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Gerhart Hauptmann

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Gerhart Hauptmann

1912

"Primarily in recognition of his fruitful, varied, and outstanding production in the realm of dramatic art"

Illustrated by R. SAVARY

PRESENTATION ADDRESS

By HANS HILDEBRAND

ACTING SECRETARY

OF THE SWEDISH ACADEMY

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING that times change and men change with them. If we look back on past ages we discover its truth. We, who are no longer young, have had the opportunity in our bustling lives to experience the truth of the saying, and every day confirms it anew. As far back as history extends we find that new things emerged, but were not at first recognized although they were to be important in the future. A seed came alive and grew to magnificent size. Certain names in contemporary science illustrate the discrepancy between modest beginnings and later developments.

The same is true of dramatic poetry. This is not the place to trace its development through twenty-five centuries. There is a tremendous difference, however, between the satyr choruses of the Dionysiac festivals, called tragedies because of the goat skins worn by the chorus, and the demands the modern age makes on dramatic poetry, and this difference indicates considerable progress.

In our time Gerhart Hauptmann has been a great name in the field of drama. He turned fifty recently; he is thus in his prime of life and can look back on an exceptionally rich career as an artist. He submitted his first work to the stage at the age of twenty-seven. At the age of thirty he proved himself a mature artist with his play *Die Weber* (*The Weavers,* 1892). This work was followed by others which confirmed his reputation. In most of his plays he deals with conditions of the low-class life which he had numerous occasions to study, especially in his native Silesia. His descriptions are based on keen observations of man and his milieu. Each of his characters is a fully developed personality—there is not a trace of types or clichés. Nobody even for a moment could doubt the truthfulness of his observations; they have established Hauptmann as a

great realist. But he nowhere praises the life of these so-called low characters. On the contrary, when one has seen or read these plays and identified himself deeply with the conditions they represent, he feels the need for fresh air and asks how such misery can be abolished in the future. The realism in Hauptmann's plays leads necessarily to brighter dreams of new and better conditions and to the wish for their fulfilment.

Hauptmann has also written dramas of a totally different nature: he calls them "Märchendramen." Among them is the delightful *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* (*The Assumption of Hannele,* 1893), in which the misery of life and the bliss of heaven emerge with such striking contrast. Among these plays is also *Die versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell,* 1897), the most popular of his plays in his own country. The copy used by the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy bore the stamp of the sixtieth impression.

Hauptmann has also distinguished himself in the genres of historical drama and comedy. He has not published a collection of his lyrical poems, but incidental poems in his plays bear witness to his talent in this field.

In his early years he had published a few short stories, but in 1910 he brought out his novel *Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint* (*The Fool in Christ: Emanuel Quint*), the result of many years of work. The story "Der Apostel" ("The Apostle") of 1892 is a sketch of the final work in which we learn about the inner life of a poor man who, without any education other than that acquired from the Bible and without any critical judgment of what he has read, finally reaches the conclusion that he is the reincarnation of Christ. It is not easy to give a correct account of the development of a human soul that can be considered normal, in view of all the forces and circumstances that affect its development. But it is even more difficult to attain the truth if one describes the inner development of a soul that is in certain respects abnormal. The attempt is bold; its execution took decades of creative work. Judgment of the work has differed widely. I am happy to join the many who consider *Emanuel Quint* a masterly solution of a difficult problem.

Hauptmann's particular virtue is his penetrating and critical insight into the human soul. It is this gift that enabled him in his plays and in his novels to create truly living individuals rather than types representing some particular outlook or opinion. All the characters we meet, even the minor ones, have a full life. In his novels one admires the descriptions of

the setting, as well as the sketches of the people that come in more or less close contact wth the protagonist of the story. The plays reveal his great art by their powerful concentration which holds the reader or spectator from beginning to end. Whatever subject he treats, even when he deals with life's seamy side, his is always a noble personality. That nobility and his refined art give his works their wonderful power.

The preceding remarks were intended to sketch the reasons why the Swedish Academy has awarded this year's Nobel Prize to Gerhart Hauptmann.

Dr. Hauptmann—In your significant and controversial book *Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint* you say: "It is impossible to uncover the necessary course of a human life in all its stages, if only because every human being is something unique from beginning to end and because the observer can comprehend his object only within the limits of his own nature."

That is indeed true. But there are many kinds of observers. The everyday man in the midst of his bustling life has neither the opportunity nor the will to study his fellow men in greater depth. We see the outside but do not care to see beneath it unless we happen to have a special interest in learning another's motives. Even those who are not drawn into the turmoil of present life, who limit their intercourse with the outside world and are on intimate terms with their immediate surroundings, do not generally go very far in their study of the human soul. We are attracted or repelled; we love or hate, if we are not indifferent. We praise or blame.

The poet, however, is not an everyday man. He is able to extend the scope of his imagination much further. For he has the divine gift of intuition. And you, Dr. Hauptmann, possess this wonderful gift to the highest degree. In your many works you have created innumerable characters. But they do not exist merely as so many types of such and such a nature. To the reader and spectator of your plays, each of your characters is a fully developed individual, living and acting together with others, but different from all of them. That is the reason for much of the magic of your work.

It has been said that at least in some of your works you have been a marked realist. You have had rich opportunities to use your gift of observation and become acquainted with the memory of whole classes of people, and you have described it faithfully. If after seeing or reading such a play one is deeply moved by it, he cannot help thinking, "These

conditions must be improved." One cannot deny the existence of the seamy side of life, and it must have its place in literature in order to teach wisdom to the living.

Your manifold activities as a writer have given us other marvelous works. I shall mention only two here, *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and *Die versunkene Glocke*. The latter seems to enjoy great popularity in your country.

Through the mouth of the ambitious and unfortunate Michael Kramer you say:

> *If someone has the effrontery to paint the man with the crown of thorns—it will take him a lifetime to do it. No pleasures for him: lonely hours, lonely days, lonely years. He must be alone with himself and with his God. He must consecrate himself daily. Nothing common must be about him or in him. And then when he struggles and toils in his solitude the Holy Ghost comes. Then he can sometimes catch a glimpse. It swells, he can feel it. Then he rests in the eternal and he has it before him in quiet and beauty. He has it without wanting it. He sees the Savior. He feels Him.*

Although in your work you have not represented the Savior with the crown of thorns, you have represented a poor man ultimately driven to the delusion that he is the second Christ. But Kramer's words reflect your own attitude. Your novel *Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint* appeared in 1910, but the story "Der Apostel" of 1892 shows that the plan for writing the novel had occurred to you twenty years earlier.

True art does not consist in writing down and handing to the public the thoughts of the moment, but rather in subjecting potentially useful ideas to close scrutiny, to the conflict of different opinions and the apprehensive consideration of their eventual effect. This process will gradually lead the true artist to the precious conviction, "I have finally reached the truth." You have attained the highest rank of art by painstaking but never pedantic preparatory research, by the consistency of your feelings, thoughts, and actions, and by the strict form of your plays.

The Swedish Academy has found the great artist Gerhart Hauptmann worthy of receiving this year's Nobel Prize, which his Majesty the King will now present to him.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

By GERHART HAUPTMANN

AS THE RECIPIENT of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature, I thank you for the kind and cordial words which have been addressed to me. You may rest assured that I and my nation understand and deeply appreciate the honor conferred upon me. The Nobel Prize has become a cultural concern of the entire globe, and its magnificent donor has for all times given his name a place in the cultural life of nations. Distinguished people the world over will utter the name of Nobel with the same emotions as people of former ages uttered that of a patron saint whose power of protection is beyond doubt, and the medal will be passed on from generation to generation and honored by families of all peoples.

Today I cannot but pay my share of the ever-renewed tribute of respect to this great donor, and after him to the Swedish nation that has brought him forth and is so faithfully administering the heritage of his humanitarianism. Let me also recall the memory of those men whose self-denying and lynx-like task on this earth consists in attending to the cultivation of the mind's soil, so that the weeds may be rooted out and the good shoots be nurtured. Let me thank you and express the wish that you may never tire in the most blessed of all activities and that you may never lack truly rich harvests.

And now let me drink to the eventual realization of the ideal that underlies this foundation, I mean the ideal of world peace, which comprehends the final ideals of art and science. For art and science that serve war are neither pure nor ultimate; they are so only when created by, and in turn creating, peace. And let me drink to that great, ultimate, and purely ideal Nobel Prize which humanity will bestow upon itself when brute violence is banished from the intercourse of nations, as it has been banished from that of individuals in civilized societies.

THE WEAVERS

A PLAY OF THE EIGHTEEN-FORTIES

By GERHART HAUPTMANN

Translated by Horst Frenz *and* Miles Waggoner

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DREISSIGER, *a cotton manufacturer*
MRS. DREISSIGER, *his wife*

at Dreissiger's
PFEIFER, *a manager*
NEUMANN, *a cashier*
AN APPRENTICE
JOHANN, *a coachman*
A YOUNG GIRL

WEINHOLD, *a tutor for Dreissiger's sons*
PASTOR KITTELHAUS
MRS. KITTELHAUS, *his wife*

HEIDE, *the Chief of Police*
KUTSCHE, *a policeman*
WELZEL, *an innkeeper*
MRS. WELZEL, *his wife*
ANNA WELZEL
WIEGAND, *a carpenter*
A TRAVELING SALESMAN
A FARMER
A FORESTER
SCHMIDT, *a physician*
HORNIG, *a rag picker*
OLD WITTIG, *a smith*

WEAVERS: *Baecker—Moritz Jaeger—Old Baumert—Mother Baumert—Bertha Baumert—Emma Baumert—Fritz, Emma's son, four years old—August Baumert—Ansorge—Mrs. Heinrich—Old Hilse—Gottlieb Hilse—Luise, Gottlieb's wife—Mielchen, his daughter, six years old—Reinmann—Heiber—A weaver woman—A boy, eight years old—A large crowd of young and old weavers and weaver women.*

The action of the play takes place in the 1840's in Kaschbach, Peterswaldau, and Langenbielau, cities at the foot of the mountains known as the Eulengebirge.

ACT ONE

SCENE—*A spacious whitewashed room in Dreissiger's house at Peterswaldau, where the weavers must deliver their finished webs. At the left are uncurtained windows; in the back wall, a glass door. At the right is a similar door through which weavers, men, women, and children, continuously come and go. Along the right wall, which, like the others, is almost entirely hidden by wooden stands for cotton, there is a bench on which the weavers, as they come in, spread out their finished webs to be examined. They step forward in the order of their arrival and offer their finished products.* PFEIFER, *the manager, stands behind a large table on which the weavers lay their webs for inspection. He makes the inspection with the use of dividers and a magnifying glass. When he is finished, he lays the cotton on the scales, where an apprentice tests its weight. The same apprentice shoves the goods taken from the scales onto the stock shelves.* PFEIFER *calls out the amount to be paid to each weaver to* NEUMANN, *the cashier, who sits at a small table.*

It is a sultry day toward the end of May. The clock points to twelve. Most of the waiting weavers stand like men before the bar of justice where, tortured and anxious, they must await a life-and-death decision. They all give the impression of being crushed, like beggars. Passing from humiliation to humiliation and convinced that they are only tolerated, they are used to making themselves as inconspicuous as possible. Also, they have a stark, irresolute look—gnawing, brooding faces. Most of the men resemble each other, half-dwarf, half-schoolmaster. They are flat-chested, coughing creatures with ashen gray faces: creatures of the looms, whose knees are bent with much sitting. At first glance, their women folk are less typical. They are broken, harried, worn out, while the men still have a certain look of pathetic gravity. The women's clothes are ragged, while those of the men are patched. Some of the young girls are not without charm—they have pale waxen complexions, delicate figures, large protruding melancholy eyes.

CASHIER NEUMANN. (*Counting out money.*) That leaves 16 silver groschen and 2 pfennigs.

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. (*In her thirties, very emaciated, puts the money away with trembling fingers.*) Thank ya, kindly, sir.

NEUMANN. (*As the woman does not move on.*) Well, is something wrong again?

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. (*Excitedly, in begging tone.*) I'd like a few pfennigs in advance. I need it awful bad.

NEUMANN. And I need a few hundred thalers. If it was just a matter of needing—! (*Already busy counting out money to another weaver, curtly.*) Mr. Dreissiger himself has to decide about advances.

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. Then, maybe I could talk to Mr. Dreissiger hisself?

PFEIFER. (*He was formerly a weaver. The type is unmistakable; only he is well-groomed, well-fed, well-clothed, clean-shaven; also, a heavy user of snuff. He calls across brusquely.*) Mr. Dreissiger would have plenty to do, God knows, if he had to bother himself with every trifle. That's what we're here for. (*He measures and inspects a web with the magnifying glass.*) Damn it all! There's a draft! (*He wraps a heavy scarf around his neck.*) Shut the door when ya come in.

THE APPRENTICE. (*In a loud voice to* PFEIFER.) It's just like talkin' to a block of wood.

PFEIFER. That's settled then! Weigh it! (*The weaver lays his web on the scales.*)

If ya only understood your work better. It's got lumps in it again—I can tell without looking. A good weaver doesn't put off the winding who knows how long.

BAECKER. (*Enters. A young, exceptionally strong weaver whose behavior is free and easy, almost impertinent.* PFEIFER, NEUMANN, *and* THE APPRENTICE *glance at each other understandingly when he enters.*) Damn it, I'm sweatin' like a dog again.

FIRST WEAVER. (*Softly.*) Feels like rain.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Pushes through the glass door at the right. Behind the door, waiting weavers are seen jammed together, shoulder to shoulder.* OLD BAUMERT *has hobbled forward and has laid his bundle on a bench near* BAECKER'S. *He sits down next to it and wipes the sweat from his face.*) Ya sure earn a rest here.

BAECKER. Rest is better than money.

OLD BAUMERT. Ya need money too. Good day to ya, Baecker!

BAECKER. And good day to you, Father Baumert! Who knows how long we'll have to be waitin' around here again.

FIRST WEAVER. It don't matter whether a weaver has to wait an hour or a day. He just don't count.

PFEIFER. Be quiet, back there. I can't hear myself think.

BAECKER. (*Softly.*) Today's one of his bad days again.

PFEIFER. (*To the weavers standing in front of him.*) How many times have I told you already. Ya ought to clean up the webs better. What sort of a mess is this? There are chunks of dirt in it, as long as my finger—and straw, and all kinds of rubbish.

WEAVER REIMANN. I guess I need a new pair of pincers.

THE APPRENTICE. (*Has weighed the web.*) And it's short weight, too.

PFEIFER. The kind of weavers ya have nowadays! You hate to hand out the yarn. Oh, Lord, in my time! My master would've made me pay for it. I tell you, weaving was a different thing in those days. Then, a man had to understand his business. Today it's not necessary anymore. Reimann, 10 groschen.

WEAVER REIMANN. Yes, but one pound is allowed for waste.

PFEIFER. I haven't time. That's settled. (*To the next weaver.*) What have you got?

WEAVER HEIBER. (*Puts his web up on the counter. While* PFEIFER *is inspecting it,* HEIBER *steps up to him and speaks softly and eagerly.*) Please, forgive me, Mr. Pfeifer, I would like to ask ya, sir, if perhaps ya would be so kind as to do me a favor and not deduct my advance this time.

PFEIFER. (*Measuring with the dividers and inspecting, jeers.*) Well, now! That's just fine. It looks as if about half the woof has been left on the spool again.

HEIBER. (*Continuing, as before.*) I'd be glad to make it up next week for sure. Last week I had to put in two days' work on the estate. And my wife's home, sick in bed. . . .

PFEIFER. (*Putting the web on the scales.*) Here's another piece of real sloppy work. (*Already taking a new web for inspection.*) What a selvage—now it's broad, then it's narrow. In one place the woof's all gathered together, who knows how much, then the reed has been pulled apart. And scarcely seventy threads to the inch. Whatever happened to the rest? Is that honest work? I never saw such a thing!

HEIBER, *suppressing tears, stands humiliated and helpless.*

BAECKER. (*Low, to* BAUMERT.) I guess this riffraff would like us to pay for the yarn, too.

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. (*Who has withdrawn only a few steps from the cashier's table, stares about from time to time, seeking help, without moving from the spot. Then she takes heart and once more turns imploringly to the cashier.*) I can

hardly . . . I don't know . . . if ya don't give me an advance this time . . . O, Lord, Lord. . . .

PFEIFER. (*Calls across.*) All this calling on the Lord! Just leave the Lord in peace. You haven't been bothering much about the Lord up to now. It'd be better if you'd look after your husband instead, so he isn't seen sitting in the tavern window all day long. We can't give advances. We have to account for every cent. It's not our own money. Later they'd be asking us for it. People who are industrious and understand their business and do their work in fear of God don't ever need advances. So, that's settled.

NEUMANN. And if a Bielau weaver got four times as much pay, he'd squander four times as much and be in debt in the bargain.

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. (*In a loud voice, as if appealing to everyone's sense of justice.*) I'm certainly not lazy, but I just can't go on this way much longer. I've had two miscarriages, and my husband, he can't do no more than half the work neither; he went up to the shepherd at Zerlau, but he couldn't do nothin' for his trouble either . . . there's just so much a body can do. . . . We sure do work as much as we can. I ain't had much sleep for weeks, and everything'll be all right again if I can only get a bit of this weakness out of my bones. But ya got to have a little consideration. (*Beseeching him and fawning.*) Ya'll have to be good enough to let me have a few groschen, this time.

PFEIFER. (*Unperturbed.*) Fiedler, 11 groschen.

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. Just a few groschen, so we can get some bread. The farmer won't give us no more credit. We got a house full of children. . . .

NEUMANN. (*Softly and with mock seriousness to* THE APPRENTICE.) Once a year the linen weaver has a brat, fa, la, la, la, la.

THE APPRENTICE. (*Chiming in.*) The first six weeks it's blind as a bat, fa, la, la, la, la.

REIMANN. (*Not touching the money that the cashier has counted out for him.*) We've always been gettin' 13½ groschen for a web.

PFEIFER. (*Calls across.*) If it doesn't suit you, Reimann, all you have to do is say the word. There are plenty of weavers. Especially weavers like you. For full weight, you'll get full pay.

REIMANN. That something should be wrong with the weight. . . .

PFEIFER. If there's nothing wrong with the cotton you bring, there'll be nothing wrong with your pay.

REIMANN. It really can't be that this web, here, should have too many flaws in it.

PFEIFER. (*Inspecting.*) He who weaves well, lives well.

HEIBER. (*He has stayed close to* PFEIFER *waiting for a favorable opportunity. He smiled with the others at* PFEIFER'S *remark; now he steps forward and speaks to him as he did before.*) I would like to ask ya, sir, if perhaps ya would be so kind and not deduct the 5 groschen advance this time. My wife's been sick in bed since before Ash Wednesday. She can't do a lick of work. And I have to pay a girl to tend the bobbin. And so—

PFEIFER. (*Takes a pinch of snuff.*) Heiber, you're not the only one I have to attend to. The others want their turn, too.

REIMANN. The way the warp was given to me—that's the way I wound it and that's the way I took it off again. I can't bring back better yarn than I take home.

PFEIFER. If ya don't like it, ya simply don't need to get any more warp here. There are plenty who'd run their feet off for it.

NEUMANN. (*To* REIMANN.) Aren't you going to take the money?

REIMANN. I just can't take such pay.

NEUMANN. (*Without troubling himself*

further about REIMANN.) Heiber, 10 groschen—take off the 5 groschen advance—leaves 5 groschen.

HEIBER. (*Steps up, looks at the money, stands there, shakes his head as if there were something he could not believe, and then quietly and carefully pockets the money.*) O my God—! (*Sighing.*) Ah, well!

OLD BAUMERT. (*Looking straight at* HEIBER.) Yes, yes, Franz! You've got cause for sighing there.

HEIBER. (*Speaking wearily.*) Ya see, I've got a sick girl layin' home. She needs a bottle of medicine.

OLD BAUMERT. What's wrong with her?

HEIBER. Ya see, she's been a sickly little thing from the time she was born. I really don't know . . . well, I can tell you: she brought it into the world with her. Such trouble's in the blood, and it keeps breakin' out over and over again.

OLD BAUMERT. There's something the matter everywhere. When you're poor, there's nothing but bad luck. There's no end to it and no salvation.

HEIBER. What have ya got in that bundle?

OLD BAUMERT. We haven't got a thing in the house. So I had our little dog killed. There ain't much to him, he was half-starved. He was a nice little dog. I couldn't kill him myself. I didn't have the heart.

PFEIFER. (*Has inspected* BAECKER'S *web, calls out.*) Baecker, 13½ groschen.

BAECKER. That's a measly hand-out for a beggar, not pay.

PFEIFER. Those who are done, have to get out. It's so crowded, we can't move around in here.

BAECKER. (*To those standing about, without lowering his voice.*) That's a measly hand-out, that's all it is. And for that a man's to work the treadle from early morning till late at night. And after a man's been workin' behind a loom for eighteen days, evenin' after evenin'—worn out, dizzy with the dust and terrible heat, then he's lucky if he gets 13½ groschen for his drudgery.

PFEIFER. We'll have no back-talk here.

BAECKER. You can't make me hold my tongue.

PFEIFER. (*Jumps up, shouting.*) We'll see about that. (*Walks toward the glass door and calls into the office.*) Mr. Dreissiger! Mr. Dreissiger, if you'll be so kind!

DREISSIGER. (*Enters. He is about forty, fat, asthmatic. With a severe look.*) What's—the matter, Pfeifer?

PFEIFER. (*Angrily.*) Baecker won't hold his tongue.

DREISSIGER. (*Draws himself up, throws his head back, and stares at* BAECKER *with quivering nostrils.*) Oh, yes—Baecker—(*to* PFEIFER.) Is that him—? (*The clerk nods.*)

BAECKER. (*Impudently.*) Yes, indeed, Mr. Dreissiger! (*Pointing to himself.*) That's him. (*Pointing to* DREISSIGER.) And that's him.

DREISSIGER. (*Indignantly.*) How can he dare?

PFEIFER. He's too well off, that's what he is. He'll skate on thin ice once too often.

BAECKER. (*Roughly.*) You shut up, you fool! Once, in the new moon, your mother must have been ridin' a broomstick with Satan to beget such a devil as you for a son.

DREISSIGER. (*In sudden anger, bellows.*) Shut up! Shut up this minute, or else—(*He trembles, takes a few steps forward.*)

BAECKER. (*With determination, standing up to him.*) I'm not deaf. I still hear good.

DREISSIGER. (*Controls himself, asks with apparent businesslike calm.*) Isn't he one of those—?

PFEIFER. He's a Bielau weaver. They can always be found where trouble is brewing.

DREISSIGER. (*Trembling.*) Then I'm warning you: if it happens once more,

and if such a gang of half-drunken young louts passes my house once again, as they did last night, singing that vile song. . . .

BAECKER. I guess you mean "Bloody Justice"?

DREISSIGER. You know exactly what I mean. Let me tell you, if I hear that song once more, I'll get hold of one of you, and—on my honor, joking aside, I promise you I'll turn him over to the state's attorney. And if I find out who wrote this wretched song. . . .

BAECKER. That's a beautiful song—it is!

DREISSIGER. Another word and I'll send for the police—immediately. I won't lose any time! We know how to deal with young fellows like you. I've taken care of your kind before.

BAECKER. Well, now, that I can believe. A real manufacturer like you can gobble up two or three hundred weavers before a person has time to turn around . . . and not so much as a bone left over. Such a man's got four stomachs like a cow and teeth like a wolf. No, indeed—that's nothing at all to him!

DREISSIGER. (*To the clerks.*) See to it that that fellow doesn't get another stick of work from us.

BAECKER. Oh, it's all the same to me whether I starve behind the loom or in a ditch by the side of the road.

DREISSIGER. Get out, this minute! Get out of here!

BAECKER. (*Firmly.*) I'll take my pay first.

DREISSIGER. How much has the man got coming, Neumann?

NEUMANN. Twelve groschen and five pfennigs.

DREISSIGER. (*Takes the money from the cashier in great haste and throws it down on the counter so that a few coins roll onto the floor.*) There you are—and now hurry—get out of my sight!

BAECKER. I'll take my pay first.

DREISSIGER. There's your pay; and if you don't hurry and get out. . . . It's exactly twelve . . . my dyers are taking off for lunch. . . .

BAECKER. My pay belong in my hand. My pay belongs here. (*He points to the palm of his left hand.*)

DREISSIGER. (*To* THE APPRENTICE.) Pick it up, Tilgner.

THE APPRENTICE *picks up the money and lays it in* BAECKER'S *hand.*

BAECKER. Everything's got to be done right. (*He puts the money slowly in an old purse.*)

DREISSIGER. Well? (*As* BAECKER *still does not leave, impatiently.*) Shall I help you?

There is excited movement among the crowd of weavers. A long, deep sigh is heard, then a fall. Everyone's attention is turned to this new event.

DREISSIGER. What's happened there?

VARIOUS WEAVERS *and* WEAVER WOMEN. Someone's fainted. It's a sickly little boy. What's wrong? Is it consumption, maybe?

DREISSIGER. Why . . . what's that? Fainted? (*He goes up closer.*)

AN OLD WEAVER. He's layin' there. (*They make room. A little boy, about eight years old, is seen lying on the floor as if dead.*)

DREISSIGER. Does somebody know this boy?

OLD WEAVER. He's not from our village.

OLD BAUMERT. He looks like one of Heinrich's boys. (*He looks at him more closely.*) Yes, indeed! That is Heinrich's little Gustav.

DREISSIGER. Where do they live, these people?

OLD BAUMERT. Why, near us in Kaschbach, Mr. Dreissiger. He goes around playin' music, and in the daytime, he works at the loom. They have nine children and the tenth's on the way.

VARIOUS WEAVERS *and* WEAVER WOMEN. They sure got a lot of trouble. Their roof leaks. The woman ain't got two shirts for the nine children.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Taking hold of the*

boy.) Why, my child, what's wrong with ya? Wake up, there now!

DREISSIGER. Take hold of him—here, help me—we'll pick him up. It's incomprehensible that anybody should let a weak child like that come such a long way. Bring some water, Pfeifer!

WEAVER WOMAN. (*Helps him sit up.*) Don't ya up and die on us, boy!

DREISSIGER. Or brandy, Pfeifer, brandy is better.

BAECKER. (*Forgotten by everybody, has been watching. Now, with one hand on the doorknob, he calls across in a loud voice, mockingly.*) Give him something to eat, too, and he'll come to all right.

Exit.

DREISSIGER. That fellow will come to no good. Take him under the arm, Neumann. Slowly—slowly . . . that's it . . . there, now . . . we'll take him into my room. Why, what is it?

NEUMANN. He's said something, Mr. Dreissiger! He's moving his lips.

DREISSIGER. What is it, little boy?

THE BOY. (*Whispers.*) I'm—hungry!

DREISSIGER. (*Turns pale.*) I can't understand him.

WEAVER WOMAN. I think he said. . . .

DREISSIGER. Well, we'll see. Let's not lose any time—he can lie on my sofa. We'll hear, then, what the doctor says.

DREISSIGER, NEUMANN, *and the* WEAVER WOMAN *carry the boy into the office. There is a commotion among the weavers, as among school children when the teacher leaves the classroom. They stretch, they whisper, they shift from one foot to the other. Soon there is loud and general conversation among them.*

OLD BAUMERT. I really do believe Baecker is right.

SEVERAL WEAVERS *and* WEAVER WOMEN. He said something like that, too. That's nothing new around here—people faintin' from hunger. Yes, and who knows what'll happen this winter if this cuttin' of wages keeps on—. And the potatoes bein' so bad this year—. It won't be no different here till we're all of us flat on our backs.

OLD BAUMERT. Ya might just as well put a rope 'round your neck and hang yourself on your loom like the Nentwich weaver did. Here, take a pinch of snuff—I was in Neurode, where my brother-in-law works in the snuff factory. He gave me a few grains. You carryin' anything nice in your kerchief?

AN OLD WEAVER. It's only a little bit of barley. The wagon from the Ullbrich miller was drivin' ahead of me, and there was a little slit in one of the sacks. That comes in handy, believe me.

OLD BAUMERT. There are twenty-two mills in Peterswaldau, and still there's nothin' left over for the likes of us.

AN OLD WEAVER. Ah, we mustn't get discouraged. Something always turns up and helps a little bit.

HEIBER. When we're hungry, we have to pray to the fourteen guardian angels, and if that don't fill ya up, then ya have to put a pebble in your mouth and suck on it. Right, Baumert?

DREISSIGER *and* PFEIFER, *as well as the cashier, return.*

DREISSIGER. It was nothing of any importance. The boy's quite all right again. (*Goes around excited and puffing.*) And yet it is a disgrace. A bit of wind would blow that wisp of a child away. It's really unbelievable how people—how parents can be so irresponsible. To load him down with two bundles of cotton and send him a good seven and a half miles on the road. It's really unbelievable. I will simply have to take steps to see to it that goods brought by children will not be accepted. (*He walks silently back and forth.*) In any case, I certainly hope that nothing of this sort happens again. On whose shoulders does the blame finally rest? The manufacturers, of course. We're blamed for everything. When a poor little fellow falls asleep in the snow in the wintertime, one

of these reporter chaps comes running up, and in two days the gruesome story is in all the papers. The father, the parents, the ones who send the child out . . . oh, no . . . they aren't guilty, certainly not! It must be the manufacturer; the manufacturer is the goat. The weaver is always let off easy, the manufacturer is the one who catches it; he's a man without a heart, dangerous fellow who can be bitten in the leg by every mad dog of a reporter. He lives in splendor and in comfort and pays the poor weavers starvation wages. These scribblers are absolutely silent about the fact that such a man has troubles too, and sleepless nights; that he runs great risks such as the weaver never dreams of; that often he does nothing but calculate—dividing, adding, and multiplying, calculating and recalculating until he's nearly out of his mind; that he has to consider and weigh a hundred different kinds of things, and always has to fight and compete, you might say, as a matter of life and death; that not a single day goes by without annoyances and losses. All the people who're dependent on the manufacturer, who suck him dry and want to live off of him—think of that! No, no! You ought to be in my shoes for a while, then you'd get fed up with it soon enough, I tell you. (*After a little reflection.*) How that fellow, that scoundrel there, that Baecker, behaved! Now he'll go around and tell everybody how hard-hearted I am. That at the slightest opportunity I throw the weavers out. Is that true? Am I so hard-hearted?

MANY VOICES. No, Mr. Dreissiger!

DREISSIGER. Well, it doesn't look like that to me, either. And yet these rascals go around here and sing nasty songs about us manufacturers. They talk of hunger and yet they have so much money to spend that they can consume their liquor by the quart. They ought to look around in other places, and see how things are among the linen weavers. They can really talk of hard times. But you here, you cotton weavers, you can quietly thank God that things are as they are. And I ask the old, industrious, skilled weavers who are here: Tell me, can a worker, who does a good job, earn his living, working for me or can't he?

VERY MANY VOICES. Yes, Mr. Dreissinger!

DREISSIGER. There, you see! A fellow like Baecker can't, of course. But I advise you, keep those fellows in check; if this goes too far, I'll just quit. Then I'll give up the whole business, and you'll see where you are. You'll see who'll give you work. Certainly not your fine Mr. Baecker.

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. (*Has come up close to* DREISSIGER *and with fawning humility brushes some dust from his coat.*) You've gone and rubbed against something, Mr. Dreissiger, sir, you have.

DREISSIGER. Business is terrible, you know that yourselves. Instead of earning money, I'm actually losing it. If, in spite of this, I see to it that my weavers always have work, I expect them to appreciate it. The goods lie stocked up here in thousands of yards, and I don't know today if I'll ever sell them. Well, I've heard that a great number of weavers around here have have no work at all, and so . . . well, Pfeifer can give you the details. The fact of the matter is this: so you'll see my good intentions—naturally, I can't just hand out charity. I'm not rich enough for that. But I can, up to a certain point, give the unemployed a chance to earn at least a little something. That I'm running a tremendous risk in doing that, well, that's my own affair. I think it's always better if a man can earn a piece of bread and cheese for himself every day rather than starve. Don't you think I'm right?

MANY VOICES. Yes, yes, Mr. Dreissiger.

DREISSIGER. I am therefore willing to put an additional two hundred weavers to work. Pfeifer will explain to you, under

what conditions. (*He is about to leave.*)

FIRST WEAVER WOMAN. (*Steps in his path, speaks quickly, imploringly, urgently.*) Mr. Dreissinger, sir, I wanted to ask ya real kindly, if perhaps you . . . I've been laid up twice. . . .

DREISSIGER. (*In haste.*) Speak to Pfeifer, my good woman, I'm late as it is. (*He turns away from her.*)

REIMANN. (*Stops him. In the tone of an injured and accusing man.*) Mr. Dreissiger, I really have a complaint to make. Mr. Pfeifer has . . . I always get 12½ groschen for a web, and. . . .

DREISSIGER. (*Interrupts him.*) There's the manager. Talk to him: he's the person to see.

HEIBER. (*Stops* DREISSIGER.) Mr. Dreissiger, sir, (*Stuttering, in confusion and haste.*) I wanted to ask ya if perhaps ya could . . . if maybe Mr. Pfeifer could . . . if he could. . . .

DREISSIGER. What is it you want?

HEIBER. The advance pay that I got last time. I mean that I. . . .

DREISSIGER. I really do not understand you.

HEIBER. I was pretty hard up, because. . . .

DREISSIGER. Pfeifer's business, that's Pfeifer's business. I really can't . . . take it up with Pfeifer. (*He escapes into the office.*)

The supplicants look helplessly at one another. One after the other, they step back, sighing.

PFEIFER. (*Starts the inspection again.*) Well, Annie, and what are you bringing us?

OLD BAUMERT. How much for a web, then, Mr. Pfeifer?

PFEIFER. Ten groschen for each web.

OLD BAUMERT. Ain't that something!

Excitement among the weavers, whispers and grumblings.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE—*A small room in the cottage of* WILHELM ANSORGE *in Kaschbach in the mountains called Eulengebirge.*

The narrow room measures less than six feet from the dilapidated floor to the smoke-blackened rafters. Two young girls, EMMA *and* BERTHA BAUMERT, *sit at looms.* MOTHER BAUMERT, *a crippled old woman, sits on a stool by the bed, at her spooling wheel. Her son,* AUGUST, *twenty years old, an idiot with small body and head and long spiderlike limbs, sits on a footstool, also reeling yarn.*

The weak, rosy light of the setting sun shines through two small window openings in the left wall. These are partly pasted over with paper and partly filled with up with straw. The light falls on the pale, blond, loose hair of the girls, on their bare, bony shoulders and thin waxen necks, on the folds of their coarse chemises, which, with a short skirt of the roughest linen, constitute their entire clothing. The warm glow lights up the entire face, neck, and chest of the old woman. Her face is emaciated to a skeleton, with folds and wrinkles in the anemic skin. The sunken eyes are reddened and watery from the lint and smoke and from working by lamplight. She has a long goiter neck with sinews standing out. Her narrow chest is covered with faded shawls and rags. Part of the right wall, with the stove, stove bench, bedstead, and several gaudily tinted pictures of saints, is also lighted up. There are rags hanging on the bar of the stove to dry, and behind the stove, old worthless rubbish is piled up. On the bench are a few old pots and kitchen utensils; a heap of potato peelings is laid out to dry on a piece of paper. Skeins of yarn and reels hang from the rafters. Small baskets with bobbins stand beside the looms. In the back there is a low door without a lock; next to it, a bundle of willow switches leans against

the wall. Several broken peck baskets lie about. The room is filled with the noise of the looms: the rhythmic movement of the lathe which shakes the walls and the floor, the shuffle and clicking of the shuttle moving rapidly back and forth. This blends with the low constant humming of the spooling wheels that sounds like the buzzing of bumble bees.

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*In a pitiful exhausted voice, as the girls stop their weaving and bend over their webs.*) Do ya have to make knots again?

EMMA. (*The elder of the girls, twenty-two years old, is tying up the torn threads.*) This is the worst yarn!

BERTHA. (*Fifteen years old.*) The warp sure causes a lot of trouble.

EMMA. Where's he been so long? He's been gone since nine o'clock.

MOTHER BAUMERT. I should say so! Where can he be, girls?

BERTHA. Don't ya worry, mother!

MOTHER BAUMERT. I can't help it!

EMMA *continues weaving.*

BERTHA. Wait a minute, Emma!

EMMA. What is it?

BERTHA. I thought I heard somebody comin'.

EMMA. That'll be Ansorge comin' home.

FRITZ. (*A small four-year-old boy, barefoot and dressed in rags, comes in crying.*) Mother, I'm hungry.

EMMA. Wait, Fritzi, just you wait a bit. Grandfather's comin' soon. He's bringing bread and grain.

FRITZ. But I'm so hungry, Mama.

EMMA. I just told ya. Don't be so silly. He's comin' right away. He'll bring some nice bread and some coffee grain. When we stop workin', Mama'll take the potato peelin's to the farmer, and he'll give her a bit of buttermilk for her boy.

FRITZ. But where's grandfather gone?

EMMA. He's at the manufacturer's, deliverin' a web.

FRITZ. At the manufacturer's?

EMMA. Yes, Fritzi! Down at Dreissiger's, in Peterswaldau.

FRITZ. Will he get some bread there?

EMMA. Yes, yes, they'll give him some money, and then he can buy some bread.

FRITZ. Will they give grandfather lots a money?

EMMA. Oh, stop talkin', boy. (*She continues weaving, as does* BERTHA. *Then both stop again.*)

BERTHA. August, go and ask Ansorge if he won't give us a light.

AUGUST *leaves together with* FRITZ.

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*With ever-increasing childlike fear, almost whining.*) Children, children! Where can the man be?

BERTHA. Maybe he dropped in to see Hauffen.

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*Crying.*) If he just ain't gone to the tavern.

EMMA. I hope not, Mother! But our father ain't that kind.

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*Quite beside herself with a host of fears.*) Well . . . well . . . well, tell me what'll happen if he . . . if he comes home . . . if he drinks it all up and don't bring nothin' home? There ain't a handful of salt in the house, not a piece of bread . . . we need a shovelful of fuel. . . .

BERTHA. Don't ya worry, Mother! The moon's shining. We'll go to the woods. We'll take August along and bring back some firewood.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Sure, so the forester can catch ya?

ANSORGE. (*An old weaver, with a gigantic frame, who has to bend low in order to enter the room, sticks his head and the upper part of his body through the door. His hair and beard are unkempt.*) Well, what do ya want?

BERTHA. Ya could give us a light!

ANSORGE. (*Muffled, as if speaking in the presence of a sick person.*) It's still light enough.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Now ya'll even make us sit in the dark.

ANSORGE. I've got to do the best I can. (*He goes out.*)

BERTHA. Now ya see how stingy he is.

EMMA. Yeah, we got to sit here till he gets good and ready.

MRS. HEINRICH. (*Enters. She is thirty years old, pregnant. Her face is worn from sorrow and anxious waiting.*) Good evenin' to ya all.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Well, Mother Heinrich, what's the news?

MRS. HEINRICH. (*Limping.*) I've stepped on a piece of glass.

BERTHA. Come over here and set down. I'll see if I can't get it out.

MRS. HEINRICH. (*Sits down;* BERTHA *kneels in front of her and busies herself with* MRS. HEINRICH'S *foot.*)

MOTHER BAUMERT. How's things at home, Mother Heinrich?

MRS. HEINRICH. (*Breaks out in despair.*) Soon I won't be able to stand it no more. (*She fights in vain against a flood of tears. Then she weeps silently.*)

MOTHER BAUMERT. It'd be the best for the likes of us, Mother Heinrich, if the dear Lord would have pity on us and take us out of this world.

MRS. HEINRICH. (*Losing her self-control, weeps and cries out.*) My poor children are starvin'! (*She sobs and moans.*) I just don't know what to do. Ya try as hard as ya can, ya wear yourself out till ya drop. I'm more dead than alive, and still it ain't no different. Nine hungry mouths to feed and not enough to feed them. Where am I to get the food, huh? Last night I had a little bit of bread—it wasn't enough for the two littlest ones. Who was I supposed to give it to, huh? They all cried: Mama, me, Mama, me. . . . No, no! And all this while I'm still up and about. What'll it be when I have to take to my bed? The few potatoes we had was washed away. We ain't got a bite to eat.

