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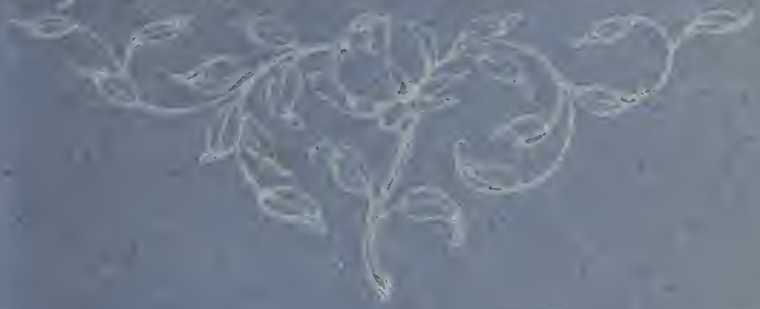
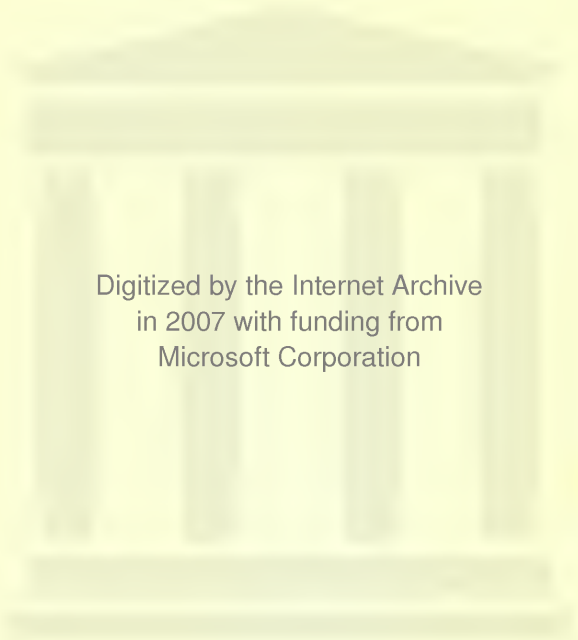


TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH By J. NILSEN LAURVIK



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Translated from the Danish, by
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PAUL ELDER AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS · SAN FRANCISCO

Published, October, 1904

Republished, April, 1916, by
PAUL ELDER & COMPANY

Prefatory Note

In the eleven years that have elapsed since this book was first introduced to American readers the literature of Scandinavia has become an ever-increasing factor in the world of letters. During this period three Scandinavian authors have been awarded the Nobel prize and at least one of these has found a widely interested reading public in America.

Everywhere are signs of a growing desire on the part of American readers to rid themselves of the onus of the "happy ending" by a marked inclination toward books and plays that deal with life at first hand, and it is in response to this growing appreciation of reality that "Andrea" is now republished in the hope that it will find that wider audience which its merits deserve.

Rarely has a more authentic human docu-

ment been presented with finer tact and artistic discretion, qualities which called forth the unstinted admiration of the late Dr. Weir Mitchell who pronounced it "one of the most subtle studies of adolescence that it has been my privilege to peruse."

J. NILSEN LAURVIK.

FOREWORD

This story, giving the spirit process of development by which a girl is changed into a maiden, was written by a Danish novelist and is based upon the study of a real girl. The translator has omitted a chapter relating to the dawn of sex consciousness in order to satisfy American ideas of literary decency. This renders the book incomplete from the psychological point of view, but what remains is the most pathetic, beautiful, and shocking revelation of such a young creature's mind.

There is nothing so frank as perfect innocence, nothing so erect and listening as the waiting heart of a girl. All her instincts hide her, all her affections pray for a discoverer. In a subtle way the author recognizes these characteristics amid the pressure

of many tribulations, which are common to youth and imposed by their elders. But the distinctive features of the study are, first, that we have all the sweetness, treachery, and tenderness of childhood in a foreign guise. Andrea is neither English nor American, but she manifests well-known traits through a personality that is strange to us.

Second, we receive a startlingly clear vision of the wicked capacities of her nature without connecting her with them. She passes before, a dainty white spirit floating above an abyss of aberrant evils. They belong to her by her powers of total personality, but she is not of them, and we are assured that she remains ignorant to the last of this pit which lies beneath the snowy lightness of her spirit.

And, third, it is the emotions of maiden adolescence expressed with the art and definition of a mature intelligence. Any young girl might have felt as Andrea did under the

same conditions and endowed with the same temperament; but not one could ever have set down so accurately the blue and gold of her own thoughts and sensations. Women during this early period of self-recognition never tell what they know, discover, because they cannot. Reticence is the very youth of virtue. When a woman is able to define it in herself she has already lost the maidenly privacy of personality. Nothing is so delicate, so chaste, so unspeakable to herself as the sex life of a young girl; and the real Andrea never could have put her twos and twos together so shrewdly.

But the story is a classic differing entirely from the vulgar self-abortions published by some women writers in this country who imagine that they are maidens because of a merely physical integrity.

CORRA HARRIS.

Reprinted from the Independent, New York.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Child was going to die. The Child had to die. They both wished for it — now.

Yes. Now they wished it.

The Child wished for it also.

It was as if the rooms round about were dying; as if the home became a cold, speechless tomb, that was not concerned with life or the living.

Only one place was inviolate, full of sunshine, fair with flowers, and cheerful with constant laughter — the room where the Child lay, the little Andrea, their tall, grown-up daughter.

She was such that all people loved her — all the people there in the city.

From the market-women upon the market-

place, where she used to buy the season's fruit, there now came thick gray cornucopias full of yellow plums.

"I want to smell, Musser, I want to smell," she laughed; and smelled of the plums which she was forbidden to eat.

From the big gardens round about in the city came dew-wet flowers every morning, and in the evening her boy and girl-friends called with budding branches and downy ferns which they brought from the woods, where never more Andrea would go.

"Let me take them, Musser." And the ferns and flowers were given into her hands and she became wet and laughed gleefully.

Poor old women in the basements and poor maiden ladies in the Almshouse cut geraniums from their flower-pots and came with them.

For flowers, that was the best they had.

"Musser, don't forget to give them coffee," cried Andrea, and she wanted to see them

drink it; but the geraniums she crushed, as they did not smell of anything.

"Do you know what? I have a dreadfully greedy nose; it can never be satisfied!" And then she and the mother laughed at that little nose, which was so delicate and small and did not look at all greedy.

In a large jar stood rushes and cattails. They were brought up from the stream, where Andrea every evening used to row in her white boat, while she sang and shouted, so that it was heard far over the hills where the farmers lived; or she lay flat on her stomach in the bottom of the boat and ate cold pancakes and drifted with the stream.

She had the vanity to drag the oars to and from the boat herself.

It was only when the moon shone that she did not go out on the stream.

And every time she looked at the rushes, she thought that now this was all over for her.

Under the ceiling, flew — stuck on pins — a multitude of butterflies. They had been brought from Brazil by a cousin, and she loved to have them around her for the sake of their beautiful colour, which, though she could no longer see, she remembered well enough; and then for all the imaginings that followed with the thoughts of owning something "from deep, deep in the big primeval forests!"

It grieved her that they were stuck on pins; they should rather have been alive, she thought.

In the centre of the ceiling hung a little Cupid finely carved in white wood. It always flapped about and made the pierced butterflies tremble.

About these there had been a struggle. By the advice of the physician there had come a nurse with long hard hands and a heavy step. She demanded that the dusty finery be pulled down at once — it was out of place in a sick-room.

Then Andrea had wept most bitterly and jumped out of bed. Before evening that strict lady was through in that home.

The mother then nursed her child, and the butterflies flew under the ceiling.

The bookcase was pitiably empty of books; for when Andrea wanted new ones — she would not borrow, she wanted to own them — she sold the old, but the old were of little value because of the many dog-ears that marked "the lovely places."

In the bookcase, back of the green silk curtain, stood her dance slippers and Eskimo shoes, but in the bottom of the bookcase lay a collection of bones and old iron.

Andrea got one penny a pound for these at the junkshop.

And so Andrea found a way in all innocence.

She lay playing with a couple of heather-tufts that the washerwoman's little boy had brought her. They were from the "Rolling Hill," where Andrea every year picked wortle-

berries in competition with the Poorhouse women, and scrambled round and round — alone — until dress and petticoats were in tatters. Then she promised her dress to the one who was poorest; but before she gave it away, the cook must needs weigh it. She could get five cents a pound from "Peter" over at the paper-factory.

Andrea amused herself by letting the dry earth crumble from the roots down on sheet and night-dress.

"Now, Musser — it is surely soiled, not?"

And she let it crumble.

When the besmudged and bedraggled little girls came with a half-eaten candy-stick or a beautiful fragment of glass from the gutter, Andrea wanted to have them lifted up, and they kissed her right on the mouth — but afterward her mother had to wash her face.

Every time the bell rang, she listened and was jubilant over the many gifts that continued to come.

"Musser," said she, "you do not think, do you that it is because of — , you know?"

The mother shook her head and laughed, and the child laughed with her. They always found occasion to laugh, and they both knew that it was the wisest way in which to chase the very sorrowful thoughts from the room.

"Because for my birthday I received thirty-one congratulations, besides bonbons and gifts!"

Andrea lay and looked toward the window.

"Oh — bring me the field-glass!"

"What do you want with that?"

"I am going to use it." She pressed her lips together and looked saucily: "Inquisitive!"

The mother brought the field-glass, and Andrea slid it under the cover.

A little later, when the mother was out for water, Andrea stealthily brought it forth.

With a knowing smile she held it before her eyes, pointed it towards the window and screwed it up and down.

There ought to be a gable with a stork's nest — but it was not there.

No it was not there!

Quietly she dropped the field-glass, folded her hands and sighed; but when the mother came, her eyes were glad again.

"Do you know — I should really like to go to a dance once more; just one little dance!" And she looked sidewise down at the light blue night-gown, that was embroidered with silk flowers on the collar. And she cast a sly glance at the bows in the two dark braids that bound her to the pillow like shining chains.

"I do not know any one who has light blue night-gowns, eh? It was droll that we should hit upon that. Ah, yes, the way one has danced, both when one was allowed to, and when father became hot about the ears be-

cause of it. And how weary those little feet are now!"

With a great effort she thrust forth one foot.

"Heavens! Such a lean little thing. It was good that I took my dance in time, else I should have shaken the bed out of joint with my restlessness in these days. Is it not so, Musser? Don't you agree with me?"

"Yes, of course — but now try to sleep, dear!"

"Sleep! So you think I want to sleep? I want to prattle, I do, and not sleep one single wink. You are surely not tired or peevish, are you?"

No, that the mother was not.

The girl came in with a letter. The mother took it.

"It is from Josephine — shall I read it?"

But the Child wanted to keep the letter until she became well.

It was put into her hands.

"Mother — one never knows what lies

inside of two such white walls. One might become afraid— "

The mother laughed.

"Josephine is not as bad as she appears — but shall I not read it?"

"No — I want to have it for myself. I will read it myself — when the eyes are entirely well!"

She lay crumpling it, straining her eyes to distinguish the signature.

"It is such a living thing, a letter!"

Then she put it away from her.

"Little Mother!"

"Yes—"

"Will you not do everything that I ask for, even though it be stupid, if it is not too shockingly expensive?"

The mother nodded.

"Still if it costs something, eh?"

"That you know very well, little child!"

"Well, all right, then I believe you and take you at your word. I think we ought to have

a celebration to-day, we three old folks. What do you say to that?"

"A celebration?"

"Yes, exactly, a celebration. I want to have Grandmother Voldby's gold chain on and all the rings — fiddle-faddle, little mother, my fingers are not tired to-day. Then you make afternoon-tea for yourself and father with lady-fingers, and an eggnog for me, real white and rich. You put on your new waist and comb the part straight — remember that! And then — no, that you shall do first of all — send word to old Nikolsen to come at once with his accordion and play two hours down in the garden. Two hours! Nothing but song and dance. He does it for twenty-five cents an hour. But hasten, my dear Musser, hasten!"

