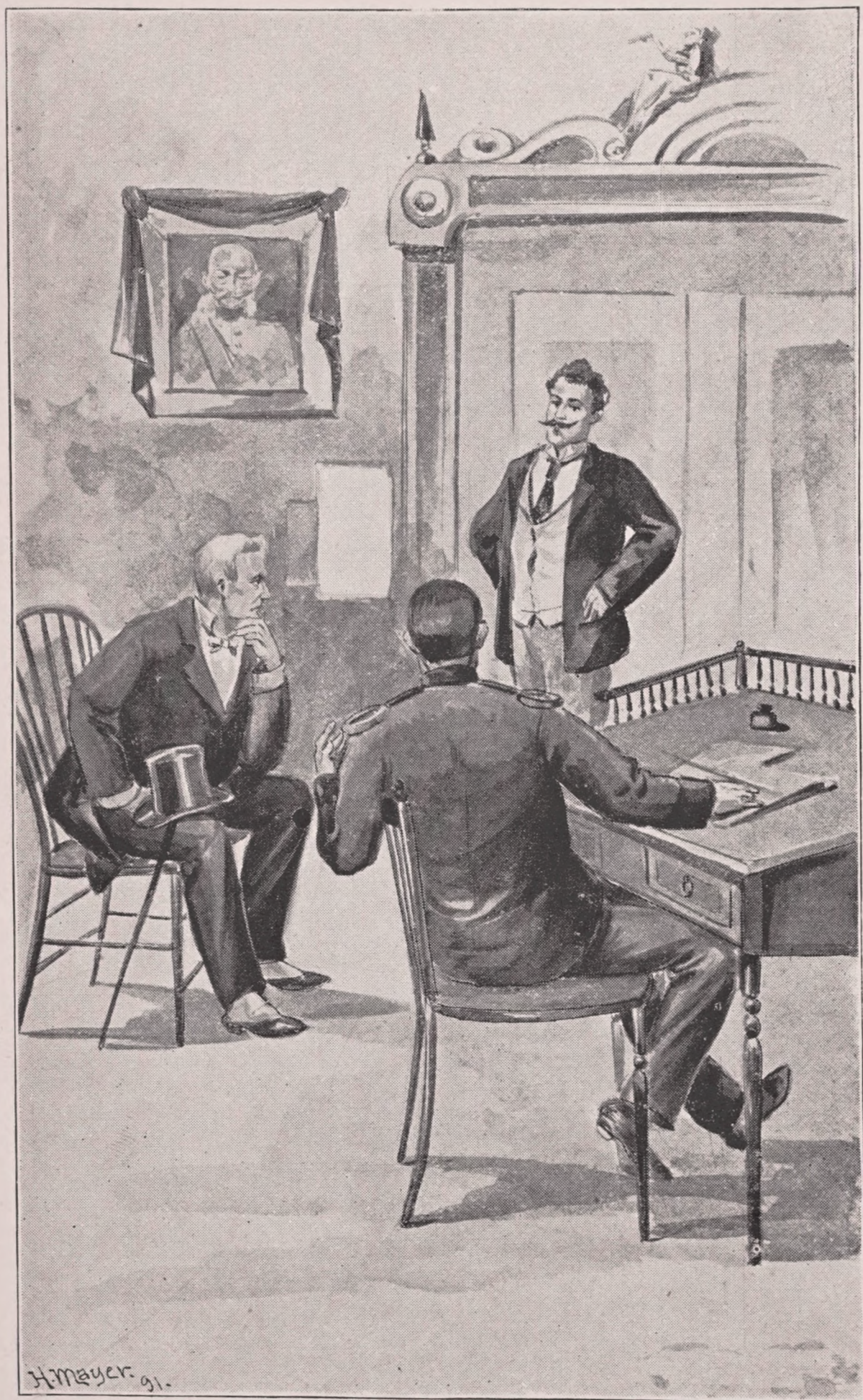






THE YOUNGEST BROTHER



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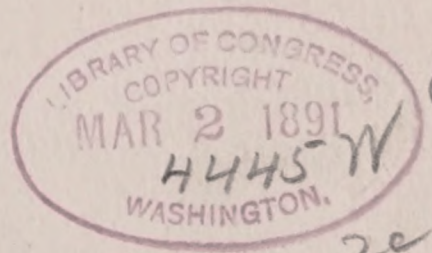
THE
Youngest Brother
A SOCIALISTIC ROMANCE

35
BY
✓
ERNST WICHERT
"

Author of "THE WORKERS," "A BRAVE HEART," "THE GREEN GATE," Etc.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY
KANNIDA



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THE YOUNGEST BROTHER

I

Madame Berken, the Privy Councilor's wife, had twice rung the bell to summon the house-maid.

She was reading a book with her youngest son on her lap. The child was sleepy and cross—tossed his little limbs, cried impatiently, and endeavored to shove aside the book, which he perhaps conjectured might be the cause of his mother's refusing to give him the undivided attention he demanded. His little sister stood before him and tried to divert his attention by pulling the string of a jumping-jack. But it was of no avail; the child grew still more restless. At the opposite side of the table sat a boy of about ten years at his lessons, repeating vocabularies in an under-tone. He grew confused, looked up, and petulantly declared:

"I cannot get on at all in this noise, and will have to stay after school-hours to-morrow, and then papa will be angry again."

"Go, Wanda," said the mother, "and see where

Frederica can be. Tell her to come here immediately."

The child ran to the door, but had not yet opened it, when the maid entered, and hurriedly stepped toward the table.

"Where have you been keeping yourself, Frederica," asked her mistress in a vexed though not an angry tone. "I rang for you twice. Fritz is tired, and ought to be taken to bed."

"No—not go to bed—play," cried the little boy.

Frederica took him in her arms, tossed him high in the air, and tickled him till he laughed.

"I hope madam will pardon me," she said, interrupting her sentence with an embarrassed laugh; "I could not come sooner. Out there is a man who insists on speaking to the Councilor."

"Then why did you not announce him?"

"Why, he came up the back stairs. The janitor would not admit him by the front entrance."

"What kind of a man does he seem to be?"

"That is hard to tell, madam. At the first glance he appears to be a regular tramp. His coat is shabby and fringed at the sleeves; his boots look as though they would not last much longer."

"You did not leave him alone in the kitchen? The silver is all there yet since noon."

"No, madam; Dora is there to keep watch. I was quite frightened when I opened the door for him, and would have shut it quickly, but he had already put his foot across the threshold."

"What impertinence!"

"Yes, that is what I thought too; but when I looked at him carefully, he did not look so vicious at all—rather sick and starved."

"What does he want? Surely to beg. Give him some alms and tell him to go."

"That I would have done on my own responsibility. But he cannot be induced to go by such means. He says he must speak to the Councilor. He speaks so plaintively, like one who has seen better days."

"What is his name, and what is he?"

"Yes, I have asked him that repeatedly, but he will not give any response. But when I said that I would not be permitted to announce him then, he said I should say—" she laughed—"but it is ridiculous!"

"Well, what? You really make me feel quite impatient, Frederica."

"He declared quite seriously that he is a relative of the Councilor; and that I should say that Arnold is here."

"Arnold?"

"Yes, Arnold. And he begged me so fervently—"

The mistress rose. Arthur had listened more attentively than she had deemed desirable. Wanda, too, had followed the narrative with open-mouthed interest. The man with the torn coat, who looked so ill and declared himself a relative of her papa's, aroused her attention to an extraordinary degree.

"Stay with the children," Mrs. Berken commanded. "I will inform my husband of these facts, and ask whether he can be disturbed in his work."

She went through the salon, and knocked at the door of the second room.

Now the children overwhelmed Frederica with questions. Why had the man crossed the threshold? and why had he not had his coat mended?—and how could she tell that he was ill and hungry? and why had he said, "Arnold is here?" Their father could not know who Arnold might be. "In our class there are three Arnolds," said Arthur. Frederica endeavored in vain to satisfy their curiosity. She had to obstruct the doorway in order to keep them in the room.

The girl was of medium height and strongly built about the hips and shoulders, but nevertheless slender, and not ungraceful. The pretty round face glowed with bright tints; the blonde hair was smoothly combed back, and the thick braids were neatly coiled at the back of her head. When she opened her mouth to laugh, her full lips disclosed two rows of pearl-white teeth, not one of which seemed defective. Her costume was well suited to her somewhat rural appearance—her dress, very plainly made, of apparently homespun gray linen, her wide apron and gay kerchief, her heavy leather shoes and filigree ear-rings, which Fritz continually stretched out his little hands to grasp. Sometimes she slapped his hand, but not in anger, as if to

hurt him. The children seemed to be very fond of her, and took advantage of their mother's absence to hang about Frederica and ask her to play games with them, after they had convinced themselves that it was impossible to gain fuller information about the strange man.

Frederica heard the door of the study open, and footsteps resound along the long corridor to the kitchen. She was not without curiosity to know whether the tramp who had so strangely introduced himself would succeed in being admitted to her master's presence. That must have been the case, for she soon heard the voice of the mistress saying, "In there." Thereupon Mrs. Berken again entered the room, sat down at the table, and took up her book. As her face showed signs of excitement, the children dared ask no questions.

The Geheimrath Berken had risen from his writing-desk, which was covered with briefs and open books. He had placed the lamp on the table and laid aside his cigar, from which the smoke now ascended behind the briefs in a straight line to the ceiling. The tall, gaunt figure of the Geheimrath, who had not yet reached his fiftieth year, was clad in an old dress-coat which was buttoned up to the white tie. His smoothly shaven face, with the prominent nose and firm mouth, was furrowed with deep wrinkles, and his complexion had an unwholesome yellowish tinge. He looked like a man who had strained his mental faculties and

had grown old, though not gray, before his time. His eyes were directed toward the door with eager expectancy. There was a timid knock.

Hesitatingly he called "Come in." Into the room stepped the person whom Frederica had described. He staggered forward a short distance with faltering steps; then he remained standing with downcast eyes, drew his shoulders together, and pressed his dusty broad-rimmed felt hat between his palms.

The Geheimrath visibly started, opened his lips, but no sound was audible. By renewed exertion he succeeded in stammering:

"Arnold—brother! Is it really you?"

The person so addressed lifted his head and opened his eyes with a stare. His pale cheeks quickly flushed. "Brother," he repeated with a hoarse voice—"yes, I am Arnold, the youngest brother. It is really kind of you to know me yet—not to disown me."