BERTHA. (*Has removed the splinter and washed out the wound.*) We'll put a piece of cloth around it. (*To* EMMA.) Look and see if ya can find one.

MOTHER BAUMERT. We ain't no better off, Mother Heinrich.

MRS. HEINRICH. At least ya've still got your girls. Ya've got a husband who can work for ya, but mine—he fell down again this past week. He's had another spell, and I was that scared to death—I didn't know what to do. And after he's had one of them fits, he's laid up for at least a week.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Mine ain't no better. He's ready to collapse, too. He's got trouble with his chest and his back. And there ain't a single pfennig in the house either. If he don't bring some money home today, I don't know what we're goin' to do either.

EMMA. That's so, Mother Heinrich. We're so bad off, Father had to take little Ami with him . . . we had to have him butchered so we can get something real in our stomachs again.

MRS. HEINRICH. Ain't ya even got a handful of flour left over?

MOTHER BAUMERT. Not even that much, Mother Heinrich; there ain't a pinch of salt left in the house.

MRS. HEINRICH. Well, then I don't know what to do! (*Gets up, standing brooding.*) I really don't know what to do! (*Crying out in anger and panic.*) I'd be satisfied if it was nothin' but pig swill!—but I just can't go home empty-handed again. That just won't do. God forgive me. I don't know nothin' else to do. (*She limps out quickly, stepping only on the heel of her left foot.*)

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*Calls after her, warning.*) Mother Heinrich, don't ya go an' do nothin' foolish.

BERTHA. She won't do no harm to herself. Don't ya worry.

EMMA. She always acts like that. (*She sits at the loom again and weaves for a few seconds.*)

AUGUST *enters with a candle, lighting the way for his father,* OLD BAUMERT, *who drags in a bundle of yarn.*

MOTHER BAUMERT. My God, man, where in the world have ya been so long?

OLD BAUMERT. Ya don't have to snap at me like that, right away. Just let me catch my breath first. Better look an' see who's come in with me.

MORITZ JAEGER. (*Enters, stooping, through the door. He is a well-built, average-sized, red-cheeked soldier. His Hussar's cap sits jauntily on the side of his head; he wears good clothes and shoes and a clean shirt without a collar. He stands erect and gives a military salute. In a hearty voice.*) Good evening, Auntie Baumert.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Well, well, now! So you've come home again? And ya didn't forget us? Why, set down. Come here, set down.

EMMA. (*With her skirt cleans off a wooden stool and shoves it toward* JAEGER.) Good evenin', Moritz! Did ya come back to have another look at how poor folks is living?

JAEGER. Well, now, say, Emma! I never really could believe it! Why, you've got a boy who'll soon be big enough to be a soldier. Where did ya get him?

BERTHA. (*Takes the small amount of food that her father brought in, puts the meat in a pan, and shoves it in the oven while* AUGUST *builds a fire.*) Ya know the Weaver Finger, don't ya?

MOTHER BAUMERT. He used to live here in the cottage with us. He would have married her, but his lungs was almost completely gone then. I warned the girl often enough. But would she listen to me? Now, he's dead and gone and forgotten a long time and she'll have to see how she can support the boy. But now, you tell me, Moritz, how's things been goin' with you?

OLD BAUMERT. You be quiet, Mother, can't ya see he's had plenty to eat; he's laughin' at all of us; he's got clothes like a prince and a silver pocket watch, and on top of all that, ten silver thalers in cash.

JAEGER. (*Stands with his legs apart, showing off, a boastful smile on his face.*) I can't complain. I didn't have a bad time in the army.

OLD BAUMERT. He was an orderly to a captain. Just listen to him—he talks like elegant folks.

JAEGER. I've got so used to fine talk that I can't help it.

MOTHER BAUMERT. No, no, well, I never! Such a good-for-nothin' as you was, and comin' into such money. You never was good for nothin' much; ya couldn't unwind two spools in a row. But you was always off and away, settin' wrenboxes and robin snares. You'd rather do that. Well, ain't that the truth?

JAEGER. It's true, Auntie Baumert. And I didn't catch just robins, I caught swallows, too.

EMMA. No matter how often we used to say swallows was poison.

JAEGER. It was all the same to me. But how have all of you been getting along, Auntie Baumert?

MOTHER BAUMERT. O dear Lord Jesus, it's been awful hard these last four years. I've been havin' bad pains. Just look at my fingers. I really don't know if it's the rheumatiz or what. I'm in such misery! I can hardly move a muscle. Nobody knows the kind of pain I have to put up with.

OLD BAUMERT. She really has it bad now. She won't be with us long.

BERTHA. In the mornin' we got to dress her, in the evenin' we got to undress her. We got to feed her like a little baby.

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*Continuing in a complaining, tearful voice.*) I got to be waited on, hand and foot. I ain't just sick. I'm also a burden. How often I've prayed to the good Lord if he'd only call me away. O Lord, O Lord, my life's too hard, it really is. I don't know . . . people might think . . . but I've been used to working hard from the time I was a child. I've always been able to do my share and now, all at once—(*She tries, in vain, to get up.*)—I just can't do nothin', no more! I've got a good husband and good children, but if I've got to sit by and see. . . . See how those girls look! They ain't got hardly no blood in 'em. They got as much color as a sheet. They keep workin' away at the treadle if they get anything for it or not. What kind of life is that? They ain't been away from the treadle all year long. They ain't even earned enough so they could buy just a few clothes so they could be seen in public, or could step into church and get some comfort. They look like skeletons, they do, young girls of fifteen and twenty.

BERTHA. (*At the stove.*) It's smokin' again.

OLD BAUMERT. Yeah, just look at that smoke. Do ya think something can be done about it? It'll damn soon collapse, that stove. We'll have to let it collapse, and we'll just have to swallow the soot. All of us cough, one worse than the other. Anyone as coughs, coughs, and if it chokes us, and if our lungs are coughed up with it, nobody cares a bit.

JAEGER. Why, that's Ansorge's business, he has to fix it, doesn't he?

BERTHA. A lot he cares. He does enough complainin'.

MOTHER BAUMERT. He thinks we're takin' up too much room, as it is.

OLD BAUMERT. And if we make a fuss, out we go. He ain't seen a bit of rent from us for almost half a year.

MOTHER BAUMERT. A man like that livin' alone could at least be civil.

OLD BAUMERT. He ain't got nothin' neither, Mother. Things is hard enough with him, too, even if he don't make a fuss about his troubles.

MOTHER BAUMERT. He's still got his house.

OLD BAUMERT. Oh, no, Mother, what are ya talkin' about? There ain't hardly a stick of wood in this house he can call his own.

JAEGER. (*Has sat down. He takes a short pipe with a decorative tassel out of one coat pocket and a flask of whiskey out of the other.*) This can't go on much longer. I'm amazed at how things are with you people around here. Why, dogs in the city live better than you live.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Eagerly.*) That's the truth, ain't it? You know it, too? And if ya complain, they tell ya it's just hard times.

ANSORGE. (*Enters with an earthen bowl full of soup in one hand, a half-finished basket in the other.*) Welcome home, Moritz! So you're here again?

JAEGER. Thank you, Father Ansorge.

ANSORGE. (*Shoving his bowl into the oven.*) Say, if you don't look like a count!

OLD BAUMERT. Show him your fine watch. He's brought back a new suit, too, and ten silver thalers in cash.

ANSORGE. (*Shaking his head.*) Well, well! Well, well!

EMMA. (*Putting the potato peelings into a little sack.*) I'll take the peelin's over now. Maybe it'll be enough for a little skimmed milk. (*She goes out.*)

JAEGER. (*While all pay close and eager attention to him.*) Well, now, just think how often you've made it hot as hell for me. They'll teach you manners, Moritz, you always said, just you wait, when they take you into the army. Well, now you

see, it's gone pretty well with me. In half a year, I had my stripes. You have to be willing, that's the main thing. I polished the sergeant's boots; I curried his horse, I brought him his beer. I was as quick as a weasel. And I was always on my toes; damn it, my gear was always clean and sparkling. I was the first one in the stable, the first one at roll call, the first one in the saddle; and when it came to the attack—forward! Hell and damnation! I was as keen as a hunting dog. I always said to myself, nobody'll help you here, you can't get out of this job; and I'd pull myself together and do it; and then, finally, the captain said about me, in front of the whole squadron: That's the way a Hussar ought to be. (*Silence. He lights his pipe.*)

ANSORGE. (*Shaking his head.*) My, and such luck you had! Well, well! Well, well! (*He sits down on the floor, with the willow switches beside him. Holding the basket between his legs, he continues mending it.*)

OLD BAUMERT. Let's just hope that ya brought us some of your good luck along with ya. Now maybe we could have a drink with ya, huh?

JAEGER. Why, sure, Father Baumert, and when this is gone, there'll be more. (*He throws a coin down on the table.*)

ANSORGE. (*With foolish, grinning amazement.*) O Lord, such goin's on . . . over there, there's a roast sizzlin' and here's a quart of whiskey—(*He drinks from the bottle.*)—to your health, Moritz. Well, well! Well, well! (*From now on, the whiskey bottle is passed around.*)

OLD BAUMERT. If we could only have a little roast on holidays, instead of not seein' no meat at all, year in and year out. This way, ya've got to wait till a little dog crosses your path like this one did four weeks ago. And that don't happen often these days.

ANSORGE. Did ya have Ami killed?

OLD BAUMERT. He would've starved to death. . . .

ANSORGE. Well, well! Well, well!

MOTHER BAUMERT. And he was such a nice, friendly little dog.

JAEGER. Are you still so eager 'round here for roast dog?

OLD BAUMERT. O Lord, Lord, if we could only get our fill of it.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Yes, a piece of meat like that is sure rare around here.

OLD BAUMERT. Ain't ya got no appetite for such things no more? Well, just stay here with us, Moritz, and ya'll soon get it back.

ANSORGE. (*Sniffing.*) Well, well! Well, well! That's something that tastes good, and it sure gives off a nice smell.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Sniffing.*) The real thing, ya might say.

ANSORGE. Now tell us what you think, Moritz. You know how things go, out there in the world. Will things ever be different here with us weavers, or what?

JAEGER. I should hope so.

ANSORGE. We can't live and we can't die up here. Things is really bad with us, believe me. We fight to the last, but in the end we have to give in. The wolf is always at the door. In the old days, when I could still work at the looms, I could half-way get along, in spite of hunger and hardship. It's been a long time since I've been able to get some real work. I can hardly make a livin' weavin' baskets. I work till late into the night and when I fall worn out into bed, I've slaved for just a few pfennigs. You got a' education, now you tell me—can anyone really make out in such hard times? I got to lay out three thalers for taxes on the house, one thaler for land taxes, three thalers for interest. I can figure on makin' fourteen thalers. That leaves me seven thalers to live on all year. Out of that, I have to buy food, firewood, clothes, shoes, and patches and thread for mendin', and ya have to have a place to live, and goodness knows what else. Is it any wonder a man can't pay the interest?

OLD BAUMERT. Somebody sure ought to go to Berlin and explain to the King how things is with us.

JAEGER. That won't do much good, either, Father Baumert. There's already been plenty said about it in the newspapers. But the rich, they turn and twist the whole thing so . . . they out-devil the very best Christians.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Shaking his head.*) To think that in Berlin they ain't got no more sense than that.

ANSORGE. Tell me, Moritz, do you think that can really be? Ain't there a law against it? When I go and pinch and scrape and work my fingers to the bone weaving baskets and still can't pay the interest, can the farmer take my cottage away from me? There ain't a farmer who don't want his money. I just don't know what's to become of me if I've got to get out of my cottage. . . . (*Speaking with a choked voice, through tears.*) Here I was born, here my father sat at his loom, for more than forty years. How often he said to Mother: Mother, he said, when my time comes, you hold on to the cottage. This cottage I've worked for, he told her. Here, every single nail stands for a night's work, every board, a year's dry bread. Ya'd really think. . . .

JAEGER. They'll take your last pfennig, they're capable of it.

ANSORGE. Well, well! Well, well! But if it comes to that, I'd rather they carried me out than have to walk out in my old age. Dyin' ain't nothin'! My father was glad enough to die—only at the end, the very end, he was a bit scared. But when I crawled into the bed with him, he quieted down again. When ya think about it, at the time I was a boy of thirteen. I was tired, and I fell asleep by the sick man. I didn't know no better—and when I woke up, he was stone cold.

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*After a pause.*) Reach into the stove, Bertha, and hand Ansorge his soup.

BERTHA. Here it is, Father Ansorge.

ANSORGE. (*Weeping, while he eats.*) Well, well! Well, well!

OLD BAUMERT *has begun to eat meat out of the pan.*

MOTHER BAUMERT. Why, Father—Father, you wait. Let Bertha set it out on the table, proper.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Chewing.*) It was two years ago that I took the sacrament last. I sold my Sunday suit right afterward. We bought a little piece of pork with the money. I ain't had no meat since then till this very evenin'.

JAEGER. We don't need meat; the manufacturers eat it for us. They wade around in fat way up to here. If anybody doesn't believe that, he only needs to go down to Bielau or Peterswaldau. They'd be amazed —one manufacturer's mansion right after the other—one palace right after the other. With plate glass windows and little towers and fine iron fences. No, no, that doesn't look anything like hard times. There's plenty there for roasts and pastries, for carriages and coaches, for governesses, and who knows what all. They're so puffed up they don't really know what to do with all their high and mighty riches.

ANSORGE. In the old days, it was all different. In those days the manufacturers gave the weavers enough to get along on. Today, they squander it all themselves. I say that's because them people in high places don't believe in God no more, or in the devil, neither. They don't know nothin' about commandments and punishment. So they steal our last bite of bread, and weaken and undermine us wherever they can. Them people are the ones that's causin' all the trouble. If our manufacturers was good men, there wouldn't be no hard times for us.

JAEGER. You listen here, and I'll read you something nice. (*He takes a few sheets of paper from his pocket.*) Come on, August, run to the tavern and get an-

other bottle. Why, August, you're always laughing.

MOTHER BAUMERT. I don't know what's the matter with the boy, he's always happy. No matter what happens, he laughs till his sides are ready to split. Now, quick! (AUGUST *goes out with the empty whiskey flask.*) Huh, Father, you know what tastes good, don't ya?

OLD BAUMERT. (*Chewing, his spirits rising from the food and the whiskey.*) Moritz, you're our man. You can read and write. You know how things is with the weavers. You have a heart for us poor weaver folk. You ought to take up our cause around here.

JAEGER. If that's all. That'd be fine with me. I'd be glad to give those devils of manufacturers something to think about. I wouldn't mind a bit. I'm an easy-going fellow, but when I once get my dander up and get mad, I'd take Dreissiger in one hand and Dittrich in the other and I'd knock their heads together so hard sparks would shoot out of their eyes. If we could manage to stick together, we could start such an uproar against the manufacturers. . . . We wouldn't need the King for that, or the government, either; we could simply say, we want this and that, and we do not want this or that, and they'd soon whistle a different tune. If they once see we've got spunk, they'd soon pull in their horns. I know their kind! They're cowardly bastards.

MOTHER BAUMERT. And that's really the truth. I certainly ain't bad. I was always one to say, there has to be rich people, too. But when it comes to this. . . .

JAEGER. For my part, the devil can take them all. That's what the whole bunch deserves.

BERTHA. Where's father? (OLD BAUMERT *has quietly left.*)

MOTHER BAUMERT. I don't know where he could've gone.

BERTHA. Could it be he ain't used to meat no more?

MOTHER BAUMERT. (*Beside herself, crying.*) Now, ya see. now ya see! He can't even keep it down. He's had to throw it up, all that nice little bit of good food.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Re-enters, crying with rage.*) No, no! It'll soon be all over with me. I'm too far gone. Ya finally get ahold of something good, and ya can't even keep it down. (*He sits down on the stove bench, weeping.*)

JAEGER. (*In a sudden fanatic outburst.*) And, at the same time, there are people, judges, not far from here—pot-bellies—who haven't a thing to do all year long except idle away their time. And they'll say the weavers could get along fine, if only they weren't so lazy.

ANSORGE. They ain't men, they're monsters.

JAEGER. Never mind, he's got what's coming to him. Baecker and I, we've given him a piece of our mind, and before we left, we sang "Bloody Justice."

ANSORGE. O Lord, O Lord, is that the song?

JAEGER. Yes, yes, and I have it here.

ANSORGE. I think it's called "Dreissiger's Son," ain't it?

JAEGER. I'll read it to you.

MOTHER BAUMERT. Who made up the song?

JAEGER. That, nobody knows. Now listen.

He reads, spelling it out like a schoolboy, accenting it badly, but with unmistakably strong feeling. Despair, pain, courage, hate, thirst for revenge—are all expressed.

JAEGER.

Here a bloody justice thrives
More terrible than lynching
Here sentence isn't even passed
To quickly end a poor man's life.

Men are slowly tortured here,
Here is the torture chamber,
Here every heavy sigh that's heard
Bears witness to man's misery.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Is deeply moved by the words of the song. He frequently has difficulty in resisting the temptation to interrupt* JAEGER. *Now he can no longer contain himself; stammering amid laughter and tears, to his wife.*) "Here is the torture chamber." Whoever wrote that, Mother, spoke the truth. You can bear witness to that . . . how does it go? "Here every sigh that's heard. . . ." What's the rest? . . . "bear witness . . ."

JAEGER. "Bears witness to man's misery."

OLD BAUMERT. Ya know, standin' or sittin', we sigh with misery day after day.

ANSORGE *has stopped working, his body bent over in deep emotion.* MOTHER BAUMERT *and* BERTHA *are continuously wiping their eyes.*

JAEGER. (*Continues reading.*)

The Dreissigers are hangmen all,
Their servants are the henchmen
All of them oppressing us
And never showing mercy.

You scoundrels all, you devil's brood

OLD BAUMERT. (*Trembling with rage, stamps the floor.*) Yes, devil's brood!!!

JAEGER. (*Reads.*)

You demons from the pit of hell
Who steal the poor man's house and home
A curse will be your payment.

ANSORGE. Well, well, and that deserves a curse.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Doubling his fist, threatening.*) "Who steal the poor man's house and home. . . !"

JAEGER. (*Reads.*)

Begging, pleading doesn't help,
In vain is all complaining,
"If you don't like it you can go,
And starve until you're dead."

OLD BAUMERT. What does it say? "In vain is all complaining"? Every word, every single word. . . . It's all as true as the Bible. "Begging, pleading doesn't help."

ANSORGE. Well, well! Well, well! Then nothin' will help.

JAEGER. (*Reads.*)

Now think about the misery
And pain of these poor wretches
Without a bite of bread at home
Are they not to be pitied?

Pitied! Ha! Such human feeling
Is unknown to you savages.
Your goal is known to everyone,
To bleed us poor men dry.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Springs up, in mad frenzy.*) "Bleed us poor men dry." That's right, bleed a poor man dry. Here I stand, Robert Baumert, master weaver from Kaschbach. Who can step up and say . . . I've been a good man all my life, and now look at me. What good's it done me? How do I look? What have they made of me? "Men are slowly tortured here." (*He stretches out his arms.*) Here, feel these, nothin' but skin and bones. "You scoundrels all, you devil's brood!!" (*He collapses onto a chair, weeping with anger and despair.*)

ANSORGE. (*Flings the basket into the corner, gets up, his entire body trembling with rage, stammers.*) There must be a change, I tell ya, here and now. We won't stand for it no more! We won't stand for it no more, come what may.

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE—*The tap room in the principal tavern in Peterswaldau. It is a large room, the raftered ceiling of which is supported at the center by a wooden pillar, around which there is a table. To the right of the pillar—one of its jambs hidden by the pil-*

lar—is a door in the back wall leading to another large room in which barrels and brewing utensils can be seen. In the corner to the right of the door is the bar—a high wooden counter with shelves for mugs, glasses, and the like; behind the bar is a cupboard with rows of liquor bottles; between the counter and the liquor cabinet there is a narrow space for the bartender. In front of the bar there is a table covered with a brightly colored cloth. A decorative lamp hangs above the table, around which there are a number of cane-chairs. Not far off in the right wall, a door leads to a room used for special occasions. Nearer the front, to the right, an old grandfather's clock is ticking. To the left of the entrance, against the rear wall, stands a table with bottles and glasses, and beyond it, in the corner, a large tile stove. There are three small windows in the left wall, under them a bench. In front of each window there is a large wooden table with its narrow end toward the wall. On the broad side of the tables are benches with backs and at the other narrow end, a single wooden chair. The walls are painted blue and are hung with placards, posters, and oil prints, among them the portrait of the King of Prussia, William IV.

Innkeeper WELZEL, *a good-natured giant of around fifty, is drawing beer into a glass from a barrel behind the counter.* MRS. WELZEL *is ironing at the stove. She is a dignified-looking woman, neatly dressed, not quite thirty-five years old.* ANNA WELZEL, *a well-dressed pretty girl of seventeen with magnificent reddish-blonde hair, sits behind the table, embroidering. For a moment she looks up from her work and listens to the sounds of children's voices singing a funeral hymn, off in the distance.* WIEGAND, *the carpenter, in his work clothes, sits at the same table with a glass of Bavarian beer in front of him. He gives the appearance of being the sort of man who knows what is needed to get ahead in the world: cunning, speed, and ruthless determination.* A TRAVELING SALESMAN *sits at the pillar table, busily devouring a chopped steak. He is of medium height, well-fed, rather puffy, disposed to heartiness, lively and impudent. He is dressed in the latest fashion. His baggage, consisting of traveling bag, sample case, umbrella, overcoat, and steamer rug—lie on chairs beside him.*

WELZEL. (*Carrying a glass of beer to the* SALESMAN, *aside to* WIEGAND.) The devil's loose in Peterswaldau today.

WIEGAND. (*In sharp, trumpeting voice.*) Well, of course, it's delivery day up at Dreissiger's.

MRS. WELZEL. Yes, but they weren't always so noisy.

WIEGAND. Well, it might be on account of the two hundred additional weavers that Dreissiger's gettin' ready to take on.

MRS. WELZEL. (*At her ironing.*) Yes, yes, that's it. If he wanted two hundred, probably six hundred will have showed up. We've got more'n enough of that sort.

WIEGAND. Lord, yes, there's plenty of them. And no matter how hard it goes with them, they don't die out. They bring more children into the world than we can ever use. (*For a moment, the hymn can be more clearly heard.*) And to add to it, there's a funeral today, too. Weaver Fabich died.

WELZEL. It took him long enough. He's been goin' around for years lookin' like a ghost.

WIEGAND. I tell ya, Welzel, never in all my life have I glued together such a tiny, shabby coffin. It was such a measly little corpse, it didn't even weigh ninety pounds.

SALESMAN. (*Chewing.*) I really don't understand . . . wherever you look, in all the newspapers, you read the most horrible stories about conditions among the weavers, and you get the impression that all the people here are half-starved. And

then you see such a funeral! Just as I came into the village, there were brass bands, schoolteachers, children, the Pastor, and a whole string of people; my God, you'd think the Emperor of China was being buried. If these people can pay for that. . . ! (*He drinks his beer. Then he puts the glass down and suddenly speaks in a frivolous tone.*) Isn't that so, Miss? Don't you agree with me?

ANNA *smiles, embarrassed, and continues busily with her embroidery.*

SALESMAN. Those must be slippers for Papa.

WELZEL. Oh, I don't like to wear them things.

SALESMAN. Just listen to that! I'd give half my fortune if those slippers were for me.

MRS. WELZEL. He just don't appreciate such things.

WIEGAND. (*After he has coughed several times and moved his chair about, as if he wanted to speak.*) The gentleman has expressed himself mighty well about the funeral. Now tell us, young lady, isn't that just a small funeral?

SALESMAN. Yes, I must say. . . . That must cost a tremendous amount of money. Where do these people get the money for it?

WIEGAND. You'll forgive me for sayin' it, sir, there is so much folly among the poorer classes hereabouts. If you don't mind my sayin' so, they have such exaggerated ideas of the dutiful respect and the obligations that's due the deceased and the blessed dead. And when it's a matter of deceased parents, they are so superstitious that the descendants and the next of kin scrape together their last penny. And what the children can't raise, they borrow from the nearest money lender. And then they're in debts up to their necks; they'll be owing His Reverence the Pastor, the sexton, and everybody else in the neighborhood. And drinks and victuals and all the other necessary things. Oh yes, I approve of respectful duty on the part of children toward their parents, but not so that the mourners are burdened down the rest of their lives by such obligations.

SALESMAN. I beg your pardon, but I should think the Pastor would talk them out of it.

WIEGAND. Beggin' your pardon, sir, but here I would like to interpose that every little congregation has its ecclesiastical house of worship and must support its reverend pastor. The high clergy get a wonderful revenue and profit from such a big funeral. The more elaborate such a funeral can be arranged, the more profitable is the offertory that flows from it. Whoever knows the conditions of the workers hereabouts can, with unauthoritative certainty, affirm that the pastors only with reluctance tolerate small and quiet funerals.

HORNIG. (*Enters. A small, bow-legged old man with a strap over his shoulders and chest. He is a rag picker.*) Good mornin'. I'd like a drink. Well, young lady, any rags? Miss Anna, in my cart I've got beautiful hair ribbons, lingerie, ribbons, garters, pins and hairpins, hooks and eyes. I'll give them all to ya for a few rags. (*Changing his tone.*) Then, out of the rags, they'll make fine white paper, and your sweetheart'll write ya a lovely letter on it.

ANNA. Oh no, thank you, I don't want a sweetheart.

MRS. WELZEL. (*Puts a hot bolt in the iron.*) That's the way the girl is. She don't want to think of gettin' married.

SALESMAN. (*Jumps up, apparently surprised and pleased, steps up to the table, and holds out his hand to* ANNA.) That's sensible, Miss. You're just like me. O.K., let's shake on it! We'll both stay single.

ANNA. (*Blushing, gives him her hand.*) But surely you are married?

SALESMAN. God forbid, I just make believe I am. You think, perhaps, because I

wear this ring? I just put it on my finger to prevent people from taking unfair advantage of my charming personality. Of you, I'm not afraid. (*He puts the ring in his pocket.*) Seriously, Miss, tell me, don't you ever want to get just the least bit married?

ANNA. (*Shaking her head.*) And why should I?

MRS. WELZEL. She'll stay single unless something very special turns up.

SALESMAN. Well, why not? One wealthy Silesian businessman married his mother's maid, and that rich manufacturer, Dreissiger, took an innkeeper's daughter, too. She isn't half as pretty as you, Miss, and now she rides in a carriage with liveried servants. Why not, indeed? (*He walks around, stretching his legs.*) I'll have a cup of coffee.

ANSORGE *and* OLD BAUMERT *enter, each with a bundle, and quietly and humbly join* HORNIG *at the front table to the left.*

WELZEL. Welcome, Father Ansorge. Is it you we're seein' again?

HORNIG. Did ya finally crawl out of your smoky nest?

ANSORGE. (*Awkwardly and visibly embarrassed.*) I went and got myself another web.

OLD BAUMERT. He's ready to work for 10 groschen.

ANSORGE. I never would've done it, but there's been an end to my basket weavin'.

WIEGAND. It's always better than nothin'. Ya know he's doin' it so ya'll have work. I'm very well acquainted with Dreissiger. A week ago I took out the storm windows for him. We were talkin' about it. He just does it out of pity.

ANSORGE. Well, well—well, well.

WELZEL. (*Setting a glass of whiskey in front of each of the weavers.*) Your health! Now tell me, Ansorge, how long has it been since ya stopped shavin'? The gentleman would like to know.

SALESMAN. (*Calls across.*) Now, Mr. Welzel, you know I didn't say that. I just noticed the master weaver because of his venerable appearance. One doesn't often run across such a powerful figure.

ANSORGE. (*Scratches his head, embarrassed.*) Well, well—well, well.

SALESMAN. Such extremely powerful, primitive men are seldom seen these days. We are so softened by civilization . . . but I find I still get pleasure out of such natural, unspoiled strength. What bushy eyebrows! Such a heavy beard. . . .

HORNIG. Well, look here, now I'll tell ya, sir—the people hereabouts are too poor to go to the barber, and they haven't been able to afford a razor in many a day. What grows, grows. They haven't anything to spend on the outer man.

SALESMAN. But I ask you, my good man, where would I. . . . (*Softly, to the tavern keeper.*) Would it be proper to offer the hairy one a glass of beer?

WELZEL. God forbid. He'll take nothin'. He's got queer notions.

SALESMAN. Well, then I won't. With your permission, Miss? (*He takes a seat at the table with her.*) I can assure you, from the time I came in, I've been so struck by your hair, such luster, such softness, such a mass of it! (*Delighted, he kisses his finger tips.*) And what color . . . like ripe wheat. What a furor you would cause if you came to Berlin with hair like that. *Parole d'honneur,* with such hair you could be presented at Court. (*Leaning back, looking at her hair.*) Exquisite, really exquisite.

WIEGAND. It's on account of her hair that she's got such a pretty nickname.

SALESMAN. What do they call her?

ANNA. (*Keeps on laughing to herself.*) Oh, don't you listen to them.

HORNIG. They call you Red Fox, don't they?

WELZEL. Now stop that! Stop turnin' the girl's head altogether. They've already put enough high and mighty ideas in her head. Today she wants a count, tomorrow it'll have to be a prince.

MRS. WELZEL. Don't ya run the girl down, man. It's no crime for a person to want to get ahead. Not everybody thinks the way you do. That wouldn't be good, either. Then nobody'd get ahead, then everybody'd always stay in the same old place. If Dreissiger's grandfather had thought the way you do, he'd still be a poor weaver. Now they're rich as can be. Old Tromtra, too, was no more than a poor weaver, now he owns twelve big estates and on top of that, he's got a title.

WIEGAND. You must admit, Welzel, on that score, your wife's right. I can vouch for that. If I'd thought like you, would I have seven journeymen today?

HORNIG. You sure know how to bide your time, we'll have to give ya credit for that. Even before the weaver's off his feet, you're already gettin' his coffin ready.

WIEGAND. You've got to tend to business if you want to get ahead.

HORNIG. Yes, you tend to yours, all right. You know better than the doctor does, when a weaver's child is goin' to die.

WIEGAND. (*No longer smiling, suddenly furious.*) And you know better than the police does where the thieves sit among the weavers, the ones who hold out a few bobbins every week. Ya come after rags and ya get a bobbin of yarn, too, if there's a chance.

HORNIG. And your livin' lays in the graveyard. The more that go to rest on your wood shavings, the better it is for you. When ya look at all the children's graves, ya pat your belly and ya say, this year's been a good one again; the little rascals dropped like June bugs from the trees. So I can afford a bottle of whiskey again this week.

WIEGAND. Anyhow, at least I don't trade in stolen goods.

HORNIG. At the most, you bill some rich cotton manufacturer twice, or you take a few extra boards from Dreissiger's barn if the moon ain't shinin'.

WIEGAND. (*Turning his back on* HORNIG.) Oh, go on talkin' to anyone you please, but leave me alone. (*Suddenly.*) Hornig, the liar!

HORNIG. Coffin-maker!

WIEGAND. (*To the others.*) He knows how to bewitch cattle.

HORNIG. Look out, let me tell ya, or I'll put the sign on you. (WIEGAND *turns pale.*)

MRS. WELZEL. (*Had gone out, and now sets a cup of coffee down in front of the* SALESMAN.) Would you perhaps rather have your coffee in the other room?

SALESMAN. Whatever put that idea in your head? (*With a longing look at* ANNA.) I'll stay here until I die.

A YOUNG FORESTER *and a* FARMER *enter, the latter carrying a whip.* (*Together.*) Good morning! (*They stop at the bar.*)

FARMER. We'll have two ginger beers.

WELZEL. Welcome to both of you! (*He pours the drinks; they both take their glasses, touch them to each other, take a sip, and place them back on the bar.*)

SALESMAN. Well, Forester, have you had a long trip?

FORESTER. Pretty far. I've come from Steinseiffersdorf.

FIRST *and* SECOND OLD WEAVERS *enter and sit down next to* ANSORGE, BAUMERT, *and* HORNIG.

SALESMAN. Pardon me, sir, are you one of Count Hochheim's foresters?

FORESTER. No, I'm one of Count Kailsch's.

SALESMAN. Oh, of course, of course—that's what I meant to say. It's most confusing here with all the counts and barons and other people of rank. You've got to have a good memory. What are you carrying the ax for?

FORESTER. I took it away from some thieves I caught stealing wood.

OLD BAUMERT. His Lordship is sure strict about a few sticks of firewood.

SALESMAN. I beg your pardon, it would

scarcely do if everybody were to take. . . .

OLD BAUMERT. Beggin' your pardon, it's the same here as everywhere else with the big and the little thieves; there are those that carry on a wholesale lumber business and get rich from stolen wood, but if a poor weaver so much as. . . .

FIRST OLD WEAVER. (*Interrupts* BAUMERT.) We don't dare pick up a single twig, but the lords, they skin us alive. There's insurance money to pay, spinnin' money, payments in kind; then we have to run errands for nothin' and work on the estate, whether we want to or not.

ANSORGE. And that's the truth: what the manufacturers leave us, the noblemen take away.

SECOND OLD WEAVER. (*Has taken a seat at the next table.*) I've said it to the gentleman hisself. Beggin' your pardon, sir, I says to him, I can't do so many days' work on the estate this year. I just can't do it! And why not? Forgive me, but the water has ruined everything. My little bit of ground's been all washed away. I've got to slave night and day if I'm to keep alive. Such a flood . . . I tell ya, I just stood there and wrung my hands. That good soil washed right down the hill and straight into my cottage; and that fine, expensive seed. . . ! Oh my Lord, I just howled into the wind. I cried for a week, till I couldn't see no more. . . . And after that I wore myself out pushin' eighty wheelbarrows of dirt up the hill.

FARMER. (*Roughly.*) You do set up an awful howl, I must say. We all have to put up with what Heaven sends us. And if it don't go good in other ways with ya, who's to blame but yourselves? When times was good, what did ya do then? Ya gambled and drank it all up, that's what ya did. If ya had put something aside at that time, ya'd have had something saved for now, and ya wouldn't have had to steal wood and yarn.

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. (*Standing with several friends in the other room, shouts through the door.*) A farmer's always a farmer, even if he sleeps till nine every mornin'.

FIRST OLD WEAVER. That's a fact; the farmer and the nobleman, they're two of a kind. If a weaver wants a place to live, the farmer says I'll give ya a little hole to live in. You pay me a nice rent, and help me bring in my hay and my grain, and if ya don't like it, ya'll see what happens. Every one of them's just like the next one.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Fiercely.*) We're just like an old apple that everybody takes a bite out of.

FARMER. (*Irritated.*) Oh, you starved wretches, what are you good for, anyway? Can ya handle a plow? Can ya even plow a straight furrow, or pitch fifteen shocks of oats onto a wagon? You're good for nothin' but loafin', and lyin' abed with your women. You're no good at all. You're no-account bums. No use at all.

(*He pays and leaves. The* FORESTER *follows him, laughing.* WELZEL, *the* CARPENTER, *and* MRS. WELZEL *laugh out loud, the* SALESMAN *chuckles. Then the laughter quiets down, and there is silence.*)

HORNIG. A farmer like that's just like a bull. As if I didn't know how bad things was around here. All the things ya get to see up here in the villages. Four and five people layin' naked on a single straw ticking.

SALESMAN. (*In a gentle, rebuking tone.*) Permit me, my good man, to observe that there is a wide difference of opinion in regard to the distress in this region. If you can read. . . .

HORNIG. Oh, I read everything in the papers as well as you do. No, no, I know these things from goin' around and mixin' with the people. When a man's lugged a pack around for forty years, he learns a thing or two. What happened at the Fullers? The children, they scratched

around in the dung heap with the neighbors' geese. Those people died there—naked—on the cold stone floor. They had to eat stinkin' weaver's glue, they was so hungry. Hunger killed them off by the hundreds.

SALESMAN. If you can read, you must be aware that the government has had a thorough investigation made and that. . . .

HORNIG. We know all that. We know all that. The government sends a gentleman who before he sets out knows everything better than if he'd seen it himself. He walks around the village a little where the brook widens and where the best houses are. He won't dirty his good, shiny shoes goin' any farther. He thinks everything is probably just as beautiful everywhere else, and climbs into his carriage, and drives home again. And then he writes to Berlin that he saw no hardships at all. If he'd had a little bit of patience, though, and had climbed around in the village up to where the brook comes in and across it or, even better, off to the side where the little shacks are scattered, the old straw huts on the hills that are sometimes so black and broken-down they wouldn't be worth the match it'd take to set 'em afire, then he'd have made an altogether different report to Berlin. Those gentlemen from the government ought to have come to me, them that didn't want to believe that there was no hardships here. I would've showed them something, I would've opened their eyes to all the hunger-holes around here.

(*The singing of the "Weavers' Song" is heard outside.*)

WELZEL. They're singin' that devil's song again.

WIEGAND. Yes, they're turnin' the whole village upside down.

MRS. WELZEL. It's like there's something in the air.

JAEGER *and* BAECKER, *arm in arm, at the head of a band of young weavers, noisily enter the other room, and then come into the bar.*

JAEGER. Squadron halt! Dismount!

The new arrivals seat themselves at the various tables at which weavers are already sitting, and start conversations with them.

HORNIG. (*Calling to* BAECKER.) Say, tell me, what's up that ya've got such a big crowd together?

BAECKER. (*Significantly.*) Maybe something's goin' to happen. Right, Moritz?

HORNIG. You don't say! Don't do nothin' foolish.

BAECKER. Blood's flowed already. Do ya want to see?

He pushes back his sleeve, stretches out his arm and shows him bleeding tattoo marks on his upper arm. Many of the young weavers at the other tables do the same.

BAECKER. We were at Barber Schmidt's havin' ourselves tattooed.

HORNIG. Well, now that's clear. No wonder there's so much noise in the streets, with such rascals tearin' around. . . !

JAEGER. (*Showing off, in a loud voice.*) Two quarts, right away, Welzel! I'll pay for it. Maybe you think I don't have the dough? Well, just you wait! If we wanted to, we could drink beer and lap up coffee till tomorrow morning as well as a traveling salesman. (*Laughter among the young weavers.*)

SALESMAN. (*With comic surprise.*) Who or whom are you talking about—me?

(*The tavern keeper, his wife, their daughter,* WIEGAND, *and the* SALESMAN, *all laugh.*)

JAEGER. Always him who asks.

SALESMAN. Allow me to say, young man, that things seem to be going right well with you.

JAEGER. I can't complain, I'm a salesman for ready-made clothing. I go fifty-fifty with the manufacturers. The hun-

grier the weavers grow, the fatter I get. The greater their poverty, the fuller my cupboard.

BAECKER. Well done. Your health, Moritz!

WELZEL. (*Has brought the whiskey; on the way back to the bar, he stops and, in his usual phlegmatic and even manner, turns slowly to the weavers. Quietly and emphatically.*) You let the gentleman alone. He ain't done nothin' to you.

YOUNG WEAVERS' VOICES. We ain't done nothin' to him, either.

MRS. WELZEL *has exchanged a few words with the* SALESMAN. *She takes the cup and the rest of the coffee into the next room. The* SALESMAN *follows her amidst the laughter of the weavers.*

YOUNG WEAVERS' VOICES. (*Singing.*) The Dreissigers are hangmen all, Their servants are the henchmen. . . .

WELZEL. Sh, Sh! Sing that song wherever ya want to, but I won't allow it here.

FIRST OLD WEAVER. He's quite right. Stop that singin'.

BAECKER. (*Shouts.*) But we've got to march past Dreissiger's again. He's got to hear our song once more.

WIEGAND. Don't go too far, or he might take it the wrong way.

Laughter and cries of "Ho-ho."

OLD WITTIG. (*A gray-haired blacksmith, bareheaded, wearing a leather apron and wooden shoes, and covered with soot, as if he had just come from the smithy, enters and stands at the bar, waiting for a glass of brandy.*) Let 'em make a little noise. Barkin' dogs don't bite.