She laughed, and the mother laughed with her, kissed her on the forehead, and was going.

"Stop a little — there is no one in the whole wide world I think so much of as of you; no,

not one; not a single one. Do you hear that?"

And the mother was hardly out, before the child took the white letter, tore it open, and stared and stared.

This much she saw, that it was only three lines, a greeting and a name.

But it disappeared in a mist.

She rang. The hand that rang the little bell trembled. Very impatiently she rang, and continued, until the girl from the kitchen came storming in.

"Read, Anne — read, quickly, read— "

And Anne gaped in astonishment, and Anne read.

"Once again."

Anne read it once more.

"You may go now — it was only that."

Now the words were imprinted in her memory.

She turned her shoulders so that her head slid out of place. Her neck pained.

Very slowly, very softly she continued to repeat the contents of the letter.

There was in her soul no thought beyond it.

The mother went through the lofty rooms, where the plants stood and withered and made the air close and oppressive, for no one remembered to give them water.

She went to the room where the father sat alone with his sorrow.

But outside of the door she faltered, as was always her habit outside of his door.

He dropped the book, but did not look up.

"What is it?"

"Andrea asked me to call!" She said it softly and humbly. He arose, looked up, but did not look at her.

"Is there — anything else?"

"No — not now. She is so wonderfully

well satisfied. But I know — but I know — oh, Karsten, I feel a great dread. You must be careful. Andrea sees, as if she read our thoughts!"

"Sees—"

"I cannot endure it!"

"You must accustom yourself to it, Jutta. It must be endured!"

He shook off the hand that she had laid on his shoulder.

"Karsten!"

"Could you not spare me these scenes — if only during this time!"

Then she was silent.

Outside of the door she took his hand.

"For her sake!"

Hand in hand, and smiling, they went in — where the child received them with a smile, that came from the depths of her sorrow like their own.

"You come so sweetly;" she looked from the one to the other. "You come so sweetly,

you two. But then you have not been here for over three hours, father!"

He sat down by her bed, and the mother went out again.

"Real rich and white, do you hear, Musser," cried the child.

The father asked how things were.

"Are you the doctor?"

"No, but then — "

"No, but then you should let the doctors take care of that, and look after your boys with their Greek and Latin. But as for that, it goes indifferently well. That is to say, for the moment it goes so remarkably lovely that we are going to have a celebration. But, then, tell me something!"

He told her a little about the school.

"The pudden-heads — oh, oh! Will you have a chocolate pastille as large as a dollar? There in the drawer. But give me half!"

The father put it in between her lips, and she snapped it with a smile.

"It is very tempting, I am going to eat all of it — you take another. But then what will our mother say to that; she has not had any at all, and she has been here the whole day. She is so awfully good to me, indeed she is, so awfully, absurdly good, that it pains me to think of it. She surely sleeps with her eyes ajar, just to watch over me. And she is so sad, so sad. We should really give her something for all her goodness to us, should we not? A silk waist? When she does not stoop over she has a very charming figure. Blue it must be, of course, like all the others. Shall we?"

The father promised it, and played with her hand.

"Have you seen how we have dressed up?" She showed him her rings. "Do you remember that one? That was an uncomfortable time, indeed. What a hubbub you made! and the way the doctors gaped at me! I can remember I thought,— "if only they do not cut me open

like a fish to see what there is inside of me." But then you gave me the ring so as to lie mouse-quiet. They were so sure that I was done for, but they were certainly fooled that time!" She laughed quietly.

"*That time—*"

The father saw the changed expression.

"You got that one with the pearls for your confirmation!"

"Yes, thank you, my dear master, we remember. Only girl in white silk with train. And then we had forgotten the garters at home, ha, ha! And the stockings slipped down. I threatened Goldsmith Larsen with all manner of torture. 'If you do not induce father to buy that ring, you will never get brooches to repair for either Agnes, Jeannette, Edith, or me; so now you know it.' And Larsen was obliging enough, and you were a dear, stupid father, who jumped right into the trap!"

"Yes, because he had such an awfully artful daughter!"

"Well — yes, you may say that, if you will; but then I have done worse things than that. Shall I confide the worst to you? It cost *one hundred and fifty*. That was because of the stone, you understand. But you must not dare to tell Musser, for she has such scruples. She says that I must neither lie nor steal. Now do you know any one who neither lies nor steals? Of course you don't, certainly not! 'Larsen, mark the ring down to fifty crowns; then we buy it.' And Larsen, he was a sly fellow. 'Why, father, have you ever in your life seen anything so disgracefully cheap — the one who could own *such* a ring!' Father went into the trap, and I got the ring on the Christmas tree; but for eleven months Larsen shared half of my pocket-money."

"But, what is this I hear? Then that must have been the time you sold bones and rags and old iron?"

"That was it, father. Heaven knows, one had to find a way out of it. How I begged

Musser for soup, which is so disgusting, merely for the sake of the bones. You are not cross on account of the ring — I tell you, I love it at least as much as my long nail!"

"Droll little girl with the nail!"

"Yes, why not? But can you remember Lavinia Fink, the beautiful, — she who had no husband? She wore either raven-black or snow-white with green shoes and red stockings, and she was so inexpressibly lovely and Bohemian. Her nails, however, were ever so much finer than mine. But then I let one grow out on my big toe as well, and that was extra! Look, father, here it is; see how it glistens. It becomes more shiny and quaint-looking, the weaker I myself grow."

The father tried to jest, and promised her small silk cases for the nail.

"Father!"

"Yes!"

"Have you noticed the way everything fades? It's the sun; but Anne insists that the

night-dress here is not faded; and you can see, can't you, that it is nearly lavender? That's so — listen! there was something— "

"That— "

"That you must help me with. Oh, father, won't you — teach me the Danish letters, but in an awful hurry?"

"But tell me, what do you want with them?"

"Father, you must teach me them!"

"Yes, yes, as soon as you are better, you can learn them in two hours, surely!"

"Father, you have promised it every day . . . if you do not teach them to me . . . I cannot die peacefully."

She said it very quietly, and held her father's eyes the while; then she repeated:

"Not peacefully, then!"

Perceiving that there was a feeling of dread and apprehension over the child, he gave his word that he would teach her the Danish letters the next day.

"Father — you must not forget it, — you

must not, you must not, both the large and small letters; just as they wrote in the olden days!"

He promised to remember the old-fashioned characters.

"But then there was a note I wanted to write . . . will you help me with it, father? I want so very much to write it myself, only two lines. That I can do, I am sure, with big, big letters, can't I?"

"Andrea, little girl — the doctor says—"

"If you will not, then you will not. I can count the spots on the curtain and the butterflies from here. I am not altogether blind yet. But then we'll talk no more about that. If only I were up; if only I were up!"

Suddenly she threw the cover about her and said in a voice that bubbled over with laughter: "Then I would surely amuse you!"

The maid came in with a coarse paper bag for Andrea.

"Now what can it be?" She stretched out

her hands. The father took the bag, opened it, and began to laugh.

"Who is it from, Anne?"

"It was a sailor, or some one of that kind, who said that it was for our sick lady."

The father emptied the bag — ship's-crackers as big as soup plates. They smelled mouldy.

But Andrea said, coyly: "Let me taste — they are from my sweetheart!"

"Oh, so that is it; yes, I suppose you have many sweethearts?"

"Only one and a half, father, one and a half; and then you: but this is from the one!"

"Not from the half?"

"No — from my real sweetheart!"

"Which one is that?"

"The one with the crackers. He is a sailor and has curly hair, and only one ear, and a red-muffler around his neck."

"How my little girl talks!"

"Why, father, it is true. I will tell you all.

But you must not laugh, nor become grieved, nor get angry, will you? It is a great secret!"

"I am all ears!"

"Then put your ear close down to me, and I'll whisper it to you. It was last year, when I was out rowing. He sat and played the accordion up on the deck of the ship. And one evening he did not play, but stood and munched crackers, and I was very flippant, you know. 'Give me one, too,' I cried; and he threw one down to me, and then we became good friends. I saw his sleeping-room, and I assure you, father, that it was no larger than a bed — and there lay two, one above the other, on shelves; upon my word they did. Ugh! He certainly is not handsome. But this year he came back; and he had broken his leg over in England, and was so sad. You are not angry, are you, father?"

"No, no — what else?"

"Yes — then I promised to marry him, when I am twenty years old, and he is captain

of a vessel. I do not care the least bit more for *him* than for the man without a nose down on the wharf — but then *he* has no one who cares for him. And all that he has seen in foreign countries! You should just hear! To be sure Pierre Loti's little sailor was indeed a different and nicer fellow. He has kissed me seven times — but not on the mouth, of course; and he has given me his word, that when we are married, he will still refrain from kissing me on the mouth. It is only you and Musser, who may do that. Now then, what do you say?"

The father kissed her.

"Father has nothing at all to say when his little girl takes sweethearts on her own account."

"Well, now . . . was it . . . was it shabby of me to deceive him, when I knew, that . . . that I, . . . you know?"

"Oh, no, Andrea, it was not at all . . . shabby!"

"I have not told it to you before, for suppose you had thought I should get well, you might have give him a raking over the coals! He would be very happy, I can tell you, if you gave him my Chinese-silk mufflers; for he thinks them most beautiful. You need not say anything about it to Musser, for she will tell it to all the other ladies, and that we cannot have, can we?"

"No, it shall be between us two!"

"Father, if you whimper, then I'll cry. You must laugh. Kiss me, little father, my lovely, lovely father. My very *loveliest* father. Lay your hand here on my forehead, then we will keep quiet for two minutes. So.... now look at your watch. Sh!....Sh!!"

He took his watch out, and Andrea followed the hands.

"Ugh, now I can stand it no longer. Father, if now I should become quite blind, it would not matter so much after all; because you can tell me everything — can you not?

Cannot we two also agree upon one pair of eyes, we two?"

The father could not find words to answer.

Suddenly she pressed her lips together and became ashen pale.

"What was it? What was it? I was so frightened. I am so afraid. It is in here, little father . . . feel . . . help me!"

He laid his hand on her chest, and noticed the uneasy beating of her heart.

"And what will you do, when you are alone? what will you do . . . you two?"

"Andrea!"

He could not bear to hear those words.

"If I keep quiet, I shall burst. . . . If I only knew one thing, — that you were happy together, with love and little gifts, and five-o'clock tea every day. Musser is so good, so good; but happy, — that she certainly is not. It is just as if her eyes continually ask for pardon; as if she had done something wrong. If you only kissed each other every morning,

and . . . yes, you should both sleep in here and think of me. Then, I can tell you, she would never take morphine to make her sleep. She could squeeze herself into my bed, and you could have hers, for it seems so poor and forlorn now. You could lie together, hand in hand . . . if only I were sure of it, I should almost not be the least bit afraid of . . . "

"Andrea . . . we will do everything that you ask!"

"Will you? Will you? In here . . . you and Musser? Do you dare say 'honour bright' on that? Father, father, how I love you! I can notice it far out in my ribs, and *there* the heart is not, I am sure! If only now I could be with you — we three, all alone! May I — may I tell her about it? Gracious, how glad she'll be! It is not a fib, is it? You are not deceiving me? You surely would not, eh? No, certainly not. Thank you for that, father. Oh, now I am as light as a feather!"

"Tell me, Andrea, is there anything you wish for very much?"

"Wish for, wish for? Yes, God bless you, to be sure there is. First, a pair of awfully strong spectacles, awfully, awfully strong, so that I myself can read my letters; and then a red skating cap with a tiny gold bell in the tassel — that is surely something I have gotten from a fairy tale . . . but here in the city one cannot get them, do you think so? And then a thick, very, very thick, raw, red carrot to munch — you do not know how I love such carrots! Then there is nothing more, unless . . . yes . . . lift me a little, carry me a little! Oh, father, carry me a little, I am so tired of lying down. We'll shut the door, eh?"

