EASTER

BY

AUGUST STRINDBERG

TRANSLATED BY

VELMA SWANSTON HOWARD

Midsummertide
The Stone Man
Half a Sheet of Paper
The Sleepy-Head
Jubal Sans Ego
and Others

FROM ETCHING BY ZORN

AUGUST STRINDBERG

COURTESY OF FREDERICK KEPPEL & CO

EASTER

(A Play in Three Acts)

AND STORIES

FROM THE SWEDISH OF

AUGUST STRINDBERG

AUTHOR OF "LUCKY PEHR," ETC.

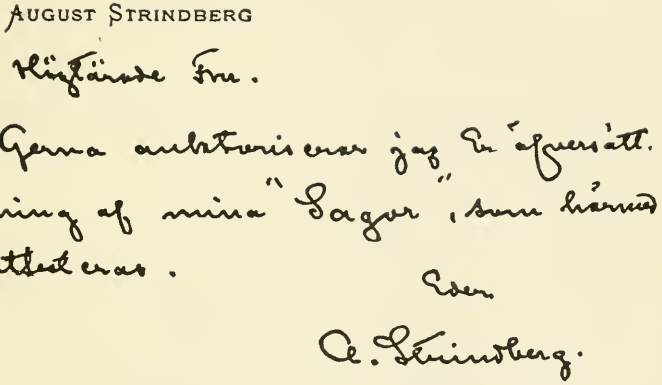
TRANSLATED BY

VELMA SWANSTON HOWARD

CINCINNATI

STEWART & KIDD COMPANY

1912



Facsimile of a letter from Herr Strindberg, authorizing Mrs. Howard to make these translations

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CHARACTERS.

Fru Heyst.

Elis, her son. A bachelor of Arts and Instructor.

Eleonora, her Daughter.

Christina, Elis' Betrothed.

Benjamin, Pupil at Classical High School.

Lindquist, A Creditor.

ACT ONE.

AFTERNOON OF HOLY THURSDAY.

Music played before rise of curtain: *"Sieben Worte des Erlösers"* (Seven Last Words from the Cross), Haydn.

Introduction: *Maestoso Adagio.*

SCENE: *An enclosed veranda, entirely glass at the back, fitted up as a living room. At centre is a large door leading to a small garden with a picket fence and a gate opening on to the street. The door and windows at the back are hung with yellow flowered chintz curtains, which can be drawn. A small mirror hangs on window-frame at left of centre door; below it a date calendar. At right is a door leading to the kitchen; at left a door leading to other rooms. Up right centre is a writing table on which are books, writing materials and a telephone. Down at right is a sewing table with a lamp and two easy chairs. At the left, above the door, is a sideboard and a parlor stove; a dining table with chairs at left centre. From the ceiling hangs a lamp. From the windows is seen a view of the street, and a house on the hill surrounded by a garden which slopes toward the city; at back of garden are seen tree-tops in spring bloom. A church spire looms above the trees. A street lamp with incandescent burners is opposite the gate.*

TIME: *The present.*

EASTER

[*A sunbeam falls obliquely across room, from left to right, touching one of the chairs at sewing table. On the other chair, which is in shadow, Christina is seated. She is running a tape through a pair of newly laundered draw-curtains. Elis comes in with overcoat unbuttoned and carrying a large bundle of documents, which he lays upon the writing table.*]

ELIS.

Good afternoon, my friend.

CHRISTINA.

Good day, Elis.

ELIS.

[*Glancing around.*] Storm-windows out—floor scoured—clean curtains. Yes, spring is here again! They have chopped up the ice-pavement, and the sallow down by the river is in bloom. Yes, it is spring now, and I can hang up my winter coat. Do you know, it is as

heavy [*weighing it in his hand*] as if it had absorbed all the winter's hardships—the sweat of anguish and the dust of the schoolroom—Ah! [*He hangs up coat on wall, left.*]

CHRISTINA.

And now you are having a holiday.

ELIS.

Easter Holiday: Five glorious days in which to revel—to breathe—to forget! See, the sun has come back! It went away in November—I remember the day it disappeared back of the brewery, opposite. Oh, this winter—this long winter!

CHRISTINA.

[*With a motion toward kitchen door.*] Softly, softly!

ELIS.

I'll be quiet, and I ought to be glad that it is over. Oh, the good sun! [*Rubbing his hands as if laving them.*] I want to bathe in sunshine—wash myself in light, after all this black filth!

CHRISTINA.

Softly, softly!

ELIS.

Do you know, I believe that peace is returning and that the misfortunes have exhausted themselves—

CHRISTINA.

What makes you think so?

ELIS.

Because—when I passed by the Cathedral, a while ago, a white dove came circling down; she lit on the pavement and dropped a branch she carried in her bill, right at my feet.

CHRISTINA.

Did you observe what kind of branch it was?

ELIS.

Olive it could hardly have been; but I think it was an emblem of peace, and just now I feel a blissful, sunny calm—Where's mother?

CHRISTINA.

[*With a glance toward kitchen door.*] In the kitchen.

ELIS.

[*Closing his eyes and speaking in hushed tones*]. I can hear that it is spring. Do you know how I can tell? Mostly by the axles on the wagon wheels—but what have we here? The bullfinch is singing, the hammers are sounding on the wharf, and I smell the fresh paint from the steamboats—

CHRISTINA.

Can you sense it all the way here?

ELIS.

Here?—True, we are here; but I was *there*—up there in the North, where our home lies. How did I ever come to this dreadful city, where all the people hate one another, and where one is always alone? It was the bread that drew us. But, beside the bread lay the misfortunes—father's crooked dealings and little sister's illness. Tell me—do you know if

mother has been permitted to visit father in prison?

CHRISTINA.

I think she has been there even to-day.

ELIS.

What did she say?

CHRISTINA.

Nothing. She talked of other matters.

ELIS.

Yet one thing is settled: After the trial came certainty, and a singular calm—when the newspapers had finished with their reports of the proceedings. One year has gone by; in one year he'll be out, and then we can begin all over!

CHRISTINA.

I admire your patience in tribulation.

ELIS.

Don't! Admire nothing in me, for I possess only faults. Now you know it—if you would only believe it!

CHRISTINA.

If you suffered for your own failings, yes; but you suffer for the mistakes of others.

ELIS.

What are you sewing upon?

CHRISTINA.

The kitchen draw-curtains, dearie.

ELIS.

Looks like a bridal veil. In the autumn you are to be my bride, Christina. True, is it not?

CHRISTINA.

Yes; but first, let us think of the summer.

ELIS.

Yes, summer! [*Taking out a check book.*] You see that the money is already in bank. When school closes, we shall go North to our own province—to Mälaren! The cottage stands there, ready—as it stood in our childhood; the lindens are still there; the punt lies under the willow down by the river. Oh, that

it were summer, so I could bathe in the sea! This family dishonor has submerged me, body and soul, and I long for a sea to cleanse me!

CHRISTINA.

Have you heard anything from sister Eleonora?

ELIS.

Yes. She is restless, poor child, and writes letters that wring my heart. She wants to come home, naturally, but the superintendent of the Asylum is afraid to let her go, for she does things which lead to prison. I feel conscience-stricken at times because I voted for her commitment.

CHRISTINA.

My dear friend, you assume the blame for everything. But in this instance, it has surely been a mercy that she was cared for, poor unhappy child!

ELIS.

What you say is true, and things seem best as they are. She is as comfortable as can be.

When I think of how she went about here, casting a shadow over every semblance of pleasure; of how her fate depressed us, like a nightmare—tortured us to despair—I am selfish enough to feel a certain relief, akin to joy. And the greatest misfortune I can imagine at this moment would be to see her step inside these doors. Just that contemptible am I!

CHRISTINA.

Just that human are you.

ELIS.

I suffer all the same at the thought of her distress, and father's.

CHRISTINA.

Some persons seem to be born for suffering—

ELIS.

Poor you, who happened into this family, doomed from the start—and damned!

CHRISTINA.

Elis, you do not know whether these are trials or chastisements.

ELIS.

What they are for you, I know not. Surely you are not accountable to any one but yourself.

CHRISTINA.

Tears in the morning, joy in the evening—Elis, perhaps I can help you—

ELIS.

Do you know if mother has a white muffler?

CHRISTINA.

[*Uneasy.*] Are you going somewhere?

ELIS.

I'm going to dine out. Peter, as you know, gave a disputation yesterday, and to-day he gives a dinner.

CHRISTINA.

Would you go to that dinner?

ELIS.

You mean that I should stay away because he proved to be a very ungrateful pupil.

CHRISTINA.

I cannot deny that his disloyalty shocked me; after promising to quote your thesis, he appropriated it without mentioning the source—

ELIS.

Alas! that is so common; but I am happy in the consciousness that "this have I done."

CHRISTINA.

Has he invited you?

ELIS.

Come to think of it, no! It's rather strange, considering that he has gone about and talked of this dinner for several years, as though my presence was a foregone conclusion. If I am not invited now, it is an intentional affront. What matter! This is not the first time—nor yet the last!

[*Pause.*]

CHRISTINA.

Benjamin is late. Do you think he will pass his examination?

ELIS.

I certainly hope so!—In Latin, surely, with honors.

CHRISTINA.

Fine boy, Benjamin!

ELIS.

Uncommonly so, but something of a dreamer. You know, of course, why he is here with us?

CHRISTINA.

It is because—

ELIS.

Because my father embezzled his funds in equity—like those of so many others. You see, Christina, this is the terrible part of it: At school I have to face all these poor, defrauded, fatherless lads who must suffer the humiliation of being charity pupils; and the light in which they regard me, you can imagine. I must continually think of their misery in order to pardon their cruelty.

CHRISTINA.

I believe your father is much better off than you.

ELIS.

Much!

CHRISTINA.

Elis, we should think of the summer and not of the past.

ELIS.

Yes, of the summer!—Do you know, I was awakened last night by the students' singing. They sang: "Yes, I'm coming! Happy winds, take my greetings to the country. To the birds say, that I love them; to birch and linden, lake and mountain, say that I would see them once again—see them now as in my childhood!" [*Rising.*] Shall I ever see them again? Shall I ever get away from this dreadful city—from Mount Ebal, the accursed, and once more behold Gerizim? [*Seats himself by the door.*]

CHRISTINA.

Yes, yes, you shall!

ELIS.

But think you that I shall see my birches and lindens as I saw them before? Think you not that the same black pall will spread over them that has veiled the landscape and the life down here ever since that day?—[*Pointing to chair, which is now in shadow.*] You see, the sun has gone away!

CHRISTINA.

It will come back—only to stay the longer.

ELIS.

True; the days are lengthening and the shadows shortening.

CHRISTINA.

We are going toward the light, Elis, believe me.

ELIS.

Sometimes I think so, and when I think of the past and compare it with the present, I feel

happy. This time last year you were not sitting here, for then you had gone from me, and had broken our engagement. Do you know that that was the darkest shadow of all. I literally died, inch by inch; but when you came again—I lived! Do you remember why you went?

CHRISTINA.

No, I do not; and it occurs to me now that there was no reason for it. I felt an irresistible impulse to go, so I went—as in a dream. When I saw you again, I awoke, and was happy.

ELIS.

And now we must never be parted; for if you were to go from me now, I should die in earnest! Mother is coming—say nothing. Shield her in her world of illusions, where she lives fancying father a martyr and all his victims scoundrels.

[*Fru Heyst comes on from kitchen, wearing a kitchen apron and paring an apple. She speaks pleasantly and somewhat artlessly.*]

FRU HEYST.

Good afternoon, children. How will you have your apple soup—hot or cold?

ELIS.

Cold, little mother.

FRU HEYST.

That's right, my boy! You always know what you want, and speak up; but Christina doesn't. This Elis learned from his father. He always knew what he wanted and what he was about—and that folks can't tolerate. Therefore it turned out badly for him. But his day is coming; then he'll get justice and the others will get their deserts!—Wait—what was I going to tell you—? Oh, yes—do you know that Lindquist has moved to town?—Lindquist—the biggest scoundrel of them all!

ELIS.

[*Agitated, rises.*] Is he here?

FRU HEYST.

Yes; he lives across the way.

ELIS.

Then one must see him pass by every day—This too!

FRU HEYST.

Only let me talk to him once, and he will never come again, or show his face! I know his little peculiarities. Well, Elis, how did Peter get on?

ELIS.

Very well.

FRU HEYST.

I can readily believe that. When do you think of debating?

ELIS.

When I can afford to, mother.

FRU HEYST.

When you can afford to? But that's no answer! And Benjamin—has he passed his examination?

ELIS.

We don't know as yet, but he will be here shortly.

FRU HEYST.

I don't quite like Benjamin, for he goes about with an air—as though he had rights; but we'll cure him of that. A good boy, all the same—Oh, by the by, there's a parcel for you, Elis. [*Steps into kitchen and returns promptly with parcel.*]

ELIS.

Fancy, how well mother keeps track of everything, and knows what is going on! Sometimes I think she is not as artless as she pretends to be.

FRU HEYST.

Here is the parcel. Lina took it in.

ELIS.

A gift! I'm afraid of gifts since I received that box of cobble stones—[*He lays parcel on table.*]

FRU HEYST.

Now I'm going back into the kitchen. Won't it be too cold with the door open?

ELIS.

Not at all, mother.

FRU HEYST.

You mustn't hang your overcoat there, Elis; it looks so untidy! Well, Christina, will my draw-curtains be ready soon?

CHRISTINA.

In a few minutes, mother.

FRU HEYST.

Yes, I do like that boy, Peter; he is my favorite! Aren't you going to the dinner, Elis?

ELIS.

Why, to be sure I am!

FRU HEYST.

Then why should you go and say that you wanted your apple soup cold, when you are to dine out? There's nothing determined about you, Elis; but there is about Peter. Now, close the doors if it grows chilly, so you won't catch cold.

ELIS.

Good old soul!—And it's always Peter—Is it her meaning to tease you about Peter?

CHRISTINA.

Me?

ELIS.

You know, of course, that old ladies are up to such games—whims and fancies only.

CHRISTINA.

What kind of gift did you receive?

ELIS.

[*Tearing off paper.*] A birch branch.

CHRISTINA.

From whom?

ELIS.

Giver anonymous—No, the birch is innocent enough, and I shall put it in water so that it will blossom, like Aaron's rod. Birch—as in my childhood—So Lindquist is here.

CHRISTINA.

What about him?

ELIS.

Our heaviest debt is to him.

CHRISTINA.

But you don't owe him anything?

ELIS.

Yes, *we* do—one for all and all for one; the family name is dishonored so long as there is debt.

CHRISTINA.

Change names.

ELIS.

Christina!

CHRISTINA.

[*Lays down work, which is finished.*] Thanks, Elis! I only wished to try you.

ELIS.

But you mustn't tempt me!—Lindquist is a poor man and needs his money. Wherever my

father has been, it is like a battle field, with dead and wounded; and mother believes that *he* is the victim!—Don't you want to go for a stroll?

CHRISTINA.

And look for the sun?—Gladly!

ELIS.

Can you understand this: The Redeemer suffered for our iniquities, yet we continue to pay? No one pays for me.

CHRISTINA.

But if someone paid for you, would you understand then?

ELIS.

Yes, then I should understand. Hush! Here comes Benjamin. Can you see if he looks happy?

CHRISTINA.

He walks so slowly—now he stops at the fountain—and washes his eyes—

ELIS.

Even this—!

CHRISTINA.

Wait a bit—

ELIS.

Tears, tears!

CHRISTINA.

Patience!

[*Enter Benjamin. He is gentle and respectful, but looks disheartened. He carries a few books and a portfolio.*]

ELIS.

How did it go with your Latin?

BENJAMIN.

Badly!

ELIS.

May I see your examination papers? What have you done?

BENJAMIN.

I dashed off the indicative, although I knew it should have been the conjunctive—

ELIS.

Then you are lost! But how could you?

BENJAMIN.

I can't explain it. I knew how it ought to be, wanted to do the right thing, and did the wrong thing. [*Dejected, he sits down at table.*]

ELIS.

[*Drops into chair at writing table and reads in Benjamin's portfolio.*] Yes, here you have the indicative.—Ye gods!

CHRISTINA.

[*Forced.*] Better luck next time! Life is long—terribly long!

BENJAMIN.

It is that!

ELIS.

[*Mournfully, but without bitterness.*] And it must all come upon you at once. You were my best pupil, so what can I expect from the others? My standing as tutor goes for naught, and I shall have no more classes. Thus every-

thing falls through. [*To Benjamin.*] Don't be so cut up; it's not your fault.

CHRISTINA.

Elis, courage, courage, for pity's sake!

ELIS.

Where shall I find it?

CHRISTINA.

Where you found it before.

ELIS.

It's not the same now. I seem to be in disgrace—

CHRISTINA.

It is a grace to suffer without blame. Don't let impatience delude you. Stand the test; for it is only a test—I feel it so.

ELIS.

Can a year for Benjamin become shorter than three hundred and sixty-five days?

CHRISTINA.

Yes; for a cheerful mind shortens time.

ELIS.

[*Laughing.*] Blow on the wound and it will heal up, we say to children.

CHRISTINA.

Be a child, then, and I'll say it. Think of mother—how well she bears everything.

ELIS.

Give me your hand, I'm sinking! [*Christina extends hand.*] Your hand trembles—

CHRISTINA.

No, I can't feel that it does.

ELIS.

You are not the strong woman you appear to be.

CHRISTINA.

I feel no weakness—

ELIS.

Then why can't you give me a little strength?

CHRISTINA.

I have none to spare.

ELIS.

[*Looking out through the window.*] Do you know who is coming this way?

CHRISTINA.

[*Glances through window, then drops to knees, crushed.*] This is too much!

ELIS.

The creditor—he who can seize our effects at any time—Lindquist, who came here that he might sit, like the spider in the centre of the web, to watch the flies—

CHRISTINA.

Fly!

ELIS.

No, I shall not fly.—Now, when you are weak, I am strong. He is coming up the street and his cruel eyes have already sighted the prey.

CHRISTINA.

Step aside at least!

ELIS.

No; now he amuses me.—He appears to brighten, as though he saw the game in the trap. —Come along, you!—He is counting the steps to the gate and sees by the open door that we are at home. He meets someone and stops to chatter.—He is talking about us, for he looks this way—

CHRISTINA.

Just so he doesn't meet mother here, for with a hasty word she might make him relentless.— Prevent it, Elis!

ELIS.

Now he shakes his cane, as if protesting that here at least mercy shall not come before justice.—He buttons his overcoat to show that as yet we have not stripped the clothes off his body—I can tell by the movement of his lips what he is saying. What shall I answer him— "My lord, you are right, take all, it belongs to you?"

CHRISTINA.

That is the only thing to be said.

ELIS.

Now he laughs, but good-naturedly—not wickedly. Perhaps he's not so bad after all, although he wants his money. If he would only come now and stop his infernal chatter!—The cane is in motion again—they always have canes—these persons with outstanding debts—and leather-galoshes that say "vitch, vitch," like whips in the air. [*He presses Christina's hand to his heart.*] Do you feel how my heart beats? I hear it myself, in the right ear, like the thump, thump of a propeller on an ocean liner.—Ah, now he has said farewell!—and now for the galoshes: "Vitch, vitch," like the Easter birch rod.—He wears watch charms.—Then he can't be so poverty-stricken. They always wear charms of carbuncle, like old flesh carved from their neighbor's back.—Hark, the galoshes! "Vipers, vipers, vitch!" Look out! —He sees me—[*bowing toward street*]. He nods first—and smiles; he waves his hand—and —and—[*sinks down at writing table and weeps*]. He passed by!

CHRISTINA.

God be praised!

ELIS.

[*Rising.*] He passed by—but he'll come back.—Let us go out into the sunshine.

CHRISTINA.

And the dinner with Peter?