"But how could I?"

"Well, as I look—" He glanced at his figure. "I am only a mechanic, and not even one who can earn his bread. But you have been fortunate enough to rise to be the Geheimrath, as I have heard, and to marry an aristocratic lady. I suppose that was she?—the one who so haughtily—"

Berken had opened his arms as if to clasp him to his breast. But now he only placed his hands on his shoulders, bent over and lightly kissed him on the cheek.

"But do tell me," he interrupted—"where do you come from thus unexpectedly? and so—"
He released his brother and rubbed off his finger-tips. "Really, it is somewhat enigmatical. I believe more than fifteen years have passed since we have seen each other."

"Sixteen," answered Arnold; "carefully counted, sixteen and a half. I am now thirty-five years old, and you have twelve years more behind you. Is that not correct? The brother born after you died young, and then came Ewald—he may be about forty-three; and then the sisters—I suppose none of them are married?—and then I. Ewald was always very kind to me. I would rather—but it would not have been of any use. He is Major, is he not?"

"Yes, Major."

"And has a wealthy wife. There I would have suited still more poorly—and, after all, you are the oldest of us brothers."

He started a step forward, and caught at a chair in order to steady himself. "Pardon." His face had grown ashy pale, and his eyes had an unsteady glance.

"But do sit down, Arnold," said the Geheimrath. "I suppose you are not in a hurry to leave—after so long a time?" He motioned him to the arm-chair, and sat down opposite him. "I would tell an untruth if I were to assert that I am glad to see

you again—that is, as you look at present. You will hardly blame me for that."

"I do not blame you for anything," answered Arnold. "You and I—it is only as it must be. It will not hurt the arm-chair; it can be brushed. And I am really tired; it is no wonder, after having traveled all night in a coach of the fourth-class, and then run around all day to find work. You can imagine that I would not have inconvenienced you if the direst necessity had not—"

"Where did you come from?"

"From Hamburg; I have been expelled from there."

"Expelled! For what reason?"

"Well"—he tried to smile—"you need have no fear. It was not on account of any criminal action. If that had happened, the Alster River is deep enough. But when a poor dog barks—"

The Geheimrath looked frightened. "You are—"

"A socialist—of course. What else can a workman be? especially if one has not even one's daily bread." His mouth relaxed into a yawn. "Yes, if one is a high officer or official, and receives a fine salary from the government, then one cannot understand that."

"But why did you not come to us sooner?"

"H'm! Every one has some sense of honor—until troubles come too thickly; then, of course, one becomes quite indifferent. I do not wish to speak ill of father after he is dead and gone; he was fast going down hill when I was yet a child.

So there was nothing left wherewith to send me to college and to afford me time and leisure to study; I had to be apprenticed to a carpenter. A good trade is a sure road to wealth. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You went to America soon after you had learned your trade."

"Yes, after father's death. The few groschen which fell to my share were just enough to pay my fare. If one has no means there, it is still harder to get along than it is here. I struggled hard enough; at length I came back, after all. For a while I was in Switzerland." A painful contraction of the muscles of his face prevented him from continuing. He passed his hand over his forehead and leaned against the back of the chair. "Pardon me, dear Siegfried—"

"Arnold, you seem to be ill!"

"No, not ill—hunger. Since yesterday afternoon—"

He gasped painfully, and his face looked blue and pinched. His eyes seemed veiled, then they closed; his head sank on his breast, and before his brother could support him, his form had glided from the chair, and he lay on the floor unconscious.

Berken sprang to his feet, hurried through the salon to the dining-room, and called to his alarmed wife: "Wine—a glass of wine! And a bowl of hot soup! My brother—he has eaten nothing since yesterday, and has fainted away. Quickly, quickly!"

He hurried back, after having seized a glass of

water, and tried to raise his brother's head. The Geheimrätthin sent Frederica to the kitchen, took a bottle of port and a glass from the buffet, and followed her husband, warding off the children, who wished to go with her.

Without hesitation she knelt on the floor and tried to pour some wine into the mouth of the exhausted man. She did not shrink from taking his head on her arm, nor from giving him every necessary attention. As she was one of the directresses of a society for nursing the sick, she had taken a course under the direction of a prominent physician, and thus could be very useful in case of necessity. She succeeded in restoring the fainting man to consciousness. With her assistance, Berken placed him on the sofa, where they made him lie down. Then she went to the kitchen and brought the soup and some bread.

The carpenter quickly revived after he had partaken of the warm soup and a glass of wine. The sister-in-law, who had seemed haughty to him at first sight, did not imbue him with much more confidence yet, but the firmness with which she performed her work of charity without being influenced by his repulsive appearance, gained his respect.

"I am sorry," he said, "to cause you so much trouble. If I had known that I was so far gone—I thank you very much."

"Oh! that is only the duty of a Christian," was her cool response. "I am glad that you feel some-

what better. Do not eat hastily. Have you a headache?"

"I am very dizzy; everything swims before my eyes. You can well imagine that I have felt discouraged for a long time. If one is entirely ruined, and sees no other way than to become a burden to one's relations—and to present oneself in such a condition!—you may believe me, I did not like to do it."

"My husband told me that you—"

"Yes, my youngest brother," Berken interrupted her, very uneasily. "He had disappeared; therefore we have never mentioned his name. Arnold will comprehend that. Oh, God! if I had only had some information of your whereabouts, something might have been done for you."

"I suppose you were well enough pleased that I kept aloof," said the carpenter, tossing his head; "brothers like myself are very inconvenient. I would have been most pleased to save you the vexation of ever beholding me again."

"But do not talk so!"

"Well! it is only the truth. Why should we try to deceive ourselves? And also for my sake. Of course, it is not my fault that I am only a workman and have met with misfortune; but it is no fun to present oneself to one's aristocratic relatives like a vagabond. But that is now overcome. Yes, one can become very wretched without being to blame for it. When I consider, we had the same

father and mother—" He supported his head on both hands and passed his fingers through his rough hair.

The Geheimrätthin left the room. "Excuse me a moment," said Berken, and followed her into the salon. He put his arm around her and detained her. "What shall we do?" he asked softly.

"He is your brother," she answered in the same tone.

"Yes, my own brother; I must not forget that. What will Ewald say? It was a very unfortunate idea of my father to place the youngest son outside of the family, so to speak. But the hard times and his sickness, the large family—you know yourself, dear Matilda, how difficult it is to get along respectably on one's salary. My parents had very much less than we, and our children are still young."

"Of course, all that needs to be considered."

"Yes, it must. I must not forget that it is my brother who applies to me for help. My resources are now, just toward the end of the quarter, very limited. The unavoidable dinner I am obliged to give—but it must be managed. Arnold must be temporarily placed in some suitable boarding-house. If he had written to me, I would have sent him some money, and this painful meeting would have been spared us."

"You wish to send him to a boarding-house?"

"What else can be done? It is too bad that our servants have already—"

"Yes, that cannot be altered. But we must try to avoid further gossip from these quarters. It is really no disgrace to have a poor relation and to be visited by him; these people understand all that. But to treat a poor brother like a beggar, and to send him out of the house—all I can say is, my feelings protest against it, and it is not the Christian spirit. My sister-in-law Sarah would perhaps advise this." This was an allusion to the wife of Major Berken; he had married the daughter of the rich banker Hirschel, who, although he had embraced Christianity, could not deny his Semitic descent, betrayed by his name. Mrs. Matilda Berken, of the aristocratic family of von Liebenhausen, did not willingly allow an opportunity of alluding to this pass by. It was a weakness of which this excellent lady was not quite conscious.

"So you would advise me to keep Arnold here?" asked the Councilor in surprise.

"I only thought, as we have the little spare-room upstairs," she answered, "which is not used, as people know, you must at least keep your brother over night; and it is absolutely necessary that he should appear decent before he is seen on the street. It would be scandalous if the police were to learn that such a vagabond is your brother."

He kissed her cheek. "Confess it, that your good heart gets the better of you," he whispered. "I pity

the poor fellow, and he is indeed my brother. It is self-evident that I willingly agree with you; but I did not dare to ask it of you. You are a true Samaritan. I thank you—I thank you. But consider once more whether the burden will not be too great for you. Do not forget, that later—I do not know if you will be able to forget that my brother, according to his social standing and manners—yes, that cannot be denied.” She shrugged her shoulders.

“When I married into a family of the bourgeoisie,” she replied, rather sharply, “I might have been prepared for that.”

That wounded him. “Matilda!” he exclaimed.

“I only mentioned a fact which is true, and do not mean offense to you or any one. Why should I? I willingly became your wife. But in the bourgeoisie it is not extraordinary for the different members of the family to adopt various social stations. One must be prepared to get in close contact with social elements which otherwise claim our attention only from a certain distance—namely, in works of charity.”

“If any one should hear you talk, Matilda”—he coughed slightly—“as if there were not black sheep enough in families of the nobility!”

“Oh, certainly! Do not let us dispute about this. I would unhesitatingly show the door to an aristocratic cousin whom I had cause to despise. Toward a poor relation of my husband, of whom I

know nothing dishonorable as yet, I will do my duty—even although my husband would prefer to take me as a pretext to get rid of him.”

“You misunderstand me entirely.”

“Permit me to plunder your wardrobe for some linen and clothing for him. But now do not detain me any longer; it is growing late.”

With these words she left him. The Geheimrath sighed, and returned to his study. His wife was quite right—but perhaps he would have preferred it if she had influenced him to act less “brotherly” toward Arnold.

Arnold had in the meantime almost finished the bottle of wine. Much refreshed, he had risen to take a look at himself in the mirror. He had not imagined that he looked quite so ragged and uncouth. He tried to smooth his hair with his hand, and when the Geheimrath entered he was trying to beat the dust off his torn trousers with a ruler which he had taken from the writing-desk.

“Well,” said he with a scornful laugh, “that was of course a long consultation. I do not take it amiss of your lady wife that she was frightened. It is a long time since I looked into a mirror, and my appearance is not very prepossessing. Perhaps it would have been better if I had stolen a rope somewhere to hang myself with. But now the right moment has passed. With something warm in the stomach, and refreshed by such wine, such thoughts do not find room. But do not fear that I

will trouble you any longer than is absolutely necessary. Of course, you will have to lend me some money, dear brother. I hope to be able to return it to you; and if not, it will not make you poorer."

"At present you will stay with us," answered the Geheimrath; "my wife wishes it so."

