typhus while still at school, to his own great relief. Hanno's experiences, however, are largely derived from Mann's own childhood memories. His parents, Senator Thomas Buddenbrook and his wife Gerda, are to a great extent modeled on the author's own father and mother, although Thomas Buddenbrook also incorporates much of Mann's adult self; the senator's parents are based on those of Senator Heinrich Mann; and so on through the whole range of characters in this roman à clef, for which purpose its author, who first conceived the idea of the book in 1897, had to do extensive and very salutary preparatory research. From older relatives he obtained detailed information not only about various members of the Mann family and their private affairs, but also about the history and constitution and topography of Lübeck, the technicalities of the corn trade, and so forth. Thus in *The Buddenbrooks* Mann was not merely telling his own story but portraying an objective social reality, with the atmosphere of which he was intimately familiar and the organic development of which he had studied and reconstructed. The result was a full-bloodedly realistic novel, one which indisputably places Mann in the great tradition of nineteenth-century European fiction; a work in which his subtly ironic style and his sharp, penetrating, slightly caricaturistic gift of observation are matched and balanced by the human breadth and weight and vitality of the material. And yet to say this is to describe the book at one level only. It is in fact something more than a family epic and a contribution to German social history. Its realism is symbolic; it is in a certain sense a philosophical novel, unobtrusively a roman à thèse as well as a roman à clef. Its subtitle, *The Decline of a Family*, is deeply ironical. The Buddenbrook family "declines" in the sense that its prosperity deteriorates, partly because the last head of the firm, Thomas Buddenbrook, has lost faith in it and in himself; and in the sense that the name dies out with the sickly child who is its last bearer. But this outward and physical downward process, a process of "waning vitality" (*niedersteigendes Leben*) as Nietzsche would have called it, is paradoxically counterpointed by a simultaneous upward process of the inner life: an increase in reflective self-consciousness, a gradual efflorescence of intellectuality and artistic talent. The representative of the second of the four generations which come within the novel's scope—Thomas Buddenbrook's father—is less successful in business than his own father because he is less ruthlessly skeptical, hard-headed and worldly. Thomas himself, in the third generation, is intellectual enough to have lost the pious Christian faith of

his parents, and to have married an exotically beautiful, musically talented lady whose values he nevertheless does not really understand. Hanno, his only child, dies young precisely because he is the most gifted and sensitive of all the Buddenbrooks and has no will to survive in a vulgar world of success-worshiping materialism. The novel concentrates on Thomas's generation, in which the essential inner battle is fought out (in the fourth, that of Hanno, it has already been lost—or already won, depending on one's point of view). Thomas becomes the central figure, contrasted on the one hand with his younger brother Christian, a grotesque dilettante and hypochondriac (modeled on the author's uncle Friedrich Mann), and on the other with his sister Tony (modeled on an aunt, Elisabeth Mann), who is a splendidly comic and yet deeply pathetic figure, surviving all her own disasters and those of her family precisely because she is invincibly naive. Thomas, bitterly reacting against his own decadent tendencies which he sees externalized in his disreputable brother, struggles heroically to keep up appearances as head of the family and the firm, although inwardly he has already lost his nerve and has none of his sister's resilience. His health is undermined and he dies very suddenly, not long before his son, not long after his election as senator—and not long after undergoing a profound intellectual illumination derived from a chance reading of Schopenhauer. There is an obvious broad parallel between this story of the Buddenbrook family and Schopenhauer's account of the life process and its redeeming extinction: the Buddenbrooks' appetite for survival and success symbolically parallels Schopenhauer's ruthless cosmic "will to life"; both wane and are finally "negated." This is not to say that the novel was conceived from the beginning under Schopenhauer's specific and direct influence. Mann could, as we have seen, have got the "will" theory, and the concept of an antithesis between life and intellectual consciousness, from Nietzsche; and he himself attests that he only discovered *The World as Will and Representation*, by a fortunate coincidence, in the autumn of 1899, when he had written nearly all of *The Buddenbrooks* except the final chapters which describe the deaths of Thomas and Hanno. Nevertheless it remains true that the novel has an intellectual dimension, a philosophic, symbolic resonance, without an understanding of which it cannot be adequately appreciated; and exactly the same applies to the best of the post-*Buddenbrooks* stories.

Another essential feature, clearly evident for the first time in *The Buddenbrooks* and then very intensively and signifi-

cantly developed in *Tristan* and *Tonio Kröger* (as well as, later, in *Death in Venice* and *The Magic Mountain*), is Mann's technique, which has often been commented on, of so-called "leitmotivistic" repetition. Mann did not invent it—he had encountered it in, for example, Tolstoy and Goncharov, even Zola had used it, and the very term "leitmotiv" is above all associated with the ultra-Romantic and Symbolistic late music dramas of Mann's favorite composer Wagner; though he also liked in this connection to mention the epic repetitions in the Homeric poems, which he had known as a child. But it was Mann who developed this device to a point of complexity and subtlety unprecedented in prose fiction. Particular phrases, often descriptive labels associated with the physical appearance or mannerisms of certain characters, or particular utterances of the characters themselves, are woven in and out of the narrative; occasionally whole sentences or even whole passages of dialogue recur verbatim. Often the purpose and effect is comic, often an effect of nostalgia or pathos is conveyed to the reader, or an unspoken comment may be made or some other dramatic purpose served (as in the case of the highly sinister recurrences in *Death in Venice*, or as when, in *Tristan*, the information that Gabriele is now dying is tacitly imparted merely by the repetition of the "label" which defines Dr. Müller's function). As Mann uses it, this leitmotivistic technique not only has a strongly stylizing tendency but also moves across the borderline from straightforward realism into symbolic suggestion.

Mann wrote *The Road to the Churchyard* in the summer of 1900 very soon after sending off the completed manuscript of *The Buddenbrooks* to his publisher. *Gladius Dei* was written a year or two later. Both, together with *Tristan* and *Tonio Kröger*, were included in a second collection of stories published in 1903 under the title *Tristan. The Road to the Churchyard* is little more than a high-spirited burlesque, parodying not only Naturalism (by reverting for instance to the alcoholism theme) but also Mann's own realistic-symbolic method: the boy on the bicycle is quite openly referred to merely as "Life." (It may not be without relevance that according to Mann's memoirs he was at about this time himself an enthusiastic cyclist; he would carry the machine upstairs to his apartment in Munich, keep it in the kitchen and clean it there regularly.) The personification of "life" as the commonplace young cyclist brutally pushing aside the melancholic drunkard who tries in the name of pedantic legal propriety to interfere with his heedless lighthearted progress, is clearly ironical: Nietzschean

vitalism is being included here too as an object of parody. At the same time Mann in this story anticipates the modification of Nietzsche's conception which he will more seriously propose in *Tonio Kröger*. Nietzsche's notorious "blond beast," his Cesare Borgia, his heroic aristocratic embodiment of ruthless energy, is in both these stories reduced to something quite harmless and trivial, even endearing: a fair-haired boy on a bicycle without a thought in his head, or the naive "blond, blue-eyed" Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm and others of their type, for whom the self-conscious intellectual Tonio Kröger can cherish a sentimental, mildly envious philosophical affection. In *The Road to the Churchyard*, however, if the representative of life is treated with indulgent irony, his maudlin antagonist Lobgott Piepsam is so grotesque and ludicrous a figure that when Mann read the story aloud at a Munich literary gathering it was, as he records with satisfaction in a letter, constantly interrupted by laughter. Piepsam *nevertheless* represents a kind of rudimentary intellectual or religious protest against "ignorant" unreflecting vitality; and this protest, expressed with greater or less sophistication in story after story, is evidently one about which Mann's feelings are not only serious but highly ambivalent. On the one hand, Piepsam fairly clearly recalls the ghoulish "outsider" figure Tobias Mindernickel who kills his dog in a rage because he cannot impose his will on its animal high spirits; the descriptions of their appearance and clothes are even rather similar. But on the other hand, as the bearer of the antivital protest Piepsam belongs (as even Mindernickel does) to the same category as Hieronymus in *Gladius Dei* and Spinell in *Tristan*—both of whom are also grotesque figures in certain respects, but both of whom have certain intellectual values which are clearly identified with Mann's own. This parodying of the representatives of his own position is one of Mann's absolutely characteristic procedures: it is an essential element in his irony of style, which is also an irony of attitude. In *The Road to the Churchyard* for instance he adopts an ironic pose, an ostensible role of detached mediator between the world of the protesting outsider and the world of healthy normality ("This man's name was Piepsam—Lobgott Piepsam, believe it or not, and I expressly mention it on account of his subsequent extremely odd behavior . . . It is hard to explain these matters to happy people like yourselves . . . a bottle of poisonous-looking yellow liquid, a ruinous liquid which we shall take the precaution of not identifying . . . We are reluctant to acquaint our readers with such matters . . ." etc.). Similarly, in *Tristan,* he

introduces Spinell as "an eccentric fellow with a name reminiscent of some sort of mineral or precious stone," thus ironically adopting the bourgeois values which reject Spinell and are rejected by him.

There is less of this kind of defensive irony in *Gladius Dei*, which is a significant and revealing story in a number of ways. The object of Mann's polemic here is something on which he feels surer of his ground. On a superficial level it may seem confusing that the protest is in this case being directed against "art," but if the necessary distinctions are made this is perfectly logical. Art in *Gladius Dei* means above all the visual arts; and Mann's general reaction to the visual arts as such appears to have been tinged with a certain puritan uneasiness. He found the excessive cult of them in Munich unwholesome; and for Italy he seems to have felt a similar distaste, reflected in Tonio Kröger's antipathetic comments on the "land of art" with its "velvet blue skies, heady wine and sweet sensuality . . . All that *bellezza*" (Tonio Kröger declares) "gets on my nerves. And I can't stand all that dreadful southern vivacity, all those people with their black animal eyes. They've no conscience in their eyes, those Latin races . . ." The essential point in *Gladius Dei* is the symbolic identification of Munich with Renaissance Florence, and of the puritanical, fanatical protagonist "Hieronymus" with Girolamo Savonarola. The story, with its well-known opening description of the Bavarian capital at the turn of the century and its *bellezza*-saturated atmosphere, makes these identifications just less than explicit but quite clear (the comparison of Hieronymus's features to those of his unnamed namesake in the "old portrait," the repeated allusions to the Medicis, the emphasis on the "loggia" and the recollection, at the climax, of the famous incident of the "burning of the vanities" on the Piazza della Signoria at Savonarola's behest). Dissatisfaction with a sensuous, unspiritual, even anti-intellectual kind of art, with an "amoral" cult of form and of beautiful physical externalities, with the kind of art that represented not an analysis and criticism of life but a superficial glorification of it—this was something that preoccupied Mann for a number of years. After *Gladius Dei* he expressed it again, this time in terms of the real Savonarola, in the three-act historical drama *Fiorenza* (published in 1905); he returned to the theme in his sketches for a long and never completed essay which was to have been called *Intellect and Art*, and the same complex of ideas underlay *Death in Venice* (a story which incidentally also reveals the innately puritanical strain in Thomas Mann's makeup). *Fiorenza* culminates in a symbolic confrontation be-

tween Savonarola and the dying Lorenzo de' Medici, who is envisaged by Mann as the supreme representative of a luxuriant aesthetic neopagan culture. It is as stillborn a play as *Gladius Dei* is a successful story; but both works interestingly document their author's preoccupations, and the shadow of Nietzsche looms large behind both. Savonarola's reforming zeal is seen in very Nietzschean terms as a disguised will to power; both he and Hieronymus represent the psychology of the "ascetic priest" which Nietzsche analyzes in *The Genealogy of Morals*. But the Schopenhauerian ingredient is now also prominent in Mann's mixture. In *Gladius Dei* (and again in *Fiorenza*) Mann gives, through the mouth of his protagonist, a definition of genuine (literary) art which is not really intelligible except against the background of Schopenhauerian metaphysics, and which amounts, oddly enough, to a kind of Schopenhauerian aesthetic of literary Naturalism. "Art," declares Hieronymus at the peroration of his vain diatribe in the art shop, "is not a cynical deception, a seductive stimulus to confirm and strengthen the lusts of the flesh! Art is the sacred torch that must *shed its merciful light into all life's terrible depths, into every shameful and sorrowful abyss;* art is the divine flame that must set fire to the world, until *the world with all its infamy and anguish burns and melts away in redeeming compassion"* (italics mine). The visual arts are being attacked because they are the wrong kind of art—because they are allied to unreflecting life, unreflecting vitality, unreflecting sensuality; and literature ("these luxurious volumes of love poetry") comes under the same condemnation if it too is content to be merely a seductive stimulus, an "insolent idolatry of the glistering surface of things." Such art asserts and celebrates life at the merely empirical level, its subject matter is no more than what Schopenhauer called "the world as representation" *(Vorstellung),* i.e., the phenomenal world which manifests "the will" to the senses. In Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, portrayal of the "representation" was, in fact, primarily the function of the visual arts; music, by contrast, was something profounder, as an expression of pure emotion, the "will itself." (It then became possible to assign, as the young Nietzsche did, an interesting intermediate position to literature.) Schopenhauer had, however, allowed that in all aesthetic experience, including that inspired by beautiful phenomena, there was that will-less (i.e., passionless) contemplative element which went halfway toward the desired ascetic renunciation. The implied partial analogy between the artist and the saint rather seems, however, to have been seized upon and exaggerated by

Mann as a rationalization of his ambivalent feelings about the less ascetic elements in the experience and creation of beauty. (The "writer as saint" appears again in *Tonio Kröger*.) Also interesting is Mann's use of Schopenhauer's central ethical concept of compassion—against which, since it entailed negation of the life will, Nietzsche had chiefly polemicized. An apologia of "compassion" is appropriate in the mouth of Hieronymus as the representative of a mentality which Nietzsche attacked. But Mann was not now a wholehearted Nietzschean, if indeed he had ever been one. As we have already noticed, he tended to move away from Nietzsche's more ruthless positions, and his art is not really compassionless: it only affects at times to be so. More germane to its essential spirit—even to that of the early stories, which certainly explore "shameful and sorrowful abysses"—is the quasi-Schopenhauerian aesthetic of compassion as Hieronymus expounds it.

Tristan, of all the stories of this immediately post-*Buddenbrooks* period, is the most perfect example of the realistic and yet symbolic *Novelle* form, and the one most heavily charged with latent meaning. It is deeply ironical and paradoxical; while at work on it in 1901 Mann referred to it in one letter as "a burlesque," at the same time relishing the piquancy of his intention of giving to this "burlesque" the title *Tristan*. It is a tragic story in that it ends with a death, and a death both more touching and more artistically meaningful than any of those which neatly and often sensationally finished off the earlier stories. At the same time *Tristan* contains two of Mann's most brilliantly realized comic characters, and a great comic scene—the climactic encounter between them—which is equal to anything in *The Buddenbrooks*, *The Magic Mountain* or *Felix Krull*.

More than ever, in this story, it is essential to appreciate the complex irony with which Mann presents his leading character, the writer Detlev Spinell. He later explained that it had been his purpose to satirize and condemn in Spinell "certain undesirable tendencies in myself, namely aestheticism, that lifeless preciosity which I consider supremely dangerous . . . I masked this character in the external features of a man of letters whom I knew, a man whose talent was exquisite but alien to life . . . For the rest, I made my author an intellectual and a weakling, a fanatical devotee of beauty and a humanly impoverished person. I elevated him into a type, into a walking symbol, and caused him to suffer a miserable defeat in his confrontation with the comically healthy brutality of a Hanseatic businessman—the husband of the lady with whom, in the sanatorium,

the author has been conducting a high-minded flirtation. It is important not to overlook the fact that *in creating this figure I was castigating myself"* (italics mine). It seems that the "man of letters" in question was the Munich novelist and short-story writer Arthur Holitscher, who had been one of Mann's closer associates at this period, and who understandably resented finding himself—as he saw it—maliciously and grotesquely caricatured in the story. In his conception of Spinell Mann had certainly made use of the literary and artistic tastes of Holitscher (among others) and of Holitscher's physical appearance. The latter recalls in his memoirs how he once noticed, just after leaving Mann's apartment, that he was being watched from the window through binoculars (to do so would in fact have been characteristic of Mann, intent as he always was on describing the minutest details of his characters' features, gestures and gait); and on another occasion Mann unexpectedly called on Holitscher in the early morning, evidently in order to observe him in situ. The publication of *Tristan* put an end to their friendship.

There is no doubt that Spinell is a predominantly caricatured figure, ludicrous in his affectations, though also slightly sinister. Although he is a writer, Mann discredits him by minimizing and disparaging his literary work and pointedly associating both his "one novel" and his behavior and tastes generally with the cult of visual beauty ("exquisite objets d'art . . . Gobelin tapestries, very old furniture, priceless porcelain," etc.). In Spinell's case this cult is of course not linked with "life" in the form of naive sensuality, as in *Gladius Dei*, but with the fin de siècle decadent "art for art's sake" movement. In Germany at that time this movement was in many intellectual circles itself allied (under Nietzsche's influence) to a vitalistic, reactively anti-intellectual and antipsychological attitude. Anti-intellectual and antipsychological are two things which Spinell (here resembling Mann himself) is not: on the contrary he regards it as his mission to uncover uncomfortable psychological truths and to destroy naiveté by means of "intellect and the power of words." The passage in his extraordinary letter to Herr Klöterjahn in which he declares this literary program is hardly consistent with the theme of his novel as Mann describes it; but the point is that in this passage Spinell is, despite everything, the mouthpiece of Mann's own views. Spinell's pessimistic skeptical intellectuality is the latent core of identification between him and Mann, carefully wrapped up and disclaimed, with characteristic dissimulating irony, in Mann's introductory description of the letter as "odd and dubious and

often scarcely intelligible." Again, Spinell cannot be called a "vitalist" in any straightforward sense of the term. Here too his attitude reveals itself as an exquisitely contrived expression of Mann's ambivalences. Spinell is so to speak an inverted vitalist: he openly declares that he hates "life" because it is ugly and vulgar, that he despises the mindless grossness of "nature"; accordingly he deliberately and knowingly accelerates Gabriele Klöterjahn's physical death. His position is that of Villiers' Axel: "life" is something which "the servants will do for us." In effect he seduces Gabriele into a kind of voluntary, quasi-Schopenhauerian, Wagnerian suicide. The cult of Wagner, with his sublime eroticism, self-destructive obsessions and luxurious tapestries of sound, was inseparable from the fin de siècle mentality; it had been associated with Symbolism ever since Baudelaire; and there can be no question—despite his bad conscience about it—of the fascination exercised on Mann by Wagner's music and the world of morbid sensibility it represents. He had been a Wagnerian devotee since even before first reading Nietzsche; and his identification with Spinell in this respect too is made abundantly clear at the climax of the story, in which Gabriele's playing of *Tristan und Isolde* is evoked without a trace of irony. All this is implied by Mann when in his already quoted comment on the story he describes Spinell's aestheticism as a dangerous tendency within himself and emphasizes that his satire is here a self-castigation. (The relationship between Mann and Spinell is in certain respects similar to that between Thomas Buddenbrook and his brother Christian.) Mann was well aware that aestheticism, in one or other of its various forms, was a possible post-Christian attitude, a possible form of protest against the vulgar positivism, the barbarous materialism and utilitarianism of contemporary Germany—a possible solution which he was tempted to try out, even while rejecting it. Thus Spinell, in the *Novelle* at least, does not appear in a wholly negative light; the author does not pass, even by implication, an unequivocal judgment on him. The story remains ambiguous, like life itself. The presentation of the facts is carefully balanced. Spinell may be the proximate cause of Gabriele's death, but the primary cause is evidently her marriage to Klöterjahn, whose child she bears when she has not the strength to do so. Her ethereal fragility is deliberately emphasized, as are also the grossness of Klöterjahn and his monstrous baby, Klöterjahn's absurd complacency and insensitivity, his naive self-deception. And yet at the moment of truth, when actually faced with the reality of his wife's death, he is revealed as capable of a genuineness of feeling to which Spinell

cannot pretend. Even now he is still comic (admitting, at long last, that "Maybe it does come from the lungs") but tears start to his eyes, "and the warm, kindly, honest, human emotion that welled up from within him was plain to see." By marrying Gabriele, Klöterjahn has in one sense committed "an outrage," but in another sense he has brought her to self-fulfillment. Equally Spinell, though he alienates her from her husband, increases in so doing her self-awareness and enlarges her intellectual horizons. Judging her to be hopelessly ill in any case, he takes it upon himself to ease her inevitable passing—not only by making her die "beautifully," but by initiating her before death into a mystery which Mann does not ironize and even sees no need to explain to the reader. (" 'I am not always sure what it means, Herr Spinell . . . What is "then—I myself am the world"?' He explained it to her, softly and briefly. 'Yes, I see.' ") Both enterprises, Klöterjahn's and Spinell's, are relatively justified; their values are relativized against each other. Each is presented objectively, without oversimplification. Even the baby, Anton Klöterjahn, Jr., is seen in a double light as the representative, like his father, of something which in Mann's eyes is not wholly profane and contemptible. The story gives him the last word: shrieking with ignorant merriment as his mother lies dying, he sits in his expensive pram, gloriously silhouetted against the disk of the setting sun, while Spinell retreats from both in discomfiture.

What of Gabriele herself, the object of this bizarre and symbolic rivalry? As the frail, slender, pallid, sylphlike femme-enfant she belongs, like the femme fatale, to the world of fin de siècle graphic art, and her type too reflects, in a complex manner, the fin de siècle life cult. She has responded to the "call of life," the challenge of the masculine vigor embodied in Klöterjahn; as a result, with her own already low vitality irreversibly impaired, she perishes—having first become receptive, under Spinell's guidance, to the message of the mystical suicide pact of Tristan and Isolde, just as Thomas Buddenbrook in his decline became receptive to the message of Schopenhauer. It may with a certain plausibility be argued (although Mann does not make the point explicit) that her death should be seen rather as Thomas Buddenbrook sees his own: that is to say metaphysically, as her entry into the deeper stream of "life" which transcends the individual. In a Schopenhauerian, though not of course in a Christian sense, the loss of Gabriele is thus her liberation, her return to the "great unity." If this is what Mann intends to suggest, it implies a certain mutual relativization of the opposing values of empirical "life" and "death"

(that is, the assertion of individuality and its mystical surrender) which would correspond to the ambiguous antithesis of Klöterjahn and Spinell, the simultaneously positive and negative valuation of each of them. Spinell's death cult could then be seen to be defeated by life on this metaphysical level also, or to be paradoxically serving it. Such are the Schopenhauerian and vitalistic overtones in this *Novelle*. The more obviously presiding genius of Wagner (though he too, like Schopenhauer in *The Buddenbrooks*, remains reverently unmentioned by name) lends it a further piquancy: the story's title and pattern faintly hint at an ironical identification between the "real-life" triangle Klöterjahn-Gabriele-Spinell and the "eternal" triangle Mark-Isolde-Tristan. The piano scene, taking place while the other patients are out on a sleighing expedition, parallels in certain ways the clandestine meeting of the legendary lovers while the court is out hunting; Klöterjahn's lengthy berating of Spinell grotesquely recalls Mark's reproachful solo in Act II when he has surprised the tryst. A bizarre or comic foreground is obtruded in order to evoke, by countersuggestion, an unspoken serious meaning; this technique exactly corresponds to that of obtruding an apparent cynical detachment against a background of tacit compassion. The characters all, so to speak, belong to two worlds, exist on two levels, and the same might be said of Mann's more important characters generally. His realism is a symbolism *per contrarium*. On one level we have a defective actual world of too solid flesh, carious teeth, consumption, slight squints, hunchbacks, degenerating families: on the other level is the world of the "whole" which embraces individual life and death, of which what we call life and death are merely different aspects. Yet Mann neither one-sidedly declares total war on empirical life as Spinell does, nor does he simplistically and exclusively stress it like Klöterjahn. Spinell and Klöterjahn are comic precisely because of their one-sidedness; the author suspends judgment, as if to suggest that serious humanity is to be achieved through a synthesis of these dialectical opposites.

In an extremely interesting way, Mann also gives this story a specific symbolic center (such as, according to some of the theorists of the form, a *Novelle* is supposed to have). The pivotal, serious, never ironized character is Gabriele, and the turning point of her life has been her first meeting with Klöterjahn on an occasion when she was sitting, in the garden of her father's house, with her "six friends" round a fountain. This scene, and still more specifically the fountain itself, becomes the central symbol; and like everything else in *Tristan*

it has a double aspect. The whole story of Gabriele is presented by Mann from the two opposing viewpoints, Spinell's and Klöterjahn's; and so, in particular, is the scene by the fountain. Spinell hears of it from Gabriele in their first rather more personal conversation (in a sense it therefore represents her first encounter with him too), and he at once ecstatically stylizes it in accordance with his own preoccupations: round the fountain in the neglected garden of the old family house, the fountain with its border of irises and its arches of soaring and drooping water, seven young ladies (like seven princesses in a fairy tale) sit "singing," and the sunlight weaves a "little golden crown" in the hair of the most beautiful of them all. Such a scene, like the pale Gabriele herself, is entirely characteristic of fin de siècle drawing and painting, and it is possible that Mann had some actual picture in mind. In "reality," as Klöterjahn tells us, they were not singing but knitting and discussing a recipe for potato pancakes. The truth of the matter, Mann seems tacitly to suggest, is neither so romantic as in Spinell's vision nor so banal as in Klöterjahn's account: it lies, again, in some unspoken synthesis. The fountain itself seems to reveal the secret: its rising and falling jets symbolize the waxing and waning of physical life, the assertion and the surrender of individuality. Lives perish, life continues; the flow is unbroken. (It is noteworthy that this idea of the continuity of life and death, which as we saw earlier is characteristic of the epoch, was a favorite theme with Rilke, and the fountain one of the favorite symbols in his poetry.) The fountain in Gabriele's garden thus unites within itself the double value which the rest of the story parodistically dichotomizes: it points beyond the Klöterjahn-Spinell polarity.

The story *Tristan* offers not only a critique of decadent aestheticism but also a relative justification of it by contrast with what Klöterjahn represents; and vice versa. Mann is here implicitly criticizing his epoch, the late nineteenth century, insofar as it tended to move one-sidedly into one or other of the extremes—into gross materialistic self-assertion, or into Axel's castle. The profundity and distinction of this *Novelle* lies in its delicately balanced communication, in vividly realized fictional and symbolic terms, without overexplicit analysis, of a personal statement by its author about himself and about his age. He chose it as the title story of the collection published in 1903, and this is probably not without significance in the case of a book which also contained *Tonio Kröger* (though admittedly *Tristan* was alone among the six stories in not having previously appeared in a periodical). *Tonio Kröger* has be-

come the better known of the two, indeed the most famous of all Mann's early *Novellen;* arguably, however, it is less completely satisfying than *Tristan* as a work of art.

Mann intended *Tonio Kröger* as an apologia, a defense against the charge of cynicism and nihilism which he knew was still being leveled against him. He wished to strike a conciliatory, harmonious note; and it was in fact his genuine aim to overcome the inner disharmony which *Tristan* so astringently expressed. His spokesman Tonio Kröger accordingly makes the opposite of Spinell's declaration: he disclaims nihilism and asserts that he loves life. Mann later described this story as "a confession of commitment to life," but admitted also that the confession was "almost too immediate," i.e., too direct in its utterance. In *Tristan* the total statement had been symbolic, mediated through an objective correlative—as had also been the case with *Gladius Dei*, the other notable artistic success in the 1903 collection. The trouble now was that after *The Joker* and *The Buddenbrooks* it was becoming more difficult to rely artistically on the self-critical autobiographical method and the Lübeck material: this vein had been thoroughly worked already. What could still be done was, for instance, to balance *The Joker* by giving the story of the free-floating outsider a more hopeful turn; and to use the Lübeck material once more in a way that would generate an effect of poignant nostalgia. The dangers were that the greater self-consciousness now reached would lead to an excess of self-analytical discursiveness, and that the nostalgia would turn to sentimentality. These dangers are not wholly avoided. Mann was also aware of *Tonio Kröger's* rather secondary and dependent character, its umbilical connection, so to speak, with *The Buddenbrooks:* he referred to it later as a "prose ballad which would admittedly be a poor thing without *The Buddenbrooks,*" and compared the novel to a violin, a "homemade instrument" on which he had played the "song" of *Tonio Kröger* and which lent its resonance to this story.

The latter did, to be sure, also have a very specific starting point in Mann's actual experience. In September 1899 he had taken a holiday in Denmark, spending nine days at the little seaside resort of Aalsgaard on the Øresund. On the way there he had revisited his native town, for the first time since leaving it five years earlier; and here in Lübeck, at the Hotel Stadt Hamburg, the bizarre incident occurred in which he was nearly arrested by mistake, as the story describes. It was during this journey that the conception of *Tonio Kröger* first took shape in his mind, although it was not finally elaborated until 1902.

Thus Tonio's visit to the north, in the last chapters of the *Novelle*, is not a mere appendage but the germ and core of the work—an event which the whole of the rest of the story prepares; a crucial nostalgic experience, the real-life equivalent of which had itself been an experience of nostalgia. The opening chapters lay the foundations which make this closing sequence meaningful; they describe the northern land of lost content to which Tonio Kröger will make his dreamlike, haunted return. As in *The Joker* and *The Buddenbrooks*, Mann draws heavily on his childhood memories. He had in fact disliked his Lübeck school as much as these works suggest; he had despised the masters, earned bad reports, been happiest during the family summer holidays by the sea at the old Kurhaus in Travemünde. There had, however, been an original of Hans Hansen —a "beloved friend," to whom he had written poems. (The boy, in adult life, took to drink and came to a squalid end in Africa.) Later, his adolescent poetry had been addressed to a girl "with dark pigtails" whom he met at private dancing lessons conducted by a Herr Knoll (sic) from Hamburg. The Latin admixture in Mann's parentage, to which (as we are endlessly informed) he attached great significance, is expressed in Tonio Kröger's name, and the remarriage of the latter's mother to an Italian musician with whom she departs to live "under far-off blue skies," rather to her son's disapproval, is another stylized version of Frau Senator Mann's departure to Munich, where she did in fact in later life (in Thomas Mann's view, which he was to express in thinly veiled terms in *Doctor Faustus*) live in a manner not altogether befitting the dignity of a Lübeck senator's widow.

The central, self-analytical section of the story is above all concerned with the basic problem of the apparent incompatibility between the *stylistic* values which Mann had developed for himself (intellectual sophistication, detachment, the kind of artistic dignity and restraint which necessarily involved a certain ironic flavor) and the *human* values which he did not want to lose or to seem to lack (warmth of heart, the capacity for compassion). Tonio Kröger feels driven by his artistic ideals into a kind of emotional limbo—quite apart from the more obvious problems arising from his alienation, as a radically skeptical intellectual, from his "normal" and "decent" unintellectual home background. Behind all this, as Mann conceives it, there still lies the fundamental Nietzschean polarity of intellect and "life": intellectual insight (*Erkenntnis*) is still regarded as necessarily entailing pessimism and ethical nihilism, though as we have seen Mann came to associate "life" with naive normal-

ity and not with a heroic elite "beyond good and evil" (this latter aspect of Nietzscheanism is specifically repudiated by Tonio Kröger in his conversation with Lisaveta Ivanovna). Aristocratic status and "immoralism" are presented instead as qualities of the decadent intellectual. In the same conversation, Tonio Kröger toys with the analogy between the artist and the prince, condemned to a way of life which forbids him to be "human" (the theme of Mann's short novel *Royal Highness*, published in 1909), and with the analogy between the artist and the criminal (the theme of *Felix Krull*, first conceived in 1909). Tonio Kröger's outstanding problem is his desire to be human without losing the ability to write well. During his youth in Lübeck "his heart was alive"; in Munich and Italy "his heart was dead." The solution will lie in a revivifying contact with the scenes and the loves of his youth; hence his northward, homeward journey.

The pattern of leitmotivistic repetition in this story—as complex as that in *Tristan*—cannot and need not be analyzed in detail. Most of the recurrent motifs belong to the complex of Tonio Kröger's feelings about his family and his Lübeck experiences; structurally they come into their own in the description of his return to Lübeck, as dreamlike nostalgic echoes—his sensations, indeed, are specifically compared to those of a recurrent dream. The details of his walk home from school with Hans Hansen, the steps of which he retraces, are recalled by the mere verbatim repetition of certain phrases, although neither the walk nor Hans himself is mentioned. It should be noted however that the leitmotiv technique in this story goes beyond the recurrence of evocative words and phrases, and embraces actual events and figures. The motif of the artist as a criminal impostor "recurs" in the incident at the Lübeck hotel; and the structural climax of the story, its clinching "symbolic center," is reached at the "recurrence," in Denmark, of "Hans and Inge." The text makes it quite clear that they are, of course, not the real Hans and Inge; the latter have long ago become a type, a symbol, and the point is simply the reconfrontation of Tonio Kröger with the type, his reimmersion in the atmosphere, which together represent all that he humanly most values. His final position is one of unresentful acceptance of the fact that he is "outside" their world—acceptance of his unhappy love affair with "life" in this sense, while still cherishing it and the feelings to which it moves him. In the light of this acceptance he can envisage a new synthesis of style and theme. Writing to his friend Lisaveta, he predicts significant developments in his work. "I see

before me a host of shadowy human figures whose gestures implore me to cast upon them the spell which shall be their deliverance: tragic and comic figures, and some that are both at once—and to these I am deeply attracted. But my deepest and most secret love belongs to the fair-haired and the blue-eyed, the bright children of life, the happy, the charming and the ordinary." The aesthetic expounded in the first of these two sentences recalls the *Gladius Dei* aesthetic of "redeeming compassion," which is applicable to Mann's own fiction, both later and earlier. Thus *Tonio Kröger*, in this sense as in others, is a work which looks back, sums up and points hopefully to the future.

Thomas Mann is often said to be an unusually untranslatable writer. So far at least as his early work is concerned (apart from special insoluble problems such as the extensive and pointed use of different German dialects in *The Buddenbrooks*) this seems to me to be an exaggeration—given that all translation is in any case difficult and in the last analysis impossible. Mann's German is highly self-conscious, sophisticated and complex, but not in fact obscure. Slavish literalness is of course out of the question, and the elaborate syntax must be broken up, though not so thoroughly as to destroy in the English all sense of the complexity, the ironic gravity, the often deliberate stiltedness of the original. Often a richness or nuance of meaning, which in German can be conveyed more economically, allows itself to be rendered in English only by slight expansion or paraphrase, and in general I have tended to regard this as preferable to omission or denudation. In making these new versions from material which came into the public domain only a few years ago, and only in areas where United States copyright laws apply, I have been very conscious of retreading part of a path heroically trodden before by a conspicuous and virtually solitary predecessor. To the English-reading public generally, Mann's work has been familiar in the versions of the late Mrs. H. T. Lowe-Porter alone, which indeed first brought his name to the wider world public outside Germany; and it is unavoidable that some comment on these versions should at this point be made. If they were satisfactory, the present enterprise would be redundant. Unfortunately it must be put clearly on record that, on any close inspection, they are not. In supporting this assertion with evidence from Mrs. Lowe-Porter's text I shall for obvious reasons refrain from debating such intangible matters as style and taste, and confine myself to points of linguistic fact. It is necessary to distinguish between conscious inexactitudes which represent a translator's limited but legitimate area of

freedom, and unwitting misunderstandings of the grammar or vocabulary of the original language. The latter are demonstrable errors, which anyone who takes the translated author seriously has a duty to correct. The following is a random sample of them from *Stories of Three Decades.*•

In *Tonio Kröger:*

"Tonio geriet in Bewegung" (i.e., grew animated) becomes "Tonio went on" (p. 90); the "Liniennetz" covering Lisaveta Ivanovna's canvas becomes (by confusion of "Linien" with "Leinen") a "*linen* mesh" (100); "ungewürzt" becomes (by confusion of "Würze" with "Wurzel") "without *roots*" (103); "mich vor dem Frühling meines Künstlertums ein wenig zu schämen" (i.e., feel, when confronted with spring, of feeling slightly ashamed of being an artist) becomes (by a misreading of the syntax and in defiance of the context) "feel a little ashamed *of the springtime of my art*" (103); "heiligend" (by confusion with "heilend") becomes "healing" (106).

In *Death in Venice:*

"Wertzeichen" (i.e., postage stamps) becomes "tributes" (383); "[Er hatte] Geheimnisse preisgegeben" (i.e., given away secrets) becomes "[had] turned his back on the 'mysteries' " (385); "der sich ein Schicksal erschleicht" (i.e., cheats his way into interesting notoriety) becomes "who manages to *lead fate by the nose*" (386); "[der] aus Tiefe Nichtswürdigkeiten begehen zu dürfen glaubt" (i.e., regards his intellectual profundity as an entitlement to infamous behavior) becomes "[makes] *this disaster* an excuse for *trifling away the rest of his life*" (386); "eine sittliche Vereinfältigung der Welt und der Seele" (i.e., a deliberate ignoring of the moral complexities of the world and of the human soul) becomes "a *tendency to equate* the world and the human soul" (386).

In *Tristan:*

"Zeiten, in denen ich das Empire einfach nicht *entbehren* kann" (i.e., cannot do without it) becomes "times when I cannot *endure* Empire" (141); "die Melodie [sang] ihre letzte Süssigkeit aus, und [die Verzierungen] schmiegten sich . . . um ihre Glieder" becomes (by misattribution to the pianist of the possessive "ihre" which in fact here refers to the melody) "the very last drop of

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• Page references are to the Secker and Warburg edition (London) which first appeared in 1936; the corresponding American edition was published by Alfred A. Knopf (New York). There have been various later reprints (Penguin Books, for example, were authorized to reissue *Death in Venice* and two other stories just after Mann's death in 1955), but in none, so far as I can see, have any of the necessary emendations been carried out. Italics in the quotations are in all cases mine.

sweetness was wrung from the melody; the embellishments seemed to cling . . . about *her* limbs" (152); "selbst dann bin ich die Welt" (the words, of crucial importance, are of course not Mann's but Wagner's) twice becomes (by misconstruction of "selbst") "*even then* I am the world" (154); "die Not des Erwachens" (i.e., anguish of waking) becomes (by confusion of "Not" with "Notwendigkeit") "*need* of waking" (155); "eine . . . *empörende* Geschichte" (i.e., revolting story) becomes a "*touching*" story (158).

In *Gladius Dei:*

"[Die] *unbedenklichen* Sitten" (i.e., easygoing morals) becomes "*unobjectionable* morals" (181); "die Antike" (i.e., antiquity, the ancient world) becomes (though followed by a singular verb) "the antiques" (182); "Linien" is again confused with "Leinen," so that "der Linienfluss des Gewandes" becomes "the flow of the *linen* garment" (186); "die Leute lösten sich ab" (i.e., came and went by turns) becomes (by confusion of "ablösen" with "auflösen") "the crowd . . . *melted away*" (186); in the case of "Du blickst schwarz, antworten Sie mir, du, Unbekannter" total confusion results from "du" being (impossibly) taken as referring to the person addressed, and "antworten" as an imperative, so that we get "You are unknown to me, and you look at me with black looks—yet answer me!" (191); and a little further on in Hieronymus's speech the plural inflections of "Geht mir, Verruchte! . . . Ihr irrt, Schamlose!" are mistaken for singulars: "Profligate, away! . . . Shameless one, you err!" (191).

In *The Dilettante* (which I have called *The Joker*):

"Für was man sich gibt" (i.e., what facade one adopts) becomes "*to* what one gives oneself" (41); and "realistisch duldsam" (i.e., having the tolerance of a realist) becomes "convincingly tolerant" (49).

These examples, the list of which could be tediously extended, are examples not simply of possible interpretations (points of interpretation scarcely arise in Thomas Mann) but of actual linguistic incomprehension, and it will be seen that the resulting rendering often seriously distorts or even reverses the sense of the passage in question, or makes no sense at all. In addition, Mrs. Lowe-Porter's versions are full of small omissions or excisions, often unimportant in themselves, but important cumulatively. For example, the last sentence of the ninth chapter or section of *Tristan*, and that of the seventh section of *The Dilettante*, have both disappeared without trace, although both are paragraphs in themselves (pp. 157, 37); and in *Tristan* we are offered no equivalent for "*Geist*" in the crucial phrase "*Geist und Wort*," which is shorn simply to "the Word"

in both its occurrences (pp. 161, 163). The same applies to numerous other sentences or phrases or words throughout the stories. Such cuts, or shortcuts, do not seem defensible even on the most liberal view of the translator's function. Insufficiently conscientious attention to the German text also seems to have been the reason for Mrs. Lowe-Porter's failure, in many cases, to reproduce Mann's leitmotivistic repetitions (e.g., the motif "*sein Herz lebte*" is given three different renderings on pp. 92, 97 and 121, although in this case as in most of the others there is no technical reason for not repeating verbatim in English what Mann repeats verbatim in German).

No one, of course, is incapable of error or oversight, but Mrs. Lowe-Porter errs frequently and gravely enough to justify—indeed to make obligatory—an attempt to produce less misleading versions of at least some of Mann's earlier writings, now that it is legally possible to do so. Her task, as the exclusive translator of his entire work, was of course Herculean, and her mistakes were probably as much due to understandable haste as to inadequate knowledge of German. Her achievement deserves credit for its sheer volume, and it would be churlish to deny that her renderings are often by no means infelicitous. My own method in retranslating these six stories was to avoid consulting the existing versions of them until I had at least decided on my first draft for a given sentence or paragraph. The corresponding passage in Mrs. Lowe-Porter would then occasionally suggest second thoughts. In general however the texts have been completely reworked.

Too much is known about Thomas Mann and too much has been written about him already for it to be easy to devise a suitable introductory essay for a selection of this kind. In this connection I must acknowledge considerable indebtedness to Professor Wolfdietrich Rasch's recent very illuminating book *Zur deutschen Literatur seit der Jahrhundertwende* (Stuttgart, 1967), especially to his opening chapter on the *Zeitgeist* of the young Thomas Mann's epoch, and to his detailed analysis of *Tristan* in the light of its cultural context. I am also grateful for much kind assistance to my friend and colleague Mr. T. J. Reed, from whose expertise I have benefited in prolonged discussions of Thomas Mann, as well as by consultation of some of his published and forthcoming work on the subject.

David Luke

LITTLE HERR FRIEDEMANN

1

IT WAS THE nurse's fault. In vain Frau Consul Friedemann, when the matter was first suspected, had solemnly urged her to relinquish so heinous a vice; in vain she had dispensed to her daily a glass of red wine in addition to her nourishing stout. It suddenly came to light that the girl had actually sunk so low as to drink the methylated spirits intended for the coffee machine; and before a replacement for her had arrived, before she could be sent away, the accident had happened. One day, when little Johannes was about a month old, his mother and three adolescent sisters returned from a walk to find that he had fallen from the swaddling table and was lying on the floor making a horribly faint whimpering noise, with the nurse standing by looking stupidly down at him.

little herr friedemann

The doctor's face, as he carefully but firmly probed the limbs of the crooked, twitching little creature, wore an exceedingly serious expression; the three girls stood in a corner sobbing, and Frau Friedemann prayed aloud in her mortal anguish.

Even before the baby was born it had been the poor woman's lot to see her husband, the consul for the Netherlands, reft from her by an illness both sudden and

acute, and she was still too broken in spirit to be even capable of hoping that the life of her little Johannes might be spared. Two days later, however, the doctor squeezed her hand encouragingly and pronounced that there was now absolutely no question of any immediate danger; above all, the slight concussion of the brain had completely cleared up. This, he explained, was obvious if one looked at the child's eyes: there had been a vacant stare in them at first which had now quite disappeared . . . "Of course," he added, "we must wait and see how things go on—and we must hope for the best, you know, hope for the best . . ."

2

The gray gabled house in which Johannes Friedemann grew up was near the north gate of the old, scarcely medium-sized merchant city. Its front door opened onto a spacious stone-paved hall, from which a stair with white wooden banisters led to the upper floors. On the first was the living room with its walls papered in a faded landscape pattern, and its heavy mahogany table draped in crimson plush, with high-backed chairs and settees standing stiffly round it.

Here, as a child, he would sit perhaps on a little stool by his mother's feet, listening to her as she told him some tale full of wonders, and as he listened he would gaze at her smooth gray hair and her kind gentle face, and breathe in the slight fragrance of scent that always hung about her. Or perhaps he would get her to show him the portrait of his father, an amiable gentleman with gray side-whiskers. He was (said Johannes's mother) now living in heaven, waiting for them all to join him there.

Behind the house was a little garden, and during the summer they would spend a good deal of their time in it, notwithstanding the almost perpetual sickly sweet exhalations from a nearby sugar refinery. In the garden stood an old gnarled walnut tree, and in its shade little

Johannes would often sit on a low wooden stool cracking nuts, while Frau Friedemann and her three daughters, now grown up, together occupied a gray canvas tent. But Frau Friedemann would often raise her eyes from her needlework and glance tenderly and sadly across at her son.

Little Johannes was no beauty, with his pigeon chest, his steeply humped back and his disproportionately long skinny arms, and as he squatted there on his stool, nimbly and eagerly cracking his nuts, he was certainly a strange sight. But his hands and feet were small and neatly shaped, and he had great liquid brown eyes, a sensitive mouth and soft light brown hair. In fact, although his face sat so pitifully low down between his shoulders, it might almost have been described as beautiful after all.

