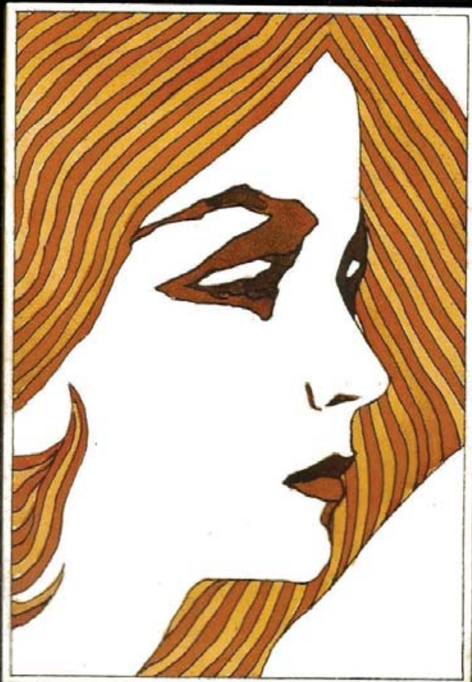
HERMANN HESSE

GERTRUD



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BOOKS

INTRODUCTION

Hermann Hesse, the Nobel laureate who enjoyed a cultlike following in the 1960s, was born on July 2, 1877, in the town of Cawl, Germany, in the Black Forest. His family came of mixed stock: French-Swiss on his mother's side, Baltic-Estonian on his father's. Hesse's mother, Maria, was born in India and educated in Germany. She bore nine children, of whom six survived. Hesse's father, Johannes, served as a Pietist missionary in India (1869–1873) but was brought back to Germany because of ill health. He settled in Cawl to assist Hermann Gundert, the famous Pietist, Indologist, and the director of the *Caliver Verlagsvereins*. A year later he married Gundert's daughter, Maria, and soon succeeded his father-in-law as editor of the Pietist publishing house in Cawl. Although a staunch Pietist and severe in his demands, Johannes Hesse was no narrow-minded sectarian. His taste for Latin literature, Greek philosophy, and Oriental religions fed an intellectual curiosity he passed on to his son. Pietism, however, with its belief in the inherent sinfulness of man and renunciation of all that is in this world, was the first of many institutions against which Hermann Hesse would rebel.

Young Hermann grew up in an atmosphere unusually cosmopolitan for a provincial town. Cawl, with its narrow cobblestone streets, its crowded houses with their pointed gables, and the old stone bridge that still spans the Nagold River, in which Hermann swam and fished, left an indelible impression on the young boy, who as the son and grandson of Protestant clergymen was expected to follow in their footsteps. But at an early age Hesse was an aggravation to his parents and teachers. As early as 1881 his mother began to suspect that her son was not destined for the life of a

Pietist, for she noticed that in addition to being willful and slow to obey his parents, he composed poems in his head before he could hold a pencil:

> Pray for Hermann with me, Johannes, and pray that I have the power to raise him. Using force is not enough. The little guy has his own life, the strength of a giant, a powerful will, and quite an amazing mind for his four years. . . . God must take this proud spirit and work with him and turn him into something noble and magnificent.[1]

By 1883 Johannes Hesse began to wonder seriously whether it would be better to hand the child over to others to raise:

> It would be humiliating for us, but I am thinking seriously whether we should give him to an institution or place him in a stranger's house. We are too nervous, too weak for him. It's not enough having a house filled with regular discipline. He has all the natural gifts he needs: he observes the moon and the clouds in a delirious state, full of harmony, accompanied by a pencil or pen, and his drawings are wonderful. He also sings quite well, even if his songs lack rhyme.[2]

In 1886, after living in Basel for five years, the family returned to Cawl. By this time Hermann had become manageable. School was a bore to him, yet he easily excelled. With little effort he was able to remain at the top of his class at the parochial mission school, later at the Latin school in Göppingen, in preparation for one of the Protestant church schools in Württenberg. After passing the entrance examination, he began his studies in Maulbronn in September 1891.

Hesse's stay, however, would be brief and unhappy. School failed to hold any interest for him as for Thomas Mann, and his formal education proved even briefer than Mann's. From an early age he was determined to be a writer, not heir to his family's Pietism. He began to suffer from headaches and insomnia and his behavior became erratic. His parents withdrew him from school in May 1892, after which he was passed from one pastor to another for convalescence. After a suicide attempt he ended up in a school for mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children. His time there wasn't pleasant, but after a stay of two months he was allowed to go home.

Hurt by what he perceived as parental rejection, he began to inveigh against adult authority and religion. His letters from this time sound like the future Harry Haller of *Steppenwolf* railing against Western culture. Letters to his parents signed "H. Hesse Nihilist (haha!)" stand as testament to his agitated emotional state:

> Well, at least you're rid of me. . . . How much would I give for death. . . . I have lost everything: home, parents, love, faith, hope, and myself. . . . The places you send me are like hell. . . . You keep saying to me: "Turn to God in Christ." I see God only as a delusion in which Christ is nothing but a man. For this, you may curse me one hundred times.[3]

By November the young rebel was ready to resume his studies at the *Gymnasium* in Castatt. That he would not be successful here soon became apparent. By January he sold most of his books, bought a revolver, rushed off to Stuttgart, and toyed with suicide. He soon returned to school, but he began to frequent taverns, to consort with dubious characters, and to gamble. By October his parents allowed him to return home, thus ending his formal education.

Hesse would spend the next six months gardening and helping his father in the *Verlagsvereins*. Afterwards, he became an apprentice machinist in a clock-tower factory in Cawl. This was a trade he could take abroad (he was making plans to go to the United States or Brazil), but a year and a half of grimy physical labor was enough to disabuse him of any romantic notion of life as a foreign worker. He left the factory for a more suitable apprenticeship in the Heckenhauer bookshop in Tübingen. His days of rebellion were over: "Of that evil time, full of anger and hatred and thoughts of suicide, I will never speak."[4]

During his four years in Tübingen, he lived a quiet life, came under the spell of Goethe, and proved to himself that he was indeed a writer. He wrote fiction and essays, but his early poetry found a more ready reception. A collection of poems, *Romantische Lieder* (1899), was his first published book.

That same year he began a job as an assistant bookseller at R. Reich's bookshop in Basel, Switzerland. One of the most fruitful periods of his life would turn out to be the five years he eventually spent in Basel making an effort to be more socially active, living with and not apart from his fellow humans, and escaping the loneliness of his previous uninvolvement in Tübingen. Soon after his arrival he became a frequent guest of several of the city's culturally prominent families, often visiting the home of Pastor La Roche for their musical gatherings, and chatting away the evenings at the home of the prominent Bernoulli family. But like his sensitive protagonist, Peter Camenzind, Hesse was less at home in a crowded drawing room than at a tavern with a few friends or out in nature; and like Camenzind, the

outdoors became part of an essentially lonely life. He was happiest when hiking in the woods around Basel, boating, or just wandering on one of his many excursions.

It wasn't long before Hesse became romantically involved. In the spring of 1900, he fell in love with Elizabeth La Roche, the "Elizabeth" of his love poems of the period and the romantic interest of what would be his first novel, *Peter Camenzind*. Despite his feelings, Hesse was too shy to pursue his love; and when obtaining her became hopeless, he soon began a more successful courtship of Maria Bernoulli. As in *Gertrude* Kuhn discovers the eponymous heroine at a musical gathering at the home of Mr. Imthor, so did Hesse meet his future wife, Maria, at a gathering at the Bernoulli residence.

In June 1902 Hesse's eyes began to bother him more than usual. (He had been exempted from military service for poor eyesight.) In August severe eyestrain and prolonged headaches forced him to take sick leave. After extended trips back to Cawl and then to Italy, he was able to finish writing *Peter Camenzind* (the story of a failed writer who embarks on a journey to discover the world and himself, a prototype of much of Hesse's later fiction). He'd begun the novel in 1901 but worked on it slowly. When the novel was published in 1904, Hesse's success as a writer seemed assured. The book became a bestseller and brought about a long association with the great Berlin publisher S. (Samuel) Fischer; it also brought him enough money to quit the book trade, become a full-time writer, and get married.

While he worked on *Unterm Rad* (translated as *Beneath the Wheel*) as well as monographs on Boccaccio and St. Francis of Assisi, his fiancée, Maria Bernoulli, to whom he was engaged in the spring of 1903, began traveling the countryside in search of an acceptable rural retreat. Both Hermann and Maria had had enough of sophisticated city life. The charms of the countryside beckoned, and after much searching, Maria was able to find a suitable farmhouse for rent in the village of Gaienhofen, on the German side of the Untersee River. The couple were married in Basel on August 2, 1904, and soon began their life in the country.

The half-timbered farmhouse had been built during the Thirty Years' War. Animals still lived in the stables, and the living quarters had been vacant for some time and were in bad repair. The newlyweds labored for weeks to make their new home livable. Eventually a tranquility settled over

the place. Hesse continued to write, to garden, and to seek his diversion in nature. Maria tended to household affairs and found her pastime in music and photography.

During his years in Gaienhofen, Hesse fell in with a large circle of friends, primarily artists, many of whom were frequent guests in his home as he was in theirs. In 1904 he was introduced to Thomas Mann, with whom he would have a slowly evolving friendship that did not become close and lasting until Mann's flight from Nazi Germany in 1933. In March 1905 Hesse's friend Ludwig Finckh came to live with the Hesses in Gainhofen. The two men were inseparable and spent much of their leisure time exploring the area on foot or in boat, and hiking and swimming. Their odd dress and unusual lifestyle marked them as different, but eventually the locals accepted them as a couple of harmless eccentrics.

When the Hesses' first son, Bruno, was born in December 1905, it became apparent that the farmhouse no longer met their needs. Also, neither of the Hesses was enchanted with Gaienhofen, especially after Hesse's failed attempt at farming, a dream that turned sour when put into practice. Nevertheless, they bought a plot of ground in the township and had a house built that overlooked the village. The new house had everything the farmhouse lacked: running water, a bathroom, a wine cellar, even a darkroom for Maria's photography, plus ample room for a growing family, into which the Hesses' second son, Heiner, was born in March 1909.

Hesse was becoming the fêted writer he'd always dreamed of being, but it was obvious that he could not be both a creative dreamer and a solid citizen—a *Phantasiemensch* and *Bürger*, as he put it. His life felt like a burden, especially his marriage. The realization was sinking in that he could not have chosen a less compatible mate than Maria Bernoulli. She was equally strong-willed and self-focused, nine years his senior, and as set in her ways as he. He was temperamental and flighty; she, withdrawn, dour, and self-sufficient. She had little interest in his writing, and he cared little for family matters. They eventually began to go their separate ways although they would have a third son before divorcing in 1923.

Of the novels Hesse attempted while living in Gaienhofen, he was able to finish but one, *Gertrude*, and only after two previous aborted attempts. According to a letter to Thomas Heuss, who would become the first President of the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II, Hesse

began *Gertrude* in the winter of 1906-07 and completed it in the winter of 1908-09: “There are two big desks where I hide my manuscripts; they hold two attempts, each about 100 pages.”[5] The novel was published serially in September and November 1909 and in book format the following year in Munich.

Unlike his previous work, the publication of *Gertrude* elicited negative reactions from the critics. In an undated letter to Conrad Haussmann (a prominent liberal statesman in Swabia) and Bernhard Zeller (Hesse’s biographer), Hesse wrote:

> “In addition to searing criticism [of *Gertrude*], reviewers have expressed strong praise. . . . and now the press has a kind of revenge—screaming for so long my genius as a writer until they grew tired and suddenly declared me an idiot.”[6]

Peter Camenzind and *Gertrude* were each a response to an urgent psychological need on the part of the author. Narrative in both was an argument for an already chosen way of life: *Peter Camenzind* was an attempt to account for Hesse’s asocial withdrawal in Basel; *Gertrude* was an account of the author’s life in Gainhofen. *Peter Camenzind* delved into the misfortunes of a troubled young writer; *Gertrude* centered around a similarly troubled young composer. Both artistic misfits were projections of their author; their problems, his.

In *Gertrude* both the inner and outer world of Hesse’s violinist composer Kuhn drew freely from the author’s personal history and his love of music. Music was important to Hesse. As a child he loved to listen to the church organ, learned to play the violin, and developed a passion for Chopin. His interest in music and painting and his lifelong association with musicians and painters greatly informed his writing. In *Gertrude* Kuhn is the person Hesse was in Basel as he becomes Hesse the disenchanted artist of Gainhofen, intent on making life acceptable. Toward the end of the novel Kuhn embraces a fatalistic philosophy of life combined with a Nietzschean theory of the irreconcilable elements of art: the Dionysian versus the Apollonian, a major theme in Hesse’s later masterpiece, *The Glass Bead Game*.

As a work of fiction, *Gertrude* disappoints: it remains more portrait than story. Like *Peter Camenzind* the narrative is only loosely grounded in space and time; fragmented by protracted dialogue, constant rumination,

and a dramatic arc which doesn't so much conclude as terminate. For all its shortcomings, however, Hesse found in *Gertrude* the approachable voice that would be the hallmark of his writing style for the rest of his career: a syntactically streamlined language uncluttered with adjectives and adverbs and unadorned with excessive figures of speech. Yet Hesse's settings are still not very particularized, nature almost an insignificant backdrop; and most characters are sketchily drawn, their interior lives indistinct. The overall effect is that of an inner drama of emotions revolving around a protagonist at some distance from society.

Hesse's pre-World-War-I heroes are esthetes who live only in their own world of dreams, who shrink before bold action. Temperamental artists, they are paralyzed by their chronic indecision and consumed by loneliness—timid souls to whom the art of life and the art of love are forever unobtainable. They ask little of life and expect much. Such is the nature of the child of nature, Peter Camenzind, and the timorous composer, Kuhn. Such too was Hermann Hesse.

[1]. Adele Gundert, *Marie Hesse*. Ein Lebensbild in Briefen und Tagebüchern (1934), p. 208 (translation mine).

[2]. *Marie Hesse* (1934), p. 231 (translation mine).

[3]. *Kindheit und Jugend vor Neunzehnhundert.* Hermann Hesse in Briefen und Lebenszeugnissen 1877–1895 (Frankfurt a. M., 1966), pp. 250–251 (translation mine).

[4]. A letter comment of June 1, 1895, *Kindheit und Jugend vor Neunzehnhundert* (1966), p. 468 (translation mine).

[5]. From a letter to Th. Heuss (Nov. 17, 1910), *Gesammelte Briefe*, Vol. 1, 1973, p. 184 (translation mine).

[6]. From a letter to Conrad Haussmann, Bernard Zeller, *Hermann Hesse in Selbstzeusgnissen und Bilddokumenten,* Rowohlt, 1963, p. 60 (translation mine).

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The text for this edition of *Gertrude* is taken from Adele Lewisohn's translation of 1915, *Gertrude and I*, published in New York by The International Monthly. *Gertrude* was the first novel by Hermann Hesse published as an individual book in English.

CHAPTER I

MY life, as I look back on it now, does not seem to have been a particularly happy one. Yet I cannot call it unhappy, in spite of my many mistakes. When all is said and done, it is very foolish to question so much about happiness and unhappiness. It seems to me that it would be harder for me to give up the unhappiest days of my life, than all the happy ones. For, if to live, means consciously to accept the inevitable, to probe fully good and bad, and to conquer, besides our outer destiny, an inner, a truer, and a less casual fate—then my life has not been poor and worthless.

If my outer fate has hung over me, as over all—unavoidable and decreed by the gods—my inner destiny is of my own making.

For the sweetness and bitterness which it brought, I believe I, alone, am answerable.

Several times in my early years I wished to be a poet. If I were a poet, I could not now resist the allurement of going back in my life to the delicate shadows of my childhood, and to the hidden wellsprings of my earliest remembrance. But these are to me so beloved and sacred that I must not desecrate them, even to myself. I was given full freedom to discover my gifts and tendencies, to make my inner joy and pain, and to consider the future, not as an outside power from above, but as the hope and the reward of my own power.

So I went untouched through school, as an unbeloved, little-gifted, but quiet student, whom one leaves alone because he does not seem to be amenable to any strong influence. Somewhere in my sixth or seventh year I began to feel that, of all unseen forces, music was to seize me most strongly

and to master me most completely. After this I had my own world, my refuge and my heaven, which no one could take from me, and which I desired to share with no one. I was a musician, although before my twelfth year I had learned to play no instrument, and never thought to earn my bread, later, through music.

Moreover, this feeling has remained without any essential change. And so it seems to me, as I look back, that my life was very gay and varied, although set from the very first in one key, and guided by one single star. Whether it was well or ill with me, my inner life remained unchanged. I might for long periods put forth upon strange waters, with no notes and no instrument to touch, but in every hour, a melody sang in my blood and on my lips. If eagerly I sought for the solution of many things—for forgetfullness and deliverance, for God and knowledge and freedom—I always found them in music. For that I did not need Beethoven or Bach. That from time to time, one can be moved and pervaded by rhythm and harmony, has always been for me a deep consolation, and has betokened a justification of all life.

O Music! A melody breaks upon you. You sing it, not with your voice, but with your soul. It saturates your very being. It takes possession of all your strength. For a few minutes it extinguishes all that lives in you—all the non-essentials, the evil, the gross, the sad. It puts you in tune with the world. It makes the heavy light, and it lends wings to the motionless. All of that can the melody of one folk-song do!

And then the harmony! Every euphonious consonance of pure tone, like a peal of bells, fills the soul with charm and gratification, and every tone, vibrating in sympathy, can kindle the heart and make it tremble for very joy—as can no other bliss.

Of all the forms of pure happiness of which people and poets have dreamed, to listen to the music of the spheres seemed to me the highest and the most spiritual. My deepest and most precious dreams have been this—for the length of a heart-beat to hear the building of the universe, and the entirety of all life, sound in mysterious, inborn harmony. Ah, how can life then be so confused, and out of tune, and untruthful—as can only lies, malice, envy and hatred between men—when the simplest music proclaims so clearly that purity, harmony, and brotherly concord of clear tones can open Heaven to us! And although I may chide myself, and be angry that I,

with all good purpose, could bring out of my life no song, and no pure music, in my innermost heart I well feel the imperative incitement, the thirsting demand for a pure harmony, sacred in itself. But my days are full of incidents and discords. And wherever I turn, and where I knock, I listen in vain for the echo of clear and full tones.

But nothing more of this. I will tell my tale. If I only think for whom I have written these pages, who had the real power over me to force this confession from me, to break through my loneliness—then I must repeat the beloved name of a woman, who was bound to me not only by a long period of my life and destiny, but who has been fixed above me like a star and a lofty symbol.

It was during my last school year, when all my comrades began to talk about their future professions, that I also began to think about it. To make music my calling and vocation, truly never occurred to me. But I could think of no other occupation which would give me happiness. Towards trade, or any other business which my father suggested to me, I had no objections. They were merely indifferent to me. But my comrades seemed so proud to undertake their chosen callings that they—and perhaps a voice within me—made it seem good and right to choose that profession which filled my thoughts, and which alone gave me true joy.

It came to me that since my twelfth year I had studied the violin, and under a good instructor had learned accurately. Only my father very much opposed it, and was uneasy to see his only son enter upon the uncertain career of an artist. My determination grew in opposition to his will, and my teacher, who liked me, strongly interceded in my favor. At the end, my father gave in. Only he was insistent, as a proof of my determination, and in the hope that I might change my mind, that I remain another year in school. I stayed with tolerable patience, and during this year I became more convinced of my desire.

It was in this last year in school that I fell in love, for the first time, with a pretty young girl of our acquaintance. Without seeing her very much, or even without wishing very strongly to see her, I tasted the sweet intoxication of a first love, as in a dream. And in this time, when during the whole day I thought of my music and of my love, and in those nights in which I could not sleep for the glorious excitement, I was filled with

conscious melodies which suddenly came to me—two little songs. I tried to write them. This filled me with a half-shamed, though penetrating joy, in which I almost wholly forgot my sentimental love sorrows.

In the meantime I heard that my beloved was taking singing lessons. I was very eager to hear her sing. After some months my wish was fulfilled one evening in the home of my parents. The pretty child was asked to sing; at first she strongly resisted, and then finally consented. And I waited for it with a nervous tension. A man accompanied her at our poor, little, piano; he played a few notes and she began. Oh, it was so bad—so pitifully bad! Yet while she sang my dismay and distress turned to pity and then to humor, and finally I was freed of my love for her.

I was a patient, not exactly lazy, but not a good student, and in my last year I made very little effort. For that, neither indolence nor my love affair was to blame. Rather an indifference, an absorption in the dreams of youth, a dullness of mind and of sense, which only now and then was suddenly and sharply interrupted, when one of the wonderful, premature hours of creative desire enveloped me as with ether. Then I felt myself enclosed by a clear, crystal air, in which no dreams were possible; in which all my senses were sharpened, and on the lookout. What resulted of those hours was little—perhaps ten melodies and a few beginnings of harmonic sketches. But their atmosphere I can never forget—that clear, almost cold air, and that intense concentration of my thoughts to give to a melody the perfect rhythm and not an accidental movement and resolution. I was not pleased with these little accomplishments. I never considered them logical and good, but it was clear to me that in my life there would be nothing so much desired, nothing so important, as the return of such hours of vision and of creation.

I also knew days of musing, when I indulged in whims on my violin, in the tumult of escaping invasions, and in the color of tones. Only, I soon discovered that this was no creation, but a playing and rioting, from which I must defend myself. I noticed that it is one thing to yield to one's dreams and to taste fragrant hours, and another, inexorably and firmly to grapple with the mystery of form as with an enemy. And even at that time I comprehended a little of the truth, that a real creative work demanded something of loneliness in one, a renunciation of some of the pleasures of life.

Finally, I was free. School was behind me! My parents bade me farewell, and my new life as a student in the Conservatory of Cologne began. I entered with great anticipations and was convinced that I would be a good student in the school of music. To my painful astonishment it was quite otherwise. I had great difficulty, especially in following the instruction. I found the piano lessons which I had to take a great annoyance, and soon saw my whole study rise before me like an impassable mountain. While I had no intention of giving it up, still I was disillusioned and disconcerted. I realized that for all my modesty, I had considered myself as a kind of genius, and had underestimated the serious toil and difficulty of the path to Art. Therefore, composition was thoroughly painful to me. For now in the smallest problem I saw only the mountain of difficulties and rules, and learned to distrust absolutely my feeling. I no more knew whether, after all, there was a spark of power in me. I felt small and sad. I did my work as I would have done it behind a counter, or in another school, industriously, but joylessly. I dared not complain, at least in my letters home. So I plodded along the way I had started, in silent disappointment, intending to become at least an average violinist. I practiced and practiced. I endured the rudeness and ridicule of my teacher. I saw many others, of whom I had not believed it possible, easily come forward and earn praise. And I stuck to my object with increasing humbleness. I could never dare to think of myself as a virtuoso. It looked as though, by dint of hard work I might become a serviceable fiddler, who might play without shame and without honor, his assigned part, and so earn his bread.

So this time for which I had watched and from which I had expected so much, was the only time in my life when I went my joyless way, forsaken by the spirit of music. And therein, I lived days without tone and without rhythm. Where I had sought enjoyment and inspiration, glory and beauty, I found only rules and obligations, difficulties and dangers.

When any music did come, either it was something banal—done a hundred times before—or it contradicted all the rules of harmony, and so was worth nothing. I packed away all my great thoughts and hopes. I was one of the thousands who approach art with youthful audacity, and whose strength fails when it becomes serious. This state of affairs lasted about three years. I was then over twenty years old. Obviously my profession had failed me, and I continued in it only out of shame and a sense of duty. I

knew nothing more of music. I knew only finger exercises, contradictory harmonies, theories, difficult piano studies, under a mocking teacher who in all my efforts saw only a waste of time.

Had not the old ideals remained secretly living in me, I could have had a good time in those years. I was free and had friends. I was a good-looking and healthy young man, a son of wealthy parents. At times I liked all that. It offered me merry days, flirtations, carousings, and outings. But it was not possible for these things to satisfy me, to kill my sense of duty, and before all else allow me to be happy in my youthful days. In all those unguarded hours, as one homesick, I looked at the declining star of my art. It was impossible to forget and to deaden my disappointment. Only once did it leave me completely.

That was the most foolish day of my foolish youth. At that time I was running after a student of the famous voice teacher H——. It seemed to be with her, as it had been with me. She had come with great hopes, had found severe teachers, was not accustomed to the work, and finally even believed she was losing her voice. She easily accepted us; flirted with all of us; and knew how to make us all foolish over her, which indeed was not difficult. She had the fiery, high-colored beauty which soon fades.

This beautiful Liddy captured me with her naïve coquetry, every time I saw her. I was never in love with her for very long at a time. Often I forgot her completely. But when I was near her, each time the infatuation seemed again to come over me. She played with me as with the others; allured us, tasted her power, merely with the curiosity of her youth. She was so beautiful—but only when she spoke, when she laughed with her warm, deep voice, or when she danced, or was pleased with the jealousy for her. Often when I returned from a party at which I had seen her, I laughed at myself and assured myself that it was impossible for a man of my kind to love a pleasing butterfly. But many times she succeeded in so exciting me by a gesture or a warm, whispered word, that, hot and wild, I wandered about her house half the night.

At that time I had a short period of wildness, of a half-forced wantonness. After days of depression and of gloomy silence, my youth demanded stormy stimulation and intoxication. Then I went with my fellow students after diversions and pranks. We passed for boisterous, unrestrained, dangerous rioters, which as far as I was concerned, was undeserved. And

with Liddy and her small circle, we won an agreeable but half-suspicious reputation as heroes.

How much of this was genuine exuberance of youth, and how much was a deliberate stupefaction, to this day I cannot decide. For a long time, now, I have outgrown these achievements and all that extrinsic youthfulness.

If it went too far, I have atoned for it.

One day in the winter there were no lessons, so eight or nine young people went together out of town, among them Liddy with three friends. We had bob-sleds with us, and looked for good coasting places in the neighboring hills and slopes. I remember the day so well! It was moderately cold; at times the sun would come out for about a quarter of an hour. The invigorating air fairly smelled of the snow. The girls with their vari-colored clothes looked brilliant against the white ground. It was intoxicating, and the violent activity in all this crispness was a joy. Our little band was in the happiest spirits. Fun and foolishness flew hither and yon and we pelted one another with snowballs, and carried on a small war, until we were in a great perspiration and covered with snow. Then we stopped to breathe, and began again. We built a great fortress of snow, besieged it and stormed it, and between times went down some little slopes on our sleds.

At noon, as we had become terribly hungry by this siege, we found a village and a good inn. We nearly roasted ourselves, then took possession of the piano, sang, screamed, and ordered wine and grog. The meal was served and heartily begun. The good wine flowed copiously, after which the girls asked for coffee, while we ordered liqueur. There was such shrieking and noise in the small inn that our ears were deafened.

I was always near Liddy, who in a gracious mood, treated me today with unusual kindness. She was radiant and gorgeous in this air of merriment and tumult. Her beautiful eyes danced and she endured many half-daring, half-timid, rather venturesome tendernesses. A forfeit game was started, in which the losers must pay, some by giving imitations at the piano of our teachers, others by kisses, the number and nature of which were closely observed.

It was still early in the afternoon, although it was beginning to grow dark, when, glowing and bustling, we left the inn. Like children we romped in the snow without hurrying back to the city through the softly falling

evening. I remained by the side of Liddy—constituted myself her knight, but not without the opposition of the others. I drew her a good part of the way on my sled and did all I could to protect her from the constant attack of snowballs. Finally we were left alone. Each of the girls had found her partner, and only two of the boys had to be contented with each other's warlike company.

I had never been so excitedly and foolishly in love as in that hour. Liddy had taken my arm, and let me press her gently to me as we walked. She talked almost continuously until night. Then she grew happily silent, and the silence seemed to me full of promise. I was intoxicated and resolved to improve the occasion to prolong this intimate, tender footing as long as possible.

No one minded when, shortly before we reached the city, I proposed a roundabout way, over a beautiful winding highway that hung over the valley in a half circle, showing a view of the city that now flashed with its street lamps, and a thousand red lights glimmering out of the deep.

Liddy still hung to my arm. She let me talk, accepting my fiery words smilingly, and seeming herself to be deeply stirred. But when I tried gently to draw her to me and to kiss her, she drew herself away.

"Look," she said, breathlessly. "Let's coast all the way down. Or are you afraid, my hero! "

I looked down and was astonished, for the incline was so steep, that for an instant I was afraid of this audacious journey.

"It won't do," I said weakly. "It is much too dark."

Immediately she fell upon me with ridicule and indignation, called me a coward, and swore to go down alone if I were too faint-hearted to go with her.

"No doubt we will fall," she added, laughing. "That's the fun of the whole trip."

This so stung me that an inspiration came to me.

"Liddy," I said, softly. "We will do it. If we fall you may pelt me with snow, but if we get down safely, then I also will have my reward."

She merely laughed and seated herself on the sled. I looked into her eyes which glowed with warmth and desire. Then I took the front place, told her to hang on tight, and started. I felt her embrace as she crossed her hands over my chest. I wanted to say something to her but I could not. The

bluff was so steep that I had the feeling of crashing through the empty air. At once I tried to find the ground with both my feet in order to hold us on or to upset us, for a feeling of terror for Liddy had struck into my heart. But it was too late. The sled rushed irresistibly down the precipice. I felt only a cold, biting deluge of driving snow-dust in my face—I heard Liddy's terrified scream, and then—nothing more.

A terrific blow, as though a sledge hammer had struck my head; somewhere a cutting hurt. The last feeling I had was that of cold. With this short, fleet, toboggan slide, I atoned for all my youthful spirits and foolishness.

Afterwards, when I had regained consciousness, many other things had entirely fled, among them my love for Liddy.

I was relieved of the tumult and terrible confusion that followed the accident. For the others it was a painful hour. From above they heard Liddy scream, and they laughed and railed at us down in the darkness. Finally, they realized that something terrible had happened. With difficulty they climbed down, and it needed a little time for them to come out of their high spirits and revelry to a realization. Liddy was white and half conscious, although quite unhurt. Only her gloves were torn and her fine, white hands scratched and bleeding. They bore me away, to all appearances, dead. Afterwards I looked in vain for the apple or pear tree on which the sled and my bones were broken. It was thought that my spine was injured, but it did not turn out to be so bad. My head and brain were badly hurt, and it was a long time before I became conscious in the hospital. The head healed and my brain rested. But the compound fracture of my left leg could never be set right. Since then I have been a cripple, one who can only limp, but no more walk or run or dance. And thus my youth was exiled into a quiet land. I entered it not without shame and resistance. But still I entered it, and many times it seems to me that in no way could I have dispensed in my life with that toboggan slide in the evening, and its consequences.

Truly, I think little of that broken leg, but more of the other effects of that accident—effects far more kind and joyful. Was it the accident itself with its pain and its glimpse into the depth, or was it the long lying there, the months-long quiet and reflection that did me good? The beginning of that long time of illness—the first week—has vanished entirely from my memory. I was much weakened, and after the final awakening, frail and

indifferent. My mother came and faithfully sat all day by my bedside. When I recognized her and said a few words to her, she seemed pleased and almost cheerful; but as I learned, later, she feared for me—not for my life but for my reason. Gradually we came to talk for long times together in the little, quiet, sick-room. We had never been very close to each other. I had felt nearer my father. Now she was touched with pity, and I, with gratitude, and disposed to a conciliation. But too long we had been accustomed to a mutual indifference for us to express in words this awakening happiness. We looked at each other contentedly, but left the things unsaid. She was again my mother, for I was ill and she could nurse me, and so forgave all else. Later we resumed our old attitude, and we avoided speaking of this sick time, as it made us both embarrassed.