"Your wife!"

"As I tell you: I am honest enough to confess that I do not quite coincide with her. For, as much as I like you—"

"And so forth—I know. So your wife wants—I did not expect it from her. But not in this condition—no, truly, I would have to be ashamed. Have you any children?"

"Three—two boys and a girl."

"Before them I would be ashamed; and before the servants—that was a very neat person who opened the door for me."

"Submit to my wife's arrangements without contradiction. Do not misunderstand her ways. You will soon discover what a dear good woman she is. And now sit down and keep quiet a while longer. I have some pressing work to do, which must be finished before to-morrow."

"Do not mind me at all," said the carpenter. "If it has to be, it is all the same to me." He put the bottle to his mouth and emptied the contents.

Meanwhile the Geheimrätthin had ordered the cook to heat the stove in the bath-room, and Frederica was sent upstairs to put the spare room in readi-

ness. Before this she had carelessly remarked that the brother of the Geheimrath had been unfortunate; he had gone to America when quite young, and left his relations without news from him. Now he had had the misfortune to lose everything, and to make the long journey home without money; that had ruined him. "It is just as though some one had been shipwrecked and tossed ashore bereft of everything; of course he is not to be blamed for it." She purposely chose this simile because she knew that the cook had a nephew at sea, of whom she liked to boast, as he was a pilot.

"Yes, the best sort of a man may meet with misfortune," the cook assented. "It is well that he has such prominent relatives who can help him on his feet. If anything of that sort ever should happen to my John, he might safely count on me."

Before an hour had passed the Geheimrätthin knocked at her husband's door. He stepped out, and she told him of her arrangements. He thereupon conducted Arnold to the bath-room.

"Refresh yourself with a bath," he said; "that at least our expensive dwellings afford us. Here on the chair is fresh linen, and there on the rack are some clothes of mine, which my wife wishes you to use. We have about the same figure; though your shoulders are broader, but that will make no difference, as I like a comfortable coat. In this box you will find comb and brush—my good wife has forgotten nothing. Ah! there are also my slippers.

When you have finished your toilet come to the dining-room; we will wait for you. Your old clothing you may bundle together and leave in a corner; they will be taken away. If the water is not warm enough or not cold enough, you need only turn one of these faucets. And I hope your bath will do you good!"

When Arnold afterward entered the dining-room, the children had been taken to bed. He appeared to be a different man. The suit of clothes which the Geheimrätthin had selected for Arnold were not her husband's newest clothes, but he himself had worn them now and then till recently. They fitted the brother perfectly, and left him quite a dignified appearance. He apparently felt well pleased with them, and his beard and hair he had also succeeded in arranging in good order. Only the rough hands betrayed the artisan. The Geheimrätthin gave him a glance of inspection, and said, well satisfied, "There, now, you look quite respectable."

"Yes," he replied, "and I feel so too. I thank you, my honored sister-in-law; I thank you with all my heart."

The Geheimrath endeavored to assume a confidential tone toward his brother. He embraced and kissed him, and exclaimed, "You have our mother's good face; only it is a little coarser—that is natural. Now sit down and eat. We have already finished; it took too long a time for us to wait for the completion of your toilet. Of course, if one—"

but he looks quite manly now, does he not, Matilda? I am quite delighted with his appearance. But do eat; we will keep you company, and then you will have a good night's rest. Frederica will show you your room. To-morrow we will consider further what can be done for you—to-morrow. First you must be rested.'

It was a long time before the carpenter had appeased his hunger.

II

It was already light when Arnold awoke, the following morning. The hail rattled against the window-pane, and the wind shook the loose slate on the mansard roof. He stretched himself on the soft bed. "Ah! how much pleasanter this is, after all, than the old bag of straw in the wretched habitation which is all a poor man can afford!" he murmured. "Such a room all to oneself! curtains and pictures—even a carpet on the floor! And that is usually unoccupied. Bah! Rich people can afford it; their necessities demand that they should have more than they need. The rich!—they are not even that; far from it!—my brother, the Geheimrath, and his high-born lady. Of course, between my condition and theirs, there is a great difference. If I did not happen to be his brother!—yes, yes, yes! Things are very queerly arranged in this world!"

He rose and dressed, walked about the little room, and looked at the various articles of furniture more carefully. He found old acquaintances—furniture which had stood in his parents' sitting-room, and which had even then been rather old-fashioned in design, but of indestructible materials. There was

a wardrobe, semicircular in form, with little columns of alabaster resting on four-cornered pieces of ebony at both sides of the door; a few chairs covered with black hair-cloth; a little table with a landscape inlaid with different kinds of natural wood, which had been cracked even in those days; some dingy steel engravings in black frames; faded photographs of relatives of the family—among these some groups in which he as the youngest had a place. "At that time I was still one of them; the boy with the trousers, already outgrown, that was I—and what a stupid stare is on that face! But the sisters in their crinolines look just as stupid. Siegfried must have swallowed a ruler, he stands there so stiff—ha, ha, ha!—but Ewald looks well; truly; he looks well; and he has his hand on my shoulder—ha, ha, ha! not on account of his brotherly affection—only to cover the patch on my coat. But that was of no consequence. Ewald was kind to me after all, and took my part against the girls, who always—"

There was a knock at the door. "Come in," he cried, quickly interrupting his soliloquy.

Frederica opened the door slightly, but did not look in. "Are you awake, Mr. Berken?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed. What is the matter?"

"The gracious madam would like to know if you are ready to come down."

"But do come in; no one will harm you."

Frederica looked into the room, without withdrawing her hand from the knob.

"It is only in order that we can arrange the work. I am to clean up here, and Fritz is just now playing quite nicely—the gracious madam thinks on account of the breakfast—we are through with it long ago."

"What time is it?"

"Well, I think the clock has just struck nine."

"Is it possible!"

"But if you wish your coffee served here—"

"Oh! It is not at all my habit to give people trouble. It would look ill for me to do so, at any rate, as I am only— But why are you standing in the cold hall?"

"That is nothing. Shall I remain until you go down-stairs?"

"Oh, yes, yes." He stepped to the door, took her by the arm, and pulled her into the room. "Tell me, what is your name?"

"Frederica—that is, really Matilda. But because the gracious madam is named so, and since it is my second name after all—"

"They have christened you over again. Yes, they easily manage that. There should really be a double list of names—one for the great folks, and one for us common people altogether."

"Mr. Berken!" The face, which till now had been a friendly one, assumed a serious expression. "If you allude to common people, I do not belong to

them. And if you include yourself among them, you do me no favor thereby."

"But that is not what I meant," he excused himself. "I only said that because—but what shall I call you?"

He tried to take her hand, but she warded him off.

"Call me Frederica, as every one in the house does. The name suits me very well, too. And now let me go to my work. I will not get through in time otherwise."

"Yes, immediately. But what was I going to ask you? Frederica, tell me, the gracious madam acts very haughtily?"

"I never speak about my employers."

"Oh! I only want to know how one must behave toward her. And my brother, the Geheimrath? It is not easy to get along with him?"

Frederica went back to the hall and took up broom and dust-pan, which she had left in the corner. Without replying to him she set to work.

"Very well," said the carpenter, leaving the room; "in a place like this the servants also become high-flown," he grumbled to himself.

The Geheimrätthin received him with stiff formality, but not unkindly. He stammered an apology for his late rising.

"Well," she said, smiling, "that may pass for once; you were certainly quite tired. Usually you rise early, do you not?"

"Yes--when I have work--of course, then it is necessary. But when there is nothing to do we always think, 'He who sleeps sins not.'" He had intended to jest about the subject, and laughed at it himself; but he immediately perceived that it was not appreciated.

"But we are told, 'Watch and pray, that ye may fall not into temptation.'"

"Yes, I know that," he answered with some embarrassment, and passed his hand over his forehead.

The Geheimrätthin placed coffee on the table and brought a basket of rolls. He stooped down and sipped the coffee without troubling himself to raise the cup. The rolls just sufficed for two bites. Little Wanda timidly watched him from a corner of the table, while Fritz sat on a footstool near the window, taking out soldiers from a box and placing them on a chair before him.

"Is that Uncle Arnold, mamma?" asked Wanda, looking at him with curiosity.

"Yes, that is your uncle, dear child."

"But he has papa's coat on."

"You may be mistaken."

"No, I am sure. I know it by that button-hole where papa used to wear his medal while the coat was new. And that is his vest and his--"

"Do be quiet, little Chatterbox," her mother exclaimed.

"But why not admit it, my honored sister-in-law?"

said the carpenter, shoving half a roll in his mouth.
"The child sees—"

"Children should not notice everything," the Geheimrätthin interposed.

It occurred to him that he had not yet greeted the children.

"What is your name?" he asked the little girl.

"Wanda. And my little brother's name is Fritz; and my older brother is at school—that is Arthur."

"Ah! there are only three of you?"

The little girl looked at her mother.

"The dear Lord has taken one of our children," said the Geheimrätthin.

"Three are really enough," said Arnold. "I know from my parents' home, that too many—" He held out his hand to Wanda, and expected her to lay her own in his; but she looked at his palm solemnly, and crossed her hands behind her.

"Shake hands with your uncle," said her mother.

The child shook her head. "Uncle has just as black fingers as our cook."

"Must you notice everything so!"

Arnold withdrew his hand. "It is really true, honored sister-in-law," he said, without being offended. "That comes from lime. A workman cannot take care of his hands like a young lady."

He took several rolls more.

"Are you going to eat them all?" asked Wanda, looking at him in amazement.

He felt embarrassed. "I thought they were here

for me," he said, with a glance at his sister-in-law.

"Certainly, certainly!" She took the child by the arm and led her into the adjoining room. But now Fritz began to cry. Arnold rose and wished to take him in his arms. The little boy stamped his feet and cried for Frederica. His mother endeavored to soothe him. "Children give one a great deal of trouble," she complained.

"Well, of course, they are only children, and I suppose they are a little spoiled. With us they are allowed to scream until they stop of their own accord."

After a while, as he stood at the window and looked down the street, the Geheimrätthin began again: "You will have to take care of yourself now for a time. My husband has already gone to his bureau; he intended to stop at the Major's first to consult with him in your behalf."

"Ah! I hope they may be successful; that is to say, I do not wish to trouble my brothers more than is absolutely necessary. If they are willing to lend me a few dollars, that will perhaps suffice to help me out, now that I am well clothed."