3

When he was seven he was sent to school, and now the years passed uniformly and rapidly. Every day, walking past the gabled houses and shops with the quaintly solemn gait that deformed people often have, he made his way to the old schoolhouse with its Gothic vaulting; and at home, when he had done his homework, he would perhaps read some of his beautiful books with their brightly colored illustrations, or potter about in the garden, while his sisters kept house for their ailing mother. The girls also went to parties, for the Friedemanns moved in the best local society; but unfortunately none of the three had yet married, for their family fortune was by no means large and they were distinctly plain.

Johannes too occasionally got an invitation from one or other of his contemporaries, but it was no great pleasure for him to associate with them. He was unable to join in their games, and since they always treated him with embarrassed reserve, it was impossible for any real companionship to develop.

Later there came a time when he would often hear

them discuss certain matters in the school yard; wide-eyed and attentive, he would listen in silence as they talked of their passions for this little girl or that. Such experiences, he decided, obviously engrossing though they were for the others, belonged like gymnastics and ball games to the category of things for which he was not suited. This was at times a rather saddening thought; but after all, he had long been accustomed to going his own way and not sharing the interests of other people.

It nevertheless came to pass—he was sixteen years old at the time—that he found himself suddenly enamored of a girl of his own age. She was the sister of one of his classmates, a blond, exuberant creature whom he had met at her brother's house. He felt a strange uneasiness in her company, and the studied self-conscious cordiality with which she too treated him saddened him profoundly.

One summer afternoon when he was taking a solitary walk along the promenade outside the old city wall, he heard whispered words being exchanged behind a jasmine bush. He cautiously peeped through the branches, and there on a seat sat this girl and a tall red-haired boy whom he knew very well by sight; the boy's arm was round her and he was pressing a kiss on her lips, which with much giggling she reciprocated. When Johannes had seen this he turned on his heel and walked softly away.

His head had sunk lower than ever between his shoulders, his hands were trembling and a sharp, biting pain rose from his chest and seemed to choke him. But he swallowed it down, and resolutely drew himself up as straight as he could. "Very well," he said to himself, "that is over. I will never again concern myself with such things. To the others they mean joy and happiness, but to me they can only bring grief and suffering. I am done with it all. It is finished for me. Never again."

The decision was a relief to him. He had made a renunciation, a renunciation forever. He went home and took up a book or played the violin, which he had learnt to do despite his deformity.

4

At seventeen he left school to go into business, like everyone else of his social standing, and he became an apprentice in Herr Schlievogt's big timber firm down by the river. They treated him with special consideration, he for his part was amiable and cooperative, and the years passed by in a peaceful and well-ordered manner. But in his twenty-first year his mother died after a long illness.

This was a great sorrow for Johannes Friedemann, and one that he long cherished. He savored this sorrow, he surrendered himself to it as one surrenders oneself to a great happiness, he nourished it with innumerable memories from his childhood and made the most of it, as his first major experience.

Is not life in itself a thing of goodness, irrespective of whether the course it takes for us can be called a "happy" one? Johannes Friedemann felt that this was so, and he loved life. He had renounced the greatest happiness it has to offer, but who shall say with what passionate care he cultivated those pleasures that were accessible to him? A walk in springtime through the parks outside the town, the scent of a flower, the song of a bird—surely these were things to be thankful for?

He also well understood that a capacity for the enjoyment of life presupposes education, indeed that it increases automatically as one's education increases: and he took pains to educate himself. He loved music and attended any concerts that were given in the town. And although it was uncommonly odd to watch him play, he did himself become not a bad violinist and took pleasure in every beautiful and tender note he was able to draw from his instrument. And by dint of much reading he had in the course of time acquired a degree of literary taste which in that town was probably unique. He was versed in all the latest publications both in Germany and abroad, he knew how to savor the exquisite rhythms of a poem, he could appreciate the subtle atmosphere of a finely written short story . . . One might indeed almost say that he was an epicurean.

He came to see that there is nothing that cannot be enjoyed and that it is almost absurd to distinguish between happy and unhappy experiences. He accepted all his sensations and moods as they came to him, he welcomed and cultivated them, whether they were sad or glad. Even his unfulfilled wishes and ardent longings were precious to him for their own sake: he would tell himself that if any of them ever came to fulfillment the best part of the pleasure would be over. Is not the sweet pain of vague desires and hopes on a still spring evening richer in delight than any fulfillment the summer could bring? Ah yes, little Herr Friedemann was an epicurean and no mistake.

This was something of which the people who passed him in the street, greeting him with that mixture of cordiality and pity to which he had so long been accustomed, were doubtless unaware. They did not know that this unfortunate cripple, strutting so quaintly and solemnly along in his light gray overcoat and his shiny top hat (for oddly enough he was a little vain of his appearance) was a man to whom life was very sweet, this life of his that flowed so gently by, unmarked by any strong emotions but filled with a quiet and delicate happiness of which he had taught himself the secret.

5

But Herr Friedemann's chief and most absorbing passion was for the theater. He had an uncommonly strong sense of drama and at moments of high theatrical effect or tragic catastrophe the whole of his little body would quiver with emotion. At the principal theater of the town he had a seat permanently reserved for him in the front row, and he would go there regularly, sometimes accompanied by his three sisters. Since their mother's death they had lived on in the big house which they and their brother jointly owned, and did all the housekeeping for themselves and him.

They were, alas, still unmarried; but they had long

reached an age at which one sets aside all such expectations, for the eldest of them, Friederike, was seventeen years older than Herr Friedemann. She and her sister Henriette were rather too tall and thin, whereas Pfiffi, the youngest, looked regrettably short and plump. This youngest girl moreover had an odd habit of wriggling and wetting the corners of her mouth whenever she spoke.

Little Herr Friedemann did not pay much attention to the three girls, but they stuck loyally together and were always of the same opinion. In particular, whenever any engagement between persons of their acquaintance was announced, they would unanimously declare that this was *very* gratifying news.

Their brother went on living with them even after he had left Herr Schlievogt's timber firm and set up on his own by taking over some small business, some sort of agency which did not demand much exertion. He lived in a couple of rooms on the ground floor of the house, in order not to have to climb the stairs except at mealtimes, for he occasionally suffered from asthma.

On his thirtieth birthday, a fine warm June day, he was sitting after lunch in the gray tent in the garden, leaning against a new soft neck rest which Henriette had made for him, with a good cigar in his mouth and a good book in his hand. Now and then he would put the book aside, listen to the contented twittering of the sparrows in the old walnut tree and look at the neat gravel drive that led up to the house and at the lawn with its bright flower beds.

Little Herr Friedemann was clean-shaven, and his face had scarcely changed at all except for a slight sharpening of his features. He wore his soft light brown hair smoothly parted on one side.

Once, he lowered the book right onto his lap, gazed up at the clear blue sky and said to himself: "Well, that's thirty years gone. And now I suppose there will be another ten or perhaps another twenty, God knows. They will come upon me silently and pass by without any commotion, as the others have done, and I look forward to them without a qualm."

6

It was in July of that year that the new military commandant for the district was appointed, a change of office that caused a considerable stir. The stout and jovial gentleman who had held the post for many years had been a great favorite with local society, and his departure was regretted. And now, for God knows what reason, it must needs be Herr von Rinnlingen who was sent from the capital to replace him.

It seemed, in fact, to be not a bad exchange, for the new lieutenant colonel, who was married but had no children, rented a very spacious villa in the southern suburbs, from which it was concluded that he intended to keep house in some style. At all events the rumor that he was quite exceptionally rich found further confirmation in the fact that he brought with him four servants, five riding and carriage horses, a landau and a light hunting brake.

Shortly after their arrival he and his wife had been to pay calls on all the best families, and everyone was talking about them; the chief object of interest however was definitely not Herr von Rinnlingen himself, but his wife. The men were dumbfounded by her and did not at first know what to think; but the ladies most decidedly did not approve of Gerda von Rinnlingen's character and ways.

"Of course, one can tell at once that she comes from the capital," observed Frau Hagenström, the lawyer's wife, in the course of conversation with Henriette Friedemann. "One doesn't mind that, one doesn't mind her smoking and riding—naturally not! But her behavior isn't merely free and easy, it's unrefined, and even that isn't quite the right word . . . She's by no means ugly, you know, some might even think her pretty—and yet she totally lacks feminine charm, her eyes and her laugh and her movements are simply not at all calculated to appeal to men. She is no flirt, and far be it from me to find fault with her for that, goodness knows—but can it be right for so young a woman, a woman of twenty-four, to show absolutely no

sign of . . . a certain natural grace and attractiveness? My dear, I am not very good at expressing myself, but I know what I mean. The men still seem to be quite stunned, poor dears: mark my words, they will all be sick to death of her in a few weeks' time."

"Well," said Fräulein Friedemann, "she has made a very good marriage, anyway."

"Oh, as to her husband!" exclaimed Frau Hagenström. "You should see how she treats him! You will see it soon enough! I am the last person to deny that up to a point a married woman should act toward the opposite sex with a certain reserve. But how does she behave to her own husband? She has a way of freezing him with her eyes and calling him *'mon cher ami'* in pitying tones, which I find quite outrageous! You have only to look at *him*—a fine upstanding first-class officer and gentleman of forty, well behaved and well mannered and very well preserved! They've been married for four years . . . My dear . . ."

7

The scene of little Herr Friedemann's first encounter with Frau von Rinnlingen was the main street of the town, a street lined almost entirely with shops and offices. He was vouchsafed this first sight of her at midday, just after leaving the stock exchange, where he had been making his modest contribution to the morning's business.

He was trudging along, a tiny and solemn figure, beside Herr Stephens, the wholesale merchant, who was an unusually large and solid man with round-trimmed side-whiskers and formidably bushy eyebrows. They were both wearing top hats, and had opened their overcoats as it was a very hot day. They were discussing politics, and their walking sticks tapped the pavement in regular rhythm. But when they were about halfway down the street Herr Stephens suddenly remarked: "Bless me, here comes that Rinnlingen woman driving toward us."

"Well, that's a lucky coincidence," replied Herr Friede-

mann in his high-pitched, rather strident voice, and peered expectantly ahead. "I've never yet set eyes on her, you know. Ah, so that is the yellow brake."

And so indeed it was: Frau von Rinnlingen was using the light yellow hunting brake today, and she herself was driving the pair of thoroughbreds; the groom sat behind her with his arms folded. She wore a loose-fitting, very light-colored coat, and her skirt was of a light color as well. From under her little round straw hat with its brown leather band came her luxuriant auburn hair, well curled at the sides and thickly tressed at the back where it fell almost to her shoulders. The complexion of her oval face was pale, and there were blue shadows in the corners of her unusually close-set eyes. Across her short but finely shaped nose ran a very becoming little ridge of freckles; the beauty or otherwise of her mouth, however, was hard to judge, for she kept protruding and withdrawing her lower lip, chafing it continually against the other.

Herr Stephens greeted Frau von Rinnlingen with an exceedingly respectful salutation as her carriage drew abreast of them, and little Herr Friedemann also raised his hat and stared at her very attentively. She lowered her whip, inclined her head slightly and drove slowly past, glancing at the houses and shopwindows on either side.

A few paces further on Herr Stephens remarked: "She's been out for a drive and now she's on her way home."

Little Herr Friedemann made no reply but gazed down at the pavement in front of him. Then he suddenly looked up at Stephens and asked: "What did you say?"

And Herr Stephens, the wholesale trader, repeated his perspicacious observation.

8

Three days later, at noon, Johannes Friedemann returned home from his regular morning walk. Luncheon was served at half-past twelve, so there would be time for him to spend another half hour in his "office" which was just

to the right of the front door. But as he was about to enter it the maid came up to him in the hall and said:

"There are visitors, Herr Friedemann."

"In my room?" he asked.

"No, upstairs with the ladies, sir."

"But who are they?"

"Lieutenant Colonel and Frau von Rinnlingen."

"Oh," said Herr Friedmann, "then of course I'll . . ."

And he climbed the stairs to the first floor and walked across the lobby toward the room with the landscape wallpaper. But with the handle of the tall white door already in his hand, he suddenly stopped, drew back a pace, turned and went slowly down again the way he had come. And although he was completely alone he said out loud to himself:

"No. Better not."

He went into his "office," sat down at his desk and took up a newspaper. But presently he let it drop again, and sat with his head turned to one side, looking out of the window. Thus he remained till the maid came and announced that luncheon was served; then he went upstairs to the dining room where his sisters were already waiting for him, and seated himself on his chair on top of three volumes of music.

Henriette, ladling out the soup, said:

"Who do you think has been here, Johannes?"

"Well?" he asked.

"The new lieutenant colonel with his wife."

"Indeed? That is very kind of them."

"Yes," said Pfiffi, dribbling at the corners of her mouth, "I think they are both very agreeable people."

"Anyway," said Friederike, "we must return the call without delay. I suggest we go on Sunday, the day after tomorrow."

"On Sunday," said Henriette and Pfiffi.

"You'll come with us of course, Johannes?" asked Friederike.

"Naturally!" said Pfiffi, wriggling. Herr Friedemann had completely ignored the question and was swallowing

his soup, silently and apprehensively. He seemed somehow to be listening, listening to some uncanny noise from nowhere.

9

The following evening there was a performance of *Lohengrin* at the city theater, and all well-educated people were present. The small auditorium was packed from top to bottom and filled with the hum of voices, the smell of gas and a medley of scent. But every eyeglass, in the stalls and in the circles, was trained on box number thirteen, just to the right of the stage; for there, this evening, Herr and Frau von Rinnlingen had appeared for the first time, and now was the chance to give them a thorough inspection.

When little Herr Friedemann, in faultless evening dress with a glistening white pigeon-breasted shirtfront, entered his box—box thirteen—he stopped dead on the threshold: his hand rose to his brow and for a moment his nostrils dilated convulsively. But then he took his seat, the seat immediately to the left of Frau von Rinnlingen.

As he sat down she contemplated him attentively, protruding her lower lip; she then turned and exchanged a few words with her husband, who was standing behind her. He was a tall well-built man with upturned moustaches and a tanned, good-humored face.

When the prelude began and Frau von Rinnlingen leaned forward over the balustrade, Herr Friedemann gave her a quick, furtive, sideways look. She was wearing a light-colored evening gown and was even slightly décolletée, unlike any other woman present. Her sleeves were wide and ample and her white evening gloves came up to her elbows. Tonight there was something voluptuous about her figure which had not been noticeable the other day under her loose coat; her bosom rose and fell slowly and firmly, and her heavy auburn tresses hung low down behind her head.

Herr Friedemann was pale, much paler than usual, and below his smoothly parted brown hair little drops of sweat stood out on his forehead. Frau von Rinnlingen had removed her left glove and was resting her bare arm on the red plush balustrade: a round, pale arm, with pale blue veins running through it and through her hand, on which she wore no rings. This arm lay constantly just where he could see it; there was no help for that.

The violins sang, the trombones blared, Telramund was struck down, the orchestra sounded a general triumph and little Herr Friedemann sat motionless, pale and silent, with his head drooping right down between his shoulders, one forefinger propped against his mouth and the other hand thrust under his lapel.

As the curtain fell, Frau von Rinnlingen rose to leave the box with her husband. Herr Friedemann, without looking at them, saw them go; he drew his handkerchief across his brow, stood up suddenly, got as far as the door that led into the corridor, then turned back again, resumed his seat, and sat on without stirring in the same posture as before.

When the bell rang and his neighbors came back into the box, he sensed that Frau von Rinnlingen was looking at him, and involuntarily he raised his head and returned her gaze. When their eyes met, so far from turning hers away, she went on scrutinizing him without a trace of embarrassment until he himself felt humiliated and compelled to look down. His pallor increased, and a strange, bittersweet rage welled up inside him . . . The music began.

Toward the end of that act Frau von Rinnlingen happened to drop her fan and it fell to the ground beside Herr Friedemann. Both of them stooped simultaneously, but she reached it first and said with a mocking smile:

"Thank you."

His head had been close to hers, and for a moment, unavoidably, he had caught the warm fragrance of her breast. His face was contorted, his whole body was convulsed and his heart throbbed with such appalling vio-

lence that he could not breathe. He sat for half a minute longer, then pushed back his chair, got up quietly and quietly left the box.

10

The clamor of the orchestra followed him as he crossed the corridor, reclaimed his top hat and light gray overcoat and stick from the cloakroom and went downstairs and out into the street.

It was a warm, still evening. In the gaslight the gray gabled houses stood silent against the sky, and the stars gleamed and glistened softly. Only a few people passed Herr Friedemann in the street, their steps reechoing along the pavement. Someone greeted him but he did not notice; his head was bowed low and his misshapen chest shuddered as he gasped for breath. Now and then, scarcely audibly, he exclaimed to himself:

"Oh my God! my God!"

He examined his feelings with horrified apprehension, realizing that his so carefully cherished, prudently cultivated sensibility had now been torn up by the roots and stirred into wild upheaval. And suddenly, quite overcome by emotion, drunk with vertiginous desire, he leaned against a lamppost and whispered in trembling anguish:

"Gerda!"

There was complete silence. Far and wide there was not a soul to be seen. Little Herr Friedemann pulled himself together and trudged on. He had reached the top of the street in which the theater stood and which ran quite steeply down to the river, and now he was walking northward along the main street toward his house . . .

How she had looked at him! Was it possible? She had forced him to look away! She had humbled him with her gaze! Was she not a woman and he a man? And had not her strange brown eyes positively quivered with pleasure as she had done so?

Again he felt that impotent, voluptuous hatred welling up inside him, but then he thought of the moment when

her head had touched his, when he had breathed her fragrance—and once more he stopped, half straightened his deformed back, and again murmured helplessly, desperately, distractedly:

"Oh my God! my God!"

Then mechanically he resumed his slow advance along the empty, echoing streets, through the sultry evening air, and walked on till he reached his house. He paused for a moment in the hall to sniff its cool, dank atmosphere, then went into his "office."

He sat down at his desk beside the open window and stared straight in front of him at a big yellow rose which someone had put for him there in a glass of water. He took it and inhaled its fragrance with closed eyes; but then, with a sad, weary gesture, he put it aside. No, no! All that was over. What was that sweet smell to him now? What were any of them now, these things that had hitherto constituted his "happiness"? . . .

He turned and looked out into the silent street. Now and then the sound of passing footsteps approached and faded. The stars glittered in the sky. How dead tired he was growing, how weak he felt! The thoughts seemed to drain from his head, and his despair began to dissolve into a great soft sadness. A few lines of poetry floated through his mind, he seemed to hear the music of *Lohengrin* again, to see again Frau von Rinnlingen sitting beside him, her white arm resting on the red plush. Then he fell into a heavy, feverish sleep.

11

Often he was on the point of waking up, yet dreaded to do so and sank back every time into unconsciousness. But when it was broad daylight he opened his eyes and gazed sorrowfully round. All that had happened was still vividly present to him; it was as if sleep had not interrupted his suffering at all.

His head was heavy and his eyes hot, but when he had washed and dabbed his forehead with eau de cologne he

felt better, and quietly resumed his seat by the window, which was still open. It was still very early, about five o'clock in the morning. Occasionally a baker's boy passed, but there was no one else to be seen. In the house opposite all the blinds were still down. But the birds were twittering, and the sky was blue and radiant. It was an absolutely beautiful Sunday morning.

A feeling of well-being and confidence came over little Herr Friedemann. What was there to be afraid of? Had anything changed? Last night, admittedly, he had suffered a bad attack; very well, but that must be the last of it! It was still not too late, it was still possible to avert disaster! He would have to avoid everything that might occasion a renewal of the attack; he felt strong enough to do so. He felt strong enough to overcome this thing, to nip it completely in the bud . . .

When half-past seven struck Friederike brought in his coffee and set it down on the round table in front of the leather sofa by the far wall.

"Good morning, Johannes," she said, "here is your breakfast."

"Thank you," said Herr Friedemann. Then he added: "Friederike dear, I am sorry, but I am afraid you will have to pay that call without me. I don't feel well enough to come with you. I haven't slept well, I have a headache —in short, I must ask you to excuse me . . ."

Friederike replied:

"What a pity. I think you should certainly call on them another time. But it's true that you're not looking well. Shall I lend you my headache pencil?"

"No, thank you," said Herr Friedemann. "It will pass." And Friederike left the room.

Standing at the table, he slowly drank his coffee and ate a crescent-shaped roll. He was pleased with himself and proud of his strong-mindedness. When he had finished he took a cigar and sat down again at the window. Breakfast had done him good and he felt happy and hopeful. He took up a book, read, smoked and looked out from time to time into the dazzling sunlight.

The street had grown lively now; through his window

he could hear the clatter of carriages, the sound of voices and the bells from the horse tramway. But the birds twittered through it all, and a soft warm breeze stirred in the shining blue sky.

At ten o'clock he heard his sisters crossing the hall and the front door creaking open, and presently he saw the three ladies walk past his window, but thought nothing much of it. An hour passed; he felt happier and happier.

A kind of elation began to fill him. How balmy the air was, and how the birds sang! Why should he not go for a short walk? And then suddenly, spontaneously, the sweet and terrifying thought simply surged up inside him: Why not call on her? Warning apprehensions followed the impulse, but with an almost muscular effort he suppressed them and added with exultant resolve: I will call on her!

And he put on his black Sunday suit, took his hat and stick and hurried, breathing rapidly, right across the town to the southern suburb. His head rose and fell busily with every step, but he saw no one, and remained absorbed in his exalted mood until he had reached the chestnut-lined avenue and the red villa that bore at its entrance the name "Lieutenant Colonel von Rinnlingen."

12

At this point he began to tremble and his heart pounded convulsively against his ribs. But he crossed the outer hall and rang the doorbell. The die was cast now and there was no going back. Let it take its course, he thought. In him there was a sudden deathly stillness.

The door was thrown open, the manservant came across the hall toward him, received his card and carried it smartly up the red-carpeted stairs. Herr Friedemann stared motionlessly at the red carpet till the servant came back and declared that his mistress would be glad if Herr Friedemann would kindly come up.

On the first floor he placed his walking stick outside the door of the drawing room, and glanced at himself in the mirror. He was very pale, his eyes were red and above

them the hair clung to his forehead; the hand in which he held his top hat was trembling uncontrollably.

The manservant opened the door and he went in. It was a fairly large, half-darkened room; the curtains were drawn. On the right stood a grand piano, and armchairs upholstered in brown silk were grouped about the round table in the center. A landscape in a massive gilt frame hung on the wall on the left above the sofa. The wallpaper was also dark. Palm trees stood in the bay window at the far end.

A minute passed before Frau von Rinnlingen emerged from the curtained doorway on the right and advanced noiselessly toward him across the deep-piled brown carpet. She was wearing a quite simply cut dress with a red and black check pattern. From the bay window a shaft of light, full of dancing motes of dust, fell straight onto her heavy red hair, so that for a moment it flashed like gold. She was looking straight at him, studying him with her strange eyes, and protruding her lower lip as usual.

"Frau Commandant," began Herr Friedemann, looking up at her, for his head reached only to her chest, "my sisters have already paid you their respects and I should like to do so myself as well. When you honored them with a call I was unfortunately not at home . . . to my great regret . . ."

He could think of absolutely no more to say, but she stood gazing implacably at him as if she meant to force him to continue speaking. The blood suddenly rushed to his head. "She wants to torment me and mock me!" he thought, "and she has guessed my feelings! Her eyes are simply quivering . . . !" Finally she said in a quite high clear voice:

"It is very kind of you to have come. I was sorry, too, to miss you the other day. Won't you please take a seat?"

She sat down quite close to him and leaned back in her chair, laying her arms on the armrests. He sat leaning forward, holding his hat between his knees. She said:

"Do you know that your sisters were here only a quarter of an hour ago? They told me you were ill."

"That is true," replied Herr Friedemann, "I did not

feel well this morning. I thought I should not be able to go out. I must ask you to excuse my late arrival."

"You still do not look quite well," she remarked calmly, with her eyes fixed steadily on him. "You are pale, and your eyes are inflamed. Perhaps your health is usually not very good?"

"Oh . . ." stammered Herr Friedemann, "in general I cannot complain . . ."

"I am often ill too," she went on, still not averting her gaze, "but no one ever notices it. My nerves are bad and I have very odd moods sometimes."

She paused, lowered her chin to her breast and looked up at him expectantly. But he made no answer. He sat on in silence looking at her, wide-eyed and thoughtful. How strangely she talked, and what an extraordinary effect her clear, cynical voice had on him! His heart was beating more quietly now; he felt as if he were dreaming. Frau von Rinnlingen spoke again:

"If I am not mistaken, you left the theater last night before the end of the opera?"

"Yes, Frau Commandant."

"I was sorry you did. You were a very appreciative neighbor, although it was not a good performance, or only a relatively good one. I suppose you are fond of music? Do you play the piano?"

"I play the violin a little," said Herr Friedemann. "That is to say—really hardly at all . . ."

"You play the violin?" she asked. Then she gazed past him for a moment and seemed to reflect.

"But then we could play together now and then," she said suddenly. "I can accompany a little. I should be glad to have found someone here who . . . Will you come?"

"I shall be delighted to place myself at your disposal," he replied. He still had the feeling that he was in a dream. There was a pause. Then suddenly her face changed. He saw it twist into a scarcely perceptible expression of cruel mockery, and saw again, for the third time, that uncanny tremor in her eyes as they unswervingly scrutinized him. He blushed scarlet, and not knowing where to look, helpless, distraught, he let his head droop right down between

his shoulders and stared in utter dismay at the carpet. But again, for a moment, that impotent, sweet, agonizing fury shuddered and trickled through him . . .

When with a desperate effort he raised his eyes again she was no longer looking at him, but gazing calmly over his head toward the door. He forced himself to utter a few words:

"And are you tolerably satisfied so far with your stay in our town, Frau Commandant?"

"Oh, yes," said Frau von Rinnlingen indifferently, "yes indeed. Why should I not be satisfied? Of course, I do feel somewhat constrained and conspicuous, but . . . By the way," she added at once, "before I forget: we are thinking of inviting some people round in a few days' time. Just a small informal party. We might play a little music and talk about this and that . . . Also we have rather a pretty garden behind the house; it goes right down to the river. In short, you and your ladies will of course be sent an invitation, but I should like to ask you here and now if we may have the pleasure of your company: shall we?"

Herr Friedemann had scarcely expressed his thanks and signified his acceptance when the door handle was pressed smartly down and the lieutenant colonel entered. They both rose, and as Frau von Rinnlingen introduced the men to each other her husband bowed to her and to Herr Friedemann with equal courtesy. His tanned face was glistening in the heat.

As he removed his gloves he said something or other in his loud energetic voice to Herr Friedemann, who stared up at him with wide, vacant eyes, fully expecting to be slapped benevolently on the shoulder. Meanwhile the commandant turned to his wife. Standing with heels together and slightly bowing to her from the waist, he said in a noticeably softer voice:

"I hope you have asked Herr Friedemann if he will come to our little gathering, my dear? If you agree, I think we should arrange for it to take place in a week's time. I hope this weather will last and that we shall be able to use the garden as well."

"As you please," replied Frau von Rinnlingen, gazing past him.

Two minutes later Herr Friedemann took his leave. As he bowed again at the door his eyes met hers, which were expressionlessly fixed on him.

13

He went on his way, not returning into town but involuntarily taking a side road that led off the avenue toward the old fortified wall by the river, where there was a well-kept park with shady paths and seats.

He walked hurriedly, aimlessly, without raising his eyes. He was flushed with an unbearable heat, he could feel it licking up in him and subsiding like flames, and his weary head throbbed relentlessly . . .

Were those not her eyes still gazing into his? Not empty of expression as they had been when he left her, but with that earlier gaze, that quivering cruelty which had filled them the very moment after she had spoken to him so strangely and softly. Did she take delight in his helplessness, in driving him to distraction? And oh, if she did read his feelings, could she not at least feel some pity? . . .

Down by the river he had walked along the bank, beside the old city wall overgrown with green, and he sat down on a seat half encircled by jasmine bushes. The sweetish fragrance hung heavily in the air all round him. In front of him the sun brooded over the tremulous water.

How weary and worn-out he felt, and yet what an agonizing turmoil filled him! Surely the best thing to do would be to take one more look round him and then walk straight down into the silent water, where he would suffer for a few moments and then be free and rescued from existence and at peace! Oh, all he wanted was peace, peace! Yet not peace in an empty, unheeding nothingness, but a quiet place in gentle sunlight, where he might sit and think good, quiet thoughts.

At that instant all his deep love for life came back to

him, piercing his heart with poignant nostalgia for his lost happiness. But then he looked about him, he looked at the mute, infinite tranquillity and indifference of nature, he saw the river wending its way in the sun, saw the grass waving and the flowers standing each in its place, just where it had bloomed, waiting to wither and be blown away: he saw all these things, all bowing in dumb submission to their existence—and suddenly he was overcome by that feeling of goodwill, of acceptance of necessity, which can in a certain sense lift us above all the adversities of fate.

He remembered that afternoon of his thirtieth birthday, when he had been happy in the possession of a quiet mind and had told himself that he could look forward, without fear or hope, to the remainder of his life. He had seen ahead of him neither brightness nor shadow, but a future bathed in gentle twilight, stretching away to a point where it merged almost imperceptibly into the dark; and with a calm and confident smile he had surveyed the years that were yet to come. How long ago had that day been?

Then this woman had come, she had had to come, it was his fate, she herself was his fate, she alone! Had he not sensed this from the very first moment? She had come, and he had tried to defend his peace of mind—but for her there had to be this rebellion within him of everything he had suppressed since his youth, because he had known instinctively that for him it meant misery and destruction. It had seized him with terrible, irresistible violence and it was destroying him!

It was destroying him, that he knew. But why go on with the vain agonizing struggle? Let it all take its course! Let him continue on his way, with his eyes closed to the gaping abyss beyond, obedient to fate, obedient to the invincible, sweetly tormenting power from which there is no escape.

The water gleamed, the jasmine breathed out its heavy pungent scent, the birds twittered in the branches all round him, and between the trees shone a dense velvet blue sky. But little hunchbacked Herr Friedemann did

not stir from his seat. He sat on and on, leaning forward with his head bowed down into his hands.

14

Everyone agreed that the Rinnlingen party was a vast success. About thirty people sat round the long, tastefully decorated table which ran the length of the large dining room; the butler and two hired waiters were already hurrying round serving ices, the room was filled with the clink and clatter of glasses and tableware and the warm aroma of food mingled with scent. The guests included a genial assemblage of men of business with their wives and daughters, almost the entire corps of officers from the garrison, an elderly doctor whom everyone liked, a few lawyers and other representatives of the best local society. Also present was a student of mathematics, a nephew of the commandant's who was here visiting his relatives; he was engaged in profound conversation with Fräulein Hagenström, who sat opposite Herr Friedemann.

The latter had been placed at the far end of the table, on a fine velvet cushion, next to the rather plain wife of the headmaster of the classical grammar school. He was not far from Frau von Rinnlingen, who had been escorted in to table by Consul Stephens. It was astonishing what a change had come over little Herr Friedemann in the last week. Perhaps it was partly the white gaslight in the dining room that made his face look so alarmingly pale; but his cheeks were sunken, his eyes reddened, dark rings surrounded them, they shone with an unspeakable sadness; and he seemed more stunted and crippled than ever. He drank a lot of wine, and occasionally addressed a remark to his neighbor.

Frau von Rinnlingen had so far spoken not a word to Herr Friedemann at table; now she leaned forward a little and called across to him:

"I've been waiting in vain these last few days for you to pay me a visit with your fiddle."

He gazed at her vacantly for a moment before answering. She was wearing a light, gay evening gown that left her white neck showing, and in her gleaming hair she had fastened a Maréchal Niel rose in full bloom. Her cheeks were slightly flushed this evening, but there were blue shadows, as always, in the corners of her eyes.

Herr Friedemann looked down at his place and stammered out some kind of reply; whereupon he also had to answer the headmaster's wife, who inquired whether he was fond of Beethoven. At this point however Lieutenant Colonel von Rinnlingen, at the head of the table, exchanged glances with his wife, tapped his glass and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I suggest we take our coffee in the other rooms. And it must be rather pleasant in the garden too, on an evening like this; if anyone cares to take a spot of air out there, I'll be very glad to do the same."

Lieutenant von Deidesheim tactfully cracked a joke to break the silence which followed, and everyone rose from table amid peals of laughter. Herr Friedemann was one of the last to leave the dining room with his partner; he escorted her, through the room decorated in medieval style in which the guests were already beginning to smoke, into the dimly lit luxurious drawing room, and there took leave of her.

He was most carefully attired, in faultless evening dress with a dazzlingly white shirt and with patent leather shoes on his slender, neatly shaped feet. From time to time it could be observed that he was wearing red silk socks.

He looked out into the corridor and saw that quite large numbers of people were already going downstairs into the garden. But he sat down with his cigar and his coffee near the door of the medieval smoking room, in which a few of the gentlemen were standing around talking, and from here he looked into the drawing room.

At a table immediately to the right of the door a small circle had formed around the student, who was discoursing volubly. He had asserted that more than one parallel to a given straight line could be drawn through one and the same point; Dr. Hagenström's wife had exclaimed:

"But that's impossible!" and he was now proving his proposition so cogently that everyone was pretending to have understood it.

But at the back of the room, on the divan, by the low lamp with the red shade, sat Gerda von Rinnlingen, in conversation with young Fräulein Stephens. She sat half reclined against the yellow silk cushion, with her legs crossed, and was smoking a cigarette in a leisurely manner, blowing the smoke out through her nose and protruding her lower lip. Fräulein Stephens sat facing her bolt upright like a statue, answering her with a nervous smile.

No one noticed little Herr Friedemann, and no one noticed that his large eyes were fixed incessantly on Frau von Rinnlingen. He sat limply and gazed at her. There was no passion in his gaze, scarcely even any pain; only a dull, dead expression of senseless, powerless, will-less surrender.

About ten minutes passed in this manner; then Frau von Rinnlingen suddenly got up, and without looking at him, as if she had been secretly observing him all this time, she walked over and stopped in front of him. He rose to his feet, looked up at her and heard her say:

"Would you like to come into the garden with me, Herr Friedemann?"

He answered:

"With pleasure, Frau Commandant."

15

"So you haven't yet seen our garden?" she asked him as they went downstairs. "It's quite big. I hope there won't be too many people there already; I should like to get away from them all for a little. I got a headache during dinner; perhaps that red wine was too strong for me . . . This is our way out, through this door." It was a glass door leading from the hall into a small cool passage, from which they went down a few steps into the open air.

It was a wonderfully warm clear starlit night, and all

the flower beds were pouring out their fragrance. The full moon was shining down on the garden, and along the gleaming white gravel paths the guests were strolling about, talking and smoking. One group had gathered round the fountain, where the elderly doctor whom everyone liked was causing general merriment by sailing paper boats.

Frau von Rinnlingen walked past them with a slight inclination of the head, and pointed into the distance where the elegant flower garden darkened into a park.

"Let's go down the center avenue," she said. At the head of it stood two short thick obelisks.

At the far end of the dead-straight chestnut-lined avenue they could see the greenish glint of the moonlit river. All round them it was dark and cool. Here and there a side path branched off; these probably all curved down to the river as well. For a long time not a sound could be heard.

"There's a pretty place beside the water," she said, "where I've often been. We could sit there and talk for a few minutes. Look, now and then one can see a star glittering between the leaves."

He made no answer, and stared at the green glimmering surface of the water as they approached it. The far bank was visible, where the public gardens were and the old city wall. At the end of the avenue, as they emerged onto the open grass that sloped down to the river, Frau von Rinnlingen said:

"Here is our spot, a little to the right; look, there's no one else there."

The seat they sat down on had its back to the park, a few yards to one side of the avenue. It was warmer here than among the great trees. The crickets chirped in the grass, which at the very edge of the water ended in a thin line of reeds. The river gleamed palely in the moonlight.

They both sat in silence for a while, looking at the water. Then he listened with a sudden shock of emotion, for she was speaking again in that soft, gentle, pensive voice he had heard a week ago.

"How long have you had your disability, Herr Friedemann?" she asked. "Were you born with it?"

He swallowed, for his throat felt constricted as if he were choking. Then he answered gently and politely:

"No, Frau Commandant. When I was a baby I was dropped on the floor, and that caused it."

"And how old are you now?" she went on.

"Thirty, Frau Commandant."

"Thirty," she repeated. "So you have not been happy during these thirty years?"

Herr Friedemann shook his head, and his lips trembled. "No," he said. "It was a lie and an illusion."

"So you believed you were happy?" she asked.

"I tried to," he said, and she replied:

"That was brave of you."

A minute passed. Only the crickets chirped, and the trees behind them rustled softly.

Then she said: "I have had some experience of unhappiness. These summer nights by the water are the best remedy for it."

He made no reply to this, but gestured weakly, pointing across to the opposite bank, where all was peaceful and dark.

"I sat there the other day," he said.

"Just after you had been to see me?" she asked.

He merely nodded.

Then suddenly, shuddering all over, he started to his feet, uttering a sobbing noise, a moan of sorrow which was somehow at the same time a cry of relief, and slowly sank to the ground in front of her. He had put his hand on hers, which had lain beside him on the seat; he clutched it now and seized the other as well; and as this little, totally deformed creature knelt there before her, quivering convulsively and burying his face in her lap, he stammered out in a hardly human, strangled voice:

"You know! I know that you know . . . Let me . . . I can't go on . . . Oh my God . . . my God . . ."

She did not push him away, nor did she lower her head toward him. She sat erect, leaning back slightly, and her

small close-set eyes, which seemed to mirror the liquid glint of the water, stared intently straight ahead, beyond him, into the distance.

And then, with a sudden violent movement, with a short, proud, scornful laugh, she had snatched her hands from his burning fingers, seized him by the arm, flung him sideways right onto the ground, leaped to her feet and vanished into the avenue.

He lay there with his face in the grass, stunned and desperate, with his body shuddering and twitching. He picked himself up, took two steps and collapsed again onto the grass. He was lying by the water's edge.

What was really his state of mind, his motive in what followed? Perhaps it was that same voluptuous hatred he had felt when she humbled him with her eyes; and now that he was lying here on the ground like a dog she had kicked, did this hatred perhaps degenerate into an insane fury which had to be translated into action, even if it was only action against himself—did it become an access of self-disgust, a craving to annihilate himself, to tear himself to pieces, to blot himself out . . . ?

He dragged himself on his stomach further down the slope, lifted the upper part of his body and let it drop into the water. He did not raise his head again; even his legs on the bank lay still.

The splash had silenced the crickets for a moment. Now they began their chirping as before, the park rustled softly and down the long avenue came the muted sound of laughter.

THE JOKER

THE END OF it all, the upshot of life—of my life—is the disgust with which it fills me. A worthy ending indeed! Disgust with it all, disgust with the whole business, this disgust that chokes me, goads me to frenzy and casts me down again into despair—sooner or later, no doubt, it will give me the necessary impetus to cut short the whole ridiculous, contemptible affair and clear out for good. True enough, I may well hold out for a month or two yet; maybe for another three or six months I shall carry on eating, sleeping and passing the time—in the same mechanical, calm and well-ordered fashion in which my life has outwardly gone by all this winter, contrasting so hideously with the vile process of my inner disintegration. One might almost suppose that a man's inner experiences become all the more violent and disturbing the more undisturbed and uncommitted and detached from the world his outward life is. There is no help for it: life has to be lived—and if one refuses to be a man of action and retires into the quiet of a hermit's solitude, even then the vicissitudes of existence will assault one inwardly, they will still be there to test one's character and to prove one a hero or a half-wit.

the joker

I have equipped myself with this neat notebook in order to write down my so-called "story." Why, I wonder? Perhaps just in order to have something to do? As an interesting psychological study perhaps, and to relish the

thought that it was all in accordance with necessity? Necessity is so consoling! And perhaps even in order to enjoy an occasional sense of superiority over myself, an occasional moment of something like indifference? For I realize that indifference would be happiness of a kind.

I

It seems so far away and long ago, the little old town with its narrow angular streets and gabled houses, its Gothic churches and fountains, its industrious, respectable and simple inhabitants and the stately old gray patrician house in which I grew up.

The house stood in the center of the town, and had outlasted four generations of rich and respected merchants. *"Ora et labora"* was the motto over the front door. The great stone-paved entrance hall had a white wooden gallery running round it, and a wide stairway leading up to another spacious landing, after which one still had to walk along a dark little pillared lobby before passing through one of the tall white doors into the drawing room where my mother sat playing the piano.

She sat in a dim light, for heavy dark red curtains hung across the windows; and the white gods and goddesses on the wallpaper seemed to stand out like real rounded figures from their blue background, and to be listening to the deep heavy opening notes of that Chopin nocturne, the piece she especially loved and always played very slowly as if to savor to the utmost the sadness of every chord. The grand piano was old and not as resonant as it had once been, but with the help of the soft pedal, which veiled the high notes so that they sounded like dull silver, the most unusual effects could be produced on it.

I would sit on the massive straight-backed damask sofa, listening to my mother and watching her. She was small and delicately built and usually wore a dress of soft pale gray material. Her slender face was not beautiful, but

under her parted, slightly wavy, unobtrusively blond hair it was like a peaceful, delicate, dreamy child's face, and as she sat at the piano with her head slightly to one side she resembled those small touching angelic figures often seen on old pictures, at the feet of the Madonna, playing on guitars.

When I was little she would often, in her gentle discreet voice, tell me wonderful stories such as no one else knew; or she would simply lay her hands on my head where it rested on her lap, and sit without speaking or stirring. I think those were the happiest and most contented hours of my life. Her hair did not turn gray, and she never seemed to me to grow any older; her figure merely became more and more fragile and her face slenderer, dreamier and more peaceful.

But my father was a tall stout gentleman in an elegant black coat and a white waistcoat, on which his gold pince-nez dangled. Between his short iron gray side-whiskers his chin, clean-shaven like his upper lip, stood out roundly and firmly, and between his eyebrows there were always two deep vertical furrows. He was a man of considerable power and influence in public affairs; I have seen some men leave his presence with quickened breath and eyes aglow, others apparently broken and in utter despair. For it sometimes happened that I, and occasionally my mother and two elder sisters as well, were present at such scenes; perhaps because my father wanted to stimulate in me an ambition to rise as high in the world as he had done; or perhaps, as I suspect, because he needed an audience. Even as a child I was led to surmise this by the way he had of leaning back against his chair, with one hand thrust into his lapel, to watch the departure of his elated or discomfited visitor.

I would sit in a corner and observe my father and mother, rather as if I were choosing between the two of them and considering whether it was better to lead a life of dreamy meditation or of action and power. And in the end it was on my mother's peaceful face that my eyes lingered.

2

One could not say that I resembled her in my outward behavior, for the greater part of my occupations were by no means quiet and noiseless. I remember one to which I was passionately devoted: I preferred it to any association with companions of my own age and the kind of games they liked, and even now, when I am nearly thirty, the thought of it amuses and delights me.

What I am referring to was a large and well-equipped puppet theater: with this I would shut myself up all alone in my room and on its stage I would produce highly remarkable music dramas. My room was on the second floor and contained gloomy portraits of two of our ancestors with pointed seventeenth-century beards. I would draw the curtains and stand a lamp near the theater, for I considered that artificial lighting was necessary to heighten the effect. I seated myself immediately in front of the stage, for I was also the conductor, and I placed my left hand on a large round cardboard box which was the only visible orchestral instrument.

The performers now also arrived: I had drawn them myself with pen and ink, cut them out and fastened them to strips of wood so that they could stand. The men wore overcoats and top hats, and the women were very beautiful.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!" I would say. "I trust you are all in good health? I have arrived already, as there were still a few preparations to be made. But I think it is now time to proceed to the dressing rooms."

They proceeded to the dressing rooms at the back of the stage, and presently returned completely transfigured into characters in gay and varied costumes. I had cut a peephole in the curtain through which they could look to see if the house was well filled; and so indeed it was. I rang the bell to warn myself that the performance was about to begin, then raised my baton and paused to savor the profound silence which this gesture imposed. But

immediately, upon my next motion, the overture began with a deep premonitory roll of drums, executed by my left hand on the lid of the cardboard box; this was joined by the trumpets, clarinets and flutes, the timbre of which my mouth reproduced with incomparable fidelity; and thus the music continued until, at a mighty crescendo, the curtain swept up and revealed the dark forest or resplendent hall in which the opening scene of the drama was to take place.

The action had been roughly thought out in advance, but the details had to be improvised. The vocal strains, accompanied by the warbling of the clarinets and the drone of my cardboard drum, were sweet and passionate, and the text was strange and sonorous: verses full of bold and grandiose words, which occasionally rhymed but seldom made sense. The opera nevertheless took its course: with my left hand I drummed, with my mouth I sang and played, and with my right hand I conducted not only the performers on the stage but everyone else, with such diligent care that as each act ended enthusiastic applause broke out, the curtain had to rise again and again and the conductor was often obliged to turn round on his rostrum and express his thanks with a dignified but gratified bow to the auditorium.

And indeed, as I packed up my theater after such a performance, flushed by my exertions, I would feel both exhausted and happy, as a great artist must feel at the triumphant completion of a work in which he has given of his best. This game remained my favorite occupation until I was thirteen or fourteen years old.

3

How in fact did they pass, my childhood and boyhood, in that great house with its ground-floor rooms where my father conducted his business, while my mother sat upstairs dreaming in an armchair or softly and pensively playing the piano, and my two sisters, who were two and

three years older than me, busied themselves in the kitchen or with the household linen? I can remember so little about it all.