OLD WEAVERS' VOICES. Wittig, Wittig!

WITTIG. Here he is. What do ya want?

OLD WEAVERS' VOICES. Wittig is here.—Wittig, Wittig!—Come here, Wittig, set with us!—Come over here, Wittig!

WITTIG. I'm awful careful about settin' with such blockheads.

JAEGER. Come on, have a drink on me.

WITTIG. Oh, you keep your liquor. When I drink, I'll pay for my own.

(*He takes his glass of brandy and sits down at the table with* BAUMERT *and* ANSORGE. *He pats the latter on the belly.*) What do the weavers eat nowadays? Sauerkraut and plenty of lice.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Ecstatically.*) But what if they wasn't to put up with it no more?

WITTIG. (*With feigned surprise, staring stupidly at the weaver.*) Well, well, well, Heinerle, tell me, is that really you? (*Laughs without restraint.*) I laugh myself sick at you people. Old Baumert wants to start a rebellion. Now we're in for it: now the tailors'll start, too, then the baa-lambs'll be rising up, then the mice and the rats. Good Lord, what a time that'll be!

He holds his sides with laughter.

OLD BAUMERT. Look here, Wittig, I'm the same man I used to be. And I tell ya even now if things could be settled peaceable, it'd be better.

WITTIG. Like hell it'll be settled peaceable. Where has anything like this ever been settled peaceable? Maybe things was settled peaceable in France? Maybe Robespierre patted the hands of the rich? There it was just "allay," go ahead! Always up to the guillotine! Let's go. It had to be "along songfong." Roast geese just don't fly into your mouth.

OLD BAUMERT. If I could just halfway earn my livin'. . . .

FIRST OLD WEAVER. We're fed up, up to here, Wittig.

SECOND OLD WEAVER. We don't even want to go home, no more. . . . Whether we work or whether we lay down and sleep, we starve either way.

FIRST OLD WEAVER. At home ya go completely crazy.

ANSORGE. It's all the same to me now, no matter what happens.

OLD WEAVERS' VOICES. (*With mounting excitement.*) There's no peace left nowhere.—We ain't even got the spirit to

work no more.—Up our way in Steinkunzendorf there's a man settin' by the brook all day long and washin' hisself, naked as God made him. . . . He's gone completely out of his head.

THIRD OLD WEAVER. (*Rises, moved by the spirit, and begins to "speak with tongues," raising his finger threateningly.*) Judgment Day is comin'! Don't join with the rich and the gentry. Judgment Day is comin'! Lord God of Sabaoth. . . .

Several laugh. He is pushed down into his chair.

WELZEL. All he has to do is drink just one glass of liquor and his head's in a whirl.

THIRD OLD WEAVER. (*Continues.*) Hearken, they don't believe in God nor hell nor heaven. They just mock at religion.

FIRST OLD WEAVER. That's enough, now, that's enough.

BAECKER. You let the man say his prayers. Many a man could take it to heart.

MANY VOICES. (*In a tumult.*) Let him talk—let him!

THIRD OLD WEAVER. (*Raising his voice.*) Hell has opened wide and its jaws are gaping open, wide open, crashing down all those who do harm to the poor and violence to the cause of the afflicted, saith the Lord.

Tumult. Suddenly reciting like a schoolboy.

And how strange it is.
If you will carefully observe
How they the linen weavers' work despise.

BAECKER. But we're cotton weavers. (*Laughter.*)

HORNIG. The linen weavers are even worse off. They wander like ghosts around the mountains. Here you at least have the courage to rebel.

WITTIG. Do ya think, maybe, that here the worst is over? That little bit of courage that they still have left in their bodies the manufacturers will knock right out of them.

BAECKER. Why, he said that the weavers will get so they'll work for just a slice of bread and cheese. (*Tumult.*)

VARIOUS OLD *and* YOUNG WEAVERS. Who said that?

BAECKER. That's what Dreissiger said about the weavers.

A YOUNG WEAVER. That son of a bitch ought to be strung up.

JAEGER. Listen to me, Wittig, you've always talked so much about the French Revolution. You always bragged so much. Now maybe the chance'll soon come for everybody to show how much of a man he is . . . whether he is a loud-mouth or a man of honor.

WITTIG. (*Starting up in a rage.*) Say one more word, boy! Did you ever hear the whistle of bullets? Did you ever stand at an outpost in enemy territory?

JAEGER. Now don't get mad. You know we're all comrades. I didn't mean any harm.

WITTIG. I don't give a rap for your comradeship. You puffed up fool!

POLICEMAN KUTSCHE *enters.*

SEVERAL VOICES. Sh! Sh! The Police!

There is a relatively long period of shing before complete silence reigns.

KUTSCHE. (*Sits down by the center pillar amid the deep silence of all the others.*) I'd like a shot of whiskey, please. (*Again complete silence.*)

WITTIG. Well, Kutsche, you here to see that everything's all right with us?

KUTSCHE. (*Not listening to* WITTIG.) Good mornin', Mr. Wiegand.

WIEGAND. (*Still in the corner of the bar.*) Good mornin', Kutsche.

KUTSCHE. How's business?

WIEGAND. Fine, thanks for askin'.

BAECKER. The Chief of Police is afraid we might spoil our stomachs on all the wages we get. (*Laughter.*)

JAEGER. Isn't that so, Welzel, we've all had pork roast and gravy and dumplings and sauerkraut, and now we're getting ready to drink our champagne. (*Laughter.*)

WELZEL. Everything's the other way 'round.

KUTSCHE. And if ya did have champagne and roast, ya'd still not be satisfied. I don't have no champagne, neither, and I manage to get along.

BAECKER. (*Referring to* KUTSCHE'S *nose.*) He waters his red beet with brandy and beer. That's how it got so nice and ripe. (*Laughter.*)

WITTIG. A cop like him's got a hard life. Now, he's got to throw a starvin' little boy in jail for beggin', then he has to seduce a weaver's pretty daughter, then he has to get dead drunk and beat his wife so she goes runnin' to the neighbors for fear of her life. Ridin' about on his horse, lyin' in his featherbed . . . till nine, I tell ya, ain't that easy.

KUTSCHE. Always a'talkin'! You'll talk yourself into a big mess one of these days. It's been known for a long time what sort of a fellow you are. Even as high as the judge they've known about your rebellious tongue for a long time. I know someone who'll bring his wife and children to the poorhouse with his drinkin' and hangin' around taverns, and hisself into jail. He'll agitate and agitate until he comes to a terrible end.

WITTIG. (*Laughs bitterly.*) Who knows what's ahead? You might be right after all. (*Breaking out angrily.*) But if it comes to that, then I'll know who I can thank, who has blabbed to the manufacturers and to the nobles, and reviled and slandered me so I don't get a lick of work no more.—Who set the farmers and the millers against me so that, for a whole week, I haven't had a single horse to shoe or a wheel to put a rim on. I know who that is. I once yanked the damned scoundrel off his horse because he was thrashing a poor little nitwit boy with a horsewhip for stealin' a few green pears. I tell ya, and ya know me, put me in jail, and ya'd better be makin' out your will at the same time. If I get the slightest warnin', I'll take whatever I can get my hands on, whether it's a horseshoe or a hammer, a wagon spoke or a bucket, and I'll go lookin' for ya, and if I have to pull ya out of bed, away from your woman, I'll do it and I'll cave your skull in, as sure as my name is Wittig.

He has jumped up and is about to attack KUTSCHE.

OLD *and* YOUNG WEAVERS. (*Holding him back.*) Wittig, Wittig, don't lose your head.

KUTSCHE. (*Has stood up involuntarily; his face is pale. During what follows he keeps moving backward. The nearer he gets to the door, the braver he becomes. He speaks the last few words at the very threshold, and then immediately disappears.*) What do ya want with me? I've got nothin' to do with you. I've got to talk to one of the weavers here. I've done nothin' to you and I've got no business with you. But I'm to tell you weavers this: the Chief of Police forbids ya to sing that song—"Dreissiger's Song," or whatever it's called. And if that singin' in the streets don't stop right away, he'll see to it that you get plenty of time and rest in jail. Then ya can sing on bread and water as long as ya like.

Leaves.

WITTIG. (*Shouts after him.*) He ain't got no right to forbid us anything, and if we roar till the windows rattle and they can hear us way off in Reichenbach, and if we sing so the houses tumble down on all the manufacturers and all the policemen's helmets dance on their heads, it's nobody's business.

BAECKER. (*In the meantime has stood up, and has given the signal for the sing-*

ing to begin. He begins to sing, together with the others.)

Here a bloody justice thrives
More terrible than lynching
Here sentence isn't even passed
To quickly end a poor man's life.

WELZEL *tries to quiet them, but no one listens to him.* WIEGAND *holds his hands over his ears and runs away. The weavers get up and, singing the following verses, march after* WITTIG *and* BAECKER, *who, by nods, gestures, have signaled for everyone to leave.*

Men are slowly tortured here,
Here is the torture chamber,
Here every heavy sigh that's heard
Bears witness to the misery.

Most of the weavers sing the following verse when they are in the street; only a few young fellows are still inside the taproom, paying for their drinks. At the end of the next verse the room is empty except for WELZEL, *his wife, his daughter,* HORNIG, *and* OLD BAUMERT.

You scoundrels all, you devil's brood
You demons from the pit of hell
Who steal the poor man's house and home
A curse will be your payment.

WELZEL. (*Calmly gathers up the glasses.*) Why, they're completely out of their heads today.

OLD BAUMERT *is about to leave.*

HORNIG. Tell me, Baumert, what's afoot?

OLD BAUMERT. They'll be goin' to Dreissiger's to see if he'll add to their wages.

WELZEL. Are you goin' to join up with such madness?

OLD BAUMERT. Well, you see, Welzel, it ain't up to me. A young man sometimes may, and an old man must. (*A trifle embarrassed, leaves.*)

HORNIG. (*Rises.*) It'll sure surprise me if things don't come to a bad end here.

WELZEL. Who'd think the old fellows would completely lose their heads?

HORNIG. Well, every man has his dream.

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

SCENE—*Peterswaldau—A living room in the house of the cotton manufacturer,* DREISSIGER. *It is luxuriously furnished in the cold style of the first half of the nineteenth century. The ceiling, stove, and doors are white; the wallpaper is a cold grayish blue, with straight lines and little flowers. The room is filled with red upholstered mahogany furniture, including chairs and cupboards, richly decorated and carved. The furniture is placed as follows: on the right, between two windows with cherry-red damask curtains, is a secretary with a drop leaf that folds down to form a desk; directly opposite it, the sofa, with an iron safe nearby; in front of the sofa a table, armchairs, and straight chairs; against the back wall, a gun case. Pictures reflecting poor taste hang in gilt frames on the walls. Above the sofa hangs a mirror with a heavily gilded rococo frame. A door on the left leads to the vestibule; an open double door in the back wall leads into the drawing room, also overloaded with uncomfortable, showy furnishings. In the drawing room,* MRS. DREISSIGER *and* MRS. KITTELHAUS, *the pastor's wife, can be seen looking at pictures while* PASTOR KITTELHAUS *converses with the tutor,* WEINHOLD, *a student of theology.*

KITTELHAUS. (*A small, friendly man, enters the front room, smoking and chatting amiably with the tutor, who is also smoking.* KITTELHAUS *looks around and, when he sees no one is in the room, shakes*

his head in amazement.) Of course it is not at all surprising, Weinhold; you are young. At your age, we old fellows had—I won't say the same views—but yet, similar ones. Similar ones, at any rate. And there is, after all, something wonderful about youth—and all its beautiful ideals. Unfortunately, however, they are fleeting—fleeting as April sunshine. Just wait till you are my age. When once a man has said his say to the people from the pulpit for thirty years, fifty-two times a year, not counting holidays—then he, of necessity, becomes quieter. Think of me, Weinhold, when that time comes for you.

WEINHOLD. (*Nineteen years old, pale, emaciated, tall and thin, with long, straight, blond hair. He is very restless and nervous in his movements.*) With all respect, sir . . . I really don't know . . . there certainly is a great difference in temperaments.

KITTELHAUS. My dear Weinhold, you may be ever so restless a soul—(*In a tone of reproof.*) and that you are—you may be ever so violent—and rudely attack existing conditions, but that will subside. Yes, yes, I certainly do admit that we have colleagues who, though rather advanced in years, still play rather childish and foolish tricks. One preaches against drinking and founds temperance societies; another writes appeals which, undeniably, are most touching to read. But what does he accomplish with it? The distress among the weavers, where it exists, is not relieved thereby. And yet the peace of society is undermined by it. No, no, in such a case one might almost say, cobbler, stick to your last! A keeper of souls should not concern himself with bellies. Preach the pure word of God and, for the rest, let Him take care who provides shelter and food for the birds and sees that the lily in the field does not perish.—But now I would really like to know where our worthy host went so suddenly.

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*Comes into the front room with the Pastor's wife. She is a pretty woman, thirty years old, a robust, healthy type. A certain discrepancy is noticeable between her manner of speaking or moving and her elegant attire.*) You're quite right, Pastor. Wilhelm's always that way. When something strikes him, he runs off and leaves me alone. I've talked to him about it plenty, but you can say what you will, that's the way it is.

KITTELHAUS. That's the way with businessmen, Madam.

WEINHOLD. If I'm not mistaken, something's been happening downstairs.

DREISSIGER. (*Enters, out of breath and excited.*) Well, Rosa, has the coffee been served?

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*Pouting.*) Oh, why do you always have to run away?

DREISSIGER. (*Lightly.*) Oh, what do you know about it?

KITTELHAUS. I beg your pardon! Have you had trouble, Mr. Dreissiger?

DREISSIGER. God knows, that I have every single day, my dear Pastor. I'm used to that. Well, Rosa? I guess you're taking care of it?

MRS. DREISSIGER *in a bad temper pulls violently several times at the broad, embroidered bell pull.*

DREISSIGER. Just now—(*After walking up and down a few times.*)—Mr. Weinhold, I would have liked you to have been there. You would have had an experience. At any rate . . . come, let's have a game of whist.

KITTELHAUS. Yes, yes, by all means. Shake the dust and trouble of the day from your shoulders, and come and be one of us.

DREISSIGER. (*Has stepped to the window, pushes the drapery aside, and looks out. Involuntarily.*) Rabble!—come here, Rosa! (*She comes.*) Tell me . . . that tall, red-headed fellow there. . . .

KITTELHAUS. That is the one they call Red Baecker.

DREISSIGER. Tell me, is he by any

chance the one who insulted you, two days ago? You know, what you told me, when Johann helped you into the carriage.

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*Makes a wry face, drawls.*) I don't remember.

DREISSIGER. Now don't be that way. I've got to know. I'm fed up with this impudence. If he's the one, I'll make him answer for it. (*The "Weavers' Song" is heard.*) Just listen to it! Just listen to it!

KITTELHAUS. (*Extremely indignant.*) Won't this nonsense ever come to an end? Now, really, I too must say, it's time the police took a hand. Permit me. (*He steps to the window.*) Look at that, Weinhold! Those aren't only young people; the old, steady weavers are running with the crowd. Men whom for years I have considered to be respectable and pious are in with them. They're taking part in this unheard-of nonsense. They are trampling God's law under their feet. Perhaps you would still like to defend these people, even now?

WEINHOLD. Certainly not, sir. That is, sir, *cum grano salis.* You must realize they are just hungry, ignorant men. They are expressing their dissatisfaction in the only way they know how. I don't expect such people. . . .

MRS. KITTELHAUS. (*Small, thin, faded, more like an old maid than a married woman.*) Mr. Weinhold, Mr. Weinhold! I must beg of you!

DREISSIGER. Mr. Weinhold, I regret very much. . . . I did not take you into my house so that you should give me lectures on humanitarianism. I must request that you restrict yourself to the education of my sons, and for the rest, leave my affairs to me—completely—to me alone! Do you understand?

WEINHOLD. (*Stands a moment, motionless and deathly pale, and then bows with a strange smile, softly.*) Of course, of course, I understand. I have seen it coming: that is why I wish to leave. *Exit.*

DREISSIGER. (*Brutally.*) Then, as soon as possible. We need the room.

MRS. DREISSIGER. Please, Wilhelm, Wilhelm!

DREISSIGER. Are you out of your mind? Are you defending a man that takes sides with such vulgarity and rowdyism as this insulting song?

MRS. DREISSIGER. But hubby, hubby, he really didn't. . . .

DREISSIGER. Reverend Kittelhaus, did he or did he not defend it?

KITTELHAUS. Mr. Dreissiger, one must ascribe it to his youth.

MRS. KITTELHAUS. I don't know—the young man comes from such a good and respectable family. His father was a civil servant for forty years and never allowed the slightest reproach to fall on himself. His mother was so overjoyed that he had found such an excellent position here. And now . . . now he shows so little appreciation of it.

PFEIFER. (*Tears open the vestibule door, shouts in.*) Mr. Dreissiger, Mr. Dreissiger! They've caught him. You ought to come. They've caught one of them.

DREISSIGER. (*Hastily.*) Has someone gone for the police?

PFEIFER. The Chief of Police is comin' up the stairs right now.

DREISSIGER. (*At the door.*) Your humble servant, sir! I am very glad that you have come.

KITTELHAUS *gestures to the ladies that it would be better if they withdrew. He, his wife, and Mrs. Dreissiger disappear into the drawing room.*

DREISSIGER. (*Very excited, to the* CHIEF OF POLICE, *who has entered in the meantime.*) I have finally had my dyers catch one of the ringleaders. I couldn't put up with it any longer. This impudence simply goes beyond all bounds. It's shocking. I have guests, and these rascals dare . . . they insult my wife when she shows herself; my children aren't sure of their lives.

Chances are my guests will be beaten up. I assure you—if blameless people—such as me and my family—in a law-abiding community—can be openly and continuously insulted . . . without proper punishment, really . . . then I regret that I have different ideas of law and order.

POLICE CHIEF. (*A man of perhaps fifty, of medium height, fat, red-faced. He is wearing a cavalry uniform, saber and spurs.*) Certainly not . . . no . . . certainly not, Mr. Dreissiger!—I am at your service. Calm yourself, I am completely at your service. It is quite all right. . . . I am, in fact, very glad that you had one of the ringleaders caught. I am glad that this thing has finally come to a head. There are a few troublemakers around here that I've had it in for, for quite a long time.

DREISSIGER. You are right, a few young fellows, thoroughly shiftless rabble, lazy rascals, who lead a dissolute life, day after day, sitting around in the taverns till the last penny has trickled down their throats. But now I am determined, I will put an end to these professional slanderers, once and for all. It's in the common interest, not merely in my own.

POLICE CHIEF. By all means! Certainly —by all means, Mr. Dreissiger. Nobody could find fault with you there. And as far as it's within my power. . . .

DREISSIGER. The whip should be used on these ruffians.

POLICE CHIEF. Quite right, quite right. We must set an example.

KUTSCHE. (*Enters and salutes. As the vestibule door opens, the noise of heavy feet stumbling up the steps is heard.*) Chief, it's my duty to inform you that we have caught a man.

DREISSIGER. Would you like to see him, Chief?

POLICE CHIEF. Why, of course, of course. First of all, let's have a close look at him. Please do me the favor, Mr. Dreissiger, of not interfering. I'll see to it that you're given satisfaction, or my name isn't Heide.

DREISSIGER. I won't be satisfied—not until that man is brought before the state's attorney.

JAEGER. (*Is led in by five dyers. They have come directly from work. Their faces, hands, and clothes are stained with dye. The captured man has his cap cocked on the side of his head and displays a cheerful impudence. A few drinks of whiskey have put him in high spirits.*) You miserable wretches, you! You want to be workers, huh? You want to be comrades, huh? Why, before I'd do a thing like this—before I'd lay hands on a fellow worker of mine, I think I'd let my hand rot off first.

At a signal from the POLICE CHIEF, KUTSCHE *orders the dyers to take their hands off the victim and to guard the doors.* JAEGER, *now free, stands there impudently.*

POLICE CHIEF. (*Shouts at* JAEGER.) Take your cap off, you! (JAEGER *removes it, but very slowly. He continues to smile ironically.*) What's your name? *

JAEGER. (*Simply and quietly.*) That's none of your business!

The impact of the words creates a stir among the others.

DREISSIGER. This is too much.

POLICE CHIEF. (*Changes color, is about to burst out, but conquers his anger.*) We'll see about this later. I'm asking you what your name is! (*When there is no reply, in rage.*) Speak up, you scoundrel, or I'll have you whipped.

JAEGER. (*Perfectly cheerful and without batting an eye at the furious outburst, calls over the heads of the spectators to*

* In the original, the chief of police uses the familiar "Du," whereupon Jaeger makes the remark that the two had never gone "tending swine together," i.e., they had not been on familiar terms.

a pretty servant girl about to serve coffee. She is perplexed at the unexpected sight and stands still, open-mouthed.) Why, tell me, Emily, are you in service in high society now? Well, then, see to it that you get out of here. The wind might start blowing around here one of these days, and it'll blow everything away—overnight.

The girl stares at JAEGER. *When she realizes that the speech is meant for her, she blushes with shame, covers her eyes with her hands and runs out, leaving the dishes in confusion on the table. Again there is a commotion among the spectators.*

POLICE CHIEF. (*Almost losing control of himself, to* DREISSIGER.) As old as I am . . . I've never encountered such unheard-of impudence. . . .

JAEGER *spits on the floor.*

DREISSIGER. See here, you! You're not in a stable—understand?

POLICE CHIEF. Now, I'm at the end of my patience. For the last time—what is your name?

KITTELHAUS. (*During this past scene has been peeking out from behind the partly open door of the drawing room and listening. Now, carried away by the incident and trembling with excitement, he comes forward to intervene.*) His name's Jaeger, Chief. Moritz . . . isn't it? Moritz Jaeger. (*To* JAEGER.) Why, Jaeger, don't you remember me?

JAEGER. (*Seriously.*) You are Reverend Kittelhaus.

KITTELHAUS. Yes, your pastor, Jaeger! If I'm the one who received you as an infant into the Communion of the Saints. The one—from whose hands you first received Holy Communion. Do you remember? There—I've worked and worked and brought the Word of God to your heart. Is this the thanks I get?

JAEGER. (*Gloomily, like a schoolboy who has been scolded.*) I've paid my thaler.

KITTELHAUS. Money, money—do you really believe that that vile, miserable money will. . . . Keep your money . . . I'd much rather you did. What nonsense that is! Behave yourself—be a good Christian! Think of what you've promised. Keep God's commandments—be good and pious. Money, money. . . .

JAEGER. I'm a Quaker now, Reverend. I don't believe in anything any more.

KITTELHAUS. What? A Quaker? Don't talk that way! Try to reform and leave words that you don't understand out of this. They're pious folk, not heathens like you. Quaker! What do you mean, Quaker?

POLICE CHIEF. With your permission, Reverend. (*He steps between him and* JAEGER.) Kutsche! Tie his hands!

Wild shouting outside: "Jaeger! Let Jaeger come on out!"

DREISSIGER. (*A little bit frightened, as are the others, has stepped instinctively to the window.*) Now, what does this mean?

POLICE CHIEF. I know. It means that they want this ruffian back. But that favor we won't do them this time. Understand, Kutsche? He goes to jail.

KUTSCHE. (*The rope in his hand, hesitating.*) With all respect, I'd like to say, Chief, we'll be havin' trouble. That's a damn big crowd. A regular gang of cutthroats, Chief. Baecker is among them, and the blacksmith. . . .

KITTELHAUS. With your kind permission—in order not to create more ill-feeling, wouldn't it be more appropriate, Chief, if we tried to settle this peaceably? Perhaps Jaeger will promise that he'll go along quietly or. . . .

POLICE CHIEF. What are you thinking? This is my responsibility. I can't possibly agree to a thing like that. Come on, Kutsche! Don't lose any time!

JAEGER. (*Putting his hands together and holding them out, laughing.*) Tie them tight—as tight as you can. It won't be for long.

KUTSCHE, *with the help of the dyers, ties his hands.*

POLICE CHIEF. Now, come on, march! (*To* DREISSIGER.) If you're worried about this, have six of the dyers go along. They can put him in the middle. I'll ride ahead —Kutsche will follow. Whoever gets in our way—will be cut down.

Cries from outside: "Cock-a-doodle-doo!! Woof, woof, woof!"

POLICE CHIEF. (*Threatening, toward the window.*) Rabble! I'll cock-a-doodle-doo and woof-woof you. Get going! Forward! March!

He marches out ahead, with drawn saber; the others follow with JAEGER.

JAEGER. (*Shouts as he leaves.*) And even if Milady Dreissiger acts so proud—she's no better than the likes of us. She's served my father his bit of whiskey a hundred times. Squadron, left wheel, ma-a-arch!

Leaves, laughing.

DREISSIGER. (*After a pause, apparently composed.*) What do you think, Pastor? Shall we begin our game of whist now? I don't think anything else will interfere now. (*He lights a cigar, gives several short laughs. As soon as the cigar is lit, he laughs out loud.*) Now I'm beginning to find this business funny. That fellow! (*In a nervous burst of laughter.*) It really is indescribably funny. First the dispute at dinner with the tutor. Five minutes later, he leaves. Good riddance! Then this business. And now—let's get on with our whist.

KITTELHAUS. Yes, but. . . . (*Roars from downstairs.*) Yes, but . . . you know, those people are making a terrible row.

DREISSIGER. We'll simply retire to the other room. We'll be quite undisturbed there.

KITTELHAUS. (*Shaking his head.*) If I only knew what has happened to these people. I must admit that the tutor was right in this respect. At least—until a short time ago—I, too, was of the opinion that the weavers were humble, patient, compliant people. Don't you think so too, Mr. Dreissiger?

DREISSIGER. Certainly they used to be patient and easily managed—certainly they used to be a civilized and orderly people—as long as the so-called "humanitarians" kept their hands out of it. Then for the longest time the terrible misery of their lives was pointed out to them. Think of all the societies and committees for the relief of distress among the weavers. Finally the weaver himself believes it—and now he's all mixed up. Let some one come in and set him straight again. He won't be stopped now. Now he complains endlessly. This doesn't please him and that doesn't please him. Now, everything has to be just so.

Suddenly a swelling roar of "Hurrah!" is heard from the crowd.

KITTELHAUS. So—with all their humanitarianism, they have accomplished nothing more than literally making wolves out of lambs, overnight.

DREISSIGER. No, Reverend, by the use of cool logic we might even be able to see the good side of this affair. Perhaps such happenings won't pass unnoticed in leading circles. Possibly at last they will come to the conclusion that such things cannot go on any longer—that something must be done—if our home industries are not to collapse completely.

KITTELHAUS. Yes, but what would you say was the cause of this enormous falling off of trade?

DREISSIGER. Foreign countries have put up high tariff walls against our goods. Our best markets are thus cut off, and at home we've got to compete for our very lives. We have no protection—absolutely no protection.

PFEIFER. (*Staggers in, breathless and pale.*) Mr. Dreissiger! Oh, Mr. Dreissiger!

DREISSIGER. (*Standing in the doorway,*

about to enter the drawing room, turns, angrily.) Well, Pfeifer, what is it this time?

PFEIFER. No . . . no. . . . This is the limit.

DREISSIGER. What's wrong now?

KITTELHAUS. You're alarming us—speak up!

PFEIFER. (*Hasn't recovered himself yet.*) This is the limit! I never saw anything like it! The authorities . . . they'll make them pay for it.

DREISSIGER. What the devil's go into you? Has anyone been—killed?

PFEIFER. (*Almost weeping with fear, cries out.*) They've set Moritz Jaeger free, they've beaten up the Chief of Police, and chased him away, they've beaten up the policeman—and chased him away, too—without his helmet—his saber broken. . . . Oh, I never. . . .

DREISSIGER. Pfeifer, you've lost your mind.

KITTELHAUS. Why, that would be revolution.

PFEIFER. (*Sitting down in a chair, his whole body trembling, moaning.*) It's gettin' serious, Mr. Dreissiger! It's gettin' serious, Mr. Dreissiger.

DREISSIGER. Well, then, the entire police force isn't. . . .

PFEIFER. It's gettin' serious, Mr. Dreissiger!

DREISSIGER. Damn it all, Pfeifer, shut up!

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*Comes from the drawing room with* MRS. KITTELHAUS.) Oh, but this is really shocking, Wilhelm. Our lovely evening is being ruined. There you are, now Mrs. Kittelhaus wants to go home.

KITTELHAUS. My dear Mrs. Dreissiger, perhaps it would be best today. . . .

MRS. DREISSIGER. Wilhelm, you should put a stop to this.

DREISSIGER. You go and talk to them. You go! Go on! (*Stopping in front of the Pastor, bursts out.*) Am I really a tyrant? Am I really a slave-driver?

JOHANN, THE COACHMAN. (*Enters.*) If you please, ma'am, I've harnessed the horses. The tutor has already put Georgie and Carl in the carriage. If things get worse we'll drive off.

MRS. DREISSIGER. If what gets worse?

JOHANN. Well, I don't know, either. I'm just thinkin'—the crowds are gettin' bigger all the time. After all, they have chased off the Chief of Police along with Kutsche.

PFEIFER. I'm tellin' ya, it's gettin' serious. Mr. Dreissiger! It's gettin' serious!

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*With mounting fear.*) What's going to happen? What do these people want? They couldn't attack us, Johann, could they?

JOHANN. There are some mangey dogs among them, ma'am.

PFEIFER. It's gettin' serious—deadly serious.

DREISSIGER. Shut up, you ass! Are the doors barred?

KITTELHAUS. Do me a favor . . . do me a favor . . . I have decided to . . . please do me a favor. . . . (*To* JOHANN.) What is it that the people really want?

JOHANN. (*Embarrassed.*) The stupid good-for-nothin's, they want more pay, that's what they want.

KITTELHAUS. Good, fine! I will go out and do my duty. I will have a serious talk with them.

JOHANN. Reverend, don't do that. Words won't do no good, here.

KITTELHAUS. My dear Mr. Dreissiger, just one word more. I would like to ask you to post some men behind the door and lock it immediately after I've gone.

MRS. KITTELHAUS. Oh, Joseph, are you really going to do this?

KITTELHAUS. I'll do it, of course . . . I'll do it! I know what I'm doing. Have no fear, the Lord will protect me.

MRS. KITTELHAUS *presses his hand,*

steps back, and wipes tears from her eyes.

KITTELHAUS. (*All the time the muffled noise of a large crowd is heard from below.*) I'll act . . . I'll act as if I were just quietly going home. I want to see whether my holy office . . . whether I still command the respect of these people . . . I want to see . . . (*He takes his hat and stick.*) Forward then, in God's name. (*Leaves, accompanied by* DREISSIGER, PFEIFER, *and* JOHANN.)

MRS. KITTELHAUS. Dear Mrs. Dreissiger,—(*She bursts into tears and puts her arms around* MRS. DREISSIGER'S *neck.*) —if only nothing happens to him!

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*Absently.*) I really don't know, Mrs. Kittelhaus—I am so . . . I really don't know how I feel. Such a thing can't hardly be humanly possible. If that's how it is . . . then it's like it was a sin to be rich. You know, if somebody had told me, I don't know but what, in the long run, I would rather have stayed in—in my humble circumstances.

MRS. KITTELHAUS. Dear Mrs. Dreissiger, believe me, there are disappointments and troubles enough in all walks of life.

MRS. DREISSIGER. Yes, of course—of course. I believe that, too. And if we've got more than other people . . . Lord knows, we certainly didn't steal it. Every single pfennig's been honestly earned. Surely it can't be that the people are going to attack us. Is it my husband's fault if business is bad?

From below comes tumultuous shouting. While the two women stare at each other, pale and terrified, DREISSIGER *bursts in.*

DREISSIGER. Rosa, throw on a coat and get into the carriage. I'll follow right after you!

He hurries to the safe, opens it, and takes out various valuables.

JOHANN. (*Enters.*) Everything's ready! But hurry, before they get to the back gate!

MRS. DREISSIGER. (*Panic-stricken, throws her arms around the coachman's neck.*) Johann, dear—good Johann! Save us, dearest Johann! Save my children, oh, oh. . . .

DREISSIGER. Be reasonable! Let go of Johann!

JOHANN. Madam, madam! Aw, don't be scared. Our horses are in good shape. Nobody can catch up with them. If they don't get out of the way, they'll get run over.

Exit.

MRS. KITTELHAUS. (*In helpless anxiety.*) But my husband? What about my husband? What will become of him, Mr. Dreissiger?

DREISSIGER. He is all right, Mrs. Kittelhaus. Just calm down, he is all right.

MRS. KITTELHAUS. I know something terrible's happened to him. You just won't tell me. You just won't say.

DREISSIGER. They'll be sorry for this, you mark my words. I know exactly who is responsible for it. Such unheard of, shameless impudence will not go unpunished. A community that does harm to its pastor—it's terrible! Mad dogs, that's what they are—beasts gone mad. And they should be treated accordingly. (*To* MRS. DREISSIGER, *who stands there, as if stunned.*) Now go, and hurry up! (*Sounds of beating against the entrance door are heard.*) Don't you hear me? The mob's gone mad. (*The smashing of the downstairs windows is heard.*) They've gone absolutely insane. There's nothing left to do but to get out.

A chorus of shouts is heard, "We want Pfeifer!" "Pfeifer come out!"

MRS. DREISSIGER. Pfeifer, Pfeifer! They want Pfeifer outside.

PFEIFER. (*Rushes in.*) They're at the back gate, too. The front door won't hold out another minute. Wittig is beating it in with a stable bucket—like—like a mad man.

From downstairs, the shouts become

louder and clearer, "Pfeifer come out!" "Pfeifer come out!"

MRS. DREISSIGER *rushes off, as if pursued.* MRS. KITTELHAUS *follows.*

PFEIFER. (*Listens. His face changes color. Once he makes out the cries, he is seized with an insane fear. He speaks the following words frantically, crying, whimpering, pleading, whining all at the same time. He overwhelms* DREISSIGER *with childish caresses, strokes his cheeks and arms, kisses his hands, and, finally, like a drowning man, puts his arms around him, clutching him and not letting him go.*) Oh, good, kind, merciful Mr. Dreissiger! Don't leave me behind. I have always served you loyally—I always treated the people well. Wages were fixed—I couldn't give them more. Don't leave me in the lurch. Don't! I beg you. They'll kill me. If they find me—they'll strike me dead. O, God in heaven, God in heaven, my wife, my children. . . .

DREISSIGER. (*As he leaves, vainly trying to free himself from* PFEIFER.) Let go of me, man! We'll see, we'll see!

Leaves with PFEIFER.

The room remains empty for a few seconds. In the drawing room, window panes are being smashed. A loud crash resounds through the house, followed by a roar of "Hurray," then silence. A few seconds pass, then soft and cautious footsteps of people coming upstairs to the second floor are heard; then, timid and shy cries: "To the left!—Get upstairs!—Sh!—Slow!—Don't shove!—Help push!—Smash!—Here we are!—Move on! We're goin' to a weddin'—You go in first!—No, you go!"

Young weavers and weaver girls appear in the vestibule door. They don't dare to enter, and each one tries to push the other one in. After a few moments, they overcome their timidity, and the poor, thin figures, some of them sickly, some ragged or patched, disperse throughout DREISSIGER'S *room and the drawing room. At first they look around curiously and shyly, then they touch everything. The girls try out the sofas; they form groups that admire their reflections in the mirror. A few climb up on chairs to look at pictures and to take them down, and in the meantime a steady stream of wretched-looking figures moves in from the vestibule.*

FIRST OLD WEAVER. (*Enters.*) No, no, this is goin' too far. Downstairs they're already startin' to break things up. It's crazy. There ain't no rhyme nor reason to it. In the end, that'll be a bad thing. Nobody with a clear head . . . would go along. I'll be careful and won't take part in such goin's on!

JAEGER, BAECKER, WITTIG *with a wooden bucket,* BAUMERT *and a number of young and old weavers come storming in as if they were chasing something, yelling back and forth in hoarse voices.*

JAEGER. Where is he?

BAECKER. Where is that dirty slavedriver?

OLD BAUMERT. If we're to eat grass, let him eat sawdust.

WITTIG. When we catch him, we'll string him up.

FIRST OLD WEAVER. We'll take him by the legs and throw him out of the window so he'll never get up again.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. (*Enters.*) He's flown the coop.

ALL. Who?

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. Dreissiger.

BAECKER. Pfeifer, too?

VOICES. Let's look for Pfeifer! Look for Pfeifer!

OLD BAUMERT. Look for him, Little Pfeifer—there's a weaver for ya to starve! (*Laughter.*)

JAEGER. If we can't get this beast Dreissiger—we'll make him poor.

OLD BAUMERT. He'll be as poor as a churchmouse—just as poor.

All rush to the door of the drawing room, ready to destroy everything.

BAECKER. (*Runs ahead, turns around,*

and stops the others.) Stop—listen to me! Once we're through here, we'll really get goin'. From here we'll go over to Bielau —to Dittrich's—he's the one who's got the steam power looms. . . . All the trouble comes from those factories.

ANSORGE. (*Comes in from the vestibule. After he has taken a few steps, he stands still, looks unbelievingly about, shakes his head, strikes his forehead, and says.*) Who am I? The Weaver Anton Ansorge? Has he gone crazy, Ansorge? It's true—things are buzzin' around in my head like a gadfly. What's he doin' here? He'll do whatever he wants to. Where is he, Ansorge? (*He strikes himself on the forehead.*) I ain't myself! I don't understand, I ain't quite right. Go away—you go away! Go away, you rebels! Heads off—legs off—hands off! You take my cottage, I'll take yours. Go to it!

With a yell, he goes into the drawing room. The rest follow him amid yells and laughter.

CURTAIN

ACT FIVE

SCENE—*The tiny weaver's room at* OLD HILSE'S. *To the left is a small window, in front of it a loom; to the right, a bed with a table pushed up close to it. In the corner, to the right is the stove with a bench. Around the table, on the foot bench, on the edge of the bed, and on a wooden stool, the following persons are seated:* OLD HILSE; *his old, blind, and almost deaf wife; his son,* GOTTLIEB; *and* GOTTLIEB'S *wife,* LUISE. *They are at morning prayers. A winding wheel with bobbins stands between table and loom. On top of the smoky, brown rafters, all kinds of old spinning, winding, and weaving implements are stored. Long hanks of yarn hang down; all sorts of rubbish are strewn about the room. The very low, narrow room has a door leading to the hall in the back wall. Opposite it, another door in the entrance hall stands open and affords a view into a second weaver's room similar to the first. The hall is paved with stones, the plaster is crumbling, and a dilapidated wooden stair leads to the attic. A washtub on a wooden stool is partly visible; shabby bits of laundry and household goods of the poor are scattered about. The light falls from the left into all the rooms.*

OLD HILSE. (*A bearded, heavy-boned man, now bent and worn with age, hard work, sickness, and exertion. An ex-soldier, he has lost one arm. He has a sharp nose, livid coloring. His hands tremble, and his body seems to be just skin, bones, and sinews. He has the deep-set, sore eyes characteristic of the weavers. He stands up, together with his son and daughter-in-law, and begins to pray.*) O Lord, we cannot be grateful enough that Thou this night, in Thy grace and goodness . . . hast taken pity upon us. That we have come to no harm this night. "Lord, Thy mercy reaches so far," and we are but poor, evil and sinful human beings not worthy to be trampled under Thy feet, so sinful and corrupted are we. But Thou, dear Father, willst look upon us and accept us for the sake of Thy beloved Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. "Jesus' blood and righteousness, they are my jewels and my robe of glory. . . ." And if sometimes we despair under Thy scourge—when the fire of purification burns too raging hot, then do not count it too highly against us—forgive us our trespasses. Give us patience, O Heavenly Father, that after this suffering we may become part of Thy eternal blessedness. Amen.

MOTHER HILSE. (*Who has been bending forward in a great effort to hear, weeping.*) Father, you always say such a beautiful prayer.

LUISE *goes to the washtub,* GOTTLIEB

into the room on the other side of the hall.

OLD HILSE. Wherever is the girl?

LUISE. She went over to Peterswaldau —to Dreissiger's. She finished windin' a few hanks of yarn again last night.