Gradually I began to perceive my situation, and after my fever had gone and I seemed quiet, the Doctor could no longer keep me in ignorance of what would always remain to me a reminder of this fall. I saw my youth, which I had hardly enjoyed consciously, grievously clipped and impoverished. For all time I must come to terms with this thing.

I eagerly sought to fasten my condition in my thoughts, to picture to myself the future, but I could not do it. Many thoughts were not yet possible to me, for I soon grew weary and sank into a halfconscious dream, wherein nature protected me from sorrow and despair, and forced upon me the rest necessary to heal me. But in spite of everything, my misfortune troubled me many hours and half the nights, and I could not think of anything to comfort me.

Then one night I awoke after a few hours of light slumber. It seemed to me I had dreamed something good, and I strove to remember what it was, but it was gone. I felt wonderfully well, even courageous, as though I had surmounted and put behind me everything unpleasant. And as I lay and thought, I felt the gentle current of recovery and of release upon me. A melody played upon my lips almost audibly, and I hummed it without really listening to it attentively. And unexpectedly music came back to me like a glowing star to which I had long been strange, and my heart beat its rhythm and my whole life bloomed, and breathed new, pure air. It came to me insensibly. Only it was there, and permeated me, as if gentle choirs were singing to me from far away.

And in this fervent, refreshing feeling, I slept again. In the morning I was happy, and not oppressed anymore. My mother noticed it and asked me what had made me happy. I tried to think, and after a while I told her that for so long I had not given a thought to my violin, but now, again, I remembered it, and I was happy.

“But you will not be able to play for a long time,” she said, somewhat anxiously.

“That does not matter—even if I never play again! ”

She could not understand this and I could not explain it to her. But she saw that I was better and that no danger lurked behind this causeless happiness. After a few days she spoke of it again.

“Son, what is the real truth about your music? We had almost believed that you had taken a dislike to it, and your father has spoken to your teachers about it. We will not discuss it—at least, not now—but we think that, if you have deceived yourself, and would like to give it up, you should do so, and not keep it because of pride or shame. What do you think?”

Then I thought of that whole time of doubts and misgivings. I tried to tell my mother about it and she seemed to understand. But now, I thought, I had become more sure of myself, and at all events I would not abandon it, but study to the end. There the matter rested. In the depths of my soul—into which my mother could not look—the music was everything. Whether or not I succeeded with my violin, I could once more hear the harmony of the universe, and I knew there was no salvation for me but in music. If my condition would not permit me to play the violin, then I must renounce it. Perhaps I would have to seek another profession or become a merchant. But all that did not matter. I would, as merchant, or even as something less than a merchant, perceive music, and in music live and breathe. I would compose. It was not the violin, as I had told my mother, which filled me with joy. But, instead, it was the creating of music that even then made my hand tremble. Already I felt the pure sweep and clear breezes, the bracing coolness of thoughts, and knew that by the side of it a lame leg and other troubles were of small significance.

From that hour I was the victor. And whenever my wishes wandered into the land of health and youth, and whenever I hated and cursed my infirmity with bitterness and passionate shame, this sorrow never really

conquered me. There was something that comforted me and dispelled the clouds.

My father travelled back and forth to see me and my mother, and when it was evident that I was better, he took her home with him. The first days I felt rather lonely. Then too, I was grieved that I had spoken so little from my heart to my mother, had paid so little attention to her thoughts and cares. But I was so filled with other feelings that these thoughts and good intentions were forgotten.

And then someone came to see me, who had not dared come while my mother was there. It was Liddy. I was rather surprised to see her. In the first minute I could not realize how near I had once been to her, and how dearly I had once cared for her. She came in great embarrassment which she could not conceal. She had been afraid of my mother and even of the court of justice. For she felt herself to blame for my accident. It dawned upon her slowly that things were not really so bad and that she could not be implicated. Then she breathed freely, though she was a little disappointed. In all this terrible affair, in the bottom of her heart, she had allowed herself much intense and emotional distress. Several times she used the word "tragic" at which I could hardly keep from laughing. Particularly, she had not been prepared to find me so gay and so disrespectful of my misfortune. She had intended to beg my forgiveness.

Had I been her lover, the very granting of this would have been a mighty compensation. Following upon this touching scene she thought once more to besiege my heart. Now, it is true, it was no small relief to this foolish child to find me so content and herself relieved of all guilt and blame. But she was not happy for this relief. Instead, the more I quieted her conscience and belittled her anxiety, the quieter and cooler I saw her become. It hurt her a good deal that I regarded her share in the affair as so trifling; that I seemed to have forgotten; that I nipped in the bud her emotions and plans; and spoiled the whole beautiful scene. In spite of my great courtesy she saw that I was no longer in love with her, and that was the hardest to bear. I might have lost arms and legs, still I would have been a lover whom, it is true, she had never loved and to whom she had granted nothing, but in whose adoration, always miserable as he was, she had found great satisfaction.

Now it was no longer so, as she clearly perceived. I saw the warmth and sympathy on her pretty face, fade and grow cool. Finally she took leave of me in meaningless words. And she never came again, although she had solemnly promised to do so.

Much as it pained me and hurt my pride to have been in love with one so insignificant and ridiculous, still her visit did me good. I was so filled with wonder to look upon this pretty and desirable girl, for the first time without emotion, and without seeing her through rose-colored glasses. If someone had presented me with a puppet, which at three years old I had embraced and loved, the change and the estrangement of my feeling could not have more astonished me than this: when I saw a maiden, whom for weeks I thought desirable, as a total stranger.

Of the comrades who had been on that winter Sunday excursion, two came several times to see me. But we found little in common to talk about, and I clearly noticed their relief when they saw I was gaining. So I asked them to make no more sacrifice. I never saw them again. It was noteworthy and gave me a curious, painful feeling. Everything that had belonged to the youthful years of my life fell away from me, became strange and was lost. I suddenly realized how falsely and pitifully I had lived this whole time—that now, love, friends, customs and the joys of these years, fell from me like ill-fitting clothes, without causing me any grief. I only wondered how I had clung to them so long, or they to me.

On the other hand I was surprised by another visitor of whom I had never thought. One day my piano teacher came, my severe, ironical master. He kept his stick in his hand and his gloves on, spoke in his accustomed harsh, almost biting manner, called my unfortunate toboggan slide a woman's tom-foolery, and seemed by the tone of his words to think I had got my just deserts! In spite of that the fact remains that he came. And he showed also, although he could not change his tone, that he had come with no adverse purpose but to say to me that in spite of my clumsiness he considered me a fair pupil, and that his colleague, the violin teacher, thought the same. And they hoped I would soon return and so give them pleasure! Although this talk, which looked almost like an apology for previous rudeness, was delivered in the same bitter, sharp way as usual, it seemed to me almost a declaration of love. I held out my hand gratefully to the crusty teacher to show him my appreciation. I tried to make it clear to

him how, for me, these years were over, and how now my old devotion to music had begun again to live.

The Professor shook his head and whistled scornfully as he said:

“Aha! You would like to be a composer?”

“If possible,” I answered.

“Well, I wish you luck! I had thought that now, perhaps, you would go on with some industry, and practice. But for a composer that is not necessary.”

“Oh, that is not what I meant! ”

“What then? You know when a music student is lazy and doesn’t like to work, he always announces that he is a composer! Anyone can do that, and every one is a genius! ”

“But I truly did not mean that. Do you want me to become a pianist?”

“No, my dear boy. You couldn’t be that. But you could learn to be a respectable violinist.”

“Then I will do that.”

“I hope you are serious about it. But I must stay no longer. Quick recovery and *Auf Wiedersehen!* ”

With that he went away and left me perplexed. I had hardly thought of returning to my studies. I rather feared things might become difficult and uncertain again, and at last all be as it had been before. But such thoughts did not last long, and it appeared that the visit of the surly Professor was well meant—a sign of genuine good-will.

After my convalescence I was to make a journey for my health. I decided to wait until the long vacation, and to resume my work as soon as possible. For the first time I understood how beneficent a time of rest, even if enforced, can be. I began my studies with misgiving, but everything went better than before. I saw everything now clearly—that never would I be a virtuoso, though this realization did not make me feel sorry in my present condition. As for the rest, everything went well, and in the long pauses of my uncomfortable suffering, theory, harmony, and composition seemed to lead to a beautiful garden. I felt that the conceits and endeavors of my good hours no longer lay half outside all rules and laws; that within the stern rule of the school, a narrow but plainly visible path led to freedom. Of course there were hours and days and nights when all lay before me like a thorny

path, and with a tired head I tormented myself with contradictions. But the doubt came no more.

At the end of the semester, to my great surprise, the teacher of theory said to me:

"You are the only pupil of this year who seems to understand anything of music. When you have written something I should like to see it."

With these comforting words ringing in my ear, I left for my vacation. I had not been home for a long time, and while I journeyed there a flood of half-forgotten incidents of my childhood and of my youth came over me. At the station my father met me and we drove home.

In the morning I had a desire to roam about the old streets. For the first time I felt the affliction of my lost, uncrippled youth. It was a torture to me, with my crooked and stiff leg, to hobble on a cane through the streets where each corner was reminiscent of boyish play and past pleasure. I went back home heavy of heart, and everything I saw and every voice I heard, and everything I thought reminded me bitterly of what had been, and of the cripple I now was. Besides I soon perceived that my mother did not sympathize with my choice of a profession, although she did not say so openly. A musician with two good legs might win success as a soloist or a dashing director, if he were worth anything, but she could not understand how one, half lame, with only moderate ability, could succeed very well as a violinist. She was encouraged in these thoughts by an old friend and distant relative to whom my father had once forbidden the house. She, filled with bitter hate for him, disregarded his wishes, for she didn't remain away but came to see my mother during his business hours.

She could not endure me, with whom, since my childhood, she had hardly exchanged a word, and she saw in my choice of a profession an ominous sign of insanity, and in my misfortune but a clear punishment and admonition of Providence.

In order to give me a surprise, my father arranged that I should be asked as a soloist for a concert of the city's musical club. But I could not do it! All day long I withdrew to my little room in which I had lived as a child. Besides, the eternal questions and necessary explanations tortured me so that I hardly ever went out. Rather, I sat by myself, and from my window watched with unhappy envy the life of the streets, the school children, and especially the young girls. How could I dare to hope ever again to win a

girl’s love? To the end of my life I would stand outside, and to the women, would always be a little less than a man. And if ever one was kind to me it would be out of pity. Ah, I had already endured as much as I could of pity!

Under such conditions I could not remain at home. My parents suffered, too, not a little from my increasing depression, and hardly raised an objection when I begged permission to take now the long planned trip which my father had promised me. My desires and hopes, now destroyed, had given me something to think about. So keenly and agonizingly did I feel this infirmity and deformity, that the mere sight of a sound man and of an attractive woman depressed and humiliated me. Even after I had been used for a long time to my cane and to my limp—until they hardly disturbed me—yet it took me years to think of my injury without bitterness and to bear it with resignation, even with a certain humor.

Fortunately, I could travel alone, and no longer required any particular help. It was easier for me as soon as I took my seat, and no one regarded me curiously or pityingly. I travelled day and night without stopping, with a real feeling of flight, and I took a deep breath when, on the second evening, I saw through the dusty windows the peaks of high mountains. Night had fallen when I reached my station, and happy but tired, went through the dark street of a simple, little village to the first inn. After a glass of dark red wine I slept ten hours in restfulness and lost a good share of my depression and of my troubles.

In the morning I got on the little mountain railroad which led mountainwards, through narrow valleys to white, foaming streams. Then I went by carriage to a little, solitary station, and by noon I was in one of the highest of mountain hamlets.

In the small inn of this quiet village I dwelt, well into the autumn—at times the only guest. I had thought to remain here a little while and then to travel through Switzerland, to see a little of the world and foreign lands. But there was at this height a breeze and an air full of such freshness and vastness that I could not leave. One side of the valley was overgrown with pines, almost to the top. The other slope was barren rock. Here I spent my days in the sun-burnt rocks, or near some dashing wild stream whose song sounded by night through all the village. In the first days I felt the solitude as a soothing draught. No one looked at me; no one showed any curiosity or any pity. I was free and alone, like a bird in the heights, and soon forgot my

sorrow, and my sickening feeling of envy. Sometimes I was sorry that I could not go farther into the mountains to see unknown valleys and hilly tracts, to climb the dangerous ways. At heart, however, after the excitement and agitation of the past months, the peace and the solitude encompassed me like a walled town. I found a peace of soul and learned to think of my bodily weakness, if not with cheerfulness, at least with resignation.

The weeks which I spent in the Alps, I count as almost the happiest of my life. I breathed the pure, clear air; I drank the icy water of the streams; I watched the flocks of goats grazing on the steep precipices, guarded by dark-haired, dreamy, silent shepherds. At times I listened to the storms raging through the valleys, and out of an unaccustomed nearness looked into the very faces of the clouds and mists. In the crevices of rocks, I observed the small, delicate, highly-colored world of flowers and the many beautiful mosses. On clear days I liked to climb for an hour, until beyond the heights, I could see the clear-cut outline of the high mountain peaks, with their blue shadows and luminous silver snowfields. In one place, where the trickling of a stream made it damp, I found on a clear day hundreds of small, blue butterflies. They were drinking of the water and hardly turned aside from my steps or from me. When I roused them they fluttered around me with a little, gentle, silky rustle. After I found them I followed that path every sunny day, and each time found the dense, blue cloud, and each time it was like a festival.

I hardly think all of that time was so full of sun and of azure and of festivity, as it seems to me in my thoughts. There must have been cloudy days and rainy days, and snow and cold, just as there must have been in me storms and bad moods. But I was not used to solitude and after the first rest and delight was over, sometimes I saw the sorrow from which I had run away suddenly appear terrifying to me. On many a cold evening I sat in my tiny room, my travelling rug over my knees, tired and given over to sorrowful, foolish thoughts. Whatever had been desired by youthful blood —holidays, and the joy of dancing, the love of women, and adventure, the triumph of strength and of love—it all lay over there on another shore, forever separated from me, forever out of my reach. Even that defiant, unrestrained time of a half-forced gayety which had ended in my accident, seemed now in my remembrance beautiful and delightfully colored, like a lost land of joy whose echoes rang alluringly from a distance.

And when on some nights the storm raged; when the cold, monotonous rush of the plunging water was drowned by the impassioned moaning and rustling of the wind-lashed pines; when in the roof-trees of the infirm house would sound the thousand inexplicable creakings of a sleepless summer night, then I lay in the hopeless, dominating dreams of life and of my sorrow, and cursed God. I seemed to myself like a poor poet and dreamer whose most beautiful dream is but a thin soap-bubble, while thousands of others in the world, full of the strength of their youth, had but to stretch out their happy, jubilant hands to grasp all the completeness of life.

But as I felt the beauty of the mountains, and all that my senses daily enjoyed, looking at me through a veil and speaking to me from a strange distance, so there came a veil and a mild strangeness between me and that wildly attacking pain, and soon I grew to take both the brightness of the day and the sorrow of the night as voices from without, to which I might listen with unclouded heart. I seemed to be like a sky, with chasing, fleeing clouds; like a field full of fighting troops; and whether it was pleasure and enjoyment, or pain and melancholy, both were clear and undisguised, and both slipped from my soul and came on me from without, in harmonies and melodies, which I perceived as in my sleep, and which, without my wish, took possession of me.

It was on a quiet evening, after my return from the rocks, that I understood this all clearly for the first time. As I brooded upon it, and was an enigma to myself, it suddenly occurred to me what it all meant—that it was the return of each strange hour in which in earlier years I had moved with misgivings. And with this remembrance returned the wonderful clearness, the almost crystal-like clearness, and transparency of the feelings, in which everything stood without masks, and in which there was no more pain or joy, but only strength and harmony. And of the change and struggle of my soaring perception, music was born.

Now, in my bright days I looked on the sun and the woods, the brown rocks and the distant, silvery mountains with a double feeling of joy and beauty, and gradually in the dark hours my sick heart expanded and revolted with double fire. I no longer distinguished between pleasure and pain, for one was like the other. Both were sorrowful and both were precious. And whether it went well or ill with me, my power remained at peace, looking on and recognizing the light and the dark as belonging together, as brother

and sister—that sorrow and joy, like tempo and theme, are parts of the same great music.

I could not write this music. It was still strange and its boundary unknown. But I could hear it, and could feel the great unity of the world. And something of it I could hold—a little piece, an echo, almost dwindling to nothing when translated. I thought of them and sang them all day, and found that they might be expressed by two violins. So I began, as a young bird tries its wings, to write my first sonata.

As I played my first movement on my violin, in my small room, I felt how weak and unfinished and uncertain it was, but every beat of it fell like a shower on my heart. I knew not whether the music was good. But I knew that it was my own music, that it lived in me, was born in me, and belonged to no one else.

In the inn below, year in and year out, motionless and white as an icicle, sat the father of the innkeeper. He was a man of more than eighty years, who never spoke a word, but only looked carefully around out of his quiet eyes. It was a mystery, whether the solemnly silent man was in possession of superhuman wisdom and peace of soul, or whether his mental powers had left him. I walked in upon this hoary man each morning, my violin under my arm. I had noticed that he always listened with attention to my playing and to all music. When I found him alone, I went near to him, tuned my violin, and played my first movement. The ancient man kept his still eyes, whose whites were yellow and whose lids were red, upon me, and listened to me. Now when I think of that music I see again the old man and his motionless, stony face, out of which the quiet eyes considered me. When I had finished I nodded to him. He blinked slyly and seemed to comprehend everything. His jaundiced eyes answered my glance. Then he turned away, let his head drop, and seemed to be dulled into his old apathy.

The autumn came early in the mountains, and when I departed one morning, the fog lay thick and a cold rain fell in spraying drops. But I took with me the sun of the happy days, and the grateful remembrance of a joyous courage for my next path in life.

CHAPTER II

DURING my last semester at the conservatory I became acquainted with the singer Muoth, who had considerable reputation in the city. He had finished his studies four years before, and had immediately been engaged by the Royal Opera, where, to be sure, he appeared only occasionally and in minor rôles. Because of the favorite, older colleagues, he could not come into just recognition. But many considered him a coming star, on the very threshold of success. I had seen him in several parts and he had always produced on me a strong impression, although not a very definite one.

Our acquaintance began in this way. On my return to school I took my violin sonata and two songs to the teacher who had shown such an interest in me. He promised to look over my compositions, and tell me what he thought of them. It was a long while before he did it, and I noticed in time a certain embarrassment whenever I met him. Finally he called me in one day, and gave me back my manuscripts.

"There are your compositions," he said in a disconcerted manner. "I hope you haven't any great hopes concerning them. There is something there, without doubt, and something can be made out of them. But to be perfectly frank, I had credited you with more repose and maturity, and with less passion. I had expected something quieter and more pleasing, surer in its technique, something that could be judged from that standpoint. But your work is technically faulty, so that I can say little about it. It is a daring experiment, which I cannot esteem, and which your teacher may not praise. You have done less and more than I had anticipated, and, therefore, I am perplexed. I am too much of a teacher to overlook your technical sins, and I

cannot decide whether, or not, your originality will outweigh them. I will wait until I see something more of yours, and then wish you luck. You will continue to compose. Of so much I am certain."

With that I was dismissed and did not know what to make of his decision, which was really no decision at all. It seemed to me that one could have seen at once whether a composition was written out of necessity and from the heart, or whether it was merely a play and a pastime. I put the manuscript away and decided to forget it for a while, and to make the most of my last months of study.

Once I was invited to the home of a music-loving family, who were acquaintances of my parents. I called formally once or twice a year. This was an evening to which a few opera singers were invited. The singer, Muoth, who of all of them interested me the most, was there. For the first time I saw him close. He was tall and handsome, a dark, impressive man, with an assured, and perhaps somewhat spoiled manner. One could see that he was pleasing to the women. Still he seemed, in spite of his affected gestures, neither proud nor self-satisfied, but rather there was in his look and mien, a dissatisfaction, a seeking for something. When I was presented to him, he greeted me with a short, formal acknowledgment, without speaking to me further. But after a while he suddenly came over to me and said:

"Is your name Kuhn? Then I already know you a little. Professor S. showed me your work. You must not be displeased. He is not indiscreet. But I came upon him when he was reading a song, and with his permission, I took a look at it."

I was surprised and embarrassed. "Why mention that? I am sure the Professor didn't like the song."

"What do you care? I liked the song very much. I could sing it if only I had the accompaniment. I might beg that from you?"

"You really like it? Can it truly be sung?"

"It certainly can, although not at every concert. But I would like it in my repertoire."

"I will copy it for you. But why do you wish to have it?"

"Because it interests me. It is real music—that song. You know that yourself."

He looked at me, and his way of considering people made me uncomfortable. He looked at me directly in the eyes, studying me, wholly unconsciously, and his eyes were full of curiosity.

"You are younger than I had thought. But you must have had much sorrow."

"Yes," I said, "but I cannot talk about it."

"You needn't—I won't question you."

His look bewildered me. After all he was an artist of distinction—while I was but a student. I could only set up a weak and timid defense against him, although I didn't like his way of questioning. He was not arrogant, but, nevertheless, a feeling of ignominy hurt me, and I wasn't able to ward it off. Still it didn't arouse any antipathy in me. I had the feeling that he was unhappy, and had a determined, forcible way of getting hold of men, as if he would snatch from them something that would comfort him. His dark, searching eyes were sad and audacious, and his face much older than he could possibly be.

Shortly after, while my thoughts were busy with his conversation, I saw him talking courteously and merrily with the daughter of the house, who was charmed by him, and who looked at him as at a wonder! I had lived such a lonely life since my accident, that this encounter filled my mind and disturbed me for days after. I was not sure enough of myself not to fear the condescension of the man, although too lonely and too hungry not to be flattered by his advances. Finally, I thought he had forgotten me and his caprice of that evening.

Then to my astonishment he appeared at my rooms. It was on a December evening after dusk. He knocked and came in as though there were nothing unnatural in his visit, and without any introduction or ceremony plunged immediately into the midst of his conversation. I must give him that song! Then, seeing my piano in the room, he would sing it at once! I must sit down and accompany him. And so for the first time I heard my song perfectly sung. It was sad, and moved me against my will, for he sang it, not in full voice, but softly, as if for himself alone. The words, which I had found the year before in a magazine, were:

"That each storm wind's breath
Hurl the avalanche to the plain

With thunder and tumult of death,
Did God so ordain?

"That a stranger, I
Through this land
Must wander by,
Is it at God's command?

"Seeth He how in dread
And pain I hover?
Aye, God is dead!
Shall I not give over?"

As I heard him sing it I knew that he liked my song. We were silent for a little while. Then I asked him if he would not tell me the errors and suggest corrections.

Muoth looked at me with his dark, keen glance, and shook his head.

"There is nothing to change," he said. "I don't know whether the composition is good or not. I don't understand anything about that. But there is life and feeling in the song, and as I can neither write verse nor compose a melody, it pleases me when I find something which seems to be my own and which I can sing for myself."

"But the words are not mine," I interrupted.

"No? But that's immaterial. The words are secondary. But you—you must have lived or you would not have written that song! "

I gave him a copy of the song which had been ready for days. He took it, rolled it up and stuck it in his coat pocket.

"Come to see me when you can," he said, and gave me his hand. "You live alone, but I will not hurt you. Now and then one likes to look into the face of a sympathetic man."

After he had gone his last words and his smile lingered with me. They seemed to be in tune with my song which he had sung, and with all I knew of the man. And the longer I considered them and reflected on them, the clearer they became, and finally I understood this man. I understood why he had come to me; why he appeared to me almost arrogant, and still half shy. He suffered, he bore a deep sorrow, and he was hungry as a wolf from lonesomeness. For this suffering he had tried pride and solitude, and they had not helped. He was lying in wait for men, for a sympathetic glance, for

a breath of understanding, and was ready to throw himself away for it. So I thought, at that time.

My feeling towards Heinrich Muoth was not clear. I sensed his longing and his need, yet I was afraid of him as a haughty, awe-inspiring man who could break me and then discard me. I was too young and inexperienced to understand, and to grant that he had given his true self and had hardly seemed to know the humility of his sorrow. But I did realize that an ardent and sincere man was suffering and suffering alone. There came to me, involuntarily, the rumors that I had heard about Muoth—vague, timid gossip of students, the real import of which I had forgotten. But I remembered distinctly their tone and color. Mad stories about women and adventures were told of him. I couldn’t remember any separate instance. I thought, however, there was something cruel, as if he had been involved in the story of some murder or suicide. When I finally overcame my shyness, and asked a comrade about them, the whole affair turned out to be much more harmless than I had thought. Muoth had had what is called a love affair with a young woman of good family, who had committed suicide two years before I met him. The singer had not been involved in the tragedy, but tongues had to wag! Probably it was my own fancy which conjured up an aura of terror about his striking and disturbing personality. But how he must have suffered on account of this love!

I didn’t have the courage to go to him. Still I could not conceal from myself that Heinrich Muoth was a suffering and perhaps a despairing man who turned towards me in his craving. Many times it seemed to me that I must return his call—that I was a knave for my silence. Still I did not go to him, for another feeling always kept me back. What Muoth wanted from me I could not give him. I was a very different man from him. And while in many respects I, too, was alone and was not truly understood by people, while I, too, as he, was separated from others either by destiny or disposition, still I would make no advances. The singer might be a demoniac man; I was not. Something within me kept me from anything shocking or strange. I had an aversion and an antipathy for the vehement conduct of Muoth. He was a man of the stage and of adventure, it seemed to me, and perhaps, therefore, destined for a tragic fate. On the other hand I wanted to live in peace. Boldness and sharp words did not belong to me. I was doomed to resignation. So I argued back and forth, trying to quiet

myself. A man had knocked at my door. I was sorry for him, but I wanted to have peace, and did not let him in. Eagerly I threw myself into my work, but I could not shut out the pleading vision. Always it stood back of me, and would not release me.

Since I did not go, Muoth took the matter into his own hands. I received a note from him. It was written in big bold strokes, and said:

"Dear Sir:

"On the eleventh, I am going to celebrate my birthday, with some friends. May I invite you also? It would be a great pleasure if on this occasion we could hear your violin sonata. Have you a friend who would play the second part? Or shall I send one to you? Stefan Kranzl would be glad to help. It would give much pleasure to

"Yours,

"Heinrich Muoth."

I had not expected this. I could play my music, which as yet no one knew, before connoisseurs! And I could play it with Kranzl! Ashamed and grateful, I accepted, and in two days was asked by Kranzl to send him my manuscript. In a few days he sent for me. The popular violinist was still young—a virtuoso of great finish—very small and slender and pale.

"So," he said the minute I entered, "you are also the friend of Muoth. Well, let's begin right away. When we have adapted it, it will go in two or three rehearsals."

He sat down, put before me the second part, indicated the tempo, and began with his light, sensitive touch. But I almost collapsed.

"Not so timid," he said, without interrupting his playing. "We will play it all through. Ah! It goes so? Too bad you haven't a better violin. Never mind. Let us take the *allegro* a little faster, so it won't sound like a funeral march. Ready."

Then I played with assurance by the side of that virtuoso. My cheap violin blended naturally with his costly one. And I was astonished to find this strange-appearing man so natural—yes, almost naïve. As I thawed and gained more courage, I asked him hesitatingly for his opinion of my composition.

“You must ask someone else that, dear man. I know nothing about it. It is indeed a little unusual but the people like that. If Muoth likes it you may be flattered. He is not infatuated with everything.”

He corrected my playing and showed me a few places where changes were necessary. Then we agreed upon another rehearsal for the following morning, and I went home. It was a comfort to me, to find this violinist so simple and honest. If he was one of Muoth’s friends, could I not, also, be one? True, he was a finished artist, and I, a beginner without great prospects. It only grieved me that no one would openly criticise my work. A harsh judgment would have pleased me better than these good-natured statements that meant nothing.

It was bitterly cold that day. One could hardly keep warm. My comrades eagerly went skating. It was a year since the accident with Liddy. It was a hard time for me and I looked forward to the evening at Muoth’s. I did not build many hopes on it. But I had been so long without friends and without merriment!

On the night before the eleventh of January, I was awakened by unusual sounds and an almost terrifying warmth in the air. I got up and went to the window, astonished that it was no longer cold. For suddenly the south wind had come. It blew—it was moist and lukewarm. Above, a storm drove great, lowering clouds across the sky, in which, in small gaps, a few stars gleamed, strangely large and dazzling. The roofs were covered with black flecks, and in the morning when I went out, all the snow had vanished. The streets, even the faces of the people, seemed curiously changed, and over all floated the early breath of spring.

I spent that day in a feverish excitement, partly because of the south wind and the intoxicating air, partly in great excitement and expectation of the evening. Often I took out my sonata, played a few bars, and threw it down again. At times I found it truly beautiful, and I had great pride in it; at other times it seemed suddenly small, patchy and obscure. I could not have endured the suspense and anxiety very long. Finally, I no longer knew whether I feared or longed for the approaching evening.

But it came. I put on my evening dress, and took my violin case, and started for Muoth’s house. In a suburb, in an unknown and unfrequented street, with great difficulty, because of the darkness, I found the house. It stood in a large garden which seemed neglected and overgrown with weeds.

Behind the unlocked garden door, a large dog fell upon me, but he was called off from a window and accompanied me, growling, to the entrance. Here a little, old woman with troubled eyes met me, took my coat, and led me through a briefly lighted corridor.

The violinist Kranzl lived luxuriously, and I had expected Muoth would live so also, for seemingly he was rich. I saw two large, wide rooms, much too large for a bachelor who is seldom at home. Everything seemed simple —rather, not simple, but casual and unordered. The furniture, too, was old and seemed to belong to the house. Here and there were a few new pieces, bought without any selection, and placed without any care. The lighting alone was luxurious. There was no gas, but a profusion of white candles in simple, beautiful, pewter candlesticks. In the drawing room there also hung a chandelier, a smooth, brass ring set with many candles. The principal piece of furniture was a stately, grand piano.

In the room, into which I was shown, a few men stood talking. I put down my violin case and bowed. Some of them nodded, then turned again to one another. I stood there, a stranger. Then Kranzl, who was standing by them, and had not noticed me at first, came to me, gave me his hand, presented me to his friends, and said:

“This is our new violinist. Have you brought your violin?” Then he called out into the next room: “Muoth, here is our man with the sonata.”

Heinrich Muoth came in, greeted me cordially, and took me with him into the next room where everything seemed festive and cheery, and where a beautiful woman in white dress offered me a glass of sherry. She was a member of the Courts Theater company. I saw to my astonishment that none of our host’s colleagues had been invited and that she was the only woman. In spite of my weak protest, she refilled the glass I had hastily drained, half in embarrassment, and half in need of the warmth, after my walk in the damp evening.

“Oh, take it! It can not hurt you. We will not get anything to eat until after the music. You have brought your violin and your sonata?”

I gave a timid answer and was embarrassed because I did not know in what relation she stood to Muoth. She seemed to be the hostess. She was certainly a delight to the eyes, as was every woman with whom, in the following years, I saw Muoth associate.

In the meantime the guests assembled in the music room. Muoth brought in a music stand; we were seated, and soon, with Kranzl, we were in the midst of my music. I played as though in a dream, and only now and then did I become conscious that I was playing here with Kranzl, that this was the timidly longed-for great evening, and that here was a little group of connoisseurs and artists before whom I was playing my sonata. It was during the *Rondo* that I first began to notice how wonderfully Kranzl was playing; for I was so filled with confusion that I kept on thinking continuously of irrelevant things—it suddenly occurred to me that I had not congratulated Muoth on his birthday!

The sonata was finished. The beautiful woman got up, gave her hand to me and to Kranzl, and opened the door to a smaller room where a table set with bottles and flowers awaited us.