What is certain is that I was a prodigiously lively boy, and that I succeeded in making myself respected and liked by my schoolmates on account of my privileged background, my exemplary imitations of the masters, a large variety of histrionic feats and a rather superior manner of expressing myself. But in class I did badly, for I was far too preoccupied with studying the comic possibilities of the masters' movements and gestures to pay attention to anything else, and at home my head was so full of operatic plots, verses and a medley of other nonsense that any serious attempt to work was out of the question.

After lunch I would take my school report into the drawing room to show it to my father. "Disgraceful!" he would say when he had read it through, standing there with one hand thrust under his lapel and the furrows deepening between his brows. "You're a disappointment to me, I must say. Will you have the goodness to tell me what is to become of you? I can't see you ever making your way in life."

That was depressing; but it did not prevent me from reading aloud to my parents and sisters, after dinner on that same day, a poem I had composed during the afternoon. My father laughed as I read, making his pince-nez bounce about all over his white waistcoat. "What a pack of nonsense!" he kept exclaiming. But my mother drew me close to her, stroked my hair back from my forehead and said: "It's not at all bad, my dear. I think there are one or two quite nice passages in it."

Later, when I was a little older, I taught myself on my own initiative to play the piano after a fashion. I began by striking F-sharp major chords because I found the black notes particularly attractive; from this point I explored modulations into other keys and gradually, by dint of long hours at the instrument, acquired a certain facility in the art of harmonic variation and could pro-

duce a mystic wash of sound which had neither rhythm nor melody but was as expressive as I could make it.

My mother said: "He has a very tasteful touch." And she arranged for me to have piano lessons, which were kept up for six months; I really had no aptitude for learning the correct fingering and rhythm.

Well, the years went by and I grew up, enjoying myself enormously despite my troubles at school. I circulated among my acquaintances and relations, happy and popular, and I behaved adroitly and charmingly to them because I liked playing the charmer, though instinctively I was beginning to despise all these prosaic unimaginative people.

4

One afternoon when I was about eighteen and on the point of entering the top classes at school, I overheard a short conversation between my parents, who were sitting together in the drawing room at the round sofa table and did not know that I was next door in the dining room, lying idly in the window seat and contemplating the pale sky above the gabled roofs. When I heard my name mentioned I tiptoed to the white double door, which was standing ajar.

My father was leaning back in his chair with his legs crossed holding the stock exchange journal with one hand on his knee and slowly stroking his chin between his muttonchop whiskers with the other. My mother was sitting on the sofa with her peaceful face bowed over some embroidery. The lamp stood between them.

My father said: "In my view it's about time he was removed from school and entered for training with some large well-established firm."

"Oh!" exclaimed my mother, looking up in dismay. "Such a talented boy!"

My father was silent for a moment and carefully blew a speck of dust from his coat. Then he hunched his shoulders

and spread out his arms, turning the palms of his hands toward my mother, and said:

"If you suppose, my dear, that to do well in business requires no talent, then let me tell you that you are mistaken. In any case I regret to say that it is becoming increasingly clear to me that the boy is getting absolutely nowhere at school. His talent, as you call it, is the talent of a kind of mimicking buffoon or joker—though let me hasten to add that I do not by any means underestimate such gifts. He can be charming when he wants to be, he knows how to handle people, how to amuse them and flatter them; he has a need to please them and to be a success with them. Many a man with that sort of disposition has made his fortune by it; and in view of his indifference to everything else I would say that his qualifications for a fairly distinguished business career are relatively good."

Having thus delivered himself my father leaned back with a satisfied air, took a cigarette from his cigarette case and lit it with deliberation.

"I dare say you are right," said my mother, and her eyes wandered unhappily round the room. "It's just that I have often thought, and in a way hoped, that one day he might become an artist . . . It's true I suppose that his musical gifts have remained undeveloped and that we can't expect anything to come of them; but have you noticed that since he went to that little art exhibition recently he has been doing some drawing? And he draws not at all badly, I think."

My father blew a puff of smoke, adjusted himself in his chair and said curtly:

"That's all clowning and hocus-pocus. Anyway we can, of course, as is only right, consult the boy's own wishes."

My own wishes! And what might they be? But I found the prospect of a change in my outward circumstances distinctly cheering. I declared with a solemn face that I was willing to leave school and become a businessman; and I was duly apprenticed to Herr Schlievogt's big timber firm down by the river.

5

Needless to say, the change was purely external. My interest in Herr Schlievogt's big timber business was extremely slight, and I sat on my revolving stool under the gaslight in that dark narrow office feeling as much a stranger and as absent in spirit as I had felt in the schoolroom. I had fewer worries now; that was the only difference.

Herr Schlievogt, a corpulent red-faced man with a stiff gray nautical beard, paid little attention to me, since he spent most of his time in the sawmill which was some distance from the timber yard and offices. His employees treated me with respect. I entertained friendly relations with only one of them, a gifted and self-satisfied young man of good family whose acquaintance I had already made at school and whose name was Schilling. Like myself he made fun of everyone and everything, but he nonetheless took a very lively interest in the timber trade and never let a day pass without declaring it to be his definite purpose to become, somehow or other, a rich man.

I for my part mechanically carried out my necessary duties and devoted the rest of the day to sauntering about the yard among the workmen and the stacks of timber, gazing through the high wooden fence at the river, where a freight train occasionally lumbered by, and as I sauntered and gazed I would be thinking about some theatrical performance or concert I had attended, or some book I had read.

I read a great deal, in fact I read everything I could lay my hands on, and I was exceedingly impressionable. I had an intuitive understanding of the personalities of authors, I seemed to see in each of them a reflection of myself, and I would go on thinking and feeling in the style of a particular book until a new one had influenced me in its turn. In my room, the room where I had once set up my puppet theater, I now sat with a book on my knees, looking up at the portraits of my two ancestors, savoring the inflections of the writer to whom I had surrendered my-

self, and with an unproductive chaos of half thoughts and fanciful images filling my mind . . .

My sisters had got married in quick succession, and when I was not at the office I often went down to the drawing room, where my mother would now usually be sitting quite alone. She was slightly ailing and her face was growing more and more placid and childlike. When she had played me some Chopin and I had showed her some new-discovered trick of harmonic modulation, she would sometimes ask me whether I was contented in my work and happy . . . There was no doubt that I was happy.

I was not much more than twenty, my situation was a merely provisional one, and I not infrequently reflected that I was by no means obliged to spend my life working for Herr Schlievogt or for any other timber business, however prosperous. I told myself that I should one day be able to kick over the traces, leave this town and its gabled houses behind me and live somewhere or other doing exactly as I pleased: reading good, elegantly written novels, going to the theater, playing the piano a little . . . Happy? But after all I ate extremely well, I wore the best clothes, and even when I was younger and still at school I had noticed how my poorer and shabbily dressed contemporaries habitually deferred to me and to others like me, treating us with a kind of flattering diffidence which indicated their willing acceptance of us as lords and leaders of fashion: and this had made me happily conscious of the fact that I belonged to the élite, to that class of rich and envied persons whose birthright it is to look down on the poor, the unlucky and the envious with benevolent contempt. Had I not every reason to be happy? Let it all take its natural course! For the time being it was very gratifying to live as a rather alien, effortlessly superior figure among these acquaintances and relations of mine whose limited outlook I found so amusing but to whom, because I liked to be liked, I behaved with adroit charm. I basked complacently in the respect which they all showed me; but it remained a

puzzled respect, for they obscurely sensed something antagonistic and extravagant in my nature and character.

6

A change was beginning to come over my father. Every day when he joined us for dinner at four o'clock the furrows between his brows seemed to have grown deeper, and he no longer thrust his hand into his lapel with an imposing gesture, but looked depressed, nervous and diffident. One day he said to me:

"You are old enough by now to share with me the anxieties which are undermining my health. It is in any case my duty to acquaint you with them, in case you should be entertaining any false expectations with regard to your future position in life. As you know, the marriages of your sisters entailed considerable sacrifices. And recently the firm has suffered losses which have reduced the capital quite severely. I am an old man, I have lost heart, and I think it is now too late to expect any appreciable improvement in the situation. I must ask you to take note that you will be cast upon your own resources . . ."

He said this about two months before his death. One day he was found slumped in the armchair in his private office, pallid, paralyzed and mumbling inarticulately. A week later the whole town attended his funeral.

My mother sat quietly on the sofa by the round table in the drawing room; she looked frail and her eyes were nearly always closed. When my sisters and I attended to her needs, she would perhaps nod and smile, but then she would sit on in silence, motionless, with her hands folded on her lap and her strange sad wide-eyed gaze fixed on one of the gods in the wallpaper pattern. When the gentlemen in frock coats came to report on the liquidation of the firm, she would nod in the same way and close her eyes again.

She no longer played Chopin, and when now and then

she gently stroked her hair, her pale, frail, tired hand would tremble. Hardly six months after my father's death she took to her bed and died without a murmur, letting her life go without a struggle . . .

So now all that was over. What was there to keep me in the place? The business had been wound up, for better or for worse, and it turned out that my share of the inheritance was about a hundred thousand marks. That was enough to make me independent—completely independent, particularly as I had, for some reason or other which is of no consequence, been declared unfit for military service.

There were no longer any ties between me and these people among whom I had grown up, who looked at me now with an air of increasing estrangement and bewilderment, and whose outlook on life was far too narrow for me to have any wish to conform to it. True, they recognized me for what I was—an absolutely useless individual. Even I recognized this. But I was sufficiently skeptical and fatalistic to take a lighthearted view of what my father had called my "talent of a buffoon or joker." I was cheerfully determined to enjoy life in my own way, and thoroughly satisfied with myself.

I took possession of my small fortune and left my native town, almost without saying good-bye. I intended in the first instance to travel.

7

The three years that now followed, those years in which I surrendered myself with eager appetite to a host of new, changing, enriching impressions, have remained in my memory like an enchanting faraway dream. How long is it since I spent that night with the monks up on the Simplon Pass, celebrating New Year's Eve amid ice and snow? How long since I strolled across the Piazza Erbe in Verona? since I stepped out for the first time from the Borgo Santo Spirito into the colonnade at Saint Peter's and let my eyes wander awestruck over that enormous

square? since I stood on the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele looking down over the gleaming white buildings of Naples and saw the graceful silhouette of Capri far out to sea, just visible in the blue haze? . . . In actual fact it was all scarcely more than six years ago.

Oh, to be sure, I lived very prudently and in a manner befitting my situation: in simple private rooms, in cheap boardinghouses—but what with moving from place to place, and because I at first found it hard to do without the upper-middle-class comforts to which I was accustomed, I nevertheless could not help spending considerable sums of money. I had set aside fifteen thousand marks from my capital for my period of traveling; this sum, needless to say, was exceeded.

I felt at ease, however, among the people with whom my wanderings brought me in contact; often they were disinterested and very interesting acquaintances, and although I was of course not an object of respect to them as I had been in my previous environment, I at least had no need to fear that they would look at me askance or ask me questions.

Occasionally my particular social accomplishments made me genuinely popular with the clientele of boardinghouses at which I stayed. I remember especially a scene in the public room at the Pensione Minelli in Palermo. Amid a circle of Frenchmen of various ages I had somehow begun to play the piano and to improvise a music drama "by Richard Wagner," with much tragic grimacing, declamatory song and rolling harmony. I had just finished, to thunderous applause, when an old gentleman hastened up to me. He was almost totally bald, with scanty white muttonchop whiskers drooping over his gray traveling coat. He seized both my hands and exclaimed with tears in his eyes:

"But that was fantastic! That was fantastic, my dear sir! I swear I have not been so delightfully entertained for the last thirty years! Pray, sir, allow me to thank you from the bottom of my heart! But you must, yes you must, become an actor or a musician!"

I confess that on such occasions I felt something of the

pride of genius, such as a great painter must feel who has condescended to scribble an absurd yet brilliant caricature on the top of a table at which he is sitting among friends. After dinner however I returned alone to the sitting room and passed a solitary and wistful hour coaxing the instrument into a series of sustained chords, expressive, as I thought, of the mood inspired in me by the sight of Palermo.

From Sicily I had paid a fleeting visit to Africa, then I had gone on to Spain; and it was there, in the country near Madrid, on a dreary wet winter afternoon, that I first became conscious of a wish to return to Germany—and realized, moreover, that it was now necessary for me to do so. For apart from the fact that I was beginning to long for a quiet, regular and settled existence, it was not hard to calculate that by the time I reached Germany, however much I economized, I should have spent twenty thousand marks.

I began my slow return journey through France without overmuch delay, but lingered for some time in this town and that, so that it took nearly six months. I remember with nostalgic clarity the summer evening on which my train drew in to the main station of the provincial capital city in central Germany which I had already selected as my destination before setting out. And now I had reached it—a little wiser, the richer by some experiences, equipped with some items of knowledge, and full of childlike delight at the prospect of establishing myself here in carefree independence, subject of course to the limits of my modest means, and settling down to a life of untroubled, contemplative leisure.

At that time I was twenty-five years old.

8

It was not a bad choice of place. The town is of moderate size, still lacking the excessive noise and bustle and ugly industrialization of a large city, but containing some quite spacious old squares and streets in which life is conducted

not inactively and even with some elegance. On its outskirts there are a number of pleasant spots, but my favorite among them has always been the so-called Lerchenberg promenade, a tastefully laid-out avenue traversing the long narrow hill on the side of which most of the town is built and from which one has an extensive view over the houses and churches, across the gently meandering river and into the distance. At certain points, especially on fine summer afternoons when a military band is playing and carriages and pedestrians are moving about, it is reminiscent of the Pincio. But I shall have occasion to refer again to this promenade . . .

I had rented a fair-sized room, with a small adjoining bedroom, in a lively district near the center of the town, and I furnished them with incredible care and the utmost pleasure. Most of my parents' furniture, to be sure, had passed into my sisters' possession, but enough of it had come my way to suffice for my needs: handsome, solid pieces, which now arrived together with my books and the two family portraits, and above all the old grand piano, which my mother had specially bequeathed to me.

And in fact, when everything had been set up in its place—when every wall, the heavy mahogany desk and the commodious chest of drawers, had been adorned with the photographs I had collected during my travels—when with my arrangements made and all secure I let myself sink into an armchair by the window and proceeded by turns to look out into the streets and to survey my new lodging—I felt an undoubted sense of well-being. Yet nevertheless (for it was a moment I have not forgotten) amid all my contentment and confidence there was something else softly stirring within me: some slight misgiving and uneasiness, some half-conscious impulse of revolt and rebellion against a power that menaced me . . . It was the faintly depressing thought that my situation, which had hitherto never been more than merely provisional, must now for the first time be regarded as definitive and permanent . . .

I will not deny that I occasionally felt a recurrence of this and similar sensations. But how, after all, can any of

us hope to avoid certain late afternoon moods: those moments in which we gaze out into the gathering dusk, perhaps into a drizzle of rain as well, and are assailed by twinges of foreboding? I could at all events be certain that my future was fully provided for. I had entrusted the round sum of eighty thousand marks to the city bank; the interest—these are poor times, heaven knows!—amounted to about six hundred marks a quarter, and this was enough to permit me to live decently, to buy books, to go to the theater now and then—not excluding an occasional lighter diversion.

From that time on I really did pass my days in a manner conforming to the ideal to which I had always aspired—I got up at ten, had breakfast, spent part of the morning at the piano and the rest of it reading a literary periodical or a book. At midday I strolled down the street to the little restaurant which I regularly patronized, and had lunch there; then I would go for a fairly long walk along the streets, round a gallery, through the outskirts of the town, up to the Lerchenberg. On returning home I would resume my morning's occupations: reading, making music, sometimes even drawing, after a fashion, to amuse myself, or writing a carefully penned letter. In the evening, if I was not going to a play or a concert after dinner, I sat on at the café reading the papers till bedtime. And I would assess the day as a good one, as one that had contained some pleasure and happiness, if I had succeeded in producing at the piano some effect which struck me as new and beautiful, or if in reading a short story or looking at a picture I had experienced some emotion which had lasted for awhile . . .

I will, however, not omit to mention that there was a certain idealistic purposefulness in my arrangements, that I made it my serious business to ensure that each of my days should "contain" as much as possible. I ate modestly, I usually had only one suit, in short I carefully limited my bodily needs in order to be able to afford a good seat at the opera or an expensive concert ticket, and to be in a position to buy the latest literary publications or visit an occasional art exhibition . . .

But the days went by, and they turned into weeks and months—was I bored? I will concede that one does not always have a book that will yield hour after hour of memorable experience; moreover one's attempts to improvise at the piano have at times been complete failures, and one has sat at the window, smoking cigarettes, while gradually and irresistibly a feeling of distaste creeps over one, distaste for oneself and for everything else. Once again one is assailed by misgiving, by that unpleasantly familiar misgiving—and one jumps from one's chair, one leaves the house and walks along the streets, watching those others go by: the people with jobs, the people with professions, at whom one can cheerfully shrug one's shoulders, in happy contempt for the intellectual inferiority and material misfortune which deprives them of leisure and of the capacity to enjoy it.

9

Is it possible for any man, at the age of twenty-seven, seriously to believe that his situation has been unalterably finalized, however depressingly probable this may in fact be? The twittering of a bird, a tiny gap of blue in the sky, some half-remembered dream when one wakes in the morning—all these are enough to flood one's heart with sudden vague hopes, to fill it with a festive expectation of some great unforeseen happiness . . . I drifted from one day to the next, meditatively, aimlessly, my mind busy with this or that trivial hope, even looking forward to such things as the next issue of an amusing periodical; I was filled with the resolute conviction that I was happy, but from time to time I felt the weariness of solitude.

If the truth were told, they were by no means rare, these moods of exasperation at the thought of my lack of friends and social intercourse; for this lack scarcely needs explaining. I had no connections with the best or even with the second-best local society; to get on a convivial footing with the jeunesse dorée I should have needed, God knows, a great deal more money than I possessed;

and as for bohemian circles—why, damn it, I am a man of education, I wear clean linen and a decent suit: am I supposed to enjoy sitting with unkempt young men round tables sticky with absinthe, discussing anarchism? In brief: there was no specific social circle to which I obviously belonged, and such acquaintanceships as I happened in one way or another to make were few and far between, superficial and uncordial—this, I admit, was my own fault, for in these cases too I behaved with diffident reserve, disagreeably conscious of the fact that I was unable, in brief clear words, to tell even a down-at-heel painter who and what I was, to define a status which he would acknowledge.

I had, of course, severed my ties with "society" and renounced it, as soon as I had taken the liberty of going my own way instead of somehow making myself useful to it. Did I need "other people" in order to be happy? If so, then I was bound to consider the possibility that I would at this moment be busy enriching myself as a large-scale entrepreneur, at the same time serving the community and earning its envy and respect.

And nevertheless—nevertheless! The fact remained that I was finding my philosophic isolation excessively vexing, and in the last resort quite inconsistent with my conception of "happiness"—with my consciousness, my conviction, that I was happy. And that this conviction should be shaken was, of course, beyond any shadow of doubt quite out of the question. Not to be happy—to be unhappy—why, was this even thinkable? It was unthinkable. Thus I decided, and thus I disposed of the question—until the mood returned and I felt again that there was something wrong, something very far wrong, about my self-isolation, my retired seclusion, my outsider's life. And this thought put me most shockingly out of humor.

Is one "out of humor" if one is happy? I remembered my earlier life in my native town, that restricted society in which I had moved, full of the gratifying consciousness of my artistic gifts and genius—sociable, charming, my eyes sparkling with high-spirited mockery and an air of benevolent superiority to everyone; people had thought

me rather odd, but I had nevertheless been popular. I had been happy then, in spite of having to work in Herr Schlievogt's big timber firm. And what was I now?

But after all, an absolutely fascinating book has just been published, a new French novel which I have decided I can afford to buy and which I shall have leisure to enjoy, sitting comfortably in my armchair. Another three hundred pages, full of taste, blague and exquisite artistry! Come now, I have arranged my life the way I wanted it! Can I possibly not be happy? The question is ridiculous. The question is utterly absurd . . .

10

Another day has drawn to a close, a day which has undeniably, thank God, contained its quota of pleasure; darkness has fallen, I have drawn the curtains and lit the reading lamp; it is nearly midnight. I could go to bed; instead of which I sit on in my armchair, leaning right back with my hands folded on my lap, gazing at the ceiling, and attending submissively to the noiseless delving and gnawing of some scarcely identifiable distress which I have been unable to shake off.

Only a couple of hours ago I was allowing a great masterpiece to do its work on me—one of those monstrous, cruel masterpieces by an unprincipled dilettantistic genius, full of decadent splendors that shake and dumbfound the spectator, torture him to ecstasy and overwhelm him . . . My nerves are still quivering, my imagination has been violently stirred, strange moods are surging up and down within me, moods of passionate longing, of religious ardor, of exultation, of mystic peace—and mingled with all this is a craving, an impulse that constantly restimulates these moods, an impulse to work them out of my system: the need to express them, to communicate them, to "make something of them" . . .

What if I really were an artist, capable of expressing myself in sound, or words, or visual images—or rather, as I should frankly prefer, in all three simultaneously? And

yet it is true that I have all sorts of talents! For example, first and foremost, I can sit down at the piano and treat myself, in the intimacy of my own room, to a display of my beautiful feelings: surely that is enough? For if I needed "other people" in order to be happy, then I—yes, well, all this I concede. But let us suppose that I did set some slight store by success, by fame, recognition, praise, envy, love? . . . Oh, God, if I so much as think of the scene in that inn at Palermo, I have to admit that it would be so indescribably encouraging and comforting if a similar incident were to happen now!

On careful reflection I feel bound to admit that there must be a distinction (sophistical and absurd though it seems) between inward and outward happiness. "Outward happiness"! What in fact is it? There is a certain class of human beings who seem to be the favorites of the gods, whose good fortune is their genius and whose genius is their good fortune: they are children of light, and with the sun's radiance mirrored in their eyes they move lightly, gracefully, charmingly, playfully through life, admiringly surrounded by everyone, praised and envied and loved by everyone, because even envy cannot bring itself to hate them. But they return the general gaze as rather spoiled children do, with a kind of whimsical irreverent mockery and unclouded goodwill, secure in their good fortune and in their genius, never for a moment entertaining the thought that things might be otherwise . . .

As for myself, I confess my weakness: I should dearly like to belong to that privileged category. And rightly or wrongly, I am still beset by the thought that once upon a time I did belong to it. Whether I am right or wrong in thinking so matters not a jot—for let us face it: the important thing is what one thinks of oneself, the image one presents of oneself, the image of oneself that one has the confidence to present!

Perhaps in reality the situation is simply that I renounced this "outward happiness" by contracting out of the service of "society" and arranging to live my life independently of "other people." But it goes without saying

that I am content with such an arrangement: this is not for one moment to be doubted, it cannot be doubted, it must not be doubted. For let me repeat with desperate emphasis: I intend to be happy, and I must be happy! The conception of "good fortune" as something meritorious, as a kind of genius, of aristocratic distinction, of special charm, and the contrary conception of "misfortune" as something ugly, skulking, contemptible and in a word ridiculous, are both so deeply rooted in me that if I were unhappy I should inevitably lose my self-respect.

How could I possibly allow myself to be unhappy? What sort of a figure should I then cut in my own eyes? I should have to squat in outer darkness like some sort of bat or owl, blinking as I gazed enviously across the gulf at the happy, charming "children of light." I should have to hate them, with that hatred which is merely love turned sour—and I should have to despise myself!

"To squat in outer darkness"! Oh, it comes back to me now, all I have thought and felt, over and over again for many a month, about my "outsider's life" and my "philosophic isolation"! And the anxiety returns, that unpleasantly familiar anxiety! And that vague impulse of rebellion against some menacing power . . .

Needless to say, some consolation was to hand, some anodyne distraction, on this occasion and on the next, and again on the next. But the same reflections returned; all of them returned a thousand times in the course of the months and the years.

11

There are certain autumn days that are like a miracle. Summer is already over, the leaves began to turn yellow some time ago, and for days the wind has been whistling all round the streets and muddy water has been streaming down the gutters. One has resigned oneself to the change of season, one has so to speak taken one's seat by the fire, ready to submit to the coming of winter. But one morning one wakes up and cannot believe one's eyes:

between the curtains a narrow strip of brilliant blue is shining into the room. In amazement one leaps out of bed and throws the window open: a flood of tremulous sunlight bursts over one, through all the street noise one can hear the birds happily twittering and chattering, and as one breathes in the light, fresh October air it seems to have exactly the aroma of the wind in May—so incomparably sweet, so incomparably full of promise. It is spring, quite obviously spring, despite the calendar; and one flings on one's clothes and hurries out into the streets, into the open, under this radiant sky . . .

About four months ago—we are now at the beginning of February—there was just such an unexpected and unusual day; and on that day I saw a quite remarkably pretty thing. I had set out in the morning before nine o'clock and was making my way toward the Lerchenberg, light of heart and high in spirits and full of a vague expectation that something or other was going to change, that something surprising and delightful was going to happen. I approached the hill from the right and walked all the way up it and along the top, keeping close to the edge of the main promenade, beside the low stone parapet: from here, for the whole length of the avenue—that is for something like half an hour's walk—I could have an unobstructed view across the town as it drops with a slightly terraced effect down the slope, and over the meandering links of the river as they gleamed in the sunlight, with the hills and greenery of the open countryside lost in a shimmering haze beyond them.

There was hardly anyone else up here yet. The seats on the far side of the promenade were empty, and here and there a statue looked out from among the trees, glittering white in the sun, although now and then a withered leaf would drift slowly down and settle on it. As I walked I watched the bright panorama to one side of me, and listened to the silence, which remained unbroken until I reached the end of the hill where the road begins to dip and is lined with old chestnut trees. But at this point I heard behind me the clatter of horses' hooves and wheels: a carriage was approaching at a brisk trot, and I had to

make way for it about halfway down the hill. I stepped aside and paused to let it pass.

It was a small, quite light two-wheeled carriage, drawn by a pair of large glossy spirited snorting bays. The reins were held by a young lady of about nineteen or twenty, and beside her sat an old gentleman of handsome and distinguished appearance, with white moustaches à la russe and bushy white eyebrows. The rear seat was occupied by a smart-looking groom in plain black and silver livery.

The horses had been reined back to a walk at the beginning of the descent, as one of them seemed nervous and refractory. It had pulled clear of the shaft right over to one side, holding its head against its chest, and its slender legs picked their way downhill in so restive and mettlesome a manner that the old gentleman was leaning forward rather anxiously, offering the young lady his elegantly gloved left hand to help her pull the reins tight. The driving seemed to have been entrusted to her only temporarily and only half in earnest: she appeared at any rate to be maneuvering the vehicle with a mixture of childlike self-importance and inexperience. She was making a solemn, indignant little movement with her head as she tried to control the shying, stumbling animal.

She was dark and slender. Her hair was wound into a firm knot behind her neck but lay quite lightly and loosely over her forehead and temples, where an occasional light brown strand could be seen. On it was perched a round straw hat, dark in color and decorated only with a modest arrangement of ribbons. For the rest, she was wearing a short dark blue jacket and a simple skirt of light gray material.

In her finely shaped oval face, with its dark brown complexion slightly flushed in the morning air, the most attractive feature was undoubtedly her eyes: they were long and narrow, their scarcely visible irises were a glittering black, and the brows arched above them were extraordinarily even, as if traced with a pen. Her nose was perhaps a trifle long, and her mouth might well have been smaller, although her lips were clearly and finely cut.

But at the moment it was looking particularly charming, for one could see her gleaming white, rather widely spaced teeth, and as she tugged at the horse the young lady pressed them hard onto her lower lip, giving a slight upward tilt to her almost childishly round chin.

It would be quite incorrect to say that this was a face of outstanding and admirable beauty. It had the charm of youth and freshness and high spirits, and this charm had so to speak been smoothed, refined and ennobled by easy affluence, gentle upbringing and luxurious care. There was no doubt that those narrow, sparkling eyes, which were now concentrated with fastidious petulance on the fractious horse, would in a minute or two resume an expression of secure happiness, of happiness taken for granted. The sleeves of her jacket, widely cut at the shoulders, fitted closely round her slender wrists, and as I watched those tiny, pale ungloved hands holding the reins I thought I had never seen anything so enchantingly, so exquisitely elegant!

I stood quite unnoticed by the side of the road as the carriage passed, and walked slowly on as the horses quickened their pace again and rapidly drew out of sight. My feelings were, in the first instance, pleasure and admiration; but I simultaneously became conscious of a strange, burning pain, a bitter, insistent upsurge—of what? Envy? Love? I did not dare analyze it. Of self-contempt?

As I write, the image that occurs to me is that of a wretched beggar standing outside a jeweler's shop, staring at some precious glittering gem in the window. Such a man cannot let the desire to possess the jewel present itself clearly to his mind: for even the thought of such a desire would be an absurdity, an impossibility, a thought that would make him utterly ridiculous in his own eyes.

12

I will report that I chanced only a week later to see that young lady again: this time it was at the opera, at a performance of Gounod's *Faust*. I had just entered the

brightly lit auditorium and was proceeding toward my seat in the stalls when I caught sight of her, sitting on the old gentleman's left, in a stage box at the other side of the house. I incidentally noticed, ludicrous though it seems, that this rather startled me and threw me into a kind of confusion, so that for some reason I at once averted my eyes and aimlessly surveyed the other boxes and rows of seats. Not until the overture began did I resolve to inspect the pair a little more closely.

The old gentleman, wearing a carefully fastened frock coat with a black silk necktie, was leaning back into his chair in a calm and dignified posture, resting one brown-gloved hand lightly on the plush balustrade of his box, and now and then slowly stroking his beard or his well-trimmed gray hair with the other. But the young lady—who was no doubt his daughter—sat leaning forward with an air of lively interest; she had both hands on the balustrade and they were holding her fan. From time to time she made a slight movement with her head to toss back the loose, light brown hair from her forehead and temples.

She was wearing a very light pale silk blouse, with a posy of violets in the girdle; and in the bright lights her narrow eyes were gleaming still blacker than when I had seen her before. I also observed that the expression of her mouth which I had noticed a week ago was evidently a habit with her: not a moment passed but she pressed her lower lip with her little white regularly spaced teeth, and drew up her chin slightly. This innocent gesture in which there was not a trace of coquetry, those calmly yet gaily wandering eyes, that delicate white neck, which she wore uncovered except for a neatly fitting narrow silk ribbon the same color as her bodice, and the way she turned now and then to draw the old gentleman's attention to something in the orchestra pit or some feature of the curtain or someone in another box—all this made an impression of ineffably subtle childlike charm which was at the same time entirely unsentimental, quite devoid of any appeal to the heartstrings of so-called compassion. It was an aristocratic, measured childlikeness, colored by the security

and confidence that come of a refined and gracious way of living. Her evident happiness had nothing arrogant about it: it was the kind of quiet happiness that can be taken for granted.

Gounod's brilliant and tender music was, I thought, no bad accompaniment to this spectacle. As I listened to it I paid no attention to what was happening on the stage and became entirely absorbed in a reflective mood of gentle melancholy, which without this music would perhaps have been more acute. But in the very first interval, after Act I, a gentleman of, let us say, twenty-seven to thirty rose from his seat in the stalls, disappeared and immediately reappeared, with a deftly executed bow, in the box on which my eyes were fixed. The old man at once shook hands with him, and the young lady too, with a cordial inclination of the head, held out hers, which he gracefully raised to his lips; whereupon he was invited to take a seat.

I declare that I am willing to concede that this young man possessed the most incomparable shirtfront that I have ever in my life been privileged to see. It was a shirtfront completely exposed to view, for his waistcoat was no more than a narrow black band and his evening jacket, fastened by one button quite some way below his stomach, was cut out from the shoulders in an unusually sweeping curve. But the shirtfront—which ended in a tall, stiff, smartly turned down butterfly collar and a wide black bow tie, and was fastened at regular intervals by two large square buttons, also black—was dazzlingly white, and although admirably starched it did not lack flexibility, for in the region of his stomach it formed a pleasing hollow, only to rise again, further up, to a satisfying and gleaming apex.

I need hardly say that it was this shirt that chiefly claimed one's attention; as for his head, however, which was completely spherical and covered with very blond hair cropped close to the skull, it was adorned with a pair of rimless and ribbonless eyeglasses, a none too thick blond moustache with slightly curled points, and a number of small dueling scars on one cheek, running right up

to the temple. For the rest, this gentleman was of unexceptionable build and moved with an air of assurance.

In the course of the evening—for he remained in the box—I noticed two postures which seemed especially characteristic of him. On the one hand, if conversation with his companions flagged, he would lean comfortably back with his legs crossed and his opera glasses on his lap, lower his head, energetically protrude the whole of his mouth and relapse into profound contemplation of both points of his moustache, evidently quite hypnotized by them, and slowly and silently turning his head to and fro. If on the other hand he was engaged in discourse with the young lady, he would respectfully modify the position of his legs, but lean back still further, grasping his chair with both hands, raise his head as high as possible and smile, opening his mouth rather wide, charmingly and a shade patronizingly down at his young neighbor. There could be no doubt that this gentleman rejoiced in a wonderfully happy conceit of himself . . .

I declare in all seriousness that these are characteristics which I fully appreciate. The nonchalance of his movements may have been a trifle daring, but not one of them gave rise to a second's embarrassment; his self-confidence sustained him throughout. And why should it be otherwise? Here, clearly, was a man who while perhaps lacking any particular distinction had irreproachably made his way, and would pursue it to clear and profitable ends; who sheltered in the shade of agreement with all men, and basked in the sunshine of their general approval. And in the meantime there he sat in the box, chattering with a girl to whose pure and exquisite charm he was perhaps not unsusceptible, and whose hand, if this were so, he could with a good conscience request in marriage. Most assuredly, I have no wish to utter a single disrespectful word about this gentleman.

But what of myself? I sat on down here and was at liberty to observe from a distance, peering bitterly out of the darkness, that precious inaccessible creature as she chatted and joked with this contemptible wretch! Excluded, unheeded, unauthorized, an outsider, hors ligne,

déclassé, a pariah, a pitiful object even in my own eyes . . .

I stayed till the end, and I met the trio again in the cloakroom, where they lingered a little as they donned their fur coats, exchanging a word here and there with some lady or with some officer . . . The young gentleman accompanied the father and daughter as they left the theater, and I followed them at a discreet interval across the foyer.

It was not raining, there were a few stars in the sky, and they did not take a carriage. They walked ahead of me at a leisurely pace, talking busily, and some way behind I timidly dogged their footsteps—crushed and tormented by a dreadful feeling of biting, mocking misery . . . They had not far to walk; it was scarcely a street's length to where they stopped in front of the simple facade of an imposing-looking house, and a moment later the young lady and her father vanished into it after bidding a cordial good-night to their escort, who in his turn quickened his pace and disappeared.

The heavy carved front door of the house bore the title and name "Justizrat Rainer."

13

I am determined to complete this written record, despite the inner repugnance which constantly impels me to throw down my pen and rush out into the street. I have pondered this affair and brooded over it to the point of utter exhaustion! How sick to death, how nauseated I am by the whole thing! . . .

Not quite three months ago I learned from the papers that a "bazaar" for charitable purposes had been arranged and would take place in the town hall; and that it would be attended by the best society. I read this announcement attentively and at once decided to go to the bazaar. She will be there, I thought, perhaps selling things at one of the stalls, and in that case there will be nothing to prevent my approaching her. When all is said and done I am a

man of education and good family, and if I find this Fräulein Rainer attractive, then on an occasion of that sort I have as much right as the gentleman with the astonishing shirtfront to address her and exchange a few pleasantries with her . . .

It was a windy and rainy afternoon when I betook myself to the town hall; there was a throng of people and carriages in front of the entrance. I managed to penetrate into the building, paid the admission fee, deposited my coat and hat and made my way with some difficulty up the wide, crowded stair to the first floor and into the banqueting hall. The air in here was sultry and smelt heavily of wine, food, scent and pine needles, and there was a confused hubbub of laughter, conversation, music, vendors' cries and ringing gongs.

The vast hall with its enormously high ceiling was gaily festooned with flags and garlands of all colors, and there were vending stalls in the middle of the floor as well as all along the sides—open stalls and closed booths, with men in fantastic masks standing outside the latter and inviting custom at the tops of their voices. The ladies who were standing round selling flowers, needlework, tobacco and various refreshments, were also wearing all kinds of costumes. The band was playing loudly at one end of the hall on a platform covered with potted plants; and a tightly packed procession of people was slowly advancing along the rather narrow passageway that had been left between the stalls.

Somewhat stunned by the noise of the music and by the high-spirited shouting from the booths and lottery tubs, I joined the general stream, and scarcely a minute had passed when I caught sight of the young lady I was looking for, a few paces to the left of the entrance. She was selling wine and lemonade at a little stall decorated with pine branches, and she had chosen an Italian costume: the brightly colored skirt, the foursquare white headdress and the short bodice such as Albanese women wear, with the sleeves leaving her dainty arms bare to the elbow. She was leaning sideways against her serving table, slightly flushed, toying with her gay fan and chatting to

a group of men who stood round the stall smoking. Among these I discerned at first glance the figure already familiar to me; he was standing close beside her, with four fingers of each hand in the side pockets of his jacket.

I pressed slowly past, resolving to approach her as soon as an opportunity should present itself, as soon as she was a little less busy. Now, by God, it would be seen whether I still had any remnant of happy self-possession, any pride and savoir-faire left in me, or whether my morose, half-desperate mood of the last few weeks had been justified! What on earth had been the matter with me? Why should the sight of this girl fill me with the agonizing miserable mixture of envy, love, shame and bitter resentment with which—I confess it—my cheeks were now once again burning? Single-mindedness! Charm! Lightness of heart, devil take it, and elegant self-complacency, as befits a gifted and fortunate and happy man! And with nervous eagerness I rehearsed the jocular phrase, the bon mot, the Italian greeting with which I intended to address her . . .

It was some time before the crowd had clumsily squeezed its way round the room and brought me full circle—and sure enough, when I reached the little wine stall again, the group of gentlemen had dispersed, and only my familiar rival was still leaning against the table, in animated conversation with the young saleswoman. Well then, by his leave, I must take the liberty of interrupting this discussion . . . And with a brisk movement I disengaged myself from the stream and stepped up to the stall.

What happened? Why, nothing! Virtually nothing! The conversation broke off, my rival stepped aside, seized his rimless and ribbonless eyeglasses with all five fingers of one hand and inspected me through these fingers; while the young lady looked me calmly and critically up and down—she surveyed my suit and surveyed my boots. The suit was by no means a new one, and the boots were muddy; I was aware of that. In addition I was flushed, and I dare say it is quite possible that my hair was untidy. I was not cool, I was not at ease, I was not equal to

the situation. I was overwhelmed by the feeling that I was intruding, that I was a stranger who had no rights here and did not belong and was making himself ridiculous. Insecurity, helplessness, hatred and pitiful mortification made it impossible for me to return her gaze—in a word, the upshot of my high-spirited intentions was that with darkly knitted brows and in a hoarse voice I said curtly and almost rudely:

"A glass of wine, please."

It is not of the slightest consequence whether I was right or wrong in thinking that I noticed a fleeting exchange of derisive glances between the girl and her friend. None of us uttered a word as she handed me the wine, and without raising my eyes, red and distraught with rage and anguish, a wretched and ridiculous figure, I stood between the pair of them, gulped a mouthful or two, put the money down on the table, made a confused bow, left the hall and rushed out of the building.

Since that moment I have known that I am doomed; and it makes precious little difference to my story to add that a few days later I read the following notice in the papers:

"Justizrat Rainer has the honor to announce the engagement of his daughter Anna to Herr Assessor Dr. Alfred Witznagel."

14

Since that moment I have known I am doomed. My last fugitive remnant of well-being and self-complacency has collapsed and disintegrated. I can bear no more. Yes, I confess it now: I am unhappy, and I see myself as a pitiful and ridiculous figure. But this is unendurable! It will kill me! Today or tomorrow I shall blow my brains out!

My first impulse, my first instinct, was to try to dramatize the affair and cunningly cloak my contemptible wretchedness in the aesthetic garb of "unhappy love." A puerile stratagem, I need hardly say. One does not die of unhappy love. Unhappy love is a pose, and quite a comfortable one. Unhappy love can be a source of self-satis-

faction. But what is destroying me is the knowledge that all the self-satisfaction I once possessed is now forever at an end!

And was I really—let me face the question—was I really in love with this girl? It may be so . . . but in what way and why? Was this love not a product of my already wounded, already sick vanity, my vanity which had flared up agonizingly at the first sight of this precious jewel so far beyond my reach, and had filled me with feelings of envy, hatred and self-contempt for which love had then been no more than a cover, a refuge, a lifeline?

Yes, it has all been vanity! Didn't my father once long ago call me a buffoon and a joker?

What right did I have, I of all people, to hold myself aloof from "society" and to turn my back on it, I who am too vain to bear its scorn and disregard, I who cannot live without society and without its approval! And yet was it really a matter of what I had or had not the right to do? Was it not a matter of necessity? Could my useless buffooning ever have earned me any social position? No: it was this very thing, this joker's talent, that was bound in any case to destroy me.

I realize that indifference would be happiness of a kind . . . But I am unable to feel that indifference about myself, I am unable to view myself except through the eyes of "other people" and I am being destroyed by a bad conscience—although I feel in no way to blame! Is even a bad conscience nothing more than festering vanity?

There is only one real misfortune: to forfeit one's own good opinion of oneself. To have lost one's self-respect: that is what unhappiness is. Oh, I have always known that so well! Everything else is part of the game, an enrichment of one's life; in every other form of suffering one can feel such extraordinary self-satisfaction, one can cut such a fine figure. Only when one has fallen out with oneself and no longer suffers with a good conscience, only in the throes of stricken vanity—only then does one become a pitiful and repulsive spectacle.

An old acquaintance appeared on the scene, a gentleman of the name of Schilling: long ago, as employees of

Herr Schlievogt's big timber firm, we had worked together in the service of society. He was briefly visiting the town on business, and he came to see me—a "skeptical fellow," with his hands in his trouser pockets, black-rimmed pince-nez and a realistic, tolerant shrug of the shoulders. He arrived one evening and said: "I shall be here for a few days." We went and sat in a tavern.

He treated me as if I were still the happy, self-satisfied man he had once known, and thinking in all good faith that he was only echoing my own blithe self-esteem, he said:

"By God, my dear fellow, you've arranged your life very pleasantly! Independent, what? Free! You're right of course, damn it! We only live once, don't we? What does anything else matter, after all? You're the wiser of the two of us, I must say. Of course, you were always a genius . . ." And he continued most cordially, as he had done long ago, to express his respect for me and to pay me compliments, little dreaming that I for my part was anxiously dreading his disapproval.

I made desperate efforts to sustain the role in which he had cast me, to keep up the appearance of success, of happiness, of self-complacency. It was useless! There was no resilience left in me, no aplomb, no self-possession. I could respond to him only with crestfallen embarrassment and cringing diffidence—and he was incredibly quick to sense this! It was frightening to watch how this man who had at first been fully prepared to recognize and respect me as a fortunate and superior person began to see through me, to look at me in astonishment, to grow cool, then superior, then impatient and irritated, and finally to treat me with undisguised contempt. It was still early when he got up to go, and next day he sent me a brief note saying that he had been obliged to leave town after all.

The fact is that everyone is much too busily preoccupied with himself to be able to form a serious opinion about another person. The indolent world is all too ready to treat any man with whatever degree of respect corresponds to his own self-confidence. Be what you please, live as you please—but put a bold face on it, act with

self-assurance and show no qualms, and no one will be moralist enough to point the finger of scorn at you. But once have the misfortune to forfeit your single-mindedness and lose your self-complacency, once betray your own self-contempt—and the world will unhesitatingly endorse it. As for me, I am past hope . . .

At this point I stop writing, I cast my pen aside—full of disgust, of disgust! Shall I make an end of it all? Surely that would be rather too heroic for a "buffoon and joker"! I am afraid the upshot of the matter will be that I shall continue to live, to eat, to sleep, to dabble in this and dabble in that; and gradually, as my apathy increases, I shall get used to being a "wretched and ridiculous figure."

Oh, God, who would have supposed—who could have supposed—that to be born a joker was so disastrous a fate!

THE ROAD TO THE CHURCHYARD

the road to the churchyard

THE ROAD TO the churchyard ran parallel to the main highway, and kept close beside it until it reached the place to which it led, namely the churchyard. On the far side of it there was, at first, a row of human habitations—new suburban houses, some of them still under construction; and then came fields. As for the highway, it was lined with trees, gnarled beech-trees of respectable age; and only one half of it was paved, and the other was not. But the road to the churchyard was lightly strewn with gravel, and for this reason it was really more like a pleasant footpath. The two roads were separated by a narrow dry ditch, full of grass and meadow flowers.

It was spring, indeed it was already nearly summer. The world was smiling. The Lord God's blue sky was full of little round compact lumps of cloud, quaint little snow white tufts scattered gaily all over it. The birds were twittering in the beeches, and a gentle breeze was blowing across the fields.

On the highway, a cart from the next village was crawling toward the town, half of it on the paved part of the road and half on the unpaved part. The carter was letting his legs hang down on either side of the shaft, and whistling very much out of tune. But at the far end of the

cart, with its back to him, sat a little yellow dog with a little pointed nose over which it was gazing, with an indescribably solemn and meditative expression, back along the way it had come. It was an exquisite and highly amusing little dog, worth its weight in gold; unfortunately however it is irrelevant in the present context, and we must therefore ignore it. A troop of soldiers was passing. They were from the nearby barracks, and they marched along through their own sweaty exhalations, singing as they marched. A second cart, coming from the direction of the town, was crawling toward the next village. The driver was asleep, and there was no dog on this vehicle, which is therefore of no interest whatsoever. Two apprentices came by, one of them a hunchback and the other gigantically tall. They walked barefoot, because they were carrying their boots over their shoulders; they called out some merry quip or other to the sleeping carter and proceeded on their way. Such was the moderate traffic, and it pursued its course without any complications or incidents.