OLD HILSE. (*Speaking in a very loud voice.*) Well, Mother, now I'll bring ya the wheel.

MOTHER HILSE. Yes, bring it, bring it to me, Father.

OLD HILSE. (*Placing the wheel in front of her.*) I'd be glad to do it for ya. . . .

MOTHER HILSE. No . . . no. . . . What would I be doin' then with all that time?

OLD HILSE. I'll wipe your fingers off for ya a bit, so the yarn won't get greasy—do ya hear? (*He wipes her hands with a rag.*)

LUISE. (*At the washtub.*) When did we have anything fat to eat?

OLD HILSE. If we don't have fat, we'll eat dry bread—if we don't have bread, we'll eat potatoes—and if we don't have potatoes neither, then we'll eat dry bran.

LUISE. (*Insolently.*) And if we ain't got rye flour, we'll do like the Wenglers—we'll find out where the flayer has buried an old dead horse. We'll dig it up and live off the rotten beast—for a couple of weeks—that's what we'll do, won't we?

GOTTLIEB. (*From the back room.*) What kind of damn nonsense are ya spoutin'?

OLD HILSE. Ya ought to be more careful with such godless talk! (*He goes to the loom, calls.*) Won't ya help me, Gottlieb —there's a few threads to pull through.

LUISE. (*From her work at the washtub.*) Gottlieb, you're to lend a hand to your father.

GOTTLIEB *enters. The old man and his son begin the tiresome job of reeding. They have hardly begun when* HORNIG *appears in the entrance hall.*

HORNIG. (*In the doorway.*) Good luck to your work!

OLD HILSE AND HIS SON. Thank ya, Hornig!

OLD HILSE. Tell me, when do ya sleep, anyhow? In the daytime ya go about tradin'—in the night ya stand watch.

HORNIG. Why, I don't get no sleep at all no more!

LUISE. Glad to see ya, Hornig!

OLD HILSE. Any good news?

HORNIG. A pretty piece of news. The people in Peterswaldau have risked their necks and have chased out Dreissiger and his whole family.

LUISE. (*With signs of excitement.*) Hornig's lyin' his head off again.

HORNIG. Not this time, young woman! Not this time—I have some pretty pinafores in the cart.—No, no, I'm tellin' the honest-to-God truth. They've up and chased him out. Yesterday evenin' he got to Reichenbach. By God! They didn't dare keep him there—for fear of the weavers—so he had to hurry off to Schweidnitz.

OLD HILSE. (*Picks up the thread of the warp carefully and pulls it close to the reed. His son catches the thread with a hook and pulls it through.*) Now, it's time for ya to stop, Hornig!

HORNIG. If I'm lyin', I don't want to leave this place alive, I swear. There ain't a child that don't know the story.

OLD HILSE. Now tell me, am I all mixed up, or are you?

HORNIG. Well, now. What I'm tellin' ya is as true as Amen in the church. I wouldn't of said nothin' if I hadn't been standin' right there, but that's the way I saw it. With my own eyes, just like I see you here, Gottlieb. They've smashed up the manufacturer's house, from cellar to attic. They threw the fine china from the attic window and smashed it—right down over the roof. Hundreds of pieces of cotton are layin' in the bottom of the brook! Believe me, the water can't even flow on no more; it swelled up over the banks; it turned real blue from all the indigo they poured out of the windows. The air itself was filled with all them blue clouds. No,

no, they did a terrible job there. Not just in the house, mind you, . . . in the dye plant . . . in the warehouse. . . ! Banisters smashed, the floors torn up—mirrors broken—sofas, arm chairs—everything—torn and slashed—cut to pieces and smashed—trampled and hacked to pieces—damn it! believe me, it was worse than war!

OLD HILSE. And you say those were weavers from around here?

Slowly and incredulously, he shakes his head. A group of tenants of the house has gathered at the door, listening intently.

HORNIG. Well, who else? I could mention all of them by name. I led the Commissioner through the house. I talked with plenty of them. They were just as friendly as usual. They went about the whole business quietly—but they were thorough. The Commissioner talked with a lot of them. They were just as polite as usual. But they wouldn't stop. They hacked at the elegant furniture, just like they were workin' for wages.

OLD HILSE. You led the Commissioner through the house?

HORNIG. Well, I sure wasn't afraid. The people all know me, always turnin' up like a bad penny. I never had trouble with nobody. I'm in good with all of them. As sure as my name is Hornig, I went through the house. Yes—and ya can really believe it—I was sore at heart—and I can tell ya about the Commissioner—he took it to heart, too. And why? Ya couldn't hear a single word the whole time, it was that quiet. It gave ya a real solemn feelin'—the way them poor hungry devils was takin' their revenge.

LUISE. (*Bursting out with excitement, trembling and wiping her eyes with her apron.*) That's only right—that had to happen!

VOICES OF THE TENANTS. There's enough slave-drivers 'round here. There's one livin' right over there.—He's got four horses and six coaches in his stable, and he lets his weavers starve!

OLD HILSE. (*Still incredulous.*) How could that have started over there?

HORNIG. Who knows? Who knows? One says this—another that.

OLD HILSE. What do they say?

HORNIG. By God, Dreissiger is supposed to have said the weavers could eat grass if they got hungry. I don't know no more.

Commotion among the tenants, who repeat it to each other with signs of indignation.

OLD HILSE. Now just listen to me, Hornig. For all I care, ya might say to me, Father Hilse, tomorrow you've got to die. That's likely, I'd answer, why not?—You might say, Father Hilse, tomorrow the King of Prussia will come to visit ya—but that weavers, men like me and my son—should be up to such things, never in the world, never, never will I believe that.

MIELCHEN. (*A pretty girl of seven, with long, loose, flaxen hair. She runs in with a basket on her arm. She holds out a silver spoon to her mother.*) Mamma, Mamma, look what I've got! Ya can buy me a dress with it!

LUISE. Why are ya in such a hurry, child? (*With mounting excitement and curiosity.*) Tell me, what did ya come draggin' in this time? You're all out of breath. And the bobbins are still in the basket. What's the meanin' of all this, child?

OLD HILSE. Where did ya get the spoon?

LUISE. Could be she found it.

HORNIG. It's worth at least two or three thalers.

OLD HILSE. (*Beside himself.*) Get out, girl! Hurry up and get out! Will ya do what I say, or do I have to get a stick to ya! And take the spoon back where ya got it. Out with you! Do ya want to make thieves out of all of us, huh? You—I'll knock the thievin' out of ya—(*He looks*

for something with which to hit her.)

MIELCHEN. (*Clinging to her mother's skirt, cries.*) Grandpapa, don't hit me—we, we—really found it. The bob-bobbin girls—they all—got—one, too.

LUISE. (*Bursts out, torn between fear and anxiety.*) There now—ya see. She found it. That's what she did. Where did ya find it?

MIELCHEN. (*Sobbing.*) In Peters—waldau—we—found 'em—in front of—Dreissiger's house.

OLD HILSE. Well, now we're in a fine mess. Hurry up, now, or I'll help ya to get goin'.

MOTHER HILSE. What's goin' on?

HORNIG. I'll tell ya what, Father Hilse. Let Gottlieb put on his coat and take the spoon to the police.

OLD HILSE. Gottlieb, put your coat on.

GOTTLIEB. (*Already doing so, eagerly.*) And then I'll go on up to the office and I'll say, they shouldn't blame us, a child like that just don't understand such things. And so I'm bringin' the spoon back. Stop that cryin', girl!

The mother takes the crying child into the back room and shuts the door on her. LUISE *returns.*

HORNIG. That might well be worth all of three thalers.

GOTTLIEB. Come, give me a piece of cloth so it don't get hurt, Luise. My, my—what an expensive thing. (*He has tears in his eyes while he wraps up the spoon.*)

LUISE. If it was ours, we could live on it for weeks.

OLD HILSE. Hurry up! Get a move on. Go as fast as ya can. That would be something! That would just about finish me. Hurry up, so we get rid of that devil's spoon. (GOTTLIEB *leaves with the spoon.*)

HORNIG. Well, I'd better be goin'. (*He talks to some of the tenants for a few seconds on his way out, then leaves.*)

PHYSICIAN SCHMIDT. (*A fidgety fat little man, with a cunning face, red from drinking, enters the house through the entrance hall.*) Good morning, people! Well, that's a fine business, that is. You can't fool me! (*Raising a warning finger.*) I know what you're up to. (*In the doorway, without coming into the room.*) Good morning, Father Hilse! (*To a woman in the hall.*) Well, Mother, how's the rheumatism? Better, eh? There you are! Now, let me see how things are with you, Father Hilse. What the devil's wrong with Mama Hilse?

LUISE. Doctor, the veins in her eyes are all dried up and she can't see at all no more.

SCHMIDT. That comes from the dust and the weaving by candlelight. Now tell me, do you know what it all means? All of Peterswaldau is on its feet, heading this way. I started out this morning in my buggy, thinking nothing was wrong, nothing at all. Then, I keep hearing the most amazing things. What in the devil's gotten into these people, Hilse? Raging like a pack of wolves. Starting a revolution, a rebellion; starting to riot; plundering and marauding. . . . Mielchen! Why, where is Mielchen? (MIELCHEN, *her eyes still red from weeping, is pushed in by her mother.*) There, Mielchen, you just reach into my coat pocket. (MIELCHEN *does so.*) Those ginger snaps are for you. Well, well, not all at once, you rascal. First, a little song! "Fox, you stole the . . ." well? "Fox, you stole . . . the goose. . . ." Just you wait, what you did—you called the sparrows on the church fence dirty names. They reported you to the teacher. Now, what do you say to that! Close to fifteen hundred people are on the march. (*Ringing of bells in the distance.*) Listen—they're ringing the alarm bells in Reichenbach. Fifteen hundred people. It's really the end of the world. Uncanny!

OLD HILSE. Are they really comin' over here to Bielau?

SCHMIDT. Yes, of course, of course.—I drove right through. Right through the whole crowd. I wanted to get out and give

each one of them a pill. They trudged along, one behind the other—like misery itself—and sang a song—it really turned your stomach—you actually began to gag. My driver, Friedrich, he trembled like an old woman. We had to have some strong bitters right afterwards. I wouldn't want to be a manufacturer—not even if I could afford to have fine rubber tires on my carriage. (*Distant singing.*) Just listen! As if you beat on an old cracked boiler with your knuckles. I tell you, they'll be here on top of us in less than five minutes. Goodbye, people. Don't do anything foolish. The soldiers'll be right behind them. Don't lose your heads. The people from Peterswaldau have lost theirs. (*Bells ring close by.*) Heavens, now our bells are beginning to ring, too. It'll drive the people completely crazy. (*Goes upstairs.*)

GOTTLIEB. (*Enters again. Still in the entrance hall, panting.*) I've seen them—I've seen them. (*To a woman in the hall.*) They're here, Auntie, they're here! (*In the doorway.*) They're here, Father, they're here! They've got beanpoles and spikes and axes. They're stoppin' at Dittrich's and kickin' up a terrible row. I think he's givin' them money. Oh, my God, whatever is goin' to happen here? I won't look. So many people! So many people! If once they get goin' and make an attack—oh, damn it, damn it! Then our manufacturers'll have a bad time of it.

OLD HILSE. Why did you run so? You'll run like that till ya get your old trouble back, till you're flat on your back again, kickin' and hittin' all around ya.

GOTTLIEB. (*With increasing excitement and joy.*) I had to run, or else they would've caught me and kept me there. They were all yellin' I should hold out my hand, too. Godfather Baumert was one of them. He said to me—Come and get your two bits, you're a poor starvin' creature too. He even said—Tell your Father . . . he said I should tell ya, Father, you should come and help make the manufacturers pay back for all the terrible drudgery. (*Passionately.*) Now times've changed, he said. Now it'd be different with us weavers. We should all of us come and help bring it about. Now we'd all have our half pound of meat on Sundays and blood sausage and cabbage on Holy Days. Now everything would be changed, he said to me.

OLD HILSE. (*With repressed indignation.*) And he calls himself your godfather! And asked ya to take part in such criminal doin's? Don't ya have nothin' to do with such things, Gottlieb. The devil's got his hand in such carryin's on. That's Satan's work, what they're doin'.

LUISE. (*Overcome by passionate feeling, vehemently.*) Yes, yes, Gottlieb, just you hide behind the stove—crawl into the chimney corner—take a ladle in your hand and put a dish of buttermilk on your knee—put on a petticoat and say nice little prayers so you'll please Father! —And ya call that a man?

Laughter from the people in the entrance hall.

OLD HILSE. (*Trembling, with suppressed rage.*) And ya call that a proper wife, huh? Let me tell ya straight out—you call yourself a mother and have a vile tongue like that? Ya think ya can tell your daughter what she should do, and stir up your husband to crime and wickedness?

LUISE. (*Completely uncontrolled.*) You with your bigoted talk! It never filled one of my babies' bellies. All four of 'em laid in filth and rags on account of it. That didn't so much as dry one single diaper. I do call myself a mother, now you know it! And ya know that's why I wish all the manufacturers was in hell and damnation! It's because I am a mother—Can I keep a little worm like that alive? I've cried more than I've breathed, from the moment one of them tender, little creatures first came into the world, until death took pity on it, and took it away. You—you

didn't give a damn. Ya prayed and ya sang, and I walked my feet bloody, for just a drop of skim milk. How many hundreds of nights I've racked my brains, just once to cheat the graveyard of a baby of mine. And tell me, what's the wrong that a little baby like that has done, huh? That he has to come to such a miserable end—and over there—at Dittrich's they're bathed in wine and washed in milk. No, no, I tell ya, if it starts here, ten horses won't hold me back. And this I'll say, too, if they was to attack Dittrich's, I'll be the first one—and God help them that tries to stop me. I'm fed up—and that's the truth.

OLD HILSE. You're lost—you're past helpin'.

LUISE. (*In a frenzy.*) You're the ones that's past helpin'! You're dishrags—not men! Fools to be spit at. Milksops who'd run away in fright if they so much as heard a child's rattle. Ya'd say "Thank ya kindly" three times for every thrashin' ya get. They haven't left enough blood in your veins so ya can get red in the face. Somebody ought to take a whip to ya, and beat some courage into your rotten bones! (*Leaves hurriedly.*)

A moment of embarrassment.

MOTHER HILSE. What's wrong with Luise, Father?

OLD HILSE. Nothin', Mama. What would be wrong with her?

MOTHER HILSE. Tell me, Father, am I just imaginin' it, or are the bells ringin'?

OLD HILSE. I guess they're buryin' somebody, Mother.

MOTHER HILSE. And for me the end never seems to come. Tell me, Father, why don't I ever die? (*Pause.*)

OLD HILSE. (*Leaves his work, draws himself up, solemnly.*) Gottlieb! Your wife has said such things to us. Gottlieb, look here! (*He bares his breast.*) Here laid a bullet as big as a thimble. And the King himself knows where I lost my arm. It wasn't the mice that ate it. (*He walks back and forth.*) Your wife—before she was even thought of, I shed my blood by the quart for the Fatherland. So let her rave on as much as she wants to.—That's all right with me. I don't give a damn.—Afraid? Me, afraid? What would I be afraid of, I'd like to know. Of the few soldiers who'll be rushin' after the rioters, maybe? Oh, Lord, if that was it—that wouldn't be nothin'! If I'm a bit brittle in my bones, when it comes to action, they're like iron. I wouldn't be scared to stand up against a few miserable bayonets—and, if it comes to the worst? Oh, how glad I'd be to take a rest. I certainly ain't afraid to die. Better today than tomorrow. No. No. And it'd be a good thing. For what would we be leavin'? Nobody'd weep for our poor old tortured bodies. That little heap of fear and pain and drudgery that we call life—we'd be glad enough to leave behind. But afterward, Gottlieb, afterward there's something—and if ya throw that away, too—then everything's really gone.

GOTTLIEB. Who knows what happens when you're dead? Ain't nobody seen it.

OLD HILSE. I'm tellin' ya, Gottlieb! Don't go and doubt the only thing poor folks have got. Why would I have set here—and worked the treadle like a slave for forty years and more? And watched quietly how that fellow over there lives in pride and gluttony—and makes money out of my hunger and hardship. And for what? Because I've got hope. I've got something, in all this misery. (*Pointing out the window.*) You've got your share here—me, in the world beyond. That's what I've been thinkin'. And I'd let myself be drawn and quartered—I'm that sure. It has been promised to us. Judgment Day is comin', but we are not the judges, no, on the contrary, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

A VOICE. (*Through the window.*) Weavers, come on out!

OLD HILSE. I don't care—do what ya

want. (*He sits down at the loom.*) You'll have to leave me in here.

GOTTLIEB. (*After a short struggle.*) I'll go and work, come what will.

Leaves.

Many hundreds of voices are heard near-by singing the "Weavers' Song"; it sounds like a dull, monotonous lament.

VOICES OF THE TENANTS. (*In the entrance hall.*) My God! My God! Now they're comin' like ants.—Where'd so many weavers come from?—Don't push —I want to see, too.—Look at that lanky fellow who's walkin' out front. Oh! Oh! —They're comin' in swarms!

HORNIG. (*Joins the people in the entrance hall.*) It's quite a show, ain't it? Ya don't see the likes of that every day. Ya ought to come around to Dittrich's. What they've done up there is really something. He ain't got no house, no more—no factory, no wine cellar—no nothin' at all. The wine bottles, they're drinkin' them all up . . . they don't even take the time to pull out the corks. One, two, three—the necks come off; nobody cares if they cut their mouths on the broken glass or not. Lots of 'em are runnin' around bleedin' like stuck pigs.— Now they're lookin' for the other Dittrich, the one here.

The singing of the crowd has stopped.

VOICES OF THE TENANTS. They really don't look so mad.

HORNIG. Don't ya worry. You just wait. Now they're takin' a good look at everything. See how they're lookin' over the place from all sides. Watch that little fat man—him with the stable bucket. That's the blacksmith from Peterswaldau, and a quick worker he is, too. He breaks down doors like they was pretzels—ya can believe me. If that man ever gets a manufacturer in his claws—he'll be done for!

VOICES OF THE TENANTS. Smash! Something happened! That was a stone flyin' through the window!—Now old Dittrich's gettin' scared.—He's hangin' out a sign! —What's on it?—Can't ya read? Where'd I be if I couldn't read?—Well, read it! "Your demands will be met." "Your demands will be met."

HORNIG. He could've spared hisself that. It won't help much. The weavers have their own ideas. Here it's the factory they're after. They want to put an end to the power looms. They're the things that are ruinin' the handweavers—even a blind man can see that. No, no! Those fellows won't stop now. They don't pay no attention to the judge, or to the chief of police —and certainly not to a sign. Anybody who's seen them kick up a riot, knows what it means.

VOICES OF THE TENANTS. All them people! What do they want? (*Hastily.*) They're comin' across the bridge! (*Anxiously.*) Are they comin' over on this side? (*In great surprise and fear.*) They're comin' this way, they're comin' this way. —They're pullin' the weavers out of their houses!

Everybody flees; the entrance hall is empty. A disorderly crowd of rioters, dirty, dusty, their faces red with liquor and exertion, wild-looking, exhausted, as if they had been up all night, tattered, pushes its way in, with the cry, "Come on out, weavers!" The crowd disperses through the various rooms. BAECKER *and a few* YOUNG WEAVERS, *armed with cudgels and poles, enter* OLD HILSE'S *room. When they recognize* OLD HILSE, *they are taken aback and calm down a little.*

BAECKER. Father Hilse, stop that slavin'! Let whoever wants to work the treadle. Ya don't need to work till ya've harmed yourself. We'll see to that.

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. Ya won't have to go to bed hungry another day.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. Weavers'll have a roof over their heads and a shirt on their backs once more.

OLD HILSE. What's the devil makin' ya come in here for, with poles and axes?

BAECKER. These we're going to break in pieces on Dittrich's back.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. We'll get 'em red-hot and shove 'em down the manufacturers' throats, so they'll know how hunger burns.

THIRD YOUNG WEAVER. Come along, Father Hilse. We don't give no quarter.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. They took no pity on us. Neither God nor man. Now we're makin' our own justice.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Comes in, somewhat unsteady on his feet, with a newly killed chicken under his arm. He stretches out his arm.*) My dear—dear—br-brother—we are all brothers! Come to my heart, brother! (*Laughter.*)

OLD HILSE. Is that you, Willem?

OLD BAUMERT. Gustav!—Gustav, poor old wretch, come to my heart. (*Moved.*)

OLD HILSE. (*Growls.*) Let me alone.

OLD BAUMERT. Gustav, that's the way it is. A man's got to have luck! Gustav, just look at me. How do I look? A man's got to have luck. Don't I look like a count? (*Patting his belly.*) Guess what's in my belly. Food fit for a prince is in my belly. A man's got to have luck. Then he gets champagne and roast hare. I'll tell ya something—we've been makin' a mistake—we've got to help ourselves.

ALL. (*Speaking at once.*) We've got to help ourselves. Hurray!

OLD BAUMERT. And once ya've had your first good bite to eat, ya feel like a different man. Jesus! Then ya get to feelin' strong like a bull. Then the strength goes through your limbs so ya don't even see no more what ya're strikin' at. Damn it, that's fun!

JAEGER. (*In the door, armed with an old cavalry saber.*) We've made a few excellent attacks.

BAECKER. Yes, we've got the hang of it, now. One, two, three, and we're inside the house. Then it goes like wild fire—cracklin' and shiverin'—like sparks flyin' in a forge.

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. We ought to make a little fire.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. We're marchin' on to Reichenbach and burnin' the houses of the rich right over their heads.

JAEGER. I bet they'd like that. Then they'd get a lot of insurance money. (*Laughter.*)

BAECKER. From here we'll march to Freiburg, to Tromtra's.

JAEGER. We ought to string up some of the officials. I've read all the trouble comes from the bureaucrats.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. Soon we'll be marchin' to Breslau. The crowd keeps gettin' bigger.

OLD BAUMERT. (*To* HILSE.) Have a drink, Gustav! Come on!

OLD HILSE. I never drink.

OLD BAUMERT. That was in the old times—today things is different, Gustav.

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. Everyday ain't a holiday. (*Laughter.*)

OLD HILSE. (*Impatiently.*) You infernal firebrands, what do ya want here in my house?

OLD BAUMERT. (*Somewhat intimidated, overly friendly.*) Now look, I wanted to bring ya a little chicken—so's ya can cook some soup for Mother.

OLD HILSE. (*Perplexed, half-friendly.*) Oh, go and tell Mother.

MOTHER HILSE. (*Her hand to her ear, has been listening with difficulty. Now she wards* BAUMERT *off.*) You let me alone. I don't want no chicken soup.

OLD HILSE. You're right, Mother. Me, neither. Not that kind, anyway. And you, Baumert! I'll tell ya one thing. When old men talk like little children, then the devil claps his hands with joy. And let me tell ya this: you and me, we have nothin' in common. You're not here because I want ya here. Accordin' to law and justice and righteousness, you ain't got no business here!

A VOICE. Who ain't with us, is against us.

JAEGER. (*Threatens brutally.*) You've got the whole thing wrong. Listen here, old man, we aren't thieves.

A VOICE. We're hungry, that's all.

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. We want to live, and that's all. And that's why we've cut the rope 'round our necks.

JAEGER. And that was right! (*Holding his fist in front of* OLD HILSE'S *face.*) Just say another word! Ya'll get a punch—right between the eyes.

BAECKER. Be quiet, be quiet! Let the old man alone.—Father Hilse, this is the way we look at it. Better dead than start the old life again.

OLD HILSE. Haven't I lived that kind of a life for sixty years or more?

BAECKER. That don't matter. There's got to be a change, anyway.

OLD HILSE. That day'll never come.

BAECKER. What they don't give us willingly, we'll take by force.

OLD HILSE. By force? (*Laughs.*) Ya might as well go and dig your own graves. They'll show you where the force is. Just wait, young man!

JAEGER. Maybe—because of the soldiers? I've been a soldier, too. We can handle a few companies of soldiers.

OLD HILSE. With your loud mouths, that I'll believe. And if ya chase a couple of them out, a dozen more'll come back.

VOICES. (*Through the window.*) The soldiers are comin'! Look out! (*Suddenly everyone is silent. For a moment, the faint sound of fifes and drums can be heard. In the stillness a short, involuntary cry.*) Damn it, I'm gettin' out! (*General laughter.*)

BAECKER. Who's talkin' of gettin' out? Who was it?

JAEGER. Who's afraid of a few lousy soldiers? I'll give the commands. I've been in the army. I know the tricks.

OLD HILSE. What'll ya shoot 'em with? With clubs, maybe, huh?

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. Never mind that old man—he ain't quite right in the head.

SECOND YOUNG WEAVER. Yes, he is a bit crazy.

GOTTLIEB. (*Has come into the room, unnoticed, and grabs hold of the speaker.*) Ought ya to be so impudent to an old man?

FIRST YOUNG WEAVER. Let me alone. I ain't said nothin' bad.

OLD HILSE. (*Meditating.*) Oh, let him talk. Don't meddle, Gottlieb. He'll see soon enough who's crazy—me or him.

BAECKER. You goin' with us, Gottlieb?

OLD HILSE. He'll have nothin' to do with it.

LUISE. (*Comes into the entrance hall, calls in.*) Don't keep hangin' around here. Don't lose no time with such prayer-book hypocrites. Come on out to the square! Ya ought to come on to the square. Uncle Baumert is comin' as fast as he can. The Major's speakin' to the people from horseback. He's tellin' 'em to go home. If ya don't come quick, we're through.

JAEGER. (*As he leaves.*) A fine, brave man you have for a husband!

LUISE. A man for a husband? I ain't got no man for a husband.

Several in the entrance hall sing.

Once there was a man so small,
Heigh ho!
He would have a wife so tall,
Heigh diddle diddle dum, dum, dum,
hurrah!

WITTIG. (*Has entered from upstairs, a stable bucket in his hand. As he is about to go out, he stops for a minute in the entrance hall.*) Forward! Those that ain't cowards, hurray! (*He rushes out. A crowd, among them* LUISE *and* JAEGER, *follow him amid shouts of "hurray."*)

BAECKER. Good luck to ya, Father Hilse, we'll be seein' each other again. (*Is about to leave.*)

OLD HILSE. I doubt that. I won't last another five years. And you won't be out before that.

BAECKER. (*Surprised, standing still.*) Get out of where, Father Hilse?

OLD HILSE. Out of jail—where else?

BAECKER. (*Laughing wildly.*) That wouldn't be so bad. At least I'd get enough to eat there, Father Hilse.

Leaves.

OLD BAUMERT. (*Has been sitting slumped on a stool, moodily meditating; now he gets up.*) It's true, Gustav—I am sorta drunk. But even so, my head's clear enough. You've got your opinion in this matter—I've got mine. I say Baecker's right—if it ends in chains and ropes—it's better in prison than at home. There, they at least take care of ya; there, ya don't have to starve. I didn't want to join 'em. But ya see, Gustav, there comes a time when a man has to have a breath of air. (*Going slowly toward the door.*) Good luck to ya, Gustav. If something was to happen, say a prayer for me, will ya?

Leaves.

The mob of rioters has now left the stage. The entrance hall gradually fills up with curious tenants. OLD HILSE *goes about tying knots in his web.* GOTTLIEB *has taken an ax from behind the stove and instinctively is testing its edge. Both* OLD HILSE *and* GOTTLIEB *are agitated, but remain silent. From outside come the buzz and roar of a large crowd.*

MOTHER HILSE. Tell me, Father, the boards is shakin' so—what's goin' on here? What's goin' to happen? (*Pause.*)

OLD HILSE. Gottlieb!

GOTTLIEB. What do ya want?

OLD HILSE. Put down that ax.

GOTTLIEB. And who'll chop the wood? (*He leans the ax against the stove.—Pause.*)

MOTHER HILSE. Gottlieb, listen to what your father says.

A VOICE. (*Singing outside the window.*)

The little man at home will stay
Heigh-ho!
And wash the dishes all the day
Heigh diddle diddle, dum, dum, dum,
hurrah!

It fades out.

GOTTLIEB. (*Leaps up, shakes his fist at the window.*) You son of a bitch, don't make me mad!

A volley is fired.

MOTHER HILSE. (*Starts up in alarm.*) Oh, dear Lord, is it thunderin' again?

OLD HILSE. (*Instinctively folding his hands.*) Dear God in heaven, protect the poor weavers, protect my poor brothers!

There is a short silence.

OLD HILSE. (*To himself, deeply moved.*) Now the blood'll flow.

GOTTLIEB. (*When the shots were heard, jumped up and held the ax tight in his hand. He is pale and scarcely able to control his great excitement.*) Well, are we to take it layin' down, even now?

GIRL. (*Calling into the room from the entrance hall.*) Father Hilse, Father Hilse, get away from that window. A bullet came right through our window upstairs. (*Disappears.*)

MIELCHEN. (*Puts her head in through the window, laughing.*) Grandpa, Grandpa, they're shootin' with guns. A couple of 'em fell down. One of 'em turned 'round in a circle—'round and 'round like a top. One's all floppin' like a sparrow with its head tore off. Oh, and so much blood spurtin' out—! (*She disappears.*)

A WOMAN WEAVER. They've killed some of 'em.

AN OLD WEAVER. (*In the entrance hall.*) Watch out! They're goin' at the soldiers.

A SECOND WEAVER. (*Beside himself.*) Look at the women! Just look at the women! If they aren't liftin' up their skirts, and spittin' at the soldiers!

A WOMAN WEAVER. (*Calls in.*) Gottlieb, look at your wife. She's got more courage than you. She's jumpin' around in front of the bayonets like she was dancin' to music.

FOUR MEN *carry a wounded man through the entrance hall. Silence. A voice is clearly heard saying, "It's Weaver Ull-*

brich." After a few seconds, the voice says again, "He's done for, I guess—a bullet got him in the ear." The men are heard walking up the wooden stairs. Sudden shouts from outside, "Hurray, hurray!"

VOICES IN THE HOUSE. Where'd they get the stones? Ya'd better run for it! From the road construction—So long, soldiers! —Now it's rainin' pavin' stones.

Shrieks of terror and yelling are heard outside and continuing in the entrance hall. There is a cry of fear, and the entrance door is banged shut.

VOICES IN THE ENTRANCE HALL. They're loadin' again.—They're goin' to shoot again.—Father Hilse, get away from that window.

GOTTLIEB. (*Runs for the ax.*) What! Are we mad dogs? Are we to eat powder and shot instead of bread? (*Hesitating a minute with the ax in his hand. To the old man.*) Am I to stand by and let my wife get shot? No, that mustn't happen! (*As he rushes out.*) Watch out—here I come!

Leaves.

OLD HILSE. Gottlieb, Gottlieb!

MOTHER HILSE. Where's Gottlieb?

OLD HILSE. He's gone to the devil.

VOICES. (*From the entrance hall.*) Get away from the window, Father Hilse!

OLD HILSE. Not me! Not if ya all go crazy. (*To* MOTHER HILSE *with mounting excitement.*) Here my Heavenly Father put me. Right, Mother? Here we'll stay sittin' and doin' what's our duty—even if the snow was to catch fire.

He begins to weave. A volley is fired. Fatally hit, OLD HILSE *rises from his stool and then falls forward over the loom. At the same time loud cries of "Hurray" are heard. Shouting "Hurray" the people who have been standing in the entrance hall rush outside. The old woman asks several times: "Father—Father—What's wrong with ya?" The steady shouting grows more and more distant. Suddenly* MIELCHEN *comes running into the room.*

MIELCHEN. Grandpa, Grandpa, they're drivin' the soldiers out of town. They've attacked Dittrich's house. They did like at Dreissiger's, Grandpa! (*Frightened, the child sees that something is wrong—sticks her finger in her mouth and cautiously steps close to the dead man.*) Grandpa!

MOTHER HILSE. Come now, Father—say something! You're scarin' me!

CURTAIN

THE HERETIC OF SOANA

By GERHART HAUPTMANN

Translated by Harry Steinhauer

Tourists can set out for the summit of Mount Generoso in Mendrisio or take the rack railway in Capolago or start from Melida by way of Soana, which is the most difficult road of all. The whole region belongs to Ticino, a Swiss canton with an Italian population.

At a great height mountain climbers not infrequently met the figure of a bespectacled goatherd, whose appearance was striking in other ways too. His face bespoke the man of culture in spite of his tanned skin. He looked not unlike the bronze statue of John the Baptist by Donatello in the cathedral of Siena. He had dark hair which hung in curls over his brown shoulders. His dress consisted of a goatskin.

Whenever a group of strangers came near this man, the mountain guides began to laugh. When the tourists saw him, they often burst into crude roars of laughter or into loud, provocative cries. They felt justified in doing so because of the strange sight he presented. The goatherd paid no heed to them; he did not even turn his head.

All the mountain guides seemed to be on basically good terms with him. They often climbed over to him and entered into confidential conversations with him. When they returned and were asked by the strangers what sort of a weird saint this was, the guides tended to act mysterious until he was out of sight. Those tourists whose curiosity was still alive learned that this man had a dark history, was popularly called "the heretic of Soana" and enjoyed a dubious esteem mingled with superstitious fear.

When the editor of these pages was still young and fortunate enough to spend frequent glorious weeks in beautiful Soana, it was inevitable that he should now and then climb Mount Generoso and one day come face to face with the so-called "heretic of Soana." He could not forget the man's appearance. After gathering all sorts of contradictory impressions about him, he resolved to see him again, in fact simply to visit him.

The editor was strengthened in his intention by a German Swiss, the doctor of Soana, who assured him that the eccentric was not averse to receiving visits from educated people. He had visited him once himself. "I should really be angry with him," he said, "because the fellow is an unauthorized competitor of mine. But he lives very high up and far away and is, thank Heaven, only consulted in secret by those few who would not stop at being cured by the devil himself." The doctor continued, "You must know there is a belief among the people that he has sold

his soul to the devil, a view that is not contested by the clergy, because it originated with them. Originally, they say, the man was under an evil spell, until he himself became a hardened villain and infernal sorcerer. As far as I am concerned, I've noticed neither claws nor horns on him."

The editor remembers his visits to the strange man very clearly. The nature of the first meeting was remarkable. A special circumstance gave it the character of an accident. At a steep spot on the road the visitor found himself face to face with a helpless mother goat which had just thrown a kid and was in the process of giving birth to a second. The distress of the lonely mother, who looked at him fearlessly as if she expected his help, and the profound mystery of birth in that vast rocky wildness, made the deepest impression on him. But he hastened his ascent, for he had concluded that this animal probably belonged to the herd of the eccentric, and wanted to summon him to help. He found him among his goats and cattle, told him what he had observed and led him to the mother in labor. Behind her the second kid was already lying in the grass, damp and bloody.

With the sure touch of a physician, with the tender love of the merciful Samaritan, the owner cared for the animal. After waiting a certain amount of time, he took each of the newborn creatures under an arm and slowly began the way back to his home, followed by the mother, whose heavy udder almost dragged on the ground. The visitor was not only rewarded with the most friendly thanks, but invited in an irresistible manner to accompany him.

The eccentric had erected several buildings on the mountain meadow that was his property. From the outside, one of these resembled a crude pile of stones. Inside it was a dry, warm stable. There the goat and her young were housed, while the visitor was led higher up to a whitewashed square building leaning against the wall of Mount Generoso and situated on a terrace overgrown with grapevine. Not far from the little gate a stream of water as thick as an arm shot out of the mountain and filled a huge stone basin which had been hewn out of the rock. Near the basin a mountain cave was locked off by an iron-bound door; this soon revealed itself to be a vaulted cellar.

This place, which, when viewed from the valley, seemed to hang at an inaccessible height, offered a splendid view; but the editor does not wish to speak about that. To be sure, when he enjoyed it for the first time, he fell from speechless astonishment into loud exclamations of rapture and back again into speechless astonishment. But his host, who at this moment emerged from the house (where he had been looking for something), suddenly seemed to be walking on softer soles. This, as well as his generally quiet, calm conduct, did not escape the visitor. It was an admonition to him to be sparing of words and chary of questions. He already liked the odd goatherd too much to run the risk of estranging him by even a hint of curiosity or importunity.

The visitor still sees the round stone table which stood on the terrace, surrounded by benches. He sees it with all the good things the "heretic of Soana" had spread on it: the most wonderful *stracchino di lecco,* delicious Italian wheat bread, salami, olives, figs and medlars, besides a jug full of red wine which he had fetched fresh from the grotto. When they sat down, the goatskin-clad, bearded host, with his long flowing locks, looked warmly into the eyes of the visitor, grasping the latter's right hand as if to indicate affection.

It is difficult to remember all that was

said at this first meeting; only some of it has remained in the memory. The goatherd wished to be called Ludovico. He related many things about the Argentine. At one point, when the ringing of the angelus bells penetrated to us from below, he remarked about this "ubiquitous irritating noise." Once the name of Seneca was mentioned. We also talked casually about Swiss politics. Finally the eccentric wanted to know some things about Germany, because it was the visitor's native land. When the time came for the visitor to depart, according to a prearranged plan, the host said, "You will always be welcome here."

Although the editor of these pages was eager for this man's story, as he frankly admits, he avoided betraying any interest in it even on subsequent visits. In chance conversations he had in Soana, he gathered some of the external reasons for Ludovico's being called the "heretic of Soana"; but the visitor was much more concerned with finding out in what sense this designation was justified, and in what peculiar inner destinies, in what special philosophy, Ludovico's way of life was rooted. But he refrained from putting questions and was richly rewarded for this.

Mostly he met Ludovico alone, either among the animals of his herd or in his cell. A few times he came upon him milking the goats with his own hands, like Robinson Crusoe, or forcing a rebellious mother to suckle her kids. At such times he seemed to merge completely with his calling of Alpine shepherd; he rejoiced in the mother goat who dragged her swollen udder on the ground, and in the ram when it was in active heat. Of one goat he said, "Doesn't he look like the Evil One himself? Just look at his eyes. What power, what flashing anger, what rage and malice! And yet what a sacred fire!" His smile took on a hard, grim character; he showed his splendid white teeth and fell into a dreamy state when he watched, with the eye of an expert, one of his demonic matadors going about his useful work.

At times the "heretic" played the pipes of Pan, and the visitor could hear their simple scale even as he approached. On such occasion the conversation naturally turned to music, about which the shepherd unfolded strange views. When he was among his herd Ludovico never spoke of anything except the animals and their habits, of the goatherd's vocation and its customs. Not infrequently he pursued the subject of animal psychology and traced the goatherd's way of life into the remotest past, betraying a scholar's knowledge of no common range. He spoke of Apollo tending the herds of Laomedon and Admetus as a servant and shepherd. "I would like to know on what instrument he made music to his flocks then." And he concluded, as if he were talking about something real, "By Heaven, I would have enjoyed listening to him." Those were the moments in which the shaggy anchorite might perhaps have created the impression that his mental powers were not quite intact. On the other hand, his thoughts received a certain justification when he demonstrated in what varied ways a herd could be influenced and guided by music. He brought them to their feet with one note and brought them to rest with another. With music he fetched them from distant places, with music he made the animals scatter or follow close on his heels.

There were also visits at which almost nothing was said. Once, when the oppressive heat of a June afternoon had penetrated to the meadows of Mount Generoso, Ludovico was lying in a blissful state of somnolence beside his cud-chewing herds. He merely gave his visitor a flashing look and motioned to him to stretch out in the grass too. When this was done

and both of them had been lying there for a while in silence, he said in a drawling voice, without any introduction, something to this effect:

"You know that Eros is older than Cronus and mightier too. —Do you feel this silent fire about us? Eros! —Do you hear the cricket chirping? Eros!" —At this moment two lizards which were chasing each other shot over the prostrate shepherd with lightning speed. He repeated, "Eros! Eros!" —And, as if obeying an order he had issued, two strong bucks now got up and locked horns. He did not interfere, although the combat became more and more heated. The clang from the thrusts became louder and louder, and the number of attacks increased. And again he said, "Eros! Eros!"