“At last! ” said one of the men, “I am simply starving.”

The woman warned him. “You are a monster! What will the composer think?”

“What composer? Is he here?”

She pointed to me. “There he is.”

He looked at me and laughed. “You should have told me that before. For the music was truly beautiful. Only when a man is hungry?”

We began to eat, and hardly were the soup plates removed, and the wine poured, than Kranzl proposed a toast to our host and his birthday.

After the clinking of the glasses, Muoth rose: “Dear Kranzl, if you think I am going to make a speech about you, you are mistaken. Above all, we will have no speeches! The only thing which, perhaps, is necessary to say, I take upon myself. I thank our young friend for his sonata which I consider great. Perhaps our Kranzl will some day be proud to get hold of some of his compositions. I am sure he feels so, for he played the sonata wonderfully. I drink to the composer and to good friendship with him! ”

Every one stood up, laughed, and teased me a bit. Soon the good, warming wine brought a conviviality to which I yielded without reason. It had been a long time since I had indulged in this way—had so let myself go —not for a year. Now the mirth and wine, the clinking of glasses and the hum of voices, and the sight of the beautiful, happy woman, opened to me a vista of joy, and I slipped lightly into the unconstrained cheerfulness and the lively conversation and laughing mood.

We left the table early and returned to the music room, where in all the corners were distributed wine and cigars. A quiet man, who had said little and whose name I didn't know, came to me and said some kind words about my sonata, which I had entirely forgotten. Then the actress drew me into the conversation and Muoth sat down beside us. We drank once more to our friendship, and suddenly he said, with his dark eyes sparkling:

"I now know your story! "

Then to the beautiful woman: "He broke his bones by tobogganing with a pretty girl."

And again to me: "That is beautiful. At the instant when love is most beautiful and as yet unstained, to go head foremost down the mountain—that is worth more than a sound leg! "

Laughing, he emptied his glass, and almost immediately he looked again arrogant and moody as he continued:

"How did you come to compose music?"

I told him of my childhood and of my music. I told him of my summer, of my flight to the mountains, and of the sonata.

"Ah! " he said, slowly. "But why does that give you joy? One cannot lose pain by transcribing it on paper."

"That is not what I am trying to do," I said. "The thing I wish to be rid of is weakness and imprisonment. I may find that pain and joy come from the same source and are simply different rhythms—each beautiful and necessary."

"But, man," he burst out, "you have lost the use of a leg. Can music make you forget that?"

"No—why? But that can never be helped."

"And it doesn't drive you to despair?"

"It doesn't make me happy—that you may believe. But I hope it will never drive me to despair."

"Then you are fortunate! I would indeed give up no leg for such a happiness! So that is what music is to you? See, Marian, that is the magic of art, about which there is so much in books."

Bitterly I flung back to him: "Why do you talk so? You yourself do not sing only for your salary, but you have happiness and comfort in it. Why do you jeer at me and at yourself? I think it is barbarous! "

"Oh, be still—be still," warned Marian, "or he will be angry."

Muoth looked at me. “I will not be angry. He is entirely right. But you cannot be so troubled about your leg, or the composing of music would not comfort you for it. You are a satisfied man. Let happen what will, you will remain contented. But I would not have believed it! ”

He sprang up, raging. “And I don’t believe it now! There is your song. There is no comfort in that—no satisfaction. Nothing but despair. Do you hear?”

Suddenly he was at the piano and everything became still. He began to play confusedly, then he started the introduction and sang my song. He sang it as he had sung it many times for me, but I could see that since then, he had put much work on it. This time he sang it in full voice, with his high baritone which I had heard on the stage. And the vigor and the passion made me forget the occasional roughness of his singing.

“And this man has written that! And yet he says he knows nothing of despair, that he is perfectly satisfied with his lot,” he cried as he pointed to me.

I had tears of shame and of anger in my eyes. I saw everything through a mist. I stood up, in order to make an end of it all, and to go. But a slight, though strong hand held me and pressed me back into my seat, and stroked my brow gently and tenderly until I had to close my eyes to keep back the tears. When I opened them Heinrich Muoth was standing before me. The others who were drinking wine and laughing with one another seemed not to have noticed my agitation or any of the scene.

“You child,” said Muoth softly. “When one has written such a song, one is above this! But I am sorry. I like you, and I am hardly with you when such a thing happens.”

“It doesn’t matter,” I said, shyly. “But I must go now. The most beautiful part of today we have had.”

“All right, I will not keep you. The others will keep on drinking, I suppose. But will you be so good as to take Marian home? She doesn’t live out of your way.”

The beautiful woman shot him a questioning glance. “Yes, will you?” she said to me. I stood up. We took leave only of Muoth. In the hall a servant helped us into our cloaks, and the little, old woman, very sleepy, lighted our way through the garden to the gate with a great lantern. The

wind still blew moist and warm, driving long, black banks of clouds before it, and rustling through the bare tree tops.

I did not venture to give Marian my arm, but she took it unasked, breathing the night air with her head thrown back, and looking down at me from her height, questioningly and trustingly. And I—I felt again her light hand upon my brow, as she walked slowly and seemed to wish to lead me.

"There is a cab stand," I said, for it was painful to me that she should accommodate herself to my lame walk, and I suffered, to be limping near this radiant, strong, slender woman.

"No," she said, "let us walk a block farther." And she took special pains to go slowly. If I had done as I desired I would have drawn her close to me. Then I was torn with torture and anger. I drew my arm away from her. And as she looked at me, astonished, I said:

"It doesn't go well, so. I must walk alone. You will pardon me."

And she walked carefully and sympathetically near me. And I knew that if I had had a straight walk and the consciousness of bodily strength, I would have said and have done the opposite to what I did and said. I became silent and abrupt. There was nothing else to do, or tears would have come again into my eyes. I was yearning to feel her hand upon my head. I wished I could run away into one of the side streets. I didn't want her to walk slowly to save me. I didn't want her pity.

"Are you angry with him?" she finally asked.

"No. It was foolish of me—I hardly know him."

"I am sorry when he is so. He has days when one must fear him." "You, too?"

"I, the most. And yet he never hurts anyone as much as he hurts himself. He hates himself many times."

"Oh, he just makes himself interesting."

"What do you mean?" she cried out in a shocked tone.

"That he is an actor. Why must he deride himself and others? Why must he draw out the life and secrets of a stranger to make him ridiculous? He's a slanderer! "

My anger flared out again in my speech. I was willing to revile and to drag down the man who had hurt me and whom I regretfully envied. Also my respect for the woman had declined—that she protected him, and seemed to be so honest to me concerning her relation to him. Was it not

wicked that she had taken upon herself to be the only woman at the gay bachelor evening! I was used to little freedom in these things. I was ashamed to be attracted to this beautiful woman. And I decided, in my passion, rather to quarrel with her than any longer, to feel her pity. If she should find me rude and leave me, it was better than that she should stay with me and be kind.

She put her hand upon my arm. “Stop! ” she cried so vehemently, that in spite of all, her voice went to my heart. “Do not say anything more. What does it matter? You are wounded by two words from Muoth, because you were not quick enough or bold enough to parry them. And now, when you are wrong, you fall upon me with hateful words. I shall go and leave you alone.”

“Please. I have merely said what I thought.”

“Do not lie! You accepted his invitation; you played with him; you saw how he loved your music; you were pleased and comforted. And now you are annoyed and cannot endure a word of him. You begin to abuse him. You would not dare that! I will lay it to the wine.”

It seemed to me that suddenly she saw what was the matter with me, and that it was not the wine that tortured me. She took another tone, although I had not made the least sign of an explanation. I was unarmed.

“You do not know Muoth,” she said. “Have you not heard him sing? He is like his singing—violent, and a little harsh, but mostly against himself. He is a poor, storm-beaten man with genuine strength, but with no aim. At any moment he will drain the whole world, and what he has, and what he does, is only a drop. He drinks and is never drunk. He has women and is never happy. He sings wonderfully but doesn’t care to be an artist. Whom he loves, he hurts. He pretends to be disdainful and quite satisfied, but he hates himself because he can never be satisfied. That’s the kind of man he is. And he has shown you friendship in the only way he can.”

I was obstinately silent.

“Perhaps you do not need him,” she began once again. “You have other friends. But when we see anyone who suffers and is unruly in his suffering, we should overlook that and try to help him.”

Yes, I thought one should do that, and gradually, as our walk in the night cooled me—although to be sure my wound was still open and cried for help—more and more I was forced to think of what Muoth had said and

of my foolishness that evening. I saw myself as a sorry dog, and in the silence asked forgiveness. Now that the glow from the wine had vanished, an ungrateful feeling seized me with which I battled. I couldn't talk much to the beautiful woman who now, herself agitated and with uncertain heart, walked close by me through the half-dark streets, where here and there, on the dead black surface, the light of a street lamp suddenly flashed on the damp pavement.

Then I remembered that I had left my violin at Muoth's, and I awoke in astonishment and alarm concerning everything. For this evening had so changed things! This Heinrich Muoth, and the violinist, Kranzl, and this glorious Marian who played in the rôles of Queens—all had stepped down from their pedestals. At the Olympian table sat not gods and saints, but poor men, one small and comic—the other oppressed and vain. Muoth, miserable and feverish in his foolish self-torture; this impressive woman, little and unhappy as the beloved of a stormy genius, without cheerfulness—and yet she was quiet and kind and familiar with sorrow.

I, too, seemed changed. I was no longer a solitary man, but was akin to all. In every one I discovered kind and hostile traits. I could not love here and shun there. I was ashamed of my small understanding, and discovered for the first time in my superficial youth that I could not go through life and among men so simply—here with love and there with hate; here with veneration and there with condemnation—but that all was mingled together and could hardly, at a glance, be separated and distinguished. I looked at this woman who walked by my side, so silent now, and considered how also in her heart were many other things than those of which she had thought and had spoken.

Finally we came to her home. She held out her hand to me. I took it gently and kissed it. "Good night," she said, "sleep well." Her voice was kind but there was no smile on her lips.

I went home and to bed. At once I went to sleep and slept until late in the morning. Then I sprang up like a Jack from his box. I did my exercises; bathed and dressed, and thought of the night before, only when I saw my coat on a chair, and missed my violin case. In my long sleep I had other memories and I had lost the thread of my thoughts. I had only a remembrance of a detached and small, rather than of a wonderful,

experience, and I was astonished that I seemed to be unchanged and quite the same.

I would have worked but my violin was not there. I went out, at first undecided, then definitely started in the direction of Muoth’s house. When I got before the garden gate I heard him singing. The dog fell upon me, but was led back with some difficulty by the old woman, who quickly came out. She let me enter, and I told her I only wished my violin and would not disturb her master. My violin case was in the hall, and the violin was in it. Also the manuscripts were placed upon it. Muoth must have done that. He had thought of me! He sang loudly. I heard him walking up and down as though upon felt soles, now and then striking a note upon the piano. His voice rang fresh and clear, dominating, as I had so often heard it on the stage. He was singing a rôle unknown to me, and he repeated frequently, pacing rapidly up and down the room.

I had picked up my things and was going. I was quiet and felt hardly touched by the remembrance of yesterday. But I was curious to see him—to see whether he had changed. I went nearer and, almost without willing it, I had the doorknob in my hand, had turned it, and stood in the open doorway.

Muoth turned, still singing. He was in his night clothes, in a long, white, fine shirt, and he looked as fresh as if he had just come from his bath. I was startled now, too late, at having so surprised him. He showed no astonishment that I had entered without knocking, nor did he seem conscious that he had on no clothes. As though this were the most natural thing he shook my hand and asked:

“Have you had your breakfast?” When I told him I had he took me to the piano.

“Here is a new rôle for me. Listen to this Aria. That’s the genuine thing! They are giving it at the Royal Opera with Büttner and Drielli. But what’s that to you or to me? How are you? Did you rest well? You looked done up when you left last night. And you were angry, too, with me. Oh, well. We will not begin with that foolishness again.”

And then immediately, without giving me an opportunity to say anything:

“Do you know Kranzl is a bore. He will not play your sonata.”

“But he did play it last night.”

“In concert, I mean. I wanted to palm it off on him, but he would not have it. It would have been fine if it could have been given this next winter at a matinee. Kranzl isn’t so foolish, you know, but lazy. He plays this Polish music all the time, by inski and owski. He doesn’t like to learn anything new.”

“I don’t believe,” I began, “that my sonata would do for a concert. I have never imagined it would. It is not perfect enough, technically.”

“That is all foolishness! You with your artist conscience! We are no school teachers, and without doubt worse things will be played, especially by Kranzl. But I don’t know anything else to do. You must give me the song and write some more soon. I am going away in the spring. I have notified them. I am going to have a long vacation. I might give a few concerts, but something new. No more Schubert and Wolff and Lowe, and others that one may hear any evening, but original and unknown things. A few little things such as the Avalanche Song. What do you think?”

For me the prospect of having my song sung by Muoth was like an opening of the door into the future, through whose crack I could see great glory. But still I wished to be cautious, and not to take advantage of Muoth’s friendship, and also not to become too greatly indebted to him. I felt he would draw me to him too forcibly, that even he might deceive and perhaps use force with me. So I was noncommittal.

“I will see,” I said. “You are very kind to me, I know, but I cannot promise. I am approaching the end of my study and must now think of an honorable certificate. Whether I can ever come forward as a composer is uncertain. Meanwhile I am a violinist and must see if I can soon find a position.”

“Ah, of course you can do that. But if you happen to write another song like the first one, you will give it to me, will you not?”

“Yes, by all means. I truly do not know why you take so much interest in me.”

“Are you afraid of me? Simply because I like your music. I’d like to sing some of your things because they mean something to me. It is pure selfishness.”

“Then why did you talk to me as you did yesterday?”

“Ah, you are still hurt about that? What did I really say? I don’t remember. At least I did not mean to be so brutal to you as I seem to have

been. But then you can defend yourself! Every one is what he is and must be, and we must take every one for what he is worth.”

“I think so, too. But you did exactly the contrary. You irritated me, and thought nothing that I said was worth anything. You drew from me things of which I don’t like to think—my very secrets—and then you threw them at me with a reproach. You even made fun of my lame leg! ”

Heinrich Muoth said slowly: “Yes—yes. People are very different. It makes one wild if one tells him the truth and another can not bear claptrap. It angered you because I didn’t treat you as if you were an officer. And it angered me that you hid your real self from me, and tried to pass off on me all that talk about the comfort of Art! ”

“I meant what I said. The difficulty is I am not used to talking about these things. And about the other—about my—well, I will not even speak of that. How it appears to me, and whether I am sad or despairing; how my leg became crippled—that I will keep to myself, and be threatened and ridiculed by nobody! ”

He stood up.

“I haven’t much on, but it won’t take me long to dress. You are a respectable man. I am not. We will not talk about it. Did you never observe that I liked you? Stay a while. Sit at the piano, until I dress. Do you sing? No? I’ll be ready in six minutes.”

And truly it took him no longer.

“Now, let’s go into the city and have something to eat,” he said. He didn’t ask whether it suited me; only said, “Let’s go.” And we went. His manner irritated me, but he was the stronger. However, there was in his conversation and in his behavior, a capricious child-likeness that was often charming and very appeasing.

After that I saw Muoth often. He sent me frequent tickets to the opera, many times asked me to come and play for him, and if not everything in him pleased me, no doubt not everything in me pleased him. There was a friendship between us—my only one—and I began to dread the time when he would no longer be near me. He had actually resigned and would not remain in spite of the many inducements. Now and then he explained that perhaps in the autumn, he might accept a call to a large opera house, though even that was only provisionally discussed.

In the meantime came the spring. One night I was present at the last bachelor evening at Muoth's. This time no woman was there. In the early morning, Muoth accompanied us to the garden gate, waved to us, and shivering in the morning mist, accompanied by the jumping and barking dog, he went back to his half dismantled rooms. I felt that a chapter of my life and my experience had been closed. I thought I knew Muoth well enough to be sure that he would soon forget us all. And now I first clearly realized how I had almost loved this moody, ill-humored, domineering man.

The time for my own departure approached. I paid my last visits to people and to places of which I had grown fond. Once, too, I went out upon the highway and looked upon the precipice which I had not forgotten.

Then I started for my home, to wait, in all probability, a long while for my future. I had no position. I could not give concerts. At home there was nothing in view, to my horror, except to give violin lessons. Of course my parents expected me, and they were rich enough, so I didn't have to worry. And they were too fine and kind to oppress and question me as to my future. But I knew from the very first that I would not stay there long.

There is little to tell of the ten months in which I sat in the house, gave lessons to three people, and in spite of all was not unhappy. Here, people also lived; here, too, almost daily something happened. But to every one my relation remained one of friendly, polite indifference. Nothing really pierced my heart; nothing carried me along with it. On the contrary I lived in complete retirement, snatched a few hours of music for myself; but my whole life was benumbed and everything seemed strange to me. Only a hunger for music remained which tortured me unendurably during my violin lessons, and certainly made me a bad teacher.

Afterwards, when my duty was done, or when I sneaked away from my lesson with tricks and lies, I bathed myself in glorious, unreal dreams; built lofty aircastles of tones; forced towers into the air and vaulted summits. When I went around in bewilderment and ecstasy, which estranged my youthful acquaintances and caused my parents worry, I felt the spring in me bubble up more powerfully and richly than during that year in the mountains. The fruit of the dreaming, the assimilating, seemingly lost years, suddenly ripened, fell quietly and gently, one after the other, and had a fragrance and gloss which surrounded me with richness, and which I accepted hesitatingly and with mistrust. It began with a song which was

followed by a violin phantasy, and in a few months, by other songs and many symphonic sketches. I considered them all as merely a beginning, and an experiment. In my heart, however, I thought of a great symphony, and in my boldest moments, even of an opera.

However, from time to time, I wrote humble letters to concert conductors and theaters, inclosing the recommendations of my teachers, and modestly offering myself to fill the first best violin position which would be open. There came short, polite answers, beginning with a "Most Honored Sir:" and sometimes there was no answer. But there came no position. Then for a day or two I felt small and very humble. I gave most painstaking lessons and courageously wrote new letters. Then suddenly, it would come to me that I had a head full of music to be written down, and hardly had I begun again, than letters and the theater, and orchestras and the concert conductors and the many "honorable sirs" sunk into nothingness, and I found myself alone, very busy and very happy.

There are recollections, of which, for the most part, one cannot tell. What a man is to himself, and what he experiences; how he is born, and grows, and sickens, and dies—that cannot be told. The life of a man of work is tedious, while the lives and destinies of the ne'er-do-wells are interesting. Only once did I touch for an instant a man whom I could never forget. That was the teacher, Lohe.

One day in the late autumn I went for a walk. South of the city there was an unassuming suburb, where no rich people dwelt, but little merchants and retired employees, in small, cheap houses with simple gardens. A skillful young carpenter had built here many pretty houses, which I had seen but once. It was a warm afternoon. Here and there some late nut trees were being picked. The gardens, and small new houses lay basking in the sun. The pretty, simple buildings pleased me, and I looked at them with the superficial, comfortable interest that young people have for so many things, when thoughts of house and home and family, rest and holidays, lie far in the future. But the peaceful street made a pleasing, comfortable impression. I walked through it slowly, and as I walked I made a point of reading the names of the owners on the small, polished brass plates on the garden doors.

On one of these plates was the name, "Konrad Lohe," and as I read it the name seemed familiar. I stood there and tried to think, and it suddenly

occurred to me that this was the name of one of my teachers in the Latin School. And the old times looked at me as if wounded, and a fleeting swarm of faces danced before my memory—of teachers and comrades, of nicknames and anecdotes. And while I stood there and stared at the brass plate smilingly, a man rose from behind a currant bush which he was trimming. He walked straight up to me and looked into my face.

"Do you wish to see me?" he asked.

There was Lohe, the instructor—Lohe whom we had called Lohengrin!

"Properly speaking, no," I said, and took off my hat. "I did not know that you lived here. I was once your pupil."

He looked at me sharply, glanced down at my cane, tried to remember, and then spoke my name. He hadn't recognized my face, but my lame leg, for of course he knew of my accident. Then he asked me to come in.

He was in his shirt sleeves and had a green garden apron tied around him. He did not seem to have aged and looked splendidly healthy. We walked around the small, well-kept garden; then he led me to an open veranda, where we sat down.

"I would never have recognized you," he frankly confessed. "I hope you remember me pleasantly."

"Not altogether," I answered, smiling. "You punished me once for something I did not do, and declared all my explanations lies. It was in the Fourth class."

He looked at me, distressed. "You must not remember that against me. I am sorry. With the best intentions, a teacher often decides that something is not right, and an injustice soon results. I know of worse cases than yours. That is one of the reasons why I left."

"So you have no position?"

"Oh, not for a long time. I was sick, and when I had recovered, my views were so changed that I took my leave. I had tried very hard to be a good teacher. But I was not. For that a man must be born. So I gave it up. And since then it's been much better with me."

One could see that. I asked some other questions, but he wished to know my story, which was soon told. It did not please him at all that I had become a musician, but he had a kind and gentle pity for my ill luck which did not hurt me. Cautiously he sought to discover what had succeeded in comforting me, and my half-evasive answers did not please him. With a

mysterious manner, hesitatingly, but impatiently, and with timid circumlocution, he made it known that he knew of a comfort, a perfectly developed system of philosophy, that would give solace to anyone who sought it earnestly.

“Oh, I know,” I said; “you mean the Bible.”

Lohe smiled timidly. “The Bible is good. It is a way to knowledge, but it isn’t knowledge itself.”

“And where is that—the knowledge, itself?”

“That you will find easily, if you desire it. I will lend you something to read that will give you the elements of it. Have you ever heard of the teaching of Karma?”

“Of Karma? No—what is it?”

“Wait! You will see.”

He left me for a few minutes during which I sat in an uncertain expectation and looked down into the garden, with its straight rows of dwarfed fruit trees. Soon Lohe came hurrying back. He looked at me beamingly and held towards me a little book, which bore the title in the middle of a mysterious scroll: “Theosophical Catechism for Beginners.”

“Take it with you,” he begged. “You can keep it. And if you want to study further, I can loan you more. For this is only a beginning. I owe everything to this teaching. Through it I have been made well in body and soul. And I hope it will do as much for you.”

I took the little book and put it in my pocket. The man accompanied me through the garden to the street, took a friendly leave of me, and asked me to come again. I looked into his face, so good and happy, and it seemed it could not harm me to seek the way to such happiness. So I went home, the little book in my pocket, curious about the first steps on this path to blessedness.

But I didn’t take those steps for a few days. On my return home, music drew me with all its power. I threw myself into it, and fairly swam in music. I wrote and played until the storm was spent, and, disenchanted, I turned back into my life of every day. There I soon found the need to study the new teaching, and took up the little book which I thought soon to exhaust.

But it did not go so easily. That little book smouldered under my hand and left me at the end, exhausted. It began with an agreeable and attractive preface about the various ways to knowledge, of which each had its value.

It told about the brotherhood of theosophists who strove for complete freedom for knowledge and spiritual perfection, to whom every faith is sacred, and every path to life is welcome. Then came a cosmogony which I did not understand, a distribution of the world into different planes and history into different eras, unknown to me. It even mentioned the lost Atlantis.

I read this for a while and then I rested and took up the other chapters, where was the theory of being born again, which I could understand somewhat better. Although it wasn't clear to me whether it all was mythology and poetical fancy, or whether it was to be taken as literal truth. It seemed to be the latter, which I could not understand. It showed a religious veneration for the law of nature which I liked better. And so it went on. I soon saw very well that this whole teaching could only be a comfort and a treasure for those to whom it was possible to accept it literally and to believe it entirely. Others, like me, to whom this endeavor to solve the riddle of the world was partly beautiful, and partly only an intricate symbol, might indeed learn from it, but could gain no life nor strength from it.

Perhaps a man of intellect and honor could be a theosophist, but such doctrines could benefit only little minds willing to accept them without discussion. It was indeed not for me.

But I went many times to the instructor who for twelve years had tormented me and himself with Greek and Latin, and now was striving, though with no success, to be my instructor upon another road. We were not friends, but I grew to like him. For a time he was the only man with whom I could talk about the important question of my life. I felt, however, that this talk was of no value, and at the best only led to brilliant sophistry. Still, this believing man, whom religion and men of science had left indifferent, and who now in the latter half of his life lived in a naïve belief in a remarkable, subtle teacher of freedom and of power in that religion, was impressive—almost venerable.

This way, however, in spite of my efforts, has remained unattainable. But pious and satisfied men, established in any belief, have a wonderful attraction for me—an attraction which is not returned.

CHAPTER III

DURING the short time of my visits at the home of the pious Theosophist and fruit-raiser, I one day received a check for a small amount whose source I did not know. It had been sent from the office of a well known concert agent in the north of Germany with whom I had never had any business. Upon inquiry the answer came that the order was sent at the request of Mr. Heinrich Muoth and that it was my royalty for a song which Muoth had used at three of his concerts.

I wrote to Muoth, thanked him, and asked him for information about it. I also enclosed a new song of mine. Above all I wanted to know how my song had been received in the concerts. I had indeed heard of Muoth's success in his concert engagements, but there had been no word spoken of my song. I told him of my life and of my work, with the exactness of a lonely man. Then I waited two, three, four weeks, and hearing nothing more I forgot the matter. I worked each day at my music that flowed from me as in a dream. In the pauses I was restless and discontented, and the giving of lessons was terribly difficult. I felt I could not do it much longer.

It seemed to me like a release from some curse when finally Muoth's letter arrived. He wrote:

"Dear Mr. Kuhn:

"I am no correspondent and for that reason your letter lay unanswered. All the more as there was really nothing I could say in response. Now, however, I can come to you with a definite proposal. I am engaged for the winter at the opera here at Cologne. You could have a position as a first or second violinist. The Director is a sensible and independent man though he

has the manners of a ruffian. Very likely an opportunity will offer itself for one of your works, as we have some very fine chamber music. In regard to your songs there are various things I want to tell you. Among others, there is a firm willing to publish them. But writing is so tiresome that I can't write long letters. Come yourself, and quickly, and telegraph about the position. There is no time to waste.

"YOURS

"MUOTH."

There I was, suddenly torn out of my hermit life and out of my retirement and carried again into the stream of life. I had hopes and cares; I was anxious and I rejoiced. There was nothing that held me back and my parents were glad to see me go out into the highway, to take the first unaided step into life. I telegraphed to say I would come, and three days later left for Cologne and Muoth.

I went to the hotel to call on Muoth but did not find him. Now he came into the hotel and stood unexpectedly before me. He shook my hand, asked nothing, told nothing, and did not in the least share my excitement. He was accustomed to let himself be carried along by the stream; to take only the present moment in earnest; and to live it out. He hardly gave me time to change my clothes and then took me to Director Roszler.

"This is Mr. Kuhn," he said.

Roszler nodded curtly.

"Glad to meet you. What can I do for you?"

"Why," said Muoth, "this is the violinist."

The Director looked at me in astonishment, turned to the singer and said gruffly: "You didn't say a word to me about the gentleman's being lame. I must have people with straight legs."

The blood flooded my face but Muoth remained quiet. He only laughed.

"Is he to dance, Roszler? I thought he was to play the violin. If he can't do that we must send him away, but we'll try him first."

"Oh, well, I'm willing. Mr. Kuhn, come to me tomorrow morning a little after nine, here in my house. Are you angry about the leg? Never mind. Muoth ought to have said something to me about that beforehand. Well, we'll see. Adieu."

When we were going away I reproached Muoth. He shrugged his shoulders and said that if he had told in the beginning about my infirmity the Director would hardly have agreed to see me. But now that I was there, if he were half way satisfied with me, I would learn to know him from a pleasanter side.

"But how could you recommend me in any case?" I said. "You don't know at all what I can do."

"Well, that's your affair! I felt it would be all right, and it will. You're such a quiet little beast that you'd never accomplish anything if someone didn't give you a push now and again. I gave you one. Now go on by yourself. You needn't be anxious. Your predecessor wasn't much good."

We spent the evening in his rooms. Here, too, he had rented some rooms in the outskirts, in gardens and quietness. And, as before, his huge dog sprang to meet him, and hardly were we seated, and had warmed ourselves, when the bell rang and a very beautiful and stately lady came and kept us company. He lived in the same atmosphere and his mistress was again a person of dignity and good breeding. With great self-assurance he seemed to consider beautiful women as his rightful possession. And I looked at the new one with sympathy and with the shrinking timidity that I always felt in the presence of women fit for love, a timidity that was altogether free from envy. For I, with my infirmity, went my way hopeless and unloved.

This time, as formerly at Muoth's, we drank well. He tyrannized over us with the overpowering, almost stifling gayety which nevertheless carried us with him. He sang wonderfully, and he sang two songs of mine. And we grew to be friends, grew warm, and came near to each other, looked into each other's unmasked eyes, and stayed together as long as the warmth burned within us.

This stately woman whose name was Lotte drew me to her with gentle friendliness. It was even then not the first time that a beautiful and loving woman came to meet me with sympathy and unexpected trust. And this time, too, it soothed as well as hurt. Yet even then I understood a little and did not take it too seriously. It has happened to me many times that a loved and loving woman has honored me with especial friendship. They all thought of me as little fit for love as for jealousy, and there came in its place that fatal sympathy. So they treated me in half maternal friendship.

Unfortunately I had, then, had no practice in such situations, and I could not look on the joy of love too closely without thinking of myself—that I, too, should have liked to experience something of it. That nipped my joy a little, but it was a good evening, that evening with the woman so beautiful in her surrender, and with the man darkly glowing, powerful and rugged, who loved me and took thought for me and yet could not show me his love in any other way than as he showed it to women, a love expressed in violence and waywardness.

As we touched our glasses before parting he nodded to me and said:

"By good rights I should drink to you now in the rite of brotherhood. I would do it gladly but on the whole I think it best to forego it. In my younger days, you know, I made a brother of each one who pleased me. But it isn't wise, least of all with colleagues. I quarreled with them all, anyway."

This time I did not have that bitter-sweet happiness of taking my friend's beloved to her house. She stayed with him, and I was glad. The journey, the call at the Director's, the suspense of the next morning, the new comradeship with Muoth—all these had done me good. I saw now for the first time how forgotten and shy and alone I had been during that long and solitary year. And I felt with comfort and with healthy excitement that I was again active among men, again a part of the world.

Punctually next morning I was at the house of Director Roszler. I found him in a dressing gown, his hair on end. But he made me welcome, and in a more friendly fashion than yesterday urged me to play. He put manuscript notes before me and took his place at the piano. I played as boldly as possible but the reading of the badly-written notes gave me some trouble. When we had finished, in silence he put before me another manuscript which I was to play without accompaniment, and then a third.

"That's good," he said. "You must grow more accustomed to reading notes. They are not always as if they were engraved. Come to the theater this evening. I'll make a place for you. Then you can play your part next to the man who sometimes, in case of need, takes your part. It will be a little crowded. Look over your music carefully beforehand, for there is no rehearsal today. I'll give you a ticket. Take it with you about eleven o'clock to the theater and get your music."

I didn't know exactly where I stood but saw that this man did not like questions, and so went. At the theater no one knew anything about the

music and no one would listen to me. I was not yet used to the routine there and lost my self-control. Then I sent a messenger to Muoth. He came, and immediately all went well. In the evening I played for the first time at the theater, and I felt myself sharply watched by the Director. On the next day I received my appointment.

So strange is man, that in the midst of this new life and of fulfilled wishes, I was oddly overcome many times by a fleeting and barely sensed longing for solitude, even for the boredom of empty days. Then, the time passed in my home town, from whose sad monotony I had escaped so thankfully, appeared to me as something worth desiring. But of the weeks spent in the mountains two years before, I thought with real homesickness. I thought I realized that I was not destined for prosperity and happiness in life, but for weakness and for subjection, and that without these shadows and this sacrifice the spring of my creative gift might flow less clearly and richly. In truth there was no question now of quiet hours and of creative work. And while things went well with me and I enjoyed a rich life, I fancied I heard continually in the depths, my buried spring softly stir and complain.