Only one man was walking along the road to the churchyard; he was walking slowly, with bowed head and leaning on a black stick. This man's name was Piepsam—Lobgott Piepsam, believe it or not, and I expressly mention it on account of his subsequent extremely odd behavior.

He was dressed in black, for he was on his way to visit the graves of his loved ones. He wore a rough-surfaced top hat of extravagant shape, a frock coat shiny with age, trousers which were both too narrow and too short and black kid gloves with all the surface worn off. His neck, a long skinny neck with a prominent Adam's apple, rose out of a turndown collar which was beginning to fray—yes, this collar was already rather raveled at the edges. But when the man raised his head, which from time to time he did to see how far he was from the churchyard, then his face became visible, and this was a rare sight; for undoubtedly it was a face one would not forget again in a hurry.

It was clean-shaven and pale. But from between the

hollow cheeks a bulbous nose protruded, a nose thicker at its tip than at its base, glowing with a monstrous and unnatural redness and closely covered, for good measure, with little insalubrious excrescences which gave it an irregular and fantastic appearance. There was something improbable and picturesque about this deeply flushed nose which stood out so sharply against the dull pallor of the rest of the face: it looked as if it had been stuck on like a carnival nose, in melancholy jest. But it had not . . . His mouth was wide, with drooping corners, and he kept it tight shut; his eyebrows were black but speckled with white, and when he looked up he would arch them almost to the brim of his hat, exposing to full view his woefully inflamed, dark-ringed eyes. In a word, it was a face which could not fail in the end to inspire the liveliest compassion.

Lobgott Piepsam's appearance was far from cheerful, it ill became this delightful morning, and even for a man about to visit the graves of his loved ones it was excessively woebegone. A glimpse of his state of mind, however, would have been enough to satisfy anyone that there was good cause for this. He was—shall I say, somewhat downhearted? . . . It is hard to explain these matters to happy people like yourselves . . . But you know, he had his little troubles, he was rather badly done by. Alas, if the truth be told, his troubles were by no means little, but grievous in the highest degree—in fact, his condition could fairly be described as absolutely wretched.

To begin with, he drank. Well, we shall have occasion to refer to this again. Secondly he was a widower and a bereaved father, forsaken by everyone; he had not a soul left on earth to whom he was dear. His wife, whose maiden name had been Lebzelt, had been snatched from him six months ago when she had borne him a child; it was their third child, and it had been born dead. The other two had also died, one of diphtheria, the other of nothing in particular, perhaps just of general deficiency. As if this were not enough, he had shortly afterward lost his job, he had been shamefully dismissed from his employment and livelihood, and this had been in consequence of the

above-mentioned ruling passion, which was a passion stronger than Piepsam.

In the old days he had been able to resist it up to a point, despite periodic bouts of immoderate indulgence. But when he had been bereft of wife and children and stood alone in the world without guidance and support, deprived of all dependents, the vice had become his master, and had increasingly broken his resistance and his spirit. He had had a position on the staff of an insurance company, as a kind of superior clerk earning ninety marks a month. But he had been guilty, when in a condition of irresponsibility, of various acts of gross negligence, and in the end his employers, after repeatedly reprimanding him, had dismissed him as hopelessly unreliable.

It need hardly be said that this circumstance had in no way raised Piepsam's moral stature; on the contrary he had now gone completely to pieces. The fact is, dear readers, that misfortune destroys human dignity. (It is quite an advantage, you know, to have a certain understanding of these matters.) The truth in this case is strange and rather horrible. It is no use for a man to go on protesting his innocence to himself: he will usually despise himself simply for being unfortunate. But there is a dreadful reciprocal intimacy between self-contempt and vice—they nourish each other, they play into each other's hands in a way which is quite uncanny. And thus it was with Piepsam. He drank because he did not respect himself, and he respected himself less and less because his self-confidence was undermined by the ever-recurring collapse of all his good resolutions. At home in his wardrobe there stood a bottle of poisonous-looking yellow liquid, a ruinous liquid which we shall take the precaution of not identifying. In front of this wardrobe Lobgott Piepsam had before now literally fallen on his knees, with his clenched teeth nearly severing his tongue; and nevertheless he had finally succumbed to the temptation . . . We are reluctant to acquaint our readers with such matters; but they are after all very instructive. So now he was proceeding along the road, to the churchyard, thrust-

ing his black walking stick before him. The gentle breeze played round his nose as it did round anyone else's, but he did not notice it. With eyebrows steeply arched he stared at the world with a hollow melancholy stare, like the lost wretched soul he was. Suddenly he heard behind him a sound that caught his attention: a soft whir was approaching from a distance at high speed. He turned and stopped in his tracks . . . It was a bicycle: with its tires crunching over the lightly graveled surface, it was approaching at full tilt but presently slowed down, as Piepsam was standing in the middle of the road.

On the saddle sat a young man—a boy, a carefree tourist. He made no pretension to be counted among the great ones of this earth, oh dear me, no! He was riding quite an inexpensive machine of no matter what make, a bicycle costing two hundred marks—just a bicycle. And on it he was out for a ride in the country, coming out of town for a bit of a spin, bowling along with his pedals glittering in the sunlight, into God's wide open spaces, hurrah! He was wearing a gaily colored shirt with a gray jacket over it, sports gaiters and the sauciest little cap you ever saw—a joke of a cap, made of brown check material with a button at the top. But from under it came a thick tangled mop of blond hair, standing up round his forehead. His eyes were a gleaming blue. He sped toward Piepsam like an embodiment of Life itself, ringing his bicycle bell. But Piepsam did not budge an inch out of the way. He stood there and stared at Life, not a muscle of his face moving.

Life irritably returned his gaze and rode slowly past him, whereupon Piepsam likewise resumed his progress. But when Life was just in front of him he said slowly and with heavy emphasis:

"Number nine thousand seven hundred and seven."

Then he pursed his lips and stared straight down at the road in front of him, aware that the eyes of Life were contemplating him in some perplexity.

Life had turned round, resting one hand on the back of the saddle and riding very slowly.

"What?" it asked . . .

"Number nine thousand seven hundred and seven," repeated Piepsam. "Oh, nothing. I shall report you."

"Report me?" asked Life, turning round still further and pedaling still more slowly, which necessitated a strenuous balancing maneuver with the handlebars.

"Certainly," replied Piepsam from a distance of five or six paces.

"What for?" asked Life, dismounting and standing still with an air of expectancy.

"You know perfectly well yourself."

"No, I do not."

"You must know."

"But I do *not* know," said Life, "and what is more, I care even less!" Whereupon it prepared to remount its bicycle. Life certainly knew all the answers.

"I shall report you because you are riding here, not out there on the main road but here on the road to the churchyard," said Piepsam.

"But my dear sir," said Life with an exasperated impatient laugh, turning round again and stopping, "you can see that there are bicycle tracks here all the way along. . . . Everyone rides here . . ."

"That makes not the slightest difference to me," answered Piepsam, "I shall still report you."

"Oh well, then, do whatever you please!" exclaimed Life, and mounted its bicycle. It mounted well and truly, not disgracing itself by any fumbling of the operation, but with one thrust of the foot swung itself up into the saddle and there energetically prepared to resume its progress at the speed appropriate to its temperament.

"If you go on riding here on the road to the churchyard I shall most certainly report you," said Piepsam, tremulously raising his voice. But Life paid precious little attention and simply rode on, gathering speed.

If you had seen Lobgott Piepsam's face at that moment you would have been profoundly startled. He compressed his lips so violently that his cheeks and even his fiery nose were pulled right out of shape; his brows were arched to a preternatural height, and under them his eyes stared

insanely at the bicycle as it drew away from him. Suddenly he dashed forward. A short distance separated him from the vehicle; he covered it at a run, and seized the saddle-bag. He clutched it with both hands, he positively clung to it: and, still pressing his lips together with superhuman force, speechless and wild-eyed, he tugged with all his strength at the unsteadily advancing machine. Anyone who had seen him might have wondered whether he maliciously intended to prevent the young man from riding on, or whether the fancy had suddenly taken him to be towed in the rider's wake, to mount up behind him and ride with him, bowling along with glittering pedals into God's wide open spaces, hurrah! . . . The bicycle could not support this monstrous load for long; it came to a stop, it tilted, it fell over.

But at this point Life lost its temper. It had ended up perching on one leg, and now, lunging out with its right arm, it fetched Herr Piepsam such a clout on the chest that he staggered back several paces. Then, with its voice rising in a threatening crescendo, it said:

"You must be drunk, man! You crazy old crackpot! Just you try once more to stop me and I'll knock your block off, do you understand? I give you fair warning, I'll break every bone in your body!" Thereupon it turned its back on Herr Piepsam, indignantly readjusted its little cap, and remounted the bicycle. Oh yes, it certainly knew the answers. And it mounted just as skillfully and successfully as before. Just one thrust of the foot and it sat secure in the saddle and at once had the machine under control. Piepsam saw its back receding faster and faster into the distance.

There he stood, gasping, staring at Life as it left him behind. . . . Life did not fall off, no accident occurred, no tire burst, and there was no stone in its path; it sped resiliently away. And now Piepsam began to shriek and to curse—one might almost say to bellow: it was certainly no longer a human voice.

"Get off!" he yelled. "Stop riding here! You are to ride out there on the main road and not on the road to the churchyard, do you hear me?! . . . Dismount! Dismount

at once! Oh! Oh! I'll report you, I'll have you prosecuted! Oh, by God in heaven, why don't you fall, why don't you fall off, you shallow lout! I'd kick you! I'd trample your face in with my boot, you damned young ruffian . . ."

Never had such a scene been witnessed! A man on the road to the churchyard screaming curses, a man swollen-faced and bellowing, a man dancing and capering in a frenzy of invective, flinging his arms and legs about, completely beside himself. The bicycle was away out of sight already, and Piepsam was still raging on the same spot.

"Stop him! Stop him! He's riding on the road to the churchyard! Pull him off his bicycle, the damned young spark! Ah . . . ah . . . if I had you here, how I'd flay the hide off you, you brainless monkey, you stupid jackass, you clown, you ignorant puppy! . . . Dismount! Dismount this instant! Will no one pull him down into the dust, the little brute!? . . . Ride your bicycle, will you? On the road to the churchyard, would you?! You scoundrel! You insolent hooligan! You damned popinjay! Bright blue eyes you have, haven't you? And what else? May the devil tear them out of your head, you ignorant, ignorant, ignorant puppy! . . ."

Piepsam now began to use expressions which cannot be repeated; he foamed at the mouth and hoarsely poured forth the vilest abuse, while his bodily movements became increasingly frenzied. A few children were walking along the main road with a small terrier and carrying a basket: they came across, climbed the ditch, stood round the screaming man and gazed curiously at his distorted face. Some laborers, busy on the new building sites beyond him or just starting their lunch break, now also took notice, and a number of them, accompanied by hodwomen, advanced along the path toward the group. But Piepsam went on raving, in fact he got worse and worse. Blindly, wildly, he shook his fists at heaven and in all directions, kicked and threshed with his legs, spun round and round, bent his knees and then jerked himself upright again, in a frantic effort to yell still louder. His

flow of invective continued without pause, he scarcely left himself time to breathe, and his command of vocabulary was astonishing. His face was hideously swollen, his top hat had slid halfway down his neck and his shirt-front was hanging out from under his waistcoat. But he had long ago passed over into generalities and was uttering things which no longer had the remotest connection with the matter in hand. They included allusions to his life of vice, and religious intimations, all spluttered out in so very unsuitable a tone and disgracefully mingled with terms of abuse.

"Come hither, come here to me all of you!" he roared. "Not you, not only you, but you others as well, you others with the caps and the bright blue eyes! I will shout truths into your ears that will make your flesh creep forever and ever, you shallow brutes! . . . Do you grin? Do you shrug your shoulders? . . . I drink . . . yes, I drink! I even drink like a fish, if you want to know! What of that?! The end is not yet come! There shall be a day, you worthless vermin, when God shall weigh us all and find us wanting . . . Oh . . . Oh . . . the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, you innocent louts, and his justice is not of this world! He shall cast you into outer darkness, you lighthearted rabble, and there shall be wailing and . . ."

He was now surrounded by a quite considerable assemblage of people. Some were laughing, and some were staring at him with puckered brows. More laborers and hodwomen had come up from the building sites. A driver had stopped his cart on the main road, dismounted, crossed the ditch and likewise approached, whip in hand. One man shook Piepsam by the arm, but this had no effect. A troop of soldiers craned their necks and laughed as they marched past him. The small terrier could contain itself no longer, braced its forefeet against the ground, wedged its tail between its hindquarters and howled up into his face.

Suddenly Lobgott Piepsam yelled once more at the top of his voice: "Dismount, dismount at once, you ignorant puppy!" Then he described a wide semicircle with one

arm, and collapsed. He lay there, abruptly silent, a black heap amid the curious crowd. His curved top hat had flown from his head, bounced once on the ground and then also lay still.

Two masons bent over the motionless Piepsam and discussed the case in the sensible straightforward language that workingmen use. Then one of them set off at a run and disappeared. The remaining bystanders made a few further attempts to revive the senseless man. One of them sprinkled him with water from a pail, another took out a bottle of brandy, poured some of it into the hollow of his hand and rubbed Piepsam's temples with it. But these experiments proved unavailing.

Thus a short time elapsed. Then the sound of wheels was heard and a vehicle approached along the main road. It was an ambulance, and it stopped on the very spot. It was drawn by two neat little horses and had an enormous red cross painted on each side. Two men in smart uniforms got down from the driving seat, and while one of them went round to the back of the vehicle to open it and pull out the stretcher, the other turned across on to the road to the churchyard, pushed aside the staring onlookers and with the assistance of a laborer dragged Herr Piepsam to the ambulance. They loaded him onto the stretcher and slid him inside, like a loaf into an oven; whereupon the door clicked shut again and the two uniformed men remounted the box. The whole thing was done with great precision, with a few practiced movements, swiftly and deftly, like something in a pantomime.

And then they drove Lobgott Piepsam away.

GLADIUS DEI

1

MUNICH WAS RESPLENDENT. A shining vault of silky blue sky stood above the festive squares, the white colonnades, the classicistic monuments and baroque churches, the leaping fountains, palaces and parks of the capital city, and its broad bright vistas, tree-lined and beautifully proportioned, basked in the shimmering haze of a fine early June day.

gladius dei

Every little street was filled with the chatter of birds, with an air of secret exultation . . . And across the squares, and past the rows of houses, the droll unhurried life of this beautiful leisurely town dawdled and trundled and rumbled along. Tourists of all nationalities were driving about in the slow little cabs, gazing with unselective curiosity at the housefronts to right and left of them, or walking up the steps into museums . . .

Many windows stood open, and through many of them music floated out into the streets—the sound of pianos or violins or cellos being practiced, of earnest and well-meant amateur endeavors. But from the Odeon a number of grand pianos could be heard simultaneously, on which serious study was in progress.

Young men whistling the Nothung motif, the kind of young men who fill the gallery of the modern Schauspielhaus every night, were strolling in and out of the uni-

versity and the state library, with literary periodicals in their side pockets. In front of the Academy of Fine Arts, which stands with its white wings outspread between the Türkenstrasse and the Siegestor, a court carriage had stopped. And at the top of the ramp, standing, sitting and lounging in colorful groups, were the models—picturesque old men, children and women, in the costume of peasants from the Alban Hills.

In the northern quarter, all the long streets were full of indolent, unhurrying, sauntering people . . . This place is not exactly the home of feverish cutthroat commercial competition: its inhabitants devote themselves to more agreeable pursuits. Young artists with small round hats perched on the backs of their heads, loosely tied cravats and no walking sticks—carefree young men who pay their rent with an occasional sketch—were out walking, seeking moods of inspiration in the bright blue morning sky and letting their eyes stray after the girls: those pretty, rather dumpy little girls with their dark hair plaited *en bandeaux*, their slightly too large feet, and their accommodating morals . . . One house in five, here, has studio windows that gleam in the sun. Often, in a row of dull solid buildings, some artistic edifice stands out, the work of some young and imaginative architect: wide-fronted, with shallow arches and bizarre decorative motifs, full of style and inventive wit. Or suddenly, in some very boring facade, one door is framed by a saucy improvisation of flowing lines and luminous colors, bacchantes, water nymphs and rose pink nudes . . .

It is always unfailingly delightful to linger in front of a cabinetmaker's window display, or those of the large stores which sell modern luxury articles of all kinds. What sybaritic imagination, what humor there is in the lines and outlines of all these things! There are little shops everywhere selling sculptures and frames and antiques, and through their windows the busts of Florentine ladies of the quattrocento sublimely and suggestively confront one's gaze. And the owner of even the smallest and most modest of these establishments will talk to one about Donatello and Mino da Fiesole for all the world as if

they themselves had given him sole reproduction rights . . .

But up there on the Odeonsplatz, near the massive loggia * with the wide expanse of mosaic pavement in front of it, diagonally opposite the Prince Regent's palace, there are always people pressing round the wide windows and showcases of one large art shop: the elaborate beauty emporium of Herr M. Blüthenzweig. What a sumptuous array of delightful exhibits it offers! There are reproductions of masterpieces from every gallery on earth, presented in expensive frames which have been subtly tinted and decorated in a taste combining simplicity with preciosity. There are facsimiles of modern paintings, gay sensuous fantasies in which the world of antiquity seems to have been brought back to life with humorous realism; perfect casts of Renaissance sculpture; bronze nudes and fragile ornamental glassware; tall earthenware vases which have emerged from baths of metal vapor clad in iridescent colors; volumes in exquisite bindings, triumphs of fine modern book production, lavish luxury editions of the works of fashionable lyric poets. And among all this the portraits of artists, musicians, philosophers, actors and writers are displayed to gratify the inquisitive public's taste for personal details . . . On an easel in the first window, the one nearest the adjacent bookshop, there was a large picture which particularly attracted the crowd: an excellent sepia photograph in a massive old-gold frame. It was a rather sensational item —a copy of the chief attraction in this year's great international exhibition, the exhibition so effectively publicized by the quaintly printed placards which were to be seen on every poster pillar, in concert programs and even in artistic advertisements for toilet preparations.

Look about you, survey the windows of the bookshops! Your eyes will encounter such titles as *Interior Decoration Since the Renaissance, Color Sense and How to*

* I.e., the so-called Feldherrnhalle, a monument to various Bavarian generals, built in the nineteenth century on the model of the Loggia dei Lanzi along ide the Piazza della Signoria in Florence. (Translator's note.)

Train It, The Renaissance in Modern Applied Art, The Book as a Work of Art, The Art of Decoration, The Hunger for Art. Reflect, too, that these stimulating publications are bought and read by the thousand, and that the very same topics are lectured on every evening to packed halls . . .

With any luck, you will also personally encounter one of the famous women already familiar to you through the medium of art—one of those rich, beautiful ladies with dyed titian-blond hair and diamond necklaces, whose bewitching features have been immortalized by some portrait painter of genius, and whose love life is the talk of the town. At carnival time they preside as queens over the artists' revels: slightly rouged, slightly painted, sublimely suggestive, flirtatious and adorable. And look! there goes a great painter with his mistress, driving up the Ludwigstrasse. People point at the carriage, people stop and gaze after the pair. Many salute them. The policemen all but stand to attention.

Art was flourishing, art ruled the day, art with its rose-entwined scepter held smiling sway over the city. That it should continue so to thrive was a matter of general and reverent concern; on all sides diligent work and propaganda were devoted to its service; everywhere there was a pious cult of line, of ornament, of form, of the senses, of beauty . . . Munich was resplendent.

2

A young man was walking along the Schellingstrasse. Surrounded by cyclists ringing their bells, he was striding down the middle of the wood-paved street toward the broad facade of the Ludwigskirche. When one looked at him, a shadow seemed to pass across the sun or a memory of dark hours across the soul. Did he dislike the sun which was bathing this lovely city in festive light? Why did he keep his eyes fixed on the ground as he walked, engrossed in his own thoughts and heedless of the world?

He was hatless, which was no matter for comment

amid the sartorial freedom of this easygoing town; instead of a hat he had pulled the hood of his wide black cloak over his head, so that it shaded his low, bony, protruding forehead, covered his ears and surrounded his gaunt visage. What torment of conscience, what scruples and what self-inflicted hardships could have so hollowed out those cheeks? Is it not horrible to see care written on a man's sunken face on so beautiful a day? His dark eyebrows thickened sharply at the narrow base of his long, aquiline, overprominent nose; and his lips were full and fleshy. Each time he raised his rather close-set brown eyes, wrinkles formed on his angular forehead. His gaze betokened knowledge, narrowness of spirit and suffering. Seen in profile, this face exactly resembled an old portrait once painted by a monk and now preserved in Florence in a hard narrow cloister cell, from which long ago there issued forth a terrible and overwhelming protest against life and its triumphs. . . .

Hieronymus strode along the Schellingstrasse, slowly and firmly, holding his wide cloak together from inside with both hands. Two young girls, two of those pretty, dumpy creatures with plaited hair, rather too large feet and accommodating morals, were strolling along arm in arm, out for adventure; as they passed him they nudged each other and giggled at the sight of his hood and his face, indeed they bent double with laughter and had to break into a run. But he paid no heed to this. With head bowed, and looking neither right nor left, he crossed the Ludwigstrasse and mounted the steps of the church.

The great central portal was wide open. In the dim religious light of the interior, cool and musty and heavy with the scent of incense, a faint red glow was visible from somewhere far within. An old woman with bloodshot eyes got up from a prayer stool and dragged herself on crutches between the columns. Otherwise the church was empty.

Hieronymus sprinkled his brow and breast from the stoup, genuflected before the high altar and then remained standing in the nave. Somehow he seemed to have grown in stature here. He stood erect and motion-

less, holding his head high; his great hooked nose jutted out over his full lips with a masterful expression, and his eyes were no longer fixed on the ground but gazed boldly straight ahead toward the crucifix on the distant high altar. Thus he paused for a while without stirring; then he genuflected again as he stepped back, and left the church.

He strode up the Ludwigstrasse, slowly and firmly, with head bowed, walking in the middle of the broad unpaved carriageway, toward the massive loggia and its statues. But on reaching the Odeonsplatz he raised his eyes, and wrinkles formed on his angular forehead: he came to a halt, his attention drawn by the crowd in front of the great art shop, in front of the elaborate beauty emporium of M. Blüthenzweig.

People were moving from window to window, pointing out to each other the treasures there displayed, exchanging views and peering over each other's shoulders. Hieronymus mingled with them, and he too began to survey the various objects, to inspect them all, one by one.

He saw the reproductions of masterpieces from every gallery on earth; the expensive, bizarre yet simple frames; the Renaissance sculpture, the bronze nudes and ornamental glassware, the iridescent vases, the luxurious bookbindings, and the portraits of artists, musicians, philosophers, actors and writers; he looked at them all, devoting a moment to every object. Holding his cloak firmly together from inside with both hands, he turned his hooded head with slight, curt movements from one thing to another; his dark eyebrows, thickening sharply at the base of his nose, were raised, and from under them his eyes rested for a while on every item in the display with a puzzled, cold, astonished stare. And so in due course he came to the first window, the one behind which the rather sensational picture stood. For some minutes he looked over the shoulders of the people who were crowding round it; then he managed to get to the front, and stood close to the glass.

The big sepia photograph, framed most tastefully in old gold, had been placed on an easel in the center of the

window. It was a Madonna, painted in a wholly modern and entirely unconventional manner. The sacred figure was ravishingly feminine, naked and beautiful. Her great sultry eyes were rimmed with shadow, and her lips were half parted in a strange and delicate smile. Her slender fingers were grouped rather nervously and convulsively round the waist of the Child, a nude boy of aristocratic, almost archaic slimness, who was playing with her breast and simultaneously casting a knowing sidelong glance at the spectator.

Two other young men were standing next to Hieronymus discussing the picture. They had books under their arms which they had just fetched from the Staatsbibliothek or were taking back to it; they were young men with a classical education, well versed in the arts and other learning.

"Damn it, but he's a lucky young fellow!" said one of them.

"And he obviously intends to make us envy him," replied the other . . . "That's a woman to watch out for, and no mistake!"

"She's enough to drive one crazy! She does make me a little doubtful about the dogma of the Immaculate Conception . . ."

"Oh, indeed, she doesn't look exactly untouchable. Have you seen the original?"

"Of course. I found it most perturbing. She's even more *provoquante* in color . . . especially her eyes."

"It's certainly a very outspoken likeness."

"How do you mean?"

"Don't you know the model? Why, he used that little milliner of his. It's almost a portrait of her, but with the depraved flavor deliberately emphasized . . . The girl herself is more innocent-looking."

"I should hope so. Life would be rather a strain if there were many of them like this *mater amata* . . ."

"The Pinakothek has bought it."

"Really? Well, well! They know what they're doing, of course. The treatment of the flesh and the flowing lines of the garment are certainly quite outstanding."

"Yes, he's a fantastically talented chap."

"Do you know him?"

"Slightly. There's no doubt that he'll have a successful career. He's been to dinner with the Prince Regent twice already . . ."

During this last exchange they had been preparing to take leave of each other.

"Shall we see you tonight at the theater?" asked one of them. "The Drama Club is putting on Machiavelli's *Mandragola.*"

"Oh, good! That's certain to be amusing. I was meaning to go to the Artists' Variety, but I dare say I shall give preference to our friend Niccolò after all. Au revoir . . ."

They separated, left the window and went off in different directions. New spectators took their place and gazed at the successful work of art. But Hieronymus stood on motionless; he stood with his head thrust forward, and his hands, as he grasped his cloak with them from inside and held it together on his breast, were seen to tighten convulsively. His brows were no longer raised as before in that expression of cold, rather resentful astonishment. They were lowered and frowning darkly; his cheeks, half hidden by the black hood, seemed more deeply sunken than ever, and his full lips had turned very pale. Slowly his head dropped further and further down, until finally his eyes were staring fixedly upward at the picture from well below it. The nostrils of his great nose were quivering.

He remained in this posture for about a quarter of an hour. A succession of different people stood round the window beside him, but he did not stir from the spot. Finally he turned round slowly, very slowly, on the balls of his feet, and walked away.

3

But the picture of the Madonna went with him. Continually, even as he sat in his small hard narrow room or knelt in the cool churches, it stood before his outraged

soul with its sultry, dark-rimmed eyes, with a mysterious smile on its lips, naked and beautiful. And no prayer could exorcise it.

But on the third night it came to pass that Hieronymus received a command and a summons from on high, bidding him to take action and raise his voice in protest against frivolous profligacy and the insolent, pretentious cult of beauty. In vain he pleaded, like Moses, that he was slow in speech and of a slow tongue: God's will remained inflexible, his bidding loud and clear. Fainthearted or no, Hieronymus must go forth on this sacrificial mission among his mocking enemies.

And so in the morning he rose up and betook himself, since God so willed it, to the art shop—to M. Blüthenzweig's great beauty emporium. He wore his hood over his head and held his cloak together from inside with both hands as he walked.

4

It had grown sultry; the sky was livid and a storm was imminent. Once again, quite a multitude was besieging the windows of the art shop, especially the one in which the Madonna was exhibited. Hieronymus gave it only a cursory glance, and then pressed down the handle of the glass door hung with posters and art magazines. "It is God's will!" he said, and entered the shop.

A young girl, a pretty, dark creature with plaited hair and rather too large feet who had been sitting somewhere at a desk writing in a ledger, approached and inquired politely how she could be of service to him.

"Thank you," said Hieronymus, looking her gravely in the eyes and wrinkling his angular forehead, "it is not you to whom I wish to speak, but the owner of the shop, Herr Blüthenzweig."

She hesitated a little, then withdrew and resumed her occupation. He remained standing in the middle of the shop.

All the objects exhibited singly outside were piled up

here by the score, in a lavish diplay—an abundance of color, line and form, of style, wit, taste and beauty. Hieronymous gazed slowly to his right and to his left, then drew the folds of his black cloak more tightly about him.

There were several people in the shop. At one of the broad tables that ran across the room sat a gentleman in a yellow suit with a black goatee, looking at a portfolio of French drawings, to which he occasionally reacted with a bleating laugh. A young man, who looked as if he were underpaid and lived on a vegetable diet, was serving him and kept dragging further portfolios across for him to inspect. Diagonally opposite the bleating gentleman an important-looking elderly lady was examining some modern art needlework, huge fantastic flowers embroidered in pale colors, standing vertically side by side on long straight stalks. She too was being attended to by one of the assistants. An Englishman was sitting nonchalantly at another table, with his traveling cap on and a pipe in his mouth; cold, clean-shaven, of uncertain age and wearing solid durable clothes. He was in the act of choosing between a number of bronzes which were being offered to him by Herr Blüthenzweig in person. One of them was a graceful nude statuette of a young girl with an immature figure and delicate limbs, her little hands chastely and coquettishly crossed on her breast; he was holding her by the head, rotating her slowly and inspecting her in detail.

Herr Blüthenzweig, a man with short brown sidewhiskers and moustaches and glistening eyes of the same color, was hovering round him, rubbing his hands and praising the little girl with every adjective he could lay his tongue to.

"A hundred and fifty marks, sir," he said in English. "An example of Munich art, sir. Certainly quite enchanting. Full of charm, you know. The very embodiment of grace, sir. Really extremely pretty, very dainty, an admirable piece." He added as an afterthought: "Most attractive and seductive," and then began again from the beginning.

His nose lay rather flat on his upper lip, so that he was

constantly breathing into his moustache with a slight snorting sound; he also kept approaching the customer in a stooping posture, as if he were sniffing him. When Hieronymus entered, Herr Blüthenzweig briefly investigated him in exactly the same manner, but then turned back at once to the Englishman.

The important-looking lady had made her choice and left the shop. A new customer entered. Herr Blüthenzweig gave him a quick sniff as if to assess his purchasing power, and then handed him over to the young woman with the ledger. This gentleman merely bought a faïence bust of Piero de' Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and then departed. The Englishman now also prepared to leave. He had taken possession of the little nude girl and was shown to the door by Herr Blüthenzweig with much bowing and scraping. The art dealer then turned to Hieronymus and came up to him.

"What can I do for you?" he asked with scant deference.

Hieronymus held his cloak together from inside with both hands and looked Herr Blüthenzweig in the face almost without moving a muscle. Then he slowly parted his thick lips and said:

"I have come to you about the picture in that window, the big photograph, the Madonna." His voice was husky and expressionless.

"Ah yes, of course," said Herr Blüthenzweig with interest and began rubbing his hands. "Seventy marks including the frame, sir. Absolutely definitive . . . a first-class reproduction. Most attractive and charming."

Hieronymus was silent. He bowed his hooded head and seemed to shrink slightly as the art dealer spoke. Then he drew himself upright again and said:

"I must tell you in advance that I am not in a position to buy anything from you, nor do I in any case wish to do so. I regret to have to disappoint your expectations. If this upsets you, I am sorry. But in the first place I am poor, and in the second place I do not like the things you are offering for sale. No, I cannot buy anything."

"You cannot . . . Oh, quite so," said Herr Blüthenzweig, snorting loudly. "Well, may I ask . . ."

"If I judge you aright," continued Hieronymus, "you despise me because I am not able to buy anything from you . . ."

"H'm . . . not at all!" said Herr Blüthenzweig. "But . . ."

"Nevertheless I beg you to listen to me and to give due weight to my words."

"Give due weight. H'm. May I ask . . ."

"You may ask," said Hieronymus, "and I will answer you. I have come to request you to remove that picture, the big photograph, the Madonna, from your window immediately and never to exhibit it again."

Herr Blüthenzweig stared at Hieronymus for a while in silence, as if expecting him to be covered with confusion by his own extraordinary speech. Since however no such thing happened, he snorted violently and delivered himself as follows:

"Will you be so good as to inform me whether you are here in some official capacity which authorizes you to dictate to me, or what exactly your business here is? . . ."

"Oh, no," replied Hieronymus, "I have no office or position under the state. The power of this world is not on my side, sir. What brings me here is solely my conscience."

Herr Blüthenzweig, at a loss for a reply, wagged his head to and fro, snorted violently into his moustache and struggled to find words. Finally he said:

"Your conscience . . . Then will you kindly allow me . . . to inform you . . . that so far as we are concerned . . . your conscience is a totally insignificant institution!"

With that he turned on his heel, walked quickly to his desk at the back of the shop and began to write. The two male assistants laughed heartily. The pretty young bookkeeper also giggled. As for the gentleman in yellow with the black beard, it became apparent that he was a foreigner, for he had obviously not understood a word, but went on studying the French drawings, uttering his bleating laugh from time to time.

"Will you please deal with the gentleman," said Herr

Blüthenzweig over his shoulder to his assistant. Then he went on writing. The young man with the ill-paid vegetarian look came up to Hieronymus, doing his best not to laugh, and the other assistant approached as well.

"Is there anything else we can do for you?" asked the ill-paid assistant gently. Hieronymus kept his sorrowful, obtuse yet penetrating gaze steadily fixed on him.

"No," he said, "there is not. I beg you to remove the picture of the Madonna from the window at once, and forever."

"Oh . . . Why?"

"It is the holy Mother of God . . ." said Hieronymus in hushed tones.

"Of course . . . But you have heard for yourself that Herr Blüthenzweig is not prepared to do what you are asking him to do."

"We must remember that it is the holy Mother of God," said Hieronymus, his head trembling.

"That is so. But what follows? Is it wrong to exhibit Madonnas? Is it wrong to paint them?"

"Not like that! Not like that!" said Hieronymus almost in a whisper, straightening himself and shaking his head vehemently several times. The angular forehead under his hood was lined all over with long, deep furrows. "You know very well that what has been painted there is vice itself, naked lust! I heard with my own ears two simple, unreflecting young men, as they looked at that picture, say that it made them doubt the dogma of the Immaculate Conception . . ."

"Oh, excuse me, that is quite beside the point," said the young assistant with a superior smile. In his leisure hours he was writing a pamphlet on the modern movement in art, and was quite capable of conducting a cultured conversation. "The picture is a work of art," he continued, "and as such it must be judged by the appropriate standards. It has been acclaimed by everyone. The state has bought it . . ."

"I know that the state has bought it," said Hieronymus. "I also know that the painter has dined twice with the Prince Regent. This is common talk among the people,

and God knows what conclusions they draw from the fact that by a work of that sort a man can become famous! What does such a fact attest? It attests the blindness of the world, a blindness that is incomprehensible unless it is mere shameless hypocrisy. That picture was painted in sensual lust, and it is enjoyed in sensual lust. . . . Is this true or not? Answer! You too, Herr Blüthenzweig, answer!"

A pause ensued. Hieronymus seemed in all seriousness to be expecting a reply, and his sorrowful penetrating brown eyes looked by turns at Herr Blüthenzweig's rounded back and at the two assistants, who stared at him with embarrassed curiosity. There was silence, broken only by the bleating laugh of the gentleman in yellow with the black beard as he pored over the French drawings.

"It *is* true!" continued Hieronymus, his husky voice trembling with profound indignation. "You dare not deny it! But how then is it possible that the painter of that picture should be solemnly extolled as if he had contributed something to the spiritual enrichment of mankind? How is it possible to stand before that picture and enjoy the vile pleasure it gives, and to silence one's conscience with talk of beauty—indeed to persuade oneself in all seriousness that one is undergoing a noble and refined experience, an experience worthy of the dignity of man? Is this wicked ignorance or the basest hypocrisy? It passes my comprehension . . . the absurdity of this fact passes my comprehension! That a man can rise to high renown on this earth by a witless, brazen manifestation of his animal instincts! Beauty. . . . What is beauty? What impulses beget beauty, and to what does it appeal? No one can possibly be ignorant of this, Herr Blüthenzweig! But how can one conceivably see through something in this way and yet not be filled with grief and revulsion at the thought of it! This exaltation and blasphemous idolatry of beauty is a crime, for it confirms and encourages the ignorance of shameless children, it strengthens them in their folly—the folly of impudence, the folly of the morally blind who know nothing of suf-

fering and still less of the way to salvation! . . . 'Who are you,' you will ask me, 'who see things so blackly?' I tell you, knowledge is the bitterest torment in this world; but it is the fire of purgatory, the purifying anguish without which no soul can be saved. It is not impudent naiveté or wicked heedlessness that will avail, Herr Blüthenzweig, but only understanding, that insight by which the passions of our loathsome flesh are consumed and extinguished."

Silence. The gentleman in yellow with the black beard uttered a short bleat.

"It would really be better if you left now," said the ill-paid assistant gently.

But Hieronymus showed no sign whatsoever of leaving. Erect in his hooded cloak, with his eyes burning, he stood there in the middle of the art shop, and in a harsh voice that seemed rusty with disuse his thick lips went on pouring forth words of condemnation . . .

"Art! they cry—pleasure! beauty! Wrap the world in a veil of beauty and set upon everything the noble imprint of style! . . . Depart from me, ye cursèd! Do you think gaudy colors can gloss over the world's misery? Do you think loud orgies of luxurious good taste can drown the moans of the tortured earth? You are wrong, you shameless wretches! God is not mocked, and your insolent idolatry of the glistering surface of things is an abomination in his sight! . . . 'Stranger,' you will say, 'you are reviling art.' You lie, I tell you; I am not reviling art! Art is not a cynical deception, a seductive stimulus to confirm and strengthen the lusts of the flesh! Art is the sacred torch that must shed its merciful light into all life's terrible depths, into every shameful and sorrowful abyss; art is the divine flame that must set fire to the world, until the world with all its infamy and anguish burns and melts away in redeeming compassion! . . . Take it out, Herr Blüthenzweig, take that famous painter's work out of your window—indeed, you would do well to burn it with hot fire and scatter its ashes to the winds, yes, to all four winds! . . ."

His unlovely voice broke off. He had taken a vehement

step backward, had snatched one arm from under the folds of his black cloak with a passionate movement and was holding it far outstretched: with a strangely contorted, convulsively trembling hand he pointed toward the window display, the showcase containing the sensational picture of the Madonna. He paused in this masterful posture. His great hooked nose seemed to jut out imperiously, his dark brows that thickened sharply at its base were arched so high that his angular forehead under the overshadowing hood was covered with broad furrows, and a hectic flush had spread over his sunken cheeks.

But at this point Herr Blüthenzweig turned round. Perhaps it was the fact of being called upon to burn a reproduction worth seventy marks that had so genuinely outraged him, or perhaps Hieronymus's speeches in general had finally exhausted his patience; at all events he was the very picture of righteous wrath. He gesticulated with his pen toward the door of the shop, snorted sharply several times into his moustache, struggled for words in his agitation and then declared with extreme emphasis:

"Now listen to me, you crazy fellow: unless you clear out of here this very instant, I'll get the packer to facilitate your exit, do you understand?!"

"Oh, no, you shall not intimidate me, you shall not drive me away, you shall not silence my voice!" cried Hieronymus, pulling his hood together above his chest with one clenched hand and fearlessly shaking his head. "I know I am alone and powerless, and yet I will not have done until you hear me, Herr Blüthenzweig! Take that picture out of your window and burn it, this very day! Oh, burn not only it! Burn these statuettes and busts as well—the sight of them tempts men to sin! Burn these vases and ornaments, these shameless revivals of paganism! Burn these luxurious volumes of love poetry! Burn everything in your shop, Herr Blüthenzweig, for it is filth in the sight of God! Burn it, burn it, burn it!" he cried, quite beside himself, and making a wild, sweeping, circular gesture with his arm. . . . "The harvest is ripe for the reaper . . . The insolence of this age exceeds all bounds . . . But I tell you . . ."

"Krauthuber!" shouted Herr Blüthenzweig, turning toward a door at the back of the shop and raising his voice, "come in here at once!"

The response to this summons was the appearance on the scene of an enormous, overwhelming figure, a monstrous, swollen hulk of terrifyingly massive humanity with gross, teeming limbs thickly padded with flesh and all shapelessly merging into each other—a prodigious, gigantic presence, slowly and ponderously heaving itself across the floor and puffing heavily: a son of the people, malt-nourished, herculean and awe-inspiring! A fringe of walrus moustache was discernible in his face, a huge paste-smeared leather apron enveloped his body and yellow shirt sleeves were rolled back from his heroic arms.

"Will you open the door for this gentleman, Krauthuber," said Herr Blüthenzweig, "and if he still cannot find his way to it, will you help him out into the street."

"Huh?" said the man, shifting his little elephant eyes to and fro between Hieronymus and his enraged employer . . . It was a primitive grunt, expressing vast strength held laboriously in check. Then he strode, with steps that made everything around him tremble, to the door and opened it.

Hieronymus had turned very pale. "Burn it—" he began to exclaim, but already a fearful superior force was upon him, and he felt himself being turned round: a bodily bulk against which there could be no conceivable resistance was slowly and inexorably thrusting him toward the door.

"I am weak," he gasped . . . "My flesh will not avail against force . . . it cannot stand firm . . . no! but what does that prove? Burn—"

He stopped short. He was outside the art shop. Herr Blüthenzweig's colossal henchman had released him with a slight shove and a final little flourish which had obliged him to collapse sideways onto the stone threshold, supporting himself on one hand. And the glass door was slammed shut behind him.

He rose to his feet. He stood upright, breathing heavily, pulling his hood together above his chest with one

clenched hand and letting the other hang down inside the cloak. A gray pallor had gathered in his sunken cheeks; the nostrils of his great hooked nose twitched open and shut; his ugly lips were contorted into an expression of desperate hatred, and his eyes, aflame with a kind of mad ecstasy, roved to and fro across the beautiful square.

He did not see the bystanders who were looking at him with curiosity and amusement. What he saw, on the mosaic pavement in front of the great loggia, were the vanities of the world: the artists' carnival costumes, the ornaments, vases, jewelry and objets d'art, the naked statues, the busts of women, the painted revivals of paganism, the masterly portraits of famous beauties, the luxurious volumes of love poetry and the art publications —he saw them all piled up into a great pyramid, and he saw the multitude, enthralled by his terrible words, consign them to crackling flames amid cries of jubilation . . . And there, against a yellow wall of cloud that had drifted across from the Theatinerstrasse with a soft roll of thunder, he saw the broad blade of a fiery sword, outstretched in the sulfurous sky above this lighthearted city . . .

"Gladius Dei super terram," his thick lips whispered; and drawing himself to his full height in his hooded cloak, he shook his hanging, hidden fist convulsively and added in a quivering undertone: *"cito et velociter!"*

TRISTAN

1

HERE WE ARE at "Einfried," the well-known sanatorium! It is white and rectilinear, a long low-lying main building with a side wing, standing in a spacious garden which is delightfully adorned with grottoes, leafy arcades and little bark pavilions; and behind its slate roofs the massive pine-green mountains rear their softly outlined peaks and clefts into the sky.

tristan

The establishment is, as always, in Dr. Leander's charge. He wears a double-pointed black beard, curled as crisply as horsehair stuffing; he has thick flashing spectacles and the general air of a man into whom science has instilled a certain coldness and hardness and quiet tolerant pessimism. His manner is abrupt and reserved. And with all this he holds sway over his patients—over all these people who are too weak to impose laws upon themselves and obey them, and who therefore pour their money into Dr. Leander's hands to gain the protection of his rigorous regime.

As for Fräulein von Osterloh, she manages all domestic matters here, and does so with tireless devotion. Dear me, what a whirl of activity! She rushes upstairs and downstairs and from one end of the institution to the other. She is mistress of the kitchen and storerooms, she climbs about in the linen cupboards, she has the servants at her beck and call, she plans the clients' daily fare on prin-

ciples of economy, hygiene, taste and elegance. She keeps house with fanatical thoroughness; and in her extreme efficiency there lies concealed a standing reproach to the entire male sex, not one member of which has ever taken it into his head to make her his wife. But in two round crimson spots on her cheeks there burns the inextinguishable hope that one day she will become Frau Dr. Leander. . . .

Ozone, and still, unstirring air . . . Einfried, whatever Dr. Leander's envious detractors and rivals may say, is most warmly to be recommended for all tubercular patients. But not only consumptives reside here: there are sufferers of all kinds—ladies, gentlemen and even children. Dr. Leander can boast of successes in the most varied fields. There are people with gastric disorders, such as Magistratsrätin Spatz, who is also hard of hearing; there are heart cases, paralytics, rheumatics and nervous patients of all sorts and conditions. There is a diabetic general, who grumbles continually as he consumes his pension. There are several gentlemen with lean, shriveled faces, walking with that unruly dancing gait which is always a bad sign. There is a lady of fifty, Pastorin Höhlenrauch, who has had nineteen children and is now totally incapable of any mental activity, despite which her mind is still not at peace: for a whole year now, driven by some restless nervous impulse, she has been wandering aimlessly all over the house—a staring, speechless, uncanny figure, leaning on the arm of her paid companion.

Occasionally a death occurs among the "serious cases," those who are confined to their beds and do not appear at meals or in the drawing room; and no one is ever aware of it, not even the patient next door. In the silence of night the waxen guest is removed, and Einfried pursues the even tenor of its way: the massage, the electrical treatment, the injections, douches, medicinal baths, gymnastics, exsudations and inhalations all continue, in premises equipped with every wonder of modern science . . .