And now for the first time the visitor heard words which made him listen with special attention, because they shed, or at least seemed to shed, light on the question why Ludovico was known to the people as the "heretic." "I prefer," he said, "to worship a living goat or a living bull to a man who was hanged on the gallows. I am not living in an age that does this. I hate and despise this age. Jupiter Ammon was represented with the horns of a ram. Pan has the legs of a goat; Bacchus, the horns of a bull. I mean the Bacchus Tauriformis or Tauricornis of the Romans. Mithra, the sun god, is represented as a bull. All the peoples revered the bull, the goat, the ram, and shed their sacred blood in sacrifice. To this I say: yes!—for the procreative power is the highest power, the procreative power is the creative power, procreation and creation are the same thing. Of course, the cult of this power is not the frigid bleating of monks and nuns. I once dreamed of Sita, the wife of Vishnu, who assumed human shape under the name of Rama. Priests died in her embraces. During that moment I knew something of all sorts of mysteries; of the mystery of black procreation in the green grass, of procreation in mother-of-pearl-colored lust; of raptures and stupors; of the mystery of yellow maize kernels, of all fruits, all sizes, all colors. I could have bellowed in the frenzy of pain when I caught sight of the merciless almighty Sita. I thought I would die of desire."

During this revelation the writer of these lines felt like an involuntary eavesdropper. He stood up with a few words, which were designed to give the impression that he had not heard the monologue but had concentrated his thoughts on other matters. Then he tried to take his leave. But Ludovico would not permit it. And so once more, on that mountain terrace, there began a banquet, and this time its course became significant and unforgettable.

The visitor was introduced into the dwelling, the interior of the cabin described above. It was square-shaped, clean, had a fireplace and resembled the simple study of a scholar. It contained ink, pen, paper and a small library, chiefly of Greek and Latin authors. "Why should I conceal the fact from you," said the shepherd, "that I am of good family and enjoyed a misguided youth and the education of a scholar? Of course you will want to know how I changed from an unnatural to a natural man, from a prisoner into a free man, from a disturbed and morose man into a happy and contented one. Or how I excluded myself from bourgeois society and Christianity." He gave a loud laugh. "Perhaps I shall write the history of my transformation some day." The visitor, whose suspense had reached its peak, found himself once more thrown far from his goal. It did not help much when his host finally declared that the cause of his regeneration lay in the fact that he worshiped natural symbols.

In the shadow of the rock, on the terrace, at the edge of the overflowing basin,

in the delicious coolness, a more sumptuous meal than the first was spread: smoked ham, cheese and wheat bread, figs, fresh medlars and wine. There had been much talk, not high-spirited but full of quiet gaiety. Finally the stone table was cleared. And now there came a moment which lives in the editor's mind as if it were yesterday.

The bronzed goatherd, as we know, created a savage impression with his long, unkept locks and beard and his goatskin. He has been compared to Donatello's Saint John the Baptist. His face did in fact have much in common with John's in fineness of line. Upon close inspection, Ludovico was really handsome, if one could forget his spectacles. To be sure, these spectacles gave his whole appearance, apart from a slightly comical expression, a strange, enigmatic and arresting quality. At the moment which I am describing, his whole person underwent a transformation. If the bronzelike quality of his body had found expression in a certain immobility, this now vanished to the extent that his features became mobile and rejuvenated. One might say that he smiled with a tinge of boyish bashfulness. "What I now ask of you," he said, "I have never proposed to anyone else. I really don't know myself where I get the courage to do it. From an old habit I still read from time to time, and even play with ink and pen. So I've written down, in the winter hours of my leisure, a simple tale which is supposed to have happened here, in and around Soana, long before my time. You will find it extremely simple, but it attracted me for all sorts of reasons, which I will not discuss now. Tell me briefly and frankly: Do you want to go back into the house with me, and do you feel inclined to forfeit some of your time to this story, which has already cost me, too, many a fruitless hour? I don't want to urge you, I would rather dissuade you. Moreover, if you say so, I will take the pages of the manuscript and throw them down into the depths right now."

Of course this did not happen. He took the wine jug, went into the house with his visitor and the two men sat facing each other. From a case made of the finest goat leather, the mountain shepherd had unfolded a manuscript, written in a monkish hand on strong paper. As though to give himself courage, he once more raised his glass to his visitor before he cast away from shore to plunge into the stream of narration. Then he began in a soft voice.

The Mountain Shepherd's Tale

On a mountain slope above Lake Lugano one may find a small hamlet among many others, which may be reached after about an hour's journey from the lake shore by way of a steep highway that winds about the mountain.

The houses of the hamlet, which, like most of the Italian places of that region, are one single gray ruin of brick and mortar, emerging like a series of boxes out of each other, front on a gorgelike valley of meadows and terraces behind the mighty slope of the towering giant Mount Generoso.

Into this valley, at the point where it really ends as a narrow gorge, a waterfall pours from the bottom of a valley situated about a hundred yards higher up. The power of the waterfall varies with the time of day and year and with the prevailing air currents; its roar constitutes perpetual music in the hamlet.

A long time ago a priest named Raffaele Francesco, who was then about twenty-five years old, was transferred to this community. He had been born in Ligornetto, which is in the canton of Ticino, and could boast that he was a member of the same family, long established there, which had produced the most significant sculptor of united Italy, who had also been born in Ligornetto and had eventually died there too.

The young priest had spent his childhood with relatives in Milan, and his student days in various theological seminaries of Switzerland and Italy. From his mother, who was descended from a noble family, he inherited the serious side of his character, which impelled him, at a very early age and without the slightest hesitation, to embrace the religious vocation.

Francesco, who wore spectacles, was distinguished from the host of his fellow pupils by exemplary industry, a strict way of life. and piety. Even his mother had to urge on him tactfully that, as a future secular priest, he might well permit himself a little joy in life, since he was not really bound to the most stringent monastic rules. However, as soon as he had received holy orders, his sole wish was to find a most remote parish, where he might dedicate himself to his heart's desire, even more than hitherto, as a sort of hermit, to the service of God, the Son and the Holy Mother.

When he came to little Soana and moved into the parsonage that adjoined the church, the mountain-dwellers soon noticed that he was an entirely different type from his predecessor. Even in appearance; for his predecessor had been a massive, bull-like peasant who used means other than ecclesiastical penances and penalties to keep the pretty women and girls of the place obedient to him. Francesco, by contrast, was pale and delicate. His eyes were deep-set. Hectic spots glowed on the impure skin that covered his cheekbones. To this were added the spectacles, which to simple folk are still a symbol of preceptorial severity and learning. After a period of from four to six weeks he had, in his own way, brought the somewhat rebellious wives and daughters under his power, and indeed to an even greater degree than the other priest.

As soon as Francesco stepped into the street through the little gate of the tiny parish yard adjoining the church, he was surrounded by children and women, who kissed his hand with genuine reverence. And the number of times in the course of the day when he was called into the confessional by the tinkling of the little church bell, mounted up, by the time evening came, to a total which elicited from his newly hired housekeeper, a woman almost seventy years old, the exclamation that she had never realized how many angels were hidden in the normally rather corrupt Soana. In short, the reputation of the young pastor Francesco Vela echoed far and wide in the region, and he soon acquired the name of saint.

Francesco did not allow any of this to affect him and was far from harboring any consciousness of doing more than discharging his duties in a tolerably competent manner. He said Masses, performed all the ecclesiastical functions of the divine Service with undiminishing zeal and in addition carried out the duties of secular instruction, for the little schoolroom was in the parsonage.

One evening at the beginning of the month of March there was a violent tug at the bell of the parish yard. When the housekeeper opened the door and shone her lantern out into the bad weather, she was confronted by a somewhat savage-looking fellow, who asked to speak to the pastor. After locking the gate the old housekeeper went in to her young master to announce the late visitor, not without visible anxiety. But Francesco, who had made it a point of duty, among others, to reject no one who needed him, whoever he might be, looked up from reading some church father and said shortly, "Go, Petronilla, bring him in."

Soon afterwards there stood before the priest's table a man of about forty, whose outward appearance was that of the people of the region, but much more neglected, indeed ragged. The man was bare-

foot. His threadbare, rain-soaked trousers were fastened about his hips by a belt. His shirt stood open. Above his tanned, hairy chest rose a bushy throat and a face that was overgrown with thick, black hair, out of which two dark, glowing eyes burned.

The man had hung a tattered, rain-soaked jacket over his left shoulder, as shepherds do, and he nervously twirled a small felt hat, shrunk and discolored by the wind and weather of many years, in his brown, hard fists. He had set down a long cudgel at the door.

When he was asked what he wished, the man poured out a flood of raw, unintelligible sounds and words, accompanied by wild grimaces. He spoke in the dialect of the district, to be sure, but deviated from it so much that it sounded like a foreign language even to the housekeeper, who had been born in Soana.

The young priest, who had attentively studied his visitor as he stood in the light of the small burning lamp, tried in vain to grasp the sense of his request. With much patience and by means of numerous questions, he was finally able to get this much out of him: that he was the father of seven children, some of whom he would like to send to the young priest's school. Francesco asked, "Where are you from?" And when the answer came tumbling out, "I'm from Soana," the priest was astonished and said at once, "That isn't possible! I know everyone in this place but I don't know you or your family."

The shepherd or peasant or whatever he was, now described the location of his home in excited tones, accompanying his description with many gestures; but Francesco could make no sense of it. He merely said, "If you are an inhabitant of Soana and your children have reached the legal age, they should have been in my school long ago. And I must surely have seen you or your wife or your children at a church service, at Mass or confession."

At this point the man opened his eyes wide and pressed his lips together. Instead of replying, he exhaled as though his heaving chest were congested.

"Well then, I'll write down your name. I think it's good of you to come of your own accord to take steps to prevent your children from remaining ignorant and possibly godless." At these words the ragged creature began to utter strange, croaking, animal-like sounds, so that his brown, sinewy, almost athletic body was shaken by them. "Yes," Francesco repeated in embarrassment, "I'll write down your name and look into the matter." One could see tear upon tear roll out of the stranger's reddened eyes and down his shaggy face.

"Very well, very well," said Francesco, who could not account for his visitor's excitement and was, besides, more disturbed than moved by it. "Very well, very well, your case will be investigated. Just tell me your name, my good man, and send me your children tomorrow morning." The man grew silent at this point, and looked at Francesco for a long time with a restless and tortured expression on his face. The priest asked once more, "What is your name? Tell me your name."

He had noticed, from the very beginning, a fearful, hunted quality in the movements of his guest. Now, when he was supposed to state his name and Petronilla's step became audible on the stone floor outside, he ducked down and displayed that pervasive fearsomeness that we associate mostly with the insane or the criminal. He appeared to be persecuted. He seemed to be in flight from the police.

However, he took a piece of paper and the priest's pen, walked away from the light into the darkness, toward the window sill, where the sounds of a nearby brook below and of the more distant waterfall of Soana penetrated into the room;

with some effort he managed to scrawl something legible on the paper and handed it resolutely to the priest. The latter said, "Good," and, making the sign of the Cross, added, "Go in peace." The savage went, leaving behind him a cloud of odors compounded of salami, onions, charcoal smoke, goats and cow stables. As soon as he was gone the priest threw the window wide open.

The next morning Francesco said Mass as usual, rested a while and then ate his frugal breakfast. Soon after, he was on his way to the mayor, who had to be visited early if he was to be found at home. For every day he went to Lugano, taking a train at the railway station far below on the lakeshore; he had a wholesale and retail business in Ticino cheese on one of the busiest streets of the town.

The sun shone down on the little square close to the church, which formed, so to speak, the agora of the village, surrounded by old chestnut trees, which were as yet bare of leaves. Children sat around and played on some of the stone benches, while the mothers and older daughters washed their linen at an antique marble sarcophagus overflowing with the cold mountain water which it was copiously fed, and carried the laundry away in baskets to dry. The ground was wet from rain mingled with snowflakes that had fallen the previous day; on the other side of the gorge, the mighty rocky slope of Mount Generoso, covered with newly fallen snow, towered in its own shadow, and from its inaccessible crags blew fresh mountain air toward them.

The young priest walked past the washerwomen with downcast eyes, returning their loud greetings with a nod. He briefly held out his hand to the children who pressed about him, looking at them over his spectacles like an old man; they wiped their lips on his hand with zeal and haste. The village, which began behind the square, was made accessible by a few narrow lanes. But even the main street could only be used by small vehicles, and then only at its front end. Toward the exit from the village the street became narrower and so steep that one could just about squeeze through and make one's way with a loaded mule. On this little street stood a small grocery store and a branch of the Swiss post office.

The postmaster, whose relations with Francesco's predecessor had been those of a comrade, greeted Francesco and was greeted by him in turn, but in such a way that due distance was maintained between the gravity of the consecrated priest and the casual friendliness of the layman. Not far from the post office the priest turned into a wretched little side lane which led down hazardously by means of stairways large and small, past open goat stables and all manner of dirty, windowless, cellarlike caves. Hens cackled; cats sat on rotten galleries under clusters of suspended corncobs. Here and there a goat bleated, or a cow, which for some reason had not been taken out to pasture, lowed.

It was astonishing, coming from this neighborhood, to pass through a narrow gate to the mayor's house and find oneself in a suite of small, vaulted rooms, whose ceilings craftsmen had elaborately decorated with figures in the style of Tiepolo. Tall windows and glass doors, hung with long red drapes, led from these sunny rooms to an equally sunny terrace, which was decorated with very ancient box-trees cut in conical shape and by wonderful laurel trees. Here, as everywhere, one heard the beautiful music of the waterfall and saw before one the wall of the wild mountain.

The mayor, Sor Domenico, was a well-dressed, sedate man in his middle forties, who had taken a second wife less than three months before. The beautiful, blooming woman of twenty-two, whom Francesco had found busy preparing

breakfast in the gleaming kitchen, led him into the garden. When the mayor had heard the priest's story about the visit of the previous evening and had read the slip of paper which bore the name of the savage visitor in his clumsy scrawl, a smile passed over his face. After inviting the young priest to sit down, he retailed the desired information about the mysterious visitor, who was indeed a citizen of Soana, until now unknown to the priest. The mayor's narration was wholly factual and the masklike indifference of his features was never disturbed.

"Luchino Scarabota," said the mayor—it was the name which the priest's visitor had scribbled on the piece of paper—"is by no means a poor man, but for years his domestic affairs have given me and the whole community a headache, and it isn't really possible to see at this point where the whole thing is going to end. He belongs to an old family, and it is very probable that he has in his veins some of the blood of the famous Luchino Scarabota da Milano, who built the nave of the cathedral down in Como between fourteen hundred and fifteen hundred. As you know, Father, we have a number of such old, famous names in our little place."

The mayor had opened the glass door and, as he was talking, led the priest out to the terrace, where he showed him with slightly upraised hand one of the square huts in which the peasants of the region live, in the steep, funnel-shaped area which forms the source of the waterfall. But this property, hanging at a great height above all the others, differed from them not only by its isolated, seemingly inaccessible location but also by its smallness and poverty.

"Do you see, there, where I am pointing with my finger? That's where this Scarabota lives," the mayor said.

"I am surprised, Father," the speaker continued, "that you haven't heard anything about that mountain pasture and its inhabitants before this. For a decade and more these people have constituted the most disgusting nuisance in this region. Unfortunately there is no way of getting at them. The woman has been brought to court and has claimed that the seven children she has borne are not those of the man she is living with—is there anything more absurd than that?—but from Swiss summer tourists who have to pass the pasture to climb Mount Generoso. And the hag is lousy and caked with dirt and as frighteningly ugly as the night, besides.

"No, it's common knowledge that the man who called on you yesterday, and with whom she is living, is the father of her children. But this is the point: this man is also her blood brother."

The young priest turned pale.

"Of course, this incestuous couple is avoided and outlawed by everyone. In this respect the vox populi seldom errs." With this explanation the mayor continued his narrative. "Whenever one of the children has appeared here or in Arogno or in Melano, he has nearly been stoned. Where these people are known any church is regarded as desecrated if the infamous brother and sister have set foot in it, and the two outlaws, whenever they thought they might dare to make such an attempt, were made to feel this in such a terrible way that for years now they have lost all desire to attend church.

"And can we permit," the mayor continued, "such children, such cursed creatures, who are the abomination and horror of everyone, to attend our school here below, and sit on the schoolbenches among the children of good Christians? Can we be expected to allow everyone in our village, big and small, to be infected by these products of moral disgrace, these wicked, mangy beasts?"

The pale face of the priest Francesco in no way betrayed to what extent he had been moved by the narrative of Sor Domenico. He thanked him and went away

with the same dignified seriousness with which he had appeared.

Soon after the conversation with the mayor, Francesco reported to his bishop concerning the case of Luchino Scarabota. A week later the bishop's answer was in his hands; it charged the young clergyman to take personal cognizance of the general situation on the so-called mountain pasture of Santa Croce. In the same letter the bishop praised the ecclesiastical zeal of the young man and confirmed that he had good cause for feeling oppressed in his conscience because of these aberrant and outlawed souls, and for being concerned about their salvation. No sinner, however far he had strayed, could be excluded from the blessings and consolation of Mother Church.

It was not until the end of the month of March that official duties and the snow conditions on Mount Generoso permitted the young clergyman of Soana to undertake the ascent to the mountain pasture of Santa Croce, with a peasant as his guide. Easter had almost come and although constant avalanches were descending the steep wall of the giant mountain and falling like muffled thunder into the gorge below the waterfall, spring had set in with full force wherever the sun was able to penetrate freely.

However little of a nature worshiper Francesco was, unlike his namesake the saint of Assisi, he could not help being affected by the tender, juicy sprouts that he saw, green and blooming about him. Though the young man did not have to become clearly aware of it, the subtle fermentation of spring was in his blood, and he was enjoying his share of that inner swelling and throbbing in all of nature which is heavenly in origin, and in all the joys that blossom from it, despite its delightful, sensuous, earthy manifestations.

The chestnut trees on the square, which the priest first had to cross with his guide, had stretched out tender, green little hands from brown, sticky buds. The children were noisy, and so were the sparrows that nested under the church roof and in countless hiding places offered by the many corners in the village. The first swallows flew in broad arcs from Soana over the abyss of the gorge, where they apparently swerved aside close to the fantastically towering, inaccessible rock massif of the mountain wall. Up there on promontories or in holes in the rock, where the foot of man had never trod, the osprey nested. These big brown couples embarked on glorious flights, and floated, for the pure fun of floating, above the mountain peaks for hours on end, circling higher and higher, as though they sought to forget themselves and move majestically into the infinite freedom of space.

Everywhere, not only in the air, not only on the brown earth, which was either plowed up or clothed in grass and narcissi, not only in everything nature permitted to rise through stalks and stems into leaves and blossoms, but in human beings also, there was a festive air, and the brown faces of the peasants who were working on the terraces between the rows of grapevine with mattock or curved knife, shone with a Sunday glow. Most of them had already slaughtered the so-called Easter lamb, a young kid, and hung it up, with its hind legs tied together, on the doorpost of their home.

The women, who were assembled about the overflowing marble sarcophagus with their filled laundry baskets, were especially numerous and noisy; when the priest and his companion walked past, they interrupted their shrill merriment. At the exit from the village there were washerwomen too; here, beneath the small statue of the Madonna, a stream of water gushed out from the rock and likewise emptied into an antique marble sarcophagus. Both basins, this sarcophagus and the one that stood on the square, had been

lifted quite some time ago out of an orchard full of thousand-year-old holm oaks and chestnuts, where they had stood since time immemorial, hidden under ivy and wild laurel, jutting only slightly out of the ground.

As he passed the spot, Francesco Vela crossed himself; in fact, he interrupted his walk for a moment to pay homage on bent knee to the small Madonna above the sarcophagus, who was charmingly surrounded by the gifts of wild flowers that the country folk had brought her. It was the first time he had seen this lovely little shrine, about which the bees buzzed, since he had never visited his upper part of the village before. The lower part of Soana, with its church and a few attractive middle-class homes, adorned with green shutters and placed about the chestnut square with its terrace-like pavement, gave the appearance of almost bourgeois prosperity; gardens large and small displayed blossoming almond and orange trees, tall cypresses, in short, a vegetation rather southern in character. Here, some hundred feet up, it was nothing but a poor Alpine shepherds' village, which gave out an odor of goats and cow stables. Here, too, an extremely steep mountain road began, paved with tap rock, which had been smoothed down by the large communal herd of goats going out to graze in the morning and returning at night. For this road led up and out to the communal meadow in the kettle-shaped spring region of the little Savaglia River, which forms the splendid waterfall of Soana further down and, after a brief, roaring passage through the deep gorge, disappears into Lake Lugano.

After the priest had climbed this mountain road for a short while, still guided by his companion, he stopped to catch his breath. Taking his big black plate-shaped hat from his head with his left hand, he drew a large colored handkerchief from his soutane with his right, to mop the beads of perspiration on his forehead. On the whole, an appreciation of nature, a feeling for the beauty of landscape, is not particularly well developed in an Italian priest. But the spaciousness afforded by a great height, from the so-called bird's-eye view, is after all a delight which at times affects even the naïvest person and evokes a certain degree of astonishment in him. As he looked down far below him, Francesco saw his church and the whole village that went with it as no more than a miniature picture, while round about him the mighty mountain world seemed to rise ever higher to heaven. The feeling of spring was now joined by a sense of the sublime, which may perhaps arise from a comparison of one's own smallness with the oppressively powerful works of nature and their threatening, mute proximity, and which may be tied to the partial realization that we, too, in some way share in this tremendous power. In short, Francesco felt himself sublimely great and minutely small at one and the same moment, and this caused him to make the accustomed sign of the Cross on brow and chest to protect himself against aberrations and demons.

As he climbed higher, religious questions and the practical church affairs of his diocese soon occupied the zealous young cleric's mind again. And when he stopped once more, this time at the entrance to a high rocky valley, and turned around, he caught sight of a badly neglected saint's shrine, built of stone, that had been erected here for the shepherds. This gave him the idea of seeking out all the extant shrines of his diocese, even the remotest, and restoring them to a condition that was worthy of God. He allowed his eyes to roam freely, seeking a point from which he might possibly survey all the existing shrines.

As his starting point he took his own church and the parsonage that was attached to it. It was situated, as was said,

on the village square, and its outside walls merged with the steep walls of rock, past which a merry mountain brook rushed downward. This mountain brook, which crossed the square of Soana underground, emerged in a stone arch, where it watered orchards and flowering meadows, though it was badly muddied by sewage. Beyond the church, a little higher up, the oldest shrine of the region stood on a round, flat-terraced hill, although it could not be seen from this spot; it was a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, whose dusty image on the altar was surmounted by a vaulted Byzantine mosaic in the apse. This mosaic, which was well preserved in both golden background and design, in spite of its thousand or more years, depicted Christus Pantokrator. The distance from the main church to this shrine was not more than three stone's throws. Another handsome chapel, this one dedicated to Saint Anne, was located at an equal distance from it. Above Soana and behind it rose a sharply pointed mountain cone, which was of course surrounded by broad valleys and by the flanks of the Generoso chain towering above it. This mountain, shaped almost like a cone of sugar, covered with growth to its very summit and seemingly inaccessible, was called Sant' Agata, because at its peak it harbored a little chapel for this saint for use in cases of emergency. Thus there was a church and three chapels within the very narrowest circumference of the village, to which were added three or four more chapels within the larger radius of the diocese. On every hill, at every pretty turn in the road, on every peak that looked out into the distance, here and there on picturesque, rocky precipices, near and far, over gorge and lake, the pious centuries had established houses of God, so that in this respect one could still feel the profound and general piety of paganism, which, in the course of millennia, had originally consecrated all these points and had thus procured for itself divine allies against the threatening, fearful powers of this wild nature.

The young zealot contemplated with satisfaction all these institutions of Roman Catholic Christianity, which distinguish the whole canton of Ticino. At the same time, he had to admit to himself, with the pain felt by the true champion of God, that an active and pure faith was not everywhere alive in them, nor even an adequately loving concern on the part of his ecclesiastical associates to safeguard all these scattered heavenly dwelling places against neglect and oblivion.

After some time they turned into the narrow footpath that leads to the summit of Generoso after a difficult ascent that took them three hours. Moreover, the bed of the Savaglia had to be crossed very soon over a dilapidated bridge; and very close by was the reservoir of the little river, which plunged down from it to a depth of a hundred yards or more in a fissure formed by its own erosion. Here Francesco heard, from various heights, depths and directions, the roaring of the wild water rushing to the reservoir and the tinkling of herd bells, and saw a man of rude exterior—it was the communal shepherd of Soana—stretched out full length on the ground, supporting himself with his hands on the bank, his head bent down to the surface of the water, slaking his thirst quite like an animal. Behind him several mother goats were grazing with their kids, while an Alsatian dog was waiting with pointed ears for orders and for the moment when his master would be finished with his drinking. "I am a shepherd too," Francesco thought, and when the other man got up from the ground and produced a piercing whistle through his fingers—a whistle that echoed from the cliffs—and threw stones a great distance at his widely scattered flocks to frighten them, to drive them on, to call them back and in general to save them from the dan-

ger of falling into the depths, Francesco thought how difficult and heavy with responsibility this task was, even with animals, to say nothing of human beings, who are always a prey to the temptations of Satan.

With redoubled zeal the priest now began to climb higher, as if there were cause to fear that the devil might possibly get to the stray sheep first. Still accompanied by his guide, whom Francesco did not consider worth conversing with, he climbed the steep and difficult ascent for an hour and more, higher and higher into the rocky wilderness of Generoso, when suddenly he saw the mountain pasture of Santa Croce lying fifty feet before him.

He refused to believe that this heap of stones and the wall in the midst of it, made of flat stones piled on each other without mortar, was the place he was looking for, as the guide assured him it was. What he had expected from the words of the mayor was a certain prosperity, whereas this dwelling could at best be regarded as a sort of refuge for sheep and goats during a sudden squall. Since it was situated on a steep slope of stone rubble and jagged blocks of rock, and as the path to it was concealed in its zigzag course, the cursed place seemed to be inaccessible. Only after the young priest had overcome his astonishment and a certain horror that took possession of him and had moved closer, did the picture of the infamous and shunned homestead take on a somewhat friendlier aspect.

Indeed, the ruin actually became transformed before the eyes of the approaching priest into sheer loveliness; for it seemed as if an avalanche of blocks and rubble which had been released from a great height had been piled up and held fast by the rudely constructed square of the homestead, so that beneath it there remained a slope of lush green free of stones, from which charming yellow marigolds climbed in delightful abundance to the ramp in front of the house door and, as though they were curious, up over the ramp and literally through the front door into the disgraceful cavehouse.

At this spectacle Francesco was taken aback. This assault of yellow field flowers against the degraded threshold, and luxuriant trains of long-stemmed blooming forget-me-nots, which likewise sought to overrun the door with their blue reflection of the sky, and under which veins of mountain water trickled away, seemed to him to be almost an open protest against human outlawry, bans and popular courts. In his astonishment, which was followed by a certain confusion, Francesco had to sit down in his black soutane on a granite boulder that was warmed by the sun. He had spent his youth in the valley, and besides, mostly indoors, in churches, lecture halls or study rooms. His feeling for nature had not been awakened. He had never before carried out an enterprise like this, into the sublime, severe loveliness of the high mountains, and he would perhaps never have undertaken it if chance, combined with duty, had not forced the ascent of the mountain upon him. Now he was overwhelmed by the novelty and grandeur of his impressions.

For the first time the young priest Francesco Vela felt the clear and truly grand sensation of existence course through him, making him forget for moments that he was a priest and why he had come here. All his notions of piety, which were intertwined with a host of ecclesiastical rules and dogmas, had not only been displaced by this sensation, but extinguished by it. Now he even forgot to cross himself. Below him lay the beautiful Lugano region of the Upper Italian Alpine world; Sant' Agata with the little pilgrims' chapel, over which the brown ospreys were still circling; the mountain of San Giorgio; the emerging peak of Mount San Salvatore; and finally, below him, at a depth that made one dizzy, lay the arm of Lake Lu-

gano that was known as Capolago, carefully set in the valleys of the mountain relief like a longish glass plate, with a fisherman's sailboat on it, looking like a tiny moth on a hand mirror. Behind all this, in the distance, were the white peaks of the lofty Alps, which seemed to have climbed up and up with Francesco. From among them rose Mount Rosa with its seven white points, gleaming out of the silken blue sky like a diadem and a phantom.

If one is justified in speaking of mountain sickness, then one is equally entitled to speak of a state that overcomes people on mountain heights and which may best be designated as incomparable health. This health the young priest now felt in his blood like a rejuvenation. Near him, among stones in the still withered heather, was a little flower, the like of which Francesco had never seen before. It was a wonderfully lovely species of blue gentian, whose petals were an astonishingly exquisite flaming blue. The young man in the black soutane, who had wanted to pluck the little flower in his first joy of discovery, left it unmolested in its modest spot, and merely bent the heather aside to look in extended rapture at the miracle. Everywhere young bright-green leaves of dwarf beech looked out from among the stones, and from a certain distance, across the slopes of hard, gray rubble and delicate green, the flock of poor Luchino Scarabota announced itself by the tinkling of bells. This entire mountain world possessed pristine individuality, the youthful charm of extinct ages of mankind, of which there was no trace left in the valleys below.

Francesco had sent his guide home, since he wanted to make his way back undisturbed by the presence of another person and did not wish to have a witness for what he planned at Luchino's hearth. Meanwhile he had already been noticed, and a number of dirty and greasy children's heads kept looking out curiously from the smoky black door-hole of the Scarabota stone castle.

Slowly the priest began to approach it and moved into the area of the property, which revealed its owner's large stock of cattle and was dirtied by the droppings of a big herd of cows and goats. Into Francesco's nose the odor of cattle and goats rose more and more acridly, mingled with the rare, invigorating mountain air; its increasing pungency at the entrance of the dwelling was only made bearable by the charcoal smoke that issued from the interior. When Francesco appeared in the frame of the door and blocked the light with his black soutane, the children retreated into the darkness, where the priest could not see them, and they met his greeting and all that he said to them with silence. Only an old mother goat came up to him, bleated gently and sniffed at him.

Gradually the interior of the room had become brighter to the eyes of the messenger of God. He saw a stable filled with a high pile of manure, deepening towards the back into a natural cave, which had been there originally in the nagelfluh, or whatever type of rock it was. In a thick stone wall at the right, a passage had been opened up, through which the priest caught sight of the family hearth, which was now abandoned; a mountain of ashes, still burning at the center, was piled up on the floor of exposed natural rock. From a chain with a thick covering of soot on it hung a battered copper pot, which was also sooty. At this fireplace of paleolithic man stood a bench without a back, whose fist-thick, broad seat rested on two posts, of the same breadth, anchored in the rock. This seat had been worn down and polished by a century and more of tired shepherds, their wives and their children. The wood no longer seemed to be wood but a yellow, polished marble or soapstone with countless scars and cuts in it. The square room really looked more like

a cave, its naturally undecorated walls consisting of strata of rude blocks and slate, from which the smoke passed through the door into the stable and from there again through the door into the open air outside, having no other way of escape, except perhaps through cracks in the walls. The room was blackened by the smoke and soot of decades, so that one might almost gain the impression of being in the interior of a chimney coated with thick soot.

Francesco had just noticed the peculiar glow emanating from a pair of eyes in a corner of the hut, when the rolling and sliding of stone rubble became audible outside, and immediately afterwards the figure of Luchino Scarabota stepped into the doorway and, like a noiseless shadow, shut out the sun, causing the room to become even darker. The savage mountain shepherd was breathing heavily, not only because he had hurried down the long distance from a higher pasture soon after he had seen the priest approach, but also because this visit was an event for the outlawed fellow.

The greeting was brief. After he had cleared the soapstone bench with his coarse hands, removing the stones and plucked marsh marigolds which his cursed brood of children had used as toys, Francesco's host urged him to sit down.

The mountain shepherd blew up the fire with puffed cheeks, and this made his feverish eyes shine even more wildly in the reflected light. He nourished the flame with logs and dry twigs, so that the pungent smoke almost drove the priest out. The shepherd's behavior was of a cringing submissiveness characterized by an anxious zeal, as if everything now depended on his not losing the grace of the Higher Being who had entered his wretched dwelling. He brought over a large dirty bucket full of milk, with a layer of thick cream at its top; unfortunately it was unbelievably foul, for which reason alone Francesco would not touch it. But he also declined to eat the fresh cheese and bread, in spite of the fact that he had become hungry, because, in his superstitious fear, he was afraid of committing a sin by doing so. Finally, when the mountain shepherd had calmed down somewhat and stood facing him with a timid, expectant look, his arms hanging from his sides, the priest began to talk as follows:

"Luchino Scarabota, you shall not lose the consolation of our Holy Church, and your children shall no longer be cast out from the community of Catholic Christians if it is proved that the evil rumors about you are untrue, or if you will confess sincerely, show remorse and contrition and be prepared, with God's help, to remove the obstacle from your path. So open your heart to me, Scarabota, let me know frankly in what respect you are being maligned, and confess with complete honesty the sinful guilt which may be weighing on you."

After this speech the shepherd was silent. But suddenly a brief, wild note struggled out of his throat, a sound betraying no emotion whatever but having something gurgling and birdlike about it. Francesco proceeded in his customary way to represent to the sinner the frightful consequences of his stubbornness, and the conciliatory kindness and love of God the Father, who had shown it through the sacrifice of His only Son, the sacrifice of the Lamb that took the sins of the world upon itself. Through Jesus Christ, he concluded, every sin can be forgiven, provided that a complete confession, combined with repentance and prayer, proves to the Heavenly Father the contrition of the poor sinner.

Only after Francesco had waited a long time and had stood up, shrugging as though to go away, did the shepherd begin to choke out an unintelligible confusion of words: a sort of clucking, such as one hears from a bird of prey. With strained

attention the priest sought to grasp what was comprehensible in this confusion. But this intelligible material seemed to him just as strange and wonderful as the obscure part. Only this much became clear from the frightening and oppressive host of imaginary things: that Luchino Scarabota wanted to secure his aid against all sorts of devils that lived in the mountains and were persecuting him.

It would have been unsuitable for the believing young priest to doubt the existence and activity of evil spirits. Was not Creation filled with all sorts and degrees of fallen angels from the company of Lucifer, the rebellious one, whom God had cast out? But here he felt a horror; he did not know whether it was in the face of the darkness arising from the incredible superstition he met here, or before the hopeless blindness resulting from ignorance. He decided to form, by means of specific questions, a judgment on the mental state and intellectual powers of his parishioner.

It soon became evident that this wild, demoralized creature knew nothing of God, even less about Jesus Christ the Savior, and least of all about the existence of a Holy Ghost. On the other hand, it appeared that he felt himself surrounded by demons and was possessed by a sinister persecution mania. And to him the priest was not the authorized servant of God, but rather a mighty magician, or God himself. What could Francesco do except cross himself, while the shepherd threw himself humbly on the ground and idolatrously licked his shoes and showered them with kisses from his moist, thick lips?

The young priest had never been in a situation like this. The rare mountain air, the spring, his separation from the stratum of civilization proper, caused his mind to become slightly clouded. He fell into a dreamlike trance, in which reality dissolved into floating, airy forms. This change was combined with a slight fearfulness, which counseled him several times to flee hastily down into the sphere of consecrated churches and church bells. The devil was powerful; who could know how many means and ways he had for seducing the unsuspecting, most faithful Christian and hurling him from the edge of a giddy precipice?

Francesco had not been taught that the idols of the heathen were mere empty creatures of the imagination and nothing more. The Church recognized their power explicitly, except that it represented this power as hostile to God. They were still contending with almighty God for the world, though the struggle was hopeless. For this reason the pale young priest was not a little frightened when his host fetched a wooden object from a corner of his dwelling, a horrible piece of carving which, beyond a doubt, represented a fetish. In spite of his priestly horror at the obscene object, Francesco could not help looking at the thing intently. With abhorrence and astonishment he had to admit to himself that in this place the most abominable pagan horror, namely that of a rural cult of Priapus, was still alive. It was evident that this primitive icon could represent none other than Priapus.

Francesco had scarcely taken the little innocent god of procreation in his hand, the god of agricultural fertility, who stood in such frankly high esteem among the ancients, when his strange feeling of oppressiveness was transformed into holy wrath. Instinctively he threw the shameless little mandrake into the fire, from which, however, the shepherd retrieved it immediately with the swift movement of a dog. It glowed in one spot, burned in another, but was promptly restored to its former condition of safety by the rude hands of the heathen creature. But now the object and its rescuer had to suffer a flood of reproachful words.

Luchino Scarabota did not seem to

know which of the two gods he should regard as the stronger; the one made of wood or the god of flesh and blood. However, he kept his eyes, in which terror and horror mingled with malicious rage, fixed on the new deity, whose impious daring at any rate did not indicate a state of weakness. Once he was in full swing, the emissary of the One and Only God refused to be intimidated in his sacred zeal by the dangerous glances which the benighted idolator cast in his direction. And now, without beating about the bush, he began to talk about the vile sin to which, as was generally asserted, the mountain shepherd owed his crop of children. Into these loud words of the young priest Scarabota's sister erupted, so to speak, but without uttering a word; she merely cast stealthy glances at the zealot and busied herself here and there in the cave. She was a pallid, repulsive woman, to whom water seemed to be an unknown commodity. One could catch unpleasant glimpses of her naked body through the tears in her tattered clothing.

When the priest had finished and had, for the moment, exhausted his stock of reproachful accusations, the woman sent her brother outside with a brief, barely audible word. The savage creature disappeared at once without contradiction, like the most obedient dog. Then the sinful woman, who was encrusted with dirt, and whose greasy black hair hung down over her broad hips, kissed the priest's hand with the words "Praised be Jesus Christ."

The next moment she burst into tears.

She said the priest was perfectly right in condemning her in harsh words. She had indeed sinned against God's commandment, though not at all in the manner which slander attributed to her. She alone was the sinner; her brother was completely innocent. She swore, and indeed by all the saints, that she had never committed that fearful sin of which she was accused, namely incest. True, she had lived unchastely, and since she was now confessing, she was prepared to describe the fathers of her children, though not to name them all. For she knew very few names, since, as she said, she had often sold her favors to passing strangers out of necessity.

For the rest, she had brought her children into the world in pain without help, and some of them she had had to bury here and there in the debris of Mount Generoso soon after their birth. Whether or not he could now give her absolution, she knew that God had forgiven her, for she had atoned enough through privation, suffering and anxiety.

Francesco could not but regard the tearful confession of the woman as a tissue of lies, at least as far as the crime was concerned. He felt, to be sure, that there were acts which absolutely defied confession before a human being, and which God alone learns of in the lonely silence of prayer. He respected this bashfulness in the degenerate woman, and in general could not conceal from himself the fact that in many respects she was a higher type than her brother. In the manner of her justification there lay a clear resoluteness. Her eye confessed, but neither kind persuasion nor the hangman's fiery tongs would have torn from her a confession in words. It turned out that it was she who had sent the man to Francesco. She had seen the pale young priest one day when she went to market in Lugano, where she sold the products of her pasture, and at the sight of him she had gained confidence and had hit upon the idea of commending her outlawed children to him. She alone was the head of the family and cared for her brother and children.

"I will not discuss the question," Francesco said, "whether you are guilty or not. One thing is clear: if you don't want your children to grow up like animals, you must separate from your brother. As

long as you live with him, it will never be possible for you to live down the fearful reputation you have acquired. People will always assume that you are guilty of this terrible sin."

After these words obduracy and defiance seemed to gain control of the woman's mind; at any rate she made no answer, but devoted herself for some time to domestic activity, as if there were no stranger present. During this time a girl of about fifteen came in, driving some goats through the opening of the stable and then helping the woman in her work, again as if Francesco were not there. The young priest realized at once, when he merely saw the girl's shadow glide through the depth of the cave, that she must be of extraordinary beauty. He crossed himself, for a slight feeling of inexplicable terror passed through him. He did not know whether he should resume his exhortations in the presence of the youthful shepherdess. She was beyond doubt thoroughly depraved, since Satan had awakened her to life by way of the vilest sins; but there might still be a remnant of purity in her, and who could tell whether she had any inkling of her dark origin.