ELIS.

As I'm not invited, I'll keep aloof. For that matter, why should I break in upon the merriment? To meet a faithless friend?—I should only suffer for his behavior so that I could not feel offended by mine own.

CHRISTINA.

Thank you for staying with us.

ELIS.

I much prefer it, as you know. Shall we walk?

CHRISTINA.

Yes—this way. [*Goes off at door left.*]

ELIS.

[*Pats Benjamin on the head in passing.*] Courage, lad! [*Benjamin buries his face in his hands. Elis takes birch branch from dining table and places it back of mirror.*] It was no olive branch the dove brought—it was birch. [*Goes out.*]

[*Eleonora enters at door centre. She is a girl of sixteen, with a braid down her back. She carries a potted yellow Easter lily and, without seeing or seeming to see Benjamin, takes a water bottle from the sideboard and waters the plant, places it on dining table, then sits down at table opposite Benjamin, regards him, and unconsciously imitates his movements. Benjamin, astonished, stares at her.*]

ELEONORA.

[*Pointing at flower.*] Do you know what this is?

BENJAMIN.

[*Simply and childishly.*] It's an Easter lily, that much I know; but who are you?

ELEONORA.

[*Pleasantly, but with a note of sadness.*] And who are you?

BENJAMIN.

My name is Benjamin, and I lodge here with Fru Heyst.

ELEONORA.

Oh, do you? My name is Eleonora, and I am a daughter of this house.

BENJAMIN.

How strange that they never speak of you!

ELEONORA.

One does not speak of the dead.

BENJAMIN.

The dead!

ELEONORA.

I am legally dead, for I have committed a terrible wrong.

BENJAMIN

You?

ELEONORA.

Yes; I have embezzled trust funds—which was of no great consequence, for ill-gotten gains should perish—but that my old father got the blame and was sent to prison, that, you see, can never be pardoned.

BENJAMIN.

How strangely and prettily you speak!—It has never occurred to me that my inheritance might have been dishonestly acquired.

ELEONORA.

One must not bind people, one must free them.

BENJAMIN.

You have freed me from the worry of being defrauded.

ELEONORA.

You are a ward, then?

BENJAMIN.

Yes, and it is my ill-luck to be compelled to stay with these poor people and live out their debt.

ELEONORA.

You mustn't use hard words, for then I'll go my way; I am so sensitive that I can't bear anything harsh. Meanwhile—you suffer this on my account?

BENJAMIN.

On your father's account.

ELEONORA.

It is all one, for he and I are one and the same person—[*pause*]. I have been very ill—Why are you so sad?

BENJAMIN.

I have had a stroke of bad luck.

ELEONORA.

Shall you grieve over that? "The rod and reproof give wisdom, and he that hateth reproof shall die." What was your bad luck?

BENJAMIN.

I failed to pass in my Latin examination, although I was absolutely certain—

ELEONORA.

So you were absolutely certain—so certain that you could have laid a wager on passing—?

BENJAMIN.

And I did it, too!

ELEONORA.

I thought as much. You see, it turned out thus because you were so certain.

BENJAMIN.

Do you think that was the cause of it?

ELEONORA.

Of course it was. "Pride goeth before a fall."

BENJAMIN.

I'll remember that next time.

ELEONORA.

Now you are thinking right; and "the sacrifices which are pleasing unto God, are a broken spirit and a contrite heart."

BENJAMIN.

Are you pious?

ELEONORA.

Yes.

BENJAMIN.

A believer, I mean.

ELEONORA.

Yes, I mean just that, so if you speak evil of God, my benefactor, I shall not sit at the same table with you.

BENJAMIN.

How old are you?

ELEONORA.

For me there is neither time nor space; I am everywhere and at any time. I am in my father's prison and in my brother's school room; I am in my mother's kitchen and in my sister's shop, far away in America. When all goes well with my sister and she can sell, I feel her joy, and when it goes badly, I suffer; but I suffer most when she does wrong. Benjamin

—You are named Benjamin because you are the youngest of my friends—yes, all mankind are my friends. Will you let me adopt you, that I may suffer for you, too?

BENJAMIN.

I do not wholly understand your words, but I seem to catch the drift of your thoughts and, from now on, I wish all that you wish!

ELEONORA.

To begin, then, will you stop judging people —even those who are convicted criminals?

BENJAMIN.

Yes, but I must have a reason for it; I have read philosophy you see.

ELEONORA.

Oh, have you! Then you shall help me interpret this, from a great philosopher: "They who hate the righteous, shall be adjudged criminally guilty." *

* This passage, from the thirty-fourth Psalm, had to be translated from the Swedish version of the Bible to give a correct interpretation of the author's meaning. Our English Bible conveys a somewhat different thought.—TRANS.

BENJAMIN.

Which, according to all logic means that one may be doomed to commit crime—

ELEONORA.

And that the crime itself is a punishment.

BENJAMIN.

It is certainly deep. One might think it was Kant or Schopenhauer—

ELEONORA.

I don't know them.

BENJAMIN.

In whose writings have you read it?

ELEONORA.

In Holy Writ.

BENJAMIN.

Really? Are such things to be found there?

ELEONORA.

What an ignorant and neglected child you are! If I could only train you!

BENJAMIN.

Little you!

ELEONORA.

But there is certainly nothing bad in you; if anything, you look good. What is the name of your Latin teacher?

BENJAMIN.

Professor Algren.

ELEONORA.

[*Rising.*] I shall remember that.—Oh! now my father fares very badly—they are cruel to him. [*Stands still, as if she were listening.*] Do you hear the rasping in the telephone wires? —Those are the hard words which the pretty, soft red copper cannot bear.—When people slander one another in the telephone, the copper wails and laments—[*with severity*] and every word is written in the Book—and at the end of time comes the reckoning.

BENJAMIN.

How severe you are!

ELEONORA.

Not I, not I! How would I dare be? I—I? [*She goes over to the stove, opens the door and takes out some torn scraps of white letter paper. Benjamin rises and looks curiously at the scraps, which Eleonora arranges on dining table.*]

ELEONORA.

[*To herself.*] Why are people so thoughtless as to put their secrets into empty stoves! Wherever I am, I go at once to the stove; but I never misuse my knowledge—I wouldn't dare to, for that brings suffering. [*Reading.*] Why, what is this?

BENJAMIN.

It's a letter from Peter, the Senior Wrangler, who makes an appointment with Christina. I have suspected this for some time.

ELEONORA.

[*Placing her hand over the papers.*] Well, what have you suspected? Speak out, you wicked man, who think only evil! This letter

holds nothing but good, for I know Christina, who is to be my sister-in-law. This meeting will ward off a misfortune from brother Elis. Promise me that you will be silent, Benjamin?

BENJAMIN.

I don't think I should dare speak of this.

ELEONORA.

What mistakes people make who have secrets!—They think themselves wise, and are fools.—But what was I doing over there?

BENJAMIN.

Yes, why are you curious?

ELEONORA.

You see, that is my malady: I must know all, or I become uneasy.

BENJAMIN.

Know all?

ELEONORA.

It is a failing which I cannot overcome.—All the same, I know what the starlings say!

BENJAMIN.

But they can't speak?

ELEONORA.

Have you never heard starlings that were taught to speak?

BENJAMIN.

That were taught—yes.

ELEONORA.

Well, then, starlings can learn to speak. Now, there are some who teach themselves, or are automatoms—they sit and listen, without our knowing it, of course, and then they repeat. I heard a pair of them, just before I came in, that sat in a walnut tree and chattered.

BENJAMIN.

How droll you are! But what did they say?

ELEONORA.

"Peter!" said one. "Judas!" said the other—"You're another!" said the first—"Fy, fy!" said the second. Have you marked

that the nightingales sing only in the deaf mutes' garden, close by?

BENJAMIN.

Yes, that is known; but why do they do so?

ELEONORA.

Because those who have ears do not hear what the nightingales say, but the deaf mutes hear it.

BENJAMIN.

Tell me some more stories!

ELEONORA.

Yes, if you are good.

BENJAMIN.

How good?

ELEONORA.

You must never measure words with me and never say: "Thus you said then, and then you said thus." Shall we talk more about birds? There is a wicked bird called the rat-buzzard, who, as one can hear by his name, lives upon rats. And since he is a bad bird, it has to

be very difficult for him to catch rats. That is why he can say only one word, and it sounds as when the cat says "mieou." Now, when the buzzard says "mieou" the rats run and hide, so he is very often without food because he's bad. Want to hear more—or shall I talk about flowers? When I was ill, I had to take a drug made from henbane, which has the peculiar quality of turning the eye into a magnifying glass.—Belladonna, on the other hand, makes one see everything diminished—and now I see farther than others, for I can see the stars in broad daylight.

BENJAMIN.

But the stars are not out?

ELEONORA.

How amusing you are! The stars are always out. Now I sit facing north, looking at Cassiopæ, which resembles a W, and sits in the centre of the "Milky Way." Can you see it?

BENJAMIN.

No, I can not!

ELEONORA.

Now bear this in mind, that one person can see what another cannot, therefore be not so certain of your eyes. I was going to speak of the flower on the table: It is an Easter lily which belongs in Switzerland, and has a chalice that has absorbed sunshine; therefore it is yellow, and soothes suffering. As I came along, I saw it in a florist's window and wanted to present it to brother Elis. When I was about to enter the shop, I found the door locked—it is evidently Confirmation Day to-day. As I had to have the flower, I took out my keys and tried them. Fancy! My door-key fitted—I walked in. Do you understand the silent language of flowers? Each fragrance expresses many, many thoughts; these thoughts assailed me, and, with my magnified eye, I looked into their workshops, which no one has seen, and they spoke to me of their sorrows brought upon them by the stupid gardener—I do not say cruel, for he is only thoughtless. Then I laid a krona, with my card, upon the counter, took the flower and walked out.

BENJAMIN.

How thoughtless! But think if they should miss the flower, and do not find the money?

ELEONORA.

That never occurred to me!

BENJAMIN.

A coin can disappear so easily, and if only your card is found, you are lost!

ELEONORA.

Surely no one thinks that I would take anything—

BENJAMIN.

[*Regards her steadily.*] No?

ELEONORA.

[*Scrutinizes him as she rises.*] Ah! I know what you mean—"Like father, like child." How thoughtless of me! What—no! What is to be, will be. [*Seats herself.*] Let it come, then!

BENJAMIN.

Can't one adjust this matter?

ELEONORA.

Hush! and talk of something else—Professor Algren! Poor Elis! poor all of us! But it is Passion Week and we must suffer. There's a concert to-morrow—Haydn's "Last words from the Cross"—"Mother, behold thy Son!" [*She buries her face in her hands, and weeps.*]

BENJAMIN.

What sort of illness have you had?

ELEONORA.

"This illness is not unto death, but for the glory of God! When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light there came darkness." What was your childhood like, Benjamin?

BENJAMIN.

I don't know.—Stupid, as I recall it—and yours?

ELEONORA.

I never had any. I was born old. I knew all at my birth, and when I learned anything it was just like remembering. I knew the thought-

lessness and ignorance of men when I was only four years old; therefore they were cruel toward me.

BENJAMIN.

All that you say I, too, seem to have thought.

ELEONORA.

I daresay you have. What made you suppose that my coin might be lost at the florist's?

BENJAMIN.

Because the exasperating thing always has to happen.

ELEONORA.

So you, also, have observed this.—Hush! someone is coming. [*Glancing up stage.*] I hear Elis' step. What joy! The best friend I have on earth! [*She becomes apprehensive.*] But he's not expecting me, and he won't be glad to see me—indeed he won't! Benjamin, Benjamin, show a smiling face and a cheerful spirit when my poor brother comes! I'll step in here so that you may prepare him for my arrival. But no hard words; they hurt so. Do you

hear? Give me your hand! [*Benjamin puts forth his hand. Eleonora kisses him on the head.*] There! Now you are my little brother. God bless and keep you! [*She exits left and, in passing, she pats the sleeve of Elis' coat affectionately.*] Poor Elis!

[*Elis enters at centre door looking troubled. Fru Heyst comes on from kitchen.*]

ELIS.

Why, there's mother!

FRU HEYST.

Was it you? I fancied I heard a strange voice.

ELIS.

I have some news to tell you. I met the attorney on the street.

FRU HEYST.

Well?

ELIS.

The case will now go to the higher courts, and in order to save time, I must read through all the official records of the trial.

FRU HEYST.

You'll soon do that.

ELIS.

[*Indicating documents on writing table.*] Ah, I thought it was over! And now I must worry through this entire passion-story—all the accusations, all the testimony, all the evidence over again!

FRU HEYST.

Yes, but then he will be acquitted by the higher courts.

ELIS.

No, mother; he has confessed.

FRU HEYST.

Yes; but that can be a "technical error" the attorney said when last I talked with him.

ELIS.

He said that to comfort you.

FRU HEYST.

Aren't you going to the dinner?

ELIS.

No.

FRU HEYST.

So you have changed your mind again!

ELIS.

Yes.

FRU HEYST.

That sort of thing is bad.

ELIS.

I know it, but I'm tossed like a straw between breakers.

FRU HEYST.

I thought just now that I heard a strange voice—one known to me; but I must have heard wrongly. [*Pointing to overcoat.*] That coat shouldn't hang there, I told you! [*Exits right. Elis crossing to left sees the Easter lily.*]

ELIS.

[*To Benjamin.*] Where did that flower come from?

BENJAMIN.

A young lady brought it.

ELIS.

Lady! What does this mean? Who was it?

BENJAMIN.

It was—

ELIS.

Was it—my sister?

BENJAMIN.

Yes.

ELIS.

[*Sinks down into a chair at table. Pause.*] Did you speak with her?

BENJAMIN.

Yes indeed!

ELIS.

O God! is it not enough yet? Was she cross to you?

BENJAMIN.

She? No, she was kind, oh, so kind!

ELIS.

Strange! Did she speak of me? Was she very angry with me?

BENJAMIN.

On the contrary, she said that you were her best and only friend on earth—

ELIS.

What an extraordinary change!

BENJAMIN.

And when she went she patted your coat—there, on the sleeve.

ELIS.

Went—where did she go?

BENJAMIN.

[*Pointing toward door at left.*] In there.

ELIS.

She is there now?

BENJAMIN.

Yes.

ELIS.

You look so pleased and happy, Benjamin!

BENJAMIN.

She talked to me so beautifully—

ELIS.

What did she talk about?

BENJAMIN.

She told stories, and then there was a good deal about religion—

ELIS.

[*Rising.*] Which made you happy?

BENJAMIN.

Yes.

ELIS.

Poor Eleonora! who is so unhappy herself, and yet can bring joy to others. [*Moving slowly toward left.*] God forgive me!

CURTAIN.

ACT TWO.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Music played before this act: *"Seven Last Words from the Cross"* (Haydn). *Largo No. I, "Pater dimitti illis."*

Scene: *Same as act one. Curtains drawn, light from street lamp shining through them; hanging lamp lit. On dining table is a small paraffin lamp lighted. Fire in the stove. Elis and Christina seated at sewing table, idle. At dining table, facing each other, sit Eleonora and Benjamin, reading. Eleonora has a shawl drawn across her shoulders. All are dressed in black; Elis and Benjamin wear white cravats. Spread out on writing table are the documents of the trial; on sewing table is the Easter lily and on writing table stands an old clock. Now and then can be seen on the curtain the shadow of a passer-by.*

Elis.

[*Speaking in an undertone to Christina.*] Good Friday! But how insufferably long! The snow is spread over the pavement, like straw in front of the house of the dying. Every sound is hushed, save the bass notes from the organ, which can be heard all the way here.

CHRISTINA.

Mother must have gone to Vespers.

ELIS.

Yes, for she dared not appear at High Mass —the stares of the people wound her.

CHRISTINA.

These people are a queer lot! They demand that we shall keep aloof; they deem it fitting and proper.

ELIS.

Perhaps they are right—

CHRISTINA.

Because of one person's misstep, the whole family is outlawed.

ELIS.

Such is life!

[*Eleonora pushes lamp toward Benjamin, so that he will see better.*]

CHRISTINA. [*To Elis*]

Isn't that a pretty picture! And they get on so well together.

ELIS.

How fortunate that Eleonora is so tranquil. —If it will only last!

CHRISTINA.

Why shouldn't it?

ELIS.

Because—happiness doesn't usually last very long. I fear everything this day! [*Benjamin cautiously pushes lamp toward Eleonora, that she may see better.*] Have you observed how changed Benjamin is? The old sullen defiance has given way to a calm submissiveness.

CHRISTINA.

How sweet she is!—Her whole being radiates an indefinable charm.

ELIS.

And she brings with her an angel of peace that moves about, unseen, breathing a tender calm. Even mother appeared calm when she saw her—a calm which I had not expected.

CHRISTINA.

Do you think she has entirely recovered?

ELIS.

Yes, if only this oversensitiveness were gone. Now she is reading the story of the Crucifixion, and, at times, she weeps.

CHRISTINA.

I remember how we always did this at school on Wednesdays during Lent.

ELIS.

Don't speak so loud; her hearing is very acute.

CHRISTINA.

Not now—she is so far away.

ELIS.

Have you marked that Benjamin's features have taken on a certain air of dignity and breeding?

CHRISTINA.

Suffering has done that. Joy makes everything commonplace.

ELIS.

Perhaps it is love, rather. Don't you think those children—

CHRISTINA.

Hush, hush, hush! Mustn't touch the butterfly's wings, for then she'll fly away!

ELIS.

They are probably gazing at each other and only pretend to be reading: for they turn no leaves as I can hear.

CHRISTINA.

Hush!

ELIS.

See, now she cannot control herself—
[*Eleonora rises, walks over to Benjamin and places her shawl over his shoulders. He protests mildly at first, then yields. Eleonora goes back to her place, seats herself and pushes lamp toward Benjamin.*]

CHRISTINA.

Poor Eleonora! She doesn't know how well she means.

ELIS.

[*Rising.*] Now I'll return to my documents.

CHRISTINA.

Can you see any purpose in this reading?

ELIS.

One only—to keep up mother's hope. Although I, too, only pretend that I'm reading, yet there are words that pierce my eyes like thorns—Statements of witnesses; figures; father's admissions—thus: "The defendant with tears confessed—" So many tears, so many tears! And these papers, with their seals, that suggest counterfeit bank notes, or prison locks; the strings and the red seals are like the Saviour's five wounds; and the sentences which never end, the everlasting pangs—this is Good Friday penance! Yesterday the sun shone; yesterday we traveled to the country—in our thoughts—Christina, suppose we have to stay here all summer!

CHRISTINA.

Then we should save a good deal of money—but it would be disappointing.

ELIS.

I should never live through it! I have spent three summers here, and it's like a grave. It is midday now, and one sees the long gray streets winding, like trenches—not a human being, not a horse, not a dog anywhere! But up from the drains come the rats, whilst the cats are off on their summer cruises. The few persons who are left in town, sit gazing into reflex-mirrors at their neighbor's clothes. "See, he is wearing his winter clothing!"—and at their neighbor's run-down heels, and their neighbor's faults.—And from the quarters of the poor, the maimed and decrepit who, until now, were in seclusion, come crawling out—creatures without noses and ears, wicked wretches, and unfortunates. They sit on the great promenade, exactly as if they had conquered the city, where but lately pretty, well-dressed children played, cheered on by tender and encouraging words from their beautiful mothers. Now the place is infested with a ragged horde who curse and torment each other.—I recall a *Midsummer's Day* two years ago—

CHRISTINA.

Elis, Elis, look ahead—ahead!

ELIS.

Is it brighter there?

CHRISTINA.

Let us think it.

ELIS.

[*Sits down at writing table.*] If it would only stop snowing—so one could go for a stroll!

CHRISTINA.