My playing in the orchestra gave me joy. I spent much time over my scores and I groped my way forward into this world. Slowly I learned what I had known only theoretically and from afar—the character and the color and the meaning of the several instruments. Along with this I saw and studied dramatic music and looked forward more and more earnestly to the time when I might dare to risk my talents on an opera of my own.

My confidential friendship with Muoth, who had one of the first and most honorable places at the opera, brought everything closer to me and was most useful to me. But with my colleagues in the orchestra this friendship did me no good. I never came into the open and friendly relations with them that I desired. Only the first violin, a man from S——named Teifer, met me half way and became my friend. He was about ten years older than I, an unpretentious and open-hearted man, with a fine and delicate face that colored easily. He was remarkably musical and had an unbelievably delicate and keen sense of hearing. He was one of those who finds satisfaction in his art without wishing to play a rôle in it. He was no virtuoso and had never composed. He played his violin contentedly and had his joy in the thorough understanding of the technique. He knew every

overture through and through, better than most directors, and where there came a delicate passage or a passage of brilliance, where the attack of one instrument shone forth beautifully and originally, he fairly glowed and enjoyed it better than anyone in that whole house. He played almost all instruments so that I learned from him daily and could go to him with questions.

For months we spoke no word to each other on any subject but that of our craft. But I liked him and he saw that I was in earnest in wishing to learn, and so there arose an unspoken understanding which lacked little of being friendship. Finally I told him about my violin sonata and asked him to play it with me some time. He agreed cordially and came to my rooms on an appointed day. To give him pleasure, I had remembered to have ready one of his native wines. We drank a glass and then I put the manuscript on the rack and we began. He played remarkably well at sight but suddenly he stopped and let his bow drop.

"Look here, Kuhn," he said. "That's a fine thing! I won't play that at sight. That must be studied first. I'll take it home with me; may I?"

When he came again we played the sonata through twice, and when we had finished he slapped me on the shoulder and cried:

"You sly-boots, you! You always act like a small boy, and in secret you do things like that! I won't say much. I'm no Professor. But this—this is very fine! "

That was the first time that anyone whom I really trusted praised my work. I showed him everything, the songs, too, which were being printed and appeared soon after. But I did not venture to tell him that I was so daring as to think of an opera.

In this good time I was frightened by a little incident which I never could forget. At Muoth's, where I went frequently, I had not met the beautiful Lotte for some time. I thought nothing of it for I did not wish to become involved in his love affairs—in fact preferred to know nothing about them. For that reason I had never asked for her, and in any case he never spoke to me of these matters. One afternoon I was sitting in my work-room studying a score. On the window ledge my black cat lay asleep in the sunshine, and the whole house was quiet. The outer door opened. Someone came in; was greeted and detained by the landlady but escaped; came to my door and knocked. I opened the door and there entered a tall and stately

woman, heavily veiled. She shut the door behind her, took a few steps into the room, drew a deep breath, and at last took off her veil. I recognized Lotte. She seemed excited and I suspected at once why she had come. At my request she seated herself. She had given me her hand but had not spoken. When she noticed my embarrassment she seemed relieved, as though she had feared I might send her away at once.

"Is it because of Heinrich Muoth?" I asked, finally.

She nodded. "Did you know anything about it?"

"I know nothing. I only suspected it."

She looked into my face as a sick man looks at his physician, was silent and slowly drew off her gloves. Suddenly she rose, laid both hands on my shoulders, and looked at me with wide-open eyes.

"What shall I do? He is never to be found. He never writes me. He never even opens my letters. For three weeks I have not been able to speak to him. I was there yesterday. I know that he was at home, but he did not open the door. He did not even call off his dog who tore my dress. He refuses to recognize me too."

"Did you have a quarrel with him?" I asked, just to say something.

She laughed. "Quarrel? Ah, we had enough quarrels from the beginning. I was used to that. No, lately he has even been polite. That was the worst of it. Once he was not there when he had ordered me to come. Once he was coming to me and did not come. Finally he called me quite formally, 'Madame.' Oh, if he had only struck me again, instead! "

I started violently. "Struck—"

Again she laughed. "Don't you know that? Oh, he struck me often. But it's been a long time now. He was formal to me, and now he knows me no more. He has someone else, I am sure. So I came to you. Tell me, I beg of you, has he someone else? You know—you must know."

Before I could help myself she had seized both my hands. I was as if turned to stone, and however much I wished to refuse to answer and to shorten the whole scene, I was almost glad that she did not give me a chance to speak, for I would not have known what to say. She, in hope and grief, was content that I listen to her, and begged and related and complained with flaming passion. But I kept looking at that tearful, ardent, beautiful face and could think of nothing but "He struck her! " I fancied I saw his fist and I shuddered before him and before her, who, after blows

and scorn and dismissal, seemed to have no other thought and wish than to find again the way to him and to the old humiliation. Finally the flood was spent. Lotte spoke more slowly, seemed to be embarrassed, to become conscious of the situation, and grew silent. Then she dropped my hands.

"He has no one else," I said softly. "At least I know nothing of it, and I don't believe it."

She looked at me gratefully.

"But I can't help you," I went on. "I never talk with him about such things."

We were both silent for a while. I could but think of Marian, the beautiful Marian—and of that evening when I went with her through the stormladen air, arm in arm; and how she had so bravely acknowledged her love. Had he beaten her, too? And had she pursued him afterwards?

"Why did you come to me?" I asked.

"I don't know. I had to do something. Don't you believe that he still thinks of me? You are a good man. Help me! You could try it. Ask him. Speak of me some time. . . ."

"No, I cannot. If he loves you still he will come to you again of himself, and if not, then. . . ."

"What then?"

"Then you must let him go. He does not deserve that you should humiliate yourself so deeply."

At that she suddenly smiled. "Oh—you! What do you know of love?"

She was right, I thought, but it hurt me nevertheless. If love would not come to me; if I did stand outside, why should I play the confidant and the helper for others. I had sympathy for Lotte, but I despised her still more. If that was love—cruelty on this side, and humiliation on that, then one lived better without love.

"I will not quarrel," I said, cooly. "I don't understand that kind of love."

Lotte put on her veil. "Very well, I will go."

Now I was sorry for her but I did not wish the unpleasant scene to begin again and so I was silent. I opened the door for her, went with her partway to the curious landlady. At the stairway I bowed and she went, without saying a word or looking at me.

I watched her sadly and for a long time could not forget her. Was I truly quite a different person from all these—from Marian, and Lotte, and

Muoth? Was this truly love? I saw them all, these creatures of passion, as if storm driven, fall and be blown into the unknown. The man tortured today by desire, but tomorrow by satiety, loving ardently and freeing himself brutally, certain of no appeal and happy in no love. And the woman dragged along, bearing insult and blows, finally cast off, and still clinging, dishonored by jealousy and scorned love, true like a dog.

On that day it happened for the first time in years that I wept. I wept unwilling and angry tears for these souls; for my friend Muoth; for that life and love; and quieter, secret tears for myself. Aye, I who lived in the midst of all this as if on another star, I who did not grasp life, who longed for love, and yet could but fear it.

I did not go to Heinrich Muoth again for a long time. He celebrated his triumphs in those days as a Wagner singer, and began to be reckoned a star. At the same time I, too, came modestly before the public. My songs appeared in print and found a friendly reception. And two of my compositions for chamber music were given in concert. It was still only a quiet, encouraging recognition among friends. The critics waited in silence or indulged me as an amateur.

I was much with the violinist Teifer. He liked me and praised my work in comradely joy, prophesied great results and was always ready to play with me. Nevertheless, something was lacking. I was drawn to Muoth but I still avoided him. I heard nothing more from Lotte. Why was I not content? I scolded myself that I did not find satisfaction with the true and fine Teifer. But even with him I missed something. He was too joyous, too sunny, too content. He seemed to recognize no abysses. One could not talk to him about Muoth. Often in the theater when Muoth sang, he looked at me and whispered:

“There—flat again! He’s so musical! He never sings Mozart and he knows why! ”

I had to grant he was right but I did not do it from my heart. I clung to Muoth but did not wish to defend him. Muoth had something that Teifer did not have and did not understand, and that bound me to him. That was an eternal longing, yearning, and discontent. These drove me to study and to work; these made me reach out after men who escaped me, just as Muoth, whom the same discontent stirred and agonized in another way. I would always make music. That I knew. But I longed to create once out of

happiness and abundance and unbroken joy, instead of always out of longing and of poverty of the heart. Ah, why was I not happy in what I possessed, in my music? And why was Muoth not happy in that which he possessed—in his tremendous vitality and his women?

Teifer was happy. No longing after the unattainable tormented him. He had his delicate, unselfish joy in his art from which he demanded no more than it gave him. And art aside, he was even more easily satisfied. He needed only a few friendly people; now and then a good glass of wine; and on free days an excursion into the country, for he was a wanderer and a friend of the open. If there was anything in the teaching of the theosophists, then this man must be near perfection. So simply good was his personality, and so little did he allow passion and discontent to enter his heart, and yet I did not wish—even though I denied it to myself—to be like him. I did not wish to be another. I wished to stay in my own skin, though at times I wanted to stretch it a little.

I detected power in myself, since my compositions began to have their little effect. I was already on the point of becoming proud. I had to find some sort of bridge to men; I had to find it possible in some way to live with them without always being worsted. If there were no other way, perhaps my music would lead me thither. If they were not willing to love me, they would be compelled to love my work. I could not free myself from such foolish thoughts, and yet I was willing to give myself as a sacrifice if only someone would want me, if only someone would understand me. Was not music the secret law of the world? Did not the earths and stars swing harmoniously in rhythm? And I must remain alone and not find the men whose personalities harmonized clearly and purely with mine.

A year had passed in the strange city. At the beginning I had very little intercourse except with Muoth, with Teifer, and our Director Roszler. But lately I had been brought into a larger circle which was neither pleasant nor unpleasant to me. Thanks to the production of my compositions for chamber music I had become acquainted with the musicians of the city outside of the theater circle. I bore now the light and pleasant burden of a slowly gathering fame in the little group. I noticed that people recognized me and observed me. Of all fame, that is the very sweetest which does not yet look for great results, can rouse as yet no envy, and does not cut one off from the world. One goes about with the feeling of being noticed here and

there, named and praised. One meets friendly faces, sees acquaintances nod with cordiality, and younger men greet one with respect. And one has always the secret feeling that the best is still to come, as it always is in youth until youth sees that the best has already passed. My sense of satisfaction was kept within bounds by the feeling of always detecting some pity in the recognition. It seemed to me always as if they protected me, as if they spared me, and were so friendly because I was a poor crippled fellow to whom one did not begrudge a grain of comfort.

After a concert at which a violin duet of mine had been played, I made the acquaintance of the rich manufacturer, Imthor, who was considered a zealous friend of music and a patron of young artists. He was a rather small and quiet man with irongray hair, in whom one saw neither his riches nor his intimate knowledge of art. But from what he said to me I could see what an understanding for music he had. He did not flatter but gave a quiet and understanding approval which was worth more. He told me what I had known a long time from another source—that in his home, many an evening, he had both old and modern compositions. He invited me to come, and said at the parting:

“We have your songs and like them. My daughter will be glad to see you.”

But before I got around to make my call I received an invitation: Mr. Imthor begs permission to play my trio in E. Major at his house. A violinist and a cellist, capable dilettantes, were at my disposal, and the first violin was reserved for me to play if I wished. I knew that Mr. Imthor always paid the professional musicians who played at his home a good honorarium. I should have received that unwillingly, and yet I did not know how the invitation was intended. Finally I accepted. The two musicians came to me, got their parts, and we had several rehearsals. Meanwhile I paid my call at his home but found no one in. So came the appointed evening.

Imthor was a widower. He lived in an old, simple, dignified house, one of the few which, in the middle of the growing city, had still its old gardens. As I went in the evening I saw little of the garden, only a short avenue of tall, plain trees whose trunks showed bright spots in the lights from the streets, and among them a few old, gray statues. Behind the great trees lay modestly the old, wide, low-roofed house. From the entrance door, straight through the corridors, stairways and all the rooms, the walls were covered

with old pictures, numbers of family portraits, and landscapes black with age, and old-fashioned views and paintings of animals. I arrived at the same time with other guests. We were received by a housekeeper and shown in.

The company was not a large one but it filled the rather small rooms somewhat uncomfortably until the doors to the music room were opened. Here there was room, and everything looked new, the piano, the music racks, the lamps, the chairs. Only the pictures on the wall were old. My fellow musicians were already there. We arranged our racks, looked at the lights, and began to tune our instruments. At that moment, at the back of the room, a door opened. There came through the half-lighted room a lady in an evening gown. Both men greeted her with deference. I saw that it was the daughter of Imthor. She looked at me a moment questioningly. Then before I had been presented, she gave me her hand and said:

"I know you already. You are Mr. Kuhn. Welcome! "

The beautiful woman had made an impression on me at her entrance. And now her voice sounded so charming and so sincere that I pressed the offered hand heartily, and looked into her eyes which greeted me understandingly.

"I am looking forward to the trio," she said, smiling, as if she had expected to find me as I was, and was content.

"I, too," I said, without knowing what I said, and looked at her again and she nodded.

Then she went on out of the room and I followed her with my eyes. Soon she returned, escorted by her father, and behind them the company. We three had taken our places at our music racks and were ready. The people took their seats; a few acquaintances nodded to me; the host gave me his hand; and when all were seated the electric lights were turned out, and only the high candles above our music racks burned. I had almost forgotten my music. I sought, farther back in the room, Gertrude Imthor who sat leaning against a book-case, in the dim light. Her brown hair seemed almost black; her eyes I could not see. I softly marked the time, and nodded, and we began the *andante* with broad tones.

During the playing I felt content. I beat the time of the measure! I soared free in the harmony of the flood of tone, which appeared to me absolutely new, and as if discovered at this moment. My thoughts of the music and my thoughts of Gertrude Imthor flowed together, pure and calm.

I drew my bow and directed with my eyes. Steadily the music flowed on and carried me with it—a golden path to Gertrude whom I could see no more and now no longer desired to see. I gave her my music and my breath, my thoughts, and the beating of my heart, as a morning wanderer yields himself to the shining blue and the clear radiance of the meadows in the dawn, without questioning and without losing the consciousness of himself. With the feeling of content and the crescendo surge of the tones, a feeling of happiness exalted me, that I should so suddenly know what love is. It was no new feeling, only an unveiling of ancient premonitions, a return to an old fatherland.

The first movement was ended. I allowed myself only a moment's pause. Softly sounded the tones of the strings in quiet harmony. Over expectant and appreciative faces, I could see for a moment the brown head, the delicate clear brow, and the red, forceful mouth. Then I tapped lightly on my music stand and we began the second movement which was worth hearing! The players became inspired; the growing yearning of the song raised restless wings, circled about in unsatisfied flights, sought and lost itself in wailing fear, deep and warm. The cello took up the melody, accentuated it, and merged it, *diminuendo*, into a newer and subtler key, then resolved it desperately into the half angry *contra*-bass.

The second movement was my confession—an acknowledgment of my longing and of my discontent. The third movement was to be the release, the fulfillment. But I understood, from this evening, that it was worth nothing, and I played it indifferently, like a thing which lay behind me. For I realized how the release ought to sound; how out of the stormy clash of tones, glory and peace should break; light out of a dark sky. All this was not expressed in my third movement,

This movement was only an appealing resolution of the dissonances, and an attempt to explain and to accentuate a little the original theme. Of that which now shone and sang in me myself, there was in it no tone and no gleam, and I marvelled that no one noticed it.

My trio was finished. I nodded to the players and laid my violin aside. The lights flared up again and the company rose. Many came to me with the usual pretty speeches, praises and criticism, to show themselves connoisseurs. Of the chief defect of my work, no one accused me. People scattered into different rooms; there were tea, wine and cakes. The men

smoked in the library. An hour went by and another. Then it came at last—the thing I had hardly expected now. Gertrude stood by me and gave me her hand.

“Did it please you?” I asked.

“Yes, it was beautiful,” she said, nodding, and I knew that she understood, so I said:

“You mean the second movement. The rest is nothing.”

She looked curiously into my eyes with a benign wisdom like that of a mature woman, and said, delicately:

“So you know it yourself. The first movement is good music, isn’t it? The second is built upon broad lines and grows great and vast and demands too much from the third. One could tell when you played it which part was dear to you.”

It was sweet to me to know that her clear, friendly eyes had observed me without my knowing it. And I thought on this first evening of our acquaintance that it must be a good and holy thing to spend a whole life under the glance of those beautiful and honest eyes. It would then have been impossible ever to do or think an evil thing. From that evening I knew that somewhere there was peace to be found for my longing—concord and the most delicate harmony; and that someone lived on earth to whose glance and whose voice every pulse and every breath in me gave a fervent answer. She, too, discovered immediately in me the pure and friendly echo of her personality, and had from the first hour that peaceful trust in being able to reveal herself to me simply, and to fear neither misunderstanding nor breach of trust. She was a close friend to me at once, a thing that is possible so quickly only to young and unspoiled people.

Up to that hour I had of course been in love from time to time but always, and especially since my accident, with a shy longing and uncertain feeling. Now instead of the being in love, love itself had come. And it seemed to me as though a thin, gray veil had fallen from my eyes. Another world lay before me in its early, God-like light, as it lies before children and before the vision of our dreams of Paradise.

Gertrude was then hardly more than twenty years old, slender and strong, like a delicate young tree, and had come untouched out of the sordidness and sham of the usual young girlhood, following her own personality like a logically developing melody.

My heart was full of joy to think that I knew that such a creature lived in such an incomplete world, and I could even think of capturing her and taking her for myself alone. I was glad to be allowed to have a little share in her beautiful youth, and to know myself counted from the beginning among her good friends.

In the night that followed this evening I did not go to sleep for a long time. No fever, and no restlessness tormented me, but I lay awake and did not try to sleep because I knew that my spring had come, and that my heart, after long and weary wandering, and seasons of winter, was upon the right way. My room was flooded with pale moonlight. All the goals of life and art lay plain and clear like mountain peaks before a storm. I felt the elusive harmony and secret rhythm of my life, even back to the unconscious years of my childhood. And when I wanted to hold fast this dream-like clarity and throbbing richness of feeling, and turn it into poetry, and name it with a name, I called it—Gertrude. With this I fell asleep toward morning and rose fresh and invigorated again as after a long, long sleep.

Then came back to me the discontented thoughts of the last weeks, and the proud thoughts, too, and I saw wherein I had erred. Today nothing tormented and discouraged and angered me anymore. I had the great harmony in my ears again, and I dreamed again the dream of my youth—of the harmony of the spheres. Again my steps, my thoughts, and my breathing followed a secret melody. Life had again a meaning and was bright with morning gold. No one noticed the change. No one was close enough to me. Only Teifer, that child, nudged me gaily at the rehearsal in the theater and said: “You slept well?”

I knew how I could please him and asked in the next intermission, “Where are you going this summer?”

He laughed shamefacedly, blushed as red as a girl whom one had asked about her wedding day.

“Bless my soul, it’s a long while till then. But look! I have the tickets already in here,” tapping his breast pocket. “This time it starts from Lake Constance. I don’t know yet what the return trip will be.”

He raised his violin, flashed at me a glance of roguishness out of his gray-blue, child eyes which seemed never to have known aught of the sordidness and sorrow of the world. And I felt myself drawn to him as to a brother. For as he rejoiced in the thought of the free, weeks-long, walking

tour, in the thought of his liberty and his carefree association with sun and air and earth, so I rejoiced anew at the thought of the path of my life which stretched out before me as in the soft light of a newly created, a rising sun, and upon which path my purpose was to go my way uprightly, with clear eyes and a pure heart.

Today as I look back on it, it lies already in the distance, in the morning of my life. But something of its light still shines upon my way, and while the sparkle of youth and gayety is gone, still today, as then, it is my inspiration. In dark hours it heals me and wipes the dust from my soul, if I but repeat the name of Gertrude, and think of her as she came to me in the music room of her father's house, light as a bird and trustful as a friend.

I now returned to Muoth whom I had avoided as much as possible, since the painful confession of the beautiful Lotte. He had noticed it and was, as I knew, too proud and also too indifferent to trouble himself about me. So for months we had not been alone together. Now since I was full of a new trust in life and full of good intentions, it seemed necessary, above all, that I should draw near again to my neglected friend. The immediate excuse was a new song which I had set to music. I decided to dedicate it to him. It was similar to the Avalanche Song which he loved, and the words were:

The storm cries every night,
Its great, moist wing falters and sweeps,
In dreamy flight the plover falls;
Now nothing sleeps
And through the land stirs new delight,
For the spring calls.

Oh in these nights I cannot sleep.
Youth stirs my heart!
From the blue wells of memory start
The ardent glories of that dawn
And look at me with eyes so deep,
And tremble, and are gone.

Be still, my heart, give o'er!
Though in the heavy blood hold sway
The passionate sweet pain
And lead thee the old paths again—

Unto youth's land no more
Forever goes thy way.

I made a careful copy and wrote on it: "Dedicated to my friend, Heinrich Muoth." I took it to him at an hour when I knew he would be at home. I was right for I heard him singing, as he walked up and down in the dignified room, practicing. He received me indifferently.

"How do you do, Kuhn? I thought you would not come again."

"Well," I answered, "here I am! How are you?"

"Just the same. Pleased, however, that you ventured to come to me once more."

"Yes, in the past I have been unfaithful."

"That is evident. But I know why."

"I hardly think you do."

"I know—I know. Lotte has been to see you, has she not?"

"Yes—but I did not want to talk about it."

"It isn't necessary, especially as you are here again."

"And have brought something with me."

I gave him the score.

"Oh! A new song! That is good. I was afraid you might be submerged in that tedious string music. And here is a dedication. To me? Truly?"

I wondered that he seemed so pleased. I had expected a joke about the dedication.

"Certainly, it pleases me," he said simply. "It pleases me always when upright men let me count for something. And especially you. I had secretly placed you on my death list."

"Do you keep such a list?"

"Oh, yes. When one has—or has had—as many friends as I. . . It makes a beautiful list. The moral ones I have always valued the most and they are exactly those who run away from me. Among scamps one may find a friend any day, but among idealists and sane people it is difficult—especially when one has no good reputation. You are at this time almost the only one. And so it goes. One always desires most what is most difficult to obtain. The greatest thing I have desired has been to have friends, but instead—it's only the women who are true to me! "

"For part of that you are to blame."

“Why?”

“You treat every one as you treat women. Men do not like that. That is why they leave you. You are an egoist.”

“God be thanked, I am! However, neither more nor less than you. When that frightful Lotte complained to you, you didn’t help her at all. But then you did not take the opportunity to lecture me, for which I am grateful. You felt a righteous disgust for the whole affair and stayed away.”

“But now I am here again. You are right. I ought to have looked after Lotte. But I don’t understand these things. She herself laughed at me and told me I understood nothing of love.”

“Well, hold tight to friendship. That’s a beautiful field, too. And do sit down and play the accompaniment. We will try your song. Do you remember the first one? And now, little by little, you’re becoming a famous gentleman.”

“My fame has started, but it will never reach yours.”

“Nonsense! You are a composer, a creator—therefore, a small god. What is glory to you? We poor artists must push if we are to amount to anything. We, singers and rope-dancers are like women. We must take our skins to the market while they are pretty and smooth. Fame, as much as we can grasp, and money—women and champagne. Photographs in the papers! Laurel wreaths! For see, if today we are seized with nausea—or a mere congestion of the lungs—tomorrow, we’re done for. And fame and laurels and the whole business is worth but a whistle.”

“But you’ll wait a long time for that! ”

“You know, in reality, I’m terribly curious about old age. Youth is a swindle, verily a real newspaper, reading-book swindle! The most beautiful time of life! Whatever there is in it, old people seem to me far more contented. Youth is the hardest time in life. One seldom hears of an old person committing suicide.”

I began to play and he turned to the song, quickly caught the melody, and in one place full of meaning, where it gently changed from the minor to the major, he gave me an appreciative nudge with his elbow.

In the evening when I returned home I found—as I had feared—a letter from Mr. Imthor. It contained a few gracious words and a generous honorarium. I sent the money back and wrote that I had no need of it, and would be so much happier if I could be received in his home as a friend. When I met him he invited me to come soon again.

“I expected it would be so,” he said. “Gertrude thought I ought not to send it but I was bound to try it.”

After that I was a frequent visitor at his house. I played the first violin at many of his concerts. I took there all the new music, my own as well as that of others. Most of my small compositions had their first hearing at his home.

One afternoon in spring I found Gertrude alone with a friend. It was raining and I had slipped on the doorstep, so she was afraid to have me leave. We talked about music, and before I knew it, I found myself telling

her of my days at the conservatory, where I had composed my first song. Then I became conscious and did not know whether I ought so to unfold myself before this woman. Gertrude said almost timidly: “I must confess something to you. But you must not tell! I have transposed and have learned two of your songs.”

“Oh, you sing then?” I cried, astonished. At the moment, oddly enough, the experience with my very first sweetheart came into my mind—how I felt when I heard her sing so badly!

Gertrude smiled contentedly and nodded. “Oh, I sing, but only for myself and a few friends. I will sing the songs for you if you will accompany me.

We went to the piano and she gave me her manuscript written neatly in her fine, feminine hand. I played very softly so as to hear her. And she sang the song, and then the second. And I sat and listened and heard my music transformed, filled with magic. She sang with a high, bird-like voice. It was the most beautiful that I had ever heard. Her voice was like the south wind in a snow-covered valley. Each tone drew a veil from my heart. Although I seemed to be lifted out of myself, even to soar, yet had I to harden, to steel myself, so that the tears which swam in my eyes might not fall upon the notes.

I had thought to understand what was love, and seemed to myself quite wise about it. I had looked at the world confidently out of new eyes, and had felt a closer and deeper interest in all things living. Now it was different. Now there was no longer comfort and clearness but storm and flame. Now my heart wanted to destroy itself in rejoicing. It wanted to know more of life and of everything. It wanted to burn in its own flames. At this moment, had anyone asked me what was love I would have believed that I knew well. I would have tried to explain and it would have sounded like something deep and burning.

In the meantime Gertrude’s light, rapturous voice seemed to vibrate over my thoughts. It seemed to call happiness to me and to wish me only joy; to float in distant heights above me, unattainable and always unknown. Ah, I knew then how it was! She might sing, she might be friendly, she might deem she was kind to me. It would count as nothing to that which I craved, if she were not wholly and eternally mine, mine alone. Without this

was my life vain, and all goodness and tenderness, everything in me, had no meaning.

Then I felt a hand on my shoulder, started up, frightened, and looked into her face. Her clear eyes were intent, but by slow degrees as I looked into them she began to smile tenderly and to color.

I could give her only my thanks. She did not know how it was with me. She only felt and understood that I was moved, and to protect me found a way back to cheerful and friendly conversation.

Then I left. I did not return home, and I didn't know whether it rained or not. I walked with my cane through the streets, though it was really no walking, and the streets were no streets. I was carried aloft upon storm clouds through a whirling heaven. I spoke with the storm—I became myself the storm. And out of infinite distance something enkindling rang. It was a birdlike, soaring, woman's voice. It seemed free from the thoughts of men and of storms, and yet it seemed in its essence to have all the wild sweetness of passion.

All through the evening I sat without a light in my room. When I could no longer endure it, although it was late, I went to see Muoth, but found his windows dark and had to turn back. I wandered long through the night, and suddenly weary, waking out of my dreams, found myself at the gate of Gertrude's garden. The old trees bowed devoutly before the hidden house, from which came no sound nor ray of light. Between the clouds here and there appeared and disappeared faintly twinkling stars.

I waited some days before I dared again to go to Gertrude. During this time there came a letter from the poet whose songs I had set to music. For two years we had grown apart. From time to time, however, there came interesting letters from him. I sent him my compositions and he sent me his poems. Now he wrote:

"Honored Sir:

"You have not heard from me in a long time. I have been busy. Since I have seen and understood your music I have been working on a libretto for you. I always felt it in my mind's eye, but I could not see it clearly. Now I have it as good as done. It is the libretto for an opera, and you must compose the music. I know you are not happy. That shows in your music. I won't speak of myself. But here is the libretto for you. As nothing else happy blossoms for us, we may play to others a few pretty things. Then, for

a minute, it will be clear to these thick-skinned souls that life has more than sacrifice. For as neither of us can win anything good for ourselves, it torments us to have others perceive our useless strength.

“Yours,

“Hans H.”

That was like a spark to my powder. I wrote for his libretto, and was so impatient that I tore up the letter and sent a telegram. After a week the manuscript came, a short, fervent love scene, written in verse. There were omissions here and there but enough for me for the moment. I read and went about with the verses singing in my head. I sang them and played them by day and by night and soon I ran with them to Gertrude.

“You must help me,” I said. “I am composing an opera. There are three songs set for your voice. Will you look them over and then sing them for me?”

She was pleased, let me explain them, tried over the music, and promised to learn them soon. Then succeeded ardent hours. I went about drunk with love and with music, fit for nothing else, and Gertrude was the only one who knew my secret. I brought the scores to her. She learned them and sang them, counselled about them and helped; and in the secret and in the work which was being born—which belonged to both of us—she had an evergrowing joy. No hint, no suggestion, that she did not immediately understand and accept. Then she began to help me by writing and copying for me in her fine hand. I had taken leave of the theater because of sickness.

No embarrassment came between Gertrude and me. We were carried on the same stream; we worked at the same work. It was for her, as it was for me, an unfolding, a ripening of our youth, a joy and a magic in which my passion burned unseen. She did not distinguish between my work and me. She loved us both and was ours. And for me, also, love and music and life seemed no longer distinct. Many times I looked on the beautiful girl in astonishment and wonder, and she returned my glance. When I came or went she pressed my hand more warmly than I dared to clasp hers. And in those balmy, summer days, when I went through the garden and entered the old house, I knew not whether it was my work or my love that so held me and uplifted me.

Such days do not last long. The end was already approaching, and my passion flamed again in the blind desire of love as I sat at her piano and she sang the last act of my work, for the soprano rôle was finished. She sang it so wonderfully! I thought of those beautiful days. Already I felt their color fading while Gertrude still soared in her heights. I felt the inevitable chill of days to come. She smiled and leaning over me to see the notes, saw the sorrow in my eyes, and looked at me questioningly. Then I stood up and took her face tenderly between my hands. I kissed her forehead and her mouth. Then again I sat down. She allowed it all to happen quietly and almost devoutly, without surprise and without displeasure. And when she saw the tears in my eyes, she gently stroked my hair, my forehead and my shoulder with her transparent hand, and so quieted me.

So I played and she sang. And the kiss, and the hour of wonder, though never to be forgotten, remained our last secret. For the opera could not be a secret much longer. It needed other minds and other help. The first to know must be Muoth, for I had thought of him for the leading rôle. Its impetuosity and fire was akin to his singing and to his character. But I hesitated a little while. My work was, as yet, a bond between Gertrude and me. It belonged to her and to me; had borne us anxiety and joy. It was a garden no one knew, or a ship on which we two alone sailed on the great sea.

She was the first to question when she felt and saw that she had helped me all she could.

“Who will sing the principal rôle?”

“Heinrich Muoth.”

She was astonished. “Oh! ” she said. “Really? I do not like him.”

“He is my friend, and the rôle suits him.”

“I see.”

And a stranger stood between us.