Her movements, at any rate, showed a great serenity, which certainly did not permit one to draw any conclusions about emotional disturbance or a burdened conscience. On the contrary, everything about her bespoke a modest self-confidence, which was not affected by the presence of the pastor. So far, she had not as much as cast a glance at Francesco, at least not in such a way as to meet his eye or in any other discernible fashion. In fact, while he himself was looking at her stealthily through his glasses, he was compelled to doubt more and more whether a child of sin, a child of such parents, could look like this. She finally vanished by way of a ladder into a sort of attic, so that Francesco was able to continue his difficult work of spiritual ministration.

"I can't leave my brother," the woman said, "for the very simple reason that he is helpless without me. He can, when necessary, write his name, and I've taught him to do so with the greatest difficulty. He can't distinguish coins and is afraid of trains, cities and people. If I leave him, he will pursue me as a poor dog pursues his lost master. He will either find me or perish miserably; and what will then happen to the children and our property? If I stay here with the children, I'd like to see the man who could get my brother away from here; they'd have to put him in chains and lock him behind iron bars in Milan."

The priest said, "This may yet happen, if you do not follow my good advice."

At that the woman's anxiety turned to rage. She had sent her brother to Francesco that he might take pity on them, not make them miserable. She preferred in that case to continue living as she had till now, hated and rejected by the people below. She was a good Catholic, but when the Church rejected someone, he had a right to give himself to the devil. And she might then perhaps really commit that great sin she was accused of but of which she was as yet innocent.

Mingled with these strained words and lone shrieks that came from the woman, Francesco heard, from above, where the girl had vanished, a sweet singing, first like the most gentle breathing, then swelling with power, and his mind was influenced more by this melodious spell than by the furious outbursts of the degenerate woman. A hot wave rose within him, mingled with an anxiety he had never felt before. The smoke-filled hole of this animal-human dwelling stable seemed to be transformed, as if by magic, into the loveliest of all crystalline grottoes of Dante's Paradise, full of angelic voices and the sounding pinions of laughing doves.

He went. It was impossible for him to

endure such confusing influences any longer without trembling visibly. When he reached the hollowed-out pile of stones outside, he inhaled the freshness of the mountain air and was at once filled like an empty vessel with the immense impression of the mountain world. His spirit passed, as it were, into the farthest range of his eyes and consisted of the colossal masses of the earth's crust, from distant, snowy peaks to adjacent fearful abysses, under the royal brightness of the spring day. He still saw brown ospreys drawing their unselfconscious circles over the cone-shaped Sant' Agata. The idea came to him to hold a private service there for the outlawed family, and he revealed this thought to the woman, who had stepped dejectedly across the threshold of the cave, luxuriant in the yellow marigolds. "You dare not come to Soana, as you yourself know," he said. "If I invited you to do so, we would all be equally ill advised."

The woman was again moved to the point of tears, and promised to appear on a certain day before the chapel of Sant' Agata with her brother and the older children.

When the young priest had gotten far enough away from Luchino Scarabota's home and his curse-laden family so that he could no longer be seen from there, he chose a stone block that had been warmed through by the sun as a resting place in which to reflect on what he had just experienced. He told himself that while it was true he had climbed the mountain with a morbid interest, he had still done so in a sober frame of mind and with a sense of duty, and without any foretaste of what was disturbing him now with such foreboding. And what was this disturbance? He tugged, stroked and brushed his soutane for a long time, as if in that way he could rid himself of it.

When, after some time, he still did not feel the desired clarity, he took his breviary out of his pocket with an habitual movement; but even though he immediately began reading aloud, he was not freed from a certain strange indecision. He felt as if he had forgotten to attend to something, some important aspect of his mission. For this reason he kept looking back at the road from under his spectacles with a certain expectancy, and lacked the strength to continue the descent which he had begun.

So he fell into a strange reverie, out of which he was awakened by two slight incidents which his imagination, wrenched out of its accustomed groove, saw with considerable exaggeration: first of all, the right lens of his spectacles cracked with a bang under the impact of the cold mountain air, and almost immediately after that he heard a fearful panting above his head and felt a strong pressure on his shoulders.

The young priest leaped up. He laughed aloud when he recognized the cause of his panic in a spotted he-goat, which had given him proof of his unbounded confidence by planting his forehooves on his shoulders without any regard for his clerical garb.

But this was only the beginning of the animal's most intimate importunity. The shaggy goat with the strong, beautifully curved horns and flashing eyes had, it seemed, the habit of begging from passing mountain-climbers and did so in such a droll, firm and irresistible manner that one could ward him off only by taking flight. Standing above Francesco, he kept putting his hooves on the priest's chest and seemed determined to nibble at his hair, nose and fingers, after forcing the harassed victim to submit to having his pockets sniffed at and devouring a few bits of bread with incredible greed.

An old, bearded she-goat, whose bell and udder dragged on the ground, had followed the highwayman and, encouraged

by him, began to harass the priest too. She was especially impressed by the breviary with its cross and gilt edges and, when Francesco was busy defending himself against a curved goat horn, she succeeded in getting possession of the little book. Taking its black-printed leaves for green ones, she began eating the sacred truths literally and greedily, according to the prescription of the prophet.

On this scene of distress, aggravated by the gathering of other animals that had been grazing by themselves, the shepherdess suddenly appeared as a rescuer. It was the very same girl of whom Francesco had first caught a fleeting glimpse in Luchino's hut. When the slim, strong girl, after driving the goats away, stood before him with her fresh cheeks flushed and her laughing eyes, he said, "You have saved me, my good girl." And, taking his breviary from the hands of the young Eve, he added, laughing too, "It is really strange that, in spite of my shepherd's office, I am so helpless against your flock."

A priest may not converse with a young girl or woman any longer than his ecclesiastical duty demands, and the congregation notices it at once if he is seen holding such a conversation outside the church. And so Francesco, mindful of his stern calling, continued his way back without delay; and yet he felt as if he had detected himself in a sinful act and had to purify himself through a remorseful confession at the earliest opportunity. He had not yet got beyond the range of the herd bells when the sound of a woman's voice penetrated to him, suddenly making him forget all his meditations again. The voice was of such quality that it did not occur to him that it could belong to the shepherdess he had just left. Francesco had not only heard the church singers of the Vatican in Rome but had formerly listened to secular singers in Milan with his mother, so the coloratura and bel canto of the prima donnas were not unknown to him. He stopped involuntarily and waited. No doubt they are tourists from Milan, he thought, and hoped that he might, if possible, catch a passing glimpse of the owner of this glorious voice. But since she did not seem willing to appear, he continued to set foot before foot, cautiously descending into the giddy depths.

What Francesco had experienced on this professional visit, as a whole and in detail, was superficially not worth mentioning, if one excludes the abominations that had as their breeding ground the hut of the poor Scarabotas, brother and sister. But the young priest felt at once that this mountain trip had become for him an event of great importance, though for the present he had not even a remote idea of the entire scope of its significance. He felt that a transformation had taken place in him, working from the inside out. He found himself in a new state, which became minute by minute more strange to him, and he grew suspicious, but by no means so suspicious as to scent the presence of Satan or to wish perhaps to throw an inkwell at him, even if he had had one in his pocket. The mountain world lay below him like a paradise. For the very first time, folding his hands involuntarily, he congratulated himself on having been entrusted by his superior with the care of this very parish. Compared with this precious valley, what was the cloth of St. Peter, which came from heaven, held by angels at its three corners? Where could the human mind find a greater majesty than in these inaccessible crags of Mount Generoso, from which one could hear continuously the muffled spring thunder of melting snow descending in avalanches?

From the day of his visit to the depraved family, Francesco, to his astonishment, could no longer find his way back into the unthinking peace of his former existence. The new countenance which Nature had assumed for him refused to

fade, and she would not permit herself to be forced back in any way into her former lifeless state. The character of her influence, which plagued him not only in the daytime but in his dreams too, he recognized at once and named it temptation. And since the faith of the Church is fused with pagan superstition through the mere fact of combating it, Francesco in all seriousness traced his transformation back to the touching of that wooden object, that little mandrake which the ragged shepherd had rescued from the fire. Beyond doubt a relic still remained alive, a fragment of those abominations to which the ancients paid homage under the name of phallic worship, that shameful cult which had been suppressed in the world by the holy war of the Cross of Jesus. —Up to the moment when he had caught sight of the loathsome object, the Cross alone had been burned into Francesco's soul. He had been branded with the brand of the Cross, precisely as the sheep of a herd are marked with a white-hot stamp, and his stigma had become the essential symbol of his self, present in him in both his waking and dreaming life. Now the accursed Satan incarnate looked down at him from the crosspiece of the crucifix; this most unclean, dreadful satyr symbol was gradually usurping the place of the Cross and was in constant rivalry with it.

Francesco had reported the success of his pastoral mission to the mayor and especially to the bishop. The answer he received from the bishop was approval of his procedure. "Above all," the bishop wrote, "we must avoid any flagrant scandal." He thought it was exceedingly shrewd that Francesco had instituted a special secret service for the poor sinners on Sant' Agata, in the chapel of the Holy Mother of Mary. But the endorsement of his action by his superior could not restore Francesco's peace of mind; he could not get rid of the idea that he had come down from up there with a sort of enchantment clinging to him.

In Ligornetto, where Francesco was born and where his uncle, the famous sculptor, had spent the last ten years of his life, there still lived the same old priest who had introduced him as a boy to the saving truths of the Catholic faith and shown him the way of grace. One day, walking from Soana to Ligornetto in about three hours, he called on this old priest, who welcomed him and was visibly touched at being asked to hear the young man's confession. Of course he granted him absolution.

Francesco's scruples of conscience are expressed approximately in the following revelation which he made to the old man. He said: "Since I visited the poor sinners on the mountain pasture of Soana, I have been in a sort of possessed state. I shudder! I feel as if I had put on, not merely another coat, but actually another skin. When I hear the waterfall of Soana roar, I want most of all to climb down into the deep gorge and stand for hours under the falling masses of water, as if to purify myself both outside and in and to regain my health. When I see the crucifix in the church or the crucifix over my bed, I laugh. I can no longer weep and sigh as I used to do, or imagine the sufferings of our Savior. On the other hand, my eyes are attracted by all sorts of objects which resemble the little mandrake belonging to Luchino Scarabota. Sometimes they are quite unlike it, but I see a resemblance nevertheless. I had made curtains for the windows of my little room, so that I might work, steep myself in the study of the Church Fathers. Now I have removed these curtains. The singing of the birds, the murmur of the many brooks that run through the meadow past my house after the snow has melted, yes, even the fragrance of the narcissi used to disturb me. Now I open my windows wide, so that I may drink it all in greedily.

"All this alarms me," Francesco continued, "but this is perhaps not the worst. Still worse, perhaps, is the fact that I have fallen into the orbit of unclean devils, as though under the spell of black magic. Their pinching and clawing, their impudent tickling and provocation to sin, at every hour of the day and night, is terrible. I open my window and their magic power makes it seem as if the song of the birds in the blossoming cherry tree under my window were charged with unchastity. I am challenged by certain shapes in the bark of trees and they, yes, even certain lines of the mountains, remind me of parts of the *corporis femini*. It is a terrifying assault of crafty, malicious, ugly demons to which I am being delivered up in spite of all my prayers and chastisements. All nature, I say it to you with a shudder, sometimes murmurs, roars and thunders a tremendous phallic song into my terrified ears, thus—as I am compelled to believe against my better judgment—paying homage to the shepherd's wretched little wooden idol.

"All this," Francesco continued, "naturally increases my alarm and mental anguish, the more so because I recognize it as my duty to enter the field as a champion against the focus of infection up there on the mountain pasture. But even this is not the worst part of my confession. What is worse: something like an ineradicable poison, mingled with a sort of devilish sweetness, has penetrated the very basic duties of my calling, spreading confusion everywhere. I was at first moved with a pure and holy power by the words of Jesus about the lost sheep and the shepherd who leaves his flock to bring it back from the inaccessible rocks. But now I doubt whether this purpose still exists in its pristine purity. It has increased in passionate zeal. I awaken at night, my face bathed in tears, and I dissolve into a sobering compassion for the fate of the lost souls up there. But when I say 'lost souls,' this is perhaps the point at which a sharp line must be drawn between truth and falsehood. For the fact is that the sinful souls of Scarabota and his sister appear before my mind's eye solely and uniquely as the image of the fruit of their sin, that is, their daughter.

"Now, I ask myself whether the cause of my seemingly worthy zeal may not be a forbidden desire for her and whether I am doing right and not running the risk of eternal death by continuing my seemingly meritorious labors."

The old, experienced priest had listened to most of the youth's pedantic confession with a serious look on his face, but he smiled at several points. This was Francesco as he knew him, with his conscientious sense of outer and inner order and his need of clear accuracy and cleanliness. He said: "Francesco, do not be afraid. Just keep on the road you have always walked. You must not be surprised that the machinations of the evil enemy reveal themselves most powerfully and most dangerously when you proceed to snatch victims from him which he felt to be securely his, so to speak."

His mind set at ease, Francesco stepped out of the priest's house into the street of the little village of Ligornetto, in which he had spent his earliest youth. It is a small village, lying fairly flat on a broad valley floor surrounded by fertile fields; the vineyards wind in and out from mulberry tree to mulberry tree like solidly twisted ropes, between vegetable and grain plots. This place, too, is dominated by the mighty jagged crags of Mount Generoso, whose majesty is visible here from the west side of its broad base.

It was around midday and Ligornetto appeared to be in a state of somnolence. Francesco was barely greeted on his walk by a few cackling hens, some children at play and at the end of the village by a barking little dog. Here, at the end of the village, his uncle's home, built with the

resources of a wealthy man, was thrust forward like a bolt on a door, the *buen retiro* of that Vincenzo, the sculptor. It was now uninhabited and had gone over into the possession of the canton of Ticino as a kind of memorial foundation. Francesco walked up the steps leading to the abandoned and neglected garden and then yielded to a sudden desire to see the interior of the house. Peasants who lived nearby, old acquaintances of his, gave him the key to the house.

The relation of the young priests to the arts was one which is common to his class. His famous uncle had been dead about ten years, and Francesco had not seen the rooms of the celebrated artist's home since the day of the funeral. He could not have said what suddenly moved him to visit the empty house, in which he had until now for the most part shown only a passing interest. The uncle had never been more than a celebrity to him, and his sphere of activity was alien and meaningless.

As Francesco turned the key in the lock and entered the hall through the door, which creaked on its rusty hinges, he shuddered slightly at the dusty stillness that was wafted toward him from the staircase and from all the open rooms. To the right of the entrance hall was the deceased artist's library, which revealed at once that a culturally active man had lived here. The low bookcases contained, apart from Vasari, the complete works of Winckelmann, while the Italian Parnassus was represented by the sonnets of Michelangelo, the works of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto and others. A collection of drawings and etchings was stored in cabinets which had been especially built for the purpose; medals of the Renaissance and all sorts of valuable rarities, among them painted Etruscan clay vases and some other antiquities of bronze and marble, were set up in the room. Here and there a particularly beautiful print of Leonardo or Michelangelo hung framed on the wall, depicting a male or female nude. The small adjoining room was practically filled from top to bottom with such objects on three of its walls.

From there you entered a room with a cupola, which was several stories high and lighted from above. Here Vincenzo had worked with modeling wood and chisel, and the plaster casts of his best works filled this almost churchlike room, forming a crowded and silent collection.

Constrained, indeed alarmed, and frightened by the echo of his own footsteps, Francesco had come this far almost with a bad conscience, and now proceeded to subject this and that work of his uncle's to a first real inspection. Beside a statue of Michelangelo a Ghiberti could be seen. There was a Dante there and works covered with stippling dots, as the models had been executed in marble in enlarged form. But these world-famous figures could not long hold the attention of the young priest. Beside them stood the statues of three young girls, the daughters of a marchese who had been broadminded enough to allow the master to portray them completely unclothed. To judge from the statues the youngest of the three ladies was not more than twelve, the second not more than fifteen and the third not over seventeen years old. Francesco came to himself only after he had contemplated the slender bodies for a long time in complete absorption. Unlike the works of the Greeks, these figures did not display their nudity as a natural nobility and image of divinity, but one experienced it as an indiscretion of the boudoir. In the first place, the copies had not been dissociated from the originals but were distinctly recognizable as copies; and these originals seemed to say: we have been indecently exposed and undressed by a brutal order against our will and our sense of modesty. When Francesco awoke from his revery, his heart was pounding and he looked

fearfully in every direction. He was doing nothing that was evil but he felt it was a sin just to be alone with such figures.

He resolved to go away as quickly as possible, so that he might not actually be caught there. But when he reached the front door, instead of going out, he put the door latch into the lock from the inside and turned the key, so that he was now locked in the spectral house of the deceased and could not be surprised. After this he returned to the plaster scandal of the three graces.

His heart beating more violently, he was overcome by a wan and fearful madness. He felt a compulsion to stroke the hair of the oldest of the marchionesses as if she were alive. Although this act obviously bordered on insanity, as he himself realized, it was still in a sense commensurate with his priestly calling. But the second marchioness had to suffer being stroked on the shoulder and arm: an opulent shoulder and arm, which led to a soft, delicate hand. Soon Francesco had become a hopelessly confused and contrite sinner, through further acts of tenderness toward the third, the youngest, marchioness, finally planting a shy, criminal kiss under her left breast. He felt no better than Adam when he heard the voice of the Lord after he had eaten of the apple from the tree of knowledge. He fled. He ran as if pursued.

The following days Francesco spent partly in church in prayer, partly in his parsonage chastising himself. His contrition and remorse were great. In a fervor of devotion such as he had not known hitherto, he dared hope in the long run to triumph over the temptations of the flesh. At any rate the conflict between the principles of good and evil had broken out in him with undreamed-of frightfulness, so that it seemed that God and the devil had for the first time transplanted their theater of war into his breast. Even sleep, that part of his activity for which he was not responsible, no longer offered the young cleric any peace; for this unguarded period at night seemed especially welcome to Satan for inducing seductive and destructive delusions into the young man's normally innocent soul. One night, towards morning—he did not know whether it had happened while he was asleep or awake—in the white light of the moon, he saw the three white figures of the marchese's beautiful daughters come into his room and up to his bed. When he looked more closely, he recognized that each figure had become magically fused with the image of the young shepherdess on the pasture of Santa Croce.

Beyond a doubt a thread led from the small, toylike homestead of Scarabota to the priest's room, whose window permitted the pasture to look into it; and this thread had not been spun by angels. Francesco knew enough about the celestial hierarchy, and the infernal one too, to recognize at once whose brainchild this work was. Francesco believed in sorcery. Learned in many branches of scholastic science, he assumed that evil demons made use of the influence of the stars to accomplish certain destructive ends. He had learned that, as regards the body, man belongs to the celestial spheres; his intelligence has placed him on a level with the angels, and his will is subordinate to God; but God has permitted fallen angels to turn his will away from Him, and the realm of the demons is increased by their bond with such perverted humans. Besides, a temporal, physical emotion, exploited by the spirits of hell, can often be the cause of a man's eternal destruction. In short, the young priest trembled to the very marrow of his bones and feared the poisonous bite of the *diaboli,* the demons that smell of blood, the beast Behemoth and especially Asmodeus, the specific demon of whoring.

At first he could not bring himself to

believe that the cursed brother and sister were guilty of the sin of witchcraft and sorcery. True, he had one experience that threw him into a state of deep suspicion. Every day he undertook a spiritual purification with holy zeal and all the resources of religion, in order to purify himself of the image of the shepherd girl, but every time he did so it stood more clearly, more firmly and more plainly before him. What sort of painting was this, what sort of indestructible wooden tablet stood under it, or what sort of canvas was it that water or fire did not affect it at all?

The way this picture thrust itself forward everywhere became at times the subject of his silent and astonished observation. He would read a book; when he saw the soft face, framed by the strangely reddish, earth-brown hair, looking at him with big, dark eyes from a page, he inserted a blank leaf, which was intended to cover and conceal it. But when he turned the leaf he found that the picture penetrated every page as if there were no leaf, as indeed it penetrated drapes, doors and walls in the house and church.

Amid such anxieties and inner dissensions, the young priest was perishing with impatience because the time set for the special service on the peak of Sant' Agata would not come fast enough. He wished to perform the duty he had undertaken as quickly as possible, because he might perhaps in that way snatch the girl from the claws of the prince of hell. He wished even more to see the girl again; but what he longed for most of all was liberation from his tormented enchantment, a liberation he definitely hoped to achieve. Francesco ate little, spent the greater part of his nights awake and, growing paler and more haggard daily, acquired in the eyes of his parishioners an even greater reputation for exemplary piety.

The morning had finally come on which the priest had arranged with the poor sinners to meet in the chapel that was situated high on the cone of Sant' Agata. The extremely difficult ascent to it could not be made in less than two hours. At nine o'clock Francesco appeared on the village square, ready for the walk, serene and refreshed in his heart and viewing the world with newborn eyes. May was approaching, and a day had dawned, more exquisite than could be imagined; but the young man had already often experienced days equally beautiful, without, however, finding in nature a Garden of Eden as he did today. Today he was surrounded by paradise.

As at most other times, women and girls were standing about the sarcophagus, which was overflowing with mountain rain water; they greeted the priest with loud cries. Something in his manner and face, and the festive freshness of the young day, had given the laundresses spirit. Their skirts wedged in between their legs, so that some of them revealed their brown calves and knees, they stood bent over, working vigorously with powerful, naked arms that were tanned too. Francesco went up to the group. He found himself moved to say all sorts of friendly words that had nothing to do with his spiritual office, but concerned the good weather, good spirits and hopes for a good vintage. For the first time, probably stimulated by his visit to the house of his uncle the sculptor, the young priest condescended to study the ornamental frieze on the sarcophagus, which depicted a procession of bacchantes and prancing satyrs, dancing girls playing the flute, and Dionysos, the god of wine, wreathed in grapes, in his panther-drawn chariot. At this moment it did not seem strange to him that the ancients had covered the stone receptacle of death with figures that represented exuberant life. The women and girls, some of whom were of uncommon beauty, chattered and laughed away with him during this inspection, and at times it seemed to him

that he himself was surrounded by joyful, shouting, intoxicated maenads.

This second ascent into the mountain world was like that of a man who walks with open eyes in contrast to one who is blind from birth. Francesco felt with a compelling clarity that he had suddenly regained his sight. Accordingly, the contemplation of the sarcophagus seemed to him no accident but of deep significance. Where was its dead occupant? The living water of life filled the open stone and coffin, and eternal resurrection was proclaimed on the surface of the marble in the language of the ancients. This is how the gospel had to be interpreted.

To be sure, this was a gospel that had little in common with the one he had once studied and taught. It had no relation to the leaves or letters of a book, but rather, it came welling out of the earth through the grass, plants and flowers or flowing down with the light from the center of the sun. All nature took on, as it were, a speaking life. She who had been dead and mute became alive, intimate, direct and communicative. Suddenly she seemed to tell the young priest everything she had been silent about till now. He seemed to be her favorite, her chosen son, whom she was initiating, like a mother, into the sacred mystery of her love and motherhood. All the abysses of terror, all the anxieties of his disturbed soul were no more. There was nothing left of all the darkness and fear of a supposed stormy course to hell. The whole of Nature radiated kindness and love and Francesco, rich in kindness and love, could return kindness and love to her.

Strange: as he laboriously climbed upwards through broom, beech and thickets of bramble, often sliding down from jagged stones, the spring morning enveloped him like a joyful and tremendous symphony of nature, which spoke more about the process of creating than about the created world. The mystery of a creative activity that was forever exempt from death was openly revealed. Anyone who did not hear this symphony, so it seemed to the priest, was deceiving himself when he ventured to sing with the psalmist the hymns *"Jubilate Deo omnia terra"* or *"Benedicte coeli domino."*

The waterfall of Soana rushed down in satiate abundance into its narrow gorge. Its roar sounded full and luxurious. Its speech could never fail to be heard. Muffled at one moment, becoming clear the next, the voice of satiety sounded in perpetual variation. A thundering avalanche broke loose from the gigantic shadow-wall of Mount Generoso, and when it became audible to Francesco, the avalanche itself had already poured down in noiseless streams of rolling snow into the bed of the Savaglia. Where was there anything in nature that was not in the grip of the metamorphosis of life and that was without soul? anything in which a driving will was not active? Word, writing, song and coursing heart's blood were everywhere. Did not the sun place a warm, pleasant hand on his back between his shoulders? Did the leaves of the laurel and beech thickets not whisper and sway when he touched them in passing? Did the water not flow everywhere and, softly babbling, sketch everywhere the meandering and tangled script of its channel?

Didn't he, Francesco Vela, and didn't the fiber roots of myriads of growing things, small and large, read it, and was it not its mystery that was depicted in myriads of flowers and calyxes? The priest picked up a tiny stone and found a reddish net of lines running through it; here, too, a miraculous world—spoken, painted, written—a forming form that bore testimony everywhere to the creative power of life in pictures.

And didn't the voices of the birds bear the same testimony as they united in a network of infinitely delicate, invisible threads above the eaves of the mighty

valley of rock? This audible network seemed to Francesco at times to be transformed into visible threads of a silver splendor, which an inner and speaking fire caused to glitter. Was it not love made audible and visible in forms and a revelation of nature's bliss? And was it not delightful, the way this web, as often as it was dissolved or torn, was tied together again, as though by tiny weavers' shuttles, swiftly, tirelessly flying back and forth? Where were the small feathered weavers? One did not see them, except possibly when a little bird swiftly and silently changed its place; the tiniest throats poured out this speech that carried into space, drowning everything in its jubilation.

With everything welling forth, everything throbbing both within him and around him, Francesco did not know how to determine the place of death in the scheme of things. He touched the trunk of a chestnut tree and felt that he was pressing the nourishing juices upward within it. He drank in the air like a living soul and knew at once that it was this air to which he owed the breathing and hymning of his own soul. And was it not this air alone that made a speaking instrument of revelation out of his throat and tongue? Francesco stopped for a moment before a teeming, zealously active swarm of ants. A tiny dormouse had been almost wholly stripped down to its graceful skeleton by the mysterious little creatures. Did not the precious little skeleton and the dormouse that had perished and vanished in the warmth of the ant state testify to the indestructibility of life, and had not Nature, in her urge or compulsion to create, merely sought a new form? The priest saw the brown ospreys of Sant' Agata again, this time not below but high above him. Their winged and plumed bodies bore the miracle of the blood, the miracle of the pulsating heart, in majestic bliss through space. But who could fail to recognize that the changing curves of their flight delineated, on the blue silk of the sky, a clear, unmistakable writing, whose meaning and beauty were most intimately bound up with life and love? Francesco was convinced that the birds were inviting him to read it. And though they wrote by means of the path of their flight, the power of reading was not denied them. Francesco thought of the keen vision that was vouchsafed these winged fishermen. And he thought of the countless eyes of humans, birds, mammals, insects and fish, by means of which Nature views herself. With an astonishment that grew deeper and deeper, he recognized her in her infinite maternity. She saw to it that nothing in her whole maternal realm should remain hidden from her children's enjoyment; not only had she endowed them with the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, but, Francesco felt, she was still other, countless new senses in readiness for the transformation of the aeons. What a vastness of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching there was in the world! And over the ospreys hung a white cloud. It resembled a radiant pleasure-tent. But it, too, went away and was visibly transformed.

They were profound and mystical powers that had opened the eyes of the priest Francesco. But, though he would not admit this to himself, the background for this experience was the happy circumstance that he saw four delightful hours ahead of him, including another meeting with the poor, outlawed shepherd girl. This awareness made him secure and rich, as if the time that was filled with such precious content could not come to an end. Up there, yes, up there where the little chapel stood, above which the ospreys were circling—up there, there awaited him a happiness which, so he thought, the angels must envy him. He climbed and climbed, and the most bliss-

ful zeal gave him wings. What he planned up there in unmoored proximity to heaven must surely transfigure him and put him almost on a plane with the good Eternal Shepherd Himself. *"Sursum corda! Sursum corda!"* He kept repeating to himself the greeting of St. Francis, while alongside him walked Sant' Agata, the martyr to whom the little chapel above had been dedicated and who had walked to her death at the hands of the hangman as if to a gay dance. And behind her and him, so it seemed to Francesco in his zealous ascent, there followed a procession of holy women, all of whom wanted to be present at the miracle of love on the festive summit. Mary herself, with her exquisite ambrosial flowing hair and her graceful feet, strode far ahead of the priest and his procession of sainted women, so that the earth might be covered with flowers for all those under her eye, her breath, her feet. *"Invoco te! Invoco te!"* Francesco whispered in rapture under his breath. *"Invoco te nostra benigna stella."*

Without feeling tired, the priest had reached the peak of the mountain cone, which was scarcely wider than the little church that stood on it. There was just room left for a narrow ledge and a tight little square in front of the church; in the middle of this square stood a young chestnut tree that was still without leaves. The blue gentian had spread so thickly about the sanctuary that a piece of the sky or of Mary's blue gown seemed to be strewn around the little church in the wilderness. Or one could also imagine that the mountain had simply dipped its peak in the azure of the sky.

The choirboy and the Scarabotas, brother and sister, were already there and had made themselves comfortable under the chestnut tree. Francesco turned pale, for his eyes had looked fleetingly but in vain for the young shepherdess. But he put on a stern look and opened the chapel door with a big rusty key, without showing his disappointment and the turbulent struggle that was going on in his heart. He entered the small church, in which the choirboy at once began to make some preparations behind the altar for celebrating the Mass. A little holy water was poured into the dry fountain from a bottle that had been brought up, so that the Scarabotas could dip their hard and sinful fingers in it. They sprinkled and crossed themselves and fell to their knees just inside the threshold of the door in timid reverence.

Meanwhile Francesco, driven by uneasiness, went out once more into the open, where, after walking about a little, with a sudden mute but deep emotion, he came upon the girl he was seeking; she was resting a little below the platform formed by the mountain peak, on a starry sky of gleaming blue gentian. "Come in, I'm waiting for you," the priest said. She got up with apparent indolence and looked at him calmly from under lowered lashes. At the same time she seemed to be smiling gently with a soft charm but this was merely an illusion produced by the natural shape of her sweet mouth, the lovely light in her blue eyes and the delicate dimples in her full cheeks.

At this moment the picture Francesco had cherished in his heart was fatefully renewed and enhanced. He saw a childlike, innocent Madonna face, whose maddening charm was combined with a very gentle, painful severity. The rather pronounced red of her cheeks lay on a white, not brown, skin, from which the moist red of the lips shone with the glow of the pomegranate. Every strain in the music of this childlike head was at once sweetness and bitterness, melancholy and serenity. In her eyes one could read shy retirement and at the same time a delicate challenge: both without the violence of animal impulse but artless and flowerlike. If her eyes seemed to bear in them the

riddle and the fairy tale of the flower, the girl's whole appearance resembled rather a beautiful and ripe fruit. This head, as Francesco realized with astonishment, was still altogether that of a child, insofar as it expressed her soul; only a certain grapelike, swelling opulence indicated that she had crossed the boundary of childhood and had attained the state of womanhood. Her hair, which was partly earth brown in color, with lighter strands running through it, was tied around her forehead and temples to form a heavy crown. A heavy, inwardly fermenting, nobly ripe sleepiness seemed to draw the girl's eyelashes downward and gave her eyes a certain moist, overpowering tenderness. But the music of the head modulated below the ivory neck into another, whose eternal notes expressed another meaning. With her shoulders the woman began. She was a woman of youthful and yet mature fullness, almost tending toward an opulence that did not seem to belong to the childlike head. The bare feet and strongly tanned calves wore a fruitlike fullness which, it seemed to the priest, was almost too heavy for them. This head possessed the hot, sensuous mystery of its Isis-like body unconsciously, or at most with a gentle awareness. But for this very reason Francesco realized that he had fallen a hopeless victim, for life and death, to this head and to this omnipotent body.

But whatever the young priest saw, realized and felt at this moment of reunion with this creature of God, who was so heavily burdened by her heritage of sin, he did not reveal except by a slight trembling of his lips. "What is your name?" he merely asked the innocent sinner. The shepherdess gave her name as Agata and did this in a voice that seemed to Francesco like the cooing of a paradisial ring dove. "Can you read and write?" he asked. She replied, "No." "Do you know anything about the meaning of the Holy Mass?" She looked at him but did not reply. He then told her to go into the little church and went in ahead of her. Behind the altar the choirboy helped him into his vestments. Francesco put the biretta on his head and the sacred service began; never before had the young man been moved to such a solemn fervor.

He felt as if all-bountiful God had only now called him to His service. The road to priestly consecration which he had traveled now seemed to him to be nothing more than a dry, empty, deceptive precipitancy that had nothing in common with the truly divine. But now the divine hour, the sacred season, had been born within him. The Savior's love was like a heavenly rain of fire in which he stood and through which all the love in him was suddenly liberated and kindled. His heart expanded with infinite love into the whole of creation and was united with all creatures in a harmonious, rapturous pulsebeat. Out of this intoxication, which almost stupefied him, compassion for every creature, zeal for the divinely good, broke out with redoubled strength, and he believed that only now did he fully understand Holy Mother Church and her service. He now wanted to become her servant with a renewed but very different zeal.

How the journey, the ascent to this mountain peak, had unlocked to him the mystery whose meaning he had inquired from Agata! Her silence, which had made him mute too, signified for him, though he did not show it, a common knowledge through the revelation that had come to them both. Was not the Eternal Mother the essence of all transformations, and had he not lured the forsaken, lost children of God, groping about in the dark, to this peak, raised high above the ground, to reveal to them the miracle of the transubstantiation of the Son, the eternal flesh and blood of the Godhead? Thus the youth stood and raised the cup, his eyes overflowing with joy. It seemed to him as

if he himself were becoming God. In this state, in which he felt himself to be one of the elect, a sacred instrument, he seemed to expand with invisible organs into all the heavens with a joy and omnipotence that lifted him, he believed, infinitely above the whole teeming spawn of the churches and their clerics. They should see him, should lift their eyes to him with astonished reverence, on the dizzy heights of the altar at which he stood. For he was standing at the altar in a very different and higher sense than the Pope, the holder of Peter's keys, does after his election. With a convulsive ecstasy he held the cup of the Eucharist and the transubstantiation, as a symbol of God's body renewing itself perpetually in the whole of creation into the infinity of space, where it shone like a second, brighter sun. And while he stood there with the raised sacrament for what seemed to him an eternity but was in reality two or three seconds, it appeared to him that the cone of Sant' Agata was covered from top to bottom with listening angels, saints and apostles. But even more beautiful was a muffled drumbeat and a round dance performed by beautifully dressed women, wearing garlands of flowers and clearly visible through the walls as they moved about the chapel. Behind them whirled the maenads of the sarcophagus in ecstatic frenzy; the goat-footed satyrs danced and skipped, some of them carrying Luchino Scarabota's wooden symbol of fertility in joyful procession.

The descent to Soana brought Francesco to that brooding disenchantment felt by a person who has drunk to the last drop from the cup of intoxication. The Scarabota family had left after the Mass: the brother, sister and daughter had kissed the young priest's hand in gratitude when they departed. As he now descended deeper and deeper, the state of mind in which he had read the Mass up above became more and more an object of suspicion to him. The peak of Sant' Agata had surely, in former times, been the seat of a pagan cult, consecrated to some idol; what had possessed him up there, apparently with the murmuring sound of the Holy Ghost, was perhaps the demonic work of that dethroned theocracy which Jesus Christ had overthrown, but whose destructive power was still tolerated by the Creator and Director of the world. Upon arriving at his vicarage in Soana, the priest was overwhelmed by the consciousness that he had been guilty of a grievous sin, and his anxiety on this account became so heavy that he entered the church, which stood wall to wall with his residence, even before taking his midday meal, to entrust himself in passionate prayer to the Highest Mediator and, if possible, to purify himself in His grace.

Feeling his own helplessness, he begged God not to deliver him up to the assaults of demons. He was aware, he confessed, that they were attacking his soul in all sorts of ways, either constricting it or extending it beyond its accustomed salutary boundaries and transforming it in a terrible way. "I was a small garden, carefully cultivated in Your honor," Francesco said to God. "Now it has been destroyed by a flood, which will perhaps rise and rise under the influence of the planets and on whose boundless waters I am drifting about in a tiny bark. Formerly I knew my way precisely. It was the same way which Your Holy Church prescribes for her servants. Now I am drifting, no longer certain of the goal and the way.

"Grant me," Francesco implored, "my former narrowness and my certainty, and command the evil angels to desist from their dangerous assaults on Your helpless servant. Lead, oh, lead us not into temptation. I went up to the poor sinners in Your service; grant that I may find my way back into the firm, restricted sphere of my sacred duties."

Francesco's prayers no longer possessed their former clarity and sharpness of contour. He asked for things that were mutually incompatible. At times he was unsure himself whether the stream of passion that bore his requests came from Heaven or from another source. That is, he did not really know whether he was not fundamentally imploring Heaven to grant him a hellish prize. His inclusion of the Scarabotas, brother and sister, in his prayers might indeed have had its origin in Christian compassion and priestly care. But was this true when he implored Heaven fervently, to the point of scalding tears, for the salvation of Agata?

For the present he could still answer this question affirmatively, for the clear stirring of the mightiest impulse, which he felt when he saw the girl again, had been transformed into a romantic feeling for something infinitely pure. This transformation prevented Francesco from noticing that the fruit of mortal sin was forcing its way into the place of Mary, the Mother of God, and was, so to speak, the incarnation of the Madonna in his prayers and thoughts. On the first of May there began in the church of Soana, as everywhere, a special service for the Virgin Mary, the observance of which lulled the young priest's alertness still more. Day after day, at about the hour of twilight, he gave a short talk, chiefly to the women and daughters of Soana, on the theme of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin. Before and after the talk the nave of the church echoed with the hymns of praise in honor of Mary; they passed through the open doors into the spring air. And the old, exquisite airs, so lovely in both words and music, mingled outside with the cheerful noise made by the sparrows and with the sweetest lament of the nightingales which came from the damp gorges nearby. At such moments Francesco, apparently absorbed in the service of Mary, was wholly given up to the service of his idol.

If the mothers and daughters of Soana had suspected that they formed for the priest a congregation which he drew into the church day after day for the glorification of this hated fruit of sin, or to have himself carried aloft, on the pious strains of the hymns to Mary, to the distant little meadow that was stuck high up on the rock, they would certainly have stoned him; but as things stood, it seemed to the astonished eyes of the whole congregation that the piety of the young cleric increased with every day. Bit by bit, young and old, rich and poor, in short, everyone from the mayor to the beggar, from the most fervent churchgoer to the most indifferent, was drawn into Francesco's sacred May-madness.

Even the long, solitary walks which he now frequently took were interpreted in the young saint's favor. And yet they were only undertaken in the hope that chance might lead Agata into his path. For in his fear that he might betray himself, he had set an interval of more than a week till the next special service for the Scarabota family; and this period of time now became unbearably long to him.

Nature still spoke to him in that open way he had first experienced on his walk to Sant' Agata, on the heights where the little sanctuary stood. Every blade of grass, every flower, every tree, every vine and ivy leaf were merely words of a language that welled up from the very base of existence, which spoke to him with a mighty roaring even in the deepest silence. Never had music penetrated his whole being like this and, as he believed, filled it with holy spirit.

Francesco had forfeited the deep, calm sleep of his nights. The mystical call which had come to him seemed, so to speak, to have slain Death and banished

his brother Sleep. Each of these creative nights, pulsating with life of every sort, became a sacred period of revelation for Francesco's young body, so much so in fact that it sometimes seemed to him that the last veil was being removed from the mystery of divinity. Often, when he made the transition from the passionate dreams, which almost represented a waking state, into the waking of the senses, and outside the waterfall of Soana roared twice as loud as it did in the daytime, and the moon struggled with the darkness of the mighty abysses, and the black clouds, with a gigantic surliness, darkened the highest points of Mount Generoso, Francesco's body trembled as it never had before with fervent prayers, as a thirsty tree whose top is watered by the spring rain shudders in the wind. In this state he wrestled with God, filled with yearning to be initiated into the sacred miracle of creation as into the burning core of life, into this most holy, most inward something which permeates all Being from within. He said: "From there, O You, my almighty God, Your strongest light comes; from this core, radiating out in inexhaustible waves of fire, spreads all the bliss of existence and the mystery of the profoundest pleasure. Do not lay a finished creation into my lap, O God, but make me Your creative partner. Let me participate in Your uninterrupted work of creation; for only in this way and no other can I share in Your paradise." In order to cool the passion of his body Francesco walked back and forth in his room before open windows, so that the night air might penetrate his naked form. At the same time it seemed to him that the black storm above the gigantic rocky ridge of Mount Generoso resembled a huge bull over a heifer, snorting rain from its nostrils, grunting, shooting darting flashes out of its darkly flaming eyes and performing the generative act of fertility with its heaving haunches.