Dear heart! Last evening you wished the dark days back, that we might escape people's glances. "The darkness is so soothing; so charitable," you said. "It is like drawing a blanket over one's head."

ELIS.

You see, then, that the misery is just as great whichever way you look at it—[*reading in documents*]. The worst things in the whole procedure are the personal questions regarding father's mode of living. Here it says that

we held "grand receptions," one witness declares that he "drank!" No, this is too much! I can't bear more—yet I must read on—to the end. Are you cold?

CHRISTINA.

No; but it is not warm here!—Is Lina not at home?

ELIS.

She is at Holy Communion, as you know.

CHRISTINA.

Surely mother will be home soon?

ELIS.

When she comes from without, I am always fearful, for she hears so much and sees so much—and everything is bad!

CHRISTINA.

There seems to be an unusual melancholy in your family.

ELIS.

And therefore none but melancholy persons have cared to associate with us; the happy have shunned us.

CHRISTINA.

Mother came in just now by the kitchen door.

ELIS.

Don't be impatient with her, Christina.

CHRISTINA.

Ah, no! For her it is hardest! But I don't understand her.

ELIS.

She hides her humiliation as best she can, and therefore she is incomprehensible. Poor mother!

[*Fru Heyst comes in dressed in black, carrying a prayer book and a handkerchief.*]

FRU HEYST.

Good evening, children.

[*All speak except Benjamin, who simply nods.*] Good evening, mother dear.

FRU HEYST.

You are all in black, as though you were in mourning! [*Silence.*]

ELIS.

Is it still snowing?

FRU HEYST.

Yes, there's a heavy fall of wet snow.—It's cold in here. [*She goes up to Eleonora and pats her.*] Well, my chick, you are reading and studying, I see. [*To Benjamin.*] But you don't hurt yourself studying! [*Eleonora takes her mother's hands and kisses them.*] [*Fru Heyst, repressing her emotion.*] There, my child! There, there!

ELIS.

You were at Vespers, mamma?

FRU HEYST.

Yes; so was the Perpetual Curate, and I don't like him.

ELIS.

Did you run across any one you knew?

FRU HEYST.

It would have been better had I not!

ELIS.

Then I know whom—

FRU HEYST.

Lindquist. And he came straight up to me—

ELIS.

How heartless!

FRU HEYST.

He wanted to know how we were—and imagine my indignation when he asked if he might call this evening!

ELIS.

On a holy day?

FRU HEYST.

I was speechless! He took my silence as consent. [*Pause.*] He may be here at any moment.

ELIS.

Here? Now?

FRU HEYST.

He said that he wanted to leave a paper, which was of import.

ELIS.

He wants to take the furniture.

FRU HEYST.

But he looked so queer—I couldn't make him out.

ELIS.

Then let him come. He has the law on his side and we've got to submit. We must receive him properly when he comes.

FRU HEYST.

Only let me escape the sight of him!

ELIS.

You can stay in your room.

FRU HEYST.

But he can't have the furniture! How should we manage to exist, if he were to take everything? One can't live in empty rooms!

ELIS.

"The foxes have holes and the birds have nests—" There are homeless creatures who live in the forest—

FRU HEYST.

Knaves should live there—not honest folk!

ELIS.

[*At writing table.*] Mother, I'm reading now.

FRU HEYST.

Have you found any errors?

ELIS.

No; I don't believe there are any.

FRU HEYST.

Why, I have only just left the District Attorney, and he said that there might be a technical error—a disqualified witness, an unproved assertion or a contradiction. You can't be reading carefully—

ELIS.

Yes, mother, but it is so painful—

FRU HEYST.

Listen to me! I met the Magistrate a moment ago—and what I told you is true—then

he mentioned a robbery which occurred in town yesterday, in broad daylight. [*Benjamin and Eleonora give a start.*]

ELIS.

A robbery? Here in town?—Where?

FRU HEYST.

It is supposed to have happened at the florist's in Cloister street—but the whole proceeding was most extraordinary. These are the facts, presumably: The shopkeeper closed his place to attend church, where his son—or daughter perhaps—was to be confirmed. When he got back, around three o'clock—or four maybe—but that's unimportant—the shop door was open, and flowers were missing—quantities of flowers—a yellow tulip in particular.

ELIS.

A tulip? Had it been a lily, I should be alarmed.

FRU HEYST.

No, it was a tulip—that's absolutely certain. Meanwhile, the police are active now—

[*Eleonora has risen—as if about to speak, but Benjamin goes up to her and whispers something.*] Fancy, committing a robbery on Holy Thursday, when the young folks are being confirmed! Nothing but scallawags—the whole community! That is why they put innocent people in prison.

ELIS.

Is no one suspected?

FRU HEYST.

No. But it was an odd sort of thief, for he took no money from the cash drawer.

ELIS.

Oh, that this day were over!

FRU HEYST.

And if Lina would only come! Oh, I heard about Peter's dinner yesterday. The Governor himself was there.

ELIS.

That amazes me, for Peter was always regarded as being against the Governor's party.

FRU HEYST.

He has probably changed his mind now.

ELIS.

He is not called Peter for fun, it seems!

FRU HEYST.

What have you against the Governor?

ELIS.

He is a hinderer. He hinders everything. He hindered the Folk-High-Schools; hindered practice at arms; innocent cycling; the beautiful Vacation Colonies and—he has hindered me!

FRU HEYST.

I don't understand—but no matter. Meanwhile, the Governor made a speech and Peter thanked him—

ELIS.

—Touched, I daresay, and denied his master saying: "I do not know this man"—And again the cock crew. Was the Governor named Pontius, surnamed Pilate? [*Eleonora moves, as if to speak, but controls herself.*]

FRU HEYST.

You mustn't be so bitter, Elis! Human beings are human, and one has to put up with them.

ELIS.

Hush! I hear Lindquist coming.

FRU HEYST.

Can you hear his step in the snow?

ELIS.

I hear the rap, rap of his cane on the stones —and his leather galoshes. Go, mother!

FRU HEYST.

No, now I want to stay. I've got something to say to him.

ELIS.

Mother, dear, please go! It would be too painful.—

FRU HEYST.

"May the day be accursed wherein I was born!"

CHRISTINA.

Mustn't curse!

FRU HEYST.

[*With lofty dignity.*] "Is not destruction rather to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?"

ELEONORA.

[*With a cry of anguish.*] Mother!

FRU HEYST.

"My God, why hast thou forsaken me!"—Oh, my children! [*Goes out left.*]

ELIS.

[*Listening to sounds from without.*] He stops.—Maybe he thinks it unseemly, or too brutal? Surely one who could write such dreadful letters would not think thus! They were always written on blue paper, and now I cannot look at a blue letter without shuddering.

CHRISTINA.

What do you intend to say? What shall you propose?

ELIS.

I don't know. I have lost all presence of mind—all power to reflect. Shall I fall at his feet and beg for mercy? Can you hear him? I hear only the throbbing of the blood in my ears.

CHRISTINA.

Let us imagine the worst that can happen.—He takes everything—

ELIS.

Then along comes the landlord and demands security, which I cannot get.—He will want security when the furniture does not stand here as surety for the rent.

CHRISTINA.

[*Who has been peeping through the curtain.*] He is no longer there; he has gone.

ELIS.

Ah!—Do you know that mother's apathetic submissiveness pains me more than her anger?

CHRISTINA.

Her submissiveness is only assumed or fancied. There was somewhat of the lioness' roar in her last words. Did you see how tall she became?

ELIS.

Fancy! as I think of Lindquist at this moment, I see him as a good-natured giant who only wants to frighten children. Why did that come to me just now?

CHRISTINA.

Thoughts come and go—

ELIS.

How fortunate that I was not at the dinner yesterday! I should certainly have made a speech against the Governor and spoiled everything for myself, and for the rest of us. It was a great stroke of fortune.

CHRISTINA.

You see!

ELIS.

Thanks for the advice. You knew your friend Peter!

CHRISTINA.

My friend Peter?

ELIS.

I meant—mine. See, now he is here again! Woe to us! [*On the curtain appears the shadow of a man, who advances hesitatingly. The shadow gradually increases and becomes giantlike. Great suspense.*] The giant! See the giant, who wants to swallow us!

CHRISTINA.

Why, this is like the fairy-tales—something to laugh at.

ELIS.

I can't laugh any more. [*Shadow gradually decreases until it disappears.*]

CHRISTINA.

Then look at the cane, and you'll have to laugh.

ELIS.

He's gone. Now I want to breathe, for now he will not come before to-morrow.—Ah!

CHRISTINA.

And to-morrow the sun will be shining—for it is Resurrection Eve; the snow will be gone and the birds will be singing!

ELIS.

Say some more things of that sort. I can see all that you picture.

CHRISTINA.

If you could only look into my heart: if you could know my thoughts—my good intentions—my inmost prayers! Elis, Elis, as I now—[*Checks herself.*]

ELIS.

What is it? Tell me!

CHRISTINA.

As I now beg one thing of you—

ELIS.

Speak!

CHRISTINA.

It is a test. Think of it as a test, Elis.

ELIS.

Test, testing?—Well—

CHRISTINA.

Let me—no, I dare not.—It may fail! [*Eleonora all attention.*]

ELIS.

Why do you torture me?

CHRISTINA.

I shall regret it—I know.—Let come what may! Elis, allow me to go to the concert this evening.

ELIS.

What concert?

CHRISTINA.

Haydn's "Last Words from the Cross," at the Cathedral.

ELIS.

With whom?

CHRISTINA.

With Alice—

ELIS.

And—?

CHRISTINA.

And Peter.

ELIS.

With Peter!

CHRISTINA.

Now you are frowning! I'm sorry, but it is too late.

ELIS.

Yes, it is rather late—but explain yourself!

CHRISTINA.

I prepared you for this—which I cannot explain; therefore I asked for your implicit confidence.

ELIS.

[*Gently.*] Go! I have faith in you, but I suffer all the same because you seek the traitor's company.

CHRISTINA.

I understand; but this is simply a test—

ELIS.

—Which I cannot stand!

CHRISTINA.

You must!

ELIS.

I want to, but can't. You shall go, nevertheless.

CHRISTINA.

Your hand!

ELIS.

[*Taking her proffered hand.*] There! [*Telephone rings.*] [*Elis at the 'phone.*] Hello! No answer—Hello! My own voice answers. Who's there? How strange!—I hear my own words, like an echo.

CHRISTINA.

Such things can happen.

ELIS.

Hello!—It's uncanny. [*He rings off.*] Go now, Christina, without explanations or particulars; I'll stand the test.

CHRISTINA.

If you do, it will be well for us.

ELIS.

I'll do it. [*Christina crosses to right.*] Why do you go that way?

CHRISTINA.

My wraps are out there. So, farewell for the present. [*She goes out.*]

ELIS.

Farewell, my friend—[*pause*] forever! [*He rushes out left.*]

ELEONORA.

God help us, what have I done now! The police are searching for the offender; if I am discovered—poor mother and Elis!

BENJAMIN.

[*Childishly.*] Eleonora, you must say that I did it.

ELEONORA.

You! Can you bear another's guilt, you child?

BENJAMIN.

That's easy enough to do, when one knows one is innocent.

ELEONORA.

One should never deceive.

BENJAMIN.

Let me telephone to the florist and tell him the facts.

ELEONORA.

No; I have done wrong and I must be punished with unrest. I awakened their fear of robbery, and I ought to be frightened.

BENJAMIN.

But if the police should come—

ELEONORA.

That would be hard—but it has to be—Oh, that this day were over! [*She takes up the clock from the table and moves the hands.*] Good clock, go a little faster! Tick-tack, ping ping—now it is eight.—Ping, ping, ping,—now it is nine—ten—eleven—twelve—and *now* it is Easter Eve! The sun will soon be up, and then we shall write on the Easter eggs. I'll write like this: "Behold, the adversary hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee—"

BENJAMIN.

Why torture yourself so, Eleonora?

ELEONORA.

What, I torture myself? Think, Benjamin, of all the flowers in bloom—the blue anemones, the white snow-drops—that have to stand out in the snow day and night, to freeze in the darkness! Think what they must suffer! Night time is the hardest, for then it is dark and they are afraid of darkness. They can't run away, so they stand there, waiting for the

dawn. All—all things suffer, but the flowers most. And the birds of passage that have come, where shall they sleep to-night?

BENJAMIN.

[*Naïvely.*] They sit in hollow trees, you know.

ELEONORA.

Surely there are not enough hollow trees for all? I have seen only two in the parks hereabouts, and the owls, who kill the little birds, live in those. Poor Elis, who thinks that Christina has deserted him! But I know that she is coming back.

BENJAMIN.

If you know it, then why don't you tell him?

ELEONORA.

Because Elis must suffer—all must suffer on Good Friday, to remind them of Christ's sufferings on the cross. [*Sound of a police whistle is heard from the street.*] [*Eleonora, with a start.*] What was that?

BENJAMIN.

Don't you know?

ELEONORA.

No.

BENJAMIN.

The police—

ELEONORA.

Ah!—It sounded like that when they came to take father.—Then I was ill—and now they are coming to take me!

BENJAMIN.

[*Placing himself before centre door and facing Eleonora.*] No, they can't take you! I shall protect you, Eleonora.

ELEONORA.

That's very good of you, Benjamin, but you mustn't do it.

BENJAMIN.

[*Peeping through curtains.*] There are two of them! [*Eleonora tries to get past Benjamin, but he quietly restrains her.*] Not you,

Eleonora!—for then I shouldn't care to live any longer!

ELEONORA.

Go sit down in your chair, child; go sit down. [*Benjamin reluctantly obeys.*] [*Eleonora looks through curtain without attempting to conceal herself.*] It was only two little boys. "Oh, we of little faith!" Do you think God so cruel when I did no wrong—only acted thoughtlessly? It served me right! Why did I doubt?

BENJAMIN.

But to-morrow *he* will come who wants to take the furniture—

ELEONORA.

He may come, and we can go—from everything!—from all the old furniture which father has been accumulating for us, and which I have seen ever since I was a little child. One should not own anything that binds one to earth. Go out on the stony highways and wander with bleeding feet, for that way leads upwards, therefore it is difficult—

BENJAMIN.

There you go, torturing yourself again!

ELEONORA.

Let me! But do you know what I find hardest to part with? It is the old clock over there. That was here when I was born, and it has measured my hours and my days. [*She lifts clock from the table.*] Hear how it beats, exactly like a heart. It stopped on the hour that grandfather died—for it was here even then. Farewell, little clock, may you soon stop again! Do you know that it used to hasten when we had ill-luck in the house— as though it wanted to get past the evil, for our sakes, of course. But when the times were bright, it slowed down, that we might enjoy them all the longer. It was the good clock. But we had a bad one too. It has to hang in the kitchen now. The bad clock couldn't tolerate music, and as soon as Elis touched the piano, it began striking. Not I alone, but all noticed it; and that is why it has to stand in the kitchen. Lina does not like it, either, for it isn't quiet at night, and she can't boil eggs by it because they always

become hard-boiled, she says. Now you are laughing!

BENJAMIN.

How can I help it!

ELEONORA.

You're a good boy, Benjamin, but you must be serious. Think of the birch rod behind the mirror.

BENJAMIN.

But you are so amusing that I have to laugh. —Why weep all the time?

ELEONORA.

If one can't weep in the vale of tears, where else shall one weep?

BENJAMIN.

Hm!

ELEONORA.

You would rather laugh all day, and you have paid for it, too! I like you only when you are serious—bear that in mind.

BENJAMIN.

Do you think we shall come out of all this, Eleonora?

ELEONORA.

Most of it will right itself, when Good Friday is over, but not all. To-day the rod; to-morrow the Easter eggs. To-day snow; to-morrow thaw. To-day death; to-morrow *Resurrection.*

BENJAMIN.

How wise you are!

ELEONORA.

Oh, I feel already that it has cleared for beautiful weather; that the snow is melting. To-morrow the violets will bloom by the south wall. The clouds have lifted—I feel it in my breathing. Oh, I know so well when the way to Heaven is open! Draw aside the curtains, Benjamin, I want God to see us!

[*He rises obediently; moonlight streams into the room.*

Look, the full moon! It is the Paschal moon. And now you know that the sun is still with us, although the moon gives the light.

CURTAIN.

ACT THREE.

EASTER EVE.

Music before rise of curtain: *"Seven Last Words from the Cross"* (Haydn). *No.* 5, *Adagio.*

Scene: *Same as first and second acts, but with curtains drawn back. Landscape outside subdued by a grayish atmosphere. Centre doors closed; a fire in the stove. As curtain rises, Eleonora is seen sitting before the stove holding toward the fire a bunch of blue anemones. Benjamin enters from door at right.*

Eleonora.

Where have you been all this time, Benjamin?

Benjamin.

Surely I wasn't gone a great while!

Eleonora.

I have been longing for you!

Benjamin.

And where have you been, Eleonora?

Eleonora.

I have been at the market place, where I bought some blue anemones. Now I am warming them. They were frozen, poor things!

BENJAMIN.

Where's the sun?

ELEONORA.

Behind the mists. There are no clouds to-day, only sea-mists—for they smell salty—

BENJAMIN.

Did you notice that the birds were still alive out there?

ELEONORA.

Yes; and not one falls to the ground unless God wills it. But there were dead birds at the market place.

[*Elis comes on from right.*]

ELIS.

Has the paper come?

ELEONORA.

No, Elis.

[*Elis crosses, when he has reached the centre of the stage, Christina comes on from left.*]

CHRISTINA.

[*Taking no notice of Elis.*] Has the paper come?

ELEONORA.

No, it has not come. [*Christina crosses to right, past Elis who goes out left. They do not glance at each other.*]

Ugh! how cold it became! Hatred has entered the house. So long as there was love here, one could endure all; but now—ugh, how cold!

BENJAMIN.

Why do they ask for the paper?

ELEONORA.

Don't you understand? It will be in there.

BENJAMIN.

What?

ELEONORA.

The whole thing—the theft, the police, and more besides—

FRU HEYST.

[*Enters at door right.*] Has the paper come?

ELEONORA.

No, mother dear.

FRU HEYST.

[*Speaking as she goes out right.*] Let me know as soon as it comes.

ELEONORA.

The paper, the paper!—Oh, if only the printing presses had gone to pieces; if the editor had been taken ill.—No, one must not say such things! I was with father last night—

BENJAMIN.

Last night?

ELEONORA.

Yes, in my dreams—and then I was with sister, in America. Day before yesterday she sold thirty dollars worth, and earned five.

BENJAMIN.

Is that little or much?

ELEONORA.

It is rather much.

BENJAMIN.

[*Knowingly.*] Did you meet a friend at the market place?

ELEONORA.

Why do you ask? You mustn't play the fox with me, Benjamin! You want to know my secrets, but you sha'n't.

BENJAMIN.

And you think that you'll learn mine in this way?

ELEONORA.

Do you hear the buzzing in the telephone wires? Ah! now the paper is out and people are telephoning:—"Have you read it?"—"I have—" "Isn't it dreadful?"

BENJAMIN

What is dreadful?

ELEONORA.

This whole existence is dreadful! But we must be content. Think of Elis and Christina! They are fond of each other and hate each other, equally, and the thermometer drops whenever they pass through the room. She was at the concert yesterday, and to-day they do not speak. Why, why?

BENJAMIN.

Because your brother is jealous.

ELEONORA.

Don't voice that word! What do you know about it, for that matter, save that it is a disease and, consequently, a punishment. One should not touch evil, for then it comes back at one. Only look at Elis! Have you noticed how changed he is since he began reading those papers?

BENJAMIN.

About the trial?

ELEONORA.

Yes. Is it not as though all the evil in them had penetrated into his soul and was now flashing through his features—his glances? This Christina feels and, as a protection against his evil thoughts, she makes of herself an armor of ice. Oh, those dreadful papers! If I could only burn them! Cruelty and treachery and revenge are all through them. My child, you must keep the evil and the impure from you—both from your lips and from your heart.