CHAPTER IV

MEANTIME I had not thought of Muoth's vacation journey. He was pleased with the plan of my opera and promised all the help he could give, but was engrossed in preparations for his journey. He would only promise me to go through his rôle before autumn. I copied it for him as far as it was done. He took it with him and, according to his custom, gave no sign of life for months.

So we won our reprieve. A good understanding existed now between Gertrude and me. I believe, after that hour at the piano, that she knew exactly what was taking place within me. But she said never a word, nor was in any way changed towards me. She loved not only my music; she loved me, myself. And she felt that each of us understood the other's spirit—that between us there was a natural harmony.

So she went by my side, in concord and friendship, but without passion. Sometimes that was enough for me and I lived quiet and thankful days in her presence. But soon passion came again and then every friendly act of hers was to me an alms, and I felt with agony that the storms of love and desire which possessed me were strange and unlovely to her. Often I cheated myself, and tried to persuade myself that her nature was a placid and gently merry one. But my instinct knew that this was false. And I understood Gertrude well enough to know that to her, too, love must bring storm and danger. I have thought it over many times and I believe if I had taken her by storm and conquered her and drawn her to me with all my might she would have followed me, have gone with me forever.

But, as it was, I distrusted her cheerfulness, and I credited the tenderness and fine understanding she showed me to that fatal sympathy. I

could not rid myself of the thought that it would not have been possible for her to linger in this quiet friendship with a healthy and physically attractive man, if she liked him as well as she liked me. So there were many hours in which I would have given my music and all that lived within me for a straight leg and a dashing manner.

During this time Teifer became more intimate with me. He was indispensable to my work, so he was the next to know my secret. I showed him the text and plan of my opera. He took it home to study it carefully. When he came back his blondbearded, child face was scarlet with joy and an artist's appreciation.

"That's a piece of work—your opera! " he cried excitedly. "I can feel the overture in my fingers now. Let's go and drink a good glass, and if it weren't asking too much I'd say let us drink to an eternal brotherhood—but it mustn't be forced."

I agreed gladly, and it was a happy evening. Teifer took me home with him for the first time. A little while before, he had brought a sister back with him, a sister who had been left alone after the death of her mother. He could not say enough in praise of his new home after his long years of bachelordom. The sister was a contented, quiet girl, with her brother's child-like, friendly eyes. Her name was Brigitte. She served us with cakes and bright green Austrian wine, and passed a little box with long Virginia cigars. We drank the first glass to her health, and the second to our good comradeship. And while we ate her cakes and drank the wine, and smoked, the good Teifer tramped back and forth through the little room, full of happiness. He sat now at the piano, and now with his guitar on the sofa; then with his violin on the corner of the table. He played whatever lovely thing floated through his brain, sang, and let his eyes shine upon us—all in honor of me and of my opera. It was evident that the sister had the same passion for music in her blood, and was no less loyal to Mozart than he. Arias from "The Magic Flute" and bits of "Don Giovanni" scintillated through the tiny room, interrupted by talk and by the clinking of glasses, but always faultlessly accompanied by the violin, the piano, guitar, or merely by Teifer whistling.

I was still engaged as violinist of the orchestra for the short summer season, but I had asked for my release in the autumn, because I thought I needed all my time and energy for my work. The Director, who was angry

at my leaving, treated me at the last with a selected brand of brutality which Teifer helped me parry and ridicule.

With this true friend I worked on the instrumentation of my opera, and although he respectfully gave my ideas their full value, he inexorably laid his finger on every error in the orchestration. Often he flew into a passion and upbraided me like a stern Director, until I had erased or changed a doubtful phrase with which I was enamoured. And he had always examples ready when I doubted and was uncertain. When I wanted to insist upon something that was orchestrally impossible, or feared to risk a bold, orchestral effect, he came running with scores and showed me how Mozart or Lortzing had done, and pointed out that my hesitation was cowardice and that my persistence was pig-headed. We scolded each other, we fought and we struggled. And when all this happened at Teifer's, Brigitte listened respectfully, came and went with wine and cigars, and sympathetically smoothed out many a crumpled score. Her admiration for me was like her love for her brother. In her eyes I was a master! Every Sunday I had to take dinner with them, and afterwards, if there were no black clouds in the sky, we went out into the country by train. There we walked over the hill and through the woods, talked and sang. On one of these walks we went for a bite to a country inn out of whose windows we heard the music of a country dance. And when we had finished and sat in the garden drinking our cider, Brigitte slipped away into the house, and as we noticed it and looked after her we saw her dance past the window, fresh and gay as a summer morning. When she came back to us Teifer shook his finger at her and opined that she might have invited him to dance. At that she became red and embarrassed, made him a sign to be quiet, and looked at me. "What's the matter?" asked her brother.

"Do keep still," she said. But I saw by chance how she indicated me with her glance, and Teifer said, " Oh, yes."

I said nothing, but it was strange to me to see her embarrassed because she had danced in my presence. It occurred to me for the first time that their walks would have been faster and farther without my hindering company. And from that time I seldom went out with them.

When we had finished studying the soprano rôle, Gertrude noticed that it was hard for me to give up the frequent visits with her, and the intimate companionship at the piano; and that I avoided inventing excuses for their

continuance. So she surprised me with the proposal to accompany her regularly and I went to her on three afternoons a week. Her father approved of our friendship. In any case, he allowed her to have her own way in everything, for she had lost her mother early and had taken her place as mistress of the house.

The garden was in the full glory of early summer. Flowers were everywhere and birds sang about the quiet house. And when I went through the garden from the street and passed the old statues of the avenue on my way to the well-shaded house, it seemed to me, each time, like the entrance into a lovely place, where voices and things of the world could enter only softened and beautified. The bees hummed outside the windows in the blossoming shrubs. Sunshine and the delicate shadows of the leaves lay in the room. I sat at the piano and heard Gertrude sing, listened to her voice which soared easily and without effort. And when, after a song, we looked at each other, it was trustfully, like brother and sister. I thought many a time I need only to stretch out my hand and lay hold of my happiness gently to have it forever—and never did it. For I wished to wait until she, too, showed desire and longing. But Gertrude seemed to breathe in pure content and to wish for no change. Indeed it often seemed to me as though she begged me not to destroy this quiet understanding and thus disturb our spring.

If I were disillusioned by it, it comforted me to know how intimately she lived in my music, how she understood me and how proud of it she was. That lasted until June and then Gertrude went away with her father to the mountains. I stayed at home. And when I went past the house, it lay empty behind its trees and the gate was shut. Then the pain began again, grew mighty, and followed me far into the nights.

In the evening I went to the Teifers' almost always with music in my pocket, and took my share of their cheerful and contented life, drank their Austrian wine and played Mozart with them. Afterwards I went home through the quiet streets, saw lovers walking in the Park, went tired to bed, and yet found no sleep. Now I could not understand how I had kept myself so like a brother toward Gertrude—why I had never broken the ban, drawn her to me, and stormed and won her. I saw her in her delicate blue and gray gown, merry or earnest. I heard her voice and could not understand how I had been able to hear it without bursting forth in the warmth and fire of

wooing. Intoxicated and feverish, I got up, lighted the light, and hurled myself on my work—made voices and instruments woo and plead and threaten, repeated the song of longing in new and agitated melodies. But often this comfort failed me. Then I lay burning and wild in mad sleeplessness, repeated her name, "Gertrude—Gertrude"—confusedly and incoherently. I threw comfort and hope aside and surrendered myself desperately to the shuddering powerlessness of desire. I called upon God and demanded of him why he had created me so; and why he had given me nothing in the place of the happiness—nothing but the gray comfort of burrowing in tone, of painting before my desire, the unattainable in incorporeal, tone-fantasies.

I succeeded better in the daytime in mastering my passion. Then I shut my teeth, sat at my work from early morning, and compelled peace through long walks, and animation through cold plunges. In the evening I escaped from the shadows of the impending night to the merry companionship of the brother and sister. With them, for hours, I had peace and almost comfort. Teifer saw plainly that I was suffering and was ill, but he attributed it to my work, and counselled me to spare myself. But he himself was all fire for the work and watched my opera as excitedly and impatiently as I myself. Many times I called for him, so as to have him to myself, and we spent the evening in the cool gardens of an inn. Although the lovers, and the evening sky, the lights and fireworks, and the perfume of desire which is felt in the cities in summer evenings were not good for me.

Things were as bad as they could be! Teifer and Brigitte left for their walking tour in the mountains. Teifer begged me to go with them, and really wanted me, although I, with my lameness, would have spoiled their pleasure. I could not accept. Two weeks I stayed alone in the city, without sleep and without rest—and did no work.

Then Gertrude sent me a little box filled with Alpen roses from a village in the mountains. And when I saw her handwriting and unpacked the browned, faded blossoms, it seemed as if a glance out of her beloved eyes had fallen upon me. I was ashamed of my wildness and of my distrust. I saw that it would be better if she knew my state of mind, and the next morning I wrote her a short note. Then I told her, half jestingly, that I could not sleep because of longing for her—that I could no longer accept her friendship—that with me it was love. And as I wrote, it all came over me

again, and the letter which had begun quietly and half-jestingly, ended wildly and passionately.

Each day the post brought me greetings and picture-cards from the Teifers. They could not dream that their cards and little notes gave me each time a disappointment—that I was waiting for another letter in another hand.

Finally it came, a gray envelope with a fine handwriting, and in it a letter:

"Dear Friend:

"Your letter puts me in a difficult position. I see that you are suffering, or I should scold you for so surprising me. You know how much I like you, but my present life is dear to me, and I have, as yet, no desire to change it. If I saw that I might lose you, I would do anything to hold you. But your fiery letter I cannot answer. Be patient! Let all be as it was between us, until we see each other again, and can talk together. Then everything will be easier.

"Yours, in Friendship,

"Gertrude."

This did not change things much and yet her letter did me good. It was a greeting from her; she permitted me to pay my court to her and did not send me away. Too, her letter brought something of her with it—something of her dear, cool vision. And instead of the picture which my longing painted, she herself stood before me. Her glance demanded my trust. I felt her presence, and immediately shame and pride arose in me and helped me to conquer the consuming love, and to keep in leash my burning desires. Not cheered, but strengthened and armored, I held myself erect.

I took my work and went to live at a little inn two hours from the city. And much of the time I sat in a shady bower, covered by already fading lilacs, and there I meditated and marvelled about my life. How did I go lonely and strange along my way, uncertain where it would lead? Nowhere had I struck root; no place could I call home. With my parents, even, I stood in formal relations.

I had given up my profession to follow dangerous, creative will-o'-the-wisps which did not satisfy me. My friends did not know me. Gertrude was

the only human being with whom I could have had complete understanding and complete communion. And my work for which I lived and which alone could give my life meaning was but a chase after shadows, and a building of air castles. Could this really have a meaning and fill a human being's life, this piling up of a succession of tones, this excited playing of pictures, which at the best could only help to give to another creature a pleasant hour?

In spite of this I worked fairly faithfully, and during the season the opera came to be completed in my mind, although outwardly much was lacking and very little was written down. Many times I was truly happy and thought with pride how my work would move men—how singers and musicians, directors and chorus leaders must bend to my domination—how thousands would be affected. At other times it seemed fairly uncanny and ghostly that all this activity should have its source in the impotent dreams and fancies of a lonely man whom all pitied.

Sometimes I lost my courage and believed that my work would never be produced, that it was all artificial and overdrawn. But that was seldom. In reality I was convinced of the living force, of the strength of my work. It was honest and vital; it was alive; and had blood in its veins. And even today when I don't care to hear it, for I write an altogether different kind of music, nevertheless my whole youth is in this opera. And when many of its melodies come out to greet me, it is like a soft, spring shower, arising out of the forgotten vales of youth and passion. When I think that this longing and this power over the hearts of men came out of weakness and renunciation, I no longer know whether my whole life of that time—and my present life as well—is sweet or bitter to me.

The summer had begun to wane, when in a dark night, amid wild, passionate, sobbing gusts of rain, I wrote the end of my overture. In the morning the rain was cool and mild; the sky was gray, and the garden was an autumn garden. I gathered up my belongings and went back to the city.

Of all my acquaintances only Teifer and his sister had returned. They both looked brown and healthy, and had had many wonderful experiences on their trip. They were full of interest and expectation to see how my work had progressed. We ran through the overture, and it was almost solemn to me when Teifer laid his hand on my shoulder, and said to his sister: "Brigitte, look at him. There is a great composer." In spite of all my

longings and hunger, I awaited Gertrude’s return with confidence. I had a beautiful piece of work to show her, and I knew she would love it, understand it, and enjoy it as if it were her own. But I was most eager to show it to Heinrich Muoth, whose help was indispensable, and from whom I had heard nothing for months.

Finally he appeared, just before Gertrude’s return. One morning he walked into my room. He looked at me for a long time.

“You look dreadful,” he said, shaking his head. “Well, if one will write such things! ”

“Have you looked over the rôle?” I asked.

“Looked it over! I know it by heart, and will sing it as soon as you want me to. It’s a damned fine score! ”

“Do you really think so?”

“You will see! Your happiest time is over. As soon as your opera is produced your attic fame is a thing of the past! But that is your affair. When shall we try the music? I have a few changes to suggest. How nearly finished is it?”

I showed him as much as there was to show, and he took me with him back to his rooms. There, for the first time, I heard him sing the rôle in which I had, through all my passionate experience, thought always of him. I felt the power of my music in his voice. Now, I could see the whole as it would be on the stage. Now, first, my own flame burned its fire in me and let me feel its warmth. It no longer belonged to me. It was no longer my work. Now it had its own life and moved me with a strange power.

For the first time I felt the deliverance of a work by its creator, something which, before, I had never quite believed. My work began to take form, to show life. But a moment since I had held it in my hand, and now it was mine no more. It was like a child who had outgrown its father, who lived and moved, and exerted power of itself. It looked at me independently out of strange eyes, and yet it bore my name and my brand on its forehead. Later, at the opera performances, I had the same terrifying sensation.

Muoth had studied his part well, and what he wanted changed I could easily do. Then he asked curiously about the soprano rôle which he only half knew. He wanted to know if I had heard it sung by an artist. Then, for the first time, I had to tell him about Gertrude, and I succeeded in doing it

quietly and naturally. He had often heard of her but had never been invited to her home, and he was astonished to learn that she had studied and could sing the rôle.

“She must have a good voice,” he commented, “high and clear. Will you take me there with you some time?”

“Quite apart from that I was going to ask you. I would like to hear you sing with her. Some corrections will be necessary. As soon as they have returned I will ask permission.”

“Truly, you are a lucky fellow, Kuhn! For the orchestration you have Teifer to help you. You will see! The opera will be a success.”

I said nothing. I had no thought to give to the future, to the fate of my opera. First, it must be finished. Since I had heard it sung, I, too, believed in the art of my work.

Teifer, to whom I had told this said grimly: “I believe in it *now*. That Muoth has the strength of a savage! If he were only more thorough! He never thinks of the music, only of himself. He’s a rake—a Don Juan in everything! ”

The day when I went through the autumn garden, under the softly falling leaves, to look for Gertrude, my heart beat oppressively. But she, who had grown more beautiful and more robust, came smilingly to meet me, gave me her hand, and with her beloved voice, her bright glance, and her whole noble self, drew me with old magic. It was good to lay away my cares and sorrows and I was glad to be again in her healing presence.

She took me under her protection, and as I found no way clear to speak of my letter and of my entreaties, she, too, was silent, and gave no sign that our comradeship was disturbed and imperilled. She did not try to draw away from me. Often she was alone with me. She trusted that I would consider her desires and not repeat my wooing before she herself gave me a sign. Without delay we took up all that I had worked on in the months of her absence, and I told her that Muoth knew his rôle and praised it. I asked permission to bring him there with me as it was necessary to hear both the main parts together. She gave me her consent.

“I give my permission unwillingly,” she said. “You know that I seldom sing before strangers, and before Heinrich Muoth it will be doubly difficult. Not only because he is a famous artist. There is something about him that terrifies me—at all events upon the stage. But it will probably be all right! ”

I did not dare to shield my friend and to praise him, for fear of making her more timid. I was convinced that after the first trial, she would enjoy singing with him.

A few days later I drove up with Muoth. We were expected, and with great politeness and formality, were received by the master of the house. He had not minded my intimate visits and comradeship with Gertrude, and would have laughed if anyone had commented upon it. But it pleased him little that Muoth should come. But Muoth was so elegant and correct that they were both pleasantly surprised in him. This singer who was cried abroad as violent and haughty, could show charming manners. He was not vain, and, though decided in his speech, he was modest.

After a while, Gertrude asked, “Will you sing?” and we got up to go into the music room. I seated myself at the piano, sketched the prelude and scenes, gave the explanations and finally asked them to begin. She started timidly and cautiously, in a half voice. Muoth, on the contrary, when his turn came, sang without hesitation and in full voice. He carried us with him so that Gertrude now let herself go. Muoth, who was accustomed to treat the women of aristocratic house very formally, now became mindful of her, and followed her singing with sympathy. He expressed his admiration in hearty sincerity, as to a colleague. From then on, all the self-consciousness disappeared. The music made us friends of one mind, and my work, that still lay there half dead, in disconnected bits, grew more and more into oneness. I knew now that the vital thing had been done and could not really be spoiled, and it was good in my eyes. I did not conceal my joy and thanked my two friends with emotion. In a happy, but almost ceremonious spirit, we left the house and Muoth carried me off to an improvised banquet at his hotel. There, over the champagne, he did what he had never been willing to do. He called me by my Christian name, and I rejoiced.

“Here we are,” he said; “let’s celebrate and be happy. Really we have the right to celebrate ahead of time, for then the thing’s at its best. Afterwards it looks different. You’re running straight into the bedazzlement of the theater, lad, and we’ll drink a toast to your not being blinded by it like most of them.”

Gertrude did not at once lose her shyness with Muoth, and was at ease with him only when she sang. He was very reserved and considerate, and gradually Gertrude came to welcome him and invited him, as she did me,

with unconscious friendliness. The hours in which we were all three together were rare ones. The rôles had been sung through, and talked over. The winter round of society and the regular music evenings had begun again at the Imthors. Muoth often appeared at these without taking any part. Often I thought that Gertrude began to be more distant to me—that she drew back from me a little. But I always punished myself for such thoughts and was ashamed of my distrust. I saw how many demands were made upon Gertrude as the mistress of a much-frequented house, and I often felt a proud joy in seeing her move among her guests, so proud, so stately, and yet so gracious.

For me the weeks went quickly enough. I worked faithfully, for I planned to finish the opera during the winter. I had meetings with Teifer; evenings with him and his sister; besides all sorts of correspondence and affairs. For my songs were being sung here and there, and in Berlin everything that I had composed for strings had been played. There came questions and newspaper criticisms. And suddenly every one seemed to know that I was working on an opera, although I had never said a word to anyone about it outside of Gertrude, the Teifers, and Muoth. Well, now that was a matter of indifference, and in my heart I was glad of these signs of success. An open way seemed at last to lie before me. For a whole year I had not been at home with my parents. At Christmas time I went. I found my mother tender, but there was between us still the old self-consciousness which on my side was a fear of not being understood; and on hers a lack of belief in my career as an artist—a distrust of the earnestness of my endeavors. She spoke eagerly of what she had heard and read about me, but more with the thought of giving me a pleasure than from conviction. For in her heart she distrusted this apparent success just as she did my whole art. She was not without appreciation of music. She had sung a little in her early life. But, nevertheless, a musician, in her eyes, was something rather pitiful. Besides, she could not understand or approve of my music, of which she had heard a little.

My father had more faith. As a merchant, he thought first of all of my success. And although he had always provided for me generously and without complaint (he had really provided my whole support since I had left the orchestra) nevertheless, he was glad to see that I was beginning to earn something, and had a prospect of being able to earn my own living—a thing

which, whatever his own wealth might be, he looked upon as a necessary foundation for an honorable existence.

I found him lying in bed. He had fallen the day before my arrival and had injured his foot. He was inclined to mild philosophizing about life. I came nearer to him than ever before and found real pleasure in his practical philosophy. I could ask for his sympathy in many of my misfortunes, which out of shame I had never done before. A speech of Muoth's occurred to me which I repeated to my father. Muoth had once said, not altogether in earnest, that he believed youth to be the most difficult period of life, and that he found old people more cheerful and contented than young people. My father laughed and then said thoughtfully:

"Of course we older people assert the opposite. But your friend has caught something of the truth. I believe that one can mark a perfectly clear boundary line between youth and age. Youth stops when egoism stops. Old age begins with a life lived for others. I mean it this way. Young people have much enjoyment and much suffering from their lives because they live them for themselves alone. Then, every wish and every impulse is important. Every joy is drained to its dregs, and every grief as well. And many a one who sees that his wishes cannot be fulfilled, impetuously flings his whole life away. That is a characteristic of youth. But there comes a time for most people when all that changes, when they live more for others, not at all out of virtue but quite naturally. A family causes it in most cases. A man thinks less of himself and of his own wishes when he has children. Others lose their egoism in a profession—in politics, in art, or science. Youth must play; age must work. No one marries for the purpose of having children, but when he has children they change him. And at last he sees that everything happened only for them. That goes along with the fact that youth talks easily of death, but never thinks of it. With the old it is reversed. The young believe that they will live forever and therefore can center all their wishes and thoughts upon themselves. The old have observed by this time that there's an end somewhere, and that everything which one has and does for himself alone, falls at last into a hole and counts for nothing. So one needs another immortality and the belief that he works for more than the worms. So wife and children, and position and fatherland, are for the purpose of showing a man for whom the daily grind and drudgery is endured. And there your friend is right. A man is more contented when he

lives for other people than when he lives for himself alone. Only the old should make a heroism out of it—which it isn't. The most ardent of the young grow into the best old people, and not those who are like grandfathers while they are still in school."

I stayed at home a week and sat often by my father's bed.

He was not a patient invalid, and indeed, apart from the slight injury to his foot, was in the best of health and strength. I confessed to him my regret that I hadn't come nearer to him before. He replied that it was mutual. But that it would be a healthier thing for our future friendship than if we had made premature attempts at understanding each other, which seldom succeeded. Carefully, and in a friendly fashion, he inquired as to my relations with women. It was impossible to speak of Gertrude. The rest of my confession was quite simple.

"Comfort yourself," said my father, smiling. "You have in you the making of a right good husband. Clever women observe that quickly. Only I would not think of a very poor girl. She might care most for your money. And if you do not find the one whom you picture to yourself and might have loved, even then, all is not lost. Love between young people and love in a long married life is not the same. In youth each one thinks of himself and cares for himself, but when there is a household there are things to be anxious about. It was so with me. You may as well know it. I was very much in love with your mother and it was a real love match. That lasted only a year or two. And then the being in love stopped and was used up. We stood and didn't know what to do.

"At that time the children came—your two older sisters who died early. We had to care for them. In doing this our demands on each other were less. The strangeness wore off and all at once love was there again. Truly, not the old love, but a quite different one. And that has lasted without needing many patches for more than thirty years. All love matches are not so successful; in truth, very few."

I wasn't very much helped by this point of view, but the new and friendly relation with my father did me good, and made my home dear to me again. In the last few years I had grown almost indifferent to it. When I left I did not regret the visit, and I determined to keep in close touch with my parents.

Work, and journeys to the concerts where my string music was played, kept me from visiting the Imthors. When I began going there again, I found Muoth who had formerly gone only with me, one of the most frequently invited guests. Mr. Imthor still treated him a little cooly and distantly, but Gertrude seemed to have become good friends with him. That pleased me. I knew no reason for jealousy and was convinced that two such opposite natures as Muoth and Gertrude might interest and attract each other, but could never satisfy and love each other. So I looked on without suspicion when he sang with her. They were good to look at—these two tall, stately people, he dark and radiant, she light and gay. Only it struck me sometimes that her old, natural gayety came with an effort and was often tired and clouded. She often looked at me earnestly and scrutinizingly, with curiosity and with interest, as tormented and anxious people look at each other, and when I nodded at her and answered her look with a friendly smile, she smiled back at me but with such difficulty that it hurt me.

But I observed this very seldom. At other times she looked as happy and radiant as ever, and I thought I had only imagined it, or I laid it to a passing indisposition. Only once was I really frightened. She sat, while one of her friends played Beethoven, leaning back in her chair and probably thought herself quite unobserved. When she was receiving her guests in the brightly lighted room she had seemed gay and untroubled. Now, however, withdrawn in herself, and quite untouched by the music, she allowed her features to relax and they took on an expression of weariness, fear and timidity, like a tormented, helpless child. It lasted several minutes and as I saw it I thought my heart would stop. She suffered and had sorrow. That in itself was bad enough, but that she kept on her mask and concealed everything from me—that frightened me. As soon as the music was over I went to her side and started a meaningless sort of conversation. I said that it had been a trying winter for her and that I, too, thereby suffered, but I said it all lightly and in a jesting tone. Finally I reminded her of the spring when we had played and sung and discussed the beginning of my opera.

Then she said, “Yes, that was a happy time”; nothing more, but it was a confession, for she said it with unintended earnestness. But I read out of that remark hope for myself and was thankful to her in my heart.

How happy I would have been to repeat my question of the summer. The change in her whole being, the self-consciousness and the timidity

which she showed in my presence at times, I believed in all modesty to be a favorable sign for myself. It touched me to see how her maiden pride seemed to struggle hard to protect itself, but I dared say nothing. Her uncertainty filled me with pity and I believed I was bound to keep my unspoken promise. I have never known how to treat women. I made exactly the opposite mistake from Heinrich Muoth—I treated women as I treated my friends.

As I became convinced that my surmises were not delirious, and as I only half understood Gertrude's changed manner, I restrained myself. I went to the house less often and I avoided intimate talk with her. I wanted to spare her and not to frighten her, as she seemed to suffer and to be at war with herself. She noticed this, I am sure, and was not sorry to see my restraint. I hoped that with the end of the winter's round of gayety, a quieter and lovelier time would come for us again. Until then I decided to wait. But often the beautiful girl hurt my very heart, and against my will, I myself became more and more restless, and felt something evil in the air.

February came, and I longed for the spring and suffered blindly from the tension of the situation. Muoth, too, came to me seldom. To be sure, he had had a strenuous winter at the opera, and was now choosing between two flattering positions in large theaters which had recently been offered to him. He seemed no longer to have any woman about. At least since his break with Lotte, I had seen no woman at his house. Recently we had celebrated his birthday and since that time I had not seen him.

My need drove me to him. I began to suffer from the change of my relation to Gertrude, from overwork, and the strain of the winter. I went to him to talk things over, as formerly. He gave me a glass of sherry, and talked about the theater, and was on the whole tired and disturbed, but remarkably gentle. I listened, looked about the room, and was about to ask whether he had been at the Imthors' again, lately, and then, at a casual glance over his table, I saw an envelope with Gertrude's handwriting. Before I had even a chance to consider, a fever of bitterness rose within me. It could have been an invitation, a simple courtesy, but I did not believe it much as I would have wished to. I succeeded in remaining quiet, and soon went away. Against my will I knew everything. I saw everything, and all at once comprehended all that had been and had happened. I intended to wait and to prove, but I knew quite well that all these thoughts were but pretexts

and subterfuges. In truth the arrow had found its mark, and was poisoning my blood. And when I went home and sat in my room, the stupor slowly gave way before a terrible light which flooded me and penetrated my veins like ice, and made me see that now my life was overthrown and my hopes destroyed.

For some days I did not reach the point of tears or pain. Without thinking about it I had decided not to live longer; even more, my desire to live had vanished. I thought of dying as a business that must be accomplished unflinchingly and of which one must not think whether it is pleasant or not.

Among the things which it was necessary for me to look after—and which I did look after—was a visit to Gertrude. In a way it was for the sake of completeness, in order to make certain the proof of my premonition. I could have had this from Muoth, but, although he seemed less at fault than Gertrude, I could not bring myself to go to him. I went to Gertrude's, but did not find her in. I went after several days and chatted a few minutes with her and her father until he left us alone, as he thought we wished to start our music. Now, she stood alone opposite me and I looked at her curiously. She was changed a little, but was no less beautiful than before.

"Forgive me, Gertrude," I said firmly, "that I must torture you once more. In the summer I wrote you a letter. May I now have my answer? I must depart, perhaps for a long journey, else I would have waited until you yourself?"

She turned white and looked at me as if she had been wounded. So I helped her and said: "It must be, No? I thought so. But I must have certainty."

She nodded sadly.

"Is it Heinrich Muoth?"

She nodded again. Then, suddenly, she was frightened and seized my hand.

"Forgive me. But do him no harm! "

"I had not even thought of that. You may be at peace," I said and smiled, for I remembered Marian and Lotte, who also were so fearful of him, and whom he had beaten! Perhaps he would also beat Gertrude and break her noble queenliness and her completely trusting self.

“Gertrude,” I said once more to her, “think it over. Not for my sake. I know how things are between us. But Muoth will not make you happy. Good-bye, Gertrude.”

My detachment and clearness of vision remained unmoved. Only now, when Gertrude had pleaded with me, with that love in her voice which I had heard in the voice of Lotte; and when I saw how ill she looked and heard her say, “Don’t go so! I do not deserve it from you,” did my heart break. I had difficulty to restrain myself. I gave her my hand and said:

“I do not wish to grieve you. I do not wish to hurt Heinrich. But wait a little. Don’t let him have power over you yet. He destroys all that he loves.”

She shook her head and let my hand fall. “Good-bye,” she said, softly. “I am not to blame. Think well of me—and of Heinrich, too.” It was ended. I returned home again and went on taking care of my affairs as if it were a matter of business. The agony strangled me; my heart bled with sorrow. But I watched it as from afar and had no thoughts free to give to it. It was all one whether the days and hours that remained to me went well or not.

I arranged the heaps of manuscript on which was written my half-finished opera. Then I wrote a note about it to Teifer, so that the work, if possible, might be saved. I began to think intently how I should die. I would have liked to spare my parents, but I could not see how that was possible. In the long run it wouldn’t matter much. I decided to do it with the revolver.

All these questions rose before me unreal and shadowlike. Only one thing was clear. I dared not live longer. Too, already, behind the veil of my resolve, I divined the frightfulness of life that had resulted. It glared at me hideously out of empty eyes, and was infinitely more dreadful and fearful than the dark, almost indifferent vision of dying.

Two days later, about noon, I was ready with my preparations. I desired, however, to take a walk through the city. I had to return a few books to the library. It was a comfort for me to know that at evening I would not be living. I had the sensation of one who has met with an accident, who, in half-coma, and conscious of no real pain, but feeling a presentiment of terrible torment, hoped he might altogether sink into unconsciousness before the dreaded pain really broke upon him. I suffered less from real pain than under the fear that I might perhaps return again to full consciousness, and would then have to drain the whole cup which my summoned death was to spare me. Therefore, I took my walk quickly, tended to my business,

and came directly back. The only detour I made was to avoid going to Gertrude's house. For I had a foreboding, without being able to think it out, that perhaps at the sight of the house, the hideous agony before which I fled might fall upon me and conquer me. So I returned to the house in which I lived with a sigh of relief. I opened the door and without stopping climbed the steps. If now agony was close on my heels, if its claws stretched out to clutch me, if now somewhere within me pain began to stir, I had only a few steps and seconds between me and release.

A man in uniform came down the steps as I went up. I tried to avoid him, to hurry by him, full of fear that I might be detained. He touched his cap and spoke my name. I looked at him as one dazed. When he spoke to me he stopped and the realization of my fears seemed to come over me. I felt a deathlike weariness as if I would fall and could not hope to take the few steps to my room. Meanwhile, I stared at the strange man, and then, overcome by faintness, I sat down on one of the steps. He asked me if I was ill. I shook my head. He was holding something in his hand which he offered to me and which I would not take until he forced it into my hands. I waved it aside and said, "I don't want it."