Ah yes, this is a busy place. The establishment is flour-

ishing. The porter at the entrance in the side wing sounds the great bell when new guests arrive, and when anyone leaves he is shown to the carriage with due formality by Dr. Leander and Fräulein von Osterloh in person. Many an odd figure has lived under Einfried's hospitable roof. There is even a writer here, idling away his time—an eccentric fellow with a name reminiscent of some sort of mineral or precious stone . . .

Apart from Dr. Leander there is, moreover, a second resident physician, who deals with the trivial cases and with the hopeless cases. But his name is Müller and he is not worth mentioning.

2

At the beginning of January Herr Klöterjahn the wholesale merchant, of the firm of A. C. Klöterjahn & Co., brought his wife to Einfried. The porter sounded the bell, and Fräulein von Osterloh came to greet the new arrivals after their long journey; she met them in the reception room, which like almost all the rest of this elegant old house was furnished in remarkably pure Empire style. In a moment or two Dr. Leander also appeared; he bowed, and an introductory, mutually informative conversation ensued.

Outside lay the wintry garden, its flower beds covered with matting, its grottoes blocked with snow, its little temples isolated; and two porters were dragging in the new guests' luggage from the carriage which had stopped at the latticed gate, for there was no drive up to the house.

"Take your time, Gabriele, take care, darling, and keep your mouth closed," Herr Klöterjahn had said as he conducted his wife across the garden; and the moment one saw her one's heart trembled with such tender solicitude that one could not help inwardly echoing his words —though it must be admitted that Herr Klöterjahn's "take care," which he had said in English, could equally well have been said in German.

The coachman who had driven the lady and gentleman

from the station to the sanatorium was a plain, unsophisticated and unsentimental fellow; but he had positively bitten his tongue in an agony of helpless caution as the wholesale merchant assisted his wife down from the carriage. Indeed, even the two bay horses, as they stood steaming in the silent frosty air, had seemed to be rolling back their eyes and intently watching this anxious operation, full of concern for so much fragile grace and delicate charm.

The young lady had an ailment affecting her trachea, as was expressly stated in the letter which Herr Klöterjahn had dispatched from the shores of the Baltic to the medical director of Einfried, announcing their intended arrival; the trachea, and not, thank God, the lungs! And yet—even if it had been the lungs, this new patient could scarcely have looked more enchantingly remote, ethereal and insubstantial than she did now, as she sat by her burly husband, leaning softly and wearily back in her straight, white-lacquered armchair, listening to his conversation with the doctor.

Her beautiful pale hands, bare of jewelry except for a simple wedding ring, were resting in her lap among the folds of a dark, heavy cloth skirt, above which she wore a close-fitting silver gray bodice with a stand-up collar and a pattern of cut velvet arabesques. But these warm and weighty materials made her ineffably delicate, sweet, languid little head look all the more touching, unearthly and lovely. Her light brown hair was brushed smoothly back and gathered in a knot low down on her neck; only one stray curl drooped toward her right temple, not far from the spot where a strange, sickly little pale blue vein branched out above one of her well-marked eyebrows and across the clear, unblemished, almost transparent surface of her forehead. This little blue vein over one eye rather disturbingly dominated the whole of her delicate oval face. It stood out more strongly as soon as she began to speak, indeed as soon as she even smiled; and when this happened it gave her a strained look, an expression almost of anxiety, which filled the onlooker with obscure foreboding. And nevertheless she spoke, and she smiled. She

spoke with candor and charm in her slightly husky voice, and she smiled with her eyes, although she seemed to find it a little difficult to focus them in any direction, indeed they sometimes even showed a slight uncontrollable unsteadiness. At their corners, on each side of her slender nose, there were deep shadows. She smiled with her mouth as well, which was wide and beautiful and seemed to shine despite its pallor, perhaps because the lips were so very sharply and clearly outlined. Often she would clear her throat a little. When she did so, she would put her handkerchief to her mouth and then look at it.

"Now, Gabriele darling, don't clear your throat," said Herr Klöterjahn. "You know Dr. Hinzpeter at home particularly told you not to do that, my dear, and it's merely a matter of pulling oneself together. As I said, it's the trachea," he repeated. "I really did think it was the lungs when it began; bless my soul, what a fright I got! But it's not the lungs—good God, no, we're not standing for any of that sort of thing, are we, Gabriele, what? Oh-ho, no!"

"Indubitably not," said Dr. Leander, flashing his spectacles at them.

Whereupon Herr Klöterjahn asked for coffee—coffee and buttered rolls; and the guttural way he pronounced "coffee" and "butter" was expressive enough to give anyone an appetite.

He was served with the desired refreshments, rooms were provided for him and his wife and they made themselves at home.

We should add that Dr. Leander personally took charge of the case, without availing himself of the services of Dr. Müller.

3

The personality of the new patient caused a considerable stir in Einfried; and Herr Klöterjahn, accustomed to such successes, accepted with satisfaction all the homage that was paid to her. The diabetic general stopped grum-

bling for a moment when he first caught sight of her; the gentlemen with the shriveled faces, when they came anywhere near her, smiled and made a great effort to keep their legs under control; and Magistratsrätin Spatz immediately appointed herself her friend and chaperone. Ah yes, this lady who bore Herr Klöterjahn's name most certainly made an impression! A writer who had for a few weeks been passing his time in Einfried—an odd fish with a name reminiscent of some kind of precious stone—positively changed color when she passed him in the corridor: he stopped short and was still standing as if rooted to the spot long after she had disappeared.

Not two days had passed before her story was known to every inmate of the sanatorium. She had been born in Bremen, a fact in any case attested by certain charming little peculiarities of her speech; and there, some two years since, she had consented to become the wedded wife of Herr Klöterjahn the wholesale merchant. She had gone with him to his native town up there on the Baltic coast, and about ten months ago she had borne him a child—an admirably lively and robust son and heir, born under quite extraordinarily difficult and dangerous circumstances. But since these terrible days she had never really recovered her strength, if indeed she had ever had any strength to recover. She had scarcely risen from her confinement, utterly exhausted, her vital powers utterly impoverished, when in a fit of coughing she had brought up a little blood—oh, not much, just an insignificant little drop; but it would of course have been better if there had been none at all. And the disturbing thing was that before long the same unpleasant little incident recurred. Well, this was a matter that could be dealt with, and Dr. Hinzpeter, the family physician, took the appropriate measures. Complete rest was ordered, little pieces of ice were swallowed, morphine was prescribed to check the coughing and all possible steps were taken to tranquilize the heart. Nevertheless the patient's condition failed to improve; and whereas the child, that magnificent infant Anton Klöterjahn, Jr., won and held his place in life with colossal energy and ruthlessness, his young mother

seemed to be gently fading away, quietly burning herself out . . . It was, as we have mentioned, the trachea; and this word, when Dr. Hinzpeter used it, had a remarkably soothing, reassuring, almost cheering effect upon all concerned. But even though it was not the lungs, the doctor had in the end strongly recommended a milder climate, and a period of residence in a sanatorium, to hasten the patient's recovery; and the reputation of Einfried and of its director had done the rest.

Thus matters stood; and Herr Klöterjahn himself would tell the whole story to anyone sufficiently interested to listen. He had a loud, slovenly, good-humored way of talking, like a man whose digestion is as thoroughly sound as his finances. He spoke with extravagant movements of the lips, broadly yet fluently, as people from the north coast do; many of his words were spluttered out with a minor explosion in every syllable, and he would laugh at this as if he had made a successful joke.

He was of medium height, broad, strongly built, with short legs, a round red face, watery blue eyes, pale blond eyelashes, wide nostrils and moist lips. He wore English side-whiskers and a complete outfit of English clothes, and was delighted to encounter an English family at Einfried—father, mother and three attractive children with their nurse, who were here simply and solely because they could not think of anywhere else to live. Herr Klöterjahn ate an English breakfast with them every morning. He had a general predilection for eating and drinking plentifully and well; he displayed a real connoisseur's knowledge of food and wine, and would entertain the inmates of the sanatorium with highly stimulating accounts of dinners given by his friends at home, describing in particular certain choice dishes unknown in these southern parts. As he did so his eyes would narrow benevolently, while his speech became increasingly palatal and nasal and was accompanied by slight munching sounds at the back of his throat. He was also not altogether averse to certain other worldly pleasures, as was made evident one evening when one of the patients at Einfried, a writer by profession, saw him flirting rather

disgracefully with a chambermaid in the corridor—a trifling, humorous incident to which the writer in question reacted with a quite ludicrous grimace of disapproval.

As for Herr Klöterjahn's wife, it was plain for all to see that she was deeply attached to him. She watched his every movement and smiled at all he said. Her manner showed no trace of that patronizing indulgence with which many sick people treat those who are well; on the contrary she behaved as kindly and good-natured patients do, taking genuine pleasure in the hearty self-assurance of persons blessed with good health.

Herr Klöterjahn did not remain at Einfried for long. He had escorted his wife here; but after a week, having assured himself that she was well provided for and in good hands, he saw no reason to prolong his stay. Equally pressing duties—his flourishing child and his no less flourishing business—recalled him to his native town; they obliged him to depart, leaving his wife behind to enjoy the best of care.

4

The name of the writer who had been living in Einfried for several weeks was Spinell—Detlev Spinell; and his appearance was rather extraordinary.

Let us imagine a tall well-built man in his early thirties, with dark hair already beginning to turn distinctly gray about the temples, and a round, white, rather puffy face on which there was not the slightest sign of any growth of beard. It had not been shaved—that would have been noticeable; it was soft, indistinctly outlined and boyish, with nothing on it but an occasional little downy hair. And this really did look very odd. He had gentle, glistening, chestnut brown eyes and a thick, rather too fleshy nose. He also had an arched, porous, Roman-looking upper lip, large carious teeth and feet of remarkable dimensions. One of the gentlemen with the unruly legs, a cynic and would-be wit, had described him behind his

back as "a big baby gone bad"; but this was malicious and wide of the mark. He dressed well and fashionably, in a long dark coat and a waistcoat with colored spots.

He was unsociable and kept company with no one. Only occasionally was he seized by a mood of affability and exuberant friendliness, and this always happened when his aesthetic sensibilities were aroused—when the sight of something beautiful, a harmonious combination of colors, a vase of noble shape or the light of the setting sun on the mountains, transported him to articulate expressions of admiration. "What beauty!" he would then exclaim, leaning his head to one side, raising his shoulders, spreading out his hands and curling back his nose and lips. "Ah, dear me, pray observe, how beautiful that is!" And in the emotion of such moments Herr Spinell was capable of falling blindly upon the neck of no matter who might be at hand, whatever their status or sex . . .

On his desk, permanently on view to anyone who entered his room, lay the book he had written. It was a novel of moderate length with a completely baffling cover design, printed on the kind of paper one might use for filtering coffee, in elaborate type with every letter looking like a Gothic cathedral. Fräulein von Osterloh had read it in an idle quarter of an hour and had declared it to be "refined," which was her polite circumlocution for "unconscionably tedious." Its scenes were set in fashionable drawing rooms and luxurious boudoirs which were full of exquisite objets d'art, full of Gobelin tapestries, very old furniture, priceless porcelain, rare materials and artistic treasures of every sort. They were all described at length and with loving devotion, and as one read one constantly seemed to see Herr Spinell curling back his nose and exclaiming: "What beauty! Ah, dear me, pray observe, how beautiful that is!" It was, to be sure, rather surprising that he had not written any other books besides this one, since his passion for writing was evidently extreme. He spent most of the time in his room doing so, and sent an extraordinary number of letters to the post, one or two almost every day—though the odd and amusing thing was that he himself very rarely received any . . .

5

Herr Spinell sat opposite Herr Klöterjahn's wife at table. On the occasion of the new guests' first appearance in the great dining room on the ground floor of the side wing, he arrived a minute or two late, murmured a greeting to the company generally and took his seat, whereupon Dr. Leander, without much ceremony, introduced him to the new arrivals. He bowed and began to eat, evidently a trifle embarrassed, and maneuvering his knife and fork in a rather affected manner with his large white well-formed hands which emerged from very narrow coat sleeves. Later he seemed less ill at ease and looked calmly by turns at Herr Klöterjahn and at his wife. Herr Klöterjahn too, in the course of the meal, addressed one or two questions and remarks to him about the topography and climate of Einfried; his wife also interspersed a few charming words, and Herr Spinell answered politely. His voice was soft and really quite agreeable, though he had a slightly impeded, dragging way of speaking, as if his teeth were getting in the way of his tongue.

After the meal, when the company had moved over into the drawing room and Dr. Leander was uttering the usual courtesies to the new guests in particular. Herr Klöterjahn's wife inquired about the gentleman who had sat opposite.

"What is his name?" she asked . . . "Spinelli? I did not quite catch it."

"Spinell—not Spinelli, madam. No, he's not an Italian, he was merely born in Lemberg, so far as I know . . ."

"Did you say he was a writer, or something like that?" asked Herr Klöterjahn. His hands were in the pockets of his easy-fitting English trousers; he tilted one ear toward the doctor, and opened his mouth to listen, as some people do.

"Yes, I don't know—he writes . . ." answered Dr. Leander. "He has published a book, I believe, some kind of novel; I really don't know . . ."

These repeated declarations of ignorance indicated that

Dr. Leander had no very high opinion of the writer and declined all responsibility for him.

"But that is extremely interesting!" said Herr Klöterjahn's wife. She had never yet met a writer face to face.

"Oh, yes," replied Dr. Leander obligingly. "I am told he has a certain reputation . . ." After that no more was said about him.

But a little later, when the new guests had withdrawn and Dr. Leander too was just about to leave the drawing room, Herr Spinell detained him and made inquiries in his turn.

"What is the name of the couple?" he asked . . . "I didn't catch it, of course."

"Klöterjahn," answered Dr. Leander, already turning to go.

"*What* is his name?" asked Herr Spinell . . .

"Their name is *Klöterjahn*," said Dr. Leander, and walked away. He really had no very high opinion of the writer.

6

I think we had reached the point at which Herr Klöterjahn had returned home. Yes—he was back on the shores of the Baltic with his business and his baby, that ruthless vigorous little creature who had cost his mother so much suffering and a slight defect of the trachea. She herself, the young wife, remained behind at Einfried, and Magistratsrätin Spatz appointed herself as her friend and chaperone. This however did not prevent Herr Klöterjahn's wife from being on friendly terms with the other inmates of the sanatorium—for example, with Herr Spinell, who to everyone's astonishment (for hitherto he had kept company with no one) treated her from the outset in an extraordinarily devoted and courteous manner; and she for her part, during the few leisure hours permitted by her rigorous daily regime, seemed by no means averse to his conversation.

He would approach her with extreme circumspection and deference, and always talked to her in a carefully muted voice, so that Rätin Spatz, who was hard of hearing, usually did not catch a word of what he said. He would tiptoe on his great feet up to the armchair on which Herr Klöterjahn's wife reclined, fragile and smiling; at a distance of two paces he would stop, with one leg poised a little way behind the other and bowing from the waist; and in this posture he would talk to her in his rather impeded, dragging way, softly and intensely, but ready at any moment to withdraw and disappear as soon as her face should show the slightest sign of fatigue or annoyance. But she was not annoyed; she would invite him to sit down beside her and Frau Spatz; she would ask him some question or other and then listen to him with smiling curiosity, for often he said amusing and strange things such as no one had ever said to her before.

"Why actually are you at Einfried?" she asked. "What treatment are you taking, Herr Spinell?"

"Treatment? . . . Oh, I am having a little electrical treatment. It's really nothing worth mentioning. I will tell you, dear madam, why I am here: it is on account of the style."

"Ah?" said Herr Klöterjahn's wife, resting her chin on her hand and turning toward him with an exaggerated show of interest, as one does to children when they want to tell one a story.

"Yes. Einfried is pure *Empire*; I am told it used to be a palace, a summer residence. This side wing of course is a later addition, but the main building is old and genuine. Now, there are times when I simply cannot do without *Empire*, times when it is absolutely necessary to me if I am to achieve even a modest degree of well-being. You will appreciate that one's state of mind when one is surrounded by voluptuously soft and luxurious furniture differs entirely from the mood inspired by the straight lines of these tables and chairs and draperies . . . This brightness and hardness, this cold, austere simplicity, this rigorous reserve imparts its composure and dignity to the beholder: prolonged contact

with it has an inwardly purifying and restoring effect on me—there is no doubt that it raises my moral tone."

"Really, how remarkable," she said. "And I think I can understand what you mean, if I make an effort."

Whereupon he replied that what he meant was certainly not worth making an effort to understand, and they both laughed. Rätin Spatz also laughed and thought it remarkable; but she did not say that she understood what he meant.

The drawing room was large and beautiful. A tall white double door, standing wide open, led to the adjacent billiard room in which the gentlemen with the unruly legs and some others were playing. On the other side was a glass door giving onto the wide terrace and the garden. Near it stood a piano. There was a card table with a green top at which the diabetic general and a few other gentlemen were playing whist. Ladies sat reading or doing needlework. The room was heated by an iron stove, but in front of the elegant fireplace with its pieces of imitation coal pasted over with glowing red paper, there were comfortable places to sit and talk.

"You are an early riser, Herr Spinell. I have already quite by chance seen you two or three times leaving the house at half-past seven in the morning."

"An early riser? . . . Ah, only in a rather special sense, dear madam. The fact is that I rise early because I am really a late sleeper."

"Now, that you must explain, Herr Spinell!" Rätin Spatz also desired an explanation.

"Well . . . if one is an early riser, then it seems to me that one does not really have to get up so early. Conscience, dear lady—conscience is a terrible thing! I and my kind spend all our lives grappling with it, and we have our hands full trying to play tricks on it or to make cunning little concessions to it from time to time. I and my kind are useless creatures, and except in our few satisfying hours we do nothing but chafe ourselves sore and sick against the knowledge of our own uselessness. We hate everything that is useful, we know that it is vulgar and ugly, and we defend this truth fanatically, as

one only defends truths that are absolutely necessary to one's existence. And nevertheless our bad conscience so gnaws at us that it leaves not one spot on us unscathed. In addition, matters are made worse by the whole character of our inner life, by our outlook, our way of working—they are terribly unwholesome, they undermine us, they exhaust us. And so one has recourse to certain little palliatives, without which it would all be quite unendurable. For example, some of us feel the need for a well-conducted outward existence, for a certain hygienic austerity in our habits. We get up early, cruelly early; we take a cold bath and a walk out into the snow . . . And this has the effect of making us feel moderately satisfied with ourselves for perhaps an hour or two. If I were to act in accordance with my true nature, I should lie in bed until well into the afternoon, believe me. My early rising is really hypocrisy."

"Why, not at all, Herr Spinell! I call it self-denial . . . Don't you, Frau Rätin?" Rätin Spatz also called it self-denial.

"Hypocrisy or self-denial—whichever word you prefer! I have a melancholically honest disposition, and consequently . . ."

"That is just it. I am sure you suffer much too much from melancholy."

"Yes, dear madam, I suffer a great deal from melancholy."

The good weather continued. Everything was bright, hard and clean, windless and frosty; the house and garden, the surrounding countryside and the mountains, lay mantled in dazzling whiteness and pale blue shadows; and over it all stood a vaulted sky of delicate azure and utter purity, in which a myriad shimmering particles of light and dazzling crystals seemed to be dancing. At this period Herr Klöterjahn's wife seemed to be in tolerably good health; she had no fever, scarcely coughed at all, and had not too bad an appetite. Often she would sit out on the terrace for hours in the frost and the sun, as her doctor had prescribed. She sat in the snow, warmly wrapped in blankets and furs, hopefully breathing in the

pure icy air for the benefit of her trachea. Sometimes she would see Herr Spinell walking in the garden; he too was warmly dressed and wore fur boots which made his feet look absolutely enormous. He walked through the snow with a tentative gait and a careful, prim posture of the arms; when he reached the terrace he would greet her very respectfully and mount the steps toward her, and they would exchange a few words.

"I saw a beautiful woman on my morning walk today . . . Ah, how beautiful she was!" he said, leaning his head to one side and spreading out his hands.

"Really, Herr Spinell? Do describe her to me!"

"No, that I cannot do. Or if I did, I should be giving you an incorrect picture of her. I only glanced fleetingly at the lady as I passed, I did not really see her. But that uncertain glimpse was sufficient to stir my imagination, and I received and took away with me a vision of beauty . . . ah, of what beauty!"

She laughed. "Is that your way of looking at beautiful women, Herr Spinell?"

"Yes, dear madam; and it is a better way than if I were to stare them in the face with a crude appetite for reality, and imprint their actual imperfections on my mind . . ."

"'Appetite for reality' . . . what a strange phrase! That really is a phrase only a writer could have used, Herr Spinell! But I must confess that it impresses me. It suggests something to me that I partly understand, a certain feeling of independence and freedom, even a certain disrespect for reality—although I know that reality is more deserving of respect than anything else, indeed that it is the only truly respectable thing . . . And then I realize that there is something beyond what we can see and touch, something more delicate . . ."

"I know only one face," he said suddenly, speaking with a strange exaltation, raising his clenched hands to his shoulders and showing his carious teeth in an ecstatic smile . . . "I know only one face which even in reality is so noble and spiritual that any attempt by my imagination to improve upon it would be blasphemy—a face at

which I could gaze, which I long to contemplate, not for minutes, not for hours, but for the whole of my life, for in it I should lose myself utterly and forget all earthly things . . ."

"Yes, quite, Herr Spinell. But Fräulein von Osterloh's ears stick out rather far, don't you think?"

He made no reply and bowed deeply. When he raised his eyes again, they rested with an expression of embarrassment and sadness on the strange, sickly little pale blue vein that branched out across the clear, almost transparent surface of her forehead.

7

A strange fellow, a really very odd fellow! Herr Klöterjahn's wife sometimes thought about him, for she had plenty of time for thinking. Perhaps the beneficial effect of the change of air had begun to wear off, or perhaps some positively harmful influence was at work upon her: at all events her state of health had deteriorated, the condition of her trachea seemed to leave much to be desired, she felt weak and weary, she had lost her appetite and was often feverish. Dr. Leander had most emphatically urged her to rest, to avoid conversation, to exercise the utmost care. And so, when she was allowed up at all, she would sit with Rätin Spatz, avoiding conversation, holding her needlework idly in her lap and thinking her thoughts as they came and went.

Yes, this curious Herr Spinell made her think and wonder; and the remarkable thing was that he made her think not so much about him as about herself; somehow he awakened in her a strange curiosity about her own nature, a kind of interest in it she had never felt before. One day, in the course of conversation, he had remarked:

"Yes, women are certainly very mysterious . . . the facts are nothing new, and yet they are a perpetual source of astonishment. One is confronted, let us say, with some wonderful creature—a sylph, a phantasm, a figure from a dream, a faery's child. And what does she do? She goes

off and marries some brawny butcher, some Strong Man straight from the fairground. And there she comes, leaning on his arm, perhaps even with her head on his shoulder, and looking about her with a subtle smile as if to say: 'Well, here's a phenomenon to make you all rack your brains!' And we rack them, dear lady, we rack them."

This was a speech which Herr Klöterjahn's wife had repeatedly pondered.

On another occasion, to the astonishment of Rätin Spatz, the following dialogue took place between them:

"I am sure, dear madam, that it is very impertinent of me, but may I ask you what your name is—what it really is?"

"But my name is Klöterjahn, Herr Spinell, as you know!"

"H'm. Yes, that I know. Or rather: that I deny. I mean of course your own name, your maiden name. You must in all fairness concede, dear madam, that if anyone were to address you as 'Frau Klöterjahn' he would deserve to be horsewhipped."

She laughed so heartily that the little blue vein over her eyebrow stood out alarmingly clearly and gave her sweet delicate face a strained, anxious expression which was deeply disturbing.

"Why, good gracious, Herr Spinell! Horsewhipped? Do you find 'Klöterjahn' so appalling?"

"Yes, dear madam, I have most profoundly detested that name ever since I first heard it. It is grotesque, it is unspeakably ugly; and to insist on social convention to the point of calling you by your husband's name is barbaric and outrageous."

"Well, what about 'Eckhof'? Is Eckhof any better? My father's name is Eckhof."

"Ah, there now, you see! 'Eckhof' is quite another matter! There was once even a great actor called Eckhof. Eckhof is appropriate. You only mentioned your father. Is your mother . . ."

"Yes; my mother died when I was little."

"I see. Please tell me a little more about yourself; do

you mind my asking? If it tires you, then do not do it. Just rest, and I will go on describing Paris to you, as I did the other day. But you could talk very softly, you know; you could even whisper, and it would make what you tell me all the more beautiful. . . . You were born in Bremen?" He uttered this question almost voicelessly, with an expression of reverent awe, as if he were asking something momentous, as if Bremen were some city beyond compare, full of ineffable excitements and hidden beauties, and as if to have been born there conferred some kind of mysterious distinction.

"Yes, just fancy!" she said involuntarily. "I was born in Bremen."

"I was there once," he remarked meditatively.

"Good gracious, you've been there, too? Why, Herr Spinell, I do believe you've seen everything there is to see between Tunis and Spitsbergen!"

"Yes, I was there once," he repeated. "For a few short hours, one evening. I remember an old, narrow street with gabled houses and the moon slanting strangely down on them. And then I was in a vaulted basement room that smelt of wine and decay. How vividly I recall it . . ."

"Really? I wonder where that was? Yes, I was born in a gray gabled house like that, an old patrician merchant's house with an echoing front hall and a white wooden gallery."

"Then your father is a man of business?" he asked a little hesitantly.

"Yes. But in addition, or perhaps I should really say in the first place, he is an artist."

"Ah! Ah! What kind of artist?"

"He plays the violin. But that is not saying much. It is *how* he plays it that matters, Herr Spinell! I have never been able to listen to certain notes without tears coming to my eyes—such strange, hot tears! No other experience has ever moved me like that. I daresay you will scarcely believe me . . ."

"I believe you! Oh, I believe you indeed! . . . Tell me, dear lady: surely your family is an old one? Surely,

in that gray gabled house, many generations have already lived and labored and been gathered to their forefathers?"

"Yes. But why do you ask?"

"Because it often happens that an old family, with traditions that are entirely practical, sober and bourgeois, undergoes in its declining days a kind of artistic transfiguration."

"Is that so? Well, so far as my father is concerned he is certainly more of an artist than many a man who calls himself one and is famous for it. I only play the piano a little. Of course, now they have forbidden me to play; but I still did in those days, when I was at home. Father and I used to play together . . . Yes, all those years are a precious memory to me; especially the garden, our garden behind the house. It was terribly wild and overgrown, and the walls round it were crumbling and covered with moss; but that was just what gave it its great charm. It had a fountain in the middle, surrounded by a thick border of flag irises. In summer I used to sit there for hours with my friends. We would all sit on little garden chairs round the fountain . . ."

"What beauty!" said Herr Spinell, raising his shoulders. "You sat round it singing?"

"No, we were usually crocheting."

"Ah, but nevertheless . . . nevertheless . . ."

"Yes, we crocheted and gossiped, my six friends and I . . ."

"What beauty! Ah, dear me, how beautiful that is!" cried Herr Spinell, with his face quite contorted.

"But what is so particularly beautiful about that, Herr Spinell?"

"Oh, the fact that there were six young ladies besides yourself, the fact that you were not one of their number, but stood out among them like a queen . . . You were singled out among your six friends. A little golden crown, quite inconspicuous yet full of significance, gleamed in your hair . . ."

"Oh, what nonsense, there was no such crown . . ."

"Ah, but there was: it gleamed there in secret. I should have seen it, I should have seen it in your hair quite

plainly, if I had been standing unnoticed among the bushes on one of those occasions . . ."

"Heaven knows what you would have seen. But you were not standing there, on the contrary it was my husband, as he now is, who one day stepped out of the bushes with my father beside him. I'm afraid they had even been listening to a lot of our chatter . . ."

"So that, dear madam, was where you first met your husband?"

"Yes, that was where I met him!" Her voice was firm and happy, and as she smiled the little delicate blue vein stood out strangely and strenuously above her brow. "He was visiting my father on business, you see. He came to dinner the following evening, and only three days later he asked for my hand."

"Really! Did it all happen so very fast?"

"Yes . . . Or rather, from then on it went a little more slowly. You see, my father was not at all keen on the marriage, and insisted on our postponing it for quite a long time to think it over properly. It was partly that he would have preferred me to go on living with him, and he had other reservations about it as well. But . . ."

"But?"

"But *I* was quite determined," she said with a smile, and once more the little pale blue vein overshadowed her sweet face with an anxious, sickly expression.

"Ah, you were determined."

"Yes, and I made my wishes quite clear and stood my ground, as you see . . ."

"As I see. Yes."

". . . so that my father had to give his consent in the end."

"And so you forsook him and his violin, you forsook the old house and the overgrown garden and the fountain and your six friends, and followed after Herr Klöterjahn."

" 'And followed after. . . .' How strangely you put things, Herr Spinell! It sounds almost biblical! Yes, I left all that behind me, for after all, that is the law of nature."

"Of nature, yes, I daresay it is."

"And after all, my future happiness was at stake."

"Of course. And you came to know that happiness . . ."

"I came to know it, Herr Spinell, when they first brought little Anton to me, our little Anton, and when I heard him crying so noisily with his healthy little lungs, the strong, healthy little creature . . ."

"I have heard you mention the good health of your little Anton before, dear lady. He must be a quite exceptionally healthy child?"

"Yes, he is. And he looks so absurdly like my husband!"

"Ah! I see. So that was how it happened. And now your name is no longer Eckhof, but something else, and you have your healthy little Anton and a slight defect of the trachea."

"Yes. And as for *you*, Herr Spinell, you are a most mysterious person, I do assure you . . ."

"Yes, upon my word, so you are!" said Rätin Spatz, who was, after all, still there.

But this conversation too was one to which Herr Klöterjahn's wife afterward frequently reverted in her thoughts. Insignificant though it had been, there had nevertheless been several things latent in it which gave her food for reflection about herself. Could *this* be the harmful influence that was affecting her? Her weakness increased, and her temperature often rose: she would lie in a quiet feverish glow, in a state of mild euphoria to which she surrendered herself pensively, fastidiously, complacently, with a faintly injured air. When she was not confined to her bed, Herr Spinell would approach her, tiptoeing up to her on his great feet with extreme circumspection, stopping at a distance of two paces with one leg poised a little way behind the other, and bowing from the waist; he would talk to her in a deferentially muted voice, as if he were raising her gently aloft with reverent awe, and laying her down on soft cushioning clouds where no strident noise nor earthly contact should reach her. At such moments she would remember Herr Klöterjahn's way of saying "Careful, Gabriele, take care, darling, and keep your mouth closed!" in a voice as hard

as a well-meant slap on the back. But then she would at once put this memory aside and lie back weakly and euphorically on the cloudy cushions which Herr Spinell so assiduously spread out beneath her.

One day, apropos of nothing at all, she suddenly reverted to the little conversation they had had about her background and earlier life.

"So it is really true, Herr Spinell," she asked, "that you would have seen the crown?"

And although it was already a fortnight since they had talked of this, he at once knew what she meant and ardently assured her that if he had been there then, as she sat with her six friends by the fountain, he would have seen the little golden crown gleaming—would have seen it secretly gleaming in her hair.

A few days later one of the patients politely inquired whether her little Anton at home was in good health. She exchanged a fleeting glance with Herr Spinell who was nearby, and answered with a slightly bored expression:

"Thank you, he is quite well; why should he not be? And so is my husband."

8

One frosty day at the end of February, a day purer and more brilliant than any that had preceded it, high spirits prevailed at Einfried. The heart cases chattered away to each other with flushed cheeks, the diabetic general hummed and chirruped like a boy, and the gentlemen with the unruly legs were quite beside themselves with excitement. What was it all about? A communal outing had been planned, nothing less: an excursion into the mountains in several sleighs, with jingling bells and cracking whips. Dr. Leander had decided upon this diversion for his patients.

Of course, the "serious cases" would have to stay at home, poor things! With much meaningful nodding it was tacitly agreed that the entire project must be con-

cealed from them, and the opportunity to exercise this degree of compassion and consideration filled everyone with a glow of self-righteousness. But even a few of those who might very well have taken part in the treat declined to do so. Fräulein von Osterloh was of course excused in any case. No one so overburdened with duties as herself could seriously contemplate going on sleigh excursions. The tasks of the household imperatively required her presence—and in short, at Einfried she remained. But there was general disappointment when Herr Klöterjahn's wife also declared her intention of staying at home. In vain Dr. Leander urged upon her the benefits of the refreshing trip; she insisted that she was not in the mood, that she had a headache, that she felt tired; and so there was no more to be said. But the cynical would-be wit took occasion to observe:

"Mark my words, now Big Baby won't come either."

And he was right, for Herr Spinell let it be known that he intended to spend the afternoon working—he was very fond of describing his dubious activity as "work." The prospect of his absence was in any case regretted by no one, and equally little dismay was caused by Rätin Spatz's decision to remain behind and keep her young friend company, since (as she said) sleigh riding made her feel seasick.

There was an early lunch that day, at about noon, and immediately after it the sleighs drew up in front of Einfried. The patients, warmly wrapped up, made their way across the garden in animated groups, full of excitement and curiosity. The scene was watched by Herr Klöterjahn's wife and Rätin Spatz from the glass door leading out onto the terrace, and by Herr Spinell from the window of his room. There was a certain amount of playful and hilarious fighting about who should sit where; Fräulein von Osterloh, with a fur boa round her neck, darted from sleigh to sleigh pushing hampers of food under the seats; finally Dr. Leander, wearing a fur cap above his flashing spectacles, sat down himself after a last look round, and gave the signal for departure . . . The horses drew away, a few ladies shrieked and fell over

backward, the bells jangled, the short-shafted whips cracked and their long lashes trailed across the snow beside the runners; and Fräulein von Osterloh stood at the garden gate waving her handkerchief until the vehicles slid out of sight round a bend in the road and the merry noise died away. Then she hurried back through the garden to set about her tasks again; the two ladies left the glass door, and almost simultaneously Herr Spinell retired from his vantage point.

Silence prevailed in Einfried. The expedition was not expected back before evening. The "serious cases" lay in their rooms and suffered. Herr Klöterjahn's wife and her companion took a short walk and then withdrew to their rooms. Herr Spinell, too, was in his room, occupied after his fashion. At about four o'clock half a litre of milk was brought to each of the ladies, and Herr Spinell was served with his usual weak tea. Shortly after this Herr Klöterjahn's wife tapped on the wall between her room and that of Magistratsrätin Spatz and said:

"Shall we go down into the drawing room, Frau Rätin? I really can't think of anything else to do here."

"Certainly, my dear, I'll come at once," answered Frau Spatz. "I'll just put on my boots, if you don't mind; as a matter of fact, you know, I've been lying down for a little rest."

As might have been expected, the drawing room was empty. The ladies sat down by the fireplace. Rätin Spatz was embroidering flowers on a piece of canvas; Herr Klöterjahn's wife, too, began a little needlework, but presently let it drop into her lap and gazed dreamily over the arm of her chair at nothing in particular. Finally she made a remark which was really not worth opening one's mouth to reply to. Rätin Spatz, however, nevertheless asked: "What did you say, my dear?" so that to her humiliation she had to repeat the whole sentence. Rätin Spatz again asked: "What?" But just at this moment they heard steps in the lobby, the door opened and Herr Spinell came into the room.

"Do I disturb you?" he asked softly, pausing on the threshold, looking only at Herr Klöterjahn's wife, and

executing a kind of delicately hovering half-bow from the waist . . . She replied:

"Why, not at all, Herr Spinell! In the first place this room is supposed to be open to all comers, as you know, and in any case what is there to disturb? I have a very strong suspicion that I am boring Frau Spatz . . ."

He could think of no answer to this, but merely smiled, showing his carious teeth. The eyes of the two ladies followed him as with a certain air of embarrassment he walked to the glass door, where he stopped and stood looking out, rather ill-manneredly turning his back on them. Then he half turned toward them, but continued to gaze out into the garden as he said:

"The sun has disappeared. The sky has imperceptibly clouded over. It's beginning to get dark already."

"Yes, indeed, there are shadows everywhere," replied Herr Klöterjahn's wife. "I should think it may well be snowing before our sleighing party gets back. Yesterday at this time it was still broad daylight, and now dusk is falling."

"Oh," he said, "what a relief it is to the eyes! There has been too much brightness these last few weeks—too much of this sun which glares with such obtrusive clarity on everything, whether beautiful or vulgar . . . I am really thankful that it is hiding its face for a little at last."

"Do you not like the sun, Herr Spinell?"

"Well, I am no painter, you know . . . When there is no sun one feels more spiritual. There is a thick, pale gray layer of cloud all over the sky. Perhaps it means there will be a thaw tomorrow. Incidentally I would not advise you, dear madam, to go on gazing at your needlework over there."

"Oh, you need not worry, I've stopped it in any case. But what else is there to do?"

He had sat down on the revolving stool in front of the piano, leaning on the lid of the instrument with one arm.

"Music . . ." he said. "If only there were a chance to hear a little music nowadays! Sometimes the English children sing little Negro songs, and that is all."

"And yesterday afternoon Fräulein von Osterloh gave

a high-speed rendering of 'The Monastery Bells,'" remarked Herr Klöterjahn's wife.

"But dear lady, you play, do you not?" he said pleadingly, and rose to his feet . . . "There was a time when you used to make music every day with your father."

"Yes, Herr Spinell, that was in the old days! The days of the fountain in the garden, you know . . ."

"Do it today!" he begged. "Play a few bars just this once! If you knew how I craved to hear them . . ."

"Our family doctor and Dr. Leander have both expressly forbidden me to play, Herr Spinell."

"They are not here; neither of them are here! We are free . . . you are free, dear lady! A few trifling little chords . . ."

"No, Herr Spinell, it's no use your trying to persuade me. Heaven knows what sort of marvels you expect of me! And I have forgotten everything, I assure you. I can play scarcely a note by heart."

"Oh, then play that! Play scarcely a note! Besides, there is some music here too—here it is, on the top of the piano. No, this is nothing. But here is some Chopin . . ."

"Chopin?"

"Yes, the nocturnes. And now all that remains is for us to light the candles . . ."

"Don't imagine that I am going to play, Herr Spinell! I must not play! What if it were to do me harm?"

He was silent. With his great feet, his long black coat, his gray hair and his beardless face with its indistinctly outlined features, he stood there in the light of the two piano candles, letting his hands hang down by his sides.

Finally he said in a soft voice: "In that case I cannot ask it of you. If you are afraid it will do you harm, dear madam, then let the beauty that might come to life under your fingers remain dead and mute. You were not always so very prudent; at least you were not so when you were asked to make the opposite decision and renounce beauty. You were not concerned about your bodily welfare then, you showed less hesitation and a stronger will when you left the fountain and took off the little golden crown . . . Listen!" he said after a pause, dropping his

voice still lower. "If you sit here now and play as you once did, when your father was still standing beside you and drawing those notes out of his violin that brought tears to your eyes—then perhaps it will be seen again, gleaming secretly in your hair, the little golden crown . . ."

"Really?" she said, with a smile. It somehow happened that her voice failed her on this word, which came out huskily and half in a whisper. She cleared her throat and asked:

"Are those really Chopin's nocturnes you have there?"

"Indeed they are. They are open and everything is ready."

"Well, so be it; if I must, I will play one of them," she said. "But only one, do you understand? In any case, after one you certainly won't want to hear any more."

So saying she rose, put down her needlework and came across to the piano. She sat down on the revolving stool, on which two or three bound volumes of music lay; she adjusted the lights, and began turning over the pages of the Chopin album. Herr Spinell had drawn up a chair, and sat beside her like a music master.

She played the Nocturne in E-flat major, Opus 9, no. 2. If it was really true that she had forgotten anything of what she had once learned, then she must in those days have been a consummate artist. The piano was only a mediocre one, but after the very first notes she was able to handle it with perfect taste and control. She showed a highly sensitive appreciation of differences of timbre, and her enthusiastic command of rhythmic mobility verged on the fantastic. Her touch was both firm and gentle. Under her hands the melody sang forth its uttermost sweetness, and the figurations entwined themselves round it with diffident grace.

She was wearing the dress she had worn on the day of her arrival, the one with the dark heavy bodice and the thick cut-velvet arabesques, which gave to her head and her hands a look of such unearthly delicacy. The expression of her face did not change as she played, but her lips seemed to grow more clear-cut than ever and the

shadows seemed to deepen in the corners of her eyes. When she had finished she lowered her hands to her lap and went on gazing at the music. Herr Spinell sat on motionless, without saying a word.

She played another nocturne, she played a second and a third. Then she rose, but only to look for some more music on the top of the piano.

It occurred to Herr Spinell to examine the black bound albums on the piano stool. Suddenly he uttered an unintelligible sound, and his great white hands passionately fingered one of the neglected volumes.

"It's not possible! . . . It can't be true! . . . And yet there is no doubt of it! . . . Do you know what this is? . . . Do you realize what has been lying here—what I have in my hands? . . ."

"What is it?" she asked.

Speechlessly he pointed to the title page. He had turned quite pale; he lowered the volume and looked at her with trembling lips.

"Indeed? I wonder how that got here? Well, give it to me," she said simply. She put it on the music stand, sat down, and after a moment's silence began to play the first page.

He sat beside her, leaning forward, with his hands between his knees and his head bowed. She played the opening at an extravagantly, tormentingly slow tempo, with a disturbingly long pause between each of the phrases. The *Sehnsucht* motif, a lonely wandering voice in the night, softly uttered its tremulous question. Silence followed, a silence of waiting. And then the answer: the same hesitant, lonely strain, but higher in pitch, more radiant and tender. Silence again. And then, with that wonderful muted sforzando which is like an upsurging, uprearing impulse of joy and passion, the love motif began: it rose, it climbed ecstatically to a mingling sweetness, reached its climax and fell away, while the deep song of the cellos came into prominence and continued the melody in grave, sorrowful rapture . . .

Despite the inferiority of her instrument the performer tried with some success to suggest the appropriate orches-

tral effects. She rendered with brilliant precision the violin scales in the great crescendo. She played with fastidious reverence, lingering faithfully over every significant detail of the structure, humbly and ceremoniously exhibiting it, like a priest elevating the sacred host. What story did the music tell? It told of two forces, two enraptured lovers reaching out toward each other in suffering and ecstasy and embracing in a convulsive mad desire for eternity, for the absolute . . . The prelude blazed to its consummation and died down. She stopped at the point where the curtain parts and continued to gaze silently at the music.

The boredom of Rätin Spatz had by this time reached that degree of intensity at which it causes protrusion of the eyes and a terrifying, corpselike disfigurement of the human countenance. In addition this kind of music affected her stomach nerves, it threw her dyspeptic organism into a turmoil of anxiety, and Frau Spatz began to fear that she was about to have a fit.

"I'm afraid I must go to my room," she said in a faint voice. "Good-bye, I shall be back presently."

And she departed. The evening dusk was already far advanced. Outside on the terrace, thick snow was silently falling. The two candles gave a close and flickering light.

"The second act," he whispered; and she turned the pages and began playing the second act.

The sound of horns dying away in the distance . . . or was it the wind in the leaves? The soft murmuring of the stream? Already the night had flooded the grove with its stillness and hushed the castle halls, and no warning entreaty availed now to stem the tide of overmastering desire. The sacred mystery was enacted. The torch was extinguished; the descending notes of the death motif spoke with a strange, suddenly clouded sonority; and in tumultuous impatience the white veil was passionately waved, signaling to the beloved as he approached with outspread arms through the darkness.

Oh boundless, oh unending exultation of this meeting in an eternal place beyond all visible things! Delivered from the tormenting illusion, set free from the bondage

of space and time, self and not-self blissfully mingling, "thine" and "mine" mystically made one! The mocking falsehoods of day could divide them, but its pomp and show no longer had power to deceive them, for the magic potion had opened their eyes: it had made them initiates and visionaries of night. He who has gazed with love into the darkness of death and beheld its sweet mystery can long for one thing only while daylight still holds him in its delusive thrall: all his desire and yearning is for the sacred night which is eternal and true, and which unifies all that has been separated.

O sink down, night of love, upon them; give them that forgetfulness they long for, enfold them utterly in your joy and free them from the world of deception and division! "See, the last lamp has been extinguished! Thought and the vanity of thinking have vanished in the holy twilight, the world-redeeming dusk outspread over all illusion and all woe. And then, as the shining phantasms fade and my eyes fail with passion: then this, from which delusive day debarred me, with which it falsely and tormentingly confronted my endless desire—then I myself, oh wonder of wishes granted! then *I myself* am the world . . ." And there followed Brangäne's warning call, with those rising violin phrases that pass all understanding.

"I am not always sure what it means, Herr Spinell; I can only guess at some of it. What is 'then—I myself am the world'?"

He explained it to her, softly and briefly.

"Yes, I see. But how can you understand it all so well, and yet not be able to play it?"

Strangely enough, this simple question quite overwhelmed him. He colored, wrung his hands and seemed to sink into the floor, chair and all.

Finally he answered in stricken tones:

"The two seldom go together. No, I cannot play. But please continue."