Such images were wholly pagan in nature, and the priest knew it but was no longer disturbed by it. He was already too deeply absorbed in the general numbness produced by the fermenting spring juices. The narcotic breath which filled him dissolved the limits of his narrow self and expanded him into the sphere of the general. Everywhere gods were being born in early, still lifeless nature, and the depths of Francesco's soul likewise opened and sent up images of things that lay buried in the abyss of the millions of years.

One night, in a state of half-wakefulness, he fell into a deep and, in a sense, terrible dream, which threw him into a gruesome sort of devotion. He became, as it were, the witness of a mystery from which emanated a terrible weirdness and at the same time something like the consecration of an ancient, irresistible power. Hidden somewhere in the rocks of Mount Generoso there seemed to be monasteries, from which dangerous stairways and rock steps led down into inaccessible caverns. Down these rock steps bearded men and old men in brown cowls descended in a solemn procession, one behind the other; the raptness of their movements and the withdrawn expression on their faces made him shudder; they seemed to be condemned to practice a frightful cult. These well-nigh gigantic, wild figures were venerable in an oppressive way. They descended very erectly, their hair and beards fused, mighty, shaggy, bushy. And these celebrants of a merciless and beastly worship were followed by women covered only by the opulent billows of their hair, forming heavy golden or black cloaks. While these dream monks were held rigidly and insensibly captive under the yoke of fearful instinct as they mutely descended the steps, the women displayed the humility of sacrificial animals offering themselves voluntarily to a terrible deity. In the eyes of the monks there lay a silent, senseless fury, as if the poisonous bite of

a crazed animal had wounded them and infused a madness into their blood, which might be expected to erupt. On the brows of the women, on their eyelashes, which were lowered in pious devotion, there lay a sublime solemnity.

After the monks of Mount Generoso had, like living idols, finally taken their individual positions in the shallow caves formed by the wall of rock, a phallic worship began, at once ugly and sublime. Ghastly as it was—and Francesco was terrified to the depths of his soul—it was equally thrilling in its utter seriousness and fearful holiness. Near the falling water and in the magic light of the immense moon, owls circled the rocky walls with piercing shrieks, but the powerful cries of the great night birds were drowned out by the blood-congealing, anguished cries of the priestesses as they expired amid the torments of lust.

The day of the divine service for the poor outlawed Alpine shepherds had finally come again. Even the early morning, when the priest Francesco Vela awoke, was unlike any other he had ever experienced. So in the life of every superior person days break, unexpected and unbidden, like dazzling revelations. On this morning the youth did not wish to be either a saint or an archangel or even a god. Rather, he was overcome by a slight fear that saints, archangels and gods might become his enemies out of envy, for on this morning he felt himself to be exalted above saints, angels and gods. But up on Sant' Agata a disappointment was in store for him. His idol, who bore the name of the saint, had excluded herself from the church service. Questioned by the pale priest, the rude animal-like father could only produce rude, animal-like sounds, while his wife, who was at the same time his sister, excused their daughter on the score of domestic duties. Thereupon Francesco carried out his holy office with such apathy that he did not know at the end of the Mass whether he had begun it yet. Mentally, he experienced the torments of hell, and indeed entered a state of mind which could be likened to a real descent into hell and which made of him a poor damned soul.

After dismissing the ministrant as well as the Scarabotas, he descended at random one side of the steep mountain cone, still completely dazed, unaware of a goal and even less of any danger. Again he heard the nuptial cries of circling ospreys. But they sounded to him like mockery, which poured down out of a deceptively shining ether. Amidst the rubble of a dried-out rivulet he slid down, panting and running, whimpering confused prayers and curses. He felt the torments of jealousy. Although nothing had happened beyond the fact that the sinner Agata had been detained by something on the pasture of Soana, it seemed certain to the priest that she had a lover and was spending the time she had stolen from church in his villainous arms. While her absence made him suddenly aware of his great dependence on her, his feelings alternated between anxiety, dismay and rage, the urge to punish her and to beg for deliverance from his distress, that is, for the return of his love. He had by no means lost the pride of the priest yet—the wildest and most unbending pride—but had been most severely wounded. The sinner had rejected him as a man, as a servant of God and as a giver of His Sacrament. The man, the priest, the saint writhed in the convulsions of trampled vanity and foamed at the thought that she had probably preferred some beastly fellow, a shepherd or a woodcutter, to him.

His soutane torn and covered with dust, his hands bleeding and his face scratched, Francesco spent some hours climbing about wildly and blindly, up and down gorges, among broom bushes, over roaring mountain streams, and arrived at a

region of Mount Generoso where the sound of shepherds' bells reached his ear. He did not for a moment doubt what place he had reached. He looked down on forsaken Soana, on his church, which could be seen clearly in the bright sun, and recognized the crowd that was now streaming in vain to the sacred place. At this very moment he ought to have been putting on his vestments in the sacristy. But he could much more easily have put a rope about the sun and pulled it down than broken the invisible bonds that drew him powerfully to the Alpine pasture.

The young priest was on the point of attaining some measure of reason when a fragrant smoke, carried by the fresh mountain air, reached his nostrils. Instinctively he looked about him searchingly and noticed, not very far away, a seated male figure; he seemed to be tending a little fire, at the edge of which a tin vessel was steaming, probably with minestrone. The seated man did not notice the priest, for he had his back turned to him. So the priest in turn could distinguish only a round head covered with blond, woolly hair, a strong, brown neck, and shoulders draped in a loose-fitting jacket which age, weather and wind had turned earth brown. The peasant, shepherd, woodcutter or whatever he was, sat bent over the little fire, whose scarcely visible flames, held down by the mountain wind, shot out horizontal tongues along the earth and flat billows of smoke into the air. He was, it soon appeared, preoccupied with some work, some carving, and was silent most of the time like someone who has forgotten God and the world in the work that engages him. When Francesco had stood there for a while, for some reason anxiously avoiding any movement, the man or boy beside the fire began to whistle softly; having swung into the rhythm of music, he suddenly sent broken fragments of some song into the air in a melodious voice.

Francesco's heart pounded wildly. It was not because he had been climbing so vigorously up and down the gorges, but for reasons which derived partly from the strangeness of his situation, partly from the peculiar impression made on him by the presence of the man beside the fire. This brown neck, this curly, yellow-white hair, the youthful physique, bursting with vigor, that could be divined behind the shabby clothes, the palpable freedom and satisfied well-being of the mountain dweller—everything together entered Francesco's mind in a flash and established a relationship in which his morbid and groundless jealousy flared up even more tormentingly.

Francesco went up to the fire. He could not have remained hidden in any case; and he was, moreover, impelled forward by irresistible forces. The mountaineer turned round, revealing a face full of youth and strength, the like of which the priest had never seen before, jumped up, and looked at the newcomer.

It was now clear to Francesco that he had a cowherd before him, since the object he was carving was a sling. He kept his eye on the brown-and-black-spotted cattle that were visible here and there, but on the whole were far away and hidden from view, climbing about among the rocks and bushes, betrayed only by the tinkling of the bells which the bull and this or that cow wore on their necks. He was a Christian; what else could he have been among all these mountain chapels and Madonna images of the region? But he also seemed to be a most devoted son of Holy Church, for, immediately recognizing the priest's gown, he kissed Francesco's hand with timid fervor and humility.

But Francesco recognized at once that the shepherd resembled the other parish

children in no other respect. He was more powerfully and heavily built, his muscles were those of an athlete, his eyes seemed to have come from the blue lake down in the depths, and were equal in visual power to those of the brown ospreys who were, as always, circling about Sant' Agata. He had a low brow, his lips were thick and moist, his look and smile were of a coarse frankness. That secretive, furtive air that is common among people of the South was alien to him. All this Francesco took in as he stood eye to eye with the fair young Adam of Mount Generoso and agreed that he had never seen such a primitively beautiful peasant before.

In order to conceal the true reason for his coming and at the same time to make his presence intelligible, he told a lie: he said that he had given the sacrament to a dying man in a remote hut and had returned home with his ministrant. He had lost his way, had slid down the mountain and now wished to be shown the right way after he had taken a short rest. The shepherd believed this lie. With a coarse laugh that revealed his healthy teeth, yet with embarrassment, he followed the cleric's account and prepared a seat for him, throwing the jacket from his shoulders and spreading it out near the edge of the fire. This act bared his brown, gleaming shoulders, in fact his whole upper body down to his belt, since he wore no shirt.

To begin a conversation with this child of nature was a matter of considerable difficulty. It seemed embarrassing to him to be alone with the ecclesiastical gentleman. After he had been on his knees for a while, blowing into the fire, adding twigs, lifting the lid of the pot from time to time, uttering words in an unintelligible dialect, he suddenly gave a tremendous shout of joy which reverberated from the rocky bastions in a manifold echo.

Scarcely had this echo died away when someone could be heard approaching with loud laughter and screaming. It was a group of voices, the voices of children, from among which one could distinguish a woman's voice alternately laughing and calling for help. At the sound of this voice Francesco felt his arms and legs grow numb, and at the same time he sensed a power announcing itself which, compared with that which had produced his natural existence, contained the secret of true and real life. Francesco burned like the bush of the Lord, but outwardly he betrayed nothing of his condition. For a few seconds he lost consciousness; he felt an unfamiliar liberation, and at the same time a captivity that was as sweet as it was hopeless.

Meanwhile the feminine cries of distress, stifled by laughter, had been approaching until, at the turn of a precipitous path, a bucolic picture became visible, as innocent as it was unusual. That very spotted goat which had molested the priest on his first visit to the mountain pasture was leading a little bacchantic procession, puffing and resisting, carrying the sole bacchante of the troop astride on his back, followed by the noisy children. The beautiful girl whom, it seemed to Francesco, he was seeing for the first time, held the curving horns of the goat in a firm grip; but, however powerfully she pulled back, forcing the animal's neck toward her, she was neither able to make it stop nor to get off its back. Some prank, which she might perhaps have played for the sake of the children, had brought the girl to this helpless situation; she was not really sitting on the unsuitable mount, but touched the ground with her bare feet, so that she was not being carried but was walking, and yet could not leave the unruly, fiery billy goat without falling. Her hair had come loose, the straps of her coarse shirt had slipped from her shoulders, so that an exquisite sphere became visible, and her short skirts, which even normally scarcely

reached down to her calves, were now not even adequate to cover her gorgeous knees.

It was some time before the priest realized the identity of the bacchante and that he had before him the object of his tormented yearning, whom he had been seeking so avidly. The girl's shrieks, her laughter, her involuntary wild movements, her loose, flying hair, her open mouth, her full heaving bosom, the insane character of the ride—in a sense an act of compulsion and yet deliberate—had completely altered her outward appearance. A rosy glow covered her face, where pleasure and anxiety were mingled with bashfulness, which expressed itself with droll charm, as when she lifted one of her hands from the goat's horn and directed it momentarily to the dangerously high hem of her skirt.

Francesco stood there spellbound, captivated by this picture, as if it had the power to paralyze him. Its beauty was such that the obvious similarity with a witches' ride did not even occur to him. However, it did bring back to him impressions of classical antiquity. He thought of the carvings he had recently studied on the marble sarcophagus that stood, constantly overflowing with clear mountain water, on the village square of Soana. Was it not as if this world of stone, which was nevertheless so alive, of the wreath-crowned god of wine, the dancing satyrs, the panther-drawn triumphal chariot, the girl flute players and bacchantes, was it not as if they had hidden in the stony wastes of Mount Generoso, and as if one of the divinely inspired women had suddenly torn herself away from the raging mountain cult of the maenads and amazingly stepped into the life of the present?

If Francesco had not immediately recognized Agata, the goat had indeed recognized the priest, and dragged his burden, shrieking and resisting in vain, straight towards him; by planting his two deft forehooves abruptly on the priest's lap, he enabled his rider, finally released, to glide gently from his back.

When the girl became aware of the fact that there was a stranger present, and when she recognized Francesco in this stranger, her laughter and her gaiety suddenly ended, and her face, which had just been glowing with merriment, assumed an almost defiant pallor.

"Why did you not come to church today?" Francesco asked this question, standing erect, in a tone and with an expression on his pale face that could only be interpreted as anger, although it was caused by a different emotion. Whether it was because he wanted to conceal this emotion or because he was embarrassed, indeed helpless, or whether the spiritual mentor in him had been aroused to indignation—his anger increased and came to the surface in a way that made the cowherd look up in astonishment, while the girl's face showed in turn the flush and pallor of dismay and shame.

But while Francesco was speaking and punishing with words, words that were familiar to him but did not involve his soul, his emotions were at peace, and while the veins on his alabaster brow swelled, he experienced the bliss of deliverance. The sense of utter deprivation that had assailed him only a short time before was transformed into a feeling of plenty, his tormenting hunger became satiety, and the infernal world which he had cursed but a moment earlier was now dripping with the splendor of paradise. And as his wrath flowed stronger and stronger, his bliss grew and grew. He had not forgotten the desperate state in which he had just been, but the jubilation he now felt, he had to bless, bless over and over. For this desperate state had been the bridge to happiness. Francesco had already gone so far into the magic spheres of love that the mere presence of the beloved object brought with it that enjoy-

ment which stupefies one with happiness and does not permit one to think of deprivation, however near it may be.

With all this the young priest felt, and no longer concealed from himself, the change that had taken place within him. The true state of his being had, as it were, come to the surface naked. The mad chase he had behind him was, he well knew, not prescribed by the Church and ran outside the consecrated network of roads that clearly and strictly delineated his activity. For the first time, not only his foot but his soul, too, had left the highway, and it seemed to him that he had reached the spot on which he now stood, not so much as a human being, but rather, as a falling stone, a falling drop of water, a leaf driven by the storm.

Every one of his angry words showed Francesco that he was no longer in control of himself but was, on the contrary, compelled to seek and exercise power over Agata at any price. He took possession of her with words. The more he humiliated her, the more sonorously the harps of bliss resounded within him. Every pain he inflicted on her as a punishment awakened ecstasy within him. In fact, if the cowherd had not been there, Francesco might easily have lost his last shred of self-control in this ecstasy and, falling at the girl's feet, have betrayed the true beating of his heart.

Although she had grown up in a degenerate household, Agata had nevertheless retained to this day the innocence of a flower. Like the mountain gentian which they resembled, her blue eyes had never been seen at the lake in the valley below. She had the most limited sphere of experience. And yet, although the priest was for her not a human being at all, but rather a creature halfway between God and man, a sort of strange magician, she nevertheless suddenly divined what Francesco was trying to conceal and recorded it with a look of astonishment.

The children had led the billy goat away over the gravel and upward. The woodcutter had begun to feel uncomfortable in the presence of the priest. He took the pot from the fire and with great effort climbed up with it, probably to a comrade, who was sending bundles of brushwood down over a precipice into the depths below by means of a seemingly endless wire. From time to time one of these dark bundles traveled along the rocky bastions with a scraping sound, not unlike a brown bear or the shadow of a gigantic bird. Moreover, since the wire was invisible, the bundle seemed to fly down. When the cowherd had vanished from view after giving a powerful yodel, which echoed from the battlements and bastions of Mount Generoso, Agata kissed the hem of the priest's gown and then his hand, as though in contrition.

Francesco had mechanically made the sign of the Cross over the girl's head, and in doing so his hands had touched her hair. But now his arm trembled convulsively as if something wanted to keep another something in its power with its last ounce of strength. But the tense, resisting something could not prevent the blessing hand from extending slowly and bringing its palm closer and closer to the head of the repentant sinner, or from suddenly resting firmly and fully on it.

Francesco looked about him fearfully. He was far from fooling himself at this moment and justifying the position he was in by connecting it to the duties of his sacred office; yet all sorts of phrases came from him about confession and confirmation. And his almost unbridled passion, ready to leap, was so fearful of arousing horror and abomination when it was discovered, that it, too, sought cowardly refuge again behind the mask of the Church.

"You will come down to my school at Soana, Agata," he said. "You will learn to read and write there. I will teach you

a morning and evening prayer, God's commandments too, and how you may recognize and avoid the seven cardinal sins. Then you will confess to me every week."

But Francesco, who had torn himself away after these words and descended the mountain without looking around, decided next morning, after a painful, sleepless night, to go to confession himself. When he revealed his tormented conscience, not without playing the game of hide-and-seek, to a snuff-taking archpriest in the nearby mountain town, he was most readily absolved. It was obvious that the devil was opposing the young priest's attempt to lead stray souls back into the bosom of the Church, especially since woman is always man's most direct opportunity for committing sin. After breakfasting with the archpriest in the parsonage beside an open window which admitted gentle air, sun and the song of birds, and hearing some frank words about the frequent conflict between human and ecclesiastical affairs, Francesco yielded to the delusion that he was carrying away a relieved heart.

This transformation had probably been aided in part by a few glasses of that heavy dark-violet wine which the peasants of Arogno press and of which the priest possessed a few hogsheads. At the completion of the meal the priest even led the priest and confessant to the vaulted cellar under mighty, tender-leaved chestnut trees, where this treasure was stored on beams, since he was accustomed at about this time to fill a flask, which he took with him for the further needs of the day.

But Francesco had scarcely said farewell to his confessor on the flower-studded, wind-swept meadow before the iron-bound gate of the rocky vault, and, walking briskly around a bend in the road, had hardly put enough hilly land, with trees and bushes, between them, when he began to feel an inexplicable repugnance toward his colleague's consolation and to regret all the time he had spent with him.

This grimy peasant, whose shabby soutane and sweaty underwear gave off an obnoxious odor, whose scurvy head and raw, dirt-encrusted hands demonstrated that soap was an alien commodity to him, seemed rather an animal, a block of wood, than a priest of God. Clergymen, Francesco said to himself, are, according to the Church, consecrated persons who have through their consecration received a supernatural dignity and power, so that even angels bow to them. This cleric could only be described as a travesty of this teaching. What a shame it was to see the priestly omnipotence put into such bumpkin hands, since even God was subject to such omnipotence and was compelled through the words *hoc est enim meum corpus* to descend upon the altar on which the Mass was celebrated.

Francesco hated, indeed despised, him. Then again he felt a profound regret. But finally it seemed to him that the stinking, ugly, obscene Satan had assumed his form. And he thought of those births which had taken place with the help of an incubus or succubus.

Francesco himself was astonished at such stirrings of his psyche and at the course of his thoughts. His host and confessor had hardly given him cause for them, except through his very existence; for his words at breakfast were entirely in the spirit of propriety. But Francesco was already swimming once more in such an emotion of exaltation and believed he was inhaling air of such celestial purity that, compared with this sanctified element, the everyday world seemed to him to be chained down in a state of damnation.

The day had arrived on which Francesco expected the sinful girl from the Alpine pasture in his parsonage at Soana for the first time. He had directed her to ring

the bell not far from the church door, by which he could be summoned to give confession. But midday was already approaching and the bell had not stirred and, as he instructed some half-grown girls and boys in the schoolroom, he became more and more absent-minded. Through the open window he could hear the roar of the waterfall, now swelling, then subsiding, and the priest's excitement grew whenever the sound increased. At such times he feared that he might miss the sound of the bell. The children were perplexed by his restlessness and absent-mindedness. That his mind was not on his business and not with them either, escaped the girls least of all, for they feasted on the young saint with their earthly as well as their heavenly senses. Tied to the stirrings of his youthful nature by a profound instinct, they even shared the tension that dominated him at the moment.

Shortly before the twelve o'clock bell rang, there arose a murmur of voices on the village square, which till then had lain quietly in the light of the sun, the tops of its chestnut trees covered with May blossoms. A mob of people was approaching. One could hear calmer, throaty male sounds, apparently protesting. But an irresistible stream of female words, shrieks, curses and protests suddenly drowned these out and made them inaudible. Then a fearful silence ensued. Suddenly muffled voices reached the priest's ears, but the source of these voices remained at first unintelligible to him. It was May and yet it sounded as if a chestnut tree, under the weight of a gust of wind, were suddenly shaking off its autumnal burden of fruit. The hard chestnuts were falling to the ground and bursting like drumbeats.

Francesco leaned out of the window.

With horror he saw what was going on in the square. He was so alarmed, indeed so filled with dismay, that he was brought to his senses only by the shrill, ear-piercing peal of the confession bell, which was being tugged with desperate doggedness. He hurried into the church and to the church door, and pulled the penitent—it was Agata—away from the bell into the church. Then he stepped out in front of the portal.

This much was clear: the entrance of the outlaw into the village had been noticed and the usual thing had happened. They had tried to drive her out of the abode of human beings with stones, as if she were some mangy dog or wolf. The children and mothers had soon banded together and pursued the outcast, curse-laden creature; the beauty of the girl did not in the least disturb their conviction that their stones were aimed at a dangerous animal, a monster, which spread pestilence and destruction. Meanwhile Agata, feeling certain of the priest's protection, had not allowed herself to be deflected from her goal. And so the resolute girl, persecuted and hunted, had arrived at the church door, which was still being pelted with a few stones thrown by the children.

The priest did not need to bring the agitated members of his congregation to their senses by a sermon; as soon as they saw him they scattered.

In the church Francesco had motioned to the mute, heavily breathing fugitive to follow him into the parsonage. He, too, was agitated and so they heard each other breathing fitfully. On a narrow staircase of the parsonage, between white-washed walls, stood the dismayed housekeeper, now somewhat calmer, to receive the hunted game. One could see from her face that she was prepared to help if help were needed. Only the sight of the old woman seemed to make Agata aware of the humiliating aspect of her present state. Alternating between laughter and anger, she uttered strong imprecations and so gave the priest the first opportunity to hear her voice, which, it seemed to him,

sounded full, sonorous and heroic. She did not know why she was being persecuted. She regarded the town of Soana the way one would regard a nest of mud wasps or an ant heap. Furious and indignant as she was, it still did not occur to her to reflect on the cause of such dangerous malice. For she had known this condition since her childhood and assumed it to be something natural. But one fights off wasps and ants too. Even though it is animals that are attacking us, we are roused by them to hatred, to rage, to despair, according to the circumstances, and relieve our feelings by threats, tears or the stirrings of the deepest contempt. Agata did so too, while the housekeeper put the girl's ragged clothes in order and she herself pinned up the astounding mass of her hair, ranging in color from rust to ochre, which had fallen down in her hasty running.

At this moment young Francesco was suffering as never before under the compulsion of his passion. The presence of the woman who had matured in the mountain wilderness like an exquisite wild fruit, the intoxicating fire that streamed from her warm body, the fact that she, who had been distant and unattainable, was now enclosed in the narrow confines of his own dwelling—all this made Francesco clench his fists, tense his muscles and gnash his teeth, merely to keep on his feet in a situation which for some seconds threw him into total darkness. When the darkness lifted, there was an enormous commotion of images, thoughts and feelings within him: landscapes, people, the most distant memories, living moments of his domestic and professional past, fused with present ideas. As though he were fleeing from these, an inescapable future rose up before him, sweet and terrible, to which he knew he would wholly succumb. Thoughts flashed over this chaos of mental pictures, countless, restless, impotent thoughts. His conscious will, Francesco realized, had been dethroned in his mind; another will reigned, which brooked no contradiction. With horror the youth confessed to himself that he was delivered up to it for salvation or damnation. This state of mind was a sort of obsession. But if he was overcome by his fear of falling unavoidably into the crime of mortal sin, he felt at the same time like bellowing with boundless joy. His hungry eyes looked with a hitherto unknown, amazed satiety. More than that: here hunger *was* satiety and satiety, hunger. The cursed thought shot through his mind that here alone was the imperishable, divine food by which the sacrament gives heavenly nourishment to believing Christian souls. His emotions were idolatrous in nature. He condemned his uncle in Ligornetto as a bad sculptor. And why had he himself never painted? Perhaps he might still become a painter. He thought of Bernardino Luini and his great painting in the old monastery church in nearby Lugano and of the exquisite blond holy women his brush had created there. But then they were as nothing compared to this hot, most living reality.

Now Francesco did not know what to do. A warning impulse at first made him want to flee from the girl. All sorts of reasons, not all of them equally pure, moved him to seek out the mayor at once and inform him of the incident before others could do so. The mayor listened to him calmly—Francesco had fortunately found him at home—and shared the priest's view of the matter. It was but Christian and good Catholic practice not to let the bad situation on the Alpine pasture continue indefinitely, and to take an interest in the degenerate people who were enmeshed in sin and shame. As to the villagers and their conduct, he promised to take stern measures against them.

When the young priest had gone, the mayor's pretty wife, who had a quiet,

taciturn way of observing people, said:

"This young priest could go so far as to become a cardinal, even Pope. I believe he is consuming himself with fasting, praying and sleepless nights. But the devil pursues saints especially, with his hellish tricks and with the most secret wiles and stratagems. May the young man, with God's help, always be protected against them."

When Francesco walked back to the parsonage, as slowly as he could, he was followed by many desirous but also evil female eyes. It was known where he had been and they were resolved to submit to this pestilence of Soana only if they were compelled to do so. Girls walking upright, carrying bundles of wood on their heads, met him on the square near the marble sarcophagus; they did, it is true, greet him with submissive smiles, but afterwards they exchanged disdainful looks behind his back. Francesco strode along as though in a fever. He heard the confused song of the birds, the swelling and restrained roar of the eternal waterfall; but it was as if his feet were not on the ground, as if he were being pulled forward without a rudder, in a whirlpool of sounds and images. Suddenly he found himself in the sacristy of his church, then in the nave before the main altar, praying to the Virgin Mary on his knees for help in his emotional turmoil.

But his prayers did not express the desire that she free him from Agata. Such a desire would have found no nourishment in his heart. They were, rather, a cry for mercy. He wanted the Mother of God to understand, to forgive, if possible to approve. Francesco interrupted his prayer abruptly and broke away from the altar when the idea suddenly shot through his head that Agata might have gone away. But he found the girl still there, in the company of Petronilla.

"I have cleared everything up," Francesco said. "The way to the Church and to the priest is open to everyone. Trust me, what has happened will not recur." He was overcome by a firmness and sureness, as if he once again stood on the right path and on solid ground. Petronilla was sent to the neighboring parish with an important ecclesiastical document. The errand could unfortunately not be postponed. Moreover, the housekeeper was to report the incident to the priest there. "If you meet any people, tell them," he stated emphatically, "that Agata has come down here to the parsonage from the Alpine pasture and is receiving instruction from me in the teachings of our religion, our sacred faith. Let them come and prevent it and draw the punishment of eternal damnation down on their heads. Let them make a scene in front of the church and maltreat their fellow Christian. The stones will not strike her but me. If need be, I will personally take her back at twilight to the pasture."

When the housekeeper had gone, a lengthy silence ensued. The girl had folded her hands in her lap and still sat on the same rickety chair that Petronilla had placed near the white-washed wall for her. There were still flashes of fire in Agata's eyes, injury was mirrored in these lightning bolts of indignation and secret rage; but her full Madonna face had assumed more and more a helpless expression, until finally a silent, copious stream bathed her cheeks. Francesco had meanwhile turned his back to her and was looking out of the open window. As he let his eyes roam over the gigantic mountain wall of the Soana valley, from the fateful Alpine pasture to the lakeshore, with the everlasting murmur of the waterfall, the song of a single, sweet boy's voice penetrated to him from the luxuriant vine terraces; he was compelled to doubt that he now really held the fulfillment of his superterrestrial desires. Would Agata still be there when he turned around? And if

she were there, what would happen when he turned around? Would this turning not be decisive for his whole earthly existence, even beyond that, in fact? These questions and doubts persuaded the priest to remain in his present position as long as possible, in order to pass judgment on himself, or at least take counsel with himself once more before he arrived at a decision. This was a matter of seconds, not minutes; but in these seconds, not only the entire history of his entanglement, beginning with Luchino Scarabota's first visit, but his whole conscious life became the immediate present to him. In these seconds a whole tremendous vision of the Last Judgment, with Father, Son and Holy Ghost in heaven, spread out before him over the ridge of the peak of Mount Generoso and terrified him with the blare of trumpets. One foot on Generoso, the other on a mountain peak on the other side of the lake, in his left hand the scale, in his right, his naked sword, the Archangel Michael stood like a terrible threat, while behind the Alpine pasture of Soana abominable Satan had descended with horns and claws. But almost everywhere the priest's eyes strayed there stood a woman, dressed in black and wearing a black veil, wringing her hands; she was none other than his despairing mother.

Francesco closed his eyes and then pressed both hands against his temples. When he turned around slowly, he looked for a long time with an expression of horror at the girl, who was swimming in tears, her dark, red mouth trembling painfully. Agata became frightened. Francesco's face was distorted as if it had been touched by the finger of death. Without a word he staggered over to her. And with a hoarse cry, like that of someone who has been defeated by an inexorable power, a cry that was at the same time a savage, life-hungry groan and a moan for mercy, he sank to his knees before her, a crushed man, and wrung his clasped hands.

Francesco might not perhaps have succumbed to his passion in this degree for a long time if the crime committed by the villagers against Agata had not infused a nameless, ardent element of human compassion into it. He realized what must lie in store for this creature in her future life and in a world without a protector, she who was so endowed by God with aphrodisiac beauty. Circumstances had made him her protector today; perhaps he had saved her from death by stoning. He had thereby won a personal claim on her: a thought that was not clear to him, but which nevertheless influenced his actions; working unconsciously, it swept away all sorts of inhibitions, fear and timidity. And in his mind he saw no possibility of ever again withdrawing his hand from the outcast. He would stand at her side, even if the world and God stood on the other. Such considerations, such currents, combined unexpectedly with the stream of passion, and so this stream overflowed its banks.

For the present his conduct was not yet a turning away from the right path and the consequence of a resolve to sin; it was merely a state of impotence and helplessness. He could not have said why he did what he did. In reality he did nothing. Something was happening to him. And Agata, who should now really have been terrified, was not, but seemed to have forgotten that Francesco was a stranger to her and a priest. He seemed all at once to have become her brother. And as her weeping turned into sobbing, she not only permitted him, who was likewise shaken by dry sobs, to embrace her as if to comfort her, but she lowered her tear-drenched face and hid it on his breast.

Now she had become a child and he her father, insofar as he sought to calm

her in her suffering. But he had never felt a woman's body so close to his and his caresses and tendernesses soon became more than paternal. To be sure, he felt clearly that the girl's sobbing pain concealed something akin to a confession. He realized that she knew to what an ugly love she owed her existence, and was submerged in the same sorrow as he was because of it. He bore her distress, her pain, with her. In this way their hearts were united. But he soon raised her sweet Madonna face to his, putting his hand to the nape of her neck and drawing her to him, bending her white brow back with his right hand; and after feasting his greedy eyes for a long time on the object he held clasped in this way, with the fire of madness in his eye, he suddenly swooped down like a hawk on her hot, tear-salted mouth and remained inseparably fused with her.

After some moments of earthly time, but eternities of numbing bliss, Francesco suddenly tore himself loose and stood firm on both feet, tasting blood on his lips. "Come," he said, "you can't go home alone without protection, so I will accompany you."

A changeable sky lay over the Alpine world when Francesco and Agata stole out of the parsonage. They turned off into a meadow path, on which they climbed down unseen from terrace to terrace between mulberry trees, through garlands of vines. Francesco knew very well what lay behind him and what boundary he had now crossed; but he could feel no remorse. He was changed, sublimated, liberated. It was a sultry night. In the plain of Lombardy, it seemed, storms were gathering, whose distant flashes of lightning spread out like a fan behind the gigantic silhouette of the mountains. The fragrance from the giant lilac tree under the windows of the parsonage floated down with the water from the network of brooks that trickled by, mingled with cool and warm currents of air. The intoxicated couple did not speak. He supported her in the dim light whenever they climbed down the wall to a lower-lying terrace, caught her in his arms too, on which occasions her breast heaved on his, his thirsty lips clung to hers. They did not really know where they wanted to go, for from the depth of the gorge of the Savaglia no road led up to the Alpine pasture. But on this point they were agreed, that they must avoid the ascent to it through the village. But their aim was not to attain some external, distant goal but to enjoy to the full what had been attained.

How full of dross, how dead and empty the world had been till now, and what a transformation it had undergone! How it had changed in the eyes of the priest and how he had changed in it! All the things that had until now meant everything to him were erased and of no worth. His father and mother, as well as his teachers, had been left behind like worms in the dust of the old, rejected world; while for him, the son of God, the new Adam, the gate of paradise had been opened again by the cherub. In this paradise, in which he now took his first enraptured steps, timelessness prevailed. He no longer felt himself to be a man of some special time or age. Equally timeless was the nocturnal world about him. And because the time of his expulsion, the world of banishment and of original sin lay behind him outside the guarded gate of paradise, he no longer felt even the slightest fear of it. No one out there could harm him in any way. It was not in the power of his superiors, nor in the power of the Pope himself, to prevent his enjoyment of even the most trivial fruit of paradise or to rob him of the smallest trifle of the highest bliss that had now become his as a gift of grace. His superiors had become inferiors. They lived forgotten in an extinct earth of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Francesco

was no longer Francesco; he had just been awakened by the Divine Breath as the First Man, the only Adam, sole lord of the Garden of Eden. There lived no second man beside him in the plenitude of sinless creation. Constellations quivered with bliss, making a divine music. Clouds lowed like luxuriantly grazing cows, dark-red fruits radiated sweet rapture and delicious refreshment, tree trunks sweated fragrant resin, blossoms strewed out precious spices; but all this depended on Eve, whom God had placed among all these miracles as the fruit of fruits, the spice of spices, upon her who was herself the highest miracle. The fragrance from all the spices, their most delicate essence, the Creator had placed into the hair, skin and the fruit-flesh of her body; but her form, her substance, had no equal. Her form, her substance, was God's secret. The form moved of itself and remained exquisite alike at rest or in change. Her substance seemed to be made of the same mixture as lily and rose leaves, but it was chaster in its coolness and hotter in its fire, it was both more delicate and tougher. In this fruit there was a living, vibrant kernel; precious, trembling pulses hammered within it and, when one tasted of it, it yielded new blisses that were rarer and even more exquisite, without any loss of heavenly abundance occurring in the process.

And what was most precious in this creation, in this paradise regained, could indeed be deduced from the presence of the Creator. Here God had neither completed His work and left it alone, nor laid Himself to rest in it. On the contrary, His creative hand, His creative Spirit, His creative power were not withdrawn, they remained at the work of creating. And each of all the parts and members of paradise remained creative. Francesco-Adam, who had just emerged from the potter's workshop, felt himself a creative person within the whole sphere of his activity. With a rapture that was not of this world he felt and saw Eve, the daughter of God. The love that had formed her still clung to her, and the most precious of all the substances which the Father had employed to form her body still had an unearthly beauty that was not sullied by even a speck of earthly dust. But this creation, too, still quivered, swelled and shone from the heavenly fire of active, creative power and yearned to be fused with Adam. Adam in turn was impelled toward her, to enter with her into a new perfection.

Agata and Francesco, Francesco and Agata, the priest, the youth of good family, and the outlawed, despised child of the shepherd, were the first human pair as they climbed down into the valley hand in hand on the secret, nocturnal by-paths. They sought the deepest seclusion. Silently, their hearts filled with a nameless astonishment, with a rapture that almost caused both their hearts to burst, they descended deeper and deeper into the precious miracle of the cosmic hour.

They were moved. Because of the grace, the election they felt to be resting on them, their boundless happiness was tinged with an earnest solemnity. They had felt each other's body, had been united in a kiss, but they sensed the unfamiliar destiny to which they were moving. It was the final mystery. It was that for the sake of which God created, and for which He had put death into the world and had accepted it as part of the bargain, so to speak.

In this way the first human pair reached the narrow gorge below, sawed through by the little Savaglia River. It was very deep, and only an unfrequented footpath led upwards along the edge of the brook bed to the reservoir into which the mountain water poured from a dizzy height. At a considerable distance from it the brook was divided into two arms, which were united again by a little green

island that Francesco loved and often visited because it was very lovely with its few young apple trees that had struck root there. And Adam took off his shoes and carried his Eve to it. "Come, or I shall die," he said to Agata several times. And they trampled down narcissi and Easter lilies with their heavy, almost intoxicated lovers' steps.

Even here in the gorge there was summer warmth, though the course of the brook brought coolness with it. How brief a time had passed since the turning point in the life of the pair, and how far behind them everything before the turning point lay. Since the little island was rather remote from the village, the peasant who owned it had built a hut out of stones, twigs and earth to afford some shelter against accidental storms; this provided a bed of leaves that was tolerably secure against the rain. It was this hut perhaps that had been in Adam's mind when he had headed toward the valley rather than up the mountain. The hut seemed to have been prepared to receive the lovers. Mysterious hands seemed to have been forewarned of the impending celebration of the secret creation of man; for there were clouds of light about the hut, clouds of sparks, June bugs, glowworms, worlds, Milky Ways, which sometimes rose in tremendous sheaves as if they wanted to populate empty space. They flowed and floated through the gorge at such a height that one could no longer distinguish them from the stars in the sky.

Although this spectacle was familiar to them, this silent magic nevertheless produced wonder in Francesco and Agata, and their astonishment made them hesitate a moment. Is this the place, Francesco thought, which I so often sought out and contemplated with pleasure, not dreaming what it would one day mean to me? It seemed to me a place to which I might retreat as a hermit from the misery of the world and steep myself in God's word through renunciation. But what it really was—an island on the Euphrates River or the Hiddekel, the secret, most blissful place in paradise—I would not have recognized. And the mystical, flaming spark-clouds, nuptial fires, sacrificial fires, or whatever they might be, freed him completely from the earth. When he did not forget the world altogether, he knew that it lay powerless before the gates of paradise like the seven-headed dragon, the seven-headed beast that came out of the sea. What had he in common with those who worshiped the dragon? Let him blaspheme against God's hut. His venom could not reach this spot. Never had Francesco, the priest, felt such proximity to God, such security in Him, such self-forgetfulness; and in the murmuring of the mountain brook the mountains gradually seemed to resound melodiously, the crags of rock to peal like an organ, the stars to make music with myriads of golden harps. Choirs of angels shouted in jubilation through infinity, the harmonies roared down from above like tempests, and bells, bells, ringing bells, wedding bells, small and large, deep and high, powerful and gentle, spread an oppressive, blissful solemnity through world space.—And so they sank down on the bed of leaves, entwined in each other.

There is no moment that endures, and even when one wants to cling with anxious haste to those instants that afford the highest bliss, one finds no way of holding onto them, strive as he will. His whole life, Francesco felt, consisted of steps leading to the summit of the mystery he was now experiencing. Where would one breathe in the future if one could not hold onto it? How was one to endure a damned existence if one were cast out again from the raptures of one's innermost heaven? In the midst of the superhuman intoxication of enjoyment, the youth experienced transitoriness with a stinging pain; in the

enjoyment of possession he felt the torment of loss. He felt as if he must empty a cup of delicious wine and quench an equally delicious thirst; but the cup never became empty, and his thirst was never quenched. And the drinker did not want his delicious thirst to be satisfied nor the cup to be emptied; yet he sucked at it with greedy frenzy, tormented because he could never reach bottom.

Surrounded by the rushing brook, flooded by it, with glowworms dancing around them, the young couple rested in the rustling leaves, while the stars twinkled through the roof of the hut. He had taken trembling possession of all of Agata's secrets, which he had admired as unattainable treasures. He had immersed himself in her flowing hair, clung with his lips to hers. But his eye was immediately filled with envy of his mouth, which had robbed it of the sight of the sweet maiden's mouth. And bliss, more and more inconceivable, flowing, benumbing, welled up from the mysteries of her young body. What he had never hoped to possess, when it was mirrored before his eyes on hot nights, was as nothing compared to what he now had as a boundless possession.