He called to the landlady, who was not there. He took me under the arms in order to help me up, and when I saw that there was no escape, that he would not let me be, I felt strong again, stood up, and went to my room, where he followed me. There he regarded me, as I thought, with suspicion. I pointed to my leg as if it pained me, and he believed me. I found my pocketbook and gave him some money. He thanked me, and finally pressed the thing, which I had not taken, into my hands. It was a telegram. Exhausted, I stood by the table and tried to think. Did something still hold me? Had something broken through my ban? What lay there? A telegram. From whom? I was all one. It had nothing to do with me. It was brutal to bring me telegrams now. Now, when I had taken care of everything, at the last minute someone must send me a telegram! I looked around. There was a letter also upon the table. I put the letter in my pocket—it did not interest me. But the telegram bothered me. It stuck in my mind and disturbed my equanimity. I sat down and looked at it lying there and I did not know whether to read it or not. It was an invasion upon my liberty—I did not doubt that. Someone wished to prevent me—to stop me. Someone begrudged me my flight, wished me to drain the dregs of my sorrow that I

should be spared no sting, no stab, no pain. Why the telegram harassed me, I did not know. For a long time I sat by the table and dared not open it, with the feeling that it concealed the power to pull me back, and compel me to endure the unendurable which I wished to escape. When I finally did open it, my hand trembled and I deciphered it slowly, as if it had been written in a strange, foreign language. It read:

"Father dying. Please come at once.

"MOTHER."

Gradually I took in what it meant. Yesterday I thought I sorrowed for my parents that I must hurt them, although it had been but a superficial consideration. Now they opposed me; they called me back; they made their right over me felt. Suddenly there came into my mind the conversation with my father at Christmas time. Young people, he had said, could go so far in their egoism and independence as to throw away their lives for the sake of an unsatisfied wish. But he, who realized that his life was bound up with other lives, could not let his own desires carry him that far. Now I was held by such a bond. My father lay dying. My mother was alone with him. She called me. His death and her need did not at the moment touch my heart. I believed I knew worse sorrows; but that it was not possible to add to their agony, to ignore their call, to run away—that I could perceive.

In the evening I was at the station, ready for my journey. I did what was necessary mechanically, and yet conscientiously—bought my ticket, gathered up the change that was given back to me, went out to the platform and entered a compartment. I took a seat in the corner and prepared for a long night ride. A young man came in, looked around, spoke to me, and seated himself opposite me. He asked me something. I only looked at him, thinking of nothing and wishing nothing, but that he would let me alone. He coughed, rose, took his yellow leather bag, and sought another place.

The train sped through the night, blind in its foolish haste, exactly as dull and conscientious as I—as if there were something to lose or something to save. Hours afterwards, when I put my hand in my pocket, I felt the letter. That's there, too, I thought, and opened it. In it my publishers wrote about concerts and terms, and informed me that things were going well and progressing. A great critic in Munich had written an article about me. He congratulated me on it; and there lay a clipping from a paper, an

article with my name as the title—a long drivel about the condition of present-day music and about Wagner and about Brahms; and then a criticism of my chamber music and of my song, with generous praise and wishes for success. And as I read the little black letters, it became clear to me, little by little, that it had to do with me, that the world and fame stretched out their hands to me, and for a moment I could smile.

But the letter and the article had torn the bandage from my eyes. Unexpectedly I looked back to the world and saw myself not extinguished and blotted out, but, instead, in the midst of it, belonging to it. I must live; I must let what would, happen. How was it possible? Now everything came back to me—what I had felt in the last five days; and what I had felt only dully; and of what I had thought to avoid; and it all seemed mawkish, bitter and painful. It was a death sentence and I had not executed it. I must leave it unexecuted!

I heard the train rattle. I opened the window and saw dark, low things passing by; sad, leafless trees with black branches; houses under great roofs; and distant hills. All these seemed to exist unwillingly; seemed to breathe pain and opposition. Some thought it beautiful, but to me it seemed only sad. I thought of the song, “Has God willed it so?” And no matter how I sought to look upon the trees and fields and roofs, how zealously I listened to the click of the wheels, or how intensely I riveted my thoughts on everything outside of myself that I might think on without growing desperate—it was not long possible.

I could hardly think of my father. He faded with the trees, and with the passing things of the night, into forgetfulness. And against my will, in spite of my efforts, my thoughts turned back where they had no right to go. I saw a garden with old trees, and in it a house with palms in its hall, and on all the walls old, sombre paintings. I entered and walked up the steps past the pictures, and no one saw me. I passed through as a shadow passes. There was a slim woman with brown hair whose back was turned to me. I saw them both—held in close embrace. And I saw my friend, Heinrich Muoth, smile so sadly and cruelly as he so often did. No doubt he knew that he would mistreat and misuse this one. There was no help for it. It was senseless that this beautiful woman should fall to this miserable corrupter, and that for me all love and friendship counted for naught. It was senseless—but it was so.

Awakening out of a sort of sleep or unconsciousness I looked out of the window into a gray dawn. I stretched my still limbs. I felt a sense of oppression and fear, and saw only trouble and grief before me. But, after all, now I must think of my father and of my mother.

It was still gray dawn when I caught sight of the houses and bridges of my native town. In the smells and noise of the station I was so overcome by weariness and repugnance that I could hardly alight. I took my light bag and stepped into the nearest carriage. We went over the smooth asphalt, over slightly frozen ground, over threatening pavements, and finally stopped before the big door of our house. It was closed, and when, troubled and terrified, I rang the bell no one came to open. I looked up at the house and it seemed as if I were in some unpleasant nightmare where every door was locked and I must climb over the roof. The driver watched curiously and waited. I went anxiously to the other door which I had seldom entered, indeed, not for years. This was open. Behind it was my father's office, and as I entered I saw the clerks sitting there, as always, in their gray coats, dull and dusty. They stood up at my entrance and bowed to me, for I was now the heir. The bookkeeper, Klemm, who appeared as he had for twenty years, looked at me sorrowfully and questioningly.

"Why is the front door locked?" I asked.

"Because no one is there."

"Where is my father?"

"In the hospital, and your mother, also."

"Is he still alive?"

"He was alive this morning but it is expected ?"

"Yes. What is the trouble?"

"What? Oh! It is still the foot. It was not treated right, we all insist. The pain was so bad he cried aloud. Then he was taken to the hospital. Now it is blood poisoning. At half-past ten yesterday we telegraphed you."

"Yes, thank you. Now bring me some bread and a glass of wine, quickly, and order a carriage, please."

They ran about and whispered. Then everything was still. Someone gave me a tray and a glass. I ate the bread and drank the wine. I stepped into a carriage. The horse panted; and soon I stood at the entrance of the hospital where nurses with white caps and aprons, and blue striped dresses went through the corridors. Someone took me by the hand and led me to a room

where I saw my mother in tears. She nodded to me. In a narrow iron bed lay my father, changed and shrunken; his short gray beard seemed to stand up oddly in the air.

He was still awake, opened his eyes, and recognized me in spite of the fever.

“Still writing music?” he asked, softly, and his voice and glance were friendly and jesting. He looked at me with a tired, ironical wisdom, but he had nothing more to say, and it seemed to me that he looked into my heart and saw and understood all.

“Father,” I called, but he only smiled, looked at me half-mockingly, though with a half-wandering glance, then closed his eyes again!

“How you look! ” said my mother, as she embraced me. “Did it shock you so?”

I could not answer. A young physician entered, and behind him an older one. They gave my dying father some morphine, and he did not again open those wise eyes which but a moment since had looked so omniscient. We sat beside him and watched him as he lay there, saw him grow quiet—then his face change. So we waited for the end.

He lived several hours and died late in the afternoon. I felt nothing but dumb sorrow and deep weariness, and sat silently, with hot, dry eyes. Towards evening I fell asleep in my chair at the side of my dead father.

CHAPTER V

THAT life is hard to live, I had before this perceived vaguely. Now I had a new cause to brood upon it. To this day the feeling of opposition which was rooted in that experience has never left me. While my life has been barren and irksome, it seems to others, and many times to myself, rich and full. To me the life of a man seems like a profound sad night which could not be endured, if there did not blaze here and there a flash of light whose sudden brightness is so full of comfort and wonder that these seconds can extinguish and make up for the years of darkness.

That darkness—the inconsolable gloom—that is the terrible circle of daily life! Why does one arise each morning, eat, drink and then again lay himself down? The child, a savage, the healthy young man, the animal, does not suffer under the boredom of this circle of routine things and actions. He who does not suffer from thinking, likes to get up in the morning, to eat and to drink. But when this clearness and the reason for it is lost to him, he seeks enviously and expectantly to find some flash of real light in the course of the day—a light that may exalt and extinguish the feeling of time with all its thoughts of apprehension and of the end of all.

We can call these flashes creative, because it seems that they bring with them the feeling of our union with the Creator, while in them we perceive that all is as it should be. It is what the mystics have called “Illumination.” Perhaps it is the radiance of this flash that makes everything afterwards seem so dark. Perhaps it is the free, almost magic, rapture of this flash of light that makes us find all life afterwards so different and harsh and depressing. I do not know. I have never got very far in thinking or

philosophizing. But this I do know. If there is a blessed state in Paradise, it must be an unbroken continuance of such a flash. And if man can reach this state only through sorrow and through purification by pain, then no sorrow and no pain is so great that man should flee from it.

A few days after the burial of my father I still went around in bewilderment and soul-weariness. I started on an aimless walk on a suburban, country road. The pretty little houses awoke in me a hazy recollection, on which I pondered as I went along, until I recognized the garden and house of my former teacher, who, a few years before, had desired to lead me to a belief in theosophy. I went in. He came to meet me, recognized me, and took me hospitably into his room, where among the books and vases of flowers a light, pleasing aroma of tobacco floated.

“How are you?” he asked.

“Ah, you have just lost your father. You look troubled. Did it affect you so deeply?”

“No,” I said, “the death of my father would have grieved me more had I not known him so well. But in my last visit with him we became friends, and I lost that painful, guilty feeling that one has towards good parents when one accepts more love from them than one can give.”

“I am glad of that.”

“How about you and your philosophy? I should so like to hear about you because things are bad with me.”

“What is the trouble?”

“Everything. I cannot live and I cannot die. Everything seems false and futile.”

Mr. Lohe twisted his good, contented, peasant face painfully. I must confess that this good, rather fat face had annoyed me, and in no way did I expect from him or his philosophy any solace. I only desired to hear him talk, to show how powerless was his philosophy, and to punish his contentment and his optimistic belief. I did not feel friendly towards him, or towards anyone.

But the man was not so self-satisfied or entrenched in his dogma as I had thought. He looked at me lovingly with real concern. Then, with a melancholy shake of his blonde head, he said decisively:

“You are ill, dear man. Perhaps it is only physical. If so it will soon heal. In that case you must stay in the country, work hard, and eat no meat.

But I believe it is something else, that your illness is of the mind."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes. You have a sickness which is very much the fashion now, and which one meets every day in intelligent men. The doctors, naturally, know nothing of it. It is akin to moral insanity, and can also be called individualism, or imaginary loneliness. The modern books are full of it. The idea has settled upon you that you are isolated, that no one seeks you and no one understands you. Is it not so?"

"Practically, yes." I admitted in astonishment.

"You see! For one who once has this illusion, a few disillusions are enough to make him believe that between him and others there are practically no connections, but great misunderstandings; and that each wanders alone in absolute solitariness—can never make himself really understood by another, and has nothing in common to share with another. It ensues, too, that such a sick person becomes proud and thinks all other normal people understand and love one another. If this sickness should become universal, mankind would die out. But it is only to be found in Central Europe and in high positions. In the young it is curable. No doubt it even belongs to the inevitable adolescent illnesses of youth."

His slightly ironic, resonant, pedantic tone angered me a little. When he saw that I did not smile and had no defense of myself to make, the friendly, sympathetic expression returned to his face.

"Forgive me," he said kindly. "You have the real illness—not my favorite caricature of it. But there is indeed a cure for it. It is but imaginary that there is no bridge between you and men—that each goes his way alone and misunderstood. On the contrary, that which men have in common is much more and of more importance than that which each has himself alone, and by which he is separated from the others."

"That may be," I said. "But how will it help me to know that? I am no philosopher, and my sorrow is not that I cannot find truth. I don't desire to be a philosopher and thinker but simply to live a little more contentedly and easily."

"Well, seek for that, then. It is not necessary to study books and chase theories. But you must have faith in your physician while you are ill. Will you try it?"

"I will test it, gladly."

“Good! If you were sick in body and the doctor advised you to take the baths or to drink his medicine, or to go to the seashore, you might not understand why this or that remedy should help you, but you would try it and follow his directions. Do the same with the prescription I give you.

“Try for a time to learn more of others and to think less of yourself. It is the only road to health. When a thought of yourself comes into your head, tell it to go away. It will go. Thoughts are things.”

“But how shall I do that? One naturally thinks first of himself.”

“You must conquer that. You must come to a certain routine concerning yourself and your health. You must learn to think, what does it matter about me? Only in that way will you help your cure. Particularly, you must learn to love someone so much that his well-being is more important to you than your own. I do not mean that you should fall in love. That would be quite the opposite! ”

“I understand. But on whom shall I put this to the test?”

“Commence with those nearest to you—with your friends, with your family. There is your mother. She has suffered a great loss. She is now alone and needs comfort. Take care of her. Stay with her, and try to mean something to her.”

“We do not understand each other, my mother and I. That will be difficult.”

“Yes, if your desires go no further, it will not be easy. That old story of misunderstanding! You must not always think that another does not understand you. Perhaps you are not wholly just. You should first seek yourself to understand others, to give others joy, to be just to others. If you do that and begin with your mother— You see, you must say to yourself: Life doesn’t give me much pleasure, one way or another, so why should I not try to seek it in this way? You have lost your love for your own life. Therefore don’t treat your life with consideration. Put a charge upon yourself and give up a little of your comfort.”

“I will try it! You are right. It is immaterial what I do. Why should I not try what you prescribe?”

What struck me and astonished me in what he had said was its agreement with what my father, in our last meeting, had set forth as his philosophy of life. Life for others, rather than taking one’s self so seriously. The teaching was opposed to my immediate feeling, and it smacked a little

of dogma, and of instruction before confirmation, of which I, as every normal young man, thought with aversion and scorn. But in the final analysis it dealt not with opinions and a philosophy of the world, but with an entirely practical attempt to make a hard life more bearable. And I wished to make the attempt.

Full of wonder, I looked into the eyes of this man whom I had never taken seriously, and now accepted as counsellor, yes, even as a physician. But he seemed, indeed, to have something of that love which he recommended to me. He seemed to share my sorrow and to wish me all good. Besides, my feeling had already told me that I was in need of a potent cure, if I were to live and breathe again as others. I had thought of a long stay in the mountains, or of alleviating work, but now I had rather follow my counsellor, for my skill and wisdom were at an end.

When I told my mother that I had planned not to leave her, but hoped she would come to me, and share my life, she shook her head, sadly.

“What are you thinking of?” she parried. “That is not so easy. I have my old habits and cannot make new ones, and you need freedom and must not be burdened with me.”

“We can try it for a while,” I proposed. “Perhaps it will go better than you think.”

At the first I had enough to do not to brood and despair. There was the house and an extensive business with assets and liabilities; there were books and accounts; there was money coming in and money going out. Now it was a question what to do with it all. At the beginning I was disposed to close it up, to sell everything, though that could not be done quickly. Then, my mother clung to the old house. Too, my father’s will had to be executed amid hitches and difficulties. It was necessary that the bookkeeper and notary help me. The days and weeks passed, filled with interviews, with correspondence about money and debts, with plans and disappointments.

I soon found myself muddled with all these calculations and red tape. So I gave them over to a notary and lawyer, and left to them the disentangling of affairs.

I tried, at this time, to make things easier for my mother. I did not talk about business before her. I read to her and drove with her. At times I felt I must go away, and let everything go, but a feeling of shame and a certain curiosity as to what would come of it all restrained me.

My mother thought of nothing but of my father, and she showed her grief in simple, little, half-feminine, to me strange, and frequently hardly suitable, traits. At first I had to sit in my father's place at the table. Then she found I hardly suited that place, and it should remain empty. Sometimes I could not speak to her enough about my father, and at other times she was silent and looked at me sufferingly if I even mentioned his name. What I missed most was music. I would have given a great deal if I might have played an hour on my violin, but when, after several weeks, I ventured to do it, she sighed and felt that it showed a lack of respect. My unfortunate attempts to win her friendship, and to bring my way of life nearer to hers, came to naught.

So I often suffered and wished to give it up, but I conquered myself and accustomed myself to these irresponsive days. My own life lay broken and dead. But seldom now did the past echo—only, mysteriously, when in dreams I heard the voice of Gertrude, or, when in an empty hour, uninvited melodies rang from my opera. When I returned to Cologne to give up my rooms and to pack my things, everything there seemed changed as though by years. I sought out Teifer, only. He remained faithful to me. I did not dare to ask about Gertrude.

I began, by degrees, a regular, hidden warfare against the restrained, resigned behavior of my mother, which distressed me greatly by its continuance. If I begged her to be candid, to tell me what she desired, and what there was in me that displeased her, she would stroke my hand, smile sadly, and say:

"Leave me alone, child. I am, indeed, an old woman."

So I began to seek the reason myself, and I was even not ashamed to question the bookkeeper and the servants. Then a medley of things were revealed. The main ones were these. My mother had but one near relation and friend in the city, a cousin, who was a spinster, and who associated with but few people, but who was a most intimate friend of my mother. This Miss Schniebel had not cared at all for my father, and for me she had a most rigid repugnance, so that recently she had not come to the house. My mother had promised her to take care of her, should she outlive my father, and my presence seemed to make the hope vain. When, by degrees, I had gained this information, I made a call upon the old lady, and did my best to make myself agreeable to her.

This game of eccentricities and little intrigues was new to me and rather amused me. Finally, I persuaded Miss Schniebel to come to our house again, and I saw that my mother was grateful. They did everything together now. They tried to prevent the sale of the house, which I desired, and they actually accomplished it. The designs of the old lady aimed at taking my place in the house, and at succeeding to the old armchair, a place which she had long coveted. There would have been room enough for her and for me, only she would have no master of the house near her, and she refused to come to us permanently.

Nevertheless, she came running to us diligently, made herself an indispensable friend in many little things, handled me with diplomacy as though I were a dangerous World-power, and made for herself the place of advisor in the household, a place which I could not dispute with her.

My poor mother took neither one's part, openly. She was tired and suffered greatly at the change in her life. I came gradually to see how she missed my father. Once, as I went through a room, I came upon her busy in the clothes closet. At first I did not notice her. She was frightened when she saw me and I went away quickly, though I could easily see her looking at the clothes of my father. Afterwards, her eyes were red.

When the summer came, a new battle began. I insisted that my mother go on a journey with me. We were both in need of a change, and I hoped by it to cheer her, and to win more influence with her. She had little interest in travel, but, nevertheless, didn't oppose me. So much more zealously, therefore, did Miss Schniebel. She insisted that mother should remain there and that I should travel alone.

But I would not give way to any other judgment. I expected much from this trip. I began to feel uneasy in the old home with my poor mother who suffered and was not at peace. So I hoped to make my mother feel better and to master my own thoughts and humors.

I arranged that we should start on our travels towards the end of June. We took short day trips, sailed up Lake Constance, stopped at Zurich, and went over the Bruing Pass to the Berner Oberland. My mother continued to be quiet and tired, was indifferent to the travel, and seemed unhappy. At Interlacken she began to complain that she did not sleep anymore, but I persuaded her to go with me to Grindelwald, where I hoped both she and I might find rest. On this foolish, endless, joyless trip I realized the absolute

impossibility of getting rid of one’s misery or of running away from it. There lay the beautiful, green sea, reflecting the ancient and brilliant city; there rose the mountains, white and blue; and the blue-green glaciers, glittering in the sunlight. But we both passed by these, quiet and unmoved, shaming ourselves by being only wearied and oppressed by all this. We took our walks, looked up to the mountains, breathed the balmy, sweet air, and listened to the cow bells tinkle in the meadows. And we said, “ It is beautiful,” and did not dare to look into each other’s eyes.

We stayed at Grindelwald a week. Then, one morning, my mother said to me:

“There is no use, son. Let us return. I would so like to sleep again. And if I should become sick and die, I want to be in my own home.”

Quietly I packed our trunk, agreeing with her in silence, and we started back on our journey, travelling much more quickly than we had come. But I had not the feeling that I was returning to a home, but rather to a prison. My mother, too, showed but a small degree of liberation.

On the evening of our return I said to her: “What do you think of my continuing the journey alone? I would like to go on to Cologne. You understand I will gladly stay with you whenever I see you need me. But we are both sick and sorrowful and we make each other more so. Take your friend into the home. I know you will be more comfortable with her than with me.”

As was her wont, she took my hand and stroked it gently. She said nothing but looked at me with a smile which said plainly, “Yes, please go.” So with all my endeavors and good resolutions, I had accomplished nothing, except for a few months to torture her and me, and to make her much more of a stranger to me. In spite of our life together, each of us had carried his burden alone, and had not shared it with the other, and each had but sunk the deeper in his sorrow and his illness. My attempts were without results and I knew nothing better than to go, to evacuate, and leave the field to Miss Schniebel.

This I did with speed, and, as I knew no other place, I went back to Cologne. On the journey it came over me that I no longer had a home. The city in which I was born, and in which I had lived the years of my childhood, and where my father was buried, concerned me no more—had

nothing to ask of me, and nothing to give me but memories. I had not said it to Mr. Lohe at parting, but his prescription had not helped.

Fortunately I found my old rooms in Cologne empty. It seemed like a sign to me that it was useless to try to break with the past, or to flee from one's own fate. I lived again in the same house and room, in the same city. I unpacked my violin and brought out my work, and found all as it had been, only that Muoth had gone to Munich, and Gertrude had become his betrothed. I took the business of my opera in hand as if it were the fragments of my earlier life, out of which I would seek to make something. But the music stirred but slowly in my numbed soul, and first awoke when the poet of all my texts sent me a new song.

The melody came to me one evening when I followed the track of my old unrest, when, with shame and a thousand will-of-the-wisps in my heart, I strode around the garden of Gertrude's house. The words were:

> Now have I quenched my tapers one by one;
> In at my open window streams the night,
> And clasps me soft and lets me be the friend
> And brother of its might.
>
> With the same yearning pain our hearts are sore;
> Afar the presage of our dreams is sped,
> And we speak, whispering of an olden time,
> Home in our father's stead.

This verse struck into my heart and awakened my tones and my life. Painfully glowing, the long restrained and cheated pain resolved itself into tones and rhythm. From the song I found a way to the lost thread of my opera, and after so long a waste, from the feverish delirium of the gushing overflow, soared to the free heights where pain and joy are no more separated, and where all fire and power of the soul are mingled and united in one single, aspiring flame.

The day I wrote my new song and showed it to Teifer, I went home in the evening through an alley of chestnut trees. I was filled with the impetuous vigor for new work. The past months seemed to me like a mask over the eyes—without comfort in their vacancy. Now my gladdened heart beat quickly and could no more understand why it had wished to escape its

sorrow. Out of the dust the picture of Gertrude rose before me, and unafraid, I looked into her clear eyes and opened wide my heart to all the pain. Ah, it was better to suffer through her, even to press the spear deeper into the wound, than far from her, and far from my true life, to sentence myself to dusk, and to ghostlike times. Between the black, full tops of the spreading chestnuts, shone the dark blue sky, filled with stars that floated, glowing and golden, shining untroubled in the distance. That was the life of the stars. And the trees bore their buds, and blossoms and scars, naked to the gaze. Whether joy or woe portended, they gave themselves to the great purpose of life. The flies, that live but a day, swarmed giddily toward their death. Each life had its glory and its beauty, and for an instant, I saw and understood, and called it good, and called, also, my life and my sorrows good.

In the course of the autumn my opera was completed. At this time I met Mr. Imthor at a concert. He greeted me heartily, and wondered, somewhat, that he had not known of my stay in the city. He had only heard that my father was dead and that I was living in my native town.

"And how is Miss Gertrude? " I asked, as quietly as I could.

"Oh, you should come to see for yourself. Her wedding will be in the first part of November, and we surely count on you for it."

"Thank you, Mr. Imthor. And what do you hear of Muoth?"

"He is well. You know I am not entirely in sympathy with this marriage. For a long time I have wanted to ask you about Muoth. As far as I know him I have nothing to complain about him. But I have heard so many things. He seems to have had much to do with women. Can you tell me anything about it?"

"No, Mr. Imthor. It would be no use. Your daughter would judge severely any rumors against him. Muoth is my friend, and when he finds his happiness, I do not begrudge it to him."

"Yes, yes. I understand. Will you look in soon upon us?"

"Oh, I expect to. I'll see you soon again."

It had not been long since I would have done everything to prevent this marriage for the sake of both. Not because of any envy, or hope that Gertrude would turn towards me; but rather because I was convinced and seemed to have a presentiment that it would not go well with both of them, especially when I thought of Muoth's self-torturing kind of melancholy, and

of Gertrude’s tenderness, and more, when Marian and Lotte came to my mind.

But now I felt otherwise. A convulsion of my whole life, a half-year of inner loneliness, and the conscious parting from my youth, had changed me. I had now the conviction that it was foolish and dangerous to lay one’s hand on the affairs of others, and I had no reason to consider my hand as an aid, or myself as a helper and psychologist. Especially since my endeavors in this direction had all been unfortunate, and had shamed me bitterly. And now, I strongly doubt the ability of anyone, in any way, consciously to mold and to shape his life and that of others. One may win gold and honor and position, but happiness or unhappiness he cannot win—not for himself, nor for others. One can only bear what comes, but bear it, to be sure, in very different ways. Whatever comes to me, I will make no more violent attempts to juggle my life to the sunny side, but rather to accept that which is allotted to me, and to bear it with virtue, and if evil, change it into good.

If life is not dependent on such meditations, and passes over them, still, honestly intended resolutions and purposes bequeath a freedom to the soul and help it to bear the unalterable. At least it appears so to me since I have renounced, and have become indifferent to my own welfare.

That many times, that which one with all his will and toil cannot accomplish, comes unexpectedly, I learned in regard to my mother. I wrote her every month but had been for a long time without an answer from her. If things were not well with her, I would have known, so I thought little of it, and continued to write my letters—short accounts of my days. And every time I sent friendly greetings to Miss Schniebel.

Recently these greetings were no more presented. Both women had things their own way and could not stand the fulfillment of their desires. Particularly, Miss Schniebel. Her good time had gone to her head. Immediately after my departure, she had entered with triumph into the place of her siege and had established herself in our house. There she now lived with her cousin and friend. After long years of poverty, she regarded it as a well deserved fortune to be a member of the family in a stately household and to be permitted to put on airs. Not that she took on costly habits and wished to spend freely, for she had been too long in pressing circumstances, and comparative poverty. Nor did she sleep upon finer linen. On the contrary she began to count the household expenses and believed that it

should pay for itself with something to spare. But what she would not renounce were might and power. Both maids must obey her not less than my mother. Too, she knew how majestically to crush servants and workmen, and the postman. And because passion never loses through its fulfillment, gradually she expanded her greed for influence to the things in which my mother was less willing to yield. My mother's visitors she regarded as her own, and could not endure that anyone should be received when she was not there. She desired that letters, especially those from me, should not be shared with her in the form of extracts, but instead, be given to her to read. And finally she detected in my mother's house many things were not kept and cared for, and managed, in what she regarded as the right way. Above all, it seemed to her, that the scrutiny over the servants was not keen enough. If, in the evening a maid left the house, or another amused herself too long with the postman, or the cook asked for a free Sunday, she denounced the indulgence of my mother in the most severe way, and held long conversations upon the right conduct of a housewife.

Moreover, it gave her bitter pain to see how often and how grossly the rules of economy were violated. Coal had been carried again to the house! The cook broke too many eggs! And she denounced things with such assiduity and boldness that this was the beginning of the break between the friends. Of course, until now, my mother had seemed pleased with everything, even if she did not always agree. But she was disillusioned about her friend and about the situation which she thought would be so different. Now that old and venerable and long-used customs of the house were endangered; that her daily comfort and domestic peace began to suffer, she could not withhold her objections and armed herself. But she was no match for her friend. There were explanations and little, friendly wrangles. And as the cook gave notice and would only stay with my mother after much labor and many promises—almost apologies—the question of authority in the house came to a real battle. Miss Schniebel, proud of her knowledge, her experiences, her economy, and her housewifely virtues, could not understand that one should not be grateful for all these qualities. She felt so sure she was in the right, that she decided she must be a critic of the domestic management hitherto existing; that she must censure the housewifely skill of my mother. She could no longer conceal her designs. She blamed the housewife of my father, under whose direction and after

whose methods things, for so many years, had run smoothly. He had no patience with littleness and cheap economy. He had not begrudged freedom and justice to the requests of the servants. He had hated quarrels with the maids. Now, when my mother spoke of my father, whom, earlier, to be sure, she had occasionally criticized, but who, since his death, had become a saint to her, Miss Schniebel could not be silent. She recalled pointedly how, for a long time, she had wished to speak her mind about the deceased; that it was now time to put an end to all such folly and let reason hold the reins of government. She had, indeed, such consideration for her friend as not to wish to shut out thoughts of the departed, but now that she had mentioned him, herself, she must acknowledge that the late master was guilty of many of the disorders in the house. And *she* could not understand, now that my mother had a free hand, why they should remain any longer!

That was like a slap in the face to my mother, and she never forgave her cousin. Earlier, it was to her a necessity and a pleasure to complain a little now and then to this confidante, and to find some fault with the master of the house. But now she could not endure the slightest shadow upon his transfigured image, and she began to find the revolution in her house not only a disturbance, but—more—a sacrilege on the memory of her husband.

So it went on without my knowledge. Now, for the first time, a letter from my mother intimated the unrest in the birdcage, although, of course, considerately and cautiously. The whole affair made me laugh. In my next letter I left out the greetings to the spinster, but did not touch on the intimations, thinking they might straighten it out better without me. Also, I was hindered by other things which occupied me far more.

October had come, and the thoughts of Gertrude’s approaching marriage possessed me. I had not visited her home again. Nor had I seen her. After the wedding, when she had gone, I hoped to renew my friendship with her father. Also I hoped that, in time, there would be restored between her and me a good, confident relation. We had been too near to each other to blot out that which had been. Only now I had not the courage for a meeting, which she, I knew, would not have avoided.

One day someone knocked on my door in a manner I knew well. Troubled with foreboding, I sprang up and opened it, and there stood Heinrich Muoth. He stretched his hand out toward me.

"Muoth! " I cried and grasped his hand, but I could not look into his eyes without all the memories stirring in me and hurting me. I saw again the letter lying upon the table—the letter with Gertrude's handwriting. I saw myself say good-bye to her and choose my death. And now there he stood and looked at me searchingly. He looked thinner but as handsome and proud as ever.

"I had not expected you," I said, softly.

"So? I know that you do not go anymore to see Gertrude. As far as I am concerned, we will not speak of that. I have come here to see how you live and what work you are doing. How does the opera go?"

"That is finished. But first, how is Gertrude?"

"Well. We are to be married soon."

"I know."

"Yes. Will you not soon go to see her?"

"Later, perhaps. I will see whether you have been good to her."

"Hm . . ."

"Heinrich, forgive me. I cannot help but think of Lotte, whom you treated badly—even struck."

"Let Lotte be. It was all right. No woman is struck who does not wish it."

"Well, then—My opera. I hardly know to whom to send it first. There must be a good stage. But I don't know who will take it."