"I dare not — you can't stand it!"

"Lift me, lift me a little . . . it will probably be the last time. Now that I ask you!"

Then the father lifted her carefully and tenderly, and carried her in his arms up and down the floor, up and down. She nestled

up to him, and looked closely at everything.

"This is lovely . . . we fly, we two. It relieves me somewhat, when you walk with me like this. It is as if I were covered with feathers. We two, father dear, we know best!

Father . . . there is so much I want to have on my own little stone, but we will not speak of that now. In the drawer over there under the astrologer's card, it lies. You will see to it, will you not?"

He nodded and kissed her on the eyes. She became heavy in his arms, and fell into a light slumber. He could not relax his hold on her, and not until she shivered from the cold did he lay her down; and then she awoke at once.

"Father — if Josephine sends a wreath, it must not come on my grave!"

"Are you angry with Josephine?"

She nodded and her eyes became big.

"Father — she has done me harm. Now, remember, even though it were the most beautiful of them all!"

The father promised to remember all that she said, and never to forget it.

"Father, tell me — is it entirely impossible? Yes, or no? Then afterwards I will tell you what it is!"

"What shall I answer?"

"I — no, of course!"

"Very well, then — no, it is not impossible!"

"Now — there we have caught a wise old rat! That was the best that could ever happen . . . a little bit of a fat lassie, just as greedy as a puppy; and her name must be Andrea. Andrea shall be her name!

"What do you mean now, child?"

"Have I your word, or have I not? It was not impossible, you said yourself. How I have wished for it! She would surely become a paragon of strength and beauty, who could both dance and get married, and all the rest. For I know very well all the rest: I know much more than you think!"

The father hid his face in his hands. An-

drea drew a little sigh, but laughed right after, so that no one should notice it.

"What has become of Nikolsen and the eggnog? I am sleepy. It whirls and throbs inside of my head!"

And shortly after: "Haven't you a cold hand, father, an ice cold hand? The way it swells, the way it burns . . . an ice cold hand . . . Father, that is the only thing I care for. Dear God, you ought not to refuse me that!"

The cramps were upon her. The mother came, running. She nearly drove her husband from the child's bed. He went toward the door; this was almost unendurable.

But he would not allow himself to be forced by the pain of it to leave his child now that the end was approaching.

But he had to go.

Down in the garden, old Nikolsen had begun to play — a merry waltz; and the mother forgot to tell him to stop.

She knelt by the side of her child and

thought: Is this, then, at last the merciful death!

For she had watched the child's sufferings, had seen the dread in her eyes, had heard her pitiful moaning night and day.

But it was not death.

Darkness fell, and night came on.

In a room in the farthest corner of the house, the father walked up and down. He let his fingers stray along the high rows of the bookshelves, but the book that could draw his thoughts to it was not there.

And he knew that the heart-suffering he now experienced was as nothing to the emptiness that soon would envelop him wheresoever he was, and wheresoever he went.

For Andrea was in the whole world the only person who had a part in his heart. And the thought of the promise he had given regarding *her* mother, now came to him.

It had come to this, Jutta, in his thoughts, was only Andrea's mother.

He lighted a cigar and marvelled that it would not keep alight. He also marvelled that although his child was soon to leave him, he was not sitting by her bed.

He was alone.

The child's mother was there. She clung to her right . . . as if by Andrea's bed there was not room for two. When the one came, the other went out.

He turned the key in both doors, seated himself by the writing table, and hid his face in his hands.

Andrea could not speak; she never could after these attacks. It was as if the tongue stuck fast and became heavy in her mouth. She could not speak; but when she moved her lips, the mother moistened them with a sponge dipped in wine. She lay with clear, express-

ionless eyes. But there was an apprehensive dread over her. The mother noticed it by the helpless despair with which she wrote and wrote on the counterpane — wrote with those thin fingers.

The mother lit a number of candles, and placed them close about the bed. Andrea's pupils contracted.

Then the mother knew that this time she was not blind after the attack. She held a rose over to her, and she received the fragrance with astonishment, but evidently did not see the flower.

The mother began to sing little songs with many verses — her voice was broken with sorrow.

Now the hands became quiet; they lay flat on the sheet as if they belonged together, and had died together.

And the mother did not take her eyes away from those hands, now that they were at rest.

"Go . . . to bed . . . Musser!"

A softer sound was not to be heard; it was more subdued than the lamp's quiet song and the feeble sigh of the breathing, but with her heart the mother felt every word. Obediently she undressed herself for the night, and crept into the bed that stood close to the child's.

Her eyes needed the solace of tears.

For a very long time there was a sorrowful silence.

"Aren't you sleeping? Are you afraid of that . . . . you know . . . . to-night?"

She did not wait for the mother's answer.

"I have called over a hundred times, and called and called. You did not hear it. I could not see, but my eyes became cold, and they were open, and I could not speak a word. It swelled inside of me, and crawled so disgustingly on my tongue. You do not know how dreadful it was. But then I remembered that I was still here . . . with you. Now, isn't it odd that you can't hear how it cries out within me? . . . Oh dear, Musser, do you

burn Christmas candles now? Such an idea! Have you no money? You might, at least, afford a real candle. It is so horribly dark here!"

The mother let her believe that it was Christmas candles, but asked her to lie perfectly quiet, and began a lullaby to bring her into a slumber.

"Yes but, yes but — I must needs talk while yet I can . . . so that I may be empty. Mother — afterwards, what then, if I am not empty? When even one's own mother cannot hear anything!"

Now there were tears in the voice, and the mother hastened to comfort her. She assured her, and insisted that a mother is one with her child, and that nothing can separate them.

"Yes, such things are said, but they are not borne out. Have you ever heard of a father or mother who died because their child died? No, they eat every blessed day, and sleep and talk. That about being "one" is all nonsense. You do not know, for instance, what I lay

here meditating about — but then it would not be pleasant, either, if you did . . . No . . . but tell me, just for fun, how long you will be with me every day — one hour, two hours? Because I know for a certainty that one's thoughts do not cease, and I shall be longing so awfully for you — much, much more, than you for me. For you have the streets and books and the food and all that. Now . . . how long? In the beginning, three hours, perhaps?"

The mother would not leave her child either by night or day.

"Musser, you always make such rash promises; one should never promise more than one can keep. And eat, you surely must, and sleep . . . I am only afraid that I shall starve; it is so awful to think of: to starve . . . But I know something about you, Musser, and it is good . . . if only it is true."

She was tired and began to whisper.

"Father has said it himself — it was he

who thought of it . . . he will stay here at night, with you, every single night. Then you surely can go to sleep, can you not? And do you think he lies?"

For a moment the mother forgot everything else in the thought of herself and weighed word for word what the child was saying.

But Andrea noticed the doubt, and repeated the promise time and again, embellished it, coloured the words, laid her own heart's meaning in it — the mother must believe, must be made happy.

"And then you will surely get something else to do than to sit by me! But of that I will not say anything, father will tell you that himself. And oh! how often I have run off from you, even though you were alone!"

She sighed.

"Little mother, would that there were a shop where they sold cold, cold, hands. Thank you . . . no, yours are warm, too."

The tower clock struck two. Andrea was

silent, and the mother was silent with her; but at the stroke of the half hour she moaned.

"Mother . . . that was only a half-hour. Oh, how long it was! If one could only pluck this thought out of the head as one pulls out a tooth — if only one could! Think of it; you are my mother, and you cannot take one of these gruesome thoughts! You should only know how they steal about inside of me. If we were rich, then you could build a marble tomb; and there I should like to be. But, mother . . . mother . . . I shall lie down there many, many, many hours, while you go up here and forget me! How can you have the heart to do it! . . . Nonsense, Musser, I am really not so much afraid, but lonely, yes, that it surely will be . . . lonely. Can you remember what we had on the day I became ten years old? Bread pudding with whipped cream, pan cakes with currant jelly, and, best of all — apple compote. For those were my favourite dishes. Don't you think it is because

I always ate mustard with a teaspoon that I have such a sharp memory?"

There was silence, but Andrea began again: "Why does not father come? You surely have not quarrelled? Mother, have you quarrelled?"

The mother told her that he had gone to bed.

"Now, you know that is not true. He goes up in his room and waits, and waits for something . . . that he is afraid of. Mother, is he not a little bit cowardly, just a little?"

The mother answered "No," and the child whimpered: "Mother . . . you are so far away! If I make myself real little and thin, may I not come over to you, eh? My bed is so cold!"

The mother took her over to herself, as when she was a little child and lay on her breast.

They wept so inaudibly, that the one was not aware of the other's weeping.

"Hold me real tight, it matters not if you squeeze . . . In a little while it will hurt; it comes from deep, deep inside of me . . . Before, I used to dream that some one twisted a corkscrew down into my head, and wanted to wrench it off — now, it is just as if it were sticking there . . . Musser, little Musser, I really never would have married, but always have remained with you and earned money besides, so that when you became old . . . Even though you were as deaf and cross as Mistress Hansen . . . You shall have all the things in my bureau drawer, then you will have something to adorn yourself with, not? But then you must also dress every day . . . When we haven't me, then you can get so many more dresses . . . but tell Madame Berg that she must by all means see to it that you do not allow your right side to sag!"

She laughed that little, embarrassed laugh that reminded one strongly of the mother's.

"And you must never eat goose-fat . . . on account of the complexion!"

She nestled close to the mother, and her hands were cold.

"As soon . . . as soon, as, you know what I mean . . . Josephine shall have my sapphire ring. The same day . . . but not before. It is not necessary before!"

"Do you care so *much* for Josephine, then?"

"Yes . . . *so* much do I care for Josephine!"

CHAPTER TWO

Toward the morning Andrea died. The parents sat by her bed, torn with anguish and fear by her death-struggle.

What was it that they should "burn, for God's sake, burn?"

What was the wager that Josephine had won? What was the remorse that cried forth from the child's lips?

And so imploringly she continued to ask: "Father, little father, teach me the Danish letters, teach me them soon, teach me them now!"

But the last words were followed by a smile: "Musser, your dress sags: what will father say to that?"

And now it was over, all over.

The little clock continued to run, to run, to hasten — now, when there was nothing more to hasten after.

The father looked at his hands, that but a little while ago had carried Andrea to free her from the fear of death that had oppressed her as she struggled between the white pillows which she mistook for a coffin; but she did not know him.

He looked at those hands.

Again it was night. There were three in the room, but the one did not breathe.

The father sat by Andrea's bed and held her hand in his; but every time he became aware that the hand was cold and without life, he shuddered and looked fearfully aside.

Over there, by the lamp, the mother sat and sewed, stitch after stitch, stitch after stitch,

the long white silk dress for Andrea. Thus she had wished to have it. "But Musser shall sew it afterwards — what if it does get a little wrinkled? And you surely need not sew the buttonholes; that is something no one will notice, eh, Musser?"

It was one of the promises that must be kept.

The mother pricked her finger; the mother thrust the needle through the silk, and her tears were mingled with the many stitches. But he who sat over there by the child, he said not a word — he did not comfort her with the slightest sign. And only when he shuddered did she tremble; and she also was reminded that there was one in the room whom they feared — Death was there.

That night was long, so long that the mother forgot her tears. And then the white silk dress was finished, and he and she carefully drew the light-blue nightgown from the child's shoulders and dressed her for the coffin. Still

they did not speak to each other. The father lifted her up for the last time in his arms, while the mother arranged the bier as it should be. There fell a little sheet of paper on the floor, which he picked up and kept. He recognized it. He had seen Andrea crumple it up, smooth it out, and crumple it up again. He hid this little sheet of white paper.

"Do you remain here, Jutta?" Now he spoke for the first time.

"Shall I go away — from my child?" she said. Then he turned about and went out.

The mother had fallen deep into her abyss of sorrow, and she cried out to all the winds for help. She was near to losing her reason.