The Geheimrätthin paid no heed to these comments. "I must now see to my toilet," she continued; "one must always be prepared for company. But if you wish to read a book, or a newspaper—"

He shook his head. "I thank you, honored sister-in-law. But the books of my brother are much too deep for me, and his newspapers"—he laughed

abruptly—"well, I can about imagine what the newspapers contain which he subscribes for."

"What do you mean? Of course, my husband is strictly conservative in his political and church views, and, as an official, always supports the measures of the government."

The carpenter seemed to consider whether he ought to enter into discussion on this subject; he probably felt that he might easily say something which might be offensive. "For politics I care nothing at all, honored sister-in-law," he then declared; "for us workmen it is a matter of indifference whether the machine goes a little toward the right or left, as the general rut is always along the same road, which cannot bring us to our desired goal; and as for the rest—why, you know that is not for our class—theaters and concerts, and general gossip; but it may be very interesting for you."

"I suppose you read no newspapers at all, then?"

"Not regularly. But we have papers which are issued for us, and read until they fall to pieces. But they would not suit your taste."

"Shall I tell you about these pictures?"

Little Wanda, who had been listening at the door, had now come in with her picture-books, placed them on the table, and opened the largest one of them.

"Shall I tell you about the pictures?" she repeated, turning the pages with an important mien.

"That would be very nice, indeed," answered Arnold, and sat down beside her.

"Take care of Fritz," said the mother, placing the little boy where he might also see the pictures. "Frederica will soon be down to take charge of him." With this she withdrew.

In the meantime the Geheimrath had walked through the Thiergarten, despite the inclemency of the weather, in order to take the shortest road to the Major's house. He hoped to find him at home yet, but was disappointed. The Major had gone out on horseback early that morning, he was informed by a servant in livery of military cut, but it was likely that he would soon return. As the Geheimrath determined to wait, the house-maid was sent to announce the visitor to the gracious madam, who was not yet visible, but sent word that she would soon put in her appearance.

"Soon" meant half an hour this time. It seemed very long to Berken, even though there were so many pretty little ornaments to examine in the drawing-room, which was furnished with luxurious taste, and hung with pictures of the most celebrated artists. In the bay-window, the panes of which consisted of artistic designs in colored glass, hung a large brass cage with a parrot. Around this were carefully tended plants with large, colored leaves of the finest varieties, and hyacinths—a rarity at this season—were blossoming in tall vases. A real Smyrna rug covered the inlaid floor, and the heavy

silken damask portieres fell trailing over it. Berken did not envy his brother for all this luxury which his wife had brought him; nevertheless, when in these apartments—through the open door there was a vista of two adjoining rooms of equal splendor—he could not keep off the oppressive sense of his own deficient means.

At length his sister-in-law glided in—a rather voluptuous but elastic figure, dressed in a charming *negligee* of the finest pink flannel, trimmed with garnet velvet and silk cord. She wore a tiny cap on her curly black hair, and her very small white hands were covered with glittering rings. Her merry eyes greeted the Geheimrath from the distance. "But so early—so dreadfully early!" she called to him in a lively manner. The parrot, evidently pleasantly excited at her entrance, climbed up the rings of his cage, and cried, "Sarah, Sarah! Good woman, good woman!"

Berken kissed her hand. "I would not have dared ask for you at this time, my honored sister-in-law," he said, forcing his rather harsh voice to a pleasant smoothness, "but I am all the more delighted to be able to wish you a good morning. How charming you are looking! Truly, one must come to see you if one has long missed the sunshine."

She laughingly showed her pearl-white teeth. "Can you also flatter?" she playfully queried. Since the parrot would not be quiet, she stepped

to the window, put her finger through the wires of the cage, and patted his neck with her tiny fingers. The whiteness of the skin showed to good advantage against the tinted green plumage of the bird.

"I would like to speak to Ewald," the Geheimrath continued, "but have been informed that he is out already."

She nodded. "Oh, such a restless man—a terribly restless man! Always on the field before day-break, to the dismay of the captains, as if no parade could be drilled without him! And then he often does not know what to do with all the hours till noon. Fortunately I sleep well, and do not allow his early rising to disturb me. Yes—ambition, ambition! He became Major young enough—one of the few officers who are not of aristocratic prestige. Now, of course he wishes to rise higher, and thus he must show his metal. You know he is a soldier with all his heart and soul."

She had seated herself opposite him on a small settee which stood in the center of the drawing-room. "Sarah, Sarah!" the parrot screamed after her.

"That stupid bird!" she exclaimed. "Always screaming my name, which awakens such insinuating memories of the Old Testament. The patriarch Abraham should really be included, do you not think so?"

She liked to jest about her lineage, in order to show how free from prejudice she thought herself. "Ewald is beginning to be provoked at the stupid

bird. Not even before the most aristocratic lady in the city will he keep his peace. I suppose you know the aristocratic ladies are more aristocratic than are the gentlemen? Her excellency Krautheim, who occasionally honors me with a call, looks around quite alarmed. So, recently, I bought a madonna and child, and had it hung in quite a conspicuous place—there, just see! a beautiful picture, and quite cheap, for, between us, who buys such things nowadays?—only to set the worthy dame at her ease, so that she may quite unreservedly expound her antisemitic views. If Ewald is to receive a title for his services for his country—I think Sarah von Berken does not sound so badly, after all.”

The Geheimrath's smile was constrained. These rather cynical views of his sister-in-law were not at all to his taste. “Is there any near prospect of that?” he inquired. “Oh, we will see when Ewald has risen to be Colonel!”

“Yes, if it were not for that stupid bird! Probably you will obtain those honors sooner than we. Any one who has married a Fräulein von Liebenhausen—”

“That does not suffice. Wealth is also a consideration. But perhaps, on account of my sons—”

“Our boy shows very little martial spirit as yet. He is the image of his grandpapa. But perhaps he will change in the course of time. That reminds me, how are your children? We see each other so

seldom; every one is so engrossed with the social duties of their own circle. This entire week, day after day, we are invited to dinners and suppers. It is impossible to go to the theater even as often as one would wish."

She chatted thus a while longer. The Geheimrath listened with but little interest, and answered only the tenth part of her questions—which was, however, all she would have asked. The pretty woman evidently liked to hear herself talk; but she was really entertaining, and it was not her fault that her listener was not appreciative.

"Do you know, my dear Berken"—she changed the theme after a while—"that I suspect you of entertaining a secret in your mind? I am waiting in vain for a morsel of it to fall to my share, which I can then grasp. Is it really only for Ewald?"

"Certainly not," he reassured her; "you are probably even more interested in the matter than he, and I do not know how you will take it."

"But do tell me about it!"

"It is very disagreeable for me—extremely disagreeable—truly. You are perfectly right: one considers and ponders about anything of this kind, and comes to no conclusion. In short, then, yesterday evening, to our great surprise—brother Arnold has returned."

She looked at him in amazement. "What brother Arnold?"

"Our brother—my brother, Ewald's brother."

"Dear me! I have never heard that a brother—"

"I do not wonder at that. Why should Ewald? It was so long ago, that he entirely vanished from our minds, and Ewald may have believed—it is easily explained under the circumstances."

"But it must be a great joy, if a brother who has long been absent suddenly—"

"H'm! yes—yes, indeed—in one sense."

"I do not understand."

"If you had seen him, dear Sarah—"

"Well?"

"Ragged, starved—altogether wretched."

"The poor fellow!"

"Yes, poor fellow! But you can imagine that it is not very pleasant when anything of that kind happens so unexpectedly in one's home."

"Yes; how unpleasant for your wife!—I can imagine."

"Oh, Matilda received him with true Christian submission."—He suddenly interrupted himself. "H'm—I meant that she did more than her duty. When you consider—"

He was just about to explain the details of the case when the clashing of the Major's spurs was heard from the ante-room. The lively little woman sprang up immediately and hurried toward him. She stood on tiptoe to kiss him, took his arm, and exclaimed, before he could welcome the guest, who had already been announced to him at his entrance,

"Just think, dearest, your brother Arnold has returned!"

"Well, I declare!" he cried, exhibiting not much more surprise than he would have at any piece of news she might have told him.

His long blonde mustache endeavored in vain to give a martial look to the good-natured round face. His eyes lost none of their usual merriment as he turned to Siegfried, who had risen, and who looked very morose compared to him.

"So our carpenter—"

"He is a carpenter?" stammered Sarah.

"Yes, have you not just heard it?"

"I was just endeavoring, dear Ewald, to explain things."

"But that is told in two words. So Arnold is here again? That is delightful! I suppose he has become a millionaire out there across the sea? He wanted to go either to America or Australia to dig gold—something of that sort."

"Let me narrate to you."

"With pleasure. But, do you know, I am dreadfully hungry after my ride. We could discuss the subject at breakfast—if you would order it to be served, dear Sarah." He patted her cheek. "I have had provocation this morning—had to discipline two soldiers. Captain von Krummbüchel is lax; in his company there is always trouble."

"Excuse me a moment then," she said, and withdrew.

When the two gentlemen soon after appeared at the well-appointed break-fast table, the Major looked somewhat more serious. His brother had quickly informed him of the facts. He ate and drank hastily. "Yes; what shall we do with him now?" he asked, somewhat peevishly.

"That is just what I came to consult you about," answered the Geheimrath. "I myself cannot possibly—"

"Of course; I understand that. The poor boy awakens my heartfelt pity. How does he impress you?"

"Oh, now, after he is again in decent clothes—"

"Please look up my second-best street suit, Sarah," the Major said to his wife. "Let Philip take them over immediately; also some linen. But what in the world has he done to become so degenerated?"

"I fear," said the Geheimrath, sighing, "that he has spent years in the poorest and most dangerous class of associates. Several of his allusions admit of no other interpretation. You know the present movement proceeding from the working-classes; and he has become a workman—nothing but a workman who lives from hand to mouth."

"Still, I am pleased at his delaying applying to us until forced by direst necessity," declared the Major. "There is yet enough pride and manliness in him to help him on again, if one will but give him a lift."

"But how—how?"

"Yes, that cannot be decided on the spur of the moment, and altogether without hearing his opinion. We will learn what he has to say."

"I am dreadfully curious to see this brother-in-law Arnold," said Sarah, filling the wine-glass of the guest. "A real poor man in the family—a laborer, whose brothers are a Geheimrath and a Major—it is of extraordinary interest."