"I wanted to talk to you about it. Take it to Munich. In all probability they will take it, for every one is interested in you. And, if necessary, I will use my influence. I don't want anyone else to sing my rôle for me."

That was a great favor to me. I said so gratefully, and promised to attend to sending him a copy.

We kept on discussing the opera as though it were a matter of life and death, although we desired only to pass the time and to close our eyes on the chasm which had arisen between us.

Muoth broke the spell first.

"Do you remember how you took me that time to the Imthors'? It is a year now."

"I remember well, and you need not remind me of it. Rather, go! "

"No, my friend. Besides, you remind yourself. If you were in love at that time with Gertrude, why did you not say a word to me about it? Why

did you not say, ‘Leave her alone. Leave her to me!’ It would have been enough. I would have understood a hint.”

“I did not dare.”

“Why did you not dare? Why not? Who told you to look on and hold your tongue until it was too late?”

“I could not be sure that she loved me—and after, when you loved her, of course I could not do it.”

“You are a child! Perhaps she would have been happier with you. Every man has the right to conquer the woman he loves. And if you had said a word to me in the beginning, had given me the slightest sign, I would have remained away. Afterwards, naturally, it was too late.”

To me this conversation was painful.

“I don’t feel that way about it,” I said. “And you can be quite content, can you not? Then leave me in peace. Give my greetings to her, and I will call on you in Munich.”

“Will you not come to the wedding?”

“No, Muoth, that would not be in good taste. But—are you to be married in a church?”

“Naturally, in the cathedral.”

“I am glad of that. I have written something for the occasion, an organ composition. Don’t worry. It is very short.”

“You are a dear fellow! I don’t know why I have such bad luck with you.”

“I think you should call it good luck.”

“Well, we will not quarrel about that. I must go now. I have to move some things, and God knows what else. You will send the opera soon, won’t you? Send it to me, and I will myself take it to the director. Yes, and before I am married we two shall have one more evening to ourselves. Perhaps tomorrow? Good! Then, good-bye.”

There I was back in the same circle, and spent the night with thoughts a hundred times thought, and sorrows a hundred times endured.

The next day I went to a well-known organist and asked him to play my prelude for Muoth’s wedding. In the afternoon I went through my overture, for the last time with Teifer. In the evening I went to Heinrich’s hotel. There I found a room ready for us, with candlelight, a fire on the hearth, a table set with flowers, and Muoth waiting for me.

“So, my boy,” he said. “Now we will solemnize our farewell, more for me than for you. Gertrude sends her greetings to you. Let us drink her health.”

We filled our glasses and drank silently.

“And now we will think about ourselves. Youth is drawing to an end. Do you not feel that, too? It should be the most beautiful time in life, they say. I hope that is a swindle, like all these trite old maxims. The best must still be before us, else the whole thing is not worth the pains. When your opera is played, we will talk about it again.”

We ate comfortably, and drank a heavy Rhine wine. Then we lay back in our deep armchairs, with our cigars, and liqueurs, and for an hour, the past came back to him and to me. We looked at each other out of carefree, meditating eyes, and were pleased with each other. In hours like this, Heinrich was more friendly and tender than before. He well knew how transitory is such pleasure, and as long as the mood lasted, he watched over it and clung to it. Softly and smilingly he spoke of Munich, related little stories of the stage, and practised his old and fine art of sketching men and situations in short, illuminating words. Without malice, he so characterized his director, his father-in-law and others, keenly and brilliantly. I drank to him and said:

“Now, what do you say about me? Have you a type for people like me?”

“Oh, yes.” He nodded calmly and bent his dark eyes upon me. “You are entirely the type of the artist. An artist is not, as the Philistines think, a jolly fellow, who out of pure wild spirits flings down here and there a work of art. But instead he is a poor wretch, who suffers much, who is dying from too great an abundance, and, in order to live, must give of himself. The talk about happy artists amounts to nothing. That is pure Philistine babble!

That jolly Mozart kept himself up by means of champagne and suffered from lack of bread. And why Beethoven did not take his life in his youth, but instead wrote those master compositions, no man knows. A real artist must be unhappy in life. When he is hungry, and opens his sack, he finds nothing there but pearls.

Yes, if one seeks in life a little joy and warmth and sympathy, a dozen operas and trios and such things don’t help very much. That is true. So an hour with a friend, if one has one, some wine, and good-natured gossip

about this noteworthy life, that is about the best that one can have. How long a poor devil works but to make a beautiful rocket, the joy of which lasts but a minute! So we must lay by joy and peace of mind and good conscience that it may stretch to a happier hour."

I did not at all agree with his philosophy, but what did that matter? To me it was good to spend such an evening with a friend whom I had thought to have lost, and who, also, had not been certain of me. And I was reconciled in thinking back on the past time which lay so near and yet which inclosed my youth, and whose brightness and happiness could come to me no more.

We made an end to our evening in good season, and Muoth asked to accompany me to my home. I knew that he did not like to walk with me. My slow limp disturbed and annoyed him. He could make no sacrifices. And little things are so often the most difficult.

My little organ composition pleased me. It was a sort of prelude, but for me a farewell to the past, an appreciation and a blessing upon their marriage, and an echo of the friendly times with him and with her.

On the day of the wedding I went early to the church and, hidden by the organ, saw the ceremony. When the organist played my prelude, Gertrude looked up and nodded to her bridegroom. In all this time I had not seen her. In her white dress she looked taller and slimmer. With a serious grace she went to the altar, down the narrow aisle, bedecked with flowers, by the side of her proud, haughty husband. It would have looked less fine and splendid, had I—a cripple!—walked at her side.

CHAPTER VI

IT was seen to that I should not have long to think of the wedding of my friends, that my thoughts and desires and self-torture could not follow that course.

I had thought little of my mother in these days. To be sure, I knew from her last letter that, in her home, comfort and peace was not overpowering! But I had neither reason nor desire to mix in the quarrel of the two women. Rather I took a kind of malicious joy in letting it remain something in which my opinion was superfluous. Since then I had written without receiving an answer and had enough to do with the performance and revision of my opera to take any thought of Miss Schniebel. Then a letter came from my mother which astonished me by its unusual length. It was a painful accusation against her house companion, from which I learned in detail all the transgressions against the home, and against my mother's peace of mind.

It was difficult for her to write this to me and she did it with dignity and discretion. Only it was an open admission of her mistake in regard to her old friend and cousin. My mother not only confessed that the aversion of me and of my father to Miss Schniebel, was right; she was even ready to sell the house, if I still wished it, and to change her residence—anything to break away from this Schniebel woman.

"Perhaps it would be best if you came home yourself. Of course Lucy knows now what I think and what I plan, as she is spying, but our relations are too strained for me to be able to say to her what is necessary, in the right way. She will not understand my intimations that I would rather be alone again in my home, and that her presence is not necessary. I will not have an

open quarrel. I know she would scold and get ugly if I should ask her directly to go. Therefore, it would be better for you to come and arrange it. I will have no scandal, and she shall never want, but it must be said to her plainly and decidedly.”

I would have been ready to kill the dragon if my mother desired it. With great satisfaction I got ready to start, and left for my home. At my entrance into the old house I could see plainly that a new spirit reigned therein. The large, comfortable livingroom had a grim, unfriendly, oppressed and miserable appearance. Everything seemed carefully protected and preserved. A strip of carpet had been carefully placed on the old solid floor, a long funereal rag of cheap and odious stuff, to save the floor and to prevent noise. The old, square piano that for years had stood unused in the room was likewise clothed with a gloomy covering. Although my mother had prepared tea and pastry for my arrival and had tried to make everything pretty, still the place smelled of old-maid misery and benzine, so ineffaceably, that at my entrance I wrinkled up my nose at my mother. She laughed and understood at once.

Hardly was I seated in my chair, when the Dragon came in, and stumbled over the rug to do the honors herself to me. I inquired exhaustively about her health and apologized for the old house, which perhaps had not every convenience to which she was accustomed. Talking lightly over my mother’s head, she took upon herself the rôle of hostess, looked after the tea, and replied to my courtesy eagerly. She seemed flattered by it, yet made more anxious and mistrustful by my excessive friendliness. She scented betrayal, but was obliged herself to acquiesce in the agreeable key, and to display her whole assortment of somewhat antiquated courtesies. In the midst of this exchange of civilities, night came on, and we wished each other the best sleep and separated like diplomatists of the old school. Still I think that the witch, in spite of the good wishes, had little sleep that night. I rested contentedly, and my mother, after many nights spent in chagrin and depression, for the first time, went to sleep in her own house with her housewifely pride intact. At breakfast the next morning the very same polite game began. My mother, who the evening before had only listened quietly and intently, now took her part with animation. And we handled Miss Schniebel with such an art and delicacy that it drove her into a corner, and indeed saddened her. She well surmised

that the tone of my mother did not come from her heart. I almost felt sorry for her when she got uneasy and strove to make herself humble, and praised, and agreed with everything. But I thought of the dismissed housemaid, and of the piano, and of the dissatisfied cook who only stayed to please my mother. And when I thought of the embalmed piano, and of the whole sombre, petty atmosphere in my formerly happy home, I remained hard.

After we left the table I begged my mother to rest and I remained alone with the cousin.

"Do you sleep after lunch?" I asked politely. "If you do I must not disturb you. I had something to talk over with you, though there is no hurry."

"Oh, please! I never sleep in the daytime. I am not yet old enough for that, the Lord be praised. I am entirely at your service."

"Thank you. I merely wish to thank you for the friendship which you have shown my mother. She would have been very lonesome in this empty house. Now it will be changed, of course."

"What?" she cried, springing up. "What will be changed?"

"Oh, did you not know? Mother has finally decided to yield to my wishes and to come with me. Naturally we cannot let the house stand empty, so we will very soon put it up for sale."

She stared at me as if she did not grasp my meaning.

"Yes, I am sorry," I went on, regretfully. "For you, this time was one of great strain. You have taken care of the house so carefully and kindly that I cannot thank you enough."

"But I—what shall—where shall I—?"

"Oh, we must consider that. You must find some place to live. Of course there is no great hurry. You will be glad to have quiet again! "

She stood up. Her tone was polite but distinctly caustic.

"I don't know what to say," she began, bitterly. "Your mother, sir, promised me that I should live here. It was an agreement. And now when I have undertaken the house, and have helped your mother in everything—now I am to be put into the streets."

She began to cry and seemed to want to run away, but I caught her lean hand and put her back in her chair.

“It is not so bad,” I said, smiling. “That my mother wishes to move changes the situation a little. Besides, the sale of the house was not decided by my mother, but by me, for it belongs to me. My mother expects that you shall not restrict yourself in the situation of a new dwelling place and shall have no worry. You will be accommodated as before, and you will still, so to speak, be her guest.”

Now came the expected objections, the pride, the weeping, the haughty tone varying with a pleasant one, and at the end a complaisance, a yielding to wisdom. Then she went back to her room and was not seen at tea. My mother thought we should send it to her room, but I decided, after having all the politeness of my vengeance, to let Miss Schniebel remain in her comfort until evening, when punctually, at meal time, she appeared, very quiet and sullen.

“I must leave early in the morning for Cologne,” I said, during the dinner. “But should you need me at any time, Mother, I can quickly return.”

At that I looked not at my mother but at her cousin and she knew what it meant. My farewell to her was short and, on my side, almost hearty.

“Child,” said my mother, afterwards, “you did that very well and I must thank you for it. Will you not play me something from your opera?”

Of course there was no time for this, but we had broken through the armor, and between my old mother and me it began to be daylight. That was the best part of the affair. She now had faith in me. And I was happy to think of the little household I could open with her, and to think I was soon to issue from my long homelessness. I departed well satisfied, left best wishes for the old cousin, and immediately after my return began to call here and there where pretty, small houses were for rent.

Teifer helped me with this, and his sister often went with us. Both were glad for me, and looked forward to a happy life together with the two families.

In the meantime my opera had gone to Munich. After two months, shortened by the arrival of my mother, Muoth wrote me that it had been accepted, but could not be produced anymore that season. But it would be presented at the beginning of the next winter. So I had good news for the mother, and Teifer prepared a feast with festal dances when he heard it.

My mother wept when she entered our pretty little place with its garden, and thought it was not wise to be replanted when one is old. But I

found it very good, and so did the Teifers. Brigitte helped my mother as if it were a pleasure. Brigitte had few friends in the city, and was often left alone in the house while her brother was at the theater. Now she came to us often, and helped, not only by suggestions and practices, but also helped my mother and me to find our way up the steep path to a friendly quiet life together. She knew how to explain to my mother when I was in need of rest and must be alone. She was then at hand and took my place. And she explained to me many requirements and desires of my mother, of which I had never dreamed, and which my mother had not confided to me. So very soon there was a peaceful home for us, not as luxurious as our former home, but quite good enough for one who had not progressed any farther than I.

Now, also, my mother learned to know my music. She did not like all of it, and for the most part, was silent about it. But she saw and believed that it was not a pastime and play, but was earnest work. And upon the whole she found, to her astonishment, that the life of a musician, which she had considered pure rope-dancing and vaudeville, was really no less bourgeois than that life which my father had led.

We could speak more freely of him, and by degrees I heard a thousand anecdotes of him and of her, and of my childhood, and of the grandparents. The past, and my family were dear to me and interesting, and I felt I was no more outside the circle. And in return my mother learned to leave me alone, to have faith in me, when I shut myself up in my work or was irritable. She had been so content with my father, and the trials of the Schniebel had been hard for her, so now she put her confidence in me, and gradually ceased to talk of her age and her loneliness.

In all this comfort and modest happiness the feeling of sorrow and of insufficiency, in which I had so long lived, was sunk. But it did not sink into the bottomless deep; rather it reposed, unlost, in my innermost soul. Many a night it looked out at me questioningly, and maintained its right. The farther the past seemed to fade, the clearer appeared the picture of my love and of my sorrow. That remained with me and was my quiet admonisher.

Many times before had I thought to know what love is. In my youth in which I foolishly wandered with the pretty, superficial Liddy, I thought to know love. Then again when I first saw Gertrude, and felt that she was the answer to my questionings and the solace for my obscure desires. Then

again when pain began, and out of the friendship and light grew suffering and darkness. And, finally, when she was lost to me. But the love remained and was always with me, and I knew that never again would I follow a woman with desire, nor long for the kiss of a woman's lips, since I had Gertrude enshrined in my heart.

Her father, whom I sometimes visited, seemed to know of my feeling for her. He asked me for a copy of the prelude which I had written for her wedding, and showed a silent regard for me. He must have felt how I wanted to hear about her and how I hesitated to ask, and he shared many of her letters with me. In them there was, frequently, mention of me, and especially of my opera. She wrote that a good singer had been found for the soprano rôle, and that she was so pleased that at last she was to hear the whole work, parts of which she knew so intimately. She was also glad that I had my mother with me. What she wrote about Muoth, I did not know.

My life ran along smoothly; the currents of the deeps no longer drew me in nor carried me out. I was working on a mass and had an oratorio in my mind, although for that I had no words. When I necessarily had to think of my opera, it seemed to me like a foreign world. My music was following a new course. It was becoming simple, and less fiery; it desired to comfort and not to arouse.

During this time the sister of Teifer meant much to me. We saw each other almost daily. We read, played, and walked together; we had picnics and trips together. Only in summer, when I could not burden people on their vacation trips, we were separated a few weeks. The Teifers walked through the Tyrol again, crossed the Arlburg, and sent little boxes filled with edelweiss. I had taken my mother to some of her relatives in North Germany, where she had been invited for years, and I had gone to the North Sea. There, day and night, I heard the old song of the sea, and in the fresh, salt air pursued my thoughts and melodies. There for the first time, I found heart to write to Gertrude in Munich—not to the wife of Muoth, but rather to my friend Gertrude, to whom I confided my music and my dreams. Perhaps she would be pleased; perhaps some comfort and friendly words would do her good, I thought. For in my very heart I could but distrust my friend, Muoth, and I always felt a certain uneasiness for Gertrude. I knew him too well, that self-willed melancholy temperament, accustomed to live in his moods, and never to make any sacrifice; suffering and driven by an

overpowering force, and looking at his own life, in its critical hours, as a tragedy. If this was truly an illness, this state of loneliness and misunderstanding—as the good Lohe had asserted—then Muoth suffered from this illness more than anyone else.

But I heard nothing from him. He never wrote letters. Gertrude, too, answered me with only a short thank you, and inviting me to come to Munich early in the autumn, when, directly with the beginning of the season, my opera would be rehearsed.

The first of September, when we had all returned to the city, and were leading our habitual lives, we came together one evening in my house, to look through my work of the summer. The chief thing was a little lyrical composition for two violins and the piano. We played that. Brigitte Teifer was at the piano. From over my manuscript I could see her head with its heavy crown of blond braids, whose ends gleamed like gold in the candlelight. Her brother stood next to her and played the first violin. It was simple music, gently lamenting and fading away like a summer night, neither happy nor sad, but floating in the air in lost tunes, like a cloud consumed by fire after the sun has set. That composition pleased the Teifers, especially Brigitte. She was seldom given to saying anything about my music, but repressed herself in a kind of maidenly respect, and only looked at me wonderingly, for she considered me a great master. Today she took courage and made known her distinct pleasure. She glanced at me ardently out of her bright, blue eyes and nodded, until the light danced upon her blond braids. She was so pretty, almost a beauty!

To give her pleasure, I took the piano score and wrote over the notes a dedication—"To my friend, Brigitte Teifer,"—and gave it back to her. "That shall always remain above the little song," I said to her gallantly and paid her some compliments. She read the dedication, slowly flushed, held out her little, forceful hand, and immediately her eyes were full of tears.

"Is it really true?" she said, softly.

"It is, indeed," I laughed. "And I think the little song really belongs to you."

The glance from her eyes filled with tears, astonished me. It was so serious and womanly. Then I paid no more attention to it. Teifer put his violin away, and my mother, knowing well his requirements, poured some wine into the glasses. The conversation became gay. We wrangled about a

new opera that had been produced a few weeks before, and the little incident with Brigitte first occurred to me later in the evening as they took their departure, and she looked again in my eyes with a strange unrest.

In Munich, in the meanwhile, the rehearsals of my opera began. As the principal rôle was in the hands of Muoth, and as Gertrude had praised the soprano, the orchestra and the chorus were my main concern. I left my mother to the care of the friends and started for Munich.

The morning after my arrival I went through the beautiful, broad streets to Schwabing, to the quiet house where Muoth lived. I had forgotten the opera completely. I thought only of him and of Gertrude and of how I would find them. The carriage stopped before a house that stood among green trees, in a shady street. Golden maple leaves were rustling on both sides of the path to the house. I went in with a feeling of oppression. The house gave a comfortable, rich effect. A servant helped me off with my coat.

In the large drawingroom, into which I was shown, I recognized two of the old paintings which had been brought from the Imthor house. On another wall hung a new portrait of Muoth, painted in Munich. And while I was looking at it, Gertrude came in. My heart almost stopped beating when, after so long a time, I looked into her eyes. In the old friendly way, she cordially gave me her hand, but smiled out of a changed face—the sterner, matured face of a woman.

“Is everything all right?” she asked me. “You have become older, but you look well. We have waited for you a long time.”

She inquired about all the friends, about her father, about my mother, and as she grew interested and forgot the first embarrassment she looked as she had formerly. All of a sudden my surroundings vanished, and I talked to her as to my one good friend. I told her of my summer at the sea, of my work, of the Teifers, and even of poor Miss Schniebel.

Then she exclaimed, “Now your opera is to be played! How happy you must be! ”

“Yes,” I said, “but I am more happy to think I will hear you sing again.”

She nodded to me. “I, too, am happy. I sing a good deal but only for myself. We will sing all your songs. They are always by me, and never have a chance to get dusty. Stay for lunch. My husband must come soon, and afterwards he can go with you to the Director.”

We went into the music room. I sat at the piano. And she sang my songs of other times so that I became quiet and had great difficulty to remain cheerful. Her voice had grown richer and fuller, but was as delicate and spontaneous as ever, and filled my heart with the remembrance of the best days of my life. I sat over the keys as one bewildered and played softly the old notes, and for an instant, listening with eyes closed, I could not distinguish between present and past. Did she not belong to me and to my life? Were we not as brother and sister to each other—as friends? Truly with Muoth, she would not have sung so!

After a while we sat happily talking, without saying much to each other, for we perceived that between us no explanation was required. How it was with her, and how it was between her and her husband, I did not think anymore. I would see that later for myself. At all events she had not swerved from her path, and had not become untrue to herself. And if it was not well with her, and if she had a burden to bear, she bore it nobly and without bitterness.

After an hour Heinrich came. He had already heard of my arrival. He began immediately to speak of the opera, which seemed to be more important to every one than to me. I asked him how he liked Munich and how things were going.

"As usual," he said. "The Public does not like me, because it feels that its opinion matters little to me. I am seldom liked at my first appearance. First, I must take hold of the people by carrying them along with me. So I have succeeded without being liked. Many times, too, of course, I sing badly. I must confess that myself. But this opera will be a success. You can count upon that—both for you and for me. Today we will go to the Director. Tomorrow, we will invite the soprano and whomever else you desire, for lunch. Tomorrow, early, is a rehearsal of the orchestra. You will be pleased with it."

At the table I observed that he was extremely polite to Gertrude. That did not please me. And so it continued the whole time, as long as I was in Munich, and saw them both daily. They were a very handsome couple and made an impression wherever they went. But they were formal to each other, and I thought to myself that only the pride and spiritual superiority of Gertrude had the power to change his indifference into a form of courtesy and dignity. She seemed to have but awakened from her passion for this

handsome creature, and still to hope for a return of the lost, departed ardor. At all events it was she who demanded from him this civility. She was too refined and good to play, even before friends, the rôle of a disappointed, disillusioned woman, and to show her secret sorrows to anyone, even if she could not conceal them from me. But I gave her no glance, no sign of comprehension or pity. Throughout, we spoke and acted as if her marriage were without shadow. How long this situation would last was rather doubtful, and depended wholly upon Muoth whose incalculability I saw, for the first time, restrained by a woman. I was grieved for both, although I was not surprised to find things so. They both had had their love and lived their passion. Now they must either learn to renounce and to think of the happy time in sorrow or find the way to a new happiness and to a new love. Perhaps a child would draw them together, not back into the garden of their glowing love, but rather to a new, fine purpose—mutually to do and to live for each other. Gertrude had the strength and the spirituality to do that, I knew. But whether Heinrich would find it—that I could not know. It grieved me that the big, lofty storm of their first ardor and joy in each other was over. But I was glad that their good mien, not only before other people, but also before each other, had proved their fineness and dignity.

I could not accept the invitation of Muoth to stay at his home, and he did not urge me. I was there daily, and it did me good to see that Gertrude liked to have me come and liked to sing to my accompaniment. So I not only took, but gave.

The production of the opera was set for December. I remained there two weeks, took part in all the orchestra rehearsals, found that I must cut here and adapt there, but saw that the work was in good hands. It was wonderful to me to see the singers, the violinists, the flutes, the Kapellmeister and chorus busy on my work, which had become strange to me, and was a breathing being that no longer belonged to me.

“Only wait,” said Heinrich Muoth, now and then, “you’ll have to breathe the cursed air of publicity. Sometimes, I almost wish for you that it will bring you no success. For then you will have the pack of hounds after you. Then you will have to trade in locks of your hair, and in autographs, and you will see how tasteful and desirable is the adoration of the herd. Already every one is speaking of your lameness. Something like that makes one popular! ”

After the necessary experiments and tests, I departed, having first agreed to return before the production. Teifer had no end of questions to ask about the performances, and thought of a hundred separate things in the orchestra, that I had hardly taken into consideration. And he awaited the event with greater excitement and uneasiness than I myself. When I invited him and his sister to be my guests at the first performance, he jumped for joy. On the contrary my mother did not wish to take the journey and to have the excitement. I was rather glad of this. Gradually I felt the strain, and in the evenings I had to take a glass of red wine to make me sleep.

Winter came early. And the garden of our little house lay deeply buried under the snow, the morning Teifer and his sister came for me in the carriage. My mother waved to us from the window, the carriage started, and Teifer, out of his voluminous muffler, burst into a song. On the whole long trip he was like a child who takes a journey to celebrate Christmas. Brigitte showed her excitement in a quieter satisfaction. I was glad to have their company, for my calm was gone and I went to meet the event of the next few days like a condemned person.

Muoth, who met us at the station, noticed this immediately.

"You have stage fright, boy," he laughed, amused. "Thank God for that. You are, after all, just a musician, not a philosopher."

He seemed to be right, for my excitement lasted until the performance, and I did not sleep a single night.

Of us all only Muoth was calm. Teifer burned with impatience. He came to each rehearsal, and there was no end to his criticisms. Bent over, and keenly watching, he sat next to me in the rehearsals. In the difficult places he beat time loudly with his fist, and praised or disapproved with his head.

"There's a flute missing," he cried so loudly at the first rehearsal of the orchestra that the Director looked around at him, angrily.

"We have had to strike that out," I said, smiling.

"The flutes? Struck out? Why that? Such an idiocy! Be careful or they'll spoil the whole overture for you."

I had to laugh and hold him back by strength. He threw himself into the matter with such wildness. But at his favorite place in the overture, where the violas and 'cellos enter, he leaned back with his eyes closed, and

clasped my hand convulsively, and whispered, almost ashamed, “Yes, that almost makes me cry. It is great! ”

I had not yet heard the soprano rôle sung. Now it was unfamiliar and sad to hear it sung for the first time by a strange voice. The singer did it well, and I thanked her, but in my heart I thought of those autumn afternoons, when Gertrude had sung the words. And I had a feeling, an unconfessed, sad unpleasantness, as if I had given away a precious possession, and now for the first time saw it in strange hands.

I saw little of Gertrude in these days. She observed my fright, smiled, and left me alone. With the Teifers, I had made a call on her. With a calm tenderness she had taken possession of Brigitte who looked with wonder on the beautiful, distinguished woman. After that the girl raved about Gertrude and sang her praises, in which the brother joined.

I can hardly remember the days before the production. Everything in me seemed turned upside down. Then there were other difficulties. One singer got hoarse; another was offended to have such a small rôle, and acted so badly at the last rehearsal that the Director became more and more formal and frigid, especially when I had anything to say. Muoth stood by me opportunely, smiling calmly at the tumult. In this situation he was worth more to me than the good Teifer, who ran here and there like a demon and found fault with everything. Brigitte looked at me with awe, though, also, with pity, when we sat together in the hotel, in the calmer hours, oppressed and almost silent.

Well, the days passed, and the evening of the opera came. While the house was filling, I stood behind the scenes without doing or being able to suggest the slightest thing.

“Will you have a glass of wine?” Muoth asked, sympathetically.

“No,” I answered. “Does it not excite you?”

“What? The spectacle out there? It’s always like that.”

“I mean the wine.”

“Oh! No, it quiets me. I always take a glass or two when I am going to act. But, go now—it’s time.”

An attendant showed me into a box where I met Gertrude and both Teifers and a high official of the Theater Directors. They greeted me, smiling. Almost directly we heard the signal. Gertrude looked at me encouragingly and nodded. Teifer, who sat behind me, gripped my arm and

pressed it desperately. The house became dark, and from the depths my overture came solemnly up to me. Then I grew quieter.

And now my opera began. It sounded familiar to me and yet strange. It seemed to need nothing of me but to have a life of its own.

The desire and sorrow of the days gone by; the hope and sleepless nights; the suffering and longing of that time were now released, and, disguised, stood facing me. The inspiration of secret hours sounded unconfined, even wooing, in that house of a thousand strange hearts. Muoth came, commenced with his beautiful strength, gave generously of himself, and sang with his deep, unwilling passion. And the soprano answered him in high, soaring, luminous tones. Then came a place which I remembered exactly as I had heard it from Gertrude. It was my homage to her, a tender confession of my love. I turned my glance to her and looked into her quiet, pure eyes, which understood me, and answered me kindly. And in an instant the whole fragrance of my youth came over me like the scent of ripe fruit.

After that I was calm, and looked and listened as if I were merely a visitor. Applause sounded about me. The singers appeared before the curtain and bowed. There were loud calls for Muoth, and he smiled cooly into the illuminated house. I was also urged to appear. But I was quite too stupefied and had no desire to limp out of my grateful obscurity.

Teifer smiled at me like the morning sun, and even the high director of the opera shook both my hands. A banquet was prepared. But it would have been given in case of a failure! We drove away, Gertrude with her husband, I with the Teifers. On the short drive, Brigitte, although she had said no word, began suddenly to weep. At first she fought against it and wanted to withstand it, but then she held her hands before her face and let the tears run down. I couldn’t say anything, and was astonished that Teifer was silent and asked no questions. He put his arm around her and murmured to her, kindly and comfortingly, as he would quiet a child.

Afterwards came the handshakings, and the good wishes, and the toasts. Muoth winked at me, ironically. Someone asked urgently about my next work, and was astonished when I said it was to be an oratorio. Then they drank to my next opera, which to this day is unwritten.

It was late in the evening, when we had broken away and had gone back to our hotel, before I could speak to Teifer and ask what was the trouble with his sister, and why she wept. She herself had been in bed a

long time. My friend looked at me somewhat wonderingly, almost as if he would test me. Then he shook his head and whistled until I questioned him again.

“You are indeed a goose, a blind one,” he said, reproachfully. “Have you, then, never seen?”

“No,” I said with a growing presentiment of the truth.

“Well, I think now I will tell you. The child has loved you for a long time. Naturally she has never said a word to me, anymore than to you. But I have noticed it, and to be candid, I should have been overjoyed if something had come of it.”

“Oh, you have hurt me! ” I cried, filled with sorrow. “But what was it tonight?”

“That she cried? You are a child! Do you think we did not see?”

“See? What?”

“Good heaven! You do not need to tell me a word, and it is right that you never have. But then you should not so have looked at the wife of Muoth. For now we understand.”

I did not ask him to keep my secret. I knew it was safe. He gently laid his hand on my shoulder.

“I can now think of all sorts of things, friend, that during these years you have endured in silence. It came to me once, too. We will now bravely hang together and compose beautiful music, will we not? And see that the child is comforted. There, give me your hand. It has been beautiful. Goodbye until we are at home. I start with the child early in the morning.”

With that we separated. But after a few seconds he came running back and said, pleadingly: “But you must have the flutes for the next performance, won’t you?”

So ended the day of joy and each of us lay long awake—thinking. I thought of Brigitte. She had been so near to me all this time. And I had thought of her as a comrade, wished her to be just a comrade, as Gertrude thought of me. And as she had divined my love for another, she felt as I had felt when I noticed the letter at Muoth’s—and loaded my revolver. And it made me so sad that I could not smile over it.

The days during which I remained in Munich I spent mostly with the Muoths. There was no more harmony, like that of the first afternoon when we three had first sung and played together. But in the afterglow of the

production there was a silent understanding, and incidentally, it gave a new light between Gertrude and Muoth.

When I left them I stood for a while outside and looked upon the quiet house in the bare winter trees. I hoped to return there many times, and gladly would I have resigned my little peace and happiness to help the two within to come to each other again and forever.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER my return, as Heinrich had prophesied, I was hailed as successful, with many displeasing and absurd consequences. I shifted the business from my own shoulders to those of an agent. But there were visits, journalists, and stupid letters, and it took a little time for me to become accustomed to the small burdens of sudden fame and to recover from the first disillusions. The people enforced their right to a public person in most remarkable ways; for there is no distinction between genius, poet, and highwayman.

One will have a picture; the other, an autograph; the third begs for money. Every young student sends on his work, flatters prodigiously, and asks for an opinion. And if one does answer and gives an honest opinion, the same admirer immediately becomes rude, bitter and revengeful.

The magazines desire a photograph; the journalists tell of one's life, one's ancestry, one's appearance. Schoolmates recall themselves to remembrance; and distant relations have said for years that their cousin would some time be famous!