She felt as only a mother can feel — that overpowering agony because the child, who

had once by force been taken from her very heart, now again, with ten-fold greater force, was torn from her.

They all saw that her grief was greater than she could bear; and they tried, as best they could, to share it with her, for *they* also had loved Andrea.

They also had loved Andrea — *all* those who knew her. And that which, with large, uneven pencil marks she had written on back of the prescriptions, was preserved with the utmost care, as if it were her legal will and testament.

From the time she was brought into the chapel the father kept watch over her every night. He perceived from her death-struggle that this lay on her mind.

No, he did not keep watch over the empty churchyard; he stood there leaning against the wall of the chapel with his eyes open, awake and thinking.

In there she lay, his little soul, "The child

with the warm, warm heart," as Stephen had called her.

As he stood there, he wondered that his brother's words should keep running through his mind.

But the whole night long it sang in his thoughts, and welled over in his eyes: "The child with the warm, warm heart!"

And thus she was buried, as she had desired it, entirely so. Old Nikolsen was the only one omitted, as the sexton declared it would be sacrilege if one permitted accordion music in a holy churchyard.

Inside of the coffin, between myrtle crosses and wreaths as small as necklaces, lay long rolls of chocolate pastilles — those that were "like dollars." These last were brought by the little children who had so often received small gifts from Andrea.

The soft, lustrous coverlet from Smyrna, that used to lie on Andrea's bed — or, when she played Harem, on the floor — was now wrapped about the coffin, so that the earth should not penetrate through the seams.

The grave was chosen towards the south, because she was so susceptible to cold and such a lover of the sun.

Her friend Edith played the violin; she cried and played, and the tones became discordant and squeaky, but no one noticed it.

Afterwards Edith had to play in the empty home for all the little children who had left their games to follow Andrea. They were given ginger cakes and lemonade and egg-nogs, as rich and white as the cook was able to make them on such a day.

There were those among the people of the town who called all this mere mummery, but *they* had not read Andrea's pencil marks on the old prescriptions.

The father had removed Josephine's wreath himself — it was of pure white flowers, and the most beautiful of them all. He sat a long time and turned it about in his hands.

What was meant by *Harm?*

Andrea wanted to have a cherry tree on her

grave and many giant strawberries, as many as there was room for. But besides this she also wished that each of her friends would plant a little flowering plant out by her. The weeds must not be taken away, and there should stand fine, large, white benches, so that one might sit comfortably and long by her.

The grave must not be made into a mound, but should be flat, like a greensward.

There was raised a little, white stone, and on it was written:

THE CHILD WITH THE WARM, WARM HEART.

Three months later the mother, one day, began to look over Andrea's treasures.

At first she had been unable to bear even the thought of parting with anything that had belonged to Andrea.

The ring was *not* sent to Josephine.

Nothing must be disturbed in the child's room. She cried out in wild wrath when, by the order of the Master,* the bedding was removed and the empty bed covered over with a quilt.

She would not relinquish her claim to anything — not even to the withered flowers nor the empty medicine bottles — not a thing would she part with.

The mother stood in there; she wanted to give her sorrow new nourishment, new life.

But when she had emptied the wardrobe of its contents, it was as if she saw Andrea's half-blind, reproachful eyes.

Terrified, she dropped what she held and went out of the room. Long after she seemed to hear Andrea say, half jestingly, half offended: "But, Musser, what are you about? Keep away from my things!"

* The husband.

The next time, when she overcame her fear, and went in to continue the arranging of the things, she missed a lavender dress that above all the others was the one most dear to Andrea.

She did not know of anything else to do than to go to the child's father. The dress must surely be stolen.

He regarded her with that dark, contemptuous smile which, like a cold blast, could fly over his face.

"Was it worth so much, that dress?"

She was silent and timorous, and did not understand what he meant; but when he gently repeated the question, she answered that it had cost at least forty crowns, even though it was made at home.

He pulled out the drawer of the writing-table, and counted out four bank-notes: "So now, perhaps, you will do me the kindness not to speak of that theft any more!"

At the moment she was tired, simply tired. And she needed the money. Since Andrea's

death it was more difficult than ever before to ask for money.

She took them and went out.

But once inside of Andrea's room she was overpowered with despair and humiliation.

She pulled out the bureau drawers and rummaged among all the foolish things the child had accumulated.

And she found a vague comfort in the belief that Andrea had, during her last illness, been drawn more to herself than to the father.

The mother glanced hastily now here, now there, and in everything she could see Andrea, the clever, the capricious.

The whole of the small top drawer was filled up with papers, letters, note-books and writing-books.

She picked up this and that. This was a clear and concise account of bones, rags and old iron, silk stockings and comfits, bathing tickets for dirty little children, whiskey for the inmates of the poor-house asylum.

Andrea had a sense of order only in one thing. In money matters she was inordinately careful. Even "two pennies omitted in the column" was entered.

There were a number of writing-books half-filled with poor verses, and under the writing-books two blue pamphlets.

"Must be burnt unread. My *father* must not read them. Nor my mother. YOU MUST NOT. Andrea."

It was the Diary.

The mother knew that if she remained there any longer she would read every word. And she went out so as not to be tempted.

But out into the night, when she lay struggling with her sick thoughts, she fetched the "Diary."

She turned over the leaves and saw that the last entries were written with lead pencil and scarcely a month before the child's death.

She read:

FROM THE DIARY

CHAPTER FOUR

From the Diary

1892.

I am so lonesome since Helen Simons died. But I could not help it.

All the others cried so the whole way through the streets while we strewed flowers, and I will always keep the basket as a remembrance of Helen's death. But I thought it was so amusing to see the people leaning out of their windows and gaping after us. And I had Mistress Page's big hat on, because I must needs have a black one, and I was completely covered up by it and could not cry.

I tried very hard, but during the whole time we stood at the grave the most funny thoughts came to me — (that was surely the

devil whispering to me, said Edith; for she gives herself such airs, now that she takes catechetical instruction).

And they cried out a lot of gibberish in Hebrew, which sounded like the parish spelling class. I had ten pieces of block sugar in my pocket, but I did not dare take a bite, while we were standing there. The coffin was awfully lovely with pure white flowers, and the sun shone. I thought so of pancakes. If only it had rained, I could perhaps have cried a little. But I remember the time when Helen fell into the fountain with all her clothes on, and the Mistress cried: "She drowns, she drowns," and we giggled.

Jeannette plucked me by the sleeve, and said I ought to be ashamed of myself because I did not cry; but how could I help it?

And the rabbi said, that she should greet Father Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and all the Jewish gentlemen cried: "Also from me, also from me." And then it was that I be-

gan to laugh so awfully, for I seemed to see Helen knock on the gate of Heaven and courtesy and say: "They all send their greeting from home."

But they thought I was taken sick, and afterwards I began to cry most dreadfully, but that was because of embarrassment, and not at all on account of Helen.

Mother thought it was so touching to see us strewing flowers, and she wept; but father said it was nonsense. They can never agree upon *anything*.

But the old Jewish gentlemen were all simpering and snivelling, and Simons has five girls besides Helen!

To-night I will read in the Bible about the Jews, for the Christians are so frivolous.

But when I am going to die, I will scrape together a whole lot of money and buy chocolate to take with me in the coffin. I will beg father's old clothes, for Musser's are of no account when she is through with them.

It is very odd indeed that I am going to die: I am so much alive; but then it will surely not be before I am twenty, and that leaves six years and one month — I really do not care to live any longer than that, for there is so much in the world that is sad and sorrowful.

Helen was buried above her grandmother, but she was like a witch — ugh, I would rather lie by a very young girl. Fiddle-sticks! they talk about Heaven and Hell. For I can surely come into Heaven with mother: she is so pious and goes to church regularly; but father . . . that is an impossibility. What should he do in Heaven?

I want to go with my father.

Amen!!!

Father is lovely!!!

That book called "Ghosts" is a strange one; there is not a single spectre in it; so for that matter father need not have advised me against reading it.

But then it was a sin that I laughed.

JAN., 1893.

As soon as I become real grown-up, I will go to Copenhagen, which is a wicked place for a young lady to live in.

I should prefer to be an artist or a poet, but rather an artist, and paint the loveliest tapestries; for those here in the city are shockingly hideous; they look like cotton goods and peasant-petticoats.

First, I will paint a big, green meadow, with the clear water running through it, and steeplechases for the hunt, and flying swallows that eat insects; and there shall be big forests and high mountains, snow-topped and crested with castles, like the curtain in the theatre. That tapestry shall be used for a large and lofty hall. Perhaps Jacobsen, the brewer, will buy it, for he has more money than the king. But his statues stand in another house. Father says, they are the best things in Copenhagen, but I think that the King's Square must be finer.

Those houses that have towers shall have another kind of tapestry: a dark blue, just like what you see when you lie in your bed at night and look out upon the heavens and the Milky Way and the stars. It seems to me as if they were crawling away on a multitude of little bits of legs.

Stars and golden bantams and butterflies are to me the loveliest things in the whole world. But those people must not laugh loud or cry out or click their heels, for then they would be out of keeping with the tapestry.

Tyra Danebods Hall of Mourning was dark-blue — Mother's gowns are always dark-blue; it resembles Sorrow and Night and Sadness — the dark-blue. But mother cannot help getting spots on them.

My office shall be right in the centre of Prince Street, and when people come to order tapestries from me (for, of course, they will hear that mine are the most beautiful), then

I'll look them right in the eyes until I know them by heart, and then I'll know to a dot what kind of tapestry will suit them.

Every person has his colour, and that I can see by looking at him. Edith shall have pale lavender and Josephine the deepest red, which is redder than jelly — and Musser should really have something pale and sombre, something like hyacinths.

It is very important to know this, for then the rooms will be in harmony with the people who live in them.

The poor shall not pay a farthing for them, but the rich shall pay a thousand crowns for one tapestry. Then I'll give Musser money to go to Paris with, and when she comes home she'll be the most beautiful lady in the whole city, so that father will gladly go out arm in arm with her.

Father's room shall be gray, but of the kind that shines and also looks like velvet.

He should have a vaulted ceiling.

FEB., 1893.

Well, now, I have never heard the like of this! Lynges' cook has one father who is a lieutenant, and one who is a butler, and one who is a police sergeant, and one who is a baker!

It is written in the church book.

She has said to Edith that she would swear that it is gospel truth.

My! but that must be strange — I thought it was possible to have only one.

Edith says that she has the red hair from the butler, and the flat nose from the officer. She is proud of him, but then he is dead.

Suppose I too had a different father here and there round about in the city! But that is quite impossible. When I hold my hands around father's brow I can feel that we two belong together just as much as two eyes. He can suffer the same things as I, and neither does he eat beans nor meat-soup.

And then I could not touch any other man

so — except, perhaps, Uncle Stephen; but then he is father's brother.

When he speaks, it is as if a hand were laid gently on my head. Oh, that he would always come when I am sick, but of course he cannot know it beforehand.

I wonder if it is also possible sometimes to have more than one mother? That I could believe more readily, for there are many little things about mother which are not like me. She always draws such a deep breath before opening a door, as if she were afraid of some one inside.

I will look it up in the big dictionary. It seems to me that it is only in books that one has two parents.

MAY, 1893.

I would rather have a headache and a nosebleed every day. I am so awfully afraid. And that is because I am so sick inside. Last night I sat up in bed and dared not sleep, and

my heart jumped up and down just as it does when I begin to be sick. It is surely one of the big arteries that has burst. And mother is not at all nice to me; she goes about sulky and indifferent.

She says that it is just as natural as nose-bleed. Oh, yes, thank you! Perhaps it would also be natural if suddenly a hole should break in my breast and the blood flow out.

My hands have become so white, and my eyes and heart pain me so. Father has given me a lace fan, but what shall I do with that when I am going to die?

I would almost rather have cramps, for I know what that is. It is queer, but I cannot keep from thinking of giving birth to children.