"My dear sister-in-law—"

"I will visit Arnold this forenoon," said Ewald, "if you want to accompany me, Sarah—"

"Of course I will. But let us have the carriage, dear Ewald. The streets are very muddy, as the snow melts as soon as it reaches the ground. In the meantime I will dress."

"Our poor horses! We could take a cab."

"No, my love; we will drive in our own carriage. Why should we keep it if not to use?" She cared less for the drive than she did for the satisfaction of having her equipage and coachman stop at the house of the Geheimrath. That was something her dear sister-in-law could not afford, even though she had been a Fräulein von Liebenhausen.

"We will consider the question more seriously," said the Major, when he parted from his brother. "If I find Arnold as I anticipate my father's son, something must be done for him in earnest."

"Yes, we owe it to ourselves to do so," said the Geheimrath.

He went to his office, and hastily glanced through the briefs which were heaped on his desk. His work did not afford him solace. His secretaries were harshly reprimanded, and several visitors quickly dismissed. After an hour he put on his overcoat, took up his stove-pipe hat, and announced that he had some business to attend to. "If His Excellency should inquire for me, inform him that I will return very soon."

He went to the police department, and sent his name to the chief. He was immediately received. All the peevish wrinkles had disappeared from his face; he endeavored to speak in a cheerful manner, as a man of the world would speak to another. "I have come to you, honored sir, about a very delicate family affair. How can one be blamed for one's relatives? I have a brother—have him because he is mine, I might say with old Polonius. Dear me! it is nothing dishonorable—at least, I hope not. But I would like to defend myself from any unpleasantness which might occur. This brother—" He disclosed what he knew. "It is very disagreeable, is it not? But I could not turn my brother on the street. I will not be suspected on that account of associating with socialists—ha, ha, ha—I!—nevertheless, I would like to avoid having the police investigating this. My word will suffice."

The chief sought to quiet his fears in the most amiable manner. "We will immediately learn," he said, and rang.

"I would request Rath Liedemann to step here."

"At your command, sir."

In a few moments the designated official, proficient in affairs of this nature, entered. He was quite a young man, whose jovial mien little betrayed his occupation. At his entrance he gave a hasty but penetrating glance at the Geheimrath, in order to learn in advance as much as possible about the reason for his having been called to the chief's room, and lifted his eyebrows a trifle, but not perceptibly, under his glasses.

"Do you know anything about a carpenter Berken?" asked the chief; "probably only entered as workman."

"Berken?" repeated Rath Liedemann, more in order to gain time than to search in the recesses of his memory. The gentleman whom he saw before him he had immediately recognized as one of the Councilors, but could not have remembered his name instantly. Now he knew whom he had to deal with. "Berken?—yes, indeed. He was described to us a few days ago by the Hamburg police as a rather dangerous man." He bowed. "I am surprised, honored sir."

"What is recorded against him?"

"Oh, nothing culpable. As a stranger he was expelled on account of socialistic propaganda, and it was expected that he might come here, although he set out in another direction."

"And he has—"

"Certainly taken a position of trust in their secret organization; which would lead one to believe that he would continue his activity in one of the central cities of the movement. We have been on his track, but have not found him."

"The Geheimrath can help you on the track," said the chief, smiling.

"Yes, I am sorry to say," remarked Berken. "I am, however, relieved that nothing—but even so, the affair is provoking enough. If you will give me a few minutes of your time, Rath Liedemann—"

"I am entirely at your service."

Berken took leave of the chief with a cordial shake of the hand. "My best thanks."

"Oh, not at all! I am very sorry. But that can easily be arranged."

This was at the same time a hint for his subordinate, which his bow intimated that he had understood.

The two gentlemen conferred with each other for a quarter of an hour. The Geheimrath left the police bureau apparently much relieved, and hurried back to his office in order to perform duties he had delayed.

III

Arnold Berken quickly made friends with his brother's children. He gladly permitted Wanda to show him her pictures and explain them. Little Fritz allowed him to lift him on his knee in order that he might look on, and did not want to leave his uncle when Frederica entered.

"You can go back again," said Wanda, earnestly; "we are playing with uncle."

"With uncle?" repeated Fritz, and turned his face away from her.

"But you will tire the gentleman," said the girl.

"No, do not think that," exclaimed the carpenter; "on the contrary, it pleases me. We are on good terms already. The children are very well behaved."

Frederica sat down near the window with a piece of needle-work.

Wanda continued to explain the pictures, but she soon perceived that her auditor was not as attentive as before. Her uncle often looked across the book, and ceased asking questions; he hardly noticed that Fritz, thinking the progress too slow, hastily turned the pages himself, and thus began to quarrel with his sister. At length, to Wanda's silent disapproval, he commenced a conversation

with Frederica, which, although it was not very brisk, and subject to many pauses, yet interrupted her own chatting.

"I suppose you are not a native of this city?" he asked.

"No," answered Frederica, without seeming to encourage further questions.

After a while he recommenced: "Is your home far away?"

"Yes, far from here—very far."

"Near the Rhine?"

"No."

"Then probably from East Prussia."

"Yes, in East Prussia."

"I have never been there."

Another pause—then, "I suppose it is very cold there in winter?"

"Sometimes."

"Now such a funny picture is coming, uncle," Wanda interrupted.

Fritz began to laugh in expectation.

"But you are not a native of Littau?"

"No, but I worked there—in Insterburg. The people almost all speak German there now."

"But you are not laughing at all," said Wanda, pouting.

He laughed, to please her; but soon looked over again to Frederica.

"You have something so bright about your manners—so quiet, so composed—and such fine teeth—

I immediately guessed that you were from the country."

Frederica did not reply, but with difficulty restrained a burst of merriment. Thus it was surely unintentionally that the red lips parted and the dazzling row of white teeth became visible. He looked at her quite a while, as if he expected her to speak. Then he said, without noticing Wanda's tugging at his coat: "Well, do not be offended—that was my idea. One can be from the country and yet—indeed, you do not show it by your speech."

"I went to the parish school. The teacher there was a learned man—a theological student, and waiting for a place as pastor."

"Did you live near there?"

"No, I lived in the extension of the village, on our farm. But I went to school every morning."

"I suppose you learned a great deal there?"

"Oh well—!"

"Frederica can read," Wanda interposed: "She often hears Arthur's poems, too. But she does not understand Latin."

The girl laughed. "No; so learned I am not. I have forgotten many things, too. Without practice—"

"But sometimes Frederica writes a letter when she has ink."

"Indeed! To whom do you write?"

"Oh, I write home," she quickly answered; "my brother is there now."

"And you write to him?"

"Yes; and sometimes to my parents also, and to my youngest sister, who will soon go into service."

"So your parents are living yet?"

"Yes; my father has retired, and lives with my brother on the farm. Father gave over the farm to my brother when he married. His wife brought him a marriage dowry, else they could not have managed it."

"Why not?"

"Well, the other children had to get part of the property—my older brother and my second sister, who is married to a blacksmith."

"Then you must be a rich girl?"

"My portion is reserved for me," Frederica replied, seriously, "because I was not yet of age—two hundred and twenty-five marks, a cow, and a feather-bed when I marry. But I can get the value in cash."

"That is good—ready money is always good."

Wanda had listened attentively. "Oh, Frederica, do take the cow!" she exclaimed, coaxingly.

"Why?"

"Oh, for us to play with."

The elders laughed. That provoked the little girl. "A cow gives good milk, too," she added. She turned some pages in her book, and pointed to a picture. "There—do you see, uncle?—the girl is milking the cow."

Now Fritz grew restless, and cried for milk. Frederica went for a cup of milk, took the child on her

lap and fed him. Soon after, Arthur came home from school. At first he acted rather condescendingly, and bestowed as little notice as possible on the man who was attired in his father's clothes. But gradually he followed Wanda's example, and began to talk to him.

"What are you, uncle?" asked Arthur.

"Carpenter," he answered.

"Can you make tables?"

"Oh, yes, if I have wood and tools."

"And chairs, too?" asked Wanda.

"Yes."

"And bureaus?"

"Certainly."

"And wardrobes?"

And thus they continued until they had named all the articles of furniture which were within sight.

When their mother finally entered, Wanda called to her; "But uncle can make so many things—everything here! . And Frederica is going to get a cow!"

"Cow—cow!" repeated Fritz, triumphantly.

At about one o'clock the elegant equipage of the Major halted before the Councilor's house. The coachman, with a great fur cape, jumped from his seat and opened the door of the carriage. The Major's wife placed the tips of her neat little boots on the step, and carefully tripped along the damp pavement, evidently much pleased that a few pedestrians cast admiring glances at her until she reached the door of the house. Then she climbed

up the three flights of stairs as if mounting a steep hill, stopped at each landing and chatted.

"There, you see, Ewald, how quickly I get out of breath? My heart is not sound. I think I will some day suddenly die of heart-disease. These stairs! How much higher yet?"

The Major laughed. "You do not take enough exercise, dear child. If you wish to preserve your slender figure—"

"My slender figure! Do not jest. We must spend next summer in Marienbad. Papa will surely consent to that. At last we have reached the summit of the Chimborazo. Do not ring the bell yet; I must first rest a little. Now, if you please."

Frederica opened the door and showed the company into the salon. "I will announce you immediately."

The Geheimrätthin, although quite ready, did not hurry. "Your brother and his wife," she said to Arnold—"probably on your account—be prepared."

Then she entered the salon. Both ladies began to converse in a very lively manner. They had to exchange assurances of their joy at meeting again; the Major interrupted them, asking, "But where is our *sans-culotte*?" He spoke so loud that he could be heard in the next room.

"You must put on boots, Mr. Berken," whispered Frederica to Arnold.

He looked at his slippers. "Yes, but—"

"Outside, by the kitchen door, you will find a pair

of the Geheimrath's. You cannot go into the salon thus—the Majorin has very sharp eyes."

"If they only fit me!" He went toward the kitchen. When he returned the Major had just opened the door of the salon in search of him. "There he is!" he exclaimed, and hastened toward him and embraced him fervently, kissing him on each cheek.

"Yes—yes, it is I," said the carpenter, embarrassed. "And you? you are but little changed; all in all, I mean—well, well!"

The Major took his arm and drew him into the salon. "And here is also my wife, who is burning with curiosity to make the acquaintance of her youngest brother-in-law. Dear Sarah, my brother Arnold. There is a strong family resemblance, eh? He was the handsomest of the brothers, and ten or twelve years ago really a pretty boy. Even now—if he would not stoop so—" He endeavored to make him stand more erect, shoulders back.