BENJAMIN.

How well you take note of everything!

ELEONORA.

Do you know what awaits me in case Elis and the others learn that it was I who purchased the Easter Lily in that unusual manner?

BENJAMIN.

What will they do to you?

ELEONORA.

They will send me back there, where the sun never shines; where the walls are white and bare; where one hears only weeping and wailing; where I have wasted one year of my life!

BENJAMIN.

Where do you mean?

ELEONORA.

—Where one is tortured worse than in prison; where the lost live; where unrest has its abode; where despair keeps vigil day and night—and whence none return!

BENJAMIN.

Worse than in prison—where?

ELEONORA.

In prison one is sentenced, but there one is doomed. In prison one is examined and heard, but there one is unheard. Poor Easter lily! you were the cause of it. I meant so well, and did so ill!

BENJAMIN.

Why not go to the florist and say, it was thus and so? You are just like a lamb about to be slaughtered.

ELEONORA.

When it knows it is to be slaughtered, it does not complain or try to escape. What else can it do?

[*Elis comes on from right, with a letter in his hand.*]

ELIS.

Hasn't the paper come yet?

ELEONORA.

No, brother.

ELIS.

[*Speaking out into kitchen.*] Lina, run out and buy a paper!

[*Fru Heyst comes on right; Eleonora and Benjamin terrified.*]

[*Elis to Eleonora and Benjamin.*] Run out a moment, like good children! [*Both go out left.*]

FRU HEYST.

Did you get a letter?

ELIS.

Yes.

FRU HEYST.

From the Asylum?

ELIS.

Yes.

FRU HEYST.

What do they wish?

ELIS.

They demand the return of Eleonora.

FRU HEYST.

They can't have her; she is my child!

ELIS.

And my sister!

FRU HEYST.

Then, what do you mean?

ELIS.

I don't know—I can't think—

FRU HEYST.

But I can! Eleonora, the child of sorrow, has come back with joy, but not the joy of this world! Her unrest has been turned into peace, which she shares. Sane or not, for me she is wise; for she understands how to bear the burdens of life better than I—than we.—For the matter of that, am I sane, Elis? Was I sane when I believed my husband guiltless? I knew, of course, that he was convicted upon actual material evidence—that he himself admitted. And you, Elis, are you in your right mind when you do not see that Christina loves you?—when you think that she hates you?

ELIS.

It's a curious way of loving!

FRU HEYST.

No, it is not! Your coldness chills her to the heart, and it is you who hate. But you are in the wrong; that is why you suffer.

ELIS.

How can I be in the wrong! Didn't she go with my faithless friend last evening?

FRU HEYST.

She did, and with your consent. But why did she go? You should surmise that.

ELIS.

But I can't!

FRU HEYST.

Very well! You deserve all that you are getting. [*Kitchen door opens; a hand is seen holding out a paper, which Fru Heyst takes and gives to Elis.*]

ELIS.

This is the only real misfortune! With her here, we could weather the rest; but now the last support is snatched away—and now I fall!

FRU HEYST.

Fall, but fall right—then you can raise yourself later.—Anything new in the paper?

ELIS.

I don't know; I'm afraid of the paper to-day.

FRU HEYST.

Give it me, and I'll read it.

ELIS

No—wait a second!

FRU HEYST.

What do you fear? What do you anticipate?

ELIS.

The very worst!

FRU HEYST.

That has happened already, so many times! Oh, child, if you knew my life; if you had been present when I saw your father go down, step by step, without my being able to warn all those upon whom he was bringing misfortune! When he fell, I felt equally guilty, for I was cognizant

of the crime. Had not the Judge been a sensible man who understood my position as wife, I too would have been punished.

ELIS.

What was the cause of father's downfall? I have never been able to fathom it.

FRU HEYST.

Pride—the stumbling block by which we all fall.

ELIS.

But why should we who are innocent suffer for his fault?

FRU HEYST.

Be silent! [*Pause, during which she takes the paper and reads.*] What does this mean? Didn't I say it was a yellow tulip, among other things, that was missing?

ELIS.

Yes, that I distinctly remember.

FRU HEYST.

But here it says—an Easter lily!

ELIS.

[*Startled.*] Does it say that?

FRU HEYST.

[*Sinks back in chair.*] It was Eleonora!—O God, my God!

ELIS.

So it is not over, it seems!

FRU HEYST.

Prison or the Asylum!

ELIS.

It is impossible that she did it—impossible!

FRU HEYST.

Now the family name must go forth again to be dishonored—

ELIS.

Is she suspected?

FRU HEYST.

It says that suspicion points in a certain direction—it is pretty plain where—

ELIS.

I will speak to her.

FRU HEYST.

Speak gently, for I can bear no more! Recovered and lost again!—Speak to her! [*She goes out right.*]

ELIS.

Ah! [*He crosses to the door at left and calls.*] Eleonora, my child! Come, let me talk to you!

ELEONORA.

[*Coming on with hair unbraided.*] I was just arranging my hair—

ELIS.

Never mind! Tell me, little sister, where you got this flower?

ELEONORA.

I took it—

ELIS.

O God!

ELEONORA.

[*Overcome, her head droops and she clasps her hands on her breast.*] But I laid the money beside—

ELIS.

So you paid for it!

ELEONORA.

Yes and no. How provoking!—but I have done no wrong. I meant well—do you believe me?

ELIS.

I believe you, sister; but the press doesn't know that you are innocent.

ELEONORA.

Dear heart, then I must suffer for this too! [*Her head bends lower, so that her hair falls over her eyes.*] What would they do to me now? Let them do it.

BENJAMIN.

[*Frantically rushing on from left.*] No, you sha'n't touch her! She has done no wrong—I know it; for it was I, I, I who did it!

ELEONORA.

Don't believe what he's saying—it was I!

ELIS.

What am I to believe; whom shall I believe?

BENJAMIN.

Me! Me!

ELEONORA.

No, me, me!

BENJAMIN.

Let me go to the police—

ELIS.

Hush, hush!

ELEONORA.

No, I want to go, I want to go—

ELIS.

Hush, children!—Mother is coming.

[*Fru Heyst comes on greatly excited. She takes Eleonora in her arms and kisses her.*]

FRU HEYST.

Child, child, my precious child! You are with me, and you shall stay with me!

ELEONORA.

You kiss me, mother! You haven't done this in many years—why now?

FRU HEYST.

Because now—because the florist is outside and asks to be pardoned for causing us so much annoyance. The lost coin is found, and your good name—

ELEONORA.

[*Rushes into Elis' arms and kisses him, then she clasps Benjamin's neck and kisses him on the brow.*] You dear, good child! You wanted to suffer for me! How could you?

BENJAMIN.

[*Shyly.*] Because I like you so much, Eleonora!

FRU HEYST.

Bundle yourselves up, children, and go out into the garden. It's clearing.

ELEONORA.

Ah, it's clearing! Come, Benjamin. [*She takes him by the hand and they go out, hand in hand.*]

ELIS.

May we cast the birch rod on the fire now?

FRU HEYST.

Not yet! There is still a little matter to be settled—

ELIS.

Lindquist?

FRU HEYST.

He is outside; but he seems very strange, and unaccountably mild. What a pity that he is so wordy, and talks so much about himself!

ELIS.

Now, that I have seen a sunbeam, I am not afraid to meet the giant. Let him come!

FRU HEYST.

But don't irritate him—Providence has placed our fate in his hands, "and the meek"—well, you know where the proud go!

ELIS.

I know—hark! the galoshes: Vipers, vipers, vitch! Does he intend to come in with them—why not? These are his carpets, and his furniture—

FRU HEYST.

Elis, think of us! [*Goes out right.*]

ELIS.

I do, mother.

[*Lindquist enters from door at right of stage. He is an elderly and serious-looking man, with a repellent appearance. His hair is gray. He wears a toupee and close-cropped side-whiskers. He has on horn-bowed spectacles and on watch chain are hung large charms of carbuncle. He is dressed in black, with overcoat on; he holds a high silk hat in his hand. He wears top boots and leather galoshes that creak. As he steps into the room, he stares curiously at Elis, and pauses.*]

LINDQUIST.

Lindquist is my name.

ELIS.

[*On the defensive.*] Herr Heyst is mine. Please be seated. [*Lindquist sits down on chair to right of sewing table and looks Elis square in the eye. Pause.*]

ELIS.

How can I serve you?

LINDQUIST.

[*Pompously.*] Hm!—I had the honor last evening of intimating my intended visit, but upon second thought, I deemed it unsuitable to discuss business matters on a holiday—

ELIS.

We are very grateful—

LINDQUIST.

We are *not* grateful! Oh, by the by, [*pause*] day before yesterday I made a casual call at the Governor's. [*He pauses to see what sort of impression his last word makes upon Elis.*] Do you know the Governor?

ELIS.

[*Indifferently.*] I haven't the honor!

LINDQUIST.

Then you shall have the honor. We spoke of your father—

ELIS.

I daresay—

LINDQUIST.

[*Takes out a paper which he lays on the table.*] And there I got this paper.

ELIS.

I have long been expecting this; but before we go any further, may I be allowed to ask a question?

LINDQUIST.

[*Curtly.*] As you please.

ELIS.

Why don't you place this paper in the Executors' hands, then we might at least be spared this painful and long-drawn-out execution?

LINDQUIST.

Indeed, young man!

ELIS.

Young or not, I ask no charity—only justice.

LINDQUIST.

Hm!—No charity, no charity? Look at that paper, which I laid at the end of the table—Now it goes back into my pocket! Justice, then—justice only. Listen, old friend! Once upon a time I was robbed, robbed of my money in a most unpleasant manner. Then, when I wrote you a kind and inoffensive letter asking how much time you required, you replied uncivilly, treating me like a usurer, although I was the plundered party, while you belonged to the robber gang. Inasmuch as I was the more sensible, I was obliged to answer your insolent epithets with a polite, but incisive one. You know my blue paper—eh? I can set seals on it when I choose—but I do not always choose. [*He glances round about.*]

ELIS.

If you please, the furniture is at your disposal.

LINDQUIST.

I wasn't looking at the furniture; I wanted to see if your mother was here. She, presumably, loves justice as much as you do?

ELIS.

I hope so!

LINDQUIST.

Good!—Do you know that if your highly-prized justice had had its way, your mother, as accessory to the crime, would have been felled by human justice?

ELIS.

Oh, no!

LINDQUIST.

Oh, yes! and it is not too late yet.

ELIS.

My mother!

LINDQUIST.

[*Takes out another blue paper and lays it on the table.*] Look! now I lay this paper here, and it is actually blue—as yet, there are no seals.

ELIS.

Great God!—My mother? All things come back to you!

LINDQUIST.

Yes, my young lover of justice, all things come back to us—all! Suppose I were to put this question to myself: You, Anders Johann Lindquist, born in poverty and dragged up amid privation, and to labor, have you the right in your old age to deprive yourself and your children—mark! your children—of the support which you by industry, solicitude and self-denial —mark! self-denial—have saved, penny by penny? What must you, Anders Johann Lindquist, do, if you wish to be just? You plundered no one. But if you think it a bit rough that you were plundered, you can no longer remain in the community, for no one wants to

receive the pitiless man who asks the return of his own. You see, then, that there is a charity which is contrary to justice and above it—namely, mercy.

ELIS.

You are right, take all! It's yours.

LINDQUIST.

I have the right, but dare not use it.

ELIS.

I shall think of your children, and not murmur.

LINDQUIST.

Good! Then we'll put the blue paper away.—Now we will go a step farther.

ELIS.

Pardon me, but do they really intend to prosecute my mother?

LINDQUIST.

We'll go a step beyond that first. So you do not know the Governor personally?

ELIS.

No, and I don't care to know him!

LINDQUIST.

[*Takes out the paper again and waves it.*] Not so fast, not so fast! The Governor, you see, was a friend of your father's in his youth, and he wants to become acquainted with you. All things come back to you, all things. Won't you call on the Governor?

ELIS.

No!

LINDQUIST.

The Governor—

ELIS.

Let us change the subject.

LINDQUIST.

You must be civil to me, young man, for I am defenseless, since you have public sympathy on your side and I have only justice. What have you against the Governor? He doesn't take kindly to cycling and Folk-High-Schools—

these are some of his little idiosyncrasies. We need not exactly respect the idiosyncrasies, but we can pass them by—pass them by and confine ourselves to the main points, as man to man. In the larger issues of life, we must take each other, with faults and weaknesses, swallow each other, hide and hair.—Go to the Governor!

ELIS.

Never!

LINDQUIST.

Is that the kind of man you are?

ELIS.

[*Conclusively.*] Yes, that kind!

LINDQUIST.

[*Rises and begins to pace the floor.*] That's worse and worse! I shall begin at the other end. A revengeful person proposes to conduct the suit against your mother. You can prevent it.

ELIS.

How?

LINDQUIST.

Go to the Governor.

ELIS.

No!

LINDQUIST.

[*Stepping up to Elis and taking him by the shoulders.*] Then you are the most contemptible human being I ever met in my life! And now I shall go to your mother myself.

ELIS.

Don't!

LINDQUIST.

Will you call on the Governor, then?

ELIS.

Yes.

LINDQUIST.

Say it again—and louder!

ELIS.

Yes!

LINDQUIST.

Now that point is clear. [*Presenting blue paper.*] There's the document. [*Elis accepts the paper without glancing at it.*] Now we come to point number two, which was really number one.—Shall we be seated? [*They seat themselves as before.*] See! If we only meet half way, we can cover the ground in no time. Number two: This is my claim on your home. —Oh, no illusions! for I neither can nor wish to give away my family's common property. I shall exact the last copper of my claim.

ELIS.

I understand that.

LINDQUIST.

[*Sharply.*] Oh, you understand that, do you?

ELIS.

I meant no offense.

LINDQUIST.

I apprehend. [*He pushes back spectacles and looks hard at Elis.*] "Mad wolf"—

"Browbeater"—"The giant in the Skinnervik Mountains, who does not eat children—only frightens them." I'll frighten you till you are clean out of your senses! I'll have the worth of every stick of furniture—I have the inventory in my pocket, and if one peg is missing, you go to jail, young man! Oh, I can devour women and children when I'm provoked, as for public sentiment—bah!—I'll simply move to another town. [*Elis is nonplussed.*] You had a friend named Peter, Peter Holmblad. He was an orator and a linguist; but you wanted to turn him into some kind of oracle. Well, he was faithless—twice the cock crew.—Am I right? [*Elis is silent.*] Human nature is unreliable—like matter and our thoughts. Peter was faithless, I don't dispute that, nor do I defend him on that score. But the human heart is fathomless, and gold and dross are intermingled there. Peter was a faithless friend, but a friend nevertheless.

ELIS.

A treacherous—

LINDQUIST.

Treacherous, perhaps, but a friend all the same. This treacherous friend has unwittingly rendered you a great service.

ELIS.

This also!

LINDQUIST.

[*Moving closer to Elis.*] All things come back to us—all!

ELIS.

All the evil, yes; and the good is recompensed with evil.

LINDQUIST.

Not always. The good also comes back to us, believe me!

ELIS.

I must, I daresay, or you will torture the life out of me.

LINDQUIST.

Not life—but pride and hatred I shall squeeze out of you!

ELIS.

Continue—

LINDQUIST.

Peter has done you a service, I said.

ELIS.

I don't care to accept favors from that man.

LINDQUIST.

Are we there again! Hear this: Through the mediations of your friend Peter, the Governor was persuaded to intercede in your mother's behalf; therefore you must write a letter to Peter and thank him. Promise?

ELIS.

No. To any one else in the world, but not to him!

LINDQUIST.

[*Drawing closer.*] I shall have to squeeze you again, then.—You have money deposited in the bank.

ELIS.

How does that concern you? I'm not liable for my father's debts.

LINDQUIST.

You're not!—No? Were you not feasting with the others when my children's money was being squandered in this house? Answer!

ELIS.

I cannot deny it.

LINDQUIST.

And, seeing that the furniture does not cover the debt in full, you will at once make out a check for the balance.—You know the sum.

ELIS.

[*Baffled.*] This too!

LINDQUIST.

This too.—Be good enough to write! [*Elis takes out a check-book and goes over to the writing table.*]

Make it payable to person or bearer.

ELIS.

This will not cover the amount due.

LINDQUIST.

Then you can go out and borrow the rest. Every penny must be paid!

ELIS.

[*Handing check to Lindquist.*] There. It is all I possess—my summer and my bride! More I cannot give you.

LINDQUIST.

Then you must borrow, I said.

ELIS.

Impossible!

LINDQUIST.

Then you will have to find security.

ELIS.

There is no one who cares to become surety for a Heyst.

LINDQUIST.

As ultimatum, I shall present two alternatives: Thank Peter, or out with whole sum.

ELIS.

I don't wish to have any dealings with Peter.

LINDQUIST.

Then you are the meanest person I know. By an act of common politeness, you can save your mother's home and your fiancée's competence, and you won't do it. There must be some motive back of this which you don't reveal—Why do you hate Peter?

ELIS.

Kill me, but don't torture me any longer!

LINDQUIST.

You are jealous of him.

[*Elis shrugs his shoulders.*]

Thus the case stands. [*Lindquist rises and*

walks up and down.] Have you read the morning paper?

ELIS.

Yes, unhappily!

LINDQUIST.

The whole paper?

ELIS.

No, not all of it.

LINDQUIST.

Then you don't know that Peter is engaged?

ELIS.

I didn't know it.

LINDQUIST.

Nor to whom?—Guess!

ELIS.

How—

LINDQUIST.

He is engaged to Miss Alice; it was arranged yesterday at a certain concert, where your betrothed consented to act as intermediary.

ELIS.

Why so secret?

LINDQUIST.

Haven't two young persons the right to keep their heart secrets from you?

ELIS.

And for their happiness I must suffer these pangs?

LINDQUIST.

Certainly. Others have suffered to bring you happiness—your mother; your father; your sweetheart; your sister—sit down, and I'll tell you a story.—It's very short. [*Elis seats himself reluctantly.*] It happened about forty years ago. When a youth, I came to the Capitol—alone, unknown and inexperienced—to seek employment. I had only one riksdaler to my name. The night was dark, and as I knew of no cheap hotel, I questioned passers-by. None replied. When I was in the depths, a man stepped up to me and asked why I was weeping—I wept, evidently. I told him my

straits. He turned out of his way, accompanied me to a hotel, and comforted me with cheering words. As I stepped into a passageway, the glass door of a shop swung open; it caught my elbow—and the glass was broken. The rowdy shopkeeper held me responsible and demanded payment, otherwise he would call the police, he said. Imagine my distress with a night on the street in prospect! The kind-hearted stranger, who had witnessed the performance, took the trouble to call an officer, and rescued me. This man was your father. Thus, everything comes back to us—even the good. And, for your father's sake, I have wiped out the debt. Accept this paper and keep the check. [*Rising.*] As it is hard for you to say thanks, I'll go at once as I find it rather painful to be thanked. [*Going toward centre door.*] Instead, go immediately to your mother and relieve her anxiety. [*Elis rushes off, right.*]

[*Centre door opens; Eleonora and Benjamin come on. They are calm, but serious. They stop, terrified, when they see Lindquist.*] Well, well, youngsters, step along

and don't be frightened! Do you know who I am? [*In assumed voice.*] I am the giant in the Skinnervik Mountains, who frightens children—Boo, boo! But I'm not so dangerous! Come here, Eleonora! [*He takes her head between his hands and looks into her eyes.*] You have your father's good eyes; and he was a good man—but weak. [*Kissing her on the forehead.*] There!

ELEONORA.

Oh, he speaks well of father! Can any one think well of him?

LINDQUIST.

I can—ask brother Elis!

ELEONORA.