I should like to run away from myself, the whole thing is so dreary.

If only it were the pulse-artery on the wrist, then one could see it.

I would go with mother to church on Sun-

day and even dust her room, if it would only stop. Not even father takes any notice of it; he merely says I must be very quiet.

But that is the way when one is often sick: then there is no one who considers it of any account.

CHAPTER FIVE

JUNE, 1893.

To-day, I read "A Visit" by Brandes, not by Géorg, for that is his great brother, but by Edward. Father did not want me to read it, because it was not for children. But I understood it all, and quite agreed with Florizel. I know full well that they kissed each other in that hotel and slept in the same room, but then he was handsome and wonderful, and I think that most likely I should have done the same as Florizel.

For just think of sleeping entirely alone in a big, strange hotel !

I am certain that he talked like Uncle Stephen, so sweet and low, like the sound of tinkling sheep bells on a summer's eve.

Now, no one shall call me a child: why, in olden days one was often married before one was fifteen years old. Ethel is no more grown-up than I, although she is one year and five months older. And she is stupid and poor in reading, but she can play most exquisitely.

It seems to me, after all, that it was better to live when I was quite young, then the thoughts whisked off of themselves.

Oh! that I were dead and gone. Then they would surely sit by my grave together, hand-in-hand, and become good friends again — which they must have been, for otherwise they could not have begotten me. For that comes of love alone.

God! What a stupid child I was last year when I thought that one got children simply by thinking of one another. But Florizel got a child, and Brandes forgets entirely to talk about that, which was the most embarrassing part of it all.

It is not to be endured. It is as if they were bartering for me: they both want to buy me.

Edith's father and mother sleep in one room, of course, and Astra's parents also, and Jeannette's; and my mother does not snore, decidedly not. I have listened three times; she sleeps as quietly as a mouse. And as she does not snore, or walk in her sleep, or scream at night, why, father surely need not sleep alone in his own room.

It is exceedingly embarrassing for me and for mother, and it looks so poor and forlorn when one has a husband and is married to him.

Ethel says that is the way one does if one wants to avoid having many children, and that may be true; but, then, we have only me, and two — three more would certainly not matter. The riding-master should have moved up into the attic long ago, then he would surely have had five children less, and then they need not eat bare bread.

If only mother would remember to have her hair parted straight, and to keep her collar from slipping up, and to have the glasses nicely polished; for such things vex Ethel's father also. And as for me, my wife might just as well have her hair parted wrong, and I had just as leave wipe the glass with my napkin. The other day I parted my hair outrageously crooked on purpose, but father simply laughed, and did not scold in the least.

Mother is a real popinjay, but father might be a little in love with her, anyway, and kiss her on the hand. That is the most charming thing possible. And she is, I am sure, very much in love with him.

But I cannot bear always to have her questioning me as to what we talk about on our little excursions, for there really is not anything to tell, especially when we do not speak a word, but only run pell-mell out over the country road.

Father is distinguished and proud and all

that, but mother looks like Limping Mary when she begs old clothes. And I will never have confidential friends when I am married, for my husband surely will not like that, and besides it is somewhat common.

That Edward Brandes must surely resemble my father, except that he, of course, has an awfully big nose like the old Jewish gentlemen here in the city; but if father wanted to, he could easily write books like that about remarkable people, the reading of which makes one wise.

And father has surely experienced a great deal in his youth; but a father will not speak about that, not even to his own little girl, which is me.

SEPT., 1893.

Knud is only a boy, but he is so violent. He said in all seriousness that he would kill me if I did not marry him in eight years, when he becomes a minister. It gave me

such a queer feeling, as if some one had drawn a red hot darning needle up and down my back. Ugh!

He said I should be a volcano when I am twenty years old! Now, what can he know about that?

And besides I do not care about exploding mountains that are black, and smoke like a lamp. No, he should rather compare me to a marble statue or an alabaster statue that came to life.

I will not marry a minister, for he must be so serious. I will not marry at all — it is not necessary. Uncle Stephen is not married, either.

Now how can it be? Ordinarily I can only hear what people say; it dribbles along as from the spout of a drain pipe, just so; always the same. But what he says, that I can see — the same as if I looked through coloured glass. It resembles a multitude of small rainbows . . . one would think he had a colour

box in his mouth. It is sheer nonsense, but it is true, nevertheless. And then he speaks the words so softly, as if they were of velvet.

If Christ spoke like that to His disciples, I can well understand that they remembered it and could write it down. I also could write everything that he has said to me. That is not so much, of course; for he talks mostly with father, and is here such a short time.

SEPT., 1893.

To-day I made the worst blunder possible. For we had gone to the pavilion, and I ordered chocolate with whipped cream and French tarts and sandwiches, and I did not have a cent to pay with. The others thought that I was treating because it was I who proposed it — and then we had only seventeen cents altogether. The waiter noticed it by our actions, for he continued to hover about our table, and we did not know what we should do for shame.

We ate and we ate, and the food stuck in our throats, and we were fiery red in the face. They put the blame on me . . . but oh, dear, I was hungry, and the sun shone, and then I thought that the others could lend me the money.

At last Ethel and Jeannette went off to raise the money, while Agnes and I remained sitting there like hostages; and we must needs find something to do. So we ordered more sandwiches; and for over an hour we continued to eat sandwiches. I began to think they would never come back, and Agnes commenced to whimper so that I had to pinch her in the arm so that she would not cry.

And then finally they came, and we tipped the waiter a whole crown; but Ethel was cross because she had been scolded so by her father. And the waiter stood and grinned at us.

And besides I broke my hour-glass, and Musser had gone to bed, and father did not eat dinner at home.

It was a day of misfortunes.

Oct., 1893.

Knud is an absurd idiot. He came to borrow my French dictionary, and down in the hall he kissed me on the mouth. I could smell that he had rubbed himself with pomade, or some such servant-girl stuff.

Ugh! it was disgusting! I would as soon have kissed a rat. But now he knows that I do not care the least bit for him.

And why does mother always sit gossiping with those stupid ladies? The way they talk about their husbands! God have mercy on mother if she says one single bad word about father.

Then she knows she irritates him with those ladies, and he goes out as soon as they come — and I have to run in and out with sugar and cream.

"She resembles a Madonna," they say. I could say, "Hold your tongue," to them.

They are so vulgar!

Something is surely wrong. Musser is as

melancholy as a rainy day, and they glower at each other in a way to make one tremble. But I can get whatever I point at.

If only I lived with father one day and with mother the other, for they are so pleasant each by themselves, but when they are together they chill me and make me weary of it all.

They should make a confidant of me. But when father and I are alone I forget everything, for he is so wise and wonderful.

March, 1894.

Oh! that the moon were entirely burnt out, or that it would crack and explode. It is the only thing in the whole world that I hate, except rats; and it is just as if it knew it. Even though I put myself far down under the quilt, I can notice it. It is like a wicked spirit; it goes into my head. It is much worse than fever and worse than opium. For I know very well that I am awake and that it cannot reach

me, but I am so afraid of that horrible light.

No matter what I think of, I think of something else on top of that, and on top of it all I am so afraid that I would rather die. If it were possible, and I were not fifteen years old, I should be allowed to sleep with Musser and lie in her bed — then it would surely pass away.

In all books they say the moonlight is beautiful. No, the night should be still and peaceful, and it is not so when the moon comes. It is as if it makes a noise that bewitches me. But perhaps that is because I am going to die and am really not fit to live. If father knew it, then I believe he would surely stay with me the whole night, for he cannot endure my being sad.

That moon is of no earthly use; it only makes trouble. And I become so peevish when it is full moon, and say so much that is not nice. And I dream such awful dreams.

Now I will close the shutters and draw the curtain, but as soon as I put out the light the moon will come creeping in.

It is not good to live when one is sad and afraid.

JUNE, 1894.

To-day the riding-master came with jasmines for mother, and she was near to fainting from the fragrance, but she continued to stick her nose down into them and say that they were beautiful.

And he looked at her with saucer-eyes, like the big dog, and she laughed in that embarrassed way — I nearly pitied them. But I could not restrain myself, and ran into father and said that Musser had a tryst, and that we must hit upon something.

Father was not jealous — not in the least. We sent Anne after two huge ginger-cake hearts with verses in the centre; and then I carried in the tea.

But it was near to becoming serious.

Oh, God! — they acted as if nothing had happened, and the riding-master began to nibble his heart; but then he read the verses, and he became confused and began to cough, and Musser was very busy smelling the jasmines again.

Truly it was spiteful, but it was so laughable. He is as infatuated with her as if he were a young man. And then he has eight chubby children.

. . . . . .

Now I am sorry for it, for afterwards Musser cried and said it was a sin, as the riding-master is a poor, wretched man.

But then he should not use his money with which to buy flowers for other men's wives. Father never buys flowers for *his* wife . . . but neither does he buy any for Musser. And *I* get carnations every day, as long as they are in bloom. But, then, that is not nice, either!

We are not good; we are wicked, all of us. Now I will no longer take carnations from father if he does not also buy flowers for mother. That is decided.

JUNE, 1894.

Just to think that I am a moon-baby. So is mother. But not a person knows what a moon-baby is, and one must not tell it to any one, for they only laugh and say that it is all nonsense.

It is so very unusual!

Mother used to cry at night, so that Grandmother Voldby had to get up and light candles all over the house, and make coffee for her. It is only girls; boys cannot be moon-babies.

Mother also feels the moon shining on her skin, even though she closes her eyes, and she says it is as if poison enters the blood, so that the thoughts become sick.

And that is perfectly true. I lie and think about death; I can hear it, I can feel it, I

can see it. I believe Death sits up in the moon, and that is the reason why I am so afraid.

How wonderful it must be to dare to walk in the moonlight, or to sit at the window and look right out upon it, or to meet it in the woods. When I was a child I surely was not afraid of it. It seems to me that I can remember rowing out on the river, and the whole water became white as a lily.

Mother's real mother was also like that — so Grandmother Voldby has told me. And when she was going to die, and mother was only three years old, she sprang out of bed and shattered the window-panes with her hands because she wanted to beat the moon to death. But mother says that it is a disease to be a moon-baby. This is just like me, but then mother never has cramps.

When Josephine has it she becomes so malicious, but we never do; and she is not afraid of the moon. It is not so pleasant, after all, to be a girl.

If I could only understand what the moon can be good for!

JULY, 1894.

I want to be a poet.

I decided upon it last night and did not go to bed, but wrote verses.

To be sure, it is not so very difficult; it is much harder to keep awake the whole night, and the great poets always wrote best at night.

That is what Balzac did, but father says he drank a great deal of coffee, one cup after the other, without cream; and I did not get any coffee.

I stole up to the attic and peeped out at the stars, through the window in the roof. Then I drank water and ate chocolates, but that makes one sleepy. I became very cold towards morning.

Another night I will go out into the woods, and walk out there all alone — entirely

alone — all night. I think out there it must be like a dream.

Perhaps I may also go out into the churchyard so as to accustom myself to it, but I cannot bear the odour of dead bodies.

It is best for me to wait four years, until I am twenty; for a poet must have experienced a great deal. But it seems to me that it might be easier to hit upon something thrilling, and so be saved all the trouble of living through so many experiences. And Uncle Stephen says that one only lives to experience sorrow.

As for that, I could easily write a romance about Josephine, or a play about father and mother, but that would be something to weep over.

Father has told me that De Maupassant waited ten years before he made a book; and every day he went to school to the man who created Madam Bovary, whom father loves. But he is too difficult for me

in French. I cannot afford to wait ten years.

But father and mother shall not suspect that I know I am soon to die. That would be a sin.

If only I could place the semicolon and exclamation mark where they should be; for that is not easy, and one must needs know that. Father says my commas are good enough.

In four years, when every one least expects it, there will come a thick, thick book by me. It shall be called:

THE SORROWS
OF
ONE
WHO IS DEAD.