"But he looks quite presentable, does he not?"

"Yes, now—" whispered the Geheimrätthin to her sister-in-law.

"I can well imagine that your Christian charity has covered his nakedness," remarked the Majorin, with slight sarcasm. She rose, and with precaution extended her hand, covered with a light heliotrope glove, to her brother-in-law. "How are you? It is nice of you to concern yourself about your relatives after so long an absence. You might at least have sent us a photograph of yourself." She put on her

eye glasses. "Ewald is right. But now tell us where you have roamed; that must be very interesting."

"I do not know where to begin," said Arnold, timidly looking at the floor.

"Were you also in Spain?" she asked.

"No, but in Brazil—a half a year. There was little to do there; the white workman is considered less than the black one. The Chinamen in San Francisco also spoil the trade."

"Is it true that more than thirty thousand of them live there in subterranean caves?"

"Yes; three—four stories deep."

"That is of interest to you, Sarah," the Major remarked amused.

"Very interesting," she said, quite seriously. "I have heard that in America the people are not at all ashamed to work; is that true?"

"Ashamed? If they only could get work! One tries to out-do the other."

"The Fatherland is, after all, the best place," said Ewald.

The carpenter shrugged his shoulders. "For any one in your position—or in brother Siegfried's."

"A good workman, nevertheless, earns good wages here," said the Majorin, with an air of importance. "Just recently I had a table varnished over, because something hot had been placed on it. What do you think, Matilda?—six mark!"

"Of that the workman has not received half,"

replied Arnold; "and the next day perhaps he had nothing to do. Still, one must eat. And what can be done with three marks in these times, when provisions are so high? and the rent—yes, the rich know nothing of that."

The Geheimrätthin softly sighed. She knew but too well.

"You have not a very good opinion of the rich," the Major exclaimed jocosely.

"H'm! it might be otherwise in the world," remarked Arnold, stroking his chin. "The great disparity—' He deemed it dangerous to continue.

"That is the will of God," said the Geheimrätthin; "one should not grumble about it."

"I do not know about that," interrupted her sister-in-law; "only it does not help to be discontented about it."

"Perhaps it will help," said Arnold, winking. "If the dissatisfied ones unite there will be ninety-eight to one hundred—"

"And if they honestly divide with the two remaining men, each of them will have about seven and one-half groschen more," cried the Major, laughing.

"I have not reckoned it out," answered Arnold. "No one wants a division of property."

"But you want a different state—a different social order—do you not?"

"That may be."

"It will be a large prison, with self-elected supervisors."

"You may call it so. Every kind of work shall have its full reward. Now the capitalists take—" He waved his hand in the air. "Ah!"

"Speak freely."

"What for? We will never in this life be of the same opinion."

"I believe that. But beware of the military force; it will not stand much joking."

"We do not feel like joking. And in the end—what is the military force? The high officers? Bah!"

"You are red with excitement," jested the Major's wife. "I have often wished to make the close acquaintance of such a socialist. It is very interesting."

"We will soon convert him," said the Major.

"You are joking, dear Ewald?" remarked the Geheimrätthin.

"How can one take such talk seriously? It disturbs me but little, that the sun will one day cease to shine, as astronomers assure us. I will not live to see it, that human beings will be angels; and until the great Workman's Republic will be established, which needs no Geheimrath and no Major, my wine-cellar will not be exhausted. You can help us drink the wine—you will not refuse a glass of wine because others must be satisfied with water? Come to see us soon—to-morrow, or, rather, this evening. Or have we another engagement?"

"A rehearsal for the tableaux at the Generälin."

"Yes, the rehearsal, but not till nine o'clock. And to-morrow?"

"The dinner at Colonel von Leuthold—nothing else."

"So do not come between four and seven o'clock, but call at any other time."

"We must go to see our parents yet."

"Yes, on our way home; that will not detain us long. Now, Arnold, come soon. Sarah wishes to continue her studies. Be ready for a sharp cross-questioning." He stepped up to his wife and raised her by the shoulders. "But now we must be off, dear child, or we might be suspected of designing to remain to dinner."

"That would suit me well enough," said the Geheimrätthin, smilingly. She knew that she might venture the invitation. The Major kissed her hand, and Sarah began to adjust her hat before the mirror to prepare for departure.

Frederica brought in two visiting-cards—"The forester's wife with her daughter."

"Let them enter; dear Arnold, if you would in the meantime go to the children—"

"You lose nothing," said the Major; "the daughter is even older than her mother." He took him aside while the ladies were bidding each other adieu. "You are probably in need—for the present take this trifle." He placed a twenty-mark piece in his hand. "For cigars, gloves, cabs, one always needs money."

Do not drop it. Well—till we meet again!" He hastened after his wife, who in the vestibule was exchanging compliments with the two visitors.

Arnold put the gold-piece in his vest-pocket. For a long time he had not handled a gold-piece, and he turned it about in his palms for some-time, as if to reassure himself that his brother had really been so magnanimous. His head whirled when he stepped into the next room. Ewald had not disappointed his expectations. And yet he did not know how to take him—now so friendly, then again so distant. And his wife—he liked her, with her natural cheerfulness, much better than his other sister-in-law, who was so formal even in her intercourse with her nearest relatives. Arnold had felt that he could repose much confidence in Sarah, and had really been influenced by her to confess more of his ideas than was perhaps advisable. Although he did not exactly repent his doing so, still it seemed to him as if the gay young woman had the inclination of making a plaything for herself of everything which came in her way—this time of him.

Her image danced before his mental vision, constantly changing its outlines and assuming various dazzling hues. Matilda he could easily understand, but Sarah he could not fathom; the more he endeavored to do so, the more visionary grew her image. But to Frederica he said, "She suits well to my brother; he is also so—" But he lacked the

expression for his meaning, and raised his hand, waving it in the air.

In the equipage silence reigned for a few minutes. Sarah looked out of the window.

"Well, what do you think?" asked the Major, softly nudging her.

"About what?"

"About Arnold and—"

"It is really too bad for the poor fellow."

"Yes; what can be done?"

"Have you considered it yet?"

"In our sphere he certainly does not belong."

"No, not as he is now."

"He will always be so. The tree was transplanted into different ground far too early; one must let it grow where it has taken root."

"What do you mean by that?"

"H'm! I think we will concern ourselves as little about him as he himself would care to have us. When we have helped him on his feet, he may do whatever pleases him."

"That sounds like anything but brotherly sentiment."

"Of course we can help him once in a while, so that he need not be in such trouble again. For a person with his moderate requirements a little allowance does a great deal."

"You would like to shove him off?"

"I will gladly do for him whatever lies in my

power. But what can be done for a laborer, which is really all that he is?"

"But he has learned something."

"A carpenter's trade—yes. But little can be earned by that. And a carpenter is only a laborer."

"Are there not also carpenters who have their own establishment and employ workmen?"

"That may be—furniture manufacturers."

"That is something. Could not such a manufacturer and builder become purveyor to the court?"

"Yes, if circumstances—"

"I believe my furniture was ordered at such an establishment. The proprietor had a great store with goods, and worked at a large desk with many book-keepers, just as papa does. Could not your brother Arnold become such a proprietor?"

"Dear child, what are you thinking about? All that requires capital first of all."

"That we must strive to get for him."

"You are naive. Who would do that for him? And for the establishment of a business of that kind a large sum would be necessary."

"He would not need to begin with a large store."

"Then it must be considered that, for the most part, business men undertake anything of that sort. They employ supervising workmen, who overlook the apprentices. Indeed, business capacity is required to superintend all th's, and that a simple workman does not possess."

"But does not your brother Arnold probably pos-

sess such a clever mind? He is your parents' child, as well as you and Siegfried. Better schooling cannot make such a wide disparity."

"That is true."

"If he had an independent business he would be well provided for and you would not need to be ashamed of him."

"You are quite right. But, as I have said, the capital. We have nothing to give him and to go into debt for him—that you would hardly advise."

She was silent for a while. Then she lightly said, "I feel so much interested in him. It would be very nice, if something could be done for him. Do you not think so?"

"Certainly, dear. He is my brother."

"If I would speak to papa."

"You would do that?"

"Why not? He is a rich man and glad to do me a favor."

"You have ideas! But do speak to him. Perhaps he may succeed in explaining the state of affairs to you."

She glanced at him with a mischievous smile. "Is my plan really so unreasonable?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, do you know—" he began to laugh. "Papa has already quite enough to do to keep us going. To expect him to do anything for our relatives and especially—"

"Oh! papa so often gives great sums for strange

people and for purposes which are not at all sympathetic to him. He does so with a stifled sigh—but he does it.”

“Yes; there are reasons for that, my love. There are petitioners whom one cannot easily refuse.”

“Why should not papa follow the dictates of his kind heart for once? When it is to smooth the path for a good, industrious person of good family, who has met with misfortune!—certainly that is a grateful task.” That she had said with unusual earnestness. But soon a scornful little smile crossed her pretty face. “Of course it will not be quite indifferent to him either,” she continued, “and still less to mamma, as to who is the brother of their son-in-law. Do you not think so too? That we cannot set him up in business, that they certainly know. And—I have taken it into my head, as you often enough have termed it, into my obstinate head—”

He put his arm around her tenderly. “You are the best of women! Of course I could not wish any thing better for Arnold than a good social standing, but—it is really a little too impudent.”

“Let me drive to papa’s immediately,” she begged. “At first I must chat a little about it with mamma, and thus carefully advance with my attack on papa’s purse—not bring up the heavy artillery at once. Ha, ha, ha! Do you not admire my military tactics? I have learned something already from you.”

He knocked at the window. The carriage halted.

"Good luck, then," he said in parting, "I will walk home." To the coachman he gave the necessary instructions.

"H'm—h'm—h'm," he muttered to himself as he walked along. His wife's plan after all, did not seem to meet his entire approval. A few days ago he had played at the Casino, and had lost a great deal more money than he had at his disposal. The comrades from whom he had borrowed were not importunate, but thus it was all the more a matter of honor to settle the affair as soon as possible. He had determined to confess to his wife, and to induce her to ask his father-in-law for an increased allowance. Now he could hardly do that. His plan was spoiled and he felt himself in a predicament. Still, it was very improbable that the old gentleman, who with all his goodness of heart was nevertheless cautious and shrewd, would consent to do so much for Arnold. And then he would be troubling himself unnecessarily. But could he have contradicted his wife's resolution? Could he himself destroy the only possibility which might arise to help his brother to competence?