Then you cannot wish us any harm.

LINDQUIST.

No, you precious child!

ELEONORA.

Help us, then!

LINDQUIST.

Child, I cannot help your father escape his punishment, nor help Benjamin out of his failure to pass in Latin, but the other matter is already helped. Life doesn't give everything—and nothing gratis; therefore you must help *me*. Will you?

ELEONORA.

Poor me! What can I do?

LINDQUIST.

What date is this? Look and see.

ELEONORA.

[*Taking down date calendar.*] It is the sixteenth.

LINDQUIST.

Good! Before the twentieth you shall have made brother Elis call on the Governor and write a letter to Peter.

ELEONORA.

Is that all?

LINDQUIST.

Oh, you child! But if he fails to do so, the giant will come and say boo!

ELEONORA.

Why must the giant come and frighten the children?

LINDQUIST.

So the children will be good.

ELEONORA.

True—and the giant is right. [*Kissing his sleeve.*] Thank you, good giant!

BENJAMIN.

You should say Herr Lindquist.—Oh, I know who he is!

ELEONORA.

No, that is so usual—

LINDQUIST.

Good-by to you, children. Now you may cast the birch rod on the fire.

ELEONORA.

No, it must remain where it is, for the children are so forgetful.

LINDQUIST.

How well you know the children, little one! [*He goes.*]

ELEONORA.

Now we can go to the country, Benjamin—in two months! Oh, if they would only go fast! [*She tears leaflets from date calendar and scatters them in the stream of sunshine, which comes pouring into the room.*] See, how the days fly! April—May—June—and the sun shines on all of them.—Look! Now you must thank God, who helped us so that we can get to the country.

BENJAMIN.

[*Timidly.*] May I say it silently?

ELEONORA.

Yes, you may say it silently, for now the clouds have passed, and it can be heard up there.

[*Christina has come on from left and paused;*

Elis and Fru Heyst enter from right; Elis and Christina, with pleasant mien, walk toward each other, but curtain falls before they meet.]

CURTAIN.

MIDSUMMERTIDE

MIDSUMMERTIDE

At midsummertide, when the earth stands a bride in the Northland; when the ground rejoices; when the rivulets run; when the flowers in the meadow stand erect and the birds sing, then it was that the dove came from the forest and perched outside the hut where the great-grandmother of ninety was bedridden.

The old woman had lain abed for twenty years, and she could see through the window all that happened on the little plot of ground which her two sons cultivated. But she saw the world and the people in her own peculiar way, for the window-panes were set in all the colors of the rainbow. She only had to turn her head a little on the pillow, and everything was seen in succession in red, yellow, green, blue and lavender. Thus on a winter's day, when the trees were dressed in hoar-frost, as if they bore silver leaves, she turned on her pillow and the trees became green; it was summer, and the field be-

came yellow, the sky, blue, even if it was actually gray. In this way she fancied that she could conjure, and she never found the time dull. But the bewitched panes had still another gift, for they were carved, so that they showed what was outside—sometimes magnified, sometimes diminished.

Thus, when her big son came home cross, and stormed out in the yard, then the mother wished him little and good again, and immediately she saw him ever so little. Or, when the great-grandchildren came toddling along out there, and she thought of their future, then—one, two, three—they appeared in the magnifying glass, and she saw them as tall, full-grown people—perfect giants!

But when summer came, she let them open the window; for anything as pretty as it was out there, the panes could not show her. And now, on *Midsummer's Eve,* when it was the very prettiest, she lay gazing toward the field and the pasture. Then the dove struck up her song. She sang so sweetly of Christ Jesus and of Heaven's joy and bliss, and she bade all be

welcome, who were heavy laden and had had enough of this life's hardships.

The old woman heard, but she declined with many thanks, for the earth to-day was as beautiful as Heaven itself and, for herself, she wished nothing better than this.

Then the dove flew across the meadow up to the mountain-grove, where the farmer stood and dug him a well. He stood deep down, where the ground was six feet above his head, exactly as if he were in his grave.

The dove perched on a branch and cooed about the joys of Heaven, certain that the man down in the earth, who saw neither sky, sea, nor meadow, would long to be up there.

"No," said the farmer, "I must first dig a well, or my summer guest will get no water, and then the unhappy little lady and her child will leave."

The dove flew down to the strand, where the farmer's brother was dragging up nets, and sat down in the reeds, to sing.

"No," said the farmer's brother, "I must provide food for the household, or the children

will cry with hunger. Later on, later on! There's time enough for Heaven! Life first, then death."

The dove flew up to the big cottage, where the unhappy little lady spent her summers. She was sitting on the veranda sewing with a hand-machine. White as a lily was her face under the red felt hat, which, like a poppy, nestled on her black hair—black as a mourning veil! She was stitching a pretty pinafore for the little one, to be worn on *Midsummer's Eve;* and the child sat on the floor at her feet and cut into bits strips of cloth that had been given her.

"Why doesn't papa come home?" asked the little one.

This was just the hard question, which the young mother herself could not answer, and certainly not the father, either, who in a strange land nursed his grief, which was even greater than the mother's.

The sewing machine worked badly, but it stitched and stitched—as many needle pricks as a human heart can stand before it bleeds to death, and every stitch bound the thread tighter, tighter—how strange!

"I want to go to the village to-day, mamma," said the little one. "And I want to see the sun, for it is so dark here!"

"You shall go to the sun this afternoon, my child."

It was certainly dark between the high cliffs on this shore of the island, and the cottage stood in amongst shadowy pines, which hid the view—even of the sea.

"And then I want you to buy lots of play-things for me, mamma."

"Child, we have so little to buy with!" replied the mother, her head bending lower and lower. And this was the truth, for affluence had been turned into penury.

But now, when she saw the child's mournful expression, she took her in her lap.

"Put your arms around mamma's neck!" said she.

The little one did so.

"Give mamma a kiss!"

And she got one from a little half-open mouth, like a birdling's. And when the mother won a glance from those eyes—blue as hyacinths—her beautiful face reflected the child's

care-free innocence, and she herself looked like a little child in the sunlight.

"Here I shall not sing of the Heavenly Kingdom," thought the dove. "But if I can serve them, I will."

And then she flew to the *sun-village,* where she had work to perform.

Now it was afternoon. The little lady took her basket on her arm and the child by the hand, to go. She had never been in the village, but she knew that it lay in the direction of the sunset, on the other side of the island, and the farmer had told her that there were six fenced-in farms and six gates before you got there.

And so they went.

First they came to a steep path, with stones and tree-stumps, so the little one had to be carried; and that was heavy enough!

The doctor had forbidden the child to strain her left foot, for it was so frail that it might easily grow crooked.

The young mother sank under the precious burden, and the sweat-drops trickled down her face, for it was warm in the forest.

"I'm so thirsty, mamma!" wailed the little girl.

"Darling child, try to be patient and you shall have water as soon as we are there."

She kissed the little one's dry baby lips, and then the child smiled, forgetting her thirst.

But the sun burned and the air did not stir in the forest.

"Now you must try and walk a little," said the mother, putting the child down.

"I'm so tired, mamma!" moaned the little one, and sat down to cry.

But on the ground grew the prettiest little rose-red flowers, that exhaled a scent of almond. The child had never before seen such tiny flowers, and she smiled again so that the mother grew strong in spirit and could continue the journey, with the child on her arm.

Now they had reached the first gate and they walked through it, taking pains to latch it again.

Then was heard a cry, like a loud whinnying, and a runaway horse dashed forward; he stood in the middle of the road and neighed. And his neighing was answered in the forest, right and

left, and all around; and the ground trembled, and the branches shook, and the stones flew. The two forlorn human beings stood there, in the midst of a score of wild horses.

The child hid her face on her mother's breast and her little heart ticked, like a watch. with anguish.

"I'm so frightened!" she whispered.

"O God in Heaven—help us!" prayed the mother.

Then a sun scoter's song was heard in the pines, and see! that instant the horses ran off in different directions, and all was quiet again. Then they passed through the second gate and fastened the hasp.

Beyond lay a fallow field, where the sun burned even hotter than in the forest. The earth-clods lay in long gray rows, but, suddenly they saw the clods move, and they were the backs of a flock of sheep.

Sheep are good animals, particularly the lambs, but the ram is not to be played with, for he is a mischievous beast who willingly attacks those who have done him no harm. And now he came to the middle of the road, jumping the

ditch. He lowered his head and walked backwards.

"I am so frightened, mamma!" said the little one, and her heart thumped.

"O merciful God in Heaven, help us!" sighed the mother, looking beseechingly up toward the blue canopy. And there rested, fluttering like a butterfly, a little lark. And when it began to sing, the ram disappeared among the gray clods.

Then they came to the third gate. Here the ground began to sink. It was wet and swampy. The grass-tufts were like little graves strewn with white flowers—woolen flowers or cotton flowers. It meant walking straight so as not to sink down in the mire. Here there grew blackberries that were poisonous and these the little one wanted to pick, but wasn't allowed to; therefore she was sad—for she didn't understand what poisonous meant.

As they walked along they noticed something whitish coming forward between the trees. The sun was hidden and a white mist arose around them, which was ghastly!

In this misty whiteness a head with two

twisted horns stuck out. Then the head bellowed and several heads were visible—many—they came nearer and nearer.

"I'm afraid, mamma!" whispered the child. "I'm so afraid!"

The mother stepped aside and sank between two grass-tufts, into the marsh.

"O God, great and merciful, have pity on us!" cried the mother from the depths of her soul.

And now the wind was heard. The strong sea wind came rushing through the forest. The trees bowed themselves humbly before the Great Spirit and a young pine bent itself down. It whispered something from its crown into the ear of the forlorn mother, and when she had grasped a branch with her free hand, the pine straightened itself and lifted the disconsolate woman out of the mire.

The mist was blown away that instant, the sun shone again and now they stood by the fourth gate. The mother, who had lost her hat, dried the child's tears with her black hair, and when the little one smiled at this, it shone in the poor mother-heart. She forgot all the

hardships she had passed through, and gained new strength to reach the fifth gate. Then her spirits brightened, for she saw red tile roofs and flags, and alongside the road grew snow-ball bushes and wild roses—two and two—just as if they loved each other, the white snow-ball bush and the pink wild rose.

The little girl could walk now, and she picked the basket full of flowers, upon which the doll Lisa was to sleep on Midsummer night, so she would have beautiful dreams.

Thus they played their way forward, care-free once more, for they had only a birch grove left, and then they would be there! Now the road went up a little hillock, and when they came to the top and turned toward the right, the bull stood in the middle of the path!

It was impossible to flee. Prostrate, the mother dropped to her knees, laid the child on the ground, bent her head protectingly down, so that the long hair hung like a black veil, and, with outstretched hands, she prayed a silent prayer. From the child's brow the sweat of anguish dripped down upon the ground, like blood-drops.

"O God!" she prayed, "take my life, but spare the little one!"

Then she heard wing-strokes in the air, and as she glanced up, a white dove flew toward the village; but the bull was gone.

When she looked around for her child, the little one sat by the roadside and picked strawberries. And then she understood whence they had come!

They walked through the sixth gate and wandered into the town.

It lay in the sunlight, by a green-bordered creek, beneath great lindens and maples. And on a hill were seen the white church with the red belfry tower, the parish garden, with lilacs in bloom, the post office almost buried in jasmin, and the gardener's place behind the great oak. Everything stood there so bright-like! The flags floated in the breeze; small boats edged the shores and bridges, and one could see that it was Midsummer's Eve.

But they met no human being. First they were going to the shop, to trade, and there the little girl would get something to drink.

When they arrived, the shop was closed.

"I'm so thirsty, mamma!"

They went to the post office.

That was closed.

"I'm so hungry, mamma!"

The mother was mute, for she did not comprehend why it was closed on a week day, and why there were no people about. She went to the gardener's. There it was closed, and a big dog lay stretched out before the gate.

"I'm so tired, mamma!"

"So am I, my child, but we must find a drink of water."

They went from house to house, but every door was shut. The child could not walk farther, for her little foot was tired, and she limped. When the mother saw the pretty little form bent sideways, she too grew weary and sat down on the roadside, with the child on her lap. And the little one fell asleep.

Then a dove was heard singing in a lilac bush, and she sang so sweetly of Heaven's joys and of the Earth's perpetual pain and sorrow.

The mother looked upon the sleeping child, upon its little upturned face, which was framed in white laces, like the flower-petals of the

white lily, and she felt that she herself held the Kingdom of Heaven in her arms!

The child awoke and begged for water.

The mother remained mute.

"I want to go home, mamma!" cried the little one.

"The same terrible journey back?—Never! I would rather go into the sea," replied the mother.

"I want to go home!"

The mother rose up. She had seen young birches in the distance, back of a hillock, and as she looked at them, they began to move. Then she understood that over there there were people who had broken off birch leaves for Midsummer leaf-bowers. And she betook herself thither, where she should find water.

On the way, she noticed a little cottage enclosed by a green hedge, with a white gate. There the door stood open and invited them in so pleasantly. She passed through the gate and came into a garden, with peonies and columbine. Then she noticed that the curtains were lowered at all the windows, and that all the curtains were white. But one dormer window was

open and, between two palm leaves, a white hand was seen waving a little white handkerchief, as though it were waving to someone who was going away.

She went up to the stoop and there, in the tall grass, lay a wreath of green myrtle, with white roses. But it was too large to be a bridal wreath.

Then she stepped up on the veranda and asked if any one was in.

When no one replied, she went into the cottage. On the floor, in the middle of a forest of roses, stood a black damask coffin, with silver feet. And in the coffin lay a young girl, with a bridal-crown upon her head.

The walls of the room were of new rough pine boards, only varnished, so that all the knots were visible. And the oval knot-holes, where the dark branches had been sawed off, looked like eyeballs.

The child first noticed the quaint-looking walls, and said:

"See, how many eyes, mamma!"

Yes, there were all sorts of eyes: big, kindly earnest ones; little sparkling child eyes, with

a smile in the corners; angry eyes that showed too much of the white; open watchful eyes that searched the heart. And there was a large, mild mother-eye, that looked affectionately upon the dead girl. And in the eye there glistened a clear tear of pine resin, which, in the setting sun, sparkled like a diamond.

"Is the girl sleeping?" asked the child, who had now caught a glimpse of the dead.

"Yes, she is sleeping."

"Is it a bride, mamma?"

"Yes, it's a bride."

The mother had recognized her. It was the girl who was to stand a bride at Midsummer-tide, when the sailor would be home. But when the sailor wrote that he could not come before the autumn, her heart broke, for she did not want to wait till the autumn, when the trees had shed their leaves and the storms had set in.

She had listened to the dove's song and had understood. Now, when the young mother went out, she knew whither she was going.

She set the heavy basket down outside the gate and took the child in her arms, directing her steps out into the next field, which lay between

her and the strand. It was a sea of flowers that murmured and whispered around her white skirt, which was being colored by every variety of pollen. Humming-birds, bees and butterflies lifted their wings and, singing, flew before them in one great brocaded gold-cloud. She walked with light footsteps down toward the strand.

Out on the river she saw a white sailboat coming with taut sails, straight toward the landing, but no one was seen at the helm. She waded forward, bathing in flowers and flower-perfumes, so that her white petticoat looked like a flower bed, but of much more delicate colors.

She paused down by the willows on the strand. There was a bird's nest, between stem and branch; and when the tree swayed in the evening breeze, three little downy birdlings were being rocked to sleep, and the little one wished to pat them.

"No, my child," said the mother; "never touch a bird's nest."

And as they stood there, on the strand-pebbles, the white boat landed right at their feet, but there was not a person in it.

Then she took the child and stepped on board, and immediately the boat turned and steered away from the point.

When they sailed alongside the church land, all the bells began ringing, but so heartily and joyously!

The boat glided away from the point and came out upon the fjord, where the open sea was visible.

The little girl beamed with delight because the water was so calm and blue. And it was no longer water that they sailed in, but beautiful corn flowers, which she plucked with her outstretched hand.

And the flowers lowered and raised themselves, like little waves swishing against the boat. Endless, the field seemed to spread out before them. Soon they were engulfed in a white mist, and they heard the splash of waves; but from above the mist, rang the lark's trill.

"How can larks sing on the sea?" asked the child.

"The sea is so green that the larks think it a meadow," replied the mother.

Now the mist was gone, the sky was as blue

as the violet, and the larks rose. Far out in the lake they glimpsed a verdant isle, with white sand-shores where people wandered, hand in hand. The setting sun lit up the gilded dome of a colonnade, where fires burned under holy sacrifice-vessels; and above the isle a rainbow of rose-red and sea-green was drawn.

"What is this, mamma?"

The mother could not answer.

"Is it the Heavenly Kingdom, that the dove sang about? What is the Heavenly Kingdom, mamma?"

"It is a place, child, where all people are friends; where there is no sorrow, and no strife."

"Then I want to go there, mamma," said the child.

"And I, too," said the tired, forsaken and sorely tried mother.

THE STONE MAN

THE STONE MAN

If one stands by the harbor, where the steamboats lie, and looks out toward the sea, one sees to the left a mountain entirely covered with young forest trees, and behind it stands a large house built in the form of a spider. In its centre stands a wheel from which eight spokes project, exactly like the legs on a spider's round body. He who happens to get into that house does not come out again when he wants to; and some stay there a lifetime. It is the prison house.

In the old King's time the mountain was not green. Then it was gray, for nothing grew there, not even moss or heart's-ease, which usually thrive on stony hills. There were only gray stone and gray people, who looked petrified and who broke stone, drilled stone, and carried stone. Among these Stone Age people there was one who looked more petrified than

the rest. He was a youth when, in the reign of King Oscar the First, he was shut up in this prison house because he had killed a human being.

He was a life prisoner, and on his clothes were sewn the letters L. P., in black.

Winter and summer he tramped the mountain and pounded stone. In winter he saw the steamship harbor empty and desolate, and the semicircular pier with its piles, yawned like a mouth exposing a row of teeth. Now he could see the woodshed, the riding school and the two gigantic leafless lindens. Once in a while an ice yacht came sailing past the island, now and then a few boys on skates would pass; otherwise it was quiet and deserted.

When summer came it grew livelier. Then the harbor was lined with fine vessels, newly painted and flag-bedecked, and the lindens were green—the lindens under which he had sat as a child when awaiting his father, who was machinist on one of the prettiest steamboats.

Now, he had not heard the wind blowing through trees these many years; for nothing grew on *his* mountain. But in his memory the

rustling of the leaves in Riddarholmen's lindens lived, as the only thing he longed for.

If, on a summer's day, a steamboat passed the island, he heard the splash of waves and perhaps a brass band. He saw happy faces that darkened when they sighted the gray stone men on the mountain.

Then he cursed heaven and earth, his fate, and mankind's cruelty. Thus had he cursed year in and year out, and his comrades and he had cursed one another; for crime severs, while misfortune unites sufferers.

At first the life here was needlessly hard, and the guards maltreated the convicts arbitrarily, mercilessly.

But one day there came a change: the fare became better, the treatment less severe, and each prisoner was allowed to sleep in a private cell. It was the King himself who had loosed the prisoners' bonds a little, but as hopelessness had hardened the hearts of these unfortunates, they could not feel anything that even resembled gratitude, but continued to curse. And now they found it more agreeable to live in one room so they could chat at night. And

they grumbled about the food, the clothing, the guards, exactly as heretofore.

One bright day all the bells in the city began ringing—Riddarholm's most of all. King Oscar was dead, and the convicts were granted a holiday. As they could speak to each other now, they talked of making their escape, of how they were going to kill the guard; they even talked of the deceased monarch, and they spoke ill of him.

"He would have given us our freedom, had he been just," said a prisoner.

"Or else he should have locked up all the culprits who are at large."

"Then he would have had to turn jailer himself, for the whole nation would have been 'jugged.'"