For I shall die soon after, and if that is printed on the outside of the book, with, perhaps, a little band of mourning, then every one in the whole kingdom of Denmark, and

also all the poets, will read it, and father and mother.

It shall be about them, and be so true that, they will love one another the more for the reading of it. Therein I will tell how sad I have been every single day as long as I can remember, because they did not kiss one another as one should when one is happy. Then mother will write an anonymous letter and thank the author, but I will not betray myself.

No, that I will not.

One does not earn very much money by being a poet, but then perhaps I can paint tapestries besides. The money I get for the book mother shall have for a silk dress; and then her teeth need filling.

It is stupid that I should have such strong teeth that the dentist only laughs at me when they are to be looked after, and yet I shall have no use for them; while mother, who will chew for many years, should have such soft teeth.

August, 1894.

Mother opens father's letters and reads them. She holds them over steaming water. I saw it very distinctly, but I did not say anything.

There is so much that I do not understand.

There is so much sorrow in the world.

She probably has a big debt, and father always gets angry over the bills. But even so, I would not open my husband's letters; I would rather sell a few silver spoons, or something of that sort, to pay the debt with.

I will be ever so economical and never again ask to be taken out driving, and I will gladly wear black gloves, for they last much better than white.

I will indeed help my poor mother.

I wonder whether her mother was sad because she was born. For I believe mother was sad on account of me, and that is why I have not the strength to live.

No one can become strong and healthy where everything is so dull and cheerless.

And when one's own mother sits still and sighs and cannot sleep at night!

But I will ask Dr. Krarup for a great deal of morphine . . . for I will gladly endure pain if only my mother can sleep.

It burns inside of my head from all my thinking and speculating. I believe they would like to cut me in two . . . but then I suppose they would not agree as to who should have the head, and who the feet.

CHAPTER SIX

SEPT., 1894.

I hate father! I will not see him, I will not kiss him, I will not sit by him in the evenings, nor walk with him, nor anything.

He might just as well be real common. My poor, dear little Musser! It is nauseating to think of it — those words he uttered. I can hear them repeated constantly — again and again, again and again.

"Mistress . . . with my mistress . . . I was, of course, with my mistress."

Mother asked so softly: "Where were you last evening, you came home so late?"

"I was, of course, with my mistress — where else?"

Mother flung herself right down on the floor

and cried as I do when I am attacked with the cramps.

And then he said: "Why didn't you follow and see where I went to? I expected that of you!"

I pretended I was sleeping, but I could not draw a breath, for I feared I should cry.

But we will run away from him, to another country, Musser and I. I would rather eat a spider than hear father say that.

He has a mistress, one whom he loves.

And that is why he has moved out of the sleeping room; and at night, when it is entirely quiet, he goes out through the dark streets to her house, while my mother lies here at home and weeps. It is so small and common, and not a word has he confided to me.

I have not eaten a bite since; I would rather starve to death. I have locked and bolted my door, and though he knocks his hands off, I will not open: I will never open.

We will go far away from him. In a trice I'll write a romance, and it shall be called: The Faithless! and shall be about him and about . . . *her*.

In the innermost part of my heart I hate him, but inside of that again I still continue to love him.

She must surely be beautiful, that lady, more beautiful than all others, even than Josephine. But it is strange that I do not know her.

Oh! little father, dear, lovable little father . . . if it were only a dream, you might pull out all my teeth.

It only is wanting that she kisses him on the eyes, that only. Or that he also gives her silk stockings for Lent or Martinsmas.

But I shall find her.

I shall smell of all the ladies, and the one who has the fragrance of old roses about her, like father's clothes, *she* it is. I will spit right in her eyes. No, that I will not. I

will look at her until she sinks down on her knees and falls over in the gutter. Then she can lie there, the . . .

But happy . . . that I shall never be any more. And never more shall we two sit together in the gloaming and dream aloud, and never again shall we read French together.

But suppose he loves her so much that he could easily do without me? And if she were like Josephine? for Josephine one cannot get angry with!

I am only a little girl, and I shall soon die; why, then, must I have such a heavy sorrow? I wish that I might die to-night.

Mother says that I am lazy and peevish, but I shall never be so any more.

I should so much like to go into her, but I do not know what I could say.

For there is nothing so terrible as a mistress.

. . . . . .

SEPT., 1894.

We cannot go away, for Musser has no money, and she does not want to, and I haven't any, either. Oh, what shall we do, what shall we do ! Anne is putting the clothes in the wash, and Marie is baking cakes — they do not suspect anything.

Just to think that mother does not believe that he has a mistress — why, he said it with his own mouth. And now they pretend that they are friends. Father does not cast down his eyes, and he looks the same as before. But when I look in another direction, I notice father furtively glancing over at me. I do not speak to him, and I do not kiss him; but when we left the table I looked at him so that it pained in my head.

To-day he has not been with her, that is certain, for I have watched the whole day. And I smell of all his letters; but, of course, she does not dare to write.

Oh, I could wish that Musser would also

begin to deceive him, even though it were only with the old riding-master. But if it were mother who had gotten herself a lover whom she kissed — it would not be half so dreadful; for mother often does something that is not quite right. She gossips about people, but father never does that . . . oh, my poor, poor mother, and my dearest, lovely father!

I cannot endure it. But I will ferret it out; I'll search all his drawers and take her letters and send them to her in a large, yellow envelope, which signifies falseness, and inside I will simply write: You are a hussy, and we despise you, and if you come up to my father you'll be flung down stairs.

Last night I became sick, and I thought I should die, but I did not care, for it is all so disagreeable — just as if I had my mouth full of dishwater.

I do not believe a God really exists, and if he does, he is only a wicked old man who

makes trouble. I have burnt my fine hymn-book.

Madam Bovary may have deceived her husband, but he was mean and detestable, and then it was in a book, and I admire her, anyway; no, it is much, much worse when a father deceives his wife.

. . . . . .

SEPT., 1894.

I am so sorry. Now I will never again make fun of the riding-master; he is good, and surely just as unhappy as I. I had never been to see him, for no one ever goes there, as his wife is paralyzed; and he is poor because he did not become colonel. But I wanted him to deceive father, and so I went out there. It was so dirty and horrible, and they dried the wash in the dining-room, and that was because the clothes were worn and they were ashamed to hang them out — that I could well see. And the riding-master was all alone, busy making

gruel; and the children were at school, except the two little ones, who were begrimed and untidy.

He was very embarrassed, and I began to cry. But he would not do it. He said it would be a sin. But then I said that when one was poor, one was allowed to steal. "No, little Andrea, that one is not: I am so poor that my soul and body hungers — but to steal and cheat, *that* I cannot."

"Yes, but, then, don't you love Musser?" I asked.

"I sympathize with your mother, and she sympathizes with me; we are poor, both of us!"

Mother surely is not as poor as that; we have never starved, and she has many fine dresses; but she does not take care of them, and that is why they get shabby so quickly, which I did not dare say.

And I told him everything, and he promised that my secret should go with him into the grave.

He had big, grey slippers on, and no collar, and he clutched the soup spoon the whole time, just as if it were a sabre.

He was surely right in saying that one should not steal. It smelled very badly there, and not at all as it does at Seamstress Hansen's.

SEPT., 1894.

Dear little Virgin Mary ! I will thank thee and bless thee and say a prayer to thee every single day in my life. I think I shall become a Catholic, and I have heard them singing so wonderfully in the Catholic Church to-day. And now I have hung a little red, everlasting lamp over my bed, which burns only two cents' worth of oil a day. And in back of it a picture of a Madonna on the wall, and I will have a crucifix on my breast.

I will be faithful and go to church at least twice a week, both summer and winter.

For I am so glad that one can say: "I am happy in my faith." Therefore, I will thank

thee, thou good Virgin Mary. Josephine was also a Catholic when she was in the cloister in France; and that was easy enough, when she talked with nuns every day; but now she does not care anything more about it. But I will be faithful to it my whole life.

I really did not think in the bottom of my heart that father was such a one. I have asked his pardon a thousand times, and I have kissed the pillow upon which he sleeps, and I have told him about Knud, and that I wrote a Diary, and that I want to be a poet — for it is so expensive to set up a tapestry factory. But it is all far from enough, far from it.

I could fly with joy. If it were only winter, then I could go skating; but to-morrow I will go with father out into the woods, and father shall swing me a whole hour in the big swing, under the arbour. I feel to-day as one does when one swings high up in the tree tops; it makes one shudder, but it is so lovely.

And I have cried with joy. It is the first

time I have done it. It often happens in books, but I thought it an invention of the poets: but it is the simple truth.

Father and I have had a dance in here, we two, entirely alone, and we danced the Minuet (which father does not know at all) and drank Madeira far out into the night. And he surely quite forgot that I must not dance under any considerations.

It is so wonderful, that I cannot understand that it is really true. I sat in here and was so disconsolate, and then I heard father go up and down, up and down, like a guard on duty. It was my intention not to open my door, not even if I had to die of sorrow. But then it became perfectly quiet, and I had not heard father leave. My heart beat so dreadfully, and it was as if everything became black before my eyes. And then I had to look. And it was dark, but I could hear father draw his breath, so sadly and quiet-like. And then I flew over to him — I could guess where he

sat — and he took me up and carried me, and we cried and we laughed, and we cried again, and we hushed each other.

Father rocked me in his arms as he did when I was a little child. It was wonderful. It was wonderful. For there is something that is much more than love; that is the way it is with us.

So that was all nothing but stupid talk! He said it was only something one said when one became angry, and he will never be angry again; but even if I were very angry, I could not think of saying that I had a mistress, or that I had killed some one.

But father asked my forgiveness, because he had made me so unhappy. It was almost embarrassing.

I have lain my ruby ring on his pillow with two red carnations in it, so that he can smell it, and he'll surely guess who it is from. But Goldsmith Larsen shall engrave in it: "From your Beloved." That is *me*. That is the most delightful of all.

But we entirely forgot Musser. It was a crying shame that we should have forgotten her, but then we did. And then at last, when we thought of her, we peeped in, but she was sleeping; she had probably taken a potion.

We are agreed that I am to be a Catholic. Father thinks it is beautiful and agreeable — but perhaps it is only to humour me that he says so. And then he would rather have me go to the Catholic Church, which is much warmer in the winter, than trudge with Musser up to the cathedral, where there is a draught.

Unfortunately, I do not think I am fit to be pious. I have such a desire to kick up a noise and to laugh out loud just when I am most in the mood to think of religion. But I will try to believe it all, even though it does resemble pirate-romances.

I have father's handkerchief next to my heart. And we presented mother with a fine parasol, and we ate breakfast with her in the

pavilion, and she was in high spirits. But father and I, we held each other's hands and looked at each other, and now I am certain that he has not deceived us.

New Year, 1895.

Now I have been up three days. But I like it much better in bed.

Oh, it was so snug and warm! And to think, he travelled a whole night and a day down from Vienna just to be with *me* during Christmas. With *me!* To be with me during Christmas! A whole night and a whole day!

We can eat just as many gingernuts as mother can bake . . . now . . . as for that matter, so can she.

It is so delightful to live. It is so quiet and delightful.

Now, I really think that father was jealous of Uncle Stephen because we had so much to talk about.

And, then, he holds my hands while he talks.

It is as if a hundred thousand little, white bells were ringing round about in the air and in my ears and in my heart.

I should so very much like to see the houses that he builds. That must be ever so much finer than to be a poet. Made entirely of stone — one on top of the other — and they can stand for seven hundred years, if they are well built. But his hands are, nevertheless, perfectly white.

The man who has built all the big houses in Vienna is also Danish, but he is dead.

I cannot realize that I have been sick for two months. But when one has a fever one does not know anything. Oh, but now . . . *now* I will live!

"For when it comes again, then it is all over with the little girl . . . with the warm . . . warm . . . heart!"

With the warm, warm heart!

Why did he say that? What did he mean by that?

FEBRUARY, 1895.

I must not go skating.

I must not dance.