Among the letters of this sort which caused me embarrassment and distress, was one from Miss Schniebel, which amused us; and one from someone of whom I had not thought for a long time. It was the pretty Liddy who wrote to me, without making mention of our toboggan journey, but quite in the tone of an old friend. She had married a music teacher in her hometown. She gave me her address, that I might send her very soon all of my compositions with a pretty dedication to her. She enclosed her picture, which clearly showed her familiar features aged and coarsened. As soon as I could I sent her a friendly answer.

Still all these little things are hardly remembered and leave no traces. The good and worthy fruits of my success, as the acquaintance with noble and fine men, who really had music in their hearts and not only on their lips, still do not belong to my real life, which, as before, has remained in peace, and has little changed. There is left for me to tell what changes Fate has brought to my nearest friends.

Old Mr. Imthor did not have as much company as when Gertrude was with him. But every three weeks, in his house of the old paintings, he gave an evening of selected chamber music which I attended regularly. Sometimes I took Teifer with me. But Mr. Imthor insisted that I visit him besides. So, many times, I went early in the evening, during his favorite hour. I found him in the simple library where hung a picture of Gertrude. And gradually between the old man and me there came a firm understanding, and to each a need for speech. So, often we talked of the two who most filled the hearts of both of us.

I told him of Munich, and I even was not silent of the impression I had received in regard to the relationship between Gertrude and Muoth. He nodded.

“Perhaps, it will be all right,” he said, sighing, “but we can do nothing. I will be glad for the summer, when, for two months, I can have the child with me. I visit her seldom in Munich. I don’t like to go. She is so brave that I would not disturb her or touch her in any way.”

Gertrude’s letters did not bring any news. But when at Easter she came to visit her father and called on us in our little home, she looked thin and spent. And though she was friendly and tried to conceal it, I often saw in her eyes, grown so serious, a singular hopelessness. I must play for her my new music! But when I begged her to sing something, she shook her head and looked at me, beseechingly.

“Some other time,” she said, unsteadily.

We all saw that things were not well with her, and her father told me afterwards that he had proposed that she stay with him, but she would not accept that.

“She loves him,” I said. He shrugged his shoulders, and looked at me, troubled. “Oh, I do not know. Who can understand? But she said that on his own account she wished to remain with him, for he was so disturbed and

unhappy, and needed her more than he himself knew. He told her nothing but it was written on his face."

Then the voice of the old man was lowered, and he said very softly, and ashamed, "She thinks he drinks."

"He has always done that a little," I said, comfortingly, "but I have never seen him drunk. He looks after himself. He is a nervous man who hasn't himself under control, but, in his way, perhaps suffers more than he makes others suffer."

How terribly those two glorious, noble people suffered in silence, none of us knew. I do not believe that at any time they ceased to love each other. But in the very roots of their lives, they did not belong together. They met only under excitement, and in the glamour of intense hours. That clear, earnest acceptance of life, that calm breath in the understanding of one's own individuality, Muoth never knew. And Gertrude could only endure and pity his storms and broodings, his falls and his retrievals, and his eternal thirst after self-forgetfulness and excitement. She could not change these and she could not share them. So they loved each other and yet never wholly came together. And though he saw his unspoken hope that he might gain peace and comfort through Gertrude come to naught, so, she too had to look on and suffer that her work and her will were in vain, and that she could neither comfort nor save him. Thus the secret dream and ardent desire of both were destroyed. It was only by sacrifice and forbearance that they remained together. It was brave of them to do that.

I first saw Heinrich again in the summer when he brought Gertrude to her father. He was gentle and considerate with her and with me, more so than I had ever seen him. And I observed that he feared to lose her, and that he would not be able to bear that loss. But she was tired and desired nothing but rest and quiet days in order to find herself again, and again to win strength and courage. We spent a quiet evening together in our garden. Gertrude sat between my mother and Brigitte whose hand she held. Heinrich walked softly up and down between the roses. And Teifer and I played a violin sonata upon the terrace. It all remains in my soul as an ineffaceable picture—how Gertrude rested quietly in the peace of the hour, and how Brigitte bent reverently towards the beautiful suffering woman, and how Heinrich, with shoulders bent, walked back and forth in the

shadows and listened. Afterwards he said to me with gentle banter, but with sad eyes:

"Look at those three women sitting by one another. And the only one of them all who seems happy is your mother. We must see that we also become old."

Then we left one another. Muoth went alone to Bayreuth; Gertrude with her father to the mountains; the Teifers to their annual walking tour; and I with my mother to the North Sea. There I often walked along the shore and listened to the sea, and thought the same as I had years before in my first youth; thought with wonder and fear of the sad, foolish chaos of life—that love can be vain, and that people who wish one another well, can yet pass by one another with the desire to help but unable to do so. It was all as in a troubled nightmare. And I often thought of Muoth's words about youth and age, and was curious whether life would ever become simple and clear to me. My mother smiled when I alluded to this and seemed pleased. And she reminded me, to my shame, of my good friend, Teifer, who was not old and yet old enough to have come to know his lot, and who lived untroubled as a child with a Mozart melody on his lips. It was not a question of age. That I saw clearly. Perhaps our sorrow and lack of understanding was only that illness of which Mr. Lohe had first spoken to me. Or was he also, in his way, but a child like Teifer?

Well, whether it was this or that, my thinking and brooding did not change it. When music stirred in my soul then I understood all without words. I felt clear harmony in the depths of all life, and believed that thought and order were concealed in all that was. If it was all a mistake, I lived in that thought and was happy in it.

Perhaps it would have been better if Gertrude had not been separated for the summer from her husband. She began indeed to recover, and in the autumn, when I saw her after her trip, truly looked strong, and better able to resist. But the hopes which we had built upon this strength were deceptive. Gertrude had been happy during the few months with her father. She could give up to her need for rest, and to the joy of breathing quietly without a daily struggle, and when she was tired out, to go to sleep as soon as she lay down. But now it showed that she was more deeply exhausted than we had believed, or than she herself had known. For now, when Muoth was soon to

come for her, she fell into a terrified despair, could not sleep, and begged her father imploringly to keep her with him for a longer time.

Naturally, Mr. Imthor was much shocked, for he had believed that with new strength and new purpose she would be glad to return to Muoth. But he did not oppose her, and only cautiously laid before her the idea of a longer visit, preparatory to a later and final separation. But she resisted this with great vehemence.

"But I love him," she cried, passionately, "and will never be unfaithful to him. It is only so difficult to live with him! I will just have a little longer rest, a few months, perhaps, until I gain more courage."

The old man sought to quiet her and had nothing to say against this, indeed wanted to keep his child with him a while longer. He wrote to Muoth that Gertrude was still ill and wished to remain a little longer. Unfortunately Muoth did not easily accept this report. During this time of separation the desire for his wife had become strong. He had looked forward with joy to seeing her, and was full of good resolves to win her wholly again, and to make her his own.

Now Mr. Imthor's letter came as a bitter disappointment. He wrote back at once, raging, and full of suspicion against his father-in-law. He thought that Mr. Imthor had worked against him, and that he desired a dissolution of their marriage. He demanded an immediate interview with Gertrude, for he hoped surely to prevail upon her to return. Mr. Imthor came to me with the letter, and we considered for a long time what should be done. It seemed better to us both that an interview between the two should be avoided at this time, for quite clearly Gertrude could bear no excitement. Mr. Imthor was full of anxiety and begged me to go to Muoth himself, and to plead with him that for a little while he should leave Gertrude in peace. Now, I realize that I should have done that. But at that time I had doubts and thought it rather dangerous for me to let my friend know that I had the confidence of his father-in-law in regard to things in his life which he himself had not cared to tell me. So I refused, and there was nothing to do but for the old man to write a letter, which, naturally, did not make matters better.

On the contrary, Muoth came without announcement and terrified us all by the hardly curbed passion of his love and of his rage. Gertrude, who knew naught of this short exchange of letters, and who was not expecting him, was wholly surprised and stupefied by his choleric excitement. There

was a scene of which I could learn little. I only know Muoth begged Gertrude to return with him to Munich. She declared that she was ready to go if it must be, but pleaded that she might be left a little longer with her father, for she was tired and needed the rest. Then he bitterly exclaimed that, urged on by her father, she wished to forsake him, and at her gentle avowals he became more suspicious, and was so furious in his rage that he *commanded* her to return to him.

Then her pride was aroused. She was very quiet but she refused to listen to him any longer, and declared she would remain until autumn. The morning after this scene there was a kind of reconciliation, and Muoth, ashamed and repentant, granted her wishes. But he left without speaking to me.

When I heard this I was frightened, and saw the trouble ahead, that I had feared from the beginning. After the ugly and foolish scene, I thought to myself, he would not, for a long time, find the composure and courage for a return. And in the meantime he was in danger of becoming wild, and, in spite of all his desires, of growing more distant. Alone in the house, in which for a time he had been happy, he would not be able to endure it, and he would curse and drink, even, perhaps, turn again to other women, who had always run after him.

For a while he was silent. Then he wrote to Gertrude and begged once again her forgiveness. She answered him, and with pity and tenderness and friendliness, urged him to have patience.

I saw her little during this time. Sometimes I called on her to try to induce her to sing, but she resolutely shook her head, although I often found her at the piano. To me it was significant and unnatural to find this beautiful, proud woman, whom I had always seen full of strength, cheerfulness and inner peace, now so timid and so shaken in the very elements of her feeling.

Many times she came to see my mother, asked cordially after our health, and for a little while sat near the old lady on the big sofa and tried to talk. And with breaking heart, I listened and saw with what difficulty she even smiled. The appearances were strictly observed, as if I did not know anything of her sorrow, but thought it was all only nervousness and physical weakness.

I could hardly look into her eyes, in which the unbearable grief, of which I must pretend to know nothing, was so clearly written. And we talked and lived and passed by each other as though all were as it had been, but were ashamed, and wavered before each other. And in the midst of this sad confusion of sorrow, I was sometimes seized with a sudden fever of remonstrance. I felt that her heart no longer belonged to her husband, but was free, and that it was my right once more not to let her get lost, but to win her for myself and to protect her in my heart from all storm and sorrow.

Then I locked myself in my room, played the ardent, wooing music of my opera, which I suddenly again lived and understood; and through the fiery night I lay demanding and thirsting, and suffered once more all the absurd, sensitive torture of my youth, and of unfulfilled desires. And it was no less terrible than before, when I had first longed for her, and had given her that unforgettable kiss. That flamed once more on my lips and burned to ashes the quiet and resignation of years.

Only in the presence of Gertrude did the flames die down. Even if I had been stupid and unworthy enough to follow my longings, and without consideration for her husband, who was my friend, to woo her heart, still under the look of this suffering, tender, restrained woman, obstinately bearing her pain, I would have been ashamed to approach her except with pity and cautious consideration. Then, too, the more she suffered, and, perhaps, lost in hope, the prouder and more unapproachable she became. She carried herself so erect, and her fine head, with its hair of golden brown, so proudly and nobly! And never by the slightest manner would she permit us to come near to her and try to help her.

These long, silent weeks were, perhaps, the most difficult in my life. Gertrude here, near to me, and yet so far from me, and no way to her who wished to remain alone. And Brigitte, whose love for me I knew, and with whom, after a long avoidance, I continued in passable friendship. And between us all, my old mother, who saw us suffer, who had a presentiment of everything, and who did not dare to say anything, because I myself was stubbornly silent, and could not make myself say a word about my feelings. But the hardest of all was the mad standing by—the hopeless conviction that my dearest friend was going towards destruction while I did not dare to notice it or to seem to know about it.

Gertrude’s father suffered the most of all. Since I had met him years before—a wise, vigorous, happy, old gentleman, he had become older, and changed, spoke low and unsteadily, made no more jokes, and appeared full of care and misery.

One day in November I went to see him, more to hear the news and obtain some hope than to afford him any comforting companionship. He received me in his library, gave me one of his expensive cigars, and began the conversation in an optimistic, light tone, which was difficult for him and which he soon dropped. With a troubled smile, he looked at me, and said:

“You ask how things are? Bad, dear man, bad! The child has borne more than we know, else it would not be so hard for her. I am absolutely in favor of a separation, but she will not hear of it. She loves him, at least she says so, and is afraid, on his account. That is not right. She is ill—the child. She closes her eyes; she will look at nothing and only thinks it must grow better if she can but wait and be left in peace. That is nervousness, naturally, but she seems to be really ill. Only think—many times she fears, indeed, that her husband might be brutal to her if she goes back to him. And still she thinks she loves him! ”

He did not seem to understand her and looked at things so helplessly. To me her trouble was quite comprehensible. It was a battle between love and pride. She did not fear to be struck by him—she feared she could no longer respect him. And in this anguished waiting she hoped to gain strength. She had mastered him and exiled him, but in so doing had so exhausted herself that she no more trusted her own strength. That was her illness. She longed for him and feared to lose him entirely, if this new attempt for a reconciliation did not succeed. I saw only too clearly how useless and deluded my bold dream of love had been. Gertrude loved her husband and would never belong to another.

Mr. Imthor refrained from talking about Muoth, for he knew I was his friend. But he hated him, and could not understand how he could so have bewitched Gertrude. He thought of him as of a bad sorcerer, who imprisons the innocents, and never releases them. Well, passion is ever an inexplicable riddle, and it is certain that life does not spare its most beautiful children—that frequently the most noble men must honestly love that which will send them to destruction.

In this troubled time, a short note from Muoth seemed to me like a release. He wrote:

"Dear Kuhn:

"Your opera is now being played everywhere—perhaps better than here. It would be fine if you could come over to a rehearsal next week, for I sing twice. You know my life is ill and I am here alone. So you could live with me, with no fear of inconvenience. But don't bring anyone with you,

"Faithfully,

"YOUR MUOTH."

He so seldom wrote letters and never an unnecessary one, that I immediately resolved to go. He must have need of me. For an instant I had the impulse to share it with Gertrude. Perhaps this was just the right opportunity to break the ban; perhaps she would send a letter with me or a good word for him; perhaps summon him; or, perhaps, even come with me, herself. It was only a sudden impulse, and I did not carry it out. I called upon her father before my departure.

It was a dismal, damp, and stormy late autumn. From Munich, now and then, one could see the mountains nearby, covered with fresh snow. The city was overcast and it rained. I went immediately to Muoth's house. There everything was unchanged—the same servants, the same rooms, the same place for the furniture. Only everything looked strange and empty. The flowers for which Gertrude had so much cared were missing. Muoth was not there. The servant showed me into my room and helped me to unpack. I changed my clothes and went into the music room to wait for the master of the house. Outside the double windows I heard the trees rustle, and I had time to think of the past. The longer I sat there and looked at the pictures and fingered the books, the sadder grew my heart, as there seemed no more help for this house. Unwillingly I sat at the piano in order to rid myself of these useless thoughts. And I played my wedding prelude, as if, perhaps, by it, I might call back the good that had been. At last I heard rapid, heavy footsteps approaching, and Heinrich Muoth came in. He took my hand and looked at me, wearily.

"Forgive me," he said, "I was detained at the theater. You know I sing tonight. Shall we eat now?"

He walked ahead and I observed that he had changed. He was detached and indifferent; he talked only about the theater, and seemed to desire no other conversation. Only after lunch, when silent and almost embarrassed, we sat opposite each other on the yellow cane chairs, he unexpectedly said:

"It is good of you to have come. I will make extra efforts for tonight."

"Thank you," I answered. "You do not seem well."

"Don't you think so? Ah, but we will be amused! I am a grass widower, you know."

"Yes."

He looked aside.

"Did you hear any news of Gertrude?"

"Nothing special. She is still very nervous and does not sleep well."

"Yes—but let's not talk about that. She is in good hands."

He rose and walked through the room. He appeared to have something else to say. He looked at me distrustfully, as if he would try me and test me. Then he laughed and left it unsaid.

"Lotte has appeared again," he started anew.

"Lotte?"

"Yes, the very Lotte who went to you and complained of me. She is here and married, but it seems she is still interested in me. She was here to make me a real visit."

He looked at me craftily and laughed when he saw me start.

"Did you receive her?" I asked hesitatingly.

"Ah, how you trust me! No, honored sir, I sent her away. But forgive me. I talk foolishness. I am so damned tired! And tonight I have to sing. If you don't mind I think I'll lie down and take a nap."

"Good, Heinrich. Do rest, and I'll take a drive about the city. Will you have them call a carriage?"

I could not sit quietly in this house and listen to the wind in the trees. I drove about the city, without any destination, and went into the old picture gallery. There, for about half an hour I looked at the old paintings in the dim, gray light. Then it was time for closing, and I didn't know anything better to do than to read the newspapers in a café and to look through the high windows on to the rainy streets. I decided at any price to break through this reserve and to talk openly with Heinrich. When I returned I found him smiling and in good humor.

"I only needed sleep," he said, gayly. "Now I feel quite fresh again. You must play me something, won't you? The Prelude, if you will be so good."

Surprised and delighted to see him so quickly changed, I did as he desired, and after the playing, as usual, he praised it with irony and a gentle scepticism. But he allowed his many moods to have play and completely won my heart again. I recalled the first days of our friendship, and as we left the house together in the evening, I said:

"You have no dog now?"

"No—Gertrude did not like him."

We went in silence to the theater. I greeted the Kapellmeister, and let him assign me to a seat. Again I listened to the well-known music. It was quite different than the last time. I sat alone in my box. Gertrude was away. And he who played and sang was a changed person. He sang with passion and power. The public seemed to like him in this rôle, and from the beginning applauded him heartily. But to me his ardor seemed forced, and his voice ragged, almost hoarse. In the first intermission, I went down to see him. He sat as usual in his dressing room and drank champagne. And in the few words which we exchanged his eyes were unsteady like those of a drunkard. Afterwards, while Muoth was dressing, I sought the Director.

"Tell me," I begged him, "is Muoth ill? He seems to me only to keep up with champagne. You know, he is my friend."

The man looked at me questioningly.

"I do not know whether he is ill or not. But it is evident that he is going to pieces. Many times he comes on the stage almost drunk. He always drank a glass of wine before each act, but now he drinks a whole bottle. If you would talk to him—but it will do little good! Muoth is doing it purposely."

Muoth called me and we went to the nearest restaurant for supper. As at noon he was spent and unapproachable. He drank of the dark red wine without any moderation, or he could not sleep, he said. And he looked as though at any price he must forget that anything existed in the world other than the fact that he was tired and needed sleep.

On our way home in the carriage he roused himself for an instant, laughed at me, and said:

"Boy, when I am no longer here, you can salt your opera, for no one else can sing my rôle."

The following day he arose late and seemed tired and relaxed. His eyes were unsteady and his face was gray. After his breakfast I got hold of him and talked to him.

"You are killing yourself," I said, sadly, and depressed. "You stimulate yourself with champagne, and naturally have to pay afterwards. I can imagine why you do it, and I would not say anything if you had not a wife. You are at fault if you do not keep yourself clean and courageous outwardly and inwardly."

"So?" he smiled bitterly, seemingly pleased by my intensity. "And is not she at fault? Is she then courageous? She stays with her father and leaves me alone. Why should I pull myself together when she does not? People already know there is nothing more between us, and you know it, too. Besides, how am I to continue singing and making a clown of myself for the people? One can't do that out of nothing, or from loathing, which is all I feel for everything—art, above all."

"In spite of all that, you must pull yourself together, Muoth. If only you could be happy in it! But you are so miserable. If you are singing too much, take a vacation. And take it immediately! You have money. It isn't necessary for you to sing. Go to the mountains or to the sea—it doesn't matter where—and get strong again. Leave all this foolish drinking! It is not only stupid, it is cowardly, as you well know."

He only smiled. "Very well," he said, cooly, "why don't you go and dance a waltz? It will do you good, believe me. Don't be always thinking of your stupid leg. That's only imagination."

"Stop that! " I cried, indignantly. "You know perfectly well that that is something quite different. I would very gladly dance if I could, but I cannot. But you can very well pull yourself together and be sensible. The drinking, you must absolutely stop! "

"Absolutely! Dear Kuhn, I could almost laugh. I can no more be different and stop drinking than you can dance. I must stick by that which is necessary to my life and to my humor, do you understand? Drunkards may be cured if they become converted; if they find in the Salvation Army, or in any place whatever, something that satisfies them and endures. Something like that was given to me once. It was women. But I cannot associate with other women since I have had my own and she has left me."

"She has not left you! She will return. She is only ill."

“You think that! And she thinks that herself, I know. But she will not come back. When a ship is sinking the rats leave it. They don’t know that the ship is doomed to destruction. They only feel its unpleasant shivering, and run away, certainly with the good intention of soon returning.”

“Ah, do not talk so! You have often been in despair, and things have come all right again.”

“Quite true. It was so because I found a comfort or a diversion. Once it was a woman; once a dear friend—yes, you also did me that service; at another time, music or the gossip at the theater. Well, and now these things no longer interest me, and so I drink. And now shortly? You must stop preaching, as well as you do it. It was so once before. About twelve years ago another preached to me and would not leave me alone. It was about a girl. And as it happened it was my best friend.”

“And then?”

“Then he was obliged to throw me over. And then I had no friend until you came.”

“That is evident.”

“Is it not?” he said, mildly. “Now you have the choice. But I will say to you that it would not be kind if you were to desert me now. I have loved you truly, and I have thought of a happiness for you.”

“So? What is it?”

“See! You are fond of my wife—at least you were fond of her. And I have loved her, too—very dearly. Now, tonight we will have a feast, not for you and me, but in her honor. Truly, there is a reason for it. I had her portrait painted in the spring. She sat for an artist, and I was often with her. Then she went away before the portrait was quite finished. The artist wanted her to sit once again. But I became tired of waiting and ordered the portrait sent as it was. That was a week ago, and now it is in a frame and was brought to the house yesterday. I would have shown it to you, anyway, but it is better that it would be done with festivity. Really, without some champagne it would not be a success, for I should not be amusing. What do you say?”

I felt that concealed behind this jesting was deep feeling—yes, tears—and so I agreed. Our feast in honor of the woman who seemed so entirely lost to him, as she so truly was to me, was prepared.

“Can you remember her flowers?” he asked me. “I understand nothing of flowers, and don’t know what they are called. She always had white and gold ones—and red, too. But you remember?”

“Yes, I remember some of them. Why?”

“You must buy them. Order a carriage. I must attend to some things in the city. We must do all as if she were here.”

So many things occurred to him, in which I saw how deeply and incessantly he had thought about Gertrude. It made me happy and sorrowful to mark this. For her sake he no longer had his dog and lived alone. And never so long had he been without women. He ordered her portrait. He told me to buy her flowers. It was all as if he took off a mask, and I saw revealed behind the hard, selfish features, the face of a child.

“But,” I objected, “we should look at the portrait now, or in the afternoon. Pictures should be seen by daylight.”

“Ah—that! You can look at it long enough in the morning. I hope it is a good painting. But as a matter of truth it is all one to us. We want to see her likeness.”

After lunch we drove into the city and first bought the flowers—a great mass of chrysanthemums, a basket of roses, and a few bunches of white lilacs. While there, it occurred to him to have a big box of flowers sent to Gertrude at Cologne.

“There is something beautiful about flowers,” he said, thoughtfully. “I understand why Gertrude loves them so. They please me, too. Only I can give no attention to such things. When no woman was there, everything about me was disorderly and uncomfortable.”

In the evening I found the portrait in the music room. It was covered with a silk cloth. We had dined well, and Muoth demanded first to hear the Wedding Prelude. I played it, he unveiled the portrait, and we stood before it for a few minutes in silence. Gertrude had been painted in a light, summer dress in full figure, and she looked at us trustingly out of her clear eyes. It was a few minutes before we looked at each other and could give each other our hands. Muoth filled two glasses with Rhine wine, nodded to the portrait, and we drank to her who entirely dominated our thoughts. Then he took the portrait carefully in his arms and carried it out of the room. I asked him to sing, but he would not.

“Do you remember,” he smiled, “how we spent an evening together before my wedding? Now that I am a bachelor again let us empty our glasses and be happy for a little while. Your friend Teifer ought to be here. He understands happiness better than you and I. You must greet him from me when you return. He cannot endure me, I know, but ?”

With his careful, restrained merriment, which was the mood of his good hours, he began to converse and to call to my mind the past. I was amazed how everything, even the little and casual, which I thought he had long ago forgotten, lived undestroyed in his memory. He had even not forgotten that very first evening which I had spent with him and Marian and Kranzl, and our quarrel. But he did not speak of Gertrude. The time when she had come between us, he left undisturbed. I was glad he did.

I rejoiced over these unexpected, pleasant hours, and I let him enjoy the good plentiful wine without a word. I knew such moods were rare to him, and how he himself guarded them and protected them when they came. And to be sure, they never came without the wine. I always knew that they could not last long—that in the morning he would be as listless and as unapproachable as ever. And there came to me, also, a sincere warmth, almost a happy mood, in which I listened to his clever, pensive, even sometimes contradictory, contemplations. From time to time he flashed me a beautiful glance, which he had only in such hours and which seemed to be the look of one awakening from a dream.

Once when he was silent and thoughtful, I began to tell him what my theosophist had said of the sickness of loneliness.

“So?” he said, good-naturedly. “And naturally you believed it. You should have been a clergyman! ”

“Why? There may be something in it.”

“Certainly. The wise men, from time to time, realize that everything is imagination. You know I used to read many such books, and I can tell you that there is nothing in them, absolutely nothing. All that these philosophers write is only play, perhaps for the sake of comforting themselves. The one discovers individualism because he cannot endure his contemporaries; another, socialism, because he cannot endure to be alone. It may be that our feeling of loneliness is a sickness. But that doesn’t make it any different. Somnambulism is also a sickness, but for all that a fellow who has it

actually is on the edge of the roof, and if one frightens him, he breaks his neck.

“But that is something quite different.”

“As far as I am concerned, I don’t care for accuracy. I believe that wisdom comes to naught. There are only two laws of wisdom. Everything between them is mere babble.”

“What two do you mean?”

“Well, either the world is wicked and worthless, as the Buddhists and Christians say. Then one must chastise oneself and renounce everything. One could become quite happy in this belief, I think. Ascetics do not have as hard a life as is believed. But if the world and life is good and right, then one must take his part in it—and afterwards, die quietly, for then he is ready.”

“And which of these two do you believe?”

“That is a question you must never ask anyone. Most people believe both, depending on what the weather is, and how they feel, and whether they have money in their pockets. And those who believe, do not always act accordingly. It is that way with me. I believe even as Buddha, that life is worth nothing. But I live according to my senses, and as if pleasing them were the primary thing. If it were only more satisfying! ”

It was not late when we parted. As we went through the adjoining room, where, now, but a single electric lamp burned, Muoth took hold of my arm. He turned on all the lights and took the veil from Gertrude’s portrait. We looked once more into that beloved, pure face. Then he threw the veil over it and turned out the lights. He went with me to my room, and put a few magazines on the table in case I wanted to read. Then he gave me his hand, and said, softly:

“Good night, dear friend.”

I went to bed and for half an hour lay awake thinking of him. It moved me and shamed me to think how loyally he had remembered all the little events of our friendship. He, to whom it was so difficult to express friendship, clung to those whom he loved much more intensely than I had thought.

I went to sleep and dreamed all the night of Muoth, of my opera, and of Mr. Lohe. When I awoke it was still night. I awoke in great terror which had nothing to do with my dreams. I saw the pale, gray light of the dawn

through the windows, and tried to wake up and to make my mind clear, I heard rapid steps, and then a pounding on my door. I sprang up and opened it. It was cold, and I had not turned on the light. Outside stood the servant, in some clothes, hastily snatched. He looked at me, terrified, with frightened, stupefied eyes.

“Come,” he whispered, breathlessly, “Come quick! Something terrible has happened.”

I put on a dressing gown which hung there and followed him down the steps. He opened a door and stepped back for me to enter. There on a little cane table was a candelabra, in which three big candles burned, and near to it, a tumbled bed. And in the bed, I saw, lying upon his face, my friend, Muoth.

“We must turn him over,” I said, softly. But the servant was afraid to come near.

“The doctor must come immediately,” he said, stammeringly. But I forced him to assist me, and we turned over the one lying there, and I looked into the face of my friend. It was white and drawn, and his shirt was covered with blood. As we laid him down and covered him, his mouth twitched slightly, and the expression went out of his eyes.

The servant now commenced to explain but I wished to know nothing. When the doctor came he was dead. In the morning I telegraphed to Mr. Imthor. Then I went back to the still house, sat by the bed of my dead friend, listened to the wind blowing outside in the trees, and now first realized how much I had loved this poor man. But I could not regret him. His death had been easier for him than his life.

In the evening I stood at the station and watched old Mr. Imthor step from the train, and behind him, a tall woman dressed in black. I led them back to the dead, who, clothed now, lay between the flowers of yesterday. Gertrude bent and kissed him on his cold mouth.

As we stood by his grave I noticed a pretty, stately woman weeping. She had roses in her hand and stood alone, and when I looked at her curiously, I saw that it was Lotte. She nodded to me and I smiled. But Gertrude did not weep. Out of her pale, drawn face, she looked straight before her into the gentle rain, which was sprayed by the wind, and she held herself upright like a young tree whose roots are unshakened. It was only in self-defense, however. Two days later, when she unpacked Muoth’s flowers,

which had arrived during that time, she broke down altogether, and for a long time could not be seen by anyone.

To me, also, the realization of my loss, came later. And as is always so, I remembered numberless times when I had done my dead friend injustice. But he did the greatest wrong to himself. I thought much about him, and I could not find that there was anything inexplicable or incomprehensible in his fate. Although, it was all so sombre and ironic! It was so in my own life and in the life of Gertrude, and of many others. Fate was not good; life was empty and sombre. Nature gave no kindness and understanding. But in us there is kindness and understanding, if it is only for a few hours—in all of us with whom Chance plays. We can be stronger than Nature and Fate. And we can draw near to one another when we are needed, and can look at one another with understanding eyes, and we can love one another and live to comfort one another. And many times when the dark depths are silent, we can do more. Then for an instant we can be gods, stretch out our commanding hands, and create things which before were not, and which when they are created, will live without us. From tones and from words, and from other fragile, futile things, we can build music and wisdom, and songs, full of thought and comfort and of more beautiful and imperishable things than can the harsh play of chance and destiny. We can bear God in our hearts, and at times, when we are filled with understanding, He will shine from our eyes, and in our words, and speak to others who do not know Him and would not recognize Him. We cannot withdraw our hearts from life, but we can so mould and teach them that they are above chance and can look on grief and pain without breaking.

So in the years since the death of Muoth, I have brought him back a thousand times, and then I could talk to him more wisely and lovingly than when he was alive.

As time went by I saw my old mother weaken and die. And I saw the beautiful, joyful Brigitte Teifer die. After years of waiting she had married a musician and had not outlived the birth of her first child.

Gertrude conquered the grief that overpowered her when our flowers came to her as a greeting and wooing from the dead. I do not talk to her often about it, although I see her every day. But I believe she looks back to her springtime, as into a distant land, as into a valley seen in former

journeys, and not as into a lost Garden of Eden. She has regained her strength and happiness. She even sings again. But since that cold kiss on the lips of the dead, she has kissed no man. Once or twice, as the years passed, when she seemed so strong and contented, my thoughts took their old forbidden course and I wondered, “Why not?” But secretly I knew the answer, and that in her life and in my life there was nothing to alter. She is my friend, and when, after restless solitary hours, I come out from my seclusion with a song or a sonata, it belongs first to her.

Muoth was right. As a man grows older, he is more at peace than in his youth. But I will not on that account slander youth, for it sings to me in all my dreams like a master song, and rings clearer and purer than ever it did in truth.

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