And as he reveled, he became incredulous over and over again. The excess of his fulfillment caused him repeatedly to assure himself insatiably of his possession. For the first time his fingers, his quivering hands and palms, his arms, his chest, his hips felt woman. And she was more than woman to him. He felt as if he had regained something that he had lost, something he had wantonly thrown away, without which he had been a cripple, and with which he had now formed a bond of unity. Had he ever been separated from these lips, this hair, these breasts and arms? She was a goddess, not a woman. And she was not something that existed in itself; he burrowed his way into the core of the world, and, his ear pressed under the virginal breasts, he heard, with a shudder of bliss, the heart of the world beating away.

That numbness, that half-sleep, descended on the pair, in which the raptures of exhaustion merge with the charms of waking sensation and the charms of waking sensation merge with the raptures of the numbness produced by oblivion; in this state Francesco fell asleep in the arms of the girl, and then Agata in his. How strangely and with what confidence the shy, wild girl had yielded to the caressing compulsion of the priest, how submissively and happily she had served him! And when she fell asleep in his arms, it was with the trusting smile of the satiated infant who closes its eyes at the breast and in the arms of its mother. But Francesco contemplated the sleeping girl in amazement and loved her. Through her body passed waves of trembling, like those produced by the relaxation of life. Sometimes the girl cried out in her dream. But when she opened her languishing eyelids, she always had the same intoxicating smile, and the same dying in ultimate abandonment. Whenever the youth fell asleep it seemed to him that some power was gently, gently withdrawing from him the body he held in his embrace and which he felt with his whole body. But every time upon waking, this brief withdrawal was followed by a sensation of the highest, most gratefully experienced sweetness, an ineffable dream with a blissful, live sensation of the sweetest reality.

This was it, the fruit of paradise, from the tree that stood in the middle of the garden. He held it in the embrace of his whole body. It was the fruit from the tree of life, not from that of the knowledge of good and evil, with which the serpent had tempted Eve. It was, rather, that fruit, the enjoyment of which made one as God. In Francesco every wish for a higher, for

another happiness, had died. Neither on earth nor in heaven were there raptures that could compare with his. There was no king, no god whom the youth, rioting in his extravagant excess, would not have felt to be a starving beggar. His speech had sunk to a stammer, to a convulsive breathing. He sucked in the intoxicating breath that came from between Agata's open lips. He kissed away the tears of ecstasy, hot on the girl's lashes and on her cheek. With eyes closed, looking at each other only sparingly, they both enjoyed themselves in the other, their gaze turned inward, feeling passionately and clearly. But all this was more than enjoyment—it was something that human speech cannot adequately express.

Next morning Francesco celebrated early Mass punctually. His absence had been noticed by no one, his return home, not even by Petronilla. The precipitous haste with which, after making a summary toilet, he had to rush to the sacristy to join the waiting ministrants, and to the altar before the small, waiting congregation, prevented him from coming to his senses. Reflection came when he was in the parsonage again, in his little room, where the housekeeper set the customary breakfast before him. But this reflection did not immediately yield the clarity of disenchantment. Rather, his old environment and the advancing day gave to what he had experienced the resemblance of something unreal, which faded before him like a past dream. But it was reality after all. And although it surpassed in fantastic incredibility any dream that Francesco had ever dreamed, he nevertheless could not disavow it. He had had a fearful fall, there was no quibbling about this fact; the question was whether it was at all possible to lift himself from this fall, from this fearful lapse into sin. The plunge was so deep and from such a height that the priest was compelled to despair of it. This terrible fall was without example, not only in the ecclesiastical, but also in a worldly sense. Francesco thought of the mayor and how he had talked to him about the possibility of saving the outcasts of the Alpine pasture. Only now, secretly, in his profound humiliation, did he recognize the extent of the priestly arrogance, the whole overbearing conceit with which he had been puffed up at that time. He ground his teeth in shame, he squirmed, as it were, like a vain, unmasked swindler, in his dishonor, in his naked helplessness. Had he not been a saint only a moment ago? Had not women and virgins of Soana looked up to him almost idolatrously?

And had he not succeeded in lifting the Church spirit of the place to such an extent that attending church and Masses had become popular even among the men? Now he had become a traitor to God, a deceiver and betrayer of his congregation, a traitor to the Church, a traitor to the honor of his family, a traitor to himself, yes, even a traitor to the despised, cursed, reprobate, wretched Scarabotas, whom he had really ensnared into damnation under the pretext of saving their souls.

Francesco thought of his mother. She was a proud, almost masculine woman, who had protected and guided him with a firm hand when he was a child, and whose unbending will had prescribed for him the course of his future life. He knew that her harshness towards him was nothing but ardent mother-love, that even the slightest cloud on her son's honor would wound her pride most deeply, and that a serious lapse on his part would certainly cause an incurable wound in the very seat of her life. It was strange that, in relation to her, what had really happened, what had been experienced intimately and clearly, could not even be thought about.

Francesco had sunk into the most disgusting mire, into the filth of final depravity. In it he had left behind his vows as a priest, his essence as a Christian, as

his mother's son, as a human being in fact. He would have been reduced to a werewolf, that stinking, demonic beast, in the opinion of his mother and of people in general, if they had known of his crime. The youth jumped from his chair and from the breviary on the table, in which he had seemed to be absorbed. It had seemed to him as if a hail of stones had rattled against his house; not like yesterday, when they had attempted the stoning, but with a hundredfold, thousandfold power, as if the parsonage was to be destroyed or at least turned into a heap of rubble, and he buried under it like the corpse of a poisonous toad. He had heard strange sounds, fearful cries, frantic shouts, and knew that among the raging mob who tirelessly hurled stones there was not only the whole of Soana, the mayor and his wife, but also Scarabota and his family and, indeed, at the head of them all, his mother.

But after some hours had passed, such fantasies and stirrings were displaced by very different ones. Everything that had been born out of his stock-taking, out of his horror at the deed, his contrition, now seemed as if it had never existed. Francesco was dessicated by a distress he had never known, by a burning thirst. His spirit cried out as someone who is rolling about in anguish in the burning desert sand cries for water. The air seemed to be without those substances we require in order to breathe. The parsonage became a cage to the priest, and he paced restlessly between its walls like a beast of prey with aching knees, resolved, if they would not liberate him, to bang his head against the wall and smash it rather than live on like this. How is it possible to live as a dead man? he asked himself, observing the inhabitants of the village through the window. How is it that they want to breathe, how can they breathe? How can they endure their wretched existence, since they do not know what I have enjoyed and now miss? And Francesco grew within himself. He looked down on popes, emperors, princes and bishops, in short, on everyone, as people commonly look down on ants. He did so even in his thirst, his misery, his deprivation. To be sure, he was no longer master of his life. An overpowering magic had made him into a completely will-less and, without Agata, completely lifeless victim of Eros, the god who is older and mightier than Zeus and the rest of the gods. He had read in the writings of the ancients about such sorcery and about this god, and had dismissed both with a superior smile. Now he felt clearly that one had to believe even in the arrow and the deep wound with which, according to the ancients, the god poisoned the blood of his victims. This wound was indeed burning, piercing, flaming, eating and gnawing within him. He felt terrible piercing pains until, when it grew dark, he set out, inwardly shouting with happiness, on the road to the same small island world that had united him yesterday with his beloved and on which he had arranged a new meeting with her.

The mountain shepherd of Ludovico, known to the inhabitants of the region as "the heretic of Soana," fell silent when he had read to the point where his manuscript broke off. The visitor would have liked to hear the end of the tale. But when he was frank enough to express this wish, his host revealed to him that his manuscript went no further. He was also of the opinion that the story could, in fact must, break off here. The visitor did not share this opinion.

What had become of Agata and Francesco, of Francesco and Agata? Did the affair remain a secret or had it been discovered? Did the lovers find a permanent

or merely fleeting attraction for each other? Did Francesco's mother learn of the affair? And finally, the listener wanted to know, was the tale based on a real incident or was it a complete fiction?

"I have already told you," Ludovico replied, turning slightly pale, "that a real incident was the occasion for my scribbling." After this he was silent for a long time. "About six years ago," he continued, "a clergyman was literally driven from the altar of his church with sticks and stones. At least, when I returned to Europe from the Argentine and came to this region, this was told to me by so many people that I have no doubt of the incident itself. Moreover, the incestuous Scarabotas lived here on Mount Generoso, though not under that name. The name Agata is fictitious too; I simply took it from the chapel of Sant' Agata, above which, as you see, the brown ospreys are still circling. But the Scarabotas really did have, among other fruits of their sins, a grown daughter, and the priest was accused of having illicit relations with her. People say that he did not deny the fact nor did he ever show the slightest remorse, and the Pope, it is said, excommunicated him because of it. The Scarabotas had to leave the region. They—the parents, not the children—are supposed to have died in Rio from yellow fever."

The wine and the excitement aroused in the listener by the place, the hour, the company and especially by the work of fiction that had been read to him, combined with all sorts of mystical circumstances, made him still more importunate. He asked once more about Francesco's and Agata's fate. The shepherd could tell him nothing about this. "They are said to have been an annoyance to the region for a long time, because they desecrated and profaned the solitary shrines that are scattered about everywhere and misused them as an asylum for their wicked lust." At these words the anchorite broke into loud, unrestrained laughter that was wholly without cause and which he was unable to control for a long time.

Thoughtful and strangely moved, the reporter of this travel adventure set out on his way home. His diary contains descriptions of this descent, but he does not wish to insert them here. The so-called blue hour that appears when the sun has sunk beneath the horizon was in any case especially beautiful on that occasion. One could hear the waterfall of Soana roar. Just so, Francesco and Agata had heard it roar. Or did they really still hear its sound at that very moment? Was that spot not the location of the Scarabotas' pile of stones? Could one not hear sounds of merry children coming from there, mingled with the bleating of goats and sheep? The wanderer drew his hand across his face as if he wanted to wipe away a veil of confusion: had the little tale that he had heard really grown, like a tiny gentian flower or its like, on a meadow of this mountain world, or had this glorious, primitively powerful mountain relief, this petrified gigantomachy emerged out of the frame of this little novella? He was thinking this and similar thoughts when the sonorous sound of a woman's singing reached his ears. Was it not said that the anchorite was married? The voice carried, as in a spacious, acoustic hall, when people hold their breath to listen. Nature, too, was holding her breath. The voice seemed to be singing in the wall of rock. Sometimes, at least, it seemed to be streaming out from there, in broad waves full of the sweetest mellowness and fiery nobility. But the singer came, it turned out, from the very opposite direction, climbing up the path to Ludovico's square hut. She bore an earthenware vessel on her head, holding it lightly with her uplifted left hand, while she led her little daughter by the right

hand. In this way the full and yet slender figure assumed that straight, exquisite bearing which strikes us as being so solemn, indeed sublime. At this sight a vague surmise shot through the spectator's mind like an illumination.

He had probably been discovered by this time, for the song suddenly grew silent. One could see the mounting woman come closer, completely irradiated by the splendor of the western sky. One could hear the voice of the child, and the mother replying in calm, deep tones. Then one could hear the bare soles of the woman striking the rough-hewn steps resoundingly. She had to step firmly and securely because of her burden. For the waiting wanderer these moments before meeting her possessed a tension and mystery that he had never experienced before. The woman seemed to grow. One saw her dress, tucked up high, saw a knee peeping out for a moment with every step she took, saw naked shoulders and arms emerge, saw a round, feminine face, sweet in spite of a proud self-confidence, surrounded by luxuriant hair, the color of red-brown earth, like some pristine being. Was this not the man-woman, the virago, the Syrian goddess, the sinner who fell out with God to yield herself wholly to man, her husband?

The returning wanderer had stepped aside and the resplendent canephora, returning his greeting almost imperceptibly, because of her burden, strode past him. She turned both her eyes toward him while her head remained fixed ahead of her. At the same moment a proud, self-confident, knowing smile glided over her countenance. Then she lowered her eyes to the road once more, while at the same time an unearthly sparkle seemed to run through her eyelashes. The observer may have been overheated by the warmth of the day, the wine and everything else he had experienced, but this much is certain: before this woman he felt himself grow quite, quite small. These full lips, curled almost in scorn for all their enchanting sweetness, knew that there was no resisting them. There was no protection, no armor against the claims of this neck, these shoulders and this breast, which was blessed and stirred by the breath of life. She rose up out of the depth of the world and past the astonished man—and she rises and rises into eternity, as the one into whose merciless hands heaven and hell have been delivered.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF GERHART HAUPTMANN

By FELIX A. VOIGT

DOCUMENTS PRESERVED in a number of localities on the northern slopes of the Riesengebirge, the mountain range that separates southwest Poland from Czechoslovakia, enabled Gerhart Hauptmann to trace his family lineage of four centuries, both on his father's and mother's sides. The two families—Hauptman and Straehler—must certainly have settled with the other German colonists in that part of the country, which had been depopulated in the thirteenth century by migrating Mongols. In the sixteenth century the families embraced the Protestant religion, a factor which was to be of utmost importance in the life and works of their most famous descendant. They were farmers, craftsmen, and, since the eighteenth century, frequently weavers. Memories of the latter no doubt played a part in Hauptmann's choice of the theme of *Die Weber* (*The Weavers,* 1892).

Gerhart Hauptmann's only family connection with the theater was through his maternal grandmother (born in 1801), the illegitimate daughter of a Breslau actress. Her grandson, who resembled her closely, describes her as a spirited, liberal-minded woman, very fond of the theater.

Hauptmann's mother was Maria Straehler, who in 1852 married Robert Hauptmann, proprietor of the best hotel in the spa at Salzbrunn. They had four sons, one of whom was the well known poet Carl Hauptmann (1858–1921). Gerhart, their youngest, was born on November 15, 1862.

The first twelve years of Gerhart's life were spent quietly and uneventfully at Salzbrunn, where he learned the villagers' dialect as well as German, which he spoke in his father's hotel. From 1874 to 1878 he attended high school in Breslau, the capital of the province, but apparently with no great accomplishment. Later he described his schooldays as "a time of everlasting toothache." He found it so difficult to learn his lessons that his parents thought of setting him at farming. But a short stay at an uncle's farm showed he had little interest or ability in that either.

Young Hauptmann had a vague idea he had a vocation for art and decided to study sculpture at the Breslau Art Academy, where he met little success. In 1882 he gave up the struggle and began studying history at Jena, but abandoned it after a few months when his father was forced to give up his hotel. The years that followed were a period of financial difficulties and privations for Hauptmann. However, all his hardships disappeared as if by miracle when his three brothers

were married or engaged to three of the rich Thienemann sisters of Hohenhaus Castle near Dresden. With financial woes gone, Hauptmann began traveling through the whole of Europe, arriving ultimately in Italy and spending the winter of 1883 and 1884 as a sculptor in Rome. There, too, he failed to make his mark in art. Finally, a severe attack of typhus put an end to all his false starts.

In 1885, after studying in Berlin for a term, he married still another Thienemann daughter, Maria. They made their home at Erkner, then a rural suburb of the German capital. He lived in Erkner as a free-lance writer on his wife's money until pulmonary tuberculosis brought him close to the grave. At the age of twenty-three, Gerhart Hauptmann was in bad health, had little education and no profession, and appeared to be of no account whatever.

But he had devoted many years, on his own initiative, to strenuous, ceaseless reading, and had perused everything he could obtain during those first years of the naturalistic movement in literature. Also, thanks entirely to his strong determination, he had overcome his consumption. His youthful attempts at poetry—a collection of poems entitled *Das bunte Buch* (*The Motley Book,* 1888), which was never published, and an epic poem on his journey in Italy entitled *Das Promethidenlos* (1885)—had proved unsuccessful.

It was not long, however, before people began to speak about a man who lived at Erkner and apparently had the qualities of a great poet. The first writings that attracted attention to Hauptmann were two short stories entitled *"Fasching"* ("Carnival") and *"Bahnwärter Thiel"* ("Line-Keeper Thiel").

In 1888, Hauptmann spent a long time in Zurich, where his studies in the field of psychiatry under Professor August Forel added an essential ingredient to his makeup. Then came the breakthrough: *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (*Before Dawn*), his first play that was really adaptable for the stage, was written in a few weeks. Soon after its publication, in 1889, it was discovered simultaneously by Theodor Fontane and the talented theater manager Otto Brahm. Dress rehearsal of the revolutionary work on October 20, 1889, made the author famous overnight. That date marks the beginning of a new era in German literature: The author became *"Hauptmann* (captain) of the wild band of the naturalists."

To better observe the happenings of that decadent period, Gerhart Hauptmann moved to Berlin, the young capital of the new empire. There, in a turmoil of creative fury, he wrote one play after the other in rapid succession. The third, *Einsame Menschen* (*Lonely Souls,* 1891), was translated into several languages in a very short time. His first masterwork, *Die Weber* (*The Weavers,* 1892) made him famous throughout the whole of Europe. The play was translated into French by Jean Thorel and performed in the Théâtre Libre, Paris, on May 23, 1893. Emile Zola, the naturalistic theorist and novelist, attended the rehearsals. *The Weavers* marked the first performance of a German play in Paris since 1871.

Meanwhile, the young German from Silesia found he could no longer tolerate the tense and exciting atmosphere of Berlin. Consequently, he and his brother Carl moved with their families to Schreiberhau, where they lived in a very simple house close to their native Riesengebirge.

Even this refuge failed to offer Gerhart Hauptmann the creative tranquility for which he had hoped. His marriage was an unhappy one, and it is very likely that his wife's melancholic, anxious character hampered his creative activity. It is worth noting that love pangs occupy a very small place in his first plays---even in *Lonely Souls,* which is the story of a man

caught between two women. He finally found his ideal mate in a young girl named Margarete Marschalk (1875–1957), but he struggled for eleven long years before obtaining a divorce from Maria Thienemann.

Gerhart Hauptmann's fame grew from year to year. Two comedies, entitled *Kollege Crampton* (*Colleague Crampton*) and *Der Biberpelz* (*The Beaver Coat*) (1893), proved that his capacity for picturing the human condition was not confined to its seamy side. And in *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* (*Hannele,* 1892) he demonstrated he also could write verses of radiant beauty. Then, in January, 1894, he received news that his wife had taken their three sons to stay with friends in America. Maria's move was an attempt to force him to decide between her and Margarete Marschalk.

Hauptmann followed Maria without a moment's hesitation. Later he described that wild journey in his novel *Atlantis* (1912) and in *Buch der Leidenschaft* (*Book of Passion,* 1930), an autobiographical work about his marital troubles. Hauptmann spent a few months with his family in the United States and attended a performance of *Hannele* in New York before returning to Germany with his wife and family.

However, the apparent reconciliation did not last long, and the years that followed were full of stress, turmoil, and anxiety for the writer. In the autumn of 1894, Maria took the children to Dresden while Gerhart went to live alone in Berlin. There he recorded the German Peasant War of 1525 in his play *Florian Geyer* (1896), but audiences did not grasp it initially. Hauptmann sought refuge at the foot of Monte Generoso in the Swiss canton Ticino, a place to which he would return again and again. That summer, he and his young mistress journeyed to the light-flooded island of Hiddensee near Rugen on the Baltic, which became a second home for him and where, several decades later, he settled to spend the last years of his life. On Hiddensee he wrote his first play composed entirely in verse, *Die versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell,* 1896), which became a worldwide success. Unfortunately, the public, for the most part, accepted the play as a sentimental, neo-romantic poem; in reality, the author had written with his heart's blood the tragedy of his own marriage.

In 1897, Hauptmann undertook a long journey through Italy accompanied by his mistress, with whom he was to spend the rest of his life. Now he was imbued with a new spirit and Margarete Marschalk aroused the Dionysian element that slumbered within him, helping to give his work an entirely new character. Nonetheless, he never completely succeeded in recovering from the wrong he had done his first wife. It is her image, rather than Margarete's, that appears in all his works —in *Die Jungfern von Bischofsberg* (*The Maids of Bischofsberg*), in the epic *Mary,* and in the long fragments of *Der grosse Traum* (*The Great Dream*), which he began in 1914, shortly after Maria's death, but never finished. New works followed in rapid succession after 1897, poems of an entirely new type. *Fuhrmann Henschel* (*Drayman Henschel,* 1899) was a harassing tragedy worthy of Sophocles, but in naturalistic form.

In 1904 he obtained his divorce at long last and could begin a new married life with Margarete, who had borne him a son in 1900. The first part of his life was ended. *Abenteuer meiner Jugend* (*Adventure of My Youth*), as he called it in the big autobiography published in 1937, was brought to a close. Anxieties and muddled quests were finished forever.

After 1905 his life assumed a totally different aspect. Since change of scene was essential for his creative activity, he moved about at regular intervals, except

during the war years. Shortly after 1900 he built a house (half-convent and half-castle) for Margarete and himself at Agnetendorf in the Riesengebirge. During this period of his life, he spent winters in Italy or the Ticino. He would then return to Agnetendorf for a few months, passing through the Black Forest on the way, to live in the mountains during spring. In summer he went to Hiddensee, where by 1930 he had established a second residence, the Haus Seedorn, which later became a place of pilgrimage for his admirers. Every autumn Hauptmann traveled to Berlin, Vienna or other cities to attend the first performances of his plays, after which he usually rested in Lugano.

Hauptmann made a trip to Greece in 1907 where he sought the gods of the earth and underworld, Demeter and Dionysus, forsaking those of Olympus. There in the theaters of Dionysus at Athens and Delphi, the essence of the "archaic" drama was revealed to him.

Hauptmann was showered with official honors, more abroad than in Germany. He received honorary degrees from Oxford University (1905), Leipzig University (1909), the German University in Prague (1921), and Columbia University in New York (1932). In 1942 Breslau granted him the title of First Honorary Citizen of its university. And in 1912, he was awarded the great honor of the Nobel Prize for Literature. The Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna awarded him the Grillparzer Prize three times. His fiftieth, sixtieth, and seventieth birthdays were celebrated as national holidays.

The crowning years of Gerhart Hauptmann's life were those of the Weimar Republic (1918–1933). At that time he was viewed as one of the chief representatives of German literature, and the elite of his country's intelligentsia gathered about him at Agnetendorf, on Hiddensee, at Rapallo, at Lugano, or wherever he happened to be staying.

Hauptmann, however, lacked the slightest trace of historical instinct; he was absolutely incapable not only of taking an interest in politics but even of understanding it. He once said to me, "I have always kept to the outskirts of history." He did not see the signs of the times —all he saw was people and their pains.

The barbarous advent of the Nazi regime in 1933 took him completely by surprise. He could not and would not abandon his country. His art could flourish only on his native soil and, unlike other great poets, he was not capable of writing anywhere and everywhere. He spent almost all his time at Agnetendorf. Against his wishes, his eightieth birthday was exploited by the Nazis in Vienna and in the towns of his native Silesia as an occasion for celebrations on a more than local scale. But his creative activity continued without a break.

The year 1945 saw the collapse of Germany, and at the age of eighty-three he witnessed the destruction of Dresden. Now his health broke down. Against everyone's advice he went back to Agnetendorf, which was occupied by the Russians and the Poles soon after he arrived. The Russian army of occupation showed every respect and consideration for the author of *The Weavers,* who had been a friend of Maxim Gorki's. But even they could do nothing against the Polish administration of East Germany when he was threatened with expulsion. A few days after receiving notification that he was to be expelled, he was struck down by pneumonia. On June 3, 1946, he spoke his last words: "Am I still in my house?" He was still there and remained there until his heart stopped beating three days later. At his modest funeral service eulogies were pronounced in German, Russian, and Polish.

It was not until the end of July that a special convoy could be formed to take Hauptmann's mortal remains and a large

part of his personal property first to Berlin and from there to Stralsund and the island of Hiddensee he had loved so well. It was there, in the cemetery of Kloster village, that he was buried on July 28, 1946.

Margarete Hauptmann, who had been his companion for over fifty years, moved to Bavaria soon after; she settled in the vicinity of Munich where she lived until her death ten years later at eighty-two years of age.

Gerhart Hauptmann's creative activity covered a period of no less than sixty-five years. His published works include forty-seven plays, many fragments long and short, five epics in verse, and twenty-one narrative or autobiographical prose poems. In addition, there are poems, speeches, articles, and writings of all sorts, mostly unpublished. Works published after 1945 are a volume of poems, two tragedies that make up the final part of *Atridentetralogie* (Tetralogy of the Atrides): *Agamemnons Tod* (Agamemnon's Death) and *Elektra,* both 1948, the play *Herbert Engelmann,* a short story entitled "Mignon," a novel entitled *Winckelmann,* which Frank Thiess "concluded" on the basis of various variants with material of his own, and an edition of *Der grosse Traum* (*The Great Dream*) that claims to be "complete," although five cantos composed between 1938 and 1941 are not included.

There is a mass of over one hundred poetic fragments that defy proper organization, as well as first drafts of his works, diary entries, letters, and other writings, which still await publication. The mere compilation of an inventory of all the works available today would be an extremely long, tedious task. Yet there is no doubt that it is these unpublished writings that could provide the material for forming a conclusive, well-formulated judgment on the different periods of a life that was as rich as it was long.

As far as style is concerned, Gerhart Hauptmann's eludes precise classification. He has been labeled a naturalist, a realist, a romantic or neo-romantic, a symbolist, a classicist, and finally even a surrealist. None of these classifications really fits, for Hauptmann's total expression as a man and a writer is far more complex. As André Gide said, "He knew how to renovate himself continually."

Even if we overlook the youthful period, when he sought his models among the German classics, the naturalism so readily attributed to him was, in his own eyes, merely a passing phase that lasted approximately from 1887 to 1896. Plays such as *Drayman Henschel* and *Die Ratten* (*The Rats,* 1911) already left that phase behind and deserve to be called surrealist. Undoubtedly, he was a great realist all his life, one of the few writers who have succeeded in conjuring up real people before our eyes, with all their struggles, their pains, and their failures. But he combined all the essential features of every known style.

From his youth he was attracted by monasticism and mysticism; the reasons for this attraction must be sought in the history of the great Silesian mystics. At the time when he tried his hand at farming, he was strongly affected by the religious spirit of Graf von Zinzendorf, founder of a Protestant sect derived from the Moravian Brothers. The language of Martin Luther was always basic to him, and all through his life Luther's translation of the New Testament and writings were Hauptmann's daily pabulum, though he kept well away from organized religion.

Even today, few people know that in the 1890s, just when he was writing his "naturalistic" plays, he endeavored to portray Jesus Christ in essays and in poems

that were rewritten again and again, and that fundamentally he was less interested in social than in religious problems. He became passionately interested in the language of the Reformation. It was that period which supplied some of his favorite themes—*Florian Geyer* in 1896; *Fragmente der Wiedertaufer* (Fragments of the Anabaptists); the terrible drama of the Inquisition, *Magnus Garbe,* written in 1914–1915 and published in 1942; the fragment *Der Dom* (The Cathedral) and *Hamlet in Wittenberg* in 1935. What he desired most was a "perpetual Reformation" in which man would really find self-determination.

Hauptmann's years of searching to define the essence of Christianity and its founder culminated in the great analytical work entitled *Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint* (The Fool in Christ: Emanuel Quint, 1910). In that work, Hauptmann expressed in very strong language his aversion to organized Christianity of every sort.

The author aimed his bitterest attacks at intolerance, the lack of intellectual freedom within the Church, the bloodshed of the Inquisition, the spirit of contention, a complete and frank investigation of the history of the Church, and the horror of the conquest of Mexico *Der weisse Heiland* (The White Savior, 1920). Despite a deeply felt love for Jesus Christ, which stayed with him to his death, Hautpmann turned from Christianity, seeing it as a historical phenomenon.

However, in Hauptmann's writings these themes are counterbalanced by a totally different world—the world of antiquity. As early as in *The Sunken Bell,* the crucified Savior takes the visionary form of the young god Dionysus, radiant with the ecstasy of creation.

Toward the turn of the century, Hauptmann became absorbed in the works of Plato. He had previously acquired an enormous amount of general knowledge about the ancient authors from Homer through the Greek dramatists to the late Gnostics, as well as the fathers of the church and the neoplatonic mystics. Plato's ideas come to life in what is perhaps Hauptmann's finest drama, *Und Pippa tanzt!* (And Pippa Dances!, 1906). The sparkling, fragile delicacy of glass embodies his idea of Platonic beauty: it must not be touched, only admired from a distance.

A trip to Greece in 1907, to which he had looked forward so impatiently, made a decisive impression on him. His account of the experience, *Griechischer Frühling* (Greek Spring, 1908), proves how closely he identified himself with the powers of the earth. On Corfu he started his drama *Der Bogen der Odysseus* (The Bow of Odysseus, 1914): the soil of that small island where the exhausted traveler felt at home gave him new strength, as Mother Earth had given to Antaeus.

This interest in classicism and its deities —Dionysus, Eros, the oldest of them all, and Demeter, the Great Mother—culminated in *Der Ketzer von Soana* (*The Heretic of Soana*), artistically his most mature work. It was written between 1911 and 1914 as a pendant to "The Fool in Christ: Emanuel Quint" and published in 1918. The theme is the return of a lost traveler from an unnatural world to the bosom of pure, unsullied nature. Subsequently, Hauptmann turned his attention to the Eleusinian mysteries in his *Das Demetermysterium* (The Mystery of Demeter), on which he worked steadily during the last ten years of his life but left unfinished.

Toward the end of his life, the aged writer, oppressed by the dreadful sufferings brought about the Nazi regime and the World War II, once again summoned all his dramatic power to describe the terrible fate of the Atrides from the sacrifice of Iphigenia to her return to Delphi. He did this in four tragedies, collected under

the title *Atridentetralogie.* As in so many of Hauptmann's works, the idea of salvation through the voluntary sacrifice of one's life dominates the entire action.

Hauptmann once outlined his position as follows: "I am wholly a German and half a Hellene." He truly felt he had been "born as a Greek," only on northern soil. His designation, therefore, in 1932 as corresponding member of the Athens Academy, which he considered the last linear descendant of Plato's, gave him great pleasure.

Along with Christianity and the Greek classics, two poets made an impact on Hauptmann's art throughout his life—Shakespeare and Goethe. True to the old German tradition, Hauptmann struggled for no less than ten years (1924–1935) to solve the riddle of *Hamlet,* which attracted him with magic force. The play *Hamlet in Wittenberg* (1935) gave the modern playwright an opportunity to place his hero in the colorful world of the Reformation. Goethe's influence made itself felt chiefly in his language—not surprising, since Hauptmann was very familiar with the great predecessor's works.

Finally, there is the profound impact of the Indian religions. When Hauptmann was in his elderly years he kept the *Bhagavadgita* always close at hand and was constantly reading the *Upanishads.* Hauptmann considered K. E. Neumann's translation of the talks of Gautama Buddha no less important than Luther's Bible. He also made a thorough study of the Koran and still more of Lao-tzu.

Gerhart Hauptmann's bewildering profusion reaches its peak in the last of his writings, which make up an almost impenetrable maze. In this respect he resembles Goethe, whose last works were also elusive in a certain sense and demand serious study from the reader if he is to grasp their gist. For some time Hauptmann's vision of the universe had revealed a certain irrational quality or something "floating" and vague. Though he was deeply conscious of existence he refused to commit himself to a position. The truth, which he sought after but never found, was still embedded in time and not yet fully realized. For him it never achieved its marvelous, definitive crystallization. "Mebbe ay, mebbe nay!" says a simple villager in *The Weavers.* The expression in the crisp Silesian dialect interprets the quintessence of Hauptmann's thinking already at that early date. It was always difficult, not to say impossible, to get him to pronounce a clear yes or no.

All his late works, except for the fantastic short story "Das Meerwunder" ("The Sea Wonder"), were left in a fragmentary state. It is true that the monumental epic *Till Eulenspiegel* is apparently complete, but nonetheless many preliminary studies and important cantos were left unfinished.

Hauptmann's other epic poem, The Great Dream, and his novel, *Der neue Christophorus* (The New Christopher), though very long, are not complete. The author's own dream life must have been both painful and intense, and in those two works he made equal use of dreams and diary entries to discuss in his typically vague way virtually all the problems of this world and the next. Both works were begun during World War I, though there are notes which proved that the author was preoccupied with them far earlier. Both accompanied him all his life, and he was still working on them a short time before his death. Though their complex structure is often disconcerting, they are the most reliable guide to an understanding of the second half of Hauptmann's life, and the essence of his late work.

But how is it possible to discern a coherence in the life of a man whose creative activity developed in such abundance and variety through more than sixty years? Hauptmann has often been charged with not having a coherent vision of the

universe. This is an extremely weighty charge, particularly in the perspective of German thinking, but it need not be taken too seriously. His life spanned the eighty-four years from 1862 to 1946. How many revolutionary upheavals Germany, Europe, the whole world experienced during that period! How could it have been possible for Hauptmann to remain unchanged, seeing that he started out from the idea that organic life is constantly transformed and renovated?

In any case, his most typical feature is the refusal to accept a system of any kind, and in particular that of pure scientific thinking, which is concerned with what is already done and is therefore dead. Heraclitus and Plato, not Aristotle and Kant, were his philosophers. We weaker vessels are awed by all grand phenomena, whether spiritual or natural (and in my opinion Hauptmann belonged to both those realms), so we attempt to "grasp" or "comprehend" them in simpler words, to get inside them and size them up. But when we do that we merely violate those phenomena and so deprive them of their unique, inimitable character. That is no way to do justice to Gerhart Hauptmann, a man who marked a new departure in the history of his nation's spiritual life. Nor is it the right way to form a valid judgment of his worth. Yet, out of respect for the unique, inimitable, undescribable nature of the individual that judgment must be pronounced.

In Hauptmann's eyes, the true essence of nature and the world consisted in the tension between opposites, in the struggle that Heraclitus extolled as the begetter of all things. How else would he have been a dramatist? So long as the world continues to evolve—until, to quote Goethe, "all that urges, all that surges . . . rests eternally in the Lord God"—man will always be caught up in the ancestral drama that shatters him. Only a great tragic poet has the strength to look this Medusa in the eye without going mad. Hauptmann observed naked existence with horror and emotion, but also with a sublime sangfroid, and expressed it anew in a work of art. It is only in this sense, and not out of any sentimental, bourgeois sympathy, that Gerhart Hauptmann became the poet of compassion, that is to say, one who shared the sufferings of all creation.

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Translated by Robert Allen.

THE 1912 PRIZE

By GUNNAR AHLSTRÖM

In 1912, when the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Gerhart Hauptmann, the event marked the entry of contemporaneity into the Nobel annals. The new crop had finally been sown. Until then such worthy oldsters as Sully-Prudhomme, Björnstjerne Björnson, Frédéric Mistral, Theodor Mommsen, and Paul Heyse had been honored—together with such more-or-less venerated figures from romantic or exotic schools as Henryk Sienkiewicz, Rudyard Kipling, Selma Lagerlöf, and Maurice Maeterlinck. Sometimes the laurels had been distributed to hoary classics presented with official recommendations, sometimes they were voted to writers enshrouded in the mystery of distant lands or epochs, ranging from catacombs to medieval towers, from the Indian jungle to Swedish fairy tales.

But the new laureate was a true man of his times. For years Hauptmann had been famous chiefly for *The Weavers,* his drama about the workers of Silesia. Critics credited him all kinds of revolutionary qualities which were scarcely in accord with the official policies of Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany. In London the *Pall Mall Gazette* commented in a way that was characteristic of most thinking at the time: "The award of the Nobel Prize to Herr Hauptmann will probably not be greeted by the Kaiser with unmixed joy. It is a triumph for the Vaterland to have won the Prize four times while France has won it only twice and no other country has even won it more than once. But on the other hand, Herr Hauptmann represents a school of dramatic art with which the Kaiser can scarcely be in sympathy."

The award was accompanied by a kind of agitation. An atmosphere of instability characterized the debates and meetings of the Nobel Committee. From France came the rumble of public disapproval, and a sharper protest came from England.

A great change had taken place within the Swedish Academy itself, and on the Nobel Committee. On June 15, 1912, C. D. af Wirsén died in Stockholm. From the very beginning he had been closely involved with the awards. Although he wrote a rather seraphic kind of poetry, he was known chiefly as a militantly conservative literary critic, and his journalistic signature, C.D.W., had for years been the target of the younger generation's scorn. Since 1894, he had served as permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, and it was in this capacity that he was particularly effective in setting up the necessary administrative apparatus for the awards.

In 1912, af Wirsén's chair was vacant, and it was filled only toward the end of the year. In the meantime, the duties were assumed by af Wirsén's old friend, Hans

Hildebrand, the former director general of historical monuments, a handsome, white-bearded old man, who, that year, was scheduled to make the traditional address to the laureates. These new circumstances gave added importance to the 1912 choice for the literature award, since it might signal some change in policy.

There were thirty-one candidates that year, and they were without exception very well qualified. France sent an official nomination for Henri Fabre and his *Souvenirs entomologiques;* but there were other, more brilliant stars in the French literary firmament. Foremost among them was Pierre Loti, whose claims were once more put forward. Another name was added to this elite group—Henri Bergson—a nomination submitted by Andrew Lang, the famed scholar of Saint Andrew's. Ernest Lavisse was also nominated by a Swedish group.

New countries entered the competition. Switzerland came out in behalf of Spitteler's *Olympian Spring* (which was to win the Prize in 1919). Of even greater importance, however, was the arrival on the scene of the New World, represented by serious challengers. Until 1912, the United States had been represented either marginally or absurdly by local figures or impossible poets. This time, however, it was a choice nomination, Henry James, strongly backed by university circles, especially those of Harvard and Columbia. The Royal Society of Great Britain had two names to recommend. A document signed by seventy colleagues was sent in support of Thomas Hardy, which was scarcely surprising. The name of James George Frazer, the Cambridge anthropologist and scholar of mythology, whose *Golden Bough* had opened a triumphal career throughout the world, appeared for the first time. It is also of interest to note that George Bernard Shaw was also nominated for the first time—by the Norwegians, however, not by the British.

There was, then, no lack of first rate candidates, and it was among such that Gerhart Hauptmann was to be distinguished. His position, for many reasons, was a special one. He had been proposed for the first time ten years before, thus meeting the unwritten seniority requirement. He had achieved, moreover, an international reputation firmly based on the success of his plays in the theaters of many nations. In the opinion of many he was a singular Teutonic genius, somewhat in the mold of Goethe, and his work summed up with great virtuosity many varied literary currents. Gerhart Hauptmann seemed to fulfill the requirements of the most widely diversified camps.

In the last analysis it was a broad sensitivity, a sort of personal universalism, and an eclecticism that brought Hauptmann the Nobel Prize. The most diverse schools of literature could find something in him to admire.

When Hauptmann was first proposed in 1902, there was no end of discussion. To begin with, Richard M. Meyer, a distinguished professor of literature at the University of Berlin, had offered his prestigious support. "In those German circles that concern themselves lovingly and seriously with literature, there is no doubt that Gerhart Hauptmann is the most gifted author of our times," he wrote. He went on to demonstrate how Hauptmann's naturalism is stamped with "a highly idealistic orientation." But in 1902, the Nobel Committee was inclined toward Theodor Mommsen.

Four years later Hauptmann's case was reconsidered. The Swedish Academy received a printed petition on the position occupied by Hauptmann in the cultural life of his country and on his mastery as a writer. It was signed by thirty-five German and Austrian personalities, professors of literature and members of the various academies. The missive made an impression, and the candidacy subsequently was

strengthened by the successes achieved by Hauptmann in the following years, especially when his religious novel *The Fool in Christ: Emanuel Quint* came out in 1910. This explains why Erich Schmidt could be brief in nominating him in 1912, merely referring to the documentation already submitted in previous years. Everything leads us to believe, moreover, that he was directly in contact with the Nobel Committee. Thus it was no surprise to those in the know when the Academy met on November 14 and voted the prize to Hauptmann, "primarily in recognition of his fruitful, varied, and outstanding production in the realm of dramatic art."

Translated by Dale McAdoo.