I must not take walks with Lieutenant Dahl.

I must not drink wine.

I must not read.

I must not write letters.

I must not take gymnastics.

I must not take shower baths.

I must not jump.

I must not go out in the cold.

I must not wear silk stockings.

I must not draw, sew, cry, cough, have a pain in the stomach, catch a cold, go to the carnival or to the theatre — I must not do *anything*.

It is Dr. Krarup, the horrible, nasty, dis-

gusting animal torturer, Dr. Krarup, who has put it into Musser's head.

But now I'll cry until I get permission. Then they can't deny me anything.

CHAPTER SEVEN

July, 1895.

Josephine is to remain a whole month. It doesn't matter if I get sick afterward. We will amuse ourselves and have fun, and we'll play comedies in the evening.

Salome must have looked like her, I think.

If Josephine wanted a head on a silver platter she would get it, I am sure. No one can say no to Josephine.

She can do everything that she wants to. But she is covetous. She would have all the men who exist infatuated with her.

But when she says anything like that, such a strange expression comes over her face. It is as if the moon were suddenly shining upon her.

Yes, it makes me quite afraid and dizzy.

She is so very strong.

Yesterday she bit me in the neck because I said that I thought as much of Uncle Stephen as of her. But afterwards she cried and said that I was the only one in the world who cared for her for her own sake.

And yet father and mother do, and many others, in fact all those who love her.

Josephine hates Uncle Stephen. She wishes that he were dead.

It is too bad that they can not care for one another, the same as I care for them. But Josephine has surely found out that Uncle Stephen called her "A Heartless Flirt." It is a foolish saying, "A Heartless Flirt."

JULY, 1895.

After dinner she allowed me to read her letters; she has over two hundred, and they lie all jumbled up in the bottom of her trunk.

It was terribly interesting, but very sad. There were some who were only twenty years old, and one about fifty, and many, many others. They cannot live without her, and they will kneel in the dust at her feet.

Kneel in the dust at her feet!

I have given her two pairs of grey silk stockings, for there were big holes in her own.

And she has kissed every one of them, but one could not guess that from her mouth. It is so little and delicate, and she smiles like a little girl.

Her father has whipped her many, many times and locked her in and put her to bed. And then they have given her nothing but milk and bread, the same as their dog.

But she also came very near to shooting herself — and that is what I would have done.

But even though they beat her to death, she cannot stop.

When she was a little girl she lay at night and cried, and bit her pillow because she did not have any one to kiss.

She cannot stop. It is just like me when I hear dance music and cannot keep from tripping in time to the measure.

So, it is not her fault. Things like that are inherited; she says so herself.

But the worst of it is that she does not care in the least for them, and she will not marry one of them. But she would like to marry all of them.

She is wonderful; and, then, she is so lovely!

In father's room she is perfectly quiet and sits on a footstool at his feet and kisses him on the hand. But father always says: "Stop those tricks, Josephine: here you are among friends!"

The other day she read the sermon to Musser and sang psalms; but afterwards she sang a ditty that sounded dreadful, although I do not think I quite understood it.

JULY, 1895.

I love Josephine just as she is.

She has snow-white hands and feet, but otherwise she is sunburnt all over. She resembles a yellow cat with white paws.

It looks so comical.

When we have company she courtesies and casts down her eyes, and makes her voice so soft and fine — the colonel's wife says she resembles a lovely nun. But, then, I can't understand why they say so many bad things about her.

Josephine says that she acts like a magnet on all men.

When one holds a magnet close to the nose it tickles as if flies were crawling inside.

But when I have a cold it also tickles in my nose.

Josephine says that even though they hate her they cannot keep from looking at her and thinking of her.

But I do not believe that Uncle Stephen thinks of her.

Josephine says that the man she marries shall have a scorpion-whip to beat her with when she does anything wrong.

Shoemaker Olesen whipped his wife with a strap — heigh-ho!

Josephine is different from all the rest.

Scorpion-whip! That is surely the one from the Bible and the tortures of the ancient Egyptians.

JULY, 1895.

Now we have wagered.

It was not my intention. It was not with my free will. But Josephine is so strong, so strong.

I would give her the ring if it might be undone, but she does not want to.

We have wagered on a living heart . . . what shall I do, what shall I do!

I have betrayed him.

She is going up to greet him from me, but I

must not tell him about our wager. And I cannot break my word.

Why can't I do that?

We talked about him so long, and it was night, and the moon shone, and then I went over to Josephine because I was afraid.

We discussed all his characteristics.

And then she said: "He is not like the rest; him I will have."

If only I had kept quiet. But I could not. I was so certain that Uncle Stephen could never love her.

And now . . . and now he *shall* love her. And when she has won, she is going to marry another, for Uncle Stephen shall love her all his life.

That is Josephine.

But she is so strong.

I have said to her that I shall soon die, and that it is so awful to wager on another person.

But Josephine says that she dares wager

on Death and on Hell, for she knows that she will win.

Josephine says that her will is warmer than fire, but I am a pale little thing, because I am sick.

A pale little thing . . . in that she may be right; but I have so much sorrow.

Josephine knows everything, she can see everything. She also said, last night: "Your father does not care in the least for your mother."

But it gives me so much pain to think of this and that.

We have wagered . . .

AUGUST, 1895.

On Monday Uncle Stephen comes to Denmark. I am so afraid, so afraid of Josephine.

I dreamt she bit me in the heart because I cared the most for him. And the blood ran out. But when I was about to die Uncle Stephen came and drove her away. But her

teeth, all her white, mouse-like teeth, remained and gnawed at my heart.

I will lie awake to-night and think so intently about Uncle Stephen. And then when I can feel that he thinks of me I will tell him all — and he will believe it is a dream.

Father, mother, Uncle Stephen, and Josephine . . .

I am going to die.

When she has been up there, he'll surely write a letter: "Yes, I have made a mistake: Josephine is entirely different; she is lovely."

He will come to love her, but she'll marry the man with the scorpion-whip.

Then Uncle Stephen will sit and shake his head the same as mother does, and go around in the room looking for nothing, and lie awake at night.

And that is *my* fault; for I have wagered on his heart.

I have wagered on his heart.

A thought can be so long that it is without

an end. I have three thoughts without an end — the one twines about the other. They are three snakes that stick and stick their ugly darts into the peace of my days and the dreams of my nights. Three thoughts without an end!

The one is Death, and the other my wager, and the third . . . the third, my father and mother.

CHAPTER EIGHT

August, 1895.

I am not at all afraid of dying here at home. Here it is so snug and warm, and they are constantly around me. I will be brave; but if father weeps . . . if father . . .

Little, beloved father, I want to ask you for something. Stay with me the first night out there, only the first, *only the first.* I am such a stranger out there, I am so afraid that they will talk to me, all those down there. It is so gruesome; they have nothing on but that white garment, like paper. They should lie in a warm, fur cloak, a lovely, warm fur cloak.

Do that, father; stay with me out there. And if the moon shines, then you must talk to

me the whole time, the whole time. I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid of that white moon, and I am afraid of being alone out there.

It is much worse than being alone in a strange country. I am certain that I can understand all that they are lying thinking of down in the ground — all the old and all the young and all the little, little children. We can understand each other, but we cannot make one another happy.

And then we try to sleep, but we all sigh uneasily, and every time the bells ring we wake up and weep again. It is like a big prison-house, and we are shut in in little bits of cells, much smaller than those the drunken people are put in at night over at the jail: and I can hear that there is some one on the side of me, and in front of me, and in back of me, and all over; but we cannot see one another nor touch each other.

August, 1895.

I dreamt that I was dead, and it was really not so very bad.

Right on top of my grave there sat an old man and played the accordion. He was blind, and he did not know whether it was night or day, and so he continued to play.

While lying there I thought of Uncle Stephen.

Oh, that there always were such an old blind man who sat and played for the dead, day and night, summer and winter, *always!*

But there is not. They are forgotten, and they cannot forget — they remember everything, both that which is good and that which is wicked.

. . . . . .

When I am sad, then a day up here is surely as long as one down there.

I wish that I were able to put the rest of my living days in a bag and bring the bag with me down into the ground so that I might use

them when it became too lonesome . . . then I would gladly die to-night.

But I can't save a single hour, not a minute.

If I only knew that the thoughts die, if I only knew it, or that they sleep. If I only knew that one could not think and that one could not be sad; but no one knows it, no one, no one.

No one knows it, neither my father nor my mother.

No one.

I was out in the churchyard, but through the rows of flowers, it seemed to me, there came such a disgusting odour from the graves. There were only two people out there with the many hundred dead. They are alone, no one has time to be with them.

I cannot accustom myself to it.

Father read aloud, and Musser made an eggnog, and I was mischievous; for I must always be on my guard.

In two years I may go to Copenhagen and

live with Uncle Stephen, and learn to build houses.

It is nice of them to promise it. But it is not nice to lie to those who are going to die.

. . . . . .

How they are deceiving me! They play a comedy right before my very eyes.

They deceive me, because I am going to die — and I die because they are deceiving me.

But now I have written to my Grandmother Voldby; she is so old that she has surely forgotten how to lie. I *must* know the truth.

And now I am so tired.

I have wagered on a living heart — a living heart.

Mother steals my morphine; every morning she tells me how lovely she has slept.

It will not be long, I think, before I, too, shall sleep lovely every night.

I am so sad! I am so sad!

. . . . . .

I tell father I am the happiest little girl in

the world. I laugh and joke with him. We deceive each other so pleasantly.

My poor, wretched Musser! And I do not know anything.

. . . . . .

Now, at last, Grandmother Voldby has answered — and I cannot read a syllable.

There was nothing more, but the letter lay there.

The mother read:

FLENSBORG, AUGUST 20, 1895.

DEAR CHILD, DEAR LITTLE ANDREA!

I have had many doubts as to how thy letter should be answered; whether I am in the right to talk with thee about thy parents behind their back.

Whether I should try to tell thee everything in a roundabout way, whether I should temper my words half with lies and half with truth, or whether I do not rather owe it to thy pure mind and thy ease of heart to lie altogether.

But now I have come to the conclusion to tell thee the simple truth as I know it. No more and no less.

I do not know much, nor do I know all, as they did not confide in me for many years.

But old eyes see better in the dark than young ones, and I have seen so that I have wept.

The truth thou shalt know, because it lies so heavily on thy mind, as thou thyself writest — otherwise, I suppose, thou wouldst not have called upon me now.

If any one knows thy dear, faithful mother, it is I, with whom she was from her third year to the day she went from here with her husband.

Jutta, thy mother, has always cared for him, that I saw at once; but I never suspected that he would trouble himself about her. She was not beautiful in the manner of other girls, but he, on the contrary, was so fascinating that ladies made court to him.

Jutta had now set her heart on it that he cared for her, and she became very lovely indeed from going about with this idea. She tripped about so lightly that I did not notice her coming in or going out of the room. The old women here on the green said that she had eyes like "God's Mother and the Queen of Hearts" — this pleased her very much, and she smiled and laughed constantly. She played me many tricks during those days.

Thou hast surely noticed, my little Andrea, that there is a beautiful tone in thy mother's voice, and that tone was a great pleasure to Karsten. He liked to hear her

talk, but I do not think he listened so much to what she was saying.

When they met here in the vacations, they were more like brother and sister than lovers.

They said out there on the green (now I live inside of the town of Flensborg) that he had met another woman to whom he had given his heart.

I have my own reasons for thinking that it was true. Jutta heard about it and she took it more to heart than she had a right to, as Karsten had made her no promise.

One evening he came unexpectedly. I saw by his face that something had gone awry with him. We did not talk about what it was, but he wept in my arms. Jutta was out, and when she came home and saw him she began to cry. That evening they became engaged.

Now I know further, from her own lips, that she questioned Karsten, until he, in his weakness — because, I suppose, the wound was still bleeding — allowed himself to be beguiled into confiding to her everything about that other woman. But she made him the promise that her name, and what he had confided to her, should be entirely forgotten and without power between them.