"Bah! the poor boy needs it more than I. For the present there may be other means out of my difficulty. It would have been wrong to spoil my good wife's pleasure. But it is too provoking, too provoking! But one must offer a sacrifice to fraternal affection. I do it gladly, too—h'm!"

He stepped into a wine hall where he expected to meet acquaintances of his circle.

IV

Arnold felt very much bored. His life in the aristocratic house grew almost unendurable.

The Geheimrath came home so late from his bureau. Dinner was not served before half-past four. Thus the forenoon seemed endless in length. Then the head of the family was very much fatigued and spoke but little during the meal; indeed, every noisy movement of knife or fork against the plates, or shoving of a chair; increased his nervousness. After dinner, without exchanging his suit for a more comfortable one, he sat down in an arm chair and took up a newspaper, and was asleep in a few seconds. But his nap lasted only some minutes. Then a cup of black coffee revived his spirits. Now he spent an hour with his family, conversed with his wife and chatted and caressed the children. He spoke to Arnold also, but not in a pleasant easy conversational style, but as if he felt himself in duty bound to speak, and considered his questions carefully and heeded the reply but little. Then he sat down at his writing-desk in order to transact business which had to be postponed until the close of his busy office hours. At nine o'clock

his wife knocked at his door in order to remind him that it was now high time to prepare for some social affair they were to attend.

The Geheimrätthin could give Arnold a little more time and attention. But she seldom succeeded in finding a topic of conversation which the carpenter cared to pursue for any length of time, and his accounts of his experience excited her interest but little, as the most important factor always was the place he occupied here and there as artisan. It seemed very strange to her that a man who had seen so much of the world should have learned so little of the features of various places of which she had read. He seemed to have had no eyes for them. "Oh, yes," he said, "there was something of that sort to be seen there. But of what interest is it for one of our class? We only inquire where we can earn the most, are glad to have a comfortable place to rest, go to work early, come back late, and rest on the Sabbath as well as possible. It is just so everywhere. The castles and the museums of art and the churches--those one passes by. Any one must have a good suit on to be admitted there, and then there is no time either. Or, if one has time in plenty, as is often enough the case, to our sorrow, then one is in a very discontented mood and would like to throw a stone against the great window panes, in order to get a night's quarter from the police at least."

"You do not mean that in earnest?" said the Geheimrätthin much shocked.

"Well, I have never done that," he re-assured her, "but you do not know, worthy sister-in-law, what strange notions may come to any one who is famished with hunger."

"But there are in all Christian lands charitable institutions which look to it that every one is saved from the extremity of poverty."

"Yes, if one would pray and sing."

"Why do you not wish to do so?"

"Because I cannot play the hypocrite. Bread which I gained in such a way I could never swallow."

"But one should thank God for his good gifts."

"Others have more reason to do that than I. He has distributed them unequally, or at least—I do not know whether there is a God who distributes; I would rather not believe it."

"These are sinful sentiments. I can see that you have not been in church for a long time. One is admitted there even in a shabby coat."

"What should I do there? Allow myself to be consoled with the prospect of future bliss? If the people who are prosperous in this world would really believe that up there the last will be the first, they would hurry to get rid of their abundance. But they are not at all anxious."

The Geheimrätthin endeavored to convert him. That annoyed him very much. She had a haughty

manner of explaining these things, as if she belonged to the elected who could not err. "Next Sunday we will go to Holy Communion," she said. "I expect you to accompany us." He did not contradict her, but felt strange that this should be demanded of him. He felt like a prisoner.

Wanda's picture-books had been looked over more than ten times. To let Fritz ride on his knee, gave more pleasure to the boy than to him. He got a piece of wood from the kitchen and worked at it with his pocket-knife. Now he could demonstrate to the children how clever he was. He carved small dolls, animals, ships, tables and chairs. The children looked on attentively, but it was nothing more than temporary amusement. "Can I not be of any use to you at all, sister-in-law?" he asked. "Let me varnish your furniture. Some pieces look very dull."

It would make too much muss in the house, and it was not suitable that he should be seen at such work. People might think that they employed him to take advantage of his stay with them.

His only amusement was when he could have a chat, with Frederica. He understood her and she understood him. They would have understood each other still better if they had met at another place, where she was not employed as servant and where he was not the brother of the distinguished master. But this strained state of affairs imposed greater dignity on their intercourse. The first impressions

from his parental house, and school had not been entirely effaced from his character. Something still remained which distinguished him from the common workman. Frederica, on the other hand, had brought with her from the country to the city a demeanor which placed her above the general city servant girl, also in Arnold's eyes. Her simplicity of dress and the arrangement of her hair sufficiently indicated that she was not like the frivolous girls who work in wealthy families only to accumulate enough money for finery. They felt they owed each other a certain respect which rendered their conduct more amiable. Frederica liked to converse with the carpenter, as the cook had a fiery temper and was very unsociable. Even the lady of the house was afraid of her. Frederica was sometimes sent walking with the children. He could not accompany her, but he asked her, "Have you sometimes a Sunday out?"

"Every two weeks," she replied; "that, at least, is the agreement. But I do not always go—something interferes, or I do not feel like it. If the weather is not nice, I do not want to go out. One only ruins one's dresses."

"Where do you go to at such times?"

"Oh, I take a walk, and I look at the houses and the people."

"But do you not visit anybody?"

"Sometimes I visit my cousin, who is from our village. She has married a smith in Nesselblatt's foundry, at the other end of the city. I have

already gone to the theater with her; but it is a stupid pastime, and I cannot imagine how people can make such fools of themselves only to make others laugh."

"Do you never go to a coffee-house or to a dance?"

"No, indeed! With whom should I go to such a place?—oh, no; I am afraid."

"Other girls are not afraid."

"Yes, they are that kind."

"Do you not care for dancing?"

"Yes, at home—at weddings. At home there is sometimes a nice hop at the tavern which the farmers arrange. I enjoyed those dances very much. But here it is different. Here one meets so many utter strangers, and one cannot trust every one."

"That is not so bad, if a girl only has a nice escort."

She laughed. "Where could I get one?"

"If you would only wish—ten to one." He hesitated a minute, and looked at her inquiringly. Frederica stood opposite him at the table, with little Fritz on her arm, wrapping him in a shawl which she had partly thrown over her shoulder, and which hung down in graceful folds. A painter might have taken her for a model of a madonna. This did not occur to the carpenter, but she had never before seemed so beautiful to him. "If you like, Frederica," he said—"seriously, if you would like to go with me—"

She looked at him in amazement. "To a dance?"

"Yes, to a dance. Or, if you would prefer, somewhere else."

She shook her head.

"Why not?"

"Oh—"

"Am I not good enough for you?"

"No, it is not that."

"Why will you not go, then?"

She giggled. "If the Geheimrath would meet us, or the Major would come driving along—that would be fun!"

"Bah! this city is large. Let us go next Sunday—eh?"

"I thank you very much, but I cannot do it. It would not be suitable. If you go alone, you will enjoy yourself much better."

"But if I tell you—"

She gave him a warning glance. Wanda was listening to them very attentively. The little miss thereupon quickly ran to her mamma and related, "Uncle would like to go walking with Frederica next Sunday, but she will not go."

"I think you have misunderstood," replied her mother.

"No, mamma; certainly not."

"Your uncle was merely joking."

"But he said 'Seriously,' mamma."

She received no response to this.

"Why does Frederica refuse to go with him, mamma?"

"Because it is not proper."

"Why is it not proper? Frederica goes walking with us."

The Geheimrätthin smiled. "Listen, your doll is crying."

"My doll cannot cry at all. But there are dolls which can cry. My friend Tillie has such a one but her grandpapa is very rich. Mamma, buy me such a doll!"

"Next Christmas, perhaps, if you are good."

Now the little girl ran to Frederica to tell her the good news. "Next Christmas I am going to get a doll that can cry, if I am good." Then she told her uncle of it.

The Geheimrätthin resolved to hint to Arnold, as soon as possible, that she did not like his confidential intercourse with her servant-girl. To her husband she said, "Your brother has acquired very bad habits. For our children's sake, it is necessary that he should soon leave our house."

"Ewald wishes to see me to-morrow," he answered, "and we will consult about it."

Arnold went to see the Major on the day following their first meeting, but found no one at home. Soon after he received an invitation to lunch with them, which he accepted. Sarah helped him too frequently to the fiery wine, and was afterward disagreeably impressed with his coarse hilarity.

Ewald took him into his own room, gave him a cigar, and sent him away, as he did not enjoy his conversation. "I see that you live like a pig in clover," said Arnold when taking leave.

"The comparison is not to my taste," replied the Major; "but I have about as much as I need."

"When one looks at your surroundings, dear brother—"

"All that belongs to my wife. You must also marry a rich girl," he added, jestingly.

"Yes, I! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You are a fine-looking man. You must not imagine that you cannot succeed. Always look above you! If we have once set you up—but we are not so far yet."

It was again a tedious afternoon. Frederica was busy in the kitchen. Perhaps her mistress had arranged it so that she could not be in the sitting-room. In the evening his sister-in-law asked him if he would not like to sup at a restaurant, as they had to go to a dinner. He consented to that. "If you need some money—"

"I thank you. Ewald has well supplied me."

"But please go to a very nice resort."

"Of course. If one has money enough—"

"And do not drink too much."

"It would take a good deal for me—ha, ha, ha!"

Although he laughed he did not relish the rather formal manner in which the gracious lady laid down her instructions in regard to his conduct. In

the main, however, she was right; he must be cautious now.

So he roamed for a while through the crowded streets in search of a restaurant. Now and then he stood still before one of the large windows to gain a view of the place. He was dressed like the gentlemen who walked in and out, but he had a feeling that he could not comfortably sit at the same table with them. At last he stepped into a luxuriously furnished hall, lit by electric lights, which seemed to him less crowded, and sat down near one of the pillars. A waiter attired in a frock-coat and white cravat approached him forthwith, and placed a glass of beer before him. "Your order?" With that he handed him a bill of fare. He began to read it, but was shocked at the high prices. "One mark fifty—one mark seventy-five—two marks; but that is exorbitant." He glanced toward the other tables, and thought the portions very small. To spend so much money for that! There was a plate of rolls before him on the table. He helped himself, and ate one after the other.

"Shall I bring you something, sir?"