And the drunken paeans of the mystery drama continued. "Can love ever die? Tristan's love? The love of thy Isolde, of my Isolde? Oh, it is everlasting, death can-

not assail it! What could perish by death but the powers that interfere, the pretenses that part us, we who are two and one?" By the sweet word "and" love bound them together—and if death should sunder that bond, how could death come to either of them and not bring with it the other's own life? . . . And thus they sang their mysterious duo, sang of their nameless hope, their death-in-love, their union unending, lost for ever in the embrace of night's magic kingdom. O sweet night, everlasting night of love! Land of blessedness whose frontiers are infinite! What visionary once has dreamed of you and does not dread to wake again into desolate day? O grace of death, cast out that dread! Set free these lovers utterly from the anguish of waking! Ah, this miraculous tempest of rhythms, this chromatic uprushing ecstasy, this metaphysical revelation! "A rapture beyond knowing, beyond foregoing, far from the pangs of the light that parts us, a tender longing with no fear or feigning, a ceasing in beauty with no pain, an enchanted dreaming in immensity! Thou art Isolde, I am Isolde no longer; I am Tristan no longer, thou art Tristan—"

At this point there was a startling interruption. The pianist suddenly stopped playing and shaded her eyes with her hand to peer into the darkness; and Herr Spinell swung round on his chair. At the far side of the room the door that led into the passage had opened, and a shadowy figure entered, leaning on the arm of a second figure. It was one of the Einfried patients, one who had also been unable to join in the sleigh ride, but had chosen this evening hour for one of her pathetic instinctive tours round the institution: it was the lady who had had nineteen children and was no longer capable of any mental activity—it was Pastorin Höhlenrauch on the arm of her companion. She did not raise her eyes, but wandered with groping steps across the background of the room and disappeared through the opposite door, like a sleepwalker, dumb and staring and conscious of nothing. All was silent.

"That was Pastorin Höhlenrauch," he said.

"Yes, that was poor Frau Höhlenrauch," she replied.

Then she turned the pages and played the closing passage of the whole work, the Liebestod, Isolde's death song.

How pale and clear her lips were, and how the shadows deepened in the corners of her eyes! The little pale blue vein over one eyebrow, which gave her face such a disturbingly strained look, stood out more and more prominently on her transparent forehead. Under her rapidly moving hands the fantastic crescendo mounted to its climax, broken by that almost shameless, sudden pianissimo in which the ground seems to slide away under our feet and a sublime lust to engulf us in its depths. The triumph of a vast release, a tremendous fulfillment, a roaring tumult of immense delight, was heard and heard again, insatiably repeated, flooding back and reshaping itself; when it seemed on the point of ebbing away it once more wove the *Sehnsucht* motif into its harmony, then breathed out its uttermost breath and died, faded into silence, floated into nothingness. A profound stillness reigned.

They both sat listening, tilting their heads to one side and listening.

"That's the sound of bells," she said.

"It's the sleighs," he said. "I shall go."

He rose and walked across the room. When he came to the door at the far end he stopped, turned round and stood for a moment, uneasily shifting his weight from one foot to the other. And then, fifteen or twenty paces from her, he suddenly sank down on his knees—down on both knees, without a word. His long black frock coat spread out around him on the floor. His hands were clasped across his mouth and his shoulders twitched convulsively.

She sat with her hands in her lap, leaning forward away from the piano, and looked at him. She was smiling with a strained, uncertain smile, and her eyes gazed pensively into the half-darkness, focusing themselves with difficulty, with a slight uncontrollable unsteadiness.

From some way off the jangle of sleigh bells, the crack of whips and a babel of human voices could be heard approaching.

9

The sleigh excursion, which remained the chief topic of conversation for a considerable time, had taken place on the twenty-sixth of February. On the twenty-seventh a thaw set in, everything turned soft and slushy and dripped and dribbled, and on that day Herr Klöterjahn's wife was in excellent health. On the twenty-eighth she coughed up a little blood—oh, hardly any to speak of; but it was blood. At the same time she began to feel weaker than she had ever felt before, and took to her bed.

Dr. Leander examined her, and his face as he did so was cold and hard. He then prescribed the remedies indicated by medical science: small pieces of ice, morphine, complete rest. It also happened that on the following day he declared himself unable to continue the treatment personally owing to pressure of work, and handed it over to Dr. Müller, who meekly undertook it, as his contract required. He was a quiet, pale, insignificant, sad-looking man, whose modest and unapplauded function it was to care for those patients who were scarcely ill at all and for those whose cases were hopeless.

The opinion expressed by Dr. Müller, first and foremost, was that the separation between Herr Klöterjahn and his wedded wife had now lasted rather a long time. It was, in his view, extremely desirable that Herr Klöterjahn—if, of course, his prosperous business could possibly spare him—should pay another visit to Einfried. One might write to him, one might even send him a little telegram . . . And it would, Dr. Müller thought, undoubtedly cheer and strengthen the young mother if he were to bring little Anton with him—quite apart from the fact that it would be of considerable interest to the doctors to make the acquaintance of this very healthy little child.

And lo and behold, Herr Klöterjahn came. He had received Dr. Müller's little telegram and had arrived from the Baltic coast. He dismounted from the carriage, ordered coffee and buttered rolls and looked extremely put out.

"Sir," he said, "what is the matter? Why have I been summoned like this?"

"Because it is desirable," answered Dr. Müller, "that you should be near your wife at the present time."

"Desirable . . . desirable . . . ! But is it *necessary*? I have to consider my money, sir—times are bad and railway fares are high. Was this lengthy journey really indispensable? I'd say nothing if for example it were her lungs; but since, thank God, it's only her trachea . . ."

"Herr Klöterjahn," said Dr. Müller gently, "in the first place the trachea is an important organ . . ." He said "in the first place," but this was incorrect, since he did not then mention any second place.

But simultaneously with Herr Klöterjahn a buxom young woman appeared in Einfried, clad entirely in red and tartan and gold, and it was she who on one arm carried Anton Klöterjahn, Jr., little healthy Anton. Yes —he was here, and no one could deny that he was in fact a prodigy of good health. Pink and white, cleanly and freshly clothed, fat and fragrant, he reposed heavily upon the bare red arm of his extravagantly appareled nurse, devoured enormous quantities of milk and chopped meat, screamed and abandoned himself in all respects to his instincts.

From the window of his room, Spinell the writer had observed the arrival of the Klöterjahn child. Through half-closed eyes, with a strange yet penetrating scrutiny, he had watched him being lifted out of the carriage and conveyed into the house; and he had then stood on motionless for some time with his expression unchanged.

Thereafter, so far as was feasible, he avoided all contact with Anton Klöterjahn, Jr.

10

Herr Spinell was sitting in his room "working."

It was a room like all the others in Einfried, furnished in a simple and elegant period style. The massive chest of drawers had metal lion's-head mountings; the tall pier

glass was not one smooth sheet, but composed of numerous small panes framed in lead; the polished floor was uncarpeted and the stiff legs of the furniture seemed to extend into its bluish lacquered surface in clearly defined reflections. A large writing table stood near the window, across which the novelist had drawn a yellow curtain, presumably to make himself feel more spiritual.

In a yellowish twilight he was sitting bowed over the desk and writing—he was writing one of those numerous letters which he sent to the post every week and to which, comically enough, he usually received no reply. A large thick sheet of writing paper lay before him, and in its top left-hand corner, under an intricately vignetted landscape, the name "Detlev Spinell" was printed in letters of an entirely novel design. He was covering this sheet with tiny handwriting, with a neat and most carefully executed calligraphy.

"Sir!" he had written, "I am addressing the following lines to you because I simply cannot help it—because my heart is so full of what I have to say to you that it aches and trembles, and the words come to me in such a rush that they would choke me if I could not unburden myself of them in this letter . . ."

To be strictly correct, this statement about the words coming to him in a rush was quite simply untrue, and God knows what foolish vanity induced Herr Spinell to make such an assertion. Rushing was the very last thing his words seemed to be doing; indeed, for one whose profession and social status it was to be a writer, he was making miserably slow progress, and no one could have watched him without coming to the conclusion that a writer is a man who finds writing more difficult than anyone else.

Between two fingertips he held one of the strange little downy hairs that grew on his face and went on twirling it for periods of a quarter of an hour or more, at the same time staring into vacancy and adding not a line to his composition; he would then daintily pen a few words and come to a halt once more. On the other hand it must be admitted that what he finally produced did give the im-

pression of smooth spontaneity and vigor, notwithstanding its odd and dubious and often scarcely intelligible content.

"I am," the letter continued, "under an inescapable compulsion to make you see what I see, to make you share the inextinguishable vision that has haunted me for weeks, to make you see it with my eyes, illuminated by the language in which I myself would express what I inwardly behold. An imperative instinct bids me communicate my experiences to the world, to communicate them in unforgettable words each chosen and placed with burning accuracy; and this is an instinct which it is my habit to obey. I ask you, therefore, to hear me.

"I merely wish to tell you about something as it was and as it now is. It is a quite short and unspeakably outrageous story, and I shall tell it without comment, accusation or judgment, but in my own words. It is the story of Gabriele Eckhof, sir, the lady whom you call your wife . . . and please note: although the experience was yours, it is nevertheless I whose words will for the first time raise it for you to the level of a significant event.

"Do you remember the garden, sir, the old neglected garden behind that gray patrician house? Green moss grew in the crevices of the weather-beaten walls that surrounded this wild and dreaming place. And do you remember the fountain in the center? Lilac-colored sword lilies drooped over its crumbling edge, and its silvery jet murmured mysteriously as it played upon the riven stonework. The summer day was drawing to its close.

"Seven maidens were sitting in a circle round the fountain; but in the hair of the seventh, the one and chiefest among them all, the sunset's rays seemed secretly to be weaving a glittering emblem of royal rank. Her eyes were like troubled dreams, and yet her bright lips were parted in a smile . . .

"They were singing. Lifting their slender faces they watched the leaping jet, they gazed up at the point where it wearily and nobly curved into its fall, and their soft clear voices hovered around its graceful dance. Their

delicate hands, perhaps, were clasped about their knees as they sang . . .

"Do you remember this scene, sir? Did you even see it? No, you did not. It was not for your eyes, and yours were not the ears to hear the chaste sweetness of that melody. Had you seen it, you would not have dared to draw breath, and your heart would have checked its beat. You would have had to withdraw, go back into life, back to your own life, and preserve what you had beheld as something untouchable and inviolable, as a sacred treasure within your soul, to the end of your earthly days. But what did you do?

"That scene, sir, was the end of a tale. Why did you have to come and destroy it, why give the story so vulgar and ugly and painful a sequel? It had been a moving, tranquil apotheosis, immersed in the transfiguring sunset glow of decline and decay and extinction. An old family, already grown too weary and too noble for life and action, had reached the end of its history, and its last utterances were sounds of music: a few violin notes, full of the sad insight which is ripeness for death . . . Did you look into the eyes that were filled with tears by those notes? It may be that the souls of her six companions belonged to life—but not hers, the soul of their sister and queen: for on it beauty and death had set their mark.

"You saw it, that death-doomed beauty: you looked upon it to lust after it. No reverence, no awe touched your heart at the sight of something so moving and holy. You were not content to look upon it: you had to possess it, to exploit it, to desecrate it. . . . What a subtle choice you made! You are a gourmet, sir, a plebeian gourmet, a peasant with taste.

"Please note that I have no wish whatever to offend you. What I have said is not abuse: I am merely stating the formula, the simple psychological formula of your simple, aesthetically quite uninteresting personality; and I am stating it solely because I feel the need to shed a little light for you on your own nature and behavior—because it is my ineluctable vocation on this earth to call things by their names, to make them articulate, and to

illuminate whatever is unconscious. The world is full of what I call 'the unconscious type,' and all these unconscious types are what I cannot bear! I cannot bear all this primitive, ignorant life, all this naive activity, this world of infuriating intellectual blindness all round me! I am possessed by a tormenting irresistible impulse to analyze all these human lives everywhere, to do my utmost to give to each its correct definition and bring it to consciousness of itself—and I am unrestrained by consideration of the consequences of doing so, I care not whether my words help or hinder, whether they carry comfort and solace or inflict pain.

"You, sir, as I have said, are a plebeian gourmet, a peasant with taste. Although in fact your natural constitution is coarse and your position on the evolutionary scale extremely low, your wealth and your sedentary habits have made it possible for your nervous system to achieve a kind of barbarian decadence or *pourriture ignoble*, sudden and historically quite inappropriate, but lending a certain lascivious refinement to your appetites. I dare say your throat muscles began to contract automatically, as if stimulated by the prospect of swallowing some delicious soup or masticating some rare dish, when you decided to take possession of Gabriele Eckhof . . .

"What did you actually do? You interrupted her dream and imposed your misguided will upon hers; you led her out of the neglected garden into life and ugliness; you gave her your vulgar name and made her a married woman, a housewife, a mother. You degraded that weary, diffident beauty, which belonged to death and was blossoming in sublime uselessness, by harnessing it to the service of everyday triviality and of that mindless, gross and contemptible idol which is called 'nature'; and your peasant conscience has never stirred with the slightest inkling of how profound an outrage you committed.

"Once again: what in fact has happened? She, with those eyes that are like troubled dreams, has borne you a child; to that creature, that mere continuation of its begetter's crude existence, she at the same time gave every particle of vitality and viability she possessed—and now she dies.

She is dying, sir! And if nevertheless her departure is not vulgar and trivial, if at the very end she has risen from her degradation and perishes proudly and joyfully under the deadly kiss of beauty, then it is *I* who have made it my business to bring that about. You, I dare say, were in the meantime diverting yourself in quiet corridors with chambermaids.

"But her son, Gabriele Eckhof's son, is living and thriving and triumphant. Perhaps he will continue his father's career and become an active trading citizen, paying his taxes and eating well; perhaps he will be a soldier or an official, an unenlightened and efficient pillar of society; in any case he will be a normally functioning philistine type, unscrupulous and self-assured, strong and stupid.

"Let me confess to you, sir, that I hate you, you and your child, as I hate life itself—the vulgar, absurd and nevertheless triumphant life which you represent, and which is the eternal antithesis and archenemy of beauty. I cannot say that I despise you. I am unable to despise you. I honestly admit this. You are the stronger man. In our struggle I have only one thing to turn against you, the sublime avenging weapon of the weak: intellect and the power of words. Today I have used this weapon. For this letter—here too let me make an honest admission—is nothing but an act of revenge; and if it contains even a single phrase that is biting and brilliant and beautiful enough to strike home, to make you aware of an alien force, to shake your robust equanimity even for one moment, then I shall exult in that discomfiture.—DETLEV SPINELL."

And Herr Spinell put this piece of writing into an envelope, added a stamp, daintily penned an address, and delivered it to the post.

11

Herr Klöterjahn knocked at the door of Herr Spinell's room; he held a large, neatly written sheet of paper in

one hand, and wore the air of a man determined upon energetic measures. The post had done its duty, the letter had completed its curious journey from Einfried to Einfried and had duly reached its intended recipient. The time was four o'clock in the afternoon.

When Herr Klöterjahn entered, Herr Spinell was sitting on the sofa reading his own novel, the book with the baffling cover design. He rose to his feet with a surprised and interrogative glance at his visitor, while at the same time coloring perceptibly.

"Good afternoon," said Herr Klöterjahn. "Pardon my intrusion upon your occupations. But may I ask whether you wrote this?" So saying he held up the large, neatly written sheet in his left hand and struck it with the back of his right, making it crackle sharply. He then pushed his right hand into the pocket of his large, easy-fitting trousers, tilted his head to one side and opened his mouth to listen, as some people do.

Oddly enough Herr Spinell smiled; with an obliging, rather confused and half apologetic smile he raised one hand to his forehead as if he were trying to recollect what he had done, and said:

"Ah yes . . . that is so . . . I took the liberty . . ."

The fact was that on this particular day he had acted in accordance with his true nature and slept until noon. Consequently he was suffering from a bad conscience, his head was not clear, he felt nervous and his resistance was low. In addition there was now a touch of spring in the air, which he found fatiguing and deeply depressing. This must all be mentioned in extenuation of the pitifully silly figure he cut throughout the following scene.

"Did you indeed? Ah-ha! Very well!" Herr Klöterjahn, having got this opening formality out of the way, thrust his chin down against his chest, raised his eyebrows, flexed his arms and gave various other indications that he was about to come mercilessly to the point. His exuberant self-satisfaction was such that he slightly overdid these preparatory antics, so that what eventually followed did

not quite live up to the elaborate menace of the preliminary pantomime. But Herr Spinell had turned several shades paler.

"Very well, my dear sir!" repeated Herr Klöterjahn. "Then I shall answer it by word of mouth, if you don't mind, having regard to the fact that I consider it idiotic to write letters several pages long to a person to whom one can speak at any hour of the day . . ."

"Well . . . idiotic perhaps . . ." said Herr Spinell with an apologetic, almost humble smile.

"Idiotic!" repeated Herr Klöterjahn, energetically shaking his head in token of the utter unassailability of his position. "And I'd not be wasting words now on this scribbled piece of trash, frankly I'd not even have kept it to use for wrapping up sandwiches, but for the fact that it has opened my eyes and clarified certain matters which I had not understood, certain changes . . . however, that's no concern of yours and it's beside the point. I am a busy man, I have more important things to think about than your indistinguishable visions . . ."

"I wrote 'inextinguishable vision,' " said Herr Spinell, drawing himself up to his full height. During this whole scene it was the one moment in which he displayed a minimum of dignity.

"Inextinguishable . . . indistinguishable . . . !" retorted Herr Klöterjahn, glancing at the manuscript. "Your handwriting's wretched, my dear sir; you'd not get a job in my office. At first sight it seems decent enough, but when you look at it closely it's full of gaps and all of a quiver. However, that's your affair and not mine. I came here to tell you that in the first place you are a fool and a clown—well, let's hope you're aware of that already. But in addition you are a damned coward, and I dare say I don't need to prove that to you in detail either. My wife once wrote to me that when you meet women you don't look them square in the face but just give them a sort of squint from the side, because you're afraid of reality and want to carry away a beautiful impression in your mind's eye. Later on unfortunately she stopped mentioning you

in her letters, or I'd have heard some more fine stories about you. But that's the sort of man you are. It's 'beauty' and 'beauty' in every sentence you speak, but the basis of it all is cringing hypocrisy and envy, and I suppose that also explains your impudent allusion to 'quiet corridors.' I dare say that remark was intended to knock me absolutely flat, and all it did was to give me a good laugh. A damned good laugh! Well, now have I told you a few home truths? Have I—let me see—'shed a little light for you on your nature and behavior,' you miserable specimen? Not of course that it's my 'indestructible vocation' to do so, heh, heh! . . ."

"I wrote 'ineluctable vocation,' " said Herr Spinell; but he let the point go. He stood there crestfallen and helpless, like a great pathetic gray-haired scolded schoolboy.

"Indestructible . . . ineluctable . . . I tell you you are a contemptible cowardly cur. Every day you see me at table. You bow to me and smile, you pass me dishes and smile, you say the polite things and smile. And one fine day you fling this screed of abusive drivel into my face. Ho, yes, you're bold enough on paper! And this ridiculous letter's not the whole story. You've been intriguing against me behind my back, I see that now quite clearly . . . Although you needn't imagine you've had any success. If you flatter yourself that you've put any fancy notions into my wife's head, then you're barking up the wrong tree, my fine friend! My wife has too much common sense! Or if you presume to think that when I got here with the child her behavior toward us was in any way different from what it used to be, then you're even more of a half-wit than I supposed! It's true she didn't kiss the little fellow, but that was a precaution, because just lately the suggestion's been made that the trouble isn't with her trachea but with her lungs, and if that's so one can't be too . . . but anyhow they're still a long way from proving their lung theory, and as for you and your 'she is dying, sir'—why, you crazy ninny, you . . . !"

Herr Klöterjahn struggled a little to recover his breath. By now he had worked himself up into a passionate rage; he kept stabbing the air with his right forefinger and crumpling the manuscript with his left hand till it was scarcely fit to be seen. His face, between its blond English side-whiskers, had turned terribly red, and swollen veins ran like streaks of wrathful lightning across his clouded brow.

"You hate me," he went on, "and you would despise me if I were not the stronger man . . . Yes, and so I am, by God! My heart's in the right place; and where's yours? In your boots most of the time I suppose, and if it were not forbidden by law I'd knock you to pieces, with your 'intellect and power of words' and all, you blithering snake in the grass! But that does not mean, my fine fellow, that I intend to put up with your insults lying down, and when I get back and show my lawyer that bit about my 'vulgar name'—then we'll see whether you don't get the shock of your life. My name is good, sir, and it's my own hard work that made it good. Just you ask yourself whether anyone will lend you a brass farthing on yours, you idle tramp from God knows where! The law of the land is for dealing with people like you! You're a public danger! You drive people crazy! . . . But I'll have you know that you've not got away with your little tricks this time, my very smart friend! I'm not the man to let your sort get the better of me, oh no! My heart's in the right place . . ."

Herr Klöterjahn was now in a real frenzy. He was positively bellowing, and kept on repeating that his heart was in the right place.

" 'They were singing.' Full stop. They were doing nothing of the sort! They were knitting. What's more, from what I overheard, they were discussing a recipe for potato pancakes; and when I show this passage about 'decline and decay' to my father-in-law, he'll take you to court too, you may be sure of that! . . . 'Do you remember that scene, did you see it?' Of course I saw it, but what I don't see is why I should have held my breath at

the sight and run away. I don't squint and leer at women from the side, I look them in the face, and if I like the look of them and they like me, I go ahead and get them. My heart's in the right pl . . ."

Someone was knocking. Knocking at the door of the room, nine or ten times in rapid succession, in an urgent, frantic little tattoo which stopped Herr Klöterjahn in mid-sentence; and a voice exclaimed, panic-stricken and stumbling with distress and haste:

"Herr Klöterjahn, Herr Klöterjahn—oh, is Herr Klöterjahn there?"

"Keep out!" said Herr Klöterjahn rudely. "What's the matter? I'm busy here talking."

"Herr Klöterjahn," said the tremulous, gasping voice, "you must come . . . the doctors are there too . . . oh, it's so dreadfully sad . . ."

He was at the door with one stride and snatched it open. Rätin Spatz was standing outside. She was holding her handkerchief to her mouth, and great long tears were rolling down into it from both her eyes.

"Herr Klöterjahn," she managed to say, ". . . it's so terribly sad . . . She brought up so much blood, such a dreadful lot . . . She was sitting up quite quietly in her bed humming a little snatch of music to herself, and then it came—oh, God, there was such a lot, you never saw such a lot . . ."

"Is she dead?" shrieked Herr Klöterjahn, seizing Frau Spatz by the arm and dragging her to and fro on the threshold . . . "No, not quite, what? Not quite dead yet, she can still see me, can't she? Brought up a little blood again, has she? From the lungs, was it? Maybe it does come from the lungs, I admit that it may . . . Gabriele!" he cried suddenly, tears starting to his eyes, and the warm, kindly, honest, human emotion that welled up from within him was plain to see. "Yes, I'm coming!" he said, and with long strides he dragged Frau Spatz out of the room and away along the corridor. From far in the distance his rapidly receding voice could still be heard: "Not quite, what? . . . From her lungs, you say?"

12

Herr Spinell went on standing exactly where he had stood throughout Herr Klöterjahn's so abruptly terminated visit. He stared at the open door; finally he advanced a few steps into the passage and listened. But in the distance all was silent; and so he returned to his room, closing the door behind him.

He looked at himself in the mirror for several minutes, then went to his desk, took a small flask and a glass from somewhere inside it and swallowed a brandy—for which in the circumstances he could scarcely be blamed. Then he lay down on the sofa and closed his eyes.

The window was open at the top. Outside in the garden of Einfried the birds were twittering; and somehow the whole of spring was expressed in those subtle, tender, penetrating, insolent little notes. At one point Herr Spinell muttered the phrase "indestructible vocation . . . !" to himself, and shook his head from side to side, sucking the breath in between his teeth as if afflicted by acute nervous discomfort.

To regain calm and composure was out of the question. One's constitution is really quite unsuited to these coarse experiences! By a psychological process the analysis of which would carry us too far afield, Herr Spinell reached the decision to get up and take a little exercise, a short walk in the open air. Accordingly he picked up his hat and left his room.

As he stepped out of the house into the balmy, fragrant air he turned his head back toward the building and slowly raised his eyes until they reached a certain window, a window across which the curtains had been drawn: he gazed fixedly at it for a while, and his expression was grave and somber. Then, with his hands on his back, he went on his way along the gravel path. He was deep in thought as he walked.

The flower beds were still covered with matting, the trees and bushes were still bare; but the snow had gone, and there were only a few damp patches here and there

on the paths. The spacious garden with its grottoes, leafy arcades and little pavilions was bathed in the splendid intense colors of late afternoon, full of strong shadows and a rich golden glow, and intricate patterns of dark branches and twigs stood sharply and finely silhouetted against the bright sky.

It was the time of day at which the sun's outline becomes clear, when it is no longer a shapeless brilliant mass but a visibly sinking disk whose richer, milder glow the eye can bear to behold. Herr Spinell did not see the sun; he walked with his head bowed, humming a little snatch of music to himself, a brief phrase, a few anguished, plaintively rising notes: the *Sehnsucht* motif . . . But suddenly, with a start, with a quick convulsive intake of breath, he stood still as if rooted to the spot and stared straight ahead of him, wide-eyed, with sharply contracted brows and an expression of horrified repugnance . . .

The path had turned; it now led straight toward the setting sun, which stood large and low in the sky, its surface intersected by two narrow wisps of gleaming cloud with gilded edges, its warm yellow radiance flooding the garden and setting the treetops on fire. And in the very midst of this golden transfiguration, erect on the path with the sun's disk surrounding her head like a mighty halo, stood a buxom young woman clad entirely in red and gold and tartan. She was resting her right hand on her well-rounded hip, while with her left she lightly rocked a graceful little perambulator to and fro. But in front of her, in this perambulator, sat the child—sat Anton Klöterjahn, Jr., Gabriele Eckhof's fat son!

There he sat among his cushions, in a white woolly jacket and a big white hat—chubby, magnificent and robust; and his eyes, unabashed and alive with merriment, looked straight into Herr Spinell's. The novelist was just on the point of pulling himself together; after all, he was a grown man, he would have had the strength to step right past this unexpected sight, this resplendent phenomenon, and continue his walk. But at that very moment the appalling thing happened: Anton Klöter-

jahn began to laugh—he screamed with laughter, he squealed, he crowed: it was inexplicable. It was positively uncanny.

God knows what had come over him, what had set him off into this wild hilarity: the sight of the black-clad figure in front of him perhaps, or some sudden spasm of sheer animal high spirits. He had a bone teething ring in one hand and a tin rattle in the other, and he held up these two objects triumphantly into the sunshine, brandishing them and banging them together, as if he were mockingly trying to scare someone off. His eyes were almost screwed shut with pleasure, and his mouth gaped open so wide that his entire pink palate was exposed. He even wagged his head to and fro in his exultation.

And Herr Spinell turned on his heel and walked back the way he had come. Pursued by the infant Klöterjahn's jubilant shrieks, he walked along the gravel path, holding his arms in a careful, prim posture; and something in his gait suggested that it cost him an effort to walk slowly—the effort of a man intent upon concealing the fact that he is inwardly running away.

TONIO KRÖGER

1

THE WINTER SUN was no more than a feeble gleam, milky and wan behind layers of cloud above the narrow streets of the town. Down among the gabled houses it was damp and drafty, with occasional showers of a kind of soft hail that was neither ice nor snow.

tonio kröger

School was over. The hosts of liberated pupils streamed across the paved yard and out through the latticed gate, where they divided and hastened off in opposite directions. The tall ones held their bundles of books in a dignified manner, high up against their left shoulders, and with their right arms to windward steered their course toward dinner; the little ones trotted merrily off with their feet splashing in the icy slush and the paraphernalia of learning rattling about in their sealskin satchels. But now and then they would one and all snatch off their caps with an air of pious awe as some senior master with the beard of Jove and the hat of Wotan strode solemnly by . . .

"Are you coming now, Hans?" said Tonio Kröger; he had been waiting in the street for some time. With a smile he approached his friend, who had just emerged from the gate, chattering to some other boys and about to move off with them . . . "What?" he asked, looking at Tonio . . . "Oh yes, of course! We're going for a bit of a walk."

Tonio did not speak, and his eyes clouded over with sadness. Had Hans forgotten, had he only just remembered that they had arranged to walk home together this afternoon? And he himself, ever since Hans had promised to come, had been almost continuously looking forward to it!

"Well, so long, you fellows," said Hans Hansen to his companions. "I'm going for a bit of a walk now with Kröger." And the two of them turned to the left, while the others sauntered off to the right.

Hans and Tonio had time to take a walk after school, because they both came from families in which dinner was not served until four o'clock. Their fathers were important men of business, who held public office in the town and wielded considerable influence. The Hansens had for many generations owned the large timber yards down by the river, where powerful mechanical saws hissed and spat as they cut up the tree trunks. But Tonio was the son of Consul Kröger, whose sacks of grain could be seen any day being driven through the streets, with his firm's name stamped on them in great black letters; and his spacious old ancestral house was the stateliest in the whole town . . . The two friends were constantly having to doff their caps to their numerous acquaintances; indeed, although they were only fourteen, many of those they met were the first to greet them . . .

Both had slung their satchels across their shoulders, and both were well and warmly dressed: Hans in a short pilot jacket with the broad blue collar of his sailor suit hanging out over his back, and Tonio in a gray belted overcoat. Hans wore a Danish sailor cap with black ribbons, and a shock of his flaxen blond hair stood out from under it. He was extraordinarily good-looking and well built, broad in the shoulders and narrow in the hips, with keen steely blue eyes set wide apart. But Tonio's complexion, under his round fur cap, was swarthy, his features were sharply cut and quite southern in character, and the look in his dark heavy-lidded eyes, ringed with delicate shadows, was dreamy and a little hesitant . . . The outlines of his mouth and chin were unusually soft.

His gait was nonchalant and unsteady, whereas Hans's slender black-stockinged legs moved with a springy and rhythmic step . . .

Tonio was walking in silence. He was suffering. He had drawn his rather slanting brows together and rounded his lips as if to whistle, and was gazing into vacancy with his head tilted to one side. This attitude and facial expression were characteristic of him.

Suddenly Hans pushed his arm under Tonio's with a sidelong glance at him, for he understood very well what was the matter. And although Tonio still did not speak during the next few steps, he suddenly felt very moved.

"I hadn't forgotten, you know, Tonio," said Hans, gazing down at the sidewalk, "I just thought we probably wouldn't be having our walk after all today, because it's so wet and windy. But I don't mind the weather of course, and I think it's marvelous of you to have waited for me all the same. I'd already decided you must have gone home, and I was feeling cross . . ."

Everything in Tonio began to dance with joy at these words.

"Well, then, let's go round along the promenade!" he said, in a voice full of emotion. "Along the Mühlenwall and the Holstenwall, and that'll take us as far as your house, Hans . . . Oh, of course not, it doesn't matter, I don't mind walking home by myself afterward; you can walk me home next time."

In his heart he was not really convinced by what Hans had said, and sensed very clearly that his friend attached only half as much importance as he did to this tête-à-tête walk. But he perceived nevertheless that Hans was sorry for his forgetfulness and was going out of his way to conciliate him. And Tonio was very far from wishing to resist these conciliatory advances . . .

The fact was that Tonio loved Hans Hansen, and had already suffered a great deal on his account. Whoever loves the more is at a disadvantage and must suffer—life had already imparted this hard and simple truth to his fourteen-year-old soul; and his nature was such that when he learned something in this way he took careful note of

it, inwardly writing it down, so to speak, and even taking a certain pleasure in it—though without, of course, modifying his own behavior in the light of it or turning it to any practical account. He had, moreover, the kind of mind that found such lessons much more important and interesting than any of the knowledge that was thrust down his throat at school; indeed, as he sat through the hours of instruction in the vaulted Gothic classrooms, he would chiefly be occupied in savoring these insights to their very depths and thinking out all their implications. And this pastime would give him just the same sort of satisfaction as he felt when he wandered round his own room with his violin (for he played the violin) and drew from it notes of such tenderness as only he could draw, notes which he mingled with the rippling sound of the fountain down in the garden as it leaped and danced under the branches of the old walnut tree . . .

The fountain, the old walnut tree, his violin and the sea in the distance, the Baltic Sea to whose summer reveries he could listen when he visited it in the holidays: these were the things he loved, the things which, so to speak, he arranged around himself and among which his inner life evolved—things with names that may be employed in poetry to good effect, and which did indeed very frequently recur in the poems that Tonio Kröger from time to time composed.

The fact that he possessed a notebook full of poems written by himself had by his own fault become public knowledge, and it very adversely affected his reputation both with his schoolmates and with the masters. Consul Kröger's son on the one hand thought their disapproval stupid and contemptible, and consequently despised his fellow pupils as well as his teachers, whose ill-bred behavior in any case disgusted him and whose personal weaknesses had not escaped his uncommonly penetrating eye. But on the other hand he himself felt that there was something extravagant and really improper about writing poetry, and in a certain sense he could not help agreeing with all those who considered it a very odd occupation.

Nevertheless this did not prevent him from continuing to write . . .

Since he frittered away his time at home and was lethargic and inattentive in class and out of favor with the masters, he continually brought back absolutely wretched reports, to the great annoyance and distress of his father, a tall carefully dressed man with pensive blue eyes who always wore a wild flower in his buttonhole. To Tonio's mother, however—his beautiful dark-haired mother whose first name was Consuelo and who was in every way so unlike the other ladies of that town, his father having in days gone by fetched her up as his bride-to-be from somewhere right at the bottom of the map—to his mother these school reports did not matter in the least . . .

Tonio loved his dark, fiery mother, who played the piano and the mandolin so enchantingly, and he was glad that his dubious standing in human society did not grieve her. But on the other hand he felt that his father's anger was much more dignified and comme il faut, and though scolded by him he basically agreed with his father's view of the matter and found his mother's blithe unconcern slightly disreputable. Often his thoughts would run rather like this: "It's quite enough that I should be as I am and that I will not and cannot change: heedless and intractable and with my mind full of things no one else thinks about. It's at least only right and proper that I should be seriously scolded and punished for it, instead of having it all glossed over with kisses and music. After all, we're not gypsies in a green caravan, but respectable people—the Krögers, Consul Kröger's family . . ." And occasionally he would reflect: "But why is it that I am peculiar, why do I fight against everything, why am I in the masters' bad books and a stranger among the other boys? Just look at them, the good pupils and the solid mediocre ones! They don't find the masters ridiculous, they don't write poetry and they only think the kind of thoughts that one does and should think, the kind that can be spoken aloud. How decent they must

feel, how at peace with everything and everyone! It must be good to be like that . . . But what is the matter with me, and what will come of it all?"

This manner of reflecting upon himself and upon his position in life was an important factor in Tonio's love for Hans Hansen. He loved him firstly because he was beautiful; but secondly because he saw him as his own counterpart and opposite in all respects. Hans Hansen was an outstanding pupil as well as being a fine fellow, a first-class rider and athlete and swimmer who enjoyed universal popularity. The masters almost doted on him, called him by his first name and promoted his interests in every way; his schoolmates vied for his favor; ladies and gentlemen stopped him in the street, seized him by the shock of flaxen blond hair that stood out from under his Danish sailor cap, and said: "Good morning, Hans Hansen, with your nice head of hair! Still top of the class? That's a fine lad! Remember me to your father and mother . . ."

Such was Hans Hansen, and ever since they had first met the very sight of him had filled Tonio Kröger with longing, an envious longing which he could feel as a burning sensation in his chest. "If only one could have blue eyes like yours," he thought, "if only one could live so normally and in such happy harmony with all the world as you do! You are always doing something suitable, something that everyone respects. When you have finished your school tasks you take riding lessons or work at things with your fretsaw, and even when you go down to the sea in the holidays you are busy rowing and sailing and swimming, while I lie idly and forlornly in the sand, staring at the face of the sea and its mysterious expressions that change so quickly. But that is why your eyes are so clear. If only I could be like you . . ."

He made no attempt to become like Hans Hansen, indeed his wish to be like him was perhaps even hardly serious. But he did most painfully desire that Hans should love him for what he was; and so he sought his love, wooing him after his fashion—patiently and ardently and devotedly. It was a wooing full of anguish and sadness,

and this sadness burned deeper and sharper than any impulsive passion such as might have been expected from someone of Tonio's exotic appearance.

And he wooed not entirely in vain; for Hans, who in any case respected in Tonio a certain superiority, a certain gift of speech, a talent for expressing complicated things, sensed very clearly that he had aroused in him an unusually strong and tender feeling. He was grateful for this, and responded in a way that gave Tonio much happiness—but also cost him many a pang of jealousy and disappointment in his frustrated efforts to establish intellectual companionship between them. For oddly enough, although Tonio envied Hans Hansen for being the kind of person he was, he constantly strove to entice him into being like Tonio; and the success of such attempts could at best be only momentary and even then only apparent . . .

"I've just been reading something wonderful, something quite splendid . . ." he was saying. They were walking along eating by turns out of a paper bag of fruit lozenges which they had purchased at Iwersen's store in the Mühlenstrasse for ten pfennigs. "You must read it, Hans. It's *Don Carlos* by Schiller, actually . . . I'll lend it to you if you like . . ."

"Oh, no," said Hans Hansen, "don't bother, Tonio, that isn't my kind of thing. I'd rather stick to my horse books, you know. The illustrations in them are really marvelous. Next time you're at my house I'll show you them. They're split-second photographs, so you can see the horses trotting and galloping and jumping, in all the positions—you can never see them like that in real life because they move so fast . . ."

"In all the positions?" asked Tonio politely. "Yes, that must be nice. But as for *Don Carlos*, you've no idea how superb it is. You'll find such beautiful passages in it that they give you a kind of jolt, it's almost like an explosion. . . ."

"An explosion?" asked Hans Hansen . . . "How do you mean?"

"For example, the passage where the king has wept

because the marquis has betrayed him . . . but the marquis, you see, has only betrayed him to help the prince, he's sacrificing himself for the prince's sake. And then word is brought from the king's study into the anteroom that the king has wept. 'Wept?' 'The king wept?' All the courtiers are absolutely amazed, and it pierces you through and through, because he's a frightfully strict and stern king. But you can understand so well why he weeps, and actually I feel sorrier for him than for the prince and the marquis put together. He's always so very alone, and no one loves him, and then he thinks he has found someone, and that's the very man who betrays him . . ."

Hans Hansen glanced sideways at Tonio's face, and something in it must have aroused his interest in the subject, for he suddenly linked arms with him again and asked:

"Why, how does he betray him, Tonio?"

Tonio's heart leapt.

"Well, you see," he began, "all the dispatches for Brabant and Flanders . . ."

"Here comes Erwin Jimmerthal," said Hans.

Tonio fell silent. If only, he thought, the earth would open and swallow that fellow Jimmerthal up! Why does he have to come and interrupt us? If only he doesn't join us and spend the whole walk talking about their riding lessons! For Erwin Jimmerthal took riding lessons too. He was the bank manager's son and lived out here beyond the city wall. He had already got rid of his satchel and was advancing toward them along the avenue with his bandy legs and slitlike eyes.

"Hullo, Jimmerthal," said Hans. "I'm going for a bit of a walk with Kröger . . ."

"I've got to go into town and get something," said Jimmerthal. "But I'll walk along with you for a little way . . . Are those fruit lozenges you've got there? Yes, thanks, I'll have a couple. It's our lesson again tomorrow, Hans." He was referring to the riding lesson.

"Marvelous!" said Hans. "I'm going to be given my leather gaiters now, you know, because I was top in the essay the other day . . ."

"You don't take riding lessons, I suppose, Kröger?" asked Jimmerthal, and his eyes were just a pair of glinting slits . . .

"No . . ." replied Tonio in uncertain accents.

Hans Hansen remarked: "You should ask your father to let you have lessons too, Kröger."

"Yes . . ." said Tonio, hastily and without interest, his throat suddenly contracting because Hans had called him by his surname; Hans seemed to sense this and added by way of explanation:

"I call you Kröger because you've got such a crazy first name, you know; you mustn't mind my saying so, but I really can't stand it. Tonio . . . why, it isn't a name at all! Though of course it's not your fault, I realize that!"

"No, I suppose they called you that mainly because it sounds so foreign and special . . ." said Jimmerthal, with an air of trying to say something nice.

Tonio's mouth twitched. He pulled himself together and said:

"Yes, it's a silly name, heaven knows I'd rather it were Heinrich or Wilhelm, I can assure you. But it's all because I was christened after one of my mother's brothers whose name's Antonio; my mother comes from abroad, you know . . ."

Then he was silent and let the others talk on about horses and leather equipment. Hans had linked arms with Jimmerthal and was speaking with a fluent enthusiasm which *Don Carlos* could never have inspired in him . . . From time to time Tonio felt the tears welling up inside him, his nose tingled, and his chin kept trembling so that he could hardly control it . . .

Hans could not stand his name, and there was nothing to be done about it. His own name was Hans, and Jimmerthal's was Erwin—two good names which everyone recognized, to which no one could object. But "Tonio" was something foreign and special. Yes, he was a special case in every way, whether he liked it or not; he was isolated, he did not belong among decent normal people —notwithstanding the fact that he was no gypsy in a green caravan, but Consul Kröger's son, a member of the

Kröger family . . . But why did Hans always call him Tonio when they were alone together, if he felt ashamed of him as soon as anyone else appeared? Sometimes indeed there was a closeness between them, he was temporarily won over. "Why, how does he betray him, Tonio?" he had asked, and had taken his arm. But the moment Jimmerthal had turned up he had breathed a sigh of relief nevertheless, he had dropped him and gratuitously criticized him for his foreign first name. How it hurt to have to understand all this so well! . . . He knew that in fact Hans Hansen did like him a little, when they were by themselves; but when anyone else was there he would feel ashamed and throw him over. And Tonio would be alone again. He thought of King Philip. The king has wept . . .

"Oh, God," said Erwin Jimmerthal, "I really must go into town now. Good-bye, you two—thanks for the fruit lozenges!" Whereupon he jumped onto a wooden seat at the side of the avenue, ran along it with his bandy legs and trotted away.

"I like Jimmerthal!" said Hans emphatically. Privileged as he was, he had a self-assured way of declaring his likes and dislikes, of graciously conferring them, so to speak . . . And then, having warmed to the theme, he went on talking about his riding lessons. In any case they were by now quite near the Hansens' house; it did not take long to reach it by the promenade along the old fortifications. They clutched their caps and bent their heads before the wind, the strong damp breeze that moaned and jarred among the leafless branches. And Hans Hansen talked, with Tonio merely interjecting an occasional insincere "Ah!" or "Oh, yes," and getting no pleasure from the fact that Hans, in the excitement of his discourse, had again linked arms with him; for it was merely a superficial and meaningless contact . . .

Presently, not far from the station, they turned off the promenade; they watched a train bustling and puffing past, counted the coaches just for fun, and as the last one went by, waved to the man who sat up there wrapped in

his fur overcoat. Then they stopped in the Lindenplatz in front of the villa of Herr Hansen the wholesale timber merchant, and Hans demonstrated in detail what fun it was to stand on the bottom rail of the garden gate and swing oneself to and fro on its creaking hinges. But after that he took his leave.

"Well, I must go in now," he said. "Good-bye, Tonio. Next time I'll walk *you* home, I promise."

"Good-bye, Hans," said Tonio. "It was a nice walk."

Their hands, as they touched, were all wet and rusty from the garden gate. But when Hans glanced into Tonio's eyes he seemed to recollect himself, and a look of contrition came over his handsome face.

"And by the way, I'll read *Don Carlos* sometime soon," he said quickly. "That bit about the king in his study must be marvelous!" Whereupon he hitched his satchel under his arm and ran off through the front garden. Before disappearing into the house he turned round and nodded once more.

And Tonio Kröger sped off homeward, joy lending him wings. The wind was behind him, but it was not only the wind that bore him so lightly along.

Hans was going to read *Don Carlos*, and then they would have something in common, something they could talk about, and neither Jimmerthal nor anyone else would be able to join in! How well they understood each other! Perhaps—who could say?—he would one day even be able to get him to write poetry, like Tonio himself . . . No, no, he didn't want that to happen. Hans must never become like Tonio, but stay as he was, with his strength and his sunlike happiness which made everyone love him, and Tonio most of all! But still, it would do him no harm to read *Don Carlos*. . . . And Tonio walked under the low arch of the old gate, he walked along the quayside and up the steep, damp and drafty little street with its gabled buildings, till he reached his parents' house. His heart was alive in those days; in it there was longing, and sad envy, and just a touch of contempt, and a whole world of innocent delight.

2

Ingeborg Holm, the daughter of Dr. Holm who lived in the market square with its tall pointed complicated Gothic fountain—the fair-haired Inge it was whom Tonio Kröger loved at the age of sixteen.

How did it come about? He had seen her hundreds of times; but one evening he saw her in a certain light. As she talked to a friend he saw how she had a certain way of tossing her head to one side with a saucy laugh, and a certain way of raising her hand—a hand by no means particularly tiny or delicately girlish—to smooth her hair at the back, letting her sleeve of fine white gauze slide away from her elbow. He heard her pronounce some word in a certain way, some quite insignificant word, but with a certain warm timbre in her voice. And his heart was seized by a rapture far more intense than the rapture he had sometimes felt at the sight of Hans Hansen, long ago, when he had still been a silly little boy.

That evening her image remained imprinted on his mind: her thick blond tresses, her rather narrowly cut laughing blue eyes, the delicate hint of freckles across the bridge of her nose. The timbre of her voice haunted him and he could not sleep; he tried softly to imitate the particular way she had pronounced that insignificant word, and a tremor ran through him as he did so. He knew from experience that this was love. And he knew only too well that love would cost him much pain, distress and humiliation; he knew also that it destroys the lover's peace of mind, flooding his heart with music and leaving him no time to form and shape his experience, to recollect it in tranquillity and forge it into a whole. Nevertheless he accepted this love with joy, abandoning himself to it utterly and nourishing it with all the strength of his spirit; for he knew that it would enrich him and make him more fully alive—and he longed to be enriched and more fully alive, rather than to recollect things in tranquillity and forge them into a whole . . .