I saw very clearly that Karsten was not in love with thy mother; and in order that her life should not be spoiled for a momentary fancy, I talked seriously to

him and asked him to dissolve the bond before it was too late. Better that she should cry a few months than for her whole life.

But thy father assured me. He thought a great deal of thy mother, he said; and her voice he could not possibly be without, so dear had it become to him.

So it was not love that caused him to take Jutta for a wife; but I always hoped that this, the strongest of all passions, might grow up in him.

The first time I saw them together — it was before thou wert born — I understood that Jutta had made a mistake. She was not artful, she did not know the little charms of coquetry, and I dared not give her rules that might serve ten, but which would, perhaps, prove the destruction of the eleventh.

Thy mother lacked the pride of a wife and was not clever enough to hide this fault. She was obedient to her husband and worshipped him, but she was jealous. She belonged to that class of women—who are the most numerous — whose only weapons are tears; but those tears were turned into weapons against herself. When she murmured, he became tired and angry; and from that she also learned to talk in anger, she who during all the years that she was with me was the very soul of gentleness.

In such moments she reopened the subject which she had given her promise never to speak about.

Lovable, so lovable was thy mother when she lived under my roof; lovable was she in her humility and innocence when she went away from here; lovable was she in her self-sacrifice to me, to him, and to thee. It is good for thee to know it.

But he did not comprehend that she was sacrificing anything. His stiff, cold, unbending nature filled her with apprehension; she went about in her own home like one proscribed, without courage and without a will. One moment she begged for his love, and the next she upbraided him with unjust accusations.

Dear little Andrea, little heart's-child, forgive me if I make the tears come. I think thy father is of so cold a nature that no person will be able to drive him out of that shell of will and pride that surrounds his real ego. That which at one time broke something in his heart has forever extinguished the love-passion in him. Yes, I know very well that towards thee he is different; but then thou art not a person outside of him; thou art a part of himself. But now we are talking of thy father and mother's mutual relations.

She no longer believed in him. How it came about I cannot tell, but I suppose she plagued him with jealous questions, until he, tired of answering, revenged himself simply by keeping quiet. In his silence and in his tranquillity she imagined that which made her like one beside herself. She pondered many worthless

thoughts and sank far below her womanly dignity. She spied upon his going out and his coming in, certain that he must love another. In her unutterable misery she did that which made him despise her. Thy poor, lovable, broken-hearted mother!

Thou hast no right to judge her for it, but neither hast thou any right to judge him. He followed the callings of his nature; she was driven to go contrary to hers — no one was more open and single-hearted than she. Thy mother had a duplicate made of the key to his repository and searched all over to find a sign of his faithlessness.

Had she found something, it would indeed have been better; for then they would each have stood with his great wrong. But she did not find anything, for there was not anything.

Another woman would probably now have regained her peace of mind and remained silent as to what had happened, but that she could not.

She confessed what she had done. But he did not forgive her; he became embittered in his heart towards her.

When I saw what irreparable sorrow there was in thy house I departed, and sacrificed my love for Jutta, for Karsten, and for thee. I have surely shirked my responsibility badly; I should have given Jutta a knowledge of life before I sent her out to live it. Believe me,

dear child, the years that have passed since last I saw thee, have been long. Every evening and every night, it seems to me, I can hear Jutta's accusing voice; and it is full of tears. Hadst thou not existed, little child, then I would have used all my authority as opposed to Jutta's lack of will, and would have taken her from the place where it was only a degradation and a torture for her to remain.

But to thee, her only child, I will say: "Thou owest it to thy parents to give them thy life without any reservation. Thou canst bring them closer together and altogether near in friendship, in the friendship that grows with the years and lasts throughout all one's life. Without thee thy father's existence would be pitiably barren; without thee thy mother's life would be a curse. In thee, despite everything, they are rich.

I saw them together one time beside thy sick-bed, when thou wert a little girl; then they felt as one, and their wishes were as one.

If thou hadst passed away then I think the sorrow would have bound them together. But thou became well again, the good God be praised; and thou, little innocent child, helped to separate them again. Thou writest that they both want to have thee; but is there any sin in parents thinking they cannot do enough for their child? They will give and give constantly. Let it not surprise thee.

Now thou callest thyself big and grown-up — and Jutta was not much older when she made her choice — but, then, thou hast big responsibilities also.

Every person thinks most about himself until a certain age, when he feels himself poor in his own possession; and that is Nature's immutable law. But thou art born of a sad and sorrowful mother; her happiness lasted not even to thy birth, and therefore a special law applies to thee, and also because thy life will not be long.

My Andrea, Jutta's little girl, if I did not know, and if thou hadst not written that thou art reconciled with that thought, I would not mention it; but thou sayest that it does not pain thee at all and that thou art not afraid.

The sun has surely cast its brightest rays for thee, wherever thou hast gone I always hear thee laugh with thy sweet laughter, which reminds one of Jutta; yes, will you believe it, even in thy long, sad letter I found laughter — I heard thee laugh.

Thy parents do not know that thou suspectest thy fate: they know not that thou hast heard it sealed by wise physicians — out of goodness thou remainest silent. But is it just? I believe it is unjust.

Thou complainest because thy parents try to keep thee from many of the pleasures which thou particularly wantest to have in a full measure because it is denied

thee to live long. But that has its great reason, and I will confide it to thee, for thy sake and for theirs. Through thy mother's letters to me there runs the same fear and apprehension. They fear that some one may become dear to thee, dear to thy heart. Thou hast thyself discovered it, but think it is from selfishness, because they will not share thee with any one.

No, my little Andrea, that is not the reason. It is thy life they fear for. Thy long sickness and thy present illness make them fearful lest anything come to bring thee more pain and suffering than thou already hast. And that is why my little girl must not enter into wedlock with any man. They ought to have told thee long ago, as thou art a wise little girl; and when, of course, thou flittest about with thy girl friends as free as little girls of thy age, it seems to me there is no danger in making thee acquainted with the truth. And then, moreover, thou writest that thou wilt agree to everything if thou canst only make thy parents perfectly happy. Perfect happiness is not to be theirs, but thou canst do much to help, if thou wilt and hast the strength.

It may happen that thou wilt come to care for a comrade of thine own age — one of thy ball partners — for a week or a month, but when thou knowest what thou now knowest, it will not be so hard for thee to conquer that feeling and to hide it from thy parents.

Now the hour is close on twelve, and I, old woman

that I am, am wont to go to bed when it is nine o'clock, so my letter must needs have an end. We two will never torture one another by probing further into what has here been made clear.

In thy beloved mother's name and for her sake, so that with all thy heart thou canst be good to her, I will take upon myself the responsibility for the sorrow that I am surely causing thee.

With my best wishes and thanks for the confidence thou hast shown thy old friend,

INGER VOLDBY.

P. S. — I hope that, now thou art so big and grown-up, thou canst read my old-fashioned Danish writing. I cannot quite master the new script, it is so foreign to me.

CHAPTER NINE

The mother went through the lofty rooms, where the plants stood dying, to the room where the father sat alone with his sorrow.

Her white night-dress fell to the ground like a shroud. She groped her way in the dark with outstretched hands. Her hair had fallen down, and her eyes burned.

As always in the past, she faltered before the door to his room.

He did not hear her enter.

And she saw him sitting in the deep chair under the lamp. As if it were a doll or a living being, as if it were the child herself, there lay in his arms the lavender dress, the one that was dearer to Andrea than all other dresses.

Now he looked up.

"Jutta."

She barely recognized the voice.

"What do you want . . . here?"

She answered by asking:

"Are you tired, Karsten?"

He shook his head.

"I am tired, that is why I came. I am tired unto death, Karsten. And you must help me."

He arose, and the lavender dress remained lying in the chair.

"Jutta, if I could help you, don't you think I should like to very much? But no one can help you, and no one can help me — rather go to bed, my friend, try to sleep. That is what the night is for!"

His voice had not been so mild since he spoke endearing words to Andrea on her death-bed.

"You yourself, Karsten, do not go to bed, for you cannot sleep."

"No, I cannot sleep, I think . . ."

"Karsten, can you forget?"

"If I could, then I were not myself. I cannot."

"Karsten, if I could raise her up from the dead, if only for an hour — could you bear to look her in the face, could you bear to hear her voice, could you bear to hear her weep?"

He grasped her by the wrist.

"Jutta, are you sick? . . . or do you want to torture me? I only ask for peace . . . here in my loneliness!"

But she looked him in the eyes, and it was as if he would sink down under that glance.

"In a little while, in a little while you shall have peace. You shall be as lonely as you wish. In a little while. But you shall see Andrea, hear her laugh, hear her weep. Afterwards, I'll go — to the one person who has forgiveness for me . . . to the *only* person who knows what I have suffered in those years, in the many, many years!"

"Jutta . . . say what you mean; do not

talk like one who walks in her sleep. I cannot wake you . . . I cannot make you happy. But what is it? where will you go to?"

"Only away from you, who took my child's love, even though she saw how I struggled. Only away from you . . ."

He had covered his eyes with one hand and he asked, and there was a dread in his voice:

"Don't you think I am lonesome enough?"

But she answered:

"When two persons are together and are lonesome, they will be less lonesome if each goes his way!"

"Jutta . . . I am very lonesome, now, but shall be more lonesome if you leave me!"

But she wrung her hands.

"Why do you hold me back now — now, that I have the courage to leave you?"

"Because — I am afraid of the loneliness."

But she did not believe him.

"Is it the people round about here whom I visit, and on whose account you scorn me,

those upon whom you always cast your contempt? . . . is it they that you are afraid of?"

"People . . . don't you know me better, that you think others are in my thoughts?"

"Is it out of pity toward me? . . . then it is too late!"

He looked down at the floor; her eyes also were lowered.

"Jutta, I have pity on you, because your life did not become what it should — and on myself, because I allowed my own to become so barren!"

"Yours was the fault!"

"Ah, yes — that it was, I suppose. But why dispute about that now? we two have made up our reckoning so often, so cruelly often — and what did it profit us?"

"*Yours was the fault!* Does there exist a guilt so great that one person has a right to refuse another forgiveness?"

"*Right* . . . does one think of that?"

"I was a human being of flesh and blood, with a thousand desires that cried out to you — do you know that? Did you know that?"

"Jutta . . . it is night now; spare yourself, spare me!"

"Yes, in a little while I'll go; you shall only see Andrea and hear her weep — you, whom she loved above all!"

The mother fetched the blue pamphlets.

She gave them to him with the words:

"Unto those who have much, shall much be given — from those who have little, shall everything be taken away!"

The father took the pamphlets and held them between his hands as if it were the child's head he were holding. He asked in an uncertain voice:

"Are you going to remain . . . in here?"

"Shall I leave my child?"

Then he was silent and began to read.

The mother held his face with her eyes.

She asked:

"Can you see Andrea?"

"Can you hear her laugh?"

"Can you hear her weep?"

At last she only asked:

"Can you hear her weep?"

He did not answer; he did not know she spoke to him. He read. Now and then he stopped, passed his hand over his forehead, sighed, and went on again.

"So little did I know her . . ."

"So poor am I," said the mother.

"We have tortured her . . ."

"So poor am I!"

"So poor are *we*, Jutta, that we have tortured our child in her hour of death!"

The mother took his hand.

"Karsten, now it is all over. It seems to me I no longer have any right. The grave is yours, for she loved you above all. Farewell, Karsten! I do not give you thanks — as long back as I remember you have never given me anything that was worthy of thanks. We shall

be lonesome, but less lonesome each by himself than together!"

But the father bent down over her.

"Remain with me, Jutta — in my poverty. Remain with me, Jutta — help me — in my loneliness!"

She arose. The white night-dress fell to the ground like a shroud, and her eyes burned.

"In poverty . . . in loneliness."

"Jutta, we have the grave . . ."

"Yes, the grave!"