"No, I thank you."

"But then, sir—" With that the waiter took the plate with the remaining rolls.

"Do you wish another glass of beer?"

"How much is a glass?"

"Thirty pfennig."

"Thirty pfennig? For that I can get two glasses at another place."

"But not so good; altogether you seem to have mistaken the place."

"That may be."

The carpenter put his hand in his pocket and threw a dollar on the table. He was already attracting the attention of those around him. The waiter brought him the change, but watched in vain for his tip.

Arnold sneaked out timidly. He thought he heard some suppressed tittering at his exit. "They know how to charge," he thought. "Two marks for a little piece of meat! Nonsense! One must work a whole day for so much money." Then he noticed that he had gone into a first-class restaurant. Now he was on the lookout for the right sort of a place. "Over there—that bay-window with colored glass panes—that is the place for me. Every seat occupied, dense tobacco-smoke, tinkling of beer-glasses, hustling waiters." At last he found an empty chair in a distant corner. He took a seat after asking the permission of the gentlemen seated around the table. They did not pay the least attention to him. No one seemed to notice him, not even a waiter. He waited almost half an hour patiently. "Excuse me, sir," he said at last to his neighbor, "can one not get a drink here, if one is a stranger?"

"But why don't you call the waiter? Waiter, this gentleman wants some beer."

"Yes, right away."

And the waiter hurried away, grasping with each of his ten fingers the handles of as many glasses. Arnold waited another ten minutes, then rose and left. The heat had become unendurable to him, and the place altogether tiresome.

At the corner he espied a cigar-stand. He went in and bought some cigars—three for ten pfennig. Then he tried a third resort. There he was soon served with beer, but the people he found very disagreeable. They moved their chairs away ostentatiously, and at length a gentleman who sat beside a lady exclaimed indignantly, "But what an execrable weed that must be that you are puffing away at! It is unendurable!" Arnold shook some of the ashes of the despised cigar on the table, and thus aroused further dissatisfaction. "Wipe off that muss!" cried the gentleman, whose cheek showed a deep scar, in a commanding voice to the waiter. Arnold paid his bill and departed. As soon as he reached the open air he again lit his cigar-stump.

He felt that he had had quite enough of this kind of aristocratic amusement, and started on his way back to the Geheimrath's dwelling. From a basement door a few men in workmen's blouse stumbled out with unsteady gait. The windows of the basement were lit up, and on several rows of shelves were placed familiar four-cornered and

round bottles with short necks and gay labels. He stopped and looked at them with delight. Those were old friends. He considered a while whether he should enter. It seemed to be a very nice kind of a resort, although hardly such a one as the Geheimrätthin had advised him to go to. For days he had not tasted a drop of whisky, and his throat was parched—why consider longer? No one knew who he was. Only a dram! Why, he was no drunkard, only once in a while—If one works hard the habit grows on one. Oh, it is folly to consider so much! I am my own master. With these thoughts he descended the steps.

Down there he felt at home. The host in his blue apron, and the bar-maid and the guests—he saw them for the first time, but was soon on confidential terms with them. Here he knew what to demand and how much he had to pay. There were hot sausages to satisfy his appetite. And how delicious they tasted to him! With the people gathered around the bar he was soon engaged in the liveliest conversation. It never entered his mind to conceal from them that he also was a laborer. "My hands show that," he said, "do not be surprised at my coat. I have come by it honestly; it was a gift from my relations. Yes, a real Geheimrath wore it before it came to me; and who knows who may wear it, if some day necessity compels me to leave it at the pawn-shop. Bah! with our class it is up-hill one day, down the next; until

we realize our just demands, then it will be different. But such a time will come when a man with health and strength will not have to pawn his coat because he cannot find work to provide for his needs. Equal rights for all. But we need a majority in the Reichstag for that, and we will obtain that if we do not grow lax; and gradually we must enlighten our comrades in the country." Thus he continued to talk, after he was once started. Everyone present soon learned that his name was Berken, and that he had been expelled from Hamburg. He drank more than he could stand, threw clinking coins on the table and declared that he would treat the entire company.

"Always liberal, when I have the means!" One of the group, a mason, declared that he was going to a meeting of the strikers and invited Arnold to accompany him. He immediately agreed to do so. As he was told that the distance was great, he hailed a cab for himself and his good friend. "But we must go with lightning speed!"

But during the drive he grew sober and thoughtful. It began to dawn on him that he had acted very imprudently, considering the position in which he had placed himself, and the folly in which he had allowed himself to be involved. But now there was no retreat. He was ashamed to confess to his associate, whose name was Edward Blank, that he would vastly prefer to leave the cab before it reached its destination at the

extreme northeast portion of the city, for he had too plainly disclosed his views in the saloon. At last they arrived at a dancing-hall, surrounded by a wide lawn. The doors were thrown open and groups of laborers in loud conversation were gathered about them. People were continually crowding out of the densely thronged hall, while others again sought to force an entrance into the room. Blank seemed to be known by all, and was familiarly addressed as "Ed." "How are you getting on?" he asked. He was told that the small proprietors had become intimidated and had proposed arbitration, but the proprietors of the large establishments did not agree to their terms. The opinions whether the laborers would be able to keep their stand were divided. "You speak, Ed!" was the cry from every side.

In the hall the crowd was densely packed. Yet Blank succeeded in forcing his way to the table at the further end of the room, where the leaders of the assembly were sitting. He drew Berken with him and introduced him. His name was familiar to them. He was asked whether he would speak, but he refused. The police surely had an eye on him. As the helmets of some of the guardians of the peace were conspicuous among the audience, his reason was accepted as plausible. But he was requested to take a chair at the table of the presiding leaders. Several speeches were then heard. Blank proposed to accept no mediation, to insist

on their rights and to stop work within fourteen days. He met with hearty approval, but also with strong expressions of opposition from a group of older workmen. These were to be silenced by the crowd, but insisted on their right to be heard. The president succeeded with great difficulty in preventing blows between the conflicting parties. The tumult was again resumed when another speaker arose and commenced a storm of invectives against the tame spirits and stubborn heads in the assembly. According to his opinion the laborers should not even be afraid of breaking their contracts, and should immediately resent the impertinent declaration of the proprietors by a strike. He had scarcely finished the sentence when the police officers declared the meeting dissolved, but it was quite a while before the hall and the garden was cleared.

Arnold was one of the last to leave, with Ed Blank and several of the leaders. These proposed stopping at some beer-hall and to discuss what what should be their further movements. They invited Arnold to accompany them.

"It must be late," he said, but little inclined to accept. One of the party had a watch and drew it out of his greasy vest-pocket. "A little past ten."

"Is it possible!" cried Arnold; "I have no key. If I do not hurry the janitor will be asleep."

Ed asked the location of the building. "It will take you a full hour to reach it, and you will be too

late then. You had better take a drink to recover from your shock." He had already informed the others that Berken had some money with him and was liberal with it, therefore they now commenced to try to persuade him.

"But it is provoking," he exclaimed angrily. "What will I do if I cannot get in?" And all the vexation which he might cause his brother and sister-in-law by his late return began to revolve itself in his mind.

"I suppose it will not be the first time that you spend a night in a basement or in the open air," replied Henry Brander.

"Yes, but—"

"But that is not at all necessary," said Ed. "In my room there is at present an unoccupied bed. You can take that."

"If that is the case—well, then, let us be merry!"

Arnold did not withstand their entreaties longer.

The following morning he rose and departed without further unnecessary delay, but not as early as he had determined, as the effects of the preceding night rendered him tired and sleepy. He had hoped and planned to steal into his room unobserved, and to go to bed there as if he had not been absent that night. He felt very much depressed, and went to a saloon, where he ate some sour herring and took a glass of whisky. That, he thought, would do him more good than a pot of coffee.

He found the door of his room ajar. *Frédérica*

was busy therein with broom and duster. "Are you busy already?" he stammered, embarrassed.

"I suppose you do not know what time it is," she replied sharply. "It is eight o'clock." She leaned against the broom, and inspected him with anything but a friendly glance.

"Eight o'clock? Yes, I wanted to—I could not—"

"But that is not right of you to remain away all night. And how you look! Probably you have not been in bed all night. Your clothes have not been brushed, either."

"No, Frederica. But I have slept—a few hours—it was unpleasant enough. But what could I do? The house was locked."

"I waited for you a long time down in the vestibule with the key, because I did not want to have you wake the janitor, who always makes such a fuss. But you did not come."

"You—oh! Yes, if I had known that—I am sorry, truly. But as it happened—has it been noticed that I was away last night?"

"Your relatives returned very late, and retired immediately. The gracious madam is yet asleep, and the Geheimrath has not made any inquiries for you. How could he imagine anything of that kind?"

"That is well. Frederica, do not let this go any further. Why should they hear of it? Sometimes one does things unintentionally—I meant to do no

harm. Please say nothing more about it." He stepped up to her and tried to grasp her hand. But she repulsed him.

"Please do not come near me, Mr. Berken. You have taken whisky—I can smell it. I suppose that is very proper for you?"

"Only a little drink for breakfast—truly, only a little." And he put his arm about her.

She avoided him. "I see that you are not even now quite sober," she exclaimed. "I thought that you were a respectable man, but—"

"I hope you will not think the worse of me because I like you."

"Oh, those are stupid jests!"

"No, I am not in jest, Frida. You are a very nice girl—I like you very much. I can say that I have never yet met a girl, far as I have traveled, who so—"

"Now, please stop, Mr. Berken; I have heard sufficient. And if you insist on knowing it—in the plight in which you are now standing before me, I do not like you at all. To spend the whole night in revelry, and to drink whisky in the morning, and to look so disorderly—when you are in such a fine house, and should not wish to bring disgrace on your brother! But, of course, it is not my affair."

He sat down on a chair and rubbed his hands against his knees. "In the main you are quite right," he replied, "just scold me. I do not take it amiss from you. But what you have just said

about my brother, this cannot continue much longer—I mean my living here like a beggar on charity. He will soon grow weary of it and I also. Necessity knows no law and therefore I came and knocked at this door, and of course I can thus far not complain about my reception. But I would not wish to let matters remain so. Now I really recognize the difference between us. I am only a workman, and I must be among my own class. And among us a respectable man—you just spoke of that, Frida—is not blamed for taking a glass of whisky with his comrades; his wife would not object either. But a nice wife—”

“Now give me your coat,” she interrupted, “and lay down on the sofa a while. I will say that you