It was thus that Tonio Kröger had lost his heart to gay Inge Holm; and it had happened in Frau Consul Hus-

teede's drawing room, from which the furniture had been removed that evening, because it was the Frau Consul's turn to have the dancing class at her house. It was a private class, attended only by members of the best families, and the parents took turns in inviting all the young people together to receive their instruction in dancing and deportment. The dancing master, Herr Knaak, came once a week specially from Hamburg for this purpose.

François Knaak was his name, and what a character he was! "*J'ai l'honneur de me vous représenter,*" he would say, "*mon nom est Knaak* . . . And we say this not during our bow but after it, when we are standing up straight again. Quietly, but distinctly. It does not happen every day that we have to introduce ourselves in French, but if we can do it correctly and faultlessly in that language then we are all the more likely to get it right in German." How magnificently his silky black tailcoat clung to his plump hips! His trousers fell in soft folds over his patent leather shoes with their wide satin bows, and his brown eyes gazed round with an air of wearily satisfied consciousness of their own beauty . . .

His self-assurance and urbanity were absolutely overwhelming. He would walk—and no one but he could walk with so rhythmic, so supple, so resilient, so royal a tread—up to the lady of the house, bow to her and wait for her to extend her hand. When she had done so he would murmur his thanks, step buoyantly back, turn on his left heel, smartly raise his right foot from the ground, pointing it outward and downward, and walk away with his hips swaying to and fro.

When one left a party one stepped backward out of the door, with a bow; when one fetched a chair, one did not seize it by one leg and drag it across the floor, but carried it lightly by the back and set it down noiselessly. One did not stand with one's hands crossed on one's stomach and one's tongue in the corner of one's mouth; if anyone did do so, Herr Knaak had a way of imitating the posture that put one off it for the rest of one's life . . .

So much for deportment. As for dancing, Herr Knaak's

mastery of that was possibly even more remarkable. The empty drawing room was lit by a gas chandelier and by candles over the fireplace. Talcum powder had been strewn on the floor and the pupils stood round in a silent semicircle; and in the adjacent room, beyond the curtained doorways, their mothers and aunts sat on plush-covered chairs watching Herr Knaak through their lorgnettes, as with a forward inclination of the body and two fingers of each hand holding up his coattails he demonstrated the mazurka, footing it featly step by step. But when he wished to dumbfound his audience utterly, he would all of a sudden and for no good reason leap vertically off the floor, whirl his legs round each other in the air with bewildering rapidity, as though he were executing a trill with them, and then return to terra firma with a discreet but earth-shattering thump . . .

"What a preposterous monkey!" thought Tonio Kröger to himself. But he could not fail to notice that Inge, gay Inge Holm, would often watch Herr Knaak's every movement with rapt and smiling attention; and this was not the only reason why, in the last resort, he could not help feeling a certain grudging admiration for the dancing master's impressively controlled physique. How calm and imperturbable was Herr Knaak's gaze! His eyes did not look deeply into things, they did not penetrate to the point at which life becomes complex and sad; all they knew was that they were beautiful brown eyes. But that was why he had such a proud bearing! Yes, it was necessary to be stupid in order to be able to walk like that; and then one was loved, for then people found one charming. How well he understood why Inge, sweet fair-haired Inge, gazed at Herr Knaak the way she did. But would no girl ever look that way at Tonio?

Oh yes, it did happen. There was the daughter, for instance, of Dr. Vermehren the lawyer—Magdalena Vermehren, with her gentle mouth and her big, dark, glossy eyes so full of solemn enthusiasm. She often fell over when she danced. But when it was the ladies' turn to choose partners she always came to him; for she knew that he wrote poetry, she had twice asked him to show

it to her and she would often sit with her head drooping and gaze at him from a distance. But what good was that to Tonio? *He* loved Inge Holm, gay, fair-haired Inge, who certainly despised him for his poetical scribblings . . . He watched her, he watched her narrow blue eyes so full of happiness and mockery; and an envious longing burned in his heart, a bitter insistent pain at the thought that to her he would always be an outsider and a stranger . . .

"First couple *en avant!*" said Herr Knaak, and words cannot describe how exquisitely he enunciated the nasal vowel. They were practicing the quadrille, and to Tonio Kröger's profound alarm he was in the same set as Inge Holm. He avoided her as best he could, and yet constantly found himself near her; he forced his eyes not to look at her, and yet they constantly wandered in her direction . . . And now, hand in hand with the red-haired Ferdinand Matthiessen, she came gliding and running toward him, tossed her head back and stopped opposite him, recovering her breath. Herr Heinzelmann, the pianist, attacked the keyboard with his bony hands, Herr Knaak called out his instructions and the quadrille began.

She moved to and fro in front of him, stepping and turning, forward and backward; often he caught a fragrance from her hair or from the delicate white material of her dress, and his eyes clouded over with ever-increasing pain. "I love you, dear, sweet Inge," he said to himself, and the words contained all the anguish he felt to see her so eagerly and happily concentrating on the dance and paying no attention to him. A wonderful poem by Theodor Storm came into his mind: "I long to sleep, to sleep, yet you must dance." What a torment, what a humiliating contradiction it was to have to dance when one's heart was heavy with love . . .

"First couple *en avant!*" said Herr Knaak; the next figure was beginning. *"Compliment! Moulinet des dames! Tour de main!"* And no words can do justice to his elegant muting of the *e* in *"de."*

"Second couple *en avant!*" Tonio Kröger and his part-

ner were the second couple. *"Compliment!"* And Tonio Kröger bowed. *"Moulinet des dames!"* And Tonio Kröger, with bent head and frowning brows, laid his hand on the hands of the four ladies, on Inge Holm's hand, and danced the moulinet.

All round him people began to titter and laugh. Herr Knaak struck a ballet dancer's pose expressing stylized horror. "Oh dear, oh dear!" he exclaimed. "Stop, stop! Kröger has got mixed up with the ladies! *En arrière,* Miss Kröger, get back, *fi donc!* Everyone but you understands the steps by now. *Allons, vite!* Begone! *Retirez-vous!"* And he drew out his yellow silk handkerchief and flapped it at Tonio Kröger, chasing him back to his place.

Everyone laughed, the boys and the girls and the ladies in the next room, for Herr Knaak had turned the incident to such comical account; it was as entertaining as a play. Only Herr Heinzelmann, with a dry professional air, waited for the signal to go on playing; he was inured against Herr Knaak's devices.

And the quadrille continued. Then there was an interval. The parlormaid entered with a tray of wine jellies in clinking glass cups, closely followed by the cook with a load of plum cake. But Tonio Kröger slipped unobtrusively out of the room into the corridor, and stood with his hands on his back gazing at a window, regardless of the fact that since the venetian blind was down one could see nothing and it was therefore absurd to stand in front of this window pretending to be looking out of it.

But it was inward he was looking, inward at his own grief and longing. Why, why was he here? Why was he not sitting at the window in his own room, reading Storm's *Immensee* and occasionally glancing out into the garden where it lay in the evening light, with the old walnut tree and its heavy creaking branches? That was where he should have been. Let the others dance and enjoy themselves and be good at it! . . . But no, no, this was his place nevertheless—here where he knew he was near Inge, even if all he could do was to stand by himself in the distance, listening to the hum and the

clatter and the laughter and trying to pick out her voice from among it all, her voice so full of warmth and life. Dear, fair-haired Inge, with your narrow-cut, laughing blue eyes! Only people who do not read *Immensee* and never try to write anything like it can be as beautiful and lighthearted as you; that is the tragedy! . . .

Surely she would come! Surely she would notice that he had left the room, and feel what he was suffering, and slip out after him—even if it was only pity that brought her—and put her hand on his shoulder and say: "Come back and join us, don't be sad, I love you!" And he listened to the voices behind him, waiting in senseless excitement for her to come. But she did not come. Such things did not happen on earth.

Had she laughed at him too, like all the others? Yes, she had, however much he would have liked to deny it for her sake and his. And yet he had only joined in the moulinet des dames because he had been so engrossed by her presence. And what did it matter anyway? One day perhaps they would stop laughing. Had he not recently had a poem accepted by a periodical—even if the periodical had gone out of business before the poem could appear? The day was coming when he would be famous and when everything he wrote would be printed; and then it would be seen whether that would not impress Inge Holm . . . No; it would *not* impress her; that was just the point. Magdalena Vermehren, the girl who was always falling over—yes, she would be impressed. But not Inge Holm, not gay blue-eyed Inge, never. So what was the good of it all? . . .

Tonio Kröger's heart contracted in anguish at the thought. How it hurt to feel the upsurge of wonderful sad creative powers within one, and yet to know that they can mean nothing to those happy people at whom one gazes in love and longing across a gulf of inaccessibility! And yet—alone and excluded though he was, standing hopelessly with his distress in front of a drawn blind pretending to be looking through it—he was nevertheless happy. For his heart was alive in those days. Warmly and sorrowfully it throbbed for you, Ingeborg Holm, and in

blissful self-forgetfulness his whole soul embraced your blond, blithe, exuberantly normal, insignificant personality.

More than once he stood thus by himself, with flushed cheeks, in out-of-the-way corners where the music, the scent of flowers and the clink of glasses could only faintly be heard, trying to pick out the timbre of your voice from among the other distant festive sounds; he stood there and pined for you, and was nevertheless happy. More than once it mortified him that he should be able to talk to Magdalena Vermehren, the girl who was always falling over—that she should understand him and laugh with him and be serious with him, whereas fair-haired Inge, even when he was sitting beside her, seemed distant and alien and embarrassed by him, for they did not speak the same language. And nevertheless he was happy. For happiness, he told himself, does not consist in being loved; that merely gratifies one's vanity and is mingled with repugnance. Happiness consists in loving—and perhaps snatching a few little moments of illusory nearness to the beloved. And he inwardly noted down this reflection, thought out all its implications and savored it to its very depths.

"*Fidelity!*" thought Tonio Kröger. "I will be faithful and love you, Ingeborg, for the rest of my life." For he had a well-meaning nature. And nevertheless there was a sad whisper of misgiving within him, reminding him that he had, after all, quite forgotten Hans Hansen too, although he saw him daily. And the hateful, pitiable thing was that this soft, slightly mocking voice turned out to be right. Time went by, and the day came when Tonio Kröger was no longer so unreservedly ready as he had once been to lay down his life for the lighthearted Inge: for he now felt within himself the desire and the power to achieve something of his own in this world, indeed to achieve in his own way much that would be remarkable.

And he hovered watchfully round the sacrificial altar on which his love burned like a pure, chaste flame; he knelt before it and did all he could to fan it and feed it and remain faithful. And he found that after a time, im-

perceptibly, silently and without fuss, the flame had nevertheless gone out.

But Tonio Kröger stood on for awhile before the cold altar, full of astonishment and disillusionment as he realized that in this world fidelity is not possible. Then he shrugged his shoulders and went his way.

3

He went the way he had to go; rather nonchalantly and unsteadily, whistling to himself, gazing into vacancy with his head tilted to one side. And if it was the wrong way, then that was because for certain people no such thing as a right way exists. When he was asked what on earth he intended to do with his life, he would give various answers; for he would often remark (and had already written the observation down) that he carried within himself a thousand possible ways of life, although at the same time privately aware that none of them was possible at all . . .

Even before he left his native city and its narrow streets, the threads and bonds that held him to it had been quietly severed. The old Kröger family had gradually fallen into a state of decay and disintegration, and Tonio Kröger's own existence and nature were with good reason generally regarded as symptomatic of this decline. His father's mother, the family's senior and dominant member, had died; and his father, that tall, pensive, carefully dressed man with the wild flower in his buttonhole, had not been long in following her. The great Kröger mansion with all its venerable traditions was put up for sale and the firm was liquidated. But Tonio's mother, his beautiful fiery mother who played the piano and the mandolin so enchantingly and to whom nothing really mattered, got married again a year later—to a musician, a virtuoso with an Italian name, with whom she departed to live under far-off blue skies. Tonio Kröger thought this slightly disreputable; but who was he to set himself against it? He wrote poetry and could not even give an answer when asked what on earth he intended to do with his life . . .

So he left his hometown with its gabled houses and the damp wind whistling round them; he left the fountain and the old walnut tree in the garden, those faithful companions of his youth; he left the sea too, his beloved sea, and left it all without a pang. For he was grown up and enlightened now, he understood his situation and was full of contempt for the crude and primitive way of life that had enveloped him for so long.

He surrendered himself utterly to that power which he felt to be the sublimest power on earth, to the service of which he felt called and which promised him honor and renown: the power of intellect and words, a power that sits smilingly enthroned above mere inarticulate, unconscious life. He surrendered to it with youthful passion, and it rewarded him with all that it has to give, while inexorably exacting its full price in return.

It sharpened his perceptions and enabled him to see through the high-sounding phrases that swell the human breast, it unlocked for him the mysteries of the human mind and of his own, it made him clear-sighted, it showed him life from the inside and revealed to him the fundamental motives behind what men say and do. But what did he see? Absurdity and wretchedness—absurdity and wretchedness.

And with the torment and the pride of such insight came loneliness; for he could not feel at ease among the innocent, among the light of heart and dark of understanding, and they shrank from the sign on his brow. But at the same time his pleasure in words and in the form of words grew sweeter and sweeter; for he would often remark (and had already written the observation down) that mere knowledge of human psychology would in itself infallibly make us despondent if we were not cheered and kept alert by the satisfaction of expressing it . . .

He lived in large cities and in the south, for he felt that his art would ripen more lushly in the southern sun; and perhaps it was heredity on his mother's side that drew him there. But because his heart was dead and had no love in it, he fell into carnal adventures, far into the hot guilty

depths of sensuality, although such experiences cost him intense suffering. Perhaps it was something inside him inherited from his father —from the tall, pensive, neatly dressed man with the wild flower in his buttonhole—that suffered so much in those far-off regions: something that often stirred within him the faint nostalgic recollection of a more heartfelt joy he had once known and which now, amid these other pleasures, he could never recapture.

He was seized by revulsion, by a hatred of the senses, by a craving for purity and decency and peace of mind; and yet he was breathing the atmosphere of art, the mild, sweet, heavily fragrant air of a continual spring in which everything sprouts and burgeons and germinates in mysterious procreative delight. And so he could do no more than let himself be cast helplessly to and fro between gross extremes, between icy intellectuality on the one hand and devouring feverish lust on the other. The life he lived was exhausting, tormented by remorse, egregious, extravagant and unnatural, and one which Tonio Kröger himself in his heart of hearts abhorred. "How far astray I have gone!" he would sometimes think. "How was it possible for me to become involved in all these eccentric adventures? After all, I wasn't born a gypsy in a green caravan . . ."

But as his health suffered, so his artistry grew more refined: it became fastidious, exquisite, rich, subtle, intolerant of banality and hypersensitive in matters of tact and taste. His first publication was received by the competent critics with considerable acclaim and appreciation, for it was a well-made piece of work, full of humor and the knowledge of suffering. And very soon his name—the same name that had once been shouted at him by angry schoolmasters, the name with which he had signed his first verses addressed to the sea and the walnut tree and the fountain, this mixture of southern and northern sounds, this respectable middle-class name with an exotic flavor—became a formula betokening excellence. For the profound painfulness of his experience of life was allied to a rare capacity for hard, ambitious, unremitting toil; and of

this perseverance, joined in anguished combat with his fastidious sensitive taste, works of quite unusual quality were born.

He worked, not like a man who works in order to live, but like one who has no desire but to work, because he sets no store by himself as a living human being, seeks recognition only as a creative artist, and spends the rest of his time in a gray incognito, like an actor with his makeup off, who has no identity when he is not performing. He worked in silence, in invisible privacy, for he utterly despised those minor hacks who treated their talent as a social ornament—who whether they were poor or rich, whether they affected an unkempt and shabby appearance or sumptuous individualistic neckwear, aimed above all else at living happily, charmingly and artistically, little suspecting that good work is brought forth only by the pressure of a deplorable life, that living and working are incompatible and that one's life must die if one is to be wholly a creator.

4

"Do I disturb you?" asked Tonio Kröger, pausing at the studio door. He had his hat in his hand and even bowed slightly, although Lisaveta Ivanovna was an intimate friend and he could talk to her about anything.

"For pity's sake, Tonio Kröger, come in and never mind the politeness," she answered in her jerky accent. "We all know that you were well brought up and taught how to behave." So saying, she transferred her brush to the same hand as her palette, held out her right hand to him and gazed at him laughingly, shaking her head.

"Yes, but you're working," he said. "Let me see . . . Oh, but you've made progress." And he looked by turns at the color sketches propped against chair backs on either side of the easel, and at the great canvas marked off in squares and covered with a confused schematic charcoal sketch on which the first patches of color were beginning to appear.

They were in Munich, in a rear apartment on the Schellingstrasse, several floors up. Outside the wide north-facing window the sky was blue, the birds twittered and the sun shone; and the young sweet spring air, streaming in through an open pane, mingled in the large studio with the smell of fixative and oil paint. The bright golden afternoon light flooded unhindered all over the bare spacious room, frankly showing up the rather worn floorboards, falling on the rough window table covered with brushes and tubes and little bottles, and on the unframed studies that hung on the unpapered walls; it fell on the torn silk screen that enclosed a tastefully furnished little living corner near the door; it fell on the work that was gradually taking shape on the easel, and on the painter and the writer as they stood before it.

She was about the same age as himself, rather over thirty. In her dark blue paint-stained apron she sat on a low stool, propping her chin in her hand. Her brown hair was firmly set, graying a little at the sides already, and slightly waved over the temples; it surrounded a dark, Slavonic, extremely likable face with a turned-up nose, prominent cheekbones and little shiny black eyes. Tensely, skeptically, with an air almost of irritation, she scrutinized her work from the side, half closing her eyes.

He stood beside her with his right hand on his hip and his left hand rapidly twirling his brown moustache. His slanting brows were frowning and working energetically, and he was whistling softly to himself as usual. He was very carefully and punctiliously dressed, in a quiet gray suit of reserved cut. But his forehead, under the dark hair with its exceedingly correct and simple parting, twitched nervously, and his southern features were already sharp, clear-cut and traced as if with a hard chisel, although his mouth and chin were so gently and softly outlined . . . Presently he drew his hand across his forehead and eyes and turned away.

"I shouldn't have come," he said.

"Why not, Tonio Kröger?"

"I've just been working, Lisaveta, and inside my head everything looks just as it does on this canvas. A skeleton,

a faint sketch, a mess of corrections, and a few patches of color, to be sure; and now I come here and see the same thing. And the same contradiction is here too," he said, sniffing the air, "the same conflict that was bothering me at home. It's odd. Once a thought has got hold of you, you find expressions of it everywhere, you even *smell* it in the wind, don't you? Fixative and the scent of spring! Art and—well, what is the opposite? Don't call it 'nature,' Lisaveta, 'nature' isn't an adequate term. Oh, no, I daresay I ought to have gone for a walk instead, though the question is whether that would have made me feel any better! Five minutes ago, quite near here, I met a colleague—Adalbert, the short-story writer. 'God damn the spring!' he said in his aggressive way. 'It is and always was the most ghastly season of the year! Can you think a single thought that makes sense, Kröger? Have you peace of mind enough to work out any little thing, anything pointed and effective, with all this indecent itching in your blood and a whole swarm of irrelevant sensations pestering you, which turn out when you examine them to be absolutely trivial, unusable rubbish? As for me, I'm off to a café. It's neutral territory, you know, untouched by change of season; it so to speak symbolizes literature—that remote and sublime sphere in which one is incapable of grosser thoughts . . .' And off he went into the café; and perhaps I should have followed him."

Lisaveta was amused.

"Very good, Tonio Kröger! 'Indecent itching'—that's good. And he's not far wrong, because one really doesn't get much work done in spring. But now listen to me. I am now, in spite of the spring, going to do this little piece here—work out this pointed little effect, as Adalbert would say—and then we shall go into my 'salon' and have some tea, and you shall tell me all; for I can see well enough that you have got a lot on your mind today. Until then please arrange yourself somewhere—on that chest, for example, unless you think your aristocratic garments will be the worse for it . . ."

"Oh, stop going on at me about my clothes, Lisaveta Ivanovna! Would you like me to be running around in

a torn velvet jacket or a red silk waistcoat? As an artist I'm already enough of an adventurer in my inner life. So far as outward appearances are concerned one should dress decently, damn it, and behave like a respectable citizen . . . No, I haven't got a lot on my mind," he went on, watching her mix some colors on her palette. "As I told you, I'm just preoccupied with a certain problem and contradiction, and it's been preventing me from working . . . What were we talking about just now? Yes: Adalbert, the short-story writer—he's a proud man and knows his own mind. 'Spring is the most ghastly of the seasons,' he said, and went into a café. One must know what one wants, mustn't one? You see, I get nervous in spring too; I get distracted by the sweet trivial memories and feelings it revives in me. The difference is that I can't bring myself to put the blame on the spring and to despise it; for the fact is that the spring makes me feel ashamed. I am put to shame by its pure naturalness, its triumphant youthfulness. And I don't know whether to envy or despise Adalbert for not having the same reaction . . .

"One certainly does work badly in spring: and why? Because one's feelings are being stimulated. And only amateurs think that a creative artist can afford to have feelings. It's a naive amateur illusion; any genuine honest artist will smile at it. Sadly, perhaps, but he will smile. Because, of course, *what* one says must never be one's main concern. It must merely be the raw material, quite indifferent in itself, out of which the work of art is made; and the act of making must be a game, aloof and detached, performed in tranquillity. If you attach too much importance to what you have to say, if it means too much to you emotionally, then you may be certain that your work will be a complete fiasco. You will become solemn, you will become sentimental, you will produce something dull, clumsy, pompous, ungainly, unironical, insipid, dreary and commonplace; it will be of no interest to anyone, and you yourself will end up disillusioned and miserable . . . For that is how it is, Lisaveta: emotion, warm, heartfelt emotion, is inv .iably commonplace and

unserviceable—only the stimulation of our corrupted nervous system, its cold ecstasies and acrobatics, can bring forth art. One simply has to be something inhuman, something standing outside humanity, strangely remote and detached from its concerns, if one is to have the ability or indeed even the desire to play this human game, to play with men's lives, to portray them effectively and tastefully. Our stylistic and formal talent, our gift of expression, itself presupposes this cold-blooded, fastidious attitude to mankind, indeed it presupposes a certain human impoverishment and stagnation. For let us face it: all healthy emotion, all strong emotion lacks taste. As soon as an artist becomes human and begins to feel, he is finished as an artist. Adalbert knew this, and that is why he retreated into a café, into the 'remote sphere'—ah, yes!"

"Well, God be with him, *batushka,*" said Lisaveta, washing her hands in a tin basin. "After all, there's no need for you to follow him."

"No, Lisaveta, I shall not follow him; and the only reason I shall not is that I am occasionally capable, when confronted with spring, of feeling slightly ashamed of being an artist. You know, I sometimes get letters from complete strangers, from appreciative and grateful readers, expressions of admiration from people whom my work has moved. I read these communications and am touched by the warm, clumsy emotions stirred up by my art—I am overcome by a kind of pity for the enthusiastic naiveté that speaks from every line, and I blush to think what a sobering effect it would have on the honest man who wrote such a letter if he could ever take a look behind the scenes, if his innocent mind could ever grasp the fact that the last thing any proper, healthy, decent human being ever does is to write or act or compose . . . Though needless to say all this does not stop me using his admiration for my genius as an enrichment and a stimulus; I still take it uncommonly seriously and ape the solemn airs of a great man . . . Oh, don't start contradicting me, Lisaveta! I tell you I am often sick to death of being a portrayer of humanity and having no

share in human experience . . . Can one even say that an artist *is* a man? Let Woman answer that! I think we artists are all in rather the same situation as those artificial papal sopranos . . . Our voices are quite touchingly beautiful. But—"

"Be ashamed of yourself, Tonio Kröger. Come along and have tea. The water will be boiling in a minute, and here are some *papirosi*. Now, you stopped at the soprano singers; so please continue from that point. But you ought to be a little ashamed of what you are saying. If I did not know how passionately devoted to your profession and how proud of it you are . . ."

"Don't speak to me of my 'profession,' Lisaveta Ivanovna! Literature isn't a profession at all, I'll have you know—it is a curse. And when do we first discover that this curse has come upon us? At a terribly early age. An age when by rights one should still be living at peace and harmony with God and the world. You begin to feel that you are a marked man, mysteriously different from other people, from ordinary normal folk; a gulf of irony, of skepticism, of antagonism, of awareness, of sensibility, is fixed between you and your fellow men—it gets deeper and deeper, it isolates you from them, and in the end all communication with them becomes impossible. What a fate! Always supposing, of course, that you still have enough feeling, enough *love* left in your heart to know how appalling it is . . . You develop an exacerbated self-consciousness, because you are well aware that you are marked out among thousands by a sign on your brow which no one fails to notice. I once knew an actor of genius who, as a man, had to struggle against a morbid instability and lack of confidence. This was how his overstimulated consciousness of himself affected him when he was not actually engaged in performing a part. He was a consummate artist and an impoverished human being . . . A real artist is not one who has taken up art as his profession, but a man predestined and foredoomed to it; and such an artist can be picked out from a crowd by anyone with the slightest perspicacity. You can read in his face that he is a man apart, a man who does not be-

long, who feels that he is recognized and is being watched; there is somehow an air of royalty about him and at the same time an air of embarrassment. A prince walking incognito among the people wears a rather similar expression. But the incognito doesn't work, Lisaveta! Disguise yourself, put on civilian costume, dress up like an attaché or a guards lieutenant on leave—you will hardly have raised your eyes and uttered a word before everyone will know that you are not a human being but something strange, something alien, something different . . .

"But what *is* an artist? I know of no other question to which human complacency and incuriosity has remained so impervious. 'That sort of thing is a gift,' say average decent folk humbly, when a work of art has produced its intended effect upon them; and because in the goodness of their hearts they assume that exhilarating and noble effects must necessarily have exhilarating and noble causes, it never enters their heads that the origins of this so-called 'gift' may well be extremely dubious and extremely disreputable . . . It's well known that artists are easily offended; and it's also well known that this is not usually the case with people who have a good conscience and solidly grounded self-confidence . . . You see, Lisaveta, I harbor in my very soul a rooted suspicion of the artist as a type—I suspect him no less deeply, though in a more intellectual way, than every one of my honorable ancestors up there in that city of narrow streets would have suspected any sort of mountebank or performing adventurer who had strolled into his house. Listen to this. I know a banker, a middle-aged man of business, who has a talent for writing short stories. He exercises this talent in his spare time, and what he writes is often quite first class. Despite—I call it 'despite'—this admirable gift he is a man of not entirely blameless reputation: on the contrary he has already served quite a heavy prison sentence, and for good reason. In fact it was actually in jail that he first became aware of his talents, and his experiences as a prisoner are the basic theme in all his work. One might draw the rather fanciful conclusion from this that it is necessary to have been in

some kind of house of correction if one is to become a writer. But can one help suspecting that in its roots and origins his artistic tendency had less to do with his experiences in jail than with *what got him sent there?* A banker who writes short stories: that's an oddity, isn't it? But a banker with no criminal record and no stain on his character who writes short stories—*there's no such phenomenon* . . . Yes, you may laugh, but I am half serious nevertheless. There's no problem on earth so tantalizing as the problem of what an artist is and what art does to human beings. Take the case of the most remarkable masterpiece of the most typical and therefore mightiest of all artists—take a morbid, profoundly equivocal work like *Tristan and Isolde*, and observe the effects of this work on a young, healthy listener of entirely normal sensibility. He will be filled with exaltation, animation, warm, honest enthusiasm, perhaps even inspired to 'artistic' creative efforts of his own . . . Poor, decent dilettante! We artists have an inner life very different from what our 'warmhearted' admirers in their 'genuine enthusiasm' imagine. I have seen artists with women and young men crowding round them, applauding and idolizing them, artists about whom *I knew the true facts* . . . The sources and prerequisites and side effects of the artistic gift are a subject about which one is constantly making the most curious discoveries . . ."

"Discoveries, Tonio Kröger—forgive my asking—about other artists? or not only about others?"

He did not reply. He contracted his slanting brows in a frown and whistled to himself.

"Give me your cup, Tonio. The tea's not strong. And have another cigarette. And in any case you know very well that it is not necessary to look at things the way you are looking at them . . ."

"That's Horatio's answer, isn't it, my dear Lisaveta. ' 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.' "

"I mean, Tonio Kröger, that they can be considered just as curiously from another angle. I am only a stupid painting female, and if I can manage to make any reply to you, and offer some sort of defense of your own profes-

sion against you, I am sure there will be nothing new to you in what I say; I can only remind you of things you know very well yourself . . . Of the purifying, sanctifying effect of literature, for example; of the way our passions dissolve when they are grasped by insight and expressed in words; of literature as a path to understanding, to forgiveness and love. Think of the redeeming power of language, of the literary intellect as the sublimest manifestation of the human spirit, of the writer as supreme humanity, the writer as a saint—to consider things so, is that not to consider them curiously enough?"

"You have a right to talk that way, Lisaveta Ivanovna, and it is conferred upon you by your national literature, by the sublime writers of Russia; their work I will willingly worship as the sacred literature of which you speak. But I have not left your objections out of account, on the contrary they too are part of what I have got on my mind today . . . Look at me. I don't look exactly bursting with high spirits, do I? Rather old and sharp-featured and weary, don't I? Well, to revert to the subject of 'insight': can you not imagine someone with an innately unskeptical disposition, placid and well meaning and a bit sentimental, being quite literally worn out and destroyed by psychological enlightenment? Not to let oneself be overwhelmed by the sadness of everything; to observe and study it all, to put even anguish into a category, and to remain in a good humor into the bargain, if only because of one's proud consciousness of moral superiority over the abominable invention of existence—oh, yes, indeed! But there are times, notwithstanding all the delights of expression, when the whole thing becomes a little too much for one. *'Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner'?* I'm not so sure. There is such a thing as what I would call revulsion from knowledge, Lisaveta: a state of mind in which a man has no sooner seen through a thing than so far from feeling reconciled to it he is immediately revolted, sickened to death by it. This was how Hamlet felt, Hamlet the Dane, that typical literary artist. He knew what it was like to be called upon to bear a burden of knowledge for which one was not born. To be

clear-sighted even through the mist of tears—even then to have to understand, to study, to observe and ironically to discard what one has seen—even at moments when hands clasp and lips touch and eyes fail, blinded by emotion—it's infamous, Lisaveta, it's contemptible and outrageous . . . But what good does it do to feel outraged?

"A different but equally charming aspect of the matter, of course, is the way one becomes sophisticated and indifferent to truth, blasé and weary of it all. It's well known that you'll never find such mute hopelessness as among a gathering of intellectuals, all of them thoroughly hagridden already. All insights are old and stale to them. Try telling them about some truth you have discovered, in the acquisition and possession of which you perhaps feel a certain youthful pride, and their sole reaction to your vulgar knowledgeableness will be a very brief sniff . . . Oh yes, Lisaveta, literature wears people out! I assure you that in ordinary human society, by sheer skepticism and suspension of judgment, one can give the impression of being stupid, whereas in fact one is merely arrogant and lacking in courage . . . So much for 'insight.' As for 'words,' I wonder if they really redeem our passions: is it not rather that they refrigerate them and put them in cold storage? Don't you seriously think that there is a chilling, outrageous effrontery in the instant facile process by which literary language eliminates emotion? What does one do when one's heart is too full, when some sweet or sublime experience has moved one too deeply? The answer is simple! Apply to a writer: the whole thing will be settled in a trice. He will analyze it all for you, formulate it, name it, express it and make it articulate, and so far as you are concerned the entire affair will be eliminated once and for all: he will have turned it for you into a matter of total indifference, and will not even expect you to thank him for doing so. But you will go home with your heart lightened, all warmth and all mystery dispelled, wondering why on earth you were distraught with such delicious excitement only a moment ago. Can we seriously defend this vain coldhearted charlatan? Anything that has been expressed has thereby been

eliminated—that is his creed. When the whole world has been expressed, it too will have been eliminated, redeemed, abolished . . . *Très bien!* But I am not a nihilist . . ."

"You are not a—" said Lisaveta . . . She was just about to take a sip of tea and stopped dead with the spoon near her mouth.

"Well, of course not . . . What's the matter with you, Lisaveta! I tell you I am not a nihilist inasmuch as I affirm the value of living emotion. Don't you see, what the literary artist basically fails to grasp is that life goes on, that it is not ashamed to go on living, even after it has been expressed and 'eliminated.' But lo and behold! literature may redeem it as much as it pleases, it just carries on in its same old sinful way; for to the intellectual eye all activity is sinful . . .

"I'm nearly finished, Lisaveta. Listen to me. I love life —that is a confession. I present it to you for safekeeping; you are the first person to whom I have made it. It has been said, it has even been written and printed, that I hate or fear or despise or abominate life. I enjoy this suggestion, I have always felt flattered by it; but it is nonetheless false. I love life . . . You smile, Lisaveta, and I know why. But I implore you not to mistake what I am saying for mere literature! Do not think of Cesare Borgia or of any drunken philosophy that makes him its hero! This Cesare Borgia is nothing to me, I feel not a particle of respect for him, and I shall never be able to understand this idealization and cult of the extraordinary and the demonic. No: 'life' stands in eternal contrast to intellect and art—but not as a vision of bloodstained greatness and savage beauty. We who are exceptions do not see life as something exceptional; on the contrary! normality, respectability, decency—these are our heart's desire, this to us is life, life in its seductive banality! No one, my dear, has a right to call himself an artist if his profoundest craving is for the refined, the eccentric and the satanic—if his heart knows no longing for innocence, simplicity and living warmth, for a little friendship and self-surrender and familiarity and human happiness—if

he is not secretly devoured, Lisaveta, by this longing for the bliss of the commonplace! . . .

"A human friend! Will you believe me when I say that it would make me proud and happy to win the friendship of a human being? But until now all my friends have been demons, hobgoblins, phantoms struck dumb by the ghoulish profundity of their insight—in other words, men of letters.

"Sometimes I find myself on some public platform, facing a roomful of people who have come to listen to me. Do you know, it can happen on such occasions that I find myself surveying the audience, I catch myself secretly peering round the hall, and in my heart there is a question: Who are these who have come to me, whose is this grateful applause I hear, with whom have I achieved this spiritual union through my art? . . . I don't find what I am looking for, Lisaveta. I find my own flock, my familiar congregation, a sort of gathering of early Christians: people with clumsy bodies and refined souls, the kind of people, so to speak, who are always falling over when they dance, if you see what I mean; people to whom literature is a quiet way of taking their revenge on life—all of them sufferers, all repining and impoverished: never once is there one of the others among them, Lisaveta, one of the blue-eyed innocents who don't need intellect! . . .

"And after all it would be deplorably inconsistent, wouldn't it, to be glad if things were otherwise! It is absurd to love life and nevertheless to be trying with all the skill at one's command to entice it from its proper course, to interest it in our melancholy subtleties, in this whole sick aristocracy of literature. The kingdom of art is enlarging its frontiers in this world, and the realm of health and innocence is dwindling. What is left of it should be most carefully preserved: we have no right to try to seduce people into reading poetry when they would much rather be looking at books full of snapshots of horses!

"For when all's said and done, can you imagine a more pitiable spectacle than that of life attempting to be artis-

tic! There is no one whom we artists so utterly despise as the dilettante, the living human being who thinks he can occasionally try his hand at being an artist as well. I assure you this particular kind of contempt is very familiar to me from personal experience. I am a guest, let us say, at a party, among members of the best society; we are eating and drinking and talking, and all getting on famously, and I am feeling glad and grateful to have escaped for awhile into the company of simple, conventionally decent people who are treating me as an equal. And suddenly (this actually happened to me once) an officer rises to his feet, a lieutenant, a good-looking, fine upstanding man whom I should never have believed capable of any conduct unbecoming his uniform, and asks in so many words for permission to recite to us a few lines of verse which he has composed. The permission is granted, with some smiling and raising of eyebrows, and he carries out his intention: he produces a piece of paper which he has hitherto been concealing in his coattail pocket, and he reads us his work. It was something or other about music and love, deeply felt and totally inept. I ask you: a lieutenant! A man of the world! What need was there for him to do it, good heavens above! . . . Well, there was the predictable result: long faces, silence, a little polite applause and everyone feeling thoroughly uncomfortable. The first psychological effect upon myself of which I became aware was a feeling that I too, and not only this rash young man, was to blame for spoiling the party; and sure enough there were some mocking and unfriendly glances in my direction as well, for it was my trade he had bungled. But my second reaction was that this man, for whose character and way of life I had only a moment ago felt the sincerest respect, suddenly began to sink and sink and sink in my esteem . . . I felt sorry for him, I was filled with benevolent indulgence toward him. I and one or two other good-natured guests plucked up heart to approach him with a few encouraging words. 'Congratulations, lieutenant!' I said. 'What a charming talent you have! That was really very pretty!' And I very nearly patted him on the shoulder. But is

indulgence a proper thing to feel toward a lieutenant? . . . It was his own fault! There he stood, in utter embarrassment, suffering the penalty of having supposed that one may pluck even a single leaf from the laurel-tree of art and not pay for it with one's life. Oh, no! Give me my colleague, the banker with the criminal record . . . But don't you think, Lisaveta, that my eloquence today is worthy of Hamlet?"

"Have you finished now, Tonio Kröger?"

"No. But I shall say no more."

"Well, you have certainly said enough. Are you expecting an answer?"

"Have you got one for me?"

"I certainly have. I have listened to you carefully, Tonio, from beginning to end, and I will now tell you what the answer is to everything you have said this afternoon, and what the solution is to the problem that has been worrying you so much. So! The solution is quite simply that you are, and always will be, a bourgeois."

"Am I?" he asked, with a somewhat crestfallen air . . .

"That's a hard home truth for you, isn't it. And I don't wonder. So I don't mind modifying it a little, for it so happens that I can. You are a bourgeois who has taken the wrong turning, Tonio Kröger—a bourgeois manqué."

There was silence. Then he got up resolutely and seized his hat and walking stick.

"Thank you, Lisaveta Ivanovna; now I can go home with a good conscience. *I have been eliminated.*"

5

Near the end of the summer Tonio Kröger said to Lisaveta Ivanovna:

"Well, I'm leaving now, Lisaveta; I must have a change of air, a change of scene, I must get away from it all."

"So, *batushka,* I suppose you will honor Italy with another visit?"

"Oh God, Lisaveta, don't talk to me of Italy! I am bored with Italy to the point of despising it! It's a long

time since I thought I felt at home there. The land of art! Velvet blue skies, heady wine and sweet sensuality . . . No thank you, that's not for me. I renounce it. All that *bellezza* gets on my nerves. And I can't stand all that dreadful southern vivacity, all those people with their black animal eyes. They've no conscience in their eyes, those Latin races . . . No, this time I'm going for a little trip to Denmark."

"Denmark?"

"Yes. And I think I shall benefit from it. It so happens that I've never yet got round to going there, although I was so near the frontier during the whole of my youth, and yet it's a country I've always known about and loved. I suppose I must get this northern predilection from my father, for my mother really preferred the *bellezza*, you know, that is insofar as anything mattered to her at all. But think of the books they write up there in the north, Lisaveta, books of such depth and purity and humor—there's nothing like them, I love them. Think of the Scandinavian meals, those incomparable meals, only digestible in a strong salty air—in fact, I doubt if I shall be able to digest them at all now; I know them too from my childhood, the food's just like that even where I come from. And just think of the names, the names they christen people by up there—you'll find a lot of them in my part of the world as well: names like 'Ingeborg,' for instance—three syllables plucked on a harp of purest poetry. And then there's the sea—one is on the Baltic Sea up there! . . . Anyway, that's where I'm going, Lisaveta. I want to see the Baltic again, to hear those names again, to read those books in the country where they were written; and I want to stand on the battlements at Kronborg, where the 'spirit' * descended upon Hamlet and brought anguish and death to the poor noble youth . . ."

"How shall you travel, Tonio, if I may ask? What route will you be taking?"

"The usual route," he said, shrugging his shoulders and blushing visibly. "Yes, I shall be passing through my

* Mann here untranslatably plays upon two different meanings of the word "*Geist*" ("intellect" and "ghost"). (Translator's note.)

—my point of departure, Lisaveta, after these thirteen years, and I daresay it may be a rather odd experience."

She smiled.

"That's what I wanted to hear, Tonio Kröger. Well, be off with you, in God's name. And be sure you write to me, won't you? I'm looking forward to an eventful description of your journey to—Denmark . . ."

6

And Tonio Kröger traveled north. He traveled first class (for he would often say that a man whose psychological problems are so much more difficult than those of other people has a right to a little external comfort) and he continued without a halt until the towers of his native town, that town of narrow streets, rose before him into the gray sky. There he made a brief and singular sojourn . . .

It was a dreary afternoon, already almost evening, when the train steamed into the little smoke-stained terminus which he remembered with such strange vividness; under its dirty glass roof the smoke was still rolling up into clouds or drifting to and fro in straggling wisps, just as it had done long ago when Tonio Kröger had left this place with nothing but mockery in his heart. He saw to his luggage, gave instructions that it was to be sent to his hotel and left the station.

There stood the cabs, black and absurdly tall and wide, each drawn by a pair of horses, the cabs that had always been used in this town, waiting in a row outside the station! He did not take one; he merely looked at them, and he looked at everything else as well: the narrow gables and the pointed towers that looked back at him over the nearby roofs, the fair-haired, easygoing, unsophisticated people with their broad yet rapid way of talking—there they were, all round him, and laughter welled up within him, strangely hysterical laughter that was not far from tears. He went on foot, walking slowly, feeling the steady pressure of the damp wind on his face; he

crossed the bridge, with its parapets decorated by mythological statues, and walked a little way along the quayside.

Great heavens, what a tiny, hole-in-the-corner place it all seemed! Had it been like this all these years, with those little streets rising so steeply toward the town, so narrow and quaint between their gabled houses? The ships' funnels and masts swayed gently in the dusk as the wind swept across the dull gray river. Should he walk up that street now, that street that led to the house he remembered so well? No, he would go tomorrow. He was feeling so sleepy now. The journey had made him drowsy, and his head was full of drifting nebulous thoughts.

Occasionally during these thirteen years, when suffering from indigestion, he had dreamed he was at home again in the old, echoing house on the slanting street, and that his father was there again too, indignantly upbraiding him for his degenerate way of life; and he had always felt that this was entirely as it should be. And he could in no way distinguish his present impressions from one of these delusive and compelling fabrications of the dreaming mind during which one asks oneself whether this is fantasy or reality and is driven firmly to the latter conclusion, only to end by waking up after all . . . He advanced through the half empty, drafty streets, bending his head before the breeze, moving like a sleepwalker toward the hotel where he had decided to spend the night, the best hotel in the town. Ahead of him, a bow-legged man with a rolling nautical gait was carrying a pole with a little flame at the top, and lighting the gas lamps with it.

What was he really feeling? Under the ashes of his weariness something was glowing, obscurely and painfully, not flickering up into a clear flame: what was it? Hush, he must not say it! He must not put it into words! He would have liked to stroll on indefinitely, in the wind and the dusk, along these familiar streets of his dreams. But it was all so close, so near together. One reached one's destination at once.

In the upper part of the town there were arc lamps, and they were just coming alight. There was the hotel, and there were the two black lions couched in front of it; as a child he had always been afraid of them. They were still staring at each other, looking as if they were just about to sneeze; but they seemed to have grown much smaller now. Tonio Kröger walked between them into the hotel.

As a guest arriving on foot he was received without much ceremony. He encountered the inquiring gaze of the porter and of a very smartly dressed gentleman in black who was doing the honors, and who had a habit of constantly pushing his shirt cuffs back into his coat sleeves with his little fingers. They both looked him carefully up and down from head to foot, obviously trying hard to place him, to assign him an approximate position in the social hierarchy which would determine the degree of respect that was his due; they were unable, however, to reach a satisfying conclusion on this point, and therefore decided in favor of a moderate show of politeness. A mild-mannered waiter with sandy side-whiskers, a frock coat shiny with age, and rosettes on his noiseless shoes, conducted him two floors up to a neatly furnished old-fashioned room. From its window, in the twilight, there was a picturesque medieval view of courtyards, gables and the bizarre massive outlines of the church near which the hotel was situated. Tonio Kröger stood for awhile looking out of this window; then he sat with folded arms on the commodious sofa, frowning and whistling to himself.

Lights were brought, and his luggage arrived. At the same time the mild-mannered waiter laid the registration form on the table, and Tonio Kröger, with his head tilted to one side, scrawled something on it that would pass for his name and status and place of origin. He then ordered some supper and continued to stare into vacancy from the corner of his sofa. When the food had been placed before him he left it untouched for a long time, then finally ate a morsel or two and walked up and down in the room for another hour, occasionally stopping and

closing his eyes. Then he slowly undressed and went to bed. He slept for a long time and had confused, strangely nostalgic dreams.

When he woke up his room was full of broad daylight. In some haste and confusion he recalled where he was, and got up to draw the curtains. The blue of the late summer sky was already rather pale, and covered with wind-reft wisps of cloud; but the sun was shining over his native town.

He devoted more care than usual to his toilet, washed and shaved meticulously until he was as fresh and immaculate as if he were about to pay a call on a conventional well-bred family, with whom he would have to look his best and be on his best behavior; and as he went through the processes of dressing he listened to the anxious beating of his heart.