It is thus with convicts: They regard all persons as criminals, and think that they themselves were caught simply because luck was against them.

Meanwhile, it was a hot summer's day when the stone man wandered around on the strand and listened to the tolling of the bells for Oscar the Mild. He searched under the strand-peb-

bles for bullheads and stickleback, but there was none. Out in the water neither roach nor alburn was seen, and consequently no sea-gulls or swallows appeared. Then he felt that a curse rested upon the place, since not even fishes or birds would come near it.

Again he was reminded of his fate! He had lost his name and was simply number 65—a name written in ciphers instead of letters! He was not registered; paid no taxes; did not know how old he was. He was no longer a man; no longer alive—neither was he dead. He was only a gray object that moved on the mountain and which the sun burned frightfully—burned its clothes, its head with the close-cropped hair, which had once been curls brushed and combed by a mother's soft hand. To-day he was not allowed to wear a cap, lest with it he could more easily make his escape. And when the sun pierced his skull, he remembered a story of the prophet Jonah, to whom the Lord had given a gourd, that he might sit under its shadow.

"Then what did he get!" sneered he; for he believed in nothing good—absolutely nothing.

Just then he happened to see rocking in the surf a big birch bough. It was quite green, with a white stem, and may have dropped from an excursion boat. He dragged it ashore, shook the water off it and took it along with him to a crevice in the mountain a good distance away, where he propped it between three stones. Then he seated himself under the birch and heard the wind blowing softly through the leaves, which wafted a scent of finest resin.

When he had sat a while in the cooling shade, he fell asleep.

And he dreamed:

The mountain was a verdant grove, with beautiful trees and fragrant blossoms. But all by itself stood a tree with which he was unfamiliar, and this tree was more beautiful than the rest, for it had a number of trunks, as a bush has stems, and the branches formed figures and knots as intricate and fine as crochet work. And under its smooth, shiny leaves sat a little black and white bird that looked like a swallow, but was not one.

And in the dream he could interpret bird-notes, therefore he heard and understood fairly

well what the bird was singing. It sang: "Dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, there! Heave, heave, heave, heave, here! In dirt, in dirt, in dirt died you! From the dirt, the dirt, the dirt rose you!"

It was about dirt, about death, and about the resurrection, that much he understood.

But the dream went on.

He stood on the mountain, alone, in the blasting sunshine, burning up with hunger and thirst. All the comrades had cast him off and had threatened his life, because he would not help them set fire to the prison. They crowded behind him and hunted him with stones as far as he could go on the mountain. And now he was hemmed in by a wall. He saw no possible chance of scaling it, so in his despair he decided to dash his head against the wall, and thus put an end to himself.

He rushed down the slope—and look! That instant a gate opened, a green garden gate and —then he woke up.

When he thought of his plight and saw that the lovely grove had narrowed down to a birch bough, he became dissatisfied in his mind and

said to himself: "If at least it had been a linden tree!"

When he listened, he heard that the birch sang very loud. It sounded as when one sifts sand and gravel, while for him the linden could play the soft, velvety heart tones!

The next day the birch was withered and gave but little shade.

The day after that, the leaves were dry as paper and rattled like chattering teeth.

Then he thought once more of the prophet's gourd, and cursed when the sun pierced his skull.

. . .

There was a new king and there was new life in the country's administration and management.

New waterways were to be made in the city, so the convicts were sent out in barges, to dredge.

It was the first time in many, many years that the stone man had been away from his mountain. He traveled by water once more, and saw much that was new in his native city:

saw the railway and the steam engine for the first time!

It was below the station that they were to dredge. Presently they began to hoist all the impurities there were on the lake-bottom; up came drowned cats and old shoes, putrid grease from the tallow candle factory, color pigments from the dye works, tan bark from the tannery, and all the human filth which washerwomen for a hundred years had rinsed out in the public washhouse.

And there came a stench of sulphur and ammonia so insufferable that only convicts could stand it!

But when the barge was loaded, the prisoners wondered where all this filth was to be dumped. They got the answer when the boatman set sail for their own mountain.

There all the dirt was unloaded and spread so that the air soon became polluted. They waded in filth, and they soiled their clothes, hands, faces!

"This is hell!" said the prisoners.

For two years they dredged and unloaded on the mountain, which was finally immersed.

The white winter snow fell every late autumn and drew the white coverlet, with the white sheets, over all the impurity.

When the last spring came and the snow thawed, the bad odor was gone and the filth began to look like soil. That spring the dredging was over and our stone man was ordered to the smithy, so he never came out on the mountain any more. But once, in the autumn, he stole out, and saw something marvelous!

Weeds grew in the filth—ugly, greasy weeds, to be sure—mostly brownwort, not unlike nettle, but with brown blossoms, which is ugly; for flowers should be white, yellow, blue or red. There were real nettles, also, with green blossoms, and burdock, sorrel, thistle and pigweed —all the ugly, stinging, pricking, ill-smelling weeds that mortals do not love, but which follow rubbish heaps, burned lots and mud dumps.

"We cleaned out the lake and got the dirt," said the convict. "There's gratitude for you!"

Then came a time when he was transferred to a new mountain, which was to be turned into a fortress, and again he worked in stone, stone, stone!

There he lost an eye, and was beaten now and then; and there he remained so long that meantime the new King died and was succeeded by another.

On the day of the coronation one prisoner was to be pardoned, and set at liberty. The one who had conducted himself best and likewise had come to a full realization of the fact that he had done wrong, was to be pardoned. Then the other convicts felt that an injustice had been done them, for in their circles one who is sorry for a thing for which he is "not responsible" is regarded as a cringing wretch.

Thus the years came and went. Our stone man was now very old, and being too feeble for heavier work, he was taken back to his own mountain and put to sewing sacks.

One day the clergyman paused by the stone man, where he sat and sewed.

"Well!" said the clergyman, "will you never leave here?"

"How could that be possible?" returned the stone man.

"When you realize that you have done wrong—"

"When I see a human being who does more than right, then I'll believe that I am in the wrong. But that I shall never see."

" 'More than right?'—that would be mercy. May you soon know that!"

One day the stone man was sent out to make roads on the mountain which he had not seen for twenty years, perhaps.

It was a summer's day, and warm, and the boats steamed noisily past, gorgeous as butterflies.

When he came out on the point, he saw no longer a mountain, but a lovely green grove, where the foliage shimmered in the breeze, like little ripples on the lake. There were tall white birches and quivering aspens, and on the strand stood alders.

It was as in the dream!

And under the trees the grass whispered, the flowers nodded, the humming birds flew and butterflies fluttered. Many kinds of birds sang there, but he could not interpret their song, hence he understood it was not a dream.

The Mount of Damnation was turned into

blessing, and he could not help thinking of the prophet and the gourd.

"This is grace and mercy!" said something within him—a voice or a prompting—call it what you will.

And when a steamboat passed, the faces did not darken but brightened at the vision of the lovely green. Yes, he thought that someone waved, as is the custom when one sails by a summer resort.

He took a step forward under the soughing trees. They were forsooth no lindens, but he dared not wish for lindens, lest the birches be turned into rods; that much he had learned!

As he walked down the leafy path, he saw at the end of it a white wall with a green iron gate, and he heard something playing, which was not an organ, for its movements were quicker and merrier.

Above the wall there was a glimpse of the pretty roof of a villa, and a blue and yellow flag fluttered in the breeze.

And above the same wall he saw a ball of gay colors rise and fall. The prattle of little,

thin voices and the clatter of plates and glasses told him that a table was being laid.

He came up to the gate and saw—lilacs in bloom! and under them a table was being prepared, children were romping, and there was singing and playing.

"This is Paradise!" said a voice to him.

He stood long—and saw!—so long that he, the old man, drooped from fatigue; from hunger; from thirst; from all of life's miseries.

Then the gate opened, and out came a little white-clad girl. She bore in her hand a tray, and on it stood a glass of wine, the reddest he had ever seen. The child went up to the old man, straight up, and said:

"Come, dear old man, and you shall have some wine."

The old man accepted, and drank. It was rich man's wine, which had come a long way—from sunny lands, and it tasted like the sweetness of a good life, when at its best.

"This is mercy!" said his own old, broken voice. "But you, child, should not in your ignorance have given me the drink had you known who I was! Do you know who I am?"

"Yes, you are a convict, of course," the girl replied.

"You knew it—and yet—*This is mercy!*"

When the old stone man turned back he was no longer of stone, for something had begun to grow in him too.

And as he turned past a steep hill, he saw a tree with many trunks, like a bush. It was the prettiest of trees, a crab-apple tree; but this the old man did not know. In the tree fluttered a little restless bird, which people call a "tree-swallow," although her name is something else. She nestled finally in amongst the leaves and sang so mournfully, but sweetly:

"In dirt, in dirt, in dirt died you.
From the dirt, the dirt, the dirt rose you."

It was exactly as in the dream.—And now the old man understood what the tree-swallow meant.

HALF A SHEET OF PAPER

HALF A SHEET OF PAPER

The last moving van had gone. The tenant, a young man with a band of mourning around his hat, wandered once again through the apartment to see if he had not left something. No, he had forgotten nothing—nothing whatever. Then he went out into the corridor, although determined never to think more of what he had lived through in this apartment.

But see! In the corridor, near the telephone, there was half a sheet of paper tacked up. It was closely written, and in several handwritings; some legible, in black ink; some, pencil scrawls in black or red. There it stood—the whole beautiful romance that had been played in the short time of two years. All that he tried to forget was written there—a bit of human history on half a sheet of paper!

He took the sheet down. It was a sort of sun-yellowish scratch paper, that casts a sheen. He laid it on the coping of the porcelain stove

in the sitting room and, bending over it, he began to read.

First stood her name: *Alice.* It was the prettiest name he knew, because it was his sweetheart's—and the number *15, 11.* It looked like a chant number in church.

Under it stood: *The Bank.* That was his work; the sacred work that meant for him and her bread and a home. But the number was crossed, for the bank had failed and he had been taken on at another, after a short period of much anxiety.

Then followed—*The florist's* and *cab station.* That was when they were engaged, and when he had a pocketful of money.

Then: *The furniture dealer; the decorator*—He sets up house. *Express Bureau*—They move in. *Opera Box-office—50, 50*—They are newly wed and go to the opera on Sundays. Their best moments are when they both sit in silence and meet in beauty and harmony in the fairyland on the other side of the curtain.

Here followed a man's name, which was crossed out. It was that of a friend who had reached a certain height in the community but

who could not stand success, hence fell, irremediably, and had to travel far away. So ephemeral is that will-o'-the-wisp, success!

Here something new seems to have entered the lives of the couple. Written with a lead pencil in a woman's hand stands: *The Sister.* Which sister?—Ah! the one with the big gray cloak and the sweet, sympathetic face, who comes so softly and never goes through the drawing room, but takes the corridor way to the bedroom. Under her name is written: *Doctor L.*

Here first appears the name of a relative.—It says: *Mamma.* That is the mother-in-law, who has discreetly kept out of the way so as not to disturb the newly married. But now she is called, in the hour of need, and comes gladly, since she is wanted.

Here begins a big scrawl in blue and red: *The Intelligence Office*—The servant has left, or a new one is to be engaged.

The apothecary—H-m!—It darkens. *The dairy.* Here milk is ordered—sterilized milk. *The grocer—the butcher,* and others.

The household needs begin to be conducted

by telephone. Then the mistress of the home is not in her usual place? No, for she lies sick abed.

That which followed he could not read, for it began to grow dim before his eyes, as it must do for the drowning man at sea when he would look through salt water; but it stood there!—*The undertaker.* That tells enough!—a larger and a smaller casket. And in parenthesis was written: *"Of dust."*

Then there was nothing more. It ended with dust, as it always does.

But he took the sun-yellow paper, kissed it, and put it in his breast pocket.

In two minutes he had lived through two years of his life.

He was not bent when he walked out. On the contrary, he carried his head high, like a proud and happy man, for he felt that once he had possessed the sweetest thing in life. How many unfortunates there are, alas! who have never had this.

THE SLEEPY-HEAD

THE SLEEPY-HEAD

Capellmeister Kreutzberg was a man who loved to sleep in the morning, not only because he played in the orchestra evenings, but also because he drank more than one glass of beer before retiring. It is quite likely that he had thought of rising earlier, but he saw no sense in it. If he called to see a friend in the morning, the man was sure to be asleep; if he wished to deposit money in the bank, that was closed; if he wanted to borrow music at the music dealer's, the shop wasn't open, and if he had occasion to ride in a tram car, it hadn't started running. No cab could he get so early in the morning, and not even his snuff! Nothing could he accomplish thus early; therefore, he continued to sleep far into the forenoon—and this was what he wished to do of course.

He loved both sun and flowers, and little children too, but he could not live on the sunny

side on account of his fine instruments, for they did not keep in tune in sunny rooms. So the first of April he leased an apartment—one facing north. This he made sure of, for he wore a compass on his watch chain and knew where "The Dipper" hung at night.

Now spring had come, and it grew so warm that it was a veritable blessing to live in north rooms.

The sleeping room was back of the sitting room, and where he slept, with the Venetian blinds drawn, it was always pitch dark. But there were no Venetian blinds in the sitting room, for there they were not needed.

Then along came summer—and green. The capellmeister had dined at Hasselbacken the night before, therefore he slept long and well, especially as the theatre had been closed that day.

He certainly did sleep! But it grew so warm in the room that he waked—or thought himself awake a couple of times. Once, he fancied that the wall paper was burning, but that may have been the burgundy he had drunk; and once he felt something hot in his face. That was surely

the burgundy! So he turned over and went to sleep again.

About half after ten he arose, dressed himself and went into the sitting room to cool off with a glass of milk, which always stood in readiness of a morning.

But it was not cool in the sitting room to-day. It was warm—too warm! Nor was the milk cold; it was lukewarm—distastefully so!

The capellmeister was not an irritable man, but he liked regularity in all things, so he rang for old Louisa. As he had already stated his objections fifty times and more, he addressed Louisa in a pleasant but somewhat positive tone when she poked her head in at the door.

"Louisa," he said, "you have given me lukewarm milk!"

"No, master," Louisa retorted. "It was cold, but it has stood long and become lukewarm."

"You have gone and made a fire; it's suffocatingly hot in the room!"

No, she had not made a fire. And the offended Louisa retreated into her corner.

As for the milk, that could be passed over,

but when the capellmeister glanced around the room, he was distressed. He had built him a shrine in a corner, near the piano, which consisted of a small table with two silver candlesticks and a large photograph of a young woman; and before it stood a tall, gold-rimmed champagne glass.

In this glass—his wedding glass—(he was a widower now) it was his custom to place each day a red rose as a reminder, and as a tribute to her who had been his life's sun. Winter and summer a rose stood there. In winter it kept a week, if he trimmed the stem and put a little salt in the water. Yesterday he had placed a perfectly fresh rose in the glass, and to-day it was withered, shrunken, dead!—its head drooping upon its breast. That was an evil omen. He knew, to be sure, what sensitive things these flowers were, and had observed with what persons they did and did not thrive. He recalled how sometimes, when his wife was living, her rose—which she always had to have on her sewing table—would not thrive, but faded unexpectedly. And he had also observed that it happened just when his "sun" chose to go be-

hind a cloud, which, after an oppressive rumbling, resolved itself into drops. The roses wanted peace and loving words and could not endure harsh tones. They loved music, and sometimes he played to the roses so that they expanded and smiled.

Now, Louisa had a harsh temper, and used to go about the house grumbling to herself when she put the rooms in order. And she had tempestuous days out in the kitchen, when the sauce curdled and all the food, for that matter, took on an unpleasant flavor which the capellmeister instantly detected, for he himself was a sensitive instrument who felt in his soul what others do not feel.

He guessed at once that Louisa had killed the rose. Perhaps she had scolded the poor thing or pushed the glass, or had breathed evil upon it—a flower couldn't bear such treatment—so he rang again. When Louisa poked her head in, he said—not unpleasantly, but somewhat more firmly than before:

"What have you done to my rose, Louisa?"

"Nothing, good master."

"Nothing? Do you think the rose stands and

dies of its own accord? You see, of course, that there is no water in the glass. You have poured it out."

As Louisa was innocent, she went back into the kitchen and wept; for it is exasperating to be unjustly accused.

Capellmeister Kreutzberg, who couldn't cope with feminine tears, overlooked trifles. That evening he bought a new rose, a fresh one, without wire props of course; for these his wife never could abide.

Then he went to bed and slept on his ear. He probably fancied that the wall paper was on fire and that the pillow was hot, but nevertheless went off to sleep. The next morning, when he stepped into the sitting room to worship at the shrine, then—Oh, woe! the rose was stripped to the stem!

He wanted to clutch the bell rope, but restrained himself when he saw that the portrait of her whom his soul loved lay half rolled up and prostrate, at the foot of the flower glass.

This Louisa had not done! In his childlike mind he thought: "She, who was my all—my conscience and my inspiration—disapproves

of me; she is angry at me! What have I done?

And when he questioned his conscience, he naturally found, as one always finds, little flaws, and he decided to scrape them out—gradually, of course.

Then he had the photograph framed; the rose he placed under a glass globe—as if that could be of any use!

Thereupon he went off on an eight-day journey, came home again in the night, went to bed, woke up for a second, as usual, opened one eye and thought that the hanging lamp was burning.

Later, when he stepped into the sitting room, it was downright hot in there, and it looked so shabby. The curtains were faded; the piano cover, too, had lost its color; the bindings on his music books were warped; the paraffin in his lamp had evaporated and hung in a single threatening drop under the ornament, where the flies used to dance; the water in the decanter was warm.

But saddest of all! her likeness too had faded —yellowed like autumn grass! Then he be-

came downhearted, and when he was very downhearted, he took to the piano or the violin.

This time he sat down at the piano, with the vague intention of playing the Sonata in E-minor—Grieg's, of course, and her sonata—the greatest and best that has come to the world since Beethoven's D-minor—not because E comes after D, but because it *is*.

But the piano wouldn't obey to-day; it was inharmonious and troublesome, so he thought that his fingers or his ears were out of sorts. However, they were not at fault. The piano was simply out of tune, dreadfully out of tune, although it had but lately come from the skilled fingers of the tuner. It was as if bewitched—under a spell!

Then he seized the violin; that had to be tuned, of course. But when the first treble string was to be keyed, the peg wouldn't work. It was dried fast. When the capellmeister took hold with an iron grip, the string snapped and rolled up, like a dry eel skin. *It* was bewitched!

But that the picture should fade, ah, that was

the saddest of all! Therefore, he drew a veil over the altar.

With that, a veil dropped over the best part of his life, and the capellmeister became low-spirited, brooded, and ceased going out evenings.

It drew on toward midsummer; the days were longer than the nights; but as the Venetian blinds kept the room darkened, the capellmeister could not mark any change.

Finally, one night—Midsummer's Night—he was awakened by the clock striking thirteen. It was uncanny, both because it was an unlucky number and because a sensible clock can't strike thirteen. Now he did not drop to sleep again, but lay and listened. It creaked in the sitting room, then something snapped, as when a piece of furniture breaks. A moment later, it pattered on the floor, and the clock began striking; and it struck, struck, fifty strokes, then a hundred—it was weird!

Then a ray of light penetrated the sleeping room and a figure appeared on the wall paper, a curious figure, like a scarecrow. It came

from the sitting room door, hence the lamp was lit in there. But who had lighted it? And glasses clinked, just as if guests were seated there, but there was no talking. Yet strange sounds were heard, as when one takes in sail, mangles clothes, or the like.

The capellmeister had to go out and investigate. Commending his soul into the hands of the Almighty, he walked in.

First, he saw Louisa's wrapper vanish through the kitchen door. Then he saw new shades at the windows—drawn up at that, and the dining table covered with flowers in glasses as on his wedding eve, when he came home with his bride.