How bright it was outside! He would have felt better if the streets had been dusky like yesterday; but now he would have to walk through clear sunlight exposed to the public gaze. Would he meet people he knew, would they stop him and call him to account by asking him how he had spent the last thirteen years? No, thank God, no one knew him now, and anyone who remembered him would not recognize him, for he had indeed somewhat changed in the meantime. He inspected himself attentively in the mirror, and suddenly felt safer behind his mask, behind his face on which experience had laid its mark early, his face that was older than his years . . . He sent for breakfast, and then he went out, passing through the front hall under the calculating gaze of the porter and the elegant gentleman in black, and passing out into the street between the two lions.

Where was he going? He scarcely knew. He had the same sensation as yesterday. No sooner was he surrounded again by this strangely dignified and long-familiar complex of gables, turrets, arcades and fountains—no sooner did he feel again on his face the pressure of the wind, this strong fresh wind full of the delicate sharp flavor of distant dreams—than a misty veil of fantasy benumbed his senses . . . The muscles of his face relaxed; and his eyes

as he gazed at people and things had grown calm. Perhaps, at the next corner, just over there he would wake up after all . . .

Where was he going? He had an impression that the route he chose was not unconnected with last night's sad and strangely rueful dreams . . . He walked to the market square, under the arcades of the town hall; here were the butchers, weighing their wares with blood-stained hands, and here on the square was the tall pointed complicated Gothic fountain. Here he paused in front of a certain house, a simple narrow house much like any of the others, with an ornamental pierced gable. He stood gazing at it, read the name on the plate by the door, and let his eyes rest for a little on each of the windows in turn. Then he turned slowly away.

Where was he going? He was going home. But he made a detour, he took a walk outside the old city walls, for he had plenty of time. He walked along the Mühlenwall and the Holstenwall, clutching his hat before the wind that rustled and jarred among the trees. Presently, not far from the station, he turned off the promenade, watched a train bustling and puffing past, counted the coaches just for fun and gazed after the man who sat up there on the last one as it went by. But in the Lindenplatz he stopped in front of one of its handsome villas, stared for a long time into the garden and up at the windows, and finally took to swinging the iron gate to and fro on its creaking hinges. He gazed for a few moments at his hands, cold now and stained with rust; then he went on his way, he walked under the low arch of the old gate, along the harbor and up the steep drafty little street to his parents' house.

There it stood, surrounded by the neighboring buildings, its gable rising above them: it was as gray and solemn as it had been for the last three hundred years, and Tonio Kröger read the pious motto engraved over the doorway in letters now half obliterated. Then he took a deep breath and went in.

His heart was beating anxiously, for it would not have surprised him if his father had thrown open one of the

doors on the ground floor as he passed them, emerging in his office coat and with his pen behind his ear to confront him and severely take him to task for his dissolute life; and Tonio would have felt that this was just as it should be. But he got past the offices without being interfered with by anyone. The inner door of the porch was not closed, only left ajar, a fact which he noted with disapproval, although at the same time he had the sensation of being in one of those elated dreams in which obstacles dissolve before one of their own accord and one advances unimpeded, favored by some miraculous good fortune. . . . The wide entrance hall, paved with great square flagstones, reechoed with the sound of his footsteps. Opposite the kitchen, which was silent now, the strange, clumsy but neatly painted wooden cubicles still projected from high up in the wall as they had always done: these had been the maids' rooms, only accessible from the hall by a kind of open flight of steps. But the great cupboards and the carved chest that had once stood here were gone . . . The son of the house began to climb the imposing main stairway, resting his hand on the white painted openwork balustrade; with every step he took he raised it and gently let it fall again, as if he were diffidently trying to discover whether his former familiarity with this solid old handrail could be reestablished . . . But on the landing he stopped. At the entrance to the intermediate floor was a white board with black lettering which said: "Public Library."

Public library? thought Tonio Kröger, for in his opinion this was no place either for the public or for literature. He knocked on the door . . . He was bidden to enter, and did so. Tense and frowning, he beheld before him a most unseemly transformation.

There were three rooms on this intermediate floor, and their communicating doors stood open. The walls were covered almost up to the ceiling with uniformly bound books, standing in long rows on dark shelves. In each of the rooms a seedy-looking man was sitting writing at a sort of counter. Two of them merely turned their heads toward Tonio Kröger, but the first rose hastily to his feet,

placed both hands on the desk to support himself, thrust his head forward, pursed his lips, raised his eyebrows and surveyed the visitor with rapidly blinking eyes . . .

"Excuse me," said Tonio Kröger, still staring at the multitude of books. "I am a stranger here, I am making a tour of the town. So this is the public library? Would you allow me to take a short look at your collection?"

"Certainly!" said the official, blinking more vigorously than ever . . . "Certainly, anyone may do so. Please take a look round . . . Would you like a catalogue?"

"No, thank you," answered Tonio Kröger. "I shall find my way about quite easily." And he began to walk slowly along the walls, pretending to be studying the titles of the books. Finally he took down a volume, opened it, and stationed himself with it at the window.

This had been the morning room. They had always had breakfast here, not upstairs in the big dining room, with its blue wallpaper boldly decorated with the white figures of Greek gods . . . The adjoining room had been used as a bedroom. His father's mother had died there, and her death struggle had been terrible, old as she was, for she had been a woman of the world who enjoyed life and clung to it. And later in this same room his father too had breathed his last, the tall, correct, rather sad and pensive gentleman with the wild flower in his buttonhole . . . Tonio had sat at the foot of his deathbed, his eyes hot with tears, in sincere and utter surrender to an inarticulate intense emotion of love and grief. And his mother too had knelt by the bed, his beautiful fiery mother, weeping her heart out; whereupon she had departed with that artist from the south to live under far-off blue skies . . . But the third room, the little one at the back, now fully stocked with books like the other two, with a seedy-looking attendant to supervise them—this for many years had been his own room. This was the room to which he had returned from school, perhaps after just such a walk as he had taken just now; there was the wall where his desk had stood, with its drawer where he had kept his first heartfelt clumsy efforts at verse com-

position . . . The walnut tree . . . He felt a sharp pang of grief. He glanced sideways through the window. The garden was neglected and overgrown, but the old walnut tree was still there, heavily creaking and rustling in the wind. And Tonio Kröger let his eyes wander back to the book he was holding in his hand, an outstanding work of literature which he knew well. He looked down at the black lines of print and groups of sentences, followed the elegant flow of the text for a little, observing its passionate stylization, noting how effectively it rose to a climax and fell away from it again . . .

Yes, that's well done, he said to himself; he replaced the work on the shelf and turned away. And he noticed that the official was still on his feet, still blinking hard, with a mingled expression of eager servility and puzzled suspicion.

"I see you have an excellent collection," said Tonio Kröger. "I have already formed a general impression of it. I am most grateful to you. Good day." Whereupon he left the room; but it was not a very successful exit, and he had the strong impression that the library attendant was so disconcerted by his visit that he would still be standing there blinking several minutes later.

He felt disinclined to explore further. He had visited his home. The large rooms upstairs, beyond the pillared hall, were now obviously occupied by strangers; for the staircase ended in a glass door which had not previously been there, and there was some kind of nameplate beside it. He turned away, walked downstairs and across the echoing entrance hall and left the house of his fathers. He went to a restaurant and sat at a corner table, deep in thought, eating a rich heavy meal; then he returned to his hotel.

"I have finished my business," he said to the elegant gentleman in black. "I shall leave this afternoon." And he asked for his bill, at the same time ordering a cab which would take him down to the harbor to board the steamer for Copenhagen. Then he went to his room and sat upright and in silence, resting his cheek on his hand

and gazing down at the desk with unseeing eyes. Later he settled his bill and packed his luggage. At the appointed time the cab was announced and Tonio Kröger went downstairs, ready for his journey.

At the foot of the staircase the elegant gentleman in black was waiting for him.

"Excuse me!" he said, pushing his cuffs back into his sleeves with his little fingers . . . "I beg your pardon, sir, but we must just detain you for one moment. Herr Seehaase—the proprietor of the hotel—would like to have a word with you. A mere formality . . . He's just over there . . . Would you be so kind as to come with me . . . It's *only* Herr Seehaase, the proprietor."

And with polite gestures he ushered Tonio Kröger to the back of the hall. There, to be sure, stood Herr Seehaase. Tonio Kröger knew him by sight, from days gone by. He was short, plump and bowlegged. His clipped side-whiskers were white now; but he still wore a low-cut frock coat and a little velvet cap embroidered with green. He was, moreover, not alone. Beside him, at a small high desk which was fixed to the wall, stood a policeman with his helmet on and his gloved right hand resting on a complicated-looking document which lay before him on the desk. He was looking straight at Tonio Kröger with his honest soldierly eyes as if he expected him to sink right into the ground at the sight of him.

Tonio Kröger looked from one to the other and decided to await developments.

"Did you come here from Munich?" asked the policeman eventually in a slow, good-natured voice.

Tonio Kröger answered this question in the affirmative.

"You are traveling to Copenhagen?"

"Yes, I am on my way to a Danish seaside resort."

"Seaside resort? Well, you must let me see your papers," said the policeman, uttering the last word with an air of special satisfaction.

"Papers . . . ?" He had no papers. He took out his pocketbook and glanced at its contents; but apart from

some money it contained only the proofs of a short story, which he intended to correct at his destination. He did not like dealing with officials, and had never yet had a passport issued to him . . .

"I am sorry," he said, "but I have no papers with me."

"Indeed!" said the policeman . . . "None at all? What's your name?"

Tonio Kröger answered him.

"Is that the truth?" asked the policeman, drawing himself up to his full height and suddenly opening his nostrils as wide as he could.

"Certainly," replied Tonio Kröger.

"And what's your occupation, may I ask?"

Tonio Kröger swallowed and in a firm voice named his profession. Herr Seehaase raised his head and looked up at him with curiosity.

"Hm!" said the policeman. "And you allege that you are not identical with an individial of the name of—" He said "individial," and proceeded to spell out from the complicated document a highly intricate and romantic name which seemed to have been bizarrely compounded from the languages of various races; Tonio Kröger had no sooner heard it than he had forgotten it. "An individial," the policeman continued, "of unknown parentage and doubtful provenance, who is wanted by the Munich police in connection with various frauds and other offenses and is probably trying to escape to Denmark?"

"I do not merely 'allege' this," said Tonio Kröger, with a nervous movement of his shoulders. That made a certain impression.

"What? Oh, quite, yes, of course!" said the policeman. "But you can't identify yourself in any way, can you!"

Herr Seehaase attempted a conciliatory intervention.

"The whole thing is a formality," he said, "nothing more! You must realize that the officer is merely doing his duty. If you could show some kind of identification . . . some document . . ."

They all fell silent. Should he make an end of the matter by disclosing who he was, by informing Herr See-

haase that he was not an adventurer of uncertain provenance, not born a gypsy in a green caravan, but the son of Consul Kröger, a member of the Kröger family? No, he had no wish to say anything of the sort. And were they not right, in a way, these representatives of bourgeois society? In a certain sense he entirely agreed with them . . . He shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

"What have you got there?" asked the policeman. "There, in your pocketbook?"

"Here? Nothing. Only a proof," answered Tonio Kröger.

"Proof? Proof of what? Let's have a look."

And Tonio Kröger handed him his work. The policeman spread it out on the desk and began to read it. Herr Seehaase, stepping closer, did the same. Tonio Kröger glanced over their shoulders to see what part of the text they had reached. It was a good passage, pointed and effective; he had taken pains with it and got it exactly right. He was satisfied with his work.

"You see!" he said. "There is my name. I wrote this, and now it is being published, you understand."

"Well, that's good enough!" said Herr Seehaase decisively. He put the sheets together, folded them and returned them to their author. "It must be good enough, Petersen," he repeated curtly, surreptitiously closing his eyes and shaking his head to forestall any objections. "We must not delay the gentleman any longer. His cab is waiting. I hope, sir, you will excuse this slight inconvenience. The officer was of course only doing his duty, though I told him at once that he was on the wrong track . . ."

"Did you, now?" thought Tonio Kröger.

The policeman did not seem entirely satisfied; he raised some further query about "individial" and "identification." But Herr Seehaase conducted his guest back through the foyer, with repeated expressions of regret; he accompanied him out between the two lions to his cab and saw him into it, closing the door himself with a great display of respect. Whereupon the absurdly tall, broad vehicle, rumbling and stumbling, noisily and clumsily

rolled down the steep narrow streets to the harbor . . .

And that was Tonio Kröger's curious visit to the city of his fathers.

7

Night was falling, and the moon was rising, its silver radiance floating up the sky, as Tonio Kröger's ship moved out into the open sea. He stood in the bows, warmly wrapped against the mounting wind, and gazed down at the dark restless wandering of the great smooth waves beneath him, watching them slithering round each other, dashing against each other, darting away from each other in unexpected directions with a sudden glitter of foam . . .

His heart was dancing with silent elation. The experience of being nearly arrested in his native town as a criminal adventurer had somewhat damped his spirits, to be sure—even although in a certain sense he had felt that this was just as it should be. But then he had come on board and stood, as he had sometimes done with his father as a boy, watching the freight being loaded onto the boat: its capacious hold had been stuffed with bales and crates, amid shouts in a mixture of Danish and Plattdeutsch, and even a polar bear and a Bengal tiger had been lowered into it in cages with strong iron bars; evidently they had been sent from Hamburg for delivery to some Danish menagerie. And all this had cheered him up. Later, as the steamer had slipped downstream between the flat embankments, he had completely forgotten his interrogation by Constable Petersen, and all his previous impressions had revived again in his mind: his sweet, sad, rueful dreams, his walk, the sight of the walnut tree. And now, as they passed out of the estuary, he saw in the distance the shore where as a boy he had listened to the sea's summer reveries, he saw the flash of the lighthouse and the lighted windows of the resort's principal hotel at which he and his parents had stayed . . . The Baltic Sea! He bent his head before the strong salt wind which was blowing now with full unimpeded force; it enveloped

him, drowning all other sounds, making him feel slightly giddy, half numbed with a blissful lethargy which swallowed up all his unpleasant memories, all his sufferings and errors and efforts and struggles. And in the clashing, foaming, moaning uproar all round him he thought he heard the rustling and jarring of the old walnut tree, the creaking of a garden gate . . . The darkness was thickening.

"The sstars, my God, just look at the sstars!" said a voice suddenly. It spoke in a plaintively singsong northern accent * and seemed to come from the interior of a large barrel. He had heard it already; it belonged to a sandy-haired, plainly dressed man with reddened eyelids and a chilled, damp look, as if he had just been bathing. He had sat next to Tonio Kröger at dinner in the saloon and had consumed, in a modest and hesitant manner, astonishing quantities of lobster omelet. He was now standing beside him leaning against the rail, staring up at the sky and holding his chin between his thumb and forefinger. He was obviously in one of those exceptional, festive and contemplative moods in which the barriers between oneself and one's fellow men are lowered, one's heart is laid bare to strangers and one's tongue speaks of matters on which it would normally preserve an embarrassed silence . . .

"Look, sir, just look at the sstars! Twinkling away up there; by God, the whole sky's full of them. And when you look up at it all and consider that a lot of them are supposed to be a hundred times the size of the earth, well, I ask you, how does it make one feel! We men have invented the telegraph and the telephone and so many wonders of modern times, yes, so we have. But when we look up there we have to realize nevertheless that when all's said and done we are just worms, just miserable little worms and nothing more—am I right or am I wrong, sir? Yes," he concluded, answering his own question, "that's what we are: worms!" And he nodded toward the firmament in abject contrition.

* This involves an untranslatable regional peculiarity in the pronunciation of certain *s* sounds. (Translator's note.)

Oh, Lord, thought Tonio Kröger. No, he's got no literature in his system. And at once he recalled something he had recently read by a famous French writer, an essay on the cosmological and the psychological world view; it had been quite a clever piece of verbiage.

He made some kind of reply to the young man's heartfelt observation, and they then continued to converse, leaning over the rail and gazing into the flickering, stormy dusk. It turned out that Tonio Kröger's traveling companion was a young businessman from Hamburg who was devoting his holiday to this excursion . . .

"I thought: why not take the ssteamer and pop up to Copenhagen?" he explained. "So here I am, and so far so good, I must say. But those lobster omelets were a mistake, sir, I can tell you, because there's going to be a gale tonight, the captain said so himself, and that's no joke with indigestible food like that in your sstomach . . ."

Tonio Kröger listened with a certain secret sympathy to these foolish familiar overtures.

"Yes," he said, "the food's generally too heavy up in these parts. It makes one sluggish and melancholy."

"Melancholy?" repeated the young man, looking at him in some puzzlement, then suddenly added: "You're a sstranger here, sir, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, I'm from a long way away!" answered Tonio Kröger with a vague and evasive gesture.

"But you're right," said the young man. "God knows, you're right about feeling melancholy! I'm nearly always melancholy, but esspecially on evenings like this when there are sstars in the sky." And he rested his chin again on his thumb and forefinger.

He probably writes poetry, thought Tonio Kröger; deeply felt, honest, businessman's poetry . . .

It was getting late, and the wind was so high now that it made conversation impossible. So they decided to retire, and bade each other good-night.

Tonio Kröger lay down on the narrow bunk in his cabin, but could not sleep. The stiff gale with its sharp tang had strangely excited him, and his heart beat anxiously, as if troubled by the expectation of some sweet

experience. He also felt extremely seasick, for the ship was in violent motion, sliding down one steep wave after another with its screw lifting right out of the water and whirring convulsively. He put on all his clothes again and returned to the deck.

Clouds were racing across the moon. The sea was dancing. The waves were not rounded and rolling in ordered succession, they were being lashed and torn and churned into frenzy as far as the eye could reach. In the pallid, flickering light they licked and leaped upward like gigantic pointed tongues of flame: between foam-filled gulfs, jagged and incredible shapes were hurled on high: the sea seemed to be lifting mighty arms, tossing its spume into the air in wild, monstrous exhilaration. The ship was having a hard passage: pitching and rolling, thudding and groaning, it struggled on through the tumult, and from time to time the polar bear and the tiger could be heard roaring miserably from below decks. A man in an oilskin, with the hood over his head and a lantern strapped round his waist, was pacing the deck with straddled legs, keeping his balance with difficulty. But there in the stern, leaning far overboard, stood the young man from Hamburg, woefully afflicted.

"My God," he remarked in hollow, unsteady tones when he caught sight of Tonio Kröger, "just look at the uproar of the elements, sir!" But at this point he was interrupted and turned away hastily.

Tonio Kröger clutched the first taut piece of rope he could find and stood gazing out into all this mad, exuberant chaos. His spirits soared in an exultation that felt mighty enough to outshout the storm and the waves. Inwardly he began to sing a song of love, a paean of praise to the sea. Friend of my youth, ah wild sea weather, once more we meet, once more together . . . But there the poem ended. It was not a finished product, not an experience formed and shaped, recollected in tranquillity and forged into a whole. His heart was alive . . .

Thus he stood for a long time; then he lay down on a bench beside the deckhouse and looked up at the sky with its glittering array of stars. He even dozed off for awhile.

And when the cold foam sprayed his face as he lay there half asleep, he felt it as a caress.

Vertical chalk cliffs loomed ghostly in the moonlight and drew nearer; it was the island of Møn. And again he dozed off, wakened from time to time by salt showers of spray which bit into his face and numbed his features . . . By the time he was fully awake it was already broad daylight, a fresh pale gray morning, and the green sea was calmer. At breakfast he again encountered the young businessman, who blushed scarlet, obviously ashamed of having said such discreditably poetical things under cover of darkness. He readjusted his small reddish moustache, stroking it upward with all five fingers, barked out a brisk military "Good morning!" to Tonio Kröger and then carefully steered clear of him.

And Tonio Kröger landed in Denmark. He arrived in Copenhagen, gave a tip to everyone who showed signs of expecting him to do so and then spent three days exploring the city from his hotel, holding his guidebook open in front of him and in general behaving like a well-bred foreigner intent on improving his mind. He inspected Kongens Nytorv and the "Horse" in its midst, glanced up respectfully at the columns of the Fruekirke, paused long before Thorwaldsen's noble and charming sculptures, climbed the Round Tower, visited various palaces and passed two gay evenings at Tivoli. Yet all this was not really what he saw.

He saw houses which often exactly resembled those of his native town, houses with ornamental pierced gables, and the names by their front doors were names familiar to him from long ago, names symbolizing for him something tender and precious, and containing at the same time a kind of reproach, the sorrowful nostalgic reminder of something lost. And everywhere he went, slowly and pensively breathing in the damp sea air, he saw eyes just as blue, hair just as blond, faces just like those that had filled the strange sad rueful dreams of that night in his native town. As he walked these streets he would suddenly encounter a look, a vocal inflection, a peal of laughter, that pierced him to the heart . . .

The lively city did not hold him for long. He felt driven from it by a certain restlessness, by mingled memory and expectancy, and because he longed to be able to lie quietly somewhere on the seashore and not have to play the part of a busily circulating tourist. And so he embarked once more and sailed northward, on a dull day, over an inky sea, up the coast of Zealand to Elsinore. From there he at once continued his journey for another few miles by coach along the main road, which also ran close to the sea, until he reached his final and true destination. It was a little white seaside hotel with green shutters, surrounded by a cluster of low-lying houses and looking out with its wooden-shingled tower across the sound toward the Swedish coast. Here he alighted, took possession of the bright sunny room they had reserved for him, filled its shelves and cupboards with his belongings and settled down to live here for awhile.

8

It was late September already; there were not many visitors left in Aalsgaard. Meals were served in the big dining room on the ground floor, which had a beamed ceiling and tall windows overlooking the glazed veranda and the sea; they were presided over by the proprietress, an elderly spinster with white hair, colorless eyes, faintly pink cheeks and a vague twittering voice, who always tried to arrange her reddened hands on the tablecloth in a manner that would display them to their best advantage. One of the guests was a short-necked old gentleman with a hoary sailor's beard and a dark bluish complexion; he was a fish dealer from the capital and could speak German. He seemed to be completely congested and apoplectic, for he breathed in short gasps and occasionally lifted a ringed index finger to his nose, pressed it against one nostril and blew hard through the other as if to clear it a little. Notwithstanding this he addressed himself continually to a bottle of aquavit which stood before him at breakfast, lunch and dinner. The only other members of the company were three tall American boys with

their tutor or director of studies, with whom they played football day in and day out and who otherwise merely fidgeted with his spectacles and said nothing. The three youths had reddish fair hair parted in the middle, and elongated expressionless faces. "Will you pass me some of that *Wurst,* please," one of them would say in English. "It's not *Wurst,* it's *Schinken,*" the other would reply; and that was the extent of their contribution to the conversation; for the rest of the time they and their tutor sat in silence drinking hot water.

Such were Tonio Kröger's neighbors at table, and they could not have been more to his liking. He was left in peace, and sat listening to the Danish glottal stops and front and back vowels in the speeches which the fish dealer and the proprietress now and then addressed to each other; with the former he would exchange an occasional simple remark about the state of the weather; he would then take his leave, pass through the veranda and walk down again to the beach, where he had already spent most of the morning.

Sometimes it was all summer stillness there. The sea lay idle and smooth, streaked with blue and bottle green and pale red, and the light played over it in glittering silvery reflections. The seaweed withered like hay in the sun, and the stranded jellyfish shriveled. There was a slight smell of decay, and a whiff of tar from the fishing boat against which Tonio Kröger leaned as he sat on the sand, facing away from the Swedish coast and toward the open horizon; but over it all swept the pure, fresh, gentle breath of the sea.

And then there would be gray, stormy days. The waves curved downward like bulls lowering their horns for a charge, and dashed themselves furiously against the shore, which was strewn with shining wet sea grass, mussel shells and pieces of driftwood, for the water rushed far inland. Under the overcast sky the wave troughs were foaming green, like long valleys between ranges of watery hills; but where the sun shone down from beyond the clouds, the sea's surface shimmered like white velvet.

Tonio Kröger would stand there enveloped in the noise of the wind and the surf, immersed in this perpetual, ponderous, deafening roar he loved so much. When he turned and moved away, everything all round him suddenly seemed calm and warm. But he always knew that the sea was behind him, calling, luring, beckoning. And he would smile.

He would walk far inland, along solitary paths across meadows, and would soon find himself surrounded by the beech-trees which covered most of the low undulating coastland. He would sit on the mossy ground, leaning against a tree trunk, at a point from which a strip of the sea was still visible through the wood. Sometimes the clash of the surf, like wooden boards falling against each other in the distance, would be carried to him by the breeze. Crows cawed above the treetops, hoarse and desolate and forlorn . . . He would sit with a book on his knees, but reading not a word of it. He was experiencing a profound forgetfulness, floating as if disembodied above space and time, and only at certain moments did he feel his heart stricken by a pang of sorrow, a brief, piercing, nostalgic or remorseful emotion which in his lethargic trance he made no attempt to define or analyze.

Thus many days passed; he could not have told how many, and had no desire to know. But then came one on which something happened; it happened when the sun was shining and many people were there, and Tonio Kröger did not even find it particularly surprising.

There was something festive and delightful about that day from its very beginning. Tonio Kröger woke unusually early and quite suddenly; he was gently and vaguely startled out of his sleep and at once confronted with an apparently magical spectacle, an elfin miracle of morning radiance. His room had a glass door and balcony facing out over the sound; it was divided into a sleeping and a living area by a white gauze curtain, and papered and furnished lightly in delicate pale shades, so that it always looked bright and cheerful. But now, before his sleep-dazed eyes, it had undergone an unearthly transfigura-

tion and illumination, it was completely drenched in an indescribably lovely and fragrant rose-colored light: the walls and furniture shone golden and the gauze curtain was a glowing pink . . . For some time Tonio Kröger could not understand what was happening. But when he stood by the glass door and looked out, he saw that the sun was rising.

It had been dull and rainy for several days on end, but now, over land and sea, the sky was like tight-stretched pale blue silk, bright and glistening; and the sun's disk, traversed and surrounded by resplendent red and gold clouds, was mounting in triumph above the shimmering, wrinkled water, which seemed to quiver and catch fire beneath it . . . Thus the day opened, and in joy and confusion Tonio Kröger threw on his clothes; he had breakfast down in the veranda before anyone else, then swam some way out into the sound from the little wooden bathing hut, then walked for an hour along the beach. When he got back to the hotel there were several horse-drawn omnibuses standing in front of it, and from the dining room he could see that a large number of visitors had arrived: both in the adjoining parlor where the piano stood, and on the veranda and on the terrace in front of it, they were sitting at round tables consuming beer and sandwiches and talking excitedly. They were visitors in simple middle-class attire, whole families, young people and older people, even a few children.

At midmorning lunch—the table was heavily laden with cold food, smoked and salted delicacies and pastries—Tonio Kröger inquired what was afoot.

"Day visitors!" declared the fish dealer. "A party from Elsinore; they're having a dance here. Yes, God help us, we'll not sleep a wink tonight. There'll be dancing and music, and you can depend on it, they'll go on till all hours. It's some sort of subscription affair with various families taking part, an excursion in the country with a ball afterward, to make the most of the fine day. They came by boat and by road and now they're having lunch. Afterward they'll go for another drive, but they'll be back in the evening, and then it'll be dancing and fun

and games here in the dining room. Yes, damn and confound it, we'll not shut an eye this night . . ."

"It makes an agreeable change," said Tonio Kröger.

Whereupon silence was resumed. The proprietress sorted out her red fingers, the fish dealer snorted through his right nostril to clear it a little and the Americans drank hot water and made long faces.

Then suddenly it happened: *Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm walked through the dining room.*

Tonio Kröger, pleasantly weary after his swim and his rapid walk, was leaning back in his chair eating smoked salmon on toast; he was facing the veranda and the sea. And suddenly the door opened and the two of them sauntered in, unhurried, hand-in-hand. Ingeborg, the fair-haired Inge, was wearing a light-colored frock, just as she had done at Herr Knaak's dancing lessons. It was made of thin material with a floral pattern, and reached down only to her ankles; round her shoulders was a broad white tulle collar cut well down in front and exposing her soft, supple neck. She had tied the ribbons of her hat together and slung it over one arm. She had perhaps grown up a little since he had last seen her, and her wonderful blond tresses were wound round her head now; but Hans Hansen was just as he had always been. He was wearing his sailor's overcoat with the gilt buttons and with the broad blue collar hanging out over his back; in his free hand he held his sailor's cap with its short ribbons, carelessly dangling it to and fro. Ingeborg kept her narrow-cut eyes averted, feeling perhaps a little shy under the gaze of the lunching hotel guests. But Hans Hansen, as if in defiance of all and sundry, turned his head straight toward the table, and his steely blue eyes inspected each member of the company in turn, with a challenging and slightly contemptuous air; he even let go of Ingeborg's hand and swung his cap more vigorously to and fro, to show what a fine fellow he was. Thus the pair of them passed by before Tonio Kröger's eyes, against the background of the calm blue sea; they walked the length of the dining room and disappeared through the door at the far end, into the parlor.

This happened at half-past eleven, and while the residents were still at lunch, the visiting party next door and on the veranda set out on their excursion; no one else came into the dining room, they left the hotel by the side entrance. Outside, they could be heard getting into their omnibuses, amid much laughter and joking, and then there was the sound of one vehicle after another rumbling away . . .

"So they're coming back?" asked Tonio Kröger.

"They are indeed!" said the fish dealer. "And God damn the whole thing, I say. They've engaged a band, and I sleep right over this room."

"It makes an agreeable change," said Tonio Kröger again. Then he got up and left.

He spent that day as he had spent the others, on the beach and in the woods, holding a book on his knee and blinking in the sunlight. There was only one thought in his mind: that they would be coming back and holding a dance in the dining room, as the fish dealer had predicted; and he did nothing all day but look forward to this, with a sweet apprehensive excitement such as he had not felt throughout all these long, dead years. Once, by some associative trick of thought, he fleetingly remembered a far-off acquaintance: Adalbert, the short-story writer, the man who knew what he wanted and had retreated into a café to escape the spring air. And he shrugged his shoulders at the thought of him . . .

Dinner was earlier than usual; supper was also served in advance of the normal time and in the parlor, because preparations for the dance were already being made in the dining room: the whole normal program was delightfully disarranged for so festive an occasion. Then, when it was already dark and Tonio Kröger was sitting in his room, there were signs of life again on the road and in the hotel. The party was returning; there were even new guests arriving from Elsinore by bicycle or by carriage, and already he could hear, down below, a violin being tuned and the nasal tones of a clarinet practicing scales . . . There was every indication that it would be a magnificent ball.

And now the little orchestra began playing: a march in strict time, muted but clearly audible upstairs. The dancing began with a polonaise. Tonio Kröger sat on quietly for awhile and listened. But when the march tempo changed to a waltz rhythm, he rose and slipped quietly out of his room.

From his corridor there was a subsidiary flight of stairs leading down to the side entrance of the hotel, and from there one could reach the glazed veranda without passing through any of the rooms. He went this way, walking softly and stealthily as if he had no business to be there, groping cautiously through the darkness, irresistibly drawn toward the foolish, happily lilting music; he could hear it now quite loudly and distinctly.

The veranda was empty and unlit, but in the dining room the two large paraffin lamps with their polished reflectors were shining brightly, and the glass door stood open. He crept noiselessly up to it; here he could stand in the dark unobserved, watching the dancers in the lighted room, and this furtive pleasure made his skin tingle. Quickly and eagerly he glanced round for the pair he sought . . .

The festivity was already in full swing, although the dancing had begun less than half an hour ago; but the participants had of course been already warmed up and excited by the time they had got back here, having spent the whole day together in happy and carefree companionship. In the parlor, into which Tonio Kröger could see if he ventured forward a little, several older men had settled down to smoke and drink and play cards; others again were sitting with their wives on the plush-upholstered chairs in the foreground or along the walls of the dining room, watching the dance. They sat resting their hands on their outspread knees, with prosperous puffed-out faces; the mothers, wearing bonnets high up on their parted hair, looked on at the whirl of young people, with their hands folded in their laps and their heads tilted sideways. A platform had been erected against one of the longer walls, and on it the musicians were doing their best. There was even a trumpeter among them, blowing

on his instrument rather diffidently and cautiously—it seemed to be afraid of its own voice, which despite all efforts kept breaking and tripping over itself . . . The dancing couples circled round each other, swaying and gyrating, while others walked about the room hand in hand. The company was not properly dressed for a ball, merely for a summer Sunday outing in the country: the young beaux wore suits of provincial cut which they obviously used only at weekends, and the girls were in light pale frocks with bunches of wild flowers on their bosoms. There were even some children present, dancing with each other after their fashion, even when the band was not playing. The master of ceremonies appeared to be a long-legged man in a swallow-tailed coat, some kind of small-town dandy with a monocle and artificially curled hair, an assistant postmaster perhaps—a comic character straight out of a Danish novel. He devoted himself heart and soul to his task, positively perspiring with officiousness; he was everywhere at once, curvetting busily round the room with a mincing gait, setting his toes down first and artfully crisscrossing his feet, which were clad in shining pointed patent leather army boots. He waved his arms, issued instructions, called for music and clapped his hands; as he moved, the ribbons of the gaily colored bow which had been pinned to his shoulder in token of his office fluttered behind him, and from time to time he glanced lovingly round at it.

Yes, there they were, the pair who had walked past Tonio Kröger that morning in the sunlight: he saw them again, his heart suddenly leaping with joy as he caught sight of them almost simultaneously. There stood Hans Hansen, quite near him, not far from the door; with outspread legs and leaning forward slightly, he was slowly and carefully devouring a large slice of sponge cake, holding one hand cupped under his chin to catch the crumbs. And there by the wall sat Ingeborg Holm, the fair-haired Inge; at that very moment the assistant postmaster minced up to her and invited her to dance with a stilted bow, placing one hand on the small of his back and gracefully inserting the other into his bosom,

but she shook her head and indicated that she was too much out of breath and must rest for a little, whereupon the assistant postmaster sat down beside her.

Tonio Kröger looked at them both, those two for whom long ago he had suffered love: Hans and Ingeborg. For that was who they were—not so much by virtue of particular details of their appearance or similarities of dress, but by affinity of race and type: they too had that radiant blondness, those steely blue eyes, that air of untroubled purity and lightness of heart, of proud simplicity and unapproachable reserve . . . He watched them, watched Hans Hansen standing there in his sailor suit, bold and handsome as ever, broad in the shoulders and narrow in the hips; he watched Ingeborg's way of tossing her head to one side with a saucy laugh, her way of raising her hand—a hand by no means particularly tiny or delicately girlish—to smooth her hair at the back, letting her light sleeve slide away from the elbow; and suddenly his heart was pierced by such an agony of homesickness that he instinctively shrank further back into the shadows to hide the twitching of his face.

"Had I forgotten you?" he asked. "No, never! I never forgot you, Hans, nor you, sweet fair-haired Inge! It was for you I wrote my works, and when I heard applause I secretly looked round the room to see if you had joined in it . . . Have you read *Don Carlos* yet, Hans Hansen, as you promised me at your garden gate? Don't read it! I no longer want you to. What has that lonely weeping king to do with you? You must not make your bright eyes cloudy and dreamy and dim by peering into poetry and sadness . . . If only I could be like you! If only I could begin all over again and grow up like you, decent and happy and simple, normal and comme il faut, at peace with God and the world, loved by the innocent and light of heart—and marry you, Ingeborg Holm, and have a son like you, Hans Hansen! If only I could be freed from the curse of insight and the creative torment, and live and love and give thanks and be blissfully commonplace! . . . Begin all over again? It would be no good. It would all turn out the same—everything would happen

again just as it has happened. For certain people are bound to go astray because for them no right way exists."

The music had stopped; there was an interval, and refreshments were being handed round. The assistant postmaster in person was tripping about with a trayful of herring salad, offering it to the ladies; but before Ingeborg Holm he even went down on one knee as he handed her the dish, and this made her blush with pleasure.

The spectator by the glass door of the dining room was now beginning to attract attention after all, and from handsome flushed faces uncordial and inquiring looks were cast in his direction; but he stood his ground. Ingeborg and Hans glanced at him too, almost simultaneously, with that air of utter indifference so very like contempt. But suddenly he became conscious that a gaze from some other quarter had sought him out and was resting on him . . . He turned his head, and his eyes at once met those whose scrutiny he had sensed. Not far from him a girl was standing, a girl with a pale, slender delicate face whom he had noticed before. She had not been dancing much, the gentlemen had paid scant heed to her, and he had seen her sitting alone by the wall with tightly pursed lips. She was standing by herself now too. She wore a light-colored frock like the other girls, but through its transparent gossamerlike material one could glimpse bare shoulders which were thin and pointed, and between these meager shoulders her thin neck sat so low that this quiet girl almost gave the impression of being slightly deformed. She had thin short gloves on, and held her hands against her flat breasts with their fingers just touching. She had lowered her head and was gazing up at Tonio Kröger with dark, melting eyes. He turned away . . .

Here, quite near him, sat Hans and Ingeborg. Possibly they were brother and sister; Hans had sat down next to her, and surrounded by other young people with healthy pink complexions they were eating and drinking, chattering and enjoying themselves and exchanging pleasantries, and their bright clear voices and laughter rang

through the air. Could he not perhaps approach them for a moment? Could he not speak to one or other of them, make whatever humorous remark occurred to him, and would they not at least have to answer with a smile? It would give him such pleasure; he longed for it to happen; he would go back to his room contented, in the knowledge of having established some slight contact with them both. He thought out something he might say to them; but he could not nerve himself to go forward and say it. After all, the situation was as it had always been: they would not understand, they would listen to his words in puzzled embarrassment. For they and he did not speak the same language.

The dancing, apparently, was on the point of beginning again. The assistant postmaster burst into ubiquitous activity. He hurried to and fro, urged everyone to choose a partner, helped the waiter to clear chairs and glasses out of the way, issued instructions to the musicians and pushed a few awkward uncomprehending dancers into place, steering them by the shoulders. What was about to happen? Squares were being formed, of four couples each . . . A dreadful memory made Tonio Kröger blush. They were going to dance quadrilles.

The music began; the couples bowed and advanced and interchanged. The assistant postmaster directed the dance; great heavens, he was actually directing it in French, and pronouncing the nasal vowels with incomparable distinction! Ingeborg Holm was dancing just in front of Tonio Kröger, in the set nearest to the glass door. She moved to and fro in front of him, stepping and turning, forward and backward; often he caught a fragrance from her hair or from the delicate white material of her dress, and he closed his eyes, filled with an emotion so long familiar to him: during all these last days he had been faintly aware of its sharp enchanting flavor, and now it was welling up once more inside him in all its sweet urgency. What was it? Desire, tenderness? envy? self-contempt? . . . Moulinet des dames! Did you laugh, fair-haired Inge, did you laugh at me on that occasion, when I danced the moulinet and made such a

miserable fool of myself? And would you still laugh today, even now when I have become, in my own way, a famous man? Yes, you would—and you would be a thousand times right to do so, and even if I, single-handed, had composed the Nine Symphonies and written *The World as Will and Representation* and painted the *Last Judgment*—you would still be right to laugh, eternally right . . . He looked at her, and remembered a line of poetry, a line he had long forgotten and that was nevertheless so close to his mind and heart: "I long to sleep, to sleep, yet you must dance." He knew so well the melancholy northern mood it expressed, awkward and half-articulate and heartfelt. To sleep . . . To long to be able to live simply for one's feelings alone, to rest idly in sweet self-sufficient emotion, uncompelled to translate it into activity, unconstrained to dance—and to have to dance nevertheless, to have to be alert and nimble and perform the difficult, difficult and perilous sword dance of art, and never to be able quite to forget the humiliating paradox of having to dance when one's heart is heavy with love . . .

Suddenly, all round him, a wild extravagant whirl of movement developed. The sets had broken up, and everyone was leaping and gliding about in all directions: the quadrille was finishing with a gallopade. The couples, keeping time to the music's frantic prestissimo, were darting past Tonio Kröger, chasséing, racing, overtaking each other with little gasps of laughter. One of them, caught up and swept forward by the general rush, came spinning toward him. The girl had a delicate pale face and thin, hunched shoulders. And all at once, directly in front of him, there was a slipping and tripping and stumbling . . . The pale girl had fallen over. She fell so hard and heavily that it looked quite dangerous, and her partner collapsed with her. He had evidently hurt himself so badly that he completely forgot the lady and began in a half-upright posture to grimace with pain and rub his knee; the girl seemed quite dazed by her fall and was still lying on the floor. Whereupon Tonio Kröger stepped forward, took her gently by both arms and lifted

her to her feet. She looked up at him, exhausted, bewildered and wretched, and suddenly a pink flush spread over her delicate face.

"Thank you! Oh, thank you so much!" she said in Danish, and looked up at him with dark melting eyes.

"You had better not dance again, Fräulein," he said gently. Then he glanced round until once more he saw *them*, Hans and Ingeborg; and turned away. He left the veranda and the ball and went back up to his room.

He was elated by these festivities in which he had not shared, and wearied by jealousy. It had all been the same as before, so exactly the same! With flushed face he had stood in the darkness, his heart aching for you all, you the fair-haired, the happy, the truly alive; and then he had gone away, alone. Surely someone would come now! Surely Ingeborg would come now, surely she would notice that he had left, and slip out after him, put her hand on his shoulder and say: "Come back and join us! Don't be sad! I love you!" But she did not come. Such things do not happen. Yes, it was all as it had been long ago, and he was happy as he had been long ago. For his heart was alive. But what of all these years he had spent in becoming what he now was? Paralysis; barrenness; ice; and intellect! and art! . . .

He undressed and got into bed and put out the light. He whispered two names into his pillow, whispered those few chaste northern syllables that symbolized his true and native way of loving and suffering and being happy—that to him meant life and simple heartfelt emotion and home. He looked back over the years that had passed between then and now. He remembered the dissolute adventures in which his senses, his nervous system and his mind had indulged; he saw himself corroded by irony and intellect, laid waste and paralyzed by insight, almost exhausted by the fevers and chills of creation, helplessly and contritely tossed to and fro between gross extremes, between saintly austerity and lust—oversophisticated and impoverished, worn out by cold, rare, artificial ecstasies, lost, ravaged, racked and sick—and he sobbed with remorse and nostalgia.

Round about him there was silence and darkness. But lilting up to him from below came the faint music, the sweet trivial waltz rhythm of life.

9

Tonio Kröger sat in the north writing to his friend Lisaveta Ivanovna, as he had promised he would do.

"My dear Lisaveta down there in Arcadia," he wrote, "to which I hope soon to return: here is a letter of sorts, but I am afraid it may disappoint you, for I propose to write in rather general terms. Not that I have nothing to tell you, or have not, after my fashion, undergone one or two experiences. At home, in my native town, I was even nearly arrested . . . but of that you shall hear by word of mouth. I sometimes now have days on which I prefer to attempt a well-formulated general statement, rather than narrate particular events.

"I wonder if you still remember, Lisaveta, once calling me a bourgeois manqué? You called me that on an occasion on which I had allowed myself to be enticed by various previous indiscreet confessions into avowing to you my love for what I call 'life'; and I wonder if you realized how very right you were, and how truly my bourgeois nature and my love for 'life' are one and the same. My journey here has made me think about this point . . .

"My father, as you know, was of a northern temperament: contemplative, thorough, puritanically correct, and inclined to melancholy. My mother was of a vaguely exotic extraction, beautiful, sensuous, naive, both reckless and passionate, and given to impulsive, rather disreputable behavior. There is no doubt that this mixed heredity contained extraordinary possibilities—and extraordinary dangers. Its result was a bourgeois who went astray into art, a bohemian homesick for his decent background, an artist with a bad conscience. For after all it is my bourgeois conscience that makes me see the whole business of being an artist, of being any kind of exception or genius, as something profoundly equivocal, pro-

foundly dubious, profoundly suspect; and it too has made me fall so foolishly in love with simplicity and naiveté, with the delightfully normal, the respectable and mediocre.

"I stand between two worlds, I am at home in neither, and this makes things a little difficult for me. You artists call me a bourgeois, and the bourgeois feel they ought to arrest me . . . I don't know which of the two hurts me more bitterly. The bourgeois are fools; but you worshipers of beauty, you who say I am phlegmatic and have no longing in my soul, you should remember that there is a kind of artist so profoundly, so primordially fated to be an artist that no longing seems sweeter and more precious to him than his longing for the bliss of the commonplace.

"I admire those proud, cold spirits who venture out along the paths of grandiose, demonic beauty and despise 'mankind'—but I do not envy them. For if there is anything that can turn a littérateur into a true writer, then it is this bourgeois love of mine for the human and the living and the ordinary. This is the source of all warmth, of all kindheartedness and of all humor, and I am almost persuaded that it is this very love of which we read that without it one may speak with the tongues of men and of angels and yet be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

"What I have achieved so far is nothing, not much, as good as nothing. I shall improve on it, Lisaveta—this I promise you. As I write this, I can hear below the roar of the sea, and I close my eyes. I gaze into an unborn, unembodied world that demands to be ordered and shaped, I see before me a host of shadowy human figures whose gestures implore me to cast upon them the spell which shall be their deliverance: tragic and comic figures, and some that are both at once—and to these I am much attracted. But my deepest and most secret love belongs to the fair-haired and the blue-eyed, the bright children of life, the happy, the charming and the ordinary.

"Do not disparage this love, Lisaveta; it is good and fruitful. In it there is longing, and sad envy, and just a touch of contempt, and a whole world of innocent delight."

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