And look! The sun caught him right in the face! Over distant fjords and woods the sun had come and played all the little roguish pranks and had made the illumination in the sitting room. It was his birthday, and he blessed the sun that had been up so early playing tricks on the sleepy-head. And he blessed her memory, whom he called his life's sun. It was no new name, but he couldn't think of a better one—and it was good enough.

And the rose stood upon the home altar; it was perfectly fresh—as fresh as she had been before she grew weary of the grind. Weary! Ah, she was not one of your strong sort; life for her was too brutal, with all its knocks and blows. In his memory he recalled how, when she had had washing or scouring to do, she would sink down on the sofa and moan: "I'm so tired!"

Poor little girl! She did not belong here; she only paid us a visit—then she went away!

"She missed the sun," the doctor said; but at that time they couldn't afford the sun, for sunny rooms cost more.

But now *he* had the sun without his knowing it, and he stood right in it—but it was too late!

Midsummer was over, and the sun was going away again, to be gone a year and then return. It was so strange altogether!

SECRETS OF THE TOBACCO SHED

SECRETS OF THE TOBACCO SHED

Once there was a young girl who belonged to the Opera. She was so beautiful that people turned around in the street to stare at her, and she sang as only a few can sing!

The capellmeister and the composer came along and offered her their kingdoms, with their hearts. The kingdoms she accepted, but the hearts?—well, they could be dispensed with.

She was great now—as great as anything. She drove through the streets in a victoria and nodded to her picture, which hung in all the shop windows.

She became still greater, and appeared on postal cards, soaps, and cigar boxes. Finally her picture was hung in the foyer, among the mortal Immortals; and then, to speak frankly, she became very much puffed up.

One day she stood on a bridge by the sea, where the waves rose high and the current was strong. The capellmeister stood beside her, of

course, and many other young gentlemen were there. The beauty toyed with a rose, and this all the gentlemen wanted, but only he who could take it was to have it.

So she tossed the rose far out on the waves. The young gentlemen looked far out after the rose, but the capellmeister jumped at once into the surf, skimmed the waves like an eel, and soon had the flower between his lips.

Then applause thundered from the bridge, and he who lay in the sea saw that she loved him. But now, when he should return to land, he could not move. There was a tide, with an undertow; this she, on the bridge, did not comprehend, but thought that he was playing, therefore she laughed. But he, who felt the death grip, misinterpreted her laughter, which was not kindly, and he felt a sting in his heart; with that his love was over.

Presently he reached the shore with bleeding hands, which he had torn on the bridge.

"You shall have my hand," said the beauty.

"I do not want it," answered the capellmeister; then he turned his back and went away.

That was high treason against beauty, and for that he must die!

How it happened that the capellmeister left the Opera, is something which only theatre folk understand. He was firmly seated, and it took two years to throw him down.

But down he came! And when she had deposed her benefactor, she triumphed and became even more puffed up—until it was apparent. The public saw under the paint that the heart was bad, therefore it could no longer be moved by her song, and it did not believe in her tears or her smiles.

She observed this, and grew bitter. She still ruled the theatre, choked all who wished to rise, and got the papers to cut them up.

She had lost favor, but power meant more to her. And now, that she was rich, powerful and satisfied, she was content with life; and folk who are content, as a rule do not grow thin—rather are they inclined to grow fat, and she was actually becoming a little corpulent. She commenced very slowly and imperceptibly, so that she did not observe it herself until it was

too late. Bang! Descent is rapid, and this particular drive went at break-neck speed. The torture to which she subjected herself did not help. She had the most sumptuous table in the city, but was forced to starve herself; and the more she starved, the fatter she grew.

In a year she was out of the game and her salary was reduced. In two years she was half-forgotten and supplanted by younger stars. The third year she was dismissed—then she hired an attic chamber.

"It was an unnatural fat," said the stage director to the prompter.

"That isn't fat, it's bloat!" returned the prompter.

She sat now in the attic room and looked down upon a big plantation. There stood also a tobacco shed, and this she liked because there were no windows in it, at which folks could sit and stare at her. Sparrows lived under the rafters, but no tobacco hung there, inasmuch as nothing of the kind grew on the land.

Thus she sat the whole summer, gazed at her shed and wondered what it was for, as the doors were fastened with big padlocks, and no one

was seen to go in and out. That it hid some secrets she surmised; but of what sort, she would soon see.

There were still one or two lingering straws of the past glory, to which she clung, and upon which she lived. These were her crowning rôles: "Carmen" and "Aïda," which had not been filled for want of a successor; and in the public memory her performances, which had been excellent, still lived.

Well, August came, the arc lamps were lit once more, and the theatres were to be opened.

The singer sat at her window and looked down upon the shed, which had lately been painted red and had a new tile roof.

Scrambling through the potato patches came a man carrying a big, rusty key. Presently he opened the shed door and walked in.

Then came two more men, whom she thought she recognized, and they also disappeared in the shed.

Now it began to be interesting.

In a little while the three men came out carrying something big and curious, which looked like bed-bottoms or partitions.

Once outside, they turned the frames and put them down against the door; and then a fireplace appeared, but it was painted—badly painted.

Thereupon, a door to some country house was seen—a hunter's hut, perhaps? Then came a forest, a window, and a library.

It was theatre scenery. After a bit, she recognized the rose bush in "Faust."

This was the storehouse for the opera scenery, and by this very rose bush she had once sung: "Little flowers, lie there, lie there!"

Her poor little heart ached when she realized that "Faust" was to be set up, yet there was one comfort—she had not sung the star rôle, which was Margaret's.

"'Faust' may pass, but don't touch 'Carmen' or 'Aïda,' for then I shall die!"

She sat there and saw how the repertoire changed, and she knew a fortnight ahead of the newspapers which operas were to be given. It was always something pleasant. She saw "Die Freischutz" dragged out—wolf-cave and all; she saw "The Flying Dutchman," with the ship

and sea; "Tannhauser" and "Lohengrin," and many more.

And then there came a day—for the inevitable must come. The men dragged (one was named Lindquist, she remembered, and he was a scene shifter) and then out came a square in Spain! The wing stood obliquely so she could not see plainly what it was. One of the men slowly balanced the frame, and as he turned it the back was seen, which is always ugly; but there, in bold, black letters, which loomed up, one after another, deliberately, as if to torture her, was written plainly, irrevocably: C, A, R,-M, E, N. It was *Carmen!*

"Now I'm dying!" said the singer. But she didn't die, poor thing, not even when "Aïda" was put on. Thus was her name swept from the mind of the public; from shop windows; from postal cards; and, finally, in some unknown manner, her portrait disappeared from the foyer.

She could not comprehend how people forget so soon; it was absolutely inexplicable! But she mourned herself, as one mourns the dead.

And the singer—the celebrity—was of course dead.

So one day she went out alone and promenaded on a deserted street. It was a dump for rubbish. She paused without thinking of anything in particular, but saw enough of the ruin; for on the rubbish heap lay a postal card, and on it appeared her picture as "Carmen."

She walked away rapidly and cried in her heart. She came in on a side street, where the show window of a little book shop made her stop short. She was accustomed to pause by such windows, to look for her picture. But it did not hang here; instead, there hung a placard upon which she against her will read memorable words:

"The Lord's countenance is turned against all those who do evil, and He will erase their memories from the earth!"

"Those who do evil—" This was why her "memory" had been obliterated. This explained the people's forgetfulness.

"But cannot evil be turned into good? Have

I not suffered punishment enough?" she moaned.

And so she went into the woods, where there were no human beings. As she wandered, despairing, crushed, humbled, she saw another solitary being coming toward her. He asked with his eyes if he dared venture a greeting.

It was the capellmeister.

But his eyes did not speak reproaches or humiliating sympathy; they expressed admiration, astonishment, and tenderness.

"How slender and refined you have grown, Hanna!" said his lips. She looked down upon herself and found that it was true. Sorrow had burned out the superfluous, puffed-up flesh, and she was more beautiful than she had ever been.

"And you are just as young—younger!"

These were the first kind words she had heard in a long time, and when they came from him, whom she had treated so badly, she understood the worth of a good man, and told him so.

"Have you your voice still, Hanna?" asked the capellmeister, who could not abide compliments.

"I don't know," she sobbed.

"Come up to the song chamber to-morrow—yes, my room at the Opera—and we shall hear. The fact is, I'm re-engaged there."

The singer came—came back and rose to the front once more.

The public had forgiven and forgotten—forgotten the evil, and now the singer was just as great—no, much greater than before!

It was an edifying story.

THE BIG GRAVEL SCREEN

THE BIG GRAVEL SCREEN

Once upon a time an eel-pout and her son lay at the bottom of the sea, close by the steamboat dock, and watched how a boy prepared his rod for fishing.

"Look at that one!" said the eel-pout, "and you will learn something of the world's wickedness, and of its snares. . . . Look at him now! He has a whip in his hand; and now he is throwing out the lash—there it goes! Then comes the clapper, which sinks deep down; there it is! And then comes the hook, with a worm on it. *That's* the thing that you mustn't take into your mouth, for then you're caught! It is only stupid perch and roach that let themselves be fooled. So, now you know it."

Presently the seaweed forest, with mussels and snails, began to rock, and splashing, and beating of drums were heard, and then a big, red whale shot forward over their heads. It

had a tail-fin like a propeller, with which it worked.

"It's the steamboat," said the eel-pout. "Get out of the way!"

And then there was a terrible racket up above.

There were tramping and clamping as they built a bridge in about two seconds between the boat and land. But it was difficult to see, for they were letting out oil and soot up there.

There was something very heavy on the bridge, so that it shrieked; and several men began to sing: "Oh, chuck it! A-hoy! hie with it!—Hey, take hold of it!—Ho there! Hie with it! Now, steady with it! Hie with it!"

And now something happened that was indescribable! First, it sounded as when sixty Dalecarlians are splitting wood; then a big hole opened in the water, which reached clear down to the sea-bottom, and between three stones stood a black cupboard, that sang and played so that it rang and clanged all the way to the eel-pout and her son, who made for deep water.

Then was heard a voice from above that shrieked:

"Three fathoms deep—it can't be done! Let it lie there, for it won't pay to take up that old rattle-box, which costs more for repairs than it's worth." It was the Inspector of mines, whose piano had dropped into the sea.

Then there was quiet. The big red fish beat itself out with the rudder-fin, and it became still quieter. But when the sun went down, the wind came. The black cupboard down in the sea-weed forest began rocking and bumping against the stones, and with every bump it played, so that the fishes in the vicinity swam over, to see and hear.

The eel-pout came first, to stare, and when she saw that she could mirror herself in the cupboard, she said: "It's a mirror-cupboard!"

That was logical, and therefore they all said: "It's a mirror-cupboard."

Then there came a butter-fish, that nosed the candlesticks, which were still intact, and there were candle-stumps burned down fast in the pipes. "This stuff is good to eat," it said "if only the lash wasn't there!"

Along came a big cod and stretched himself out on the pedal; and then there was such a racket in the cupboard, that all the fishes fled!

And they got no farther that day.

In the night there was a half-storm, and the music-box thumped all the while, like the stone-paver's hired girl, until the sun got up. Then, when the eel-pout came back with the whole company, the cupboard was changed.

The lid had flown open, like a shark's gape, and a row of teeth was visible—so big that they had never seen the like; but every second tooth was black. And the whole machine had swelled up on the sides, like a roe-fish: the boards bulged, the pedal pointed in the air, like a kicking foot, and the arms of the candlesticks doubled themselves like fists. It was a sight!

"It's bursting!" shrieked the cod, spreading a fin for a quick turn.

"It's bursting!" they all shrieked.

And now the boards loosened, the box opened, and one could see how it looked inside. This was the funniest of all! "It's a fish-trap! Don't go there!" said the eel-pout.

"It's a loom, it is!" said the stickleback, who

crochets his nest and knows all about weaving apparatus.

"A gravel-screen!" said the perch, who usually stayed under the lime-works.

Yes, a gravel screen it certainly was! But there was such a lot of gimcracks and chicanery inside, that were not like the one they sifted gravel through. There were little manikins that looked like toes in white wool stockings, and when they moved, a foot with a hundred skeleton joints walked. It walked and walked, but it never left the spot.

It was a queer body. But the playing was over, for the skeleton couldn't get at the strings any more, but pounded in the water as if it were knocking with its knuckles to be let in.

Then there came a shoal of stickleback, that went right through the cupboard. And when they dragged their quills over the strings, it played again, but in a new way, for now the strings were re-tuned.

. . .

On a rosy summer's evening, soon thereafter, two children—a boy and a girl—sat on the steamboat dock. They were not thinking of

anything in particular—a little mischief, perhaps?—when, all of a sudden, they heard soft music from the bottom of the sea, and they became serious.

"Do you hear?"

"Yes. What is it? It's playing scales."

"No, it's the mosquitoes that are singing."

"Never! It's the mermaid."

"There isn't any mermaid, the schoolmaster said."

"That the schoolmaster doesn't know."

"Oh, just listen!"

They listened a long while, and then they went their way.

A pair of newly arrived bathing guests seated themselves on the dock. He looked into her eyes, which mirrored the whole rose-colored sunset and the green shores. Then they heard music, like a glass-harmonica, but in strange keys—such as only those dreamed who wished to do something new in the world! But it did not occur to them to seek outside themselves, for they thought that the music was within them.

Then a pair of old bathing guests came along,

who knew the joke, and they took delight in saying aloud:

"It's the Inspector's sunken piano."

But if there came new guests, who didn't know the game, they would sit and wonder and rejoice over the unknown music, till older guests appeared and enlightened them as to the deception. Then they rejoiced no more.

But the music box lay where it lay the whole summer, and the stickleback taught their art to the perch, who knew better. The piano became a perch-ground for the guests. The sailors put a net around it, and a watchman tried one day to fish cod in it. When he had brought out his cod-line with the old winder and was going to wind it up, the watchman heard a run in *X-minor!* and then the hook caught. He tugged and pulled, and at last he dragged up five finger joints, with wool on the ends, and it creaked in the bones as on a skeleton. He was scared and threw his catch into the sea, although he knew what it was.

Then followed the dog days, when the water was warm and all the fishes went far out in the deep, to cool off.

The music was hushed again. But August moonlight came, and the bathing guests held a regatta. In a white boat sat the Inspector and his wife, who were being rowed slowly back and forth by their boys. As they skimmed the black water, burnished on top with silver and a little gold besides, they heard music under the boat.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Inspector, "that's our old rattlety-bang piano. Ha, ha!"

But he was silent when he saw his wife bend her head down on her breast, after the manner of pelicans in pictures, just as if she wanted to bite her breast, and hide her face.

The old piano and its long story had awakened in her memories of the long ago; of the first dining room they had fitted up; of the first child that had learned to play; of the long evenings' loneliness, which could only be dispelled by loud volumes of sound, that made the whole apartment shake off its dullness, and which tuned up the spirits and put a new shine even on the furniture. . . . But that story does not belong here.

. . .

When the autumn was well in and the first

storm was over, then the herring came by thousands of thousands and swam through the music box. That was a farewell concert, you'd better believe! Swallow-fish and seamew gathered to listen.

That night the music box went out to sea, and then there was an end to the whole glory.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHILOSOPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHILOSOPHY

Once there was a photographer who photographed prolifically—profiles, busts, knee-lengths and full figures; and he developed and fixed up, toned down, gold-bathed and copied. He was a dabster! But he was never satisfied, for he was a philosopher, a great philosopher—and a discoverer.

He had, in fact, philosophized that the world was upside down—that one could see on the negative, when it lay in the developer. That which was right on a person, became left here; that which was dark became light. The shadows became high lights; blue was white, and silver buttons were as dull as iron. Everything was reversed.

He had a partner, who was just the common, everyday sort, full of little eccentricities. For instance, he smoked tobacco all day long; he could never learn to close a door after him; he stuck the knife into his mouth instead of the

fork; he went about in the house with his hat on; he manicured his nails in the middle of the atelier, and at night he had to have three mugs of ale. He was full of faults!

The philosopher, who, on the contrary, was faultless, harbored resentment against his imperfect brother and wanted to part from him, but couldn't, for their business interests held them together. And because they had to stick together, the philosopher's aversion began to develop into an unreasonable hatred. It was terrible!

When spring came, they were to look for a summer cottage. The partner was sent out to make arrangements, and he made them!

Thereupon, one Saturday evening, they boarded a steamboat. The philosopher sat on the upper deck all the way, and drank *punsch*. He was very corpulent and was affected with several complaints: Something awry with his liver, and with his feet, also, there was something bothersome—rheumatism or the like. Well, then! Having reached their destination, they stepped ashore at the landing.

"Is it here?" asked the philosopher.

"Only a short step from here," replied the partner.

They walked down a path bordered with trees. The path terminated right in front of a picket fence. This had to be scaled. Then came a stony path. The philosopher complained of his feet, but soon forgot his agony before a new picket fence, which must be climbed. Then the path vanished, as if of its own accord. They had to climb steep, rocky hills and make their way through briers and blueberry vines.

On the other side of the third picket fence stood a bull, who chased the philosopher as far as the fourth picket fence; and this induced a sweat bath, which opened the pores. After the sixth picket fence the cabin was seen. Presently the philosopher stepped in and came out on the veranda.

"Why are there so many trees?" he asked. "They shut out the view."

"Well, they must protect us against the sea winds," answered the partner.

"This looks like a church-yard! Why, we live in the middle of a fir-wood!"

"That's healthy!" said the partner.

Soon they were going for a bath; but there was no bathing beach, in a philosophical sense. There was only stone bottom and mud. After the bath, the philosopher meant to have a drink of water from the spring. It was a rust-brown water, with a pungent taste. That wouldn't do. Nothing would do. There was no meat to be bought, and fish was the only thing that could be had.

The philosopher was glum and seated himself under a gourd, to grumble; but stay he must! and the partner went back to the city, to look after the business during his comrade's holiday.

Six weeks had gone by when the partner returned to his philosopher.

On the landing there stood a slender youth, with rosy cheeks and a brown neck. It was the philosopher—rejuvenated and full of animal spirits.

He jumped the six picket fences and chased the bull himself.

When they reached the veranda, the partner remarked:

"You look well; how have you fared?"

"Capitally!" said the philosopher. "The picket fences have taken the fat off me; the stones have massaged my feet; the mud has given me mud baths for the rheumatism; the frugal fare has cured my liver, the pine woods my lungs and, think of it! the brown spring water contained iron—just what I needed."

"Yes, you philosopher!" said the partner, "from the negative plate we get a positive, where the shadows become high lights once more.

"If you would only take such a negative of me and find out what faults I do *not* possess, you would not despise me. Just consider! I do not drink to excess, therefore I attend to the business. I don't steal. I never speak ill of you. I never complain. I never turn white into black. I'm never uncivil to customers. I rise early in the morning. I trim my nails to keep the developer clean. I keep my hat on my head so as not to shed hairs on the plate. I smoke tobacco to clear the atmosphere of poisonous fumes. I leave the doors ajar to avoid making a noise in the atelier. I drink ale at

night so as not to fall into the whiskey habit; and I shove my knife into my mouth to avoid sticking myself with the fork."

"Verily, thou art a great philosopher!" said the photographer. "Now we shall be friends; and thus we'll make headway."

JUBAL SANS EGO

JUBAL SANS EGO

Once upon a time there was a king called Johann sans Country; and the reason of it one can guess.

But another time there was a great singer who was called "Jubal sans Ego," and why, you shall now hear. Klang was the name that his father, the soldier, had given him, and there was music in the name. But Nature had also given him a strong will, which sat like a ramrod in his back. It was a great gift, and one to be cherished in the struggles of life. Even as a child, when he began to talk, he did not say as other small boys did, "him" when he talked of himself, but at once called himself "I." "You have no 'I,'" said the grown folk. When he became a little older he expressed a desire with "I will." And then he had to listen to this:

"You have no will," and "Your will grows in the forest."

Now that was stupid of the father, but he

knew no better, for he was a soldier, and had been taught to will only what the commander willed.

Young Klang thought it queer to be told that he did not have any will, although he had such a strong one; but that can pass.

When he had grown up somewhat, his father asked one day: "What do you wish to become?"

That the boy didn't know. He had given up wishing, since it was forbidden. He certainly had a leaning toward music, but he didn't dare say so, for then he thought it would be opposed. Therefore he answered like a dutiful son: "I wish nothing."

"Then you shall be a wine-tapper," said the father.

If it was because the father knew a wine-tapper, or because the wine had a special attraction for him, we cannot tell. Suffice it to say, young Klang was placed in a wine cellar, and there he didn't fare badly.

It smelled so good of red sealing wax and French wine down there! And there were big vaulted rooms, like churches. When he sat at

the faucet, and the red wine flowed, his spirits rose, and he began to hum all the ballads he had heard.

The proprietor, who lived in wine, liked song and merriment, and kept the youth; for the music sounded so well under the arches; and when he struck up: "Down in the Deep Cellar Vault," customers came, and this pleased the proprietor.

Then, one day there came a traveling salesman, who had formerly been an opera singer, and when he heard Klang, he was so enchanted that he invited him out on a jollification that evening.

They played nine-pins, ate lobster, with dill sauce; they drank *punsch,* but, above all, they sang!

Between the toasts and the courses, and when they had drunk the "To Thee" toast, the traveling salesman said:

"Why don't you go on the stage?"

"I?" gasped Klang. "Surely I can't do that!"

"You must say, *I will;* then you can."

This was a new doctrine, for since his third

year young Klang had not used the words "I" and "will."

Now he did not dare either to will or to wish, and he begged not to be tempted further.

But the traveling salesman came again, many times, and brought great singers with him. The tempter became too strong, and Klang took his departure one evening when he had been applauded by a real *empresario.*

So he bade the proprietor farewell and, over a glass of wine, thanked the traveling salesman, who had restored his faith in himself, and his will—"the will, the ramrod in the back which holds a man upright so that he won't fall down on all fours." And never would he forget his friend who had taught him to believe in himself.

Then he went home to bid his father and mother good-by.

"I want to be a singer!" he blurted out so that it rang in the cottage.

His father looked around for the lash and his mother wept; but it did no good.

"Don't lose yourself, my son!" were the mother's parting words.

Young Klang received money with which to

travel to a foreign land. There he learned to sing according to rules, and in a few years he became a great operatic singer, made money, and had his own manager, who advanced him.

Friend Klang blossomed out, and he could say both "I" and "will," and "I command." His "I" grew to unnatural proportions, and he wouldn't tolerate any other I's where he was! He denied himself nothing, nor did he stint himself either. But now, when he was to return to his own country, the manager taught him that it would never do for one to be called Klang when one is a great singer. He must have a high-sounding name—preferably a foreign one, for that was the fashion.

The "great one" had a struggle with himself, for changing one's name was not altogether agreeable. It was like denying one's father and mother, and it might look bad.

But, inasmuch as it was the fashion, he let it go that way.

He searched the Bible to find the right name; for there stood the names!

And when he happened upon Jubal, Lamech's son, who had invented all sorts of musical in-

struments, he took it. It was a good name and, in Hebrew, it meant trumpet. As the manager was an Englishman, he desired that Klang should call himself Mister, which he did—Mister Jubal, if you please!

All this, of course, was very innocent, since it was the fashion; but it seemed strange, all the same, that with the new name Klang became another man. The old past was as if wiped out, and Mister Jubal felt as if he were a born Englishman, spoke his mother tongue with an accent and affected mutton-chop whiskers and high collars. And the checked clothes looked as if they had grown on him, like bark on trees. He grew stiff and greeted people with a monacle, never turned round on the street when an acquaintance called his name, and he always stood right in the centre of the tram car.

He hardly knew himself!

Meanwhile, he was at home once more, in his own country, and was a big singer at the Opera. He played kings and prophets, heroes, lovers and demons, and when he had a rôle to practice, he was such a good actor that he believed himself to be the one he was impersonating.

One day he walked the street and was a demon from somewhere, but he was also Mr. Jubal.

Then he heard someone from behind him call: "Klang!" Naturally he did not turn around, for this an Englishman never does, and, for the matter of that, his name was no longer Klang.

But again someone shouted "Klang." And his friend, the traveling salesman, stood before him and, with interrogating glance, asked timidly and graciously:

"Isn't this Klang?"

Mister Jubal had a demoniacal fit! Showing all his teeth and opening his mouth wide, as if he were taking a chest tone from the cavities in his cranium, he bellowed a short "No!"

Then his friend understood him and went his way. He was an enlightened man, knew life and people and himself by heart. So he was neither sad nor surprised.

But Mister Jubal thought so, and when he heard these words within him: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice," he did as Peter had done: he went off into an archway

and wept bitterly. This he himself did in his mind, but the demon in his heart laughed.

After that day, he laughed mostly; laughed at evil and good; at sorrow and shame; at everything and everybody.

His father and mother knew—through the newspapers of course—who Mr. Jubal was, but they never went to the Opera; for they thought it was something with barrel hoops and horses, and they did not wish to see their son there.

Mr. Jubal was now the *greatest* singer, and he had certainly set aside a goodly portion of his ego, but the will was still there.

Then he met his Waterloo! It was a little girl in the ballet, who could bewitch men, and Jubal, also, was bewitched—so badly bewitched that he asked if he might be hers. . . . (He meant, of course, that she should be his, but one can't say that.)

"I'll let you be mine," said the witch, "if I may—"

"You may have everything!" replied Jubal.

The girl took him at his word, and they were married. First, he taught her to sing and play; afterwards, she got everything she wished—

everything that he *didn't* wish—so, little by little, she had his will in her pocket.

One fine day Mrs. Jubal was a great singer; so great, that when the public shouted "Jubal," they meant the lady, and not the gentleman.

Jubal wished to come to the front again, but to do this at the lady's expense he had no desire, and therefore he couldn't.

He began to be blotted out and forgotten.

The brilliant coterie of friends, whom Mr. Jubal had attracted to his bachelor-quarters, flocked now in his home around *Mrs.* Jubal, who was called just—Jubal.

No one glanced at the Mister; no one drank to him. And if he tried to talk, no one listened. It was as if he were not there, and his wife was treated as if she were not married.

And now Mr. Jubal was all alone; and, alone, he went to the Café. He sauntered in one evening to seek companionship. He was ready to take up with any one at all, so long as it was a human being!

Presently he caught sight of his old friend, the traveling salesman, sitting alone having a dull time of it. And he thought: "Here I

have somebody in old Lundborg!" So he stepped up to the table and greeted him. But the friend's face changed so horribly, that Jubal had to ask: "Isn't this Lundborg?"

"Yes."

"Don't you know me—Jubal?"

"No."

"Don't you know Klang—your old friend?"

"No! He's been dead this long while."

Then Jubal understood that he was, in a certain sense, dead, and he went out.

The following day he bade farewell to the Opera and became a singing teacher, with the title of Professor.

Then he traveled to a strange country, and remained away many years.

Grief and mortification made him age early.

But this pleased him, for it meant that all would soon be over. But he didn't age so rapidly as he desired, so he procured a white wig with long locks. And he was pleased with it, because it made him unrecognizable, even to himself.

With slow steps and with his hands behind him, he walked the streets and pondered.

Folks thought he was seeking someone or expecting someone. Any one meeting his eyes marked no light in them; if you tried to make his acquaintance, he talked only generalities; and he never said "I" or "I think," but "it seems." He had lost himself, and he discovered this one day when he was about to shave. He had lathered himself before the mirror, and was just ready to proceed with the razor, when he saw the room back of him, but his face he did not see. Then he understood the situation, and he was seized with a sudden longing to find himself again. The best part of him he had given to his wife, who had his will. And he decided to hunt her up.

When he got back to his country and tramped the streets of his native city wearing his white wig, no one recognized him. But a musician who had been in Italy said: "He is a *maestro.*"

Instantly Jubal felt as if he were a great composer. He bought music paper and began writing a score, that is to say, he jotted down a lot of long and short notes, on lines—some for violins, others for reed instruments, the rest

for brass. Then he sent the stuff in to the conservatory. But no one could play it, for it was nothing—only notes.

One day he was out walking and met a painter, who had been in Paris. "There goes a model," said the painter. Jubal heard it, and he believed at once that he was a model, for he believed everything one said of him, as he did not know who or what he was.

Then, when he recalled to memory his wife, who had got his ego, he made up his mind to search for her. And he did, too! But she had gone off and married a Baron, and had traveled far away.

At last he grew weary of the search and, like all weary men, he began to long for the cause of his existence—his mother. He knew that she was a widow, and lived in a ramshackle cabin up in the mountains: and thither he went.

"Don't you know me?" asked he.

"What is your name?" demanded the mother.

"Your son's name—don't you know it?"

"My son was named Klang, but your name is Jubal, and him I do not know."

"She denies me!"

"As you denied yourself, and your mother!"

"Why did you take my will from me when I was a child?"

"You gave your will to a woman."

"I had to, otherwise I would never have gotten her. But why did you say that I didn't have any will?"

"Why, that was father's notion, my child; he knew no better. Forgive him now, for he is dead. For that matter, children shouldn't have any will, but grown-up men should."

"Fancy! how could you smooth that out so well, mother? Children mustn't have it, but grown-ups must have it."

"Listen, Gustaf!" said the mother; "Gustaf Klang—"

These were his two names, and when he heard them, he was himself again. All rôles—kings and demons, maestros and models—vanished, and he was just his mother's son.

Then he buried his head in her lap and sobbed:

"Now I want to die! I want to die!"

BLUE WING FINDS THE GOLD POWDER

BLUE WING FINDS THE GOLD POWDER

The rich man once paid a visit to the poor island, and fell in love with it. Why, the rich man could not tell; but he was enchanted with it. Possibly the place recalled some half-forgotten memory of childhood, or a beautiful dream.

He bought the island, built him a villa and planted all kinds of fine trees, bushes and flowers. The sea lay beyond it, and he had his own private landing, with a flag-staff and white boats. Oaks as tall as cathedrals shaded his house, and fresh winds swept over green meadows. He had a wife and children; servants and horses. He had everything. Yet one thing was wanting: it was a little thing, but the most important of all, and this he had forgotten to think of—it was spring water. They dug wells there and blasted rock, but only brownish salt water came. It was filtered, became as

clear as crystal, but remained salty. Herein lay the tragedy!

In those times there came a man blessed of God, who had succeeded in all his undertakings, and was one of the most famous men in the world. We are told how he struck his diamond staff into the rock and, like Moses, made the rock send forth water. Now they were to bore with a diamond drill, as they had bored in rocks elsewhere, and got water from all. They bored here for a hundred riksdaler, for a thousand, for several thousand—but only salt water came. Here there was obviously no blessing! And the rich man carefully noted that one does not get all things for money—not even a drink of fresh water, when luck's against one.

Then he became discouraged, and life no longer smiled. The schoolmaster on the island, in the meanwhile, began to pore over old books, and sent for a wise old man who went about with a divining-rod; but this didn't help matters.

Then the priest, who was even wiser, one day called the school children together and promised a reward to the one who could find an herb,

called Gold Powder, which showed you where there were water-veins.

"It has flowers like Lady's-Mantle and leaves like Almond blossoms, and is also called Golden Saxifrage. And it looks as if it had gold dust on the outer leaves. Now, remember!"

"Flowers like Lady's-Mantle and leaves like Almond blossoms," repeated the children. Then they ran into the woods and over the plains to search for the Gold Powder.

None of the children found it. A little boy actually came home with Fox Bane, which has a little gold on the top. But it is poisonous, and it was not the right one. Finally they grew weary of the search.

But there was a little girl, who did not as yet go to school. Her father was a dragoon, owned a little croft, and was more poor than rich. His only treasure was the little daughter, and in the village she was called by the pretty name of Blue Wing, because she always wore a sky-blue jacket, with wide sleeves, that flapped when she moved. Blue-wing, as a matter of fact, is a little blue butterfly, which is seen on the grass

blades in the height of summer. And its wings resemble the petals of the corn-flower—a flying corn-flower with feelers, where the stamens sit.

Blue Wing—the dragoon's Blue Wing—was an unusual child, who talked so sensibly, but so strangely that no one knew where her words came from.

All people and animals too liked her. Chickens and calves followed her, and she dared to pat even the bull. She frequently went out alone, stayed away and came back again. But when they asked where she had been, she could not tell; yet she had so much to relate. She had seen uncommon things, and had met both old men and great ladies, who had said this and that. The dragoon let her run on, for he surmised that there was someone who guarded her.

. . .

One morning Blue Wing went off on a tramp. Through meadows and groves she directed her nimble feet, singing to herself—mostly songs no one had ever heard before, but which came to her. The morning sun shone as young as if it were newly born; the air felt strong and wide

awake; the dew rose, and its healthy moisture cooled the little face.

As she entered the forest she met a green-clad man.

"Good day, Blue Wing," said the old man. "I'm the gardener at Sungleam. Come with me and you shall see my flowers."

"Too great an honor for me!" replied Blue Wing.

"No indeed! for you have never tortured plants."

Then they walked along together and came to the strand. Here there was a pretty little bridge which led to an island, and thither they went.

That was a garden! In it there was everything—big and little, and it was planned like a book!

He himself lived in a house built of growing ever-green trees—pine, spruce, juniper—dressed in their foliage. The floors were made of growing ever-green bushes and herbs. Moss and lichen grew in the cracks in the floor, to keep the water out. Crow-berry, bear-berry and twin-flower made up the boards. The ceil-

ing consisted of maiden-hair fern, honeysuckle, clematis and ivy. It was so thick that not a drop of rain came through. Outside the door stood bee-hives, but, in place of bees, butterflies lived there, and when they swarmed out, it was a vision!

"I do not like to torture bees," said the old man, "and, besides, they are so ugly! Why, they look like hairy coffee beans, and they sting too, like adders."

Then they went out into the garden.

"Now you shall read in Nature's A-B-C book. You shall learn the secrets of flowers and make the acquaintance of herbs; but you must not question—only listen and answer. See, child! on this gray stone grows something which looks like gray paper. It is the first thing that appears when the mountain gets wet. The rock moulds; the mould is called lichen. Here we have two kinds: one resembles the reindeer's antlers, and is also called reindeer moss. It is the reindeer's principal food. The other is called Iceland lichen, and resembles—what does it resemble?"

"It resembles a lung, for it says so in the natural science book."

"Yes, under a magnifying glass it is like the air-passages in the lung, and from that people learned to use it in lung diseases, you see. Now, when the mountain lichen has gathered soil, the moss comes. This has a species of flower that is simpler, and sows seeds. This resembles ice-fern, but you will see that it is also like heather and fir-trees and everything, for all growths are related. This feather-moss resembles the pine, but it has seed-vessels like the poppy, though simpler. With the moss the heather will soon be growing. If you look now at the heather through a powerful magnifying glass, it becomes a milk-weed—*epilobium,* in Latin, or a rhododendron—exactly like the elder. The soil-carpet is now ready, and in the food-earth everything grows. Mankind, for their uses, have appropriated a good many growths, and Nature herself has taught them which ones they must take, and how they should be used. This is not more remarkable than the adornments and colors that have been bestowed

upon the flowers, to let the insects know where the honey is. Look at the flax, the most useful of all growths—for the flax itself taught people how to spin. Only peep into the flower and you'll find the flax-head where the threads wind themselves around the bobbin, which whirls round the spindle.

"In order to express herself more clearly, Nature let a little parasite wind itself around the whole plant, up and down and back and forth, like the loom. Strange that it was not a human being, but a butterfly that first discovered that flax could be spun. Her name is *Flax-Tucker,* and from the leaves she spins, with her own silk, little cradle-quilts and sheets for her children. After the flax once starts growing, she is wise and makes the most of her time, so that her little ones will be ready to fly before the flax is picked.

"And in the medicinal herbs you may believe. Look at this big poppy—flame-red as fever and madness! But in the heart of the flower is a black cross. That is the apothecary's poison label. And in the centre of the cross there is a fluted Roman vase. If you rip these flutes, the

healing fluid, which can cause death if wrongly used, runs out; but it can give you Death's good brother, Sleep, when used rightly.—Yes, so wise and open-hearted is Nature! But now we will take a look at the Gold Powder."

Here he made a pause to see if Blue Wing was curious; but she was not.

"Now we shall look at the Gold Powder."

Another pause! No, Blue Wing could hold her tongue, although she was so little.

"*Now* we'll look at the Gold Powder with the lady's-mantle-flowers and the saxifrage-leaves. These are her distinguishing features, which tell you where the spring is. The Lady's-Mantle gathers both dew and water in its leaves, and in itself is a little clear spring; but the Saxifrage blasts rock.[1] Without mountains you get no springs—the mountains can be any distance away. This the Gold Powder says to those who understand. She grows here on the island, and you shall know the place, because you are good. From your little hand shall the rich man receive the fresh water for his dry

[1] Saxifrage—Latin Saxum, stone; frango, break; the place to break into rock for water.

soul, and through you shall this island be blessed. Peace be with you, my child! When you come into the nut-forest, you'll find a silver linden to the right; under it lies a copperhead snake that isn't dangerous. He will show you the way to the Gold Powder. Before you go, you must give the old man a kiss—but not unless you wish to do so yourself."

Blue Wing pursed up her little mouth and kissed him. Then the old man's countenance was transformed, and he stood there—fifty years younger!

"I have kissed a child and youth has come back to me!" said the gardener, "and you owe me no thanks. Farewell!"

Blue Wing went into the nut-forest. There the silver-lindens played and the hummingbirds sang to their accompaniment, in the linden-blossoms. The copperhead snake lay there, sure enough! but it looked a bit rusty.

"Why, there's Blue Wing, who is to have the Gold Powder!" said the copperhead snake. "You shall have it, but only on three conditions: —Don't gossip; don't deceive; and don't be

curious! Now go straight ahead, and you'll find the Gold Powder."

Blue Wing went straight ahead. Soon she met a lady.

"Good day!" said the lady. "Have you been at the gardener's in Sungleam?"

"Good day," answered Blue Wing, and walked on.

"You do not gossip, at all events," said the lady.

Then she met a gipsy.

"Where are you going to?" asked the gipsy.

"I'm going straight ahead," replied Blue Wing.

"And you don't deceive," said the gipsy.

And then she met a milk carrier. But she couldn't understand why the horse sat in the wagon and the milkman was harnessed to the shafts.

"Now I'll shy," said the driver, and started running so that the horse fell into the ditch. "Now I'll water the rye," said the driver, taking the cover off a milk bottle to sprinkle the field.

Blue Wing must have thought it queer, yet she did not glance in that direction, but walked on.

"Nor are you curious," said the milk carrier.

And now Blue Wing stood at the foot of a mountain. The sun shone in between the hazel bushes on a green row of juicy herbs, that glittered like the purest gold.

Here was the Gold Powder! And Blue Wing saw how it followed the water-veins from the mountain down to the rich man's meadow.

Then she got down on her hands and knees and plucked three Gold Powders, which she hid in her pinafore. With these she went home to her father.

The dragoon donned his cloak, his helmet and his sabre. Then they went to the priest. Later, all three went together to the rich man.

"Blue Wing has found the Gold Powder!" said the priest when he reached the dining-hall door. "And now we are all rich! The whole village is rich, for we shall have a bathing resort."

And it became a bathing resort. Steamers

and merchants came; there were a hotel and a post office, doctors and apothecaries. Gold poured into the village in summer. And this is the story of the Gold Powder, that could make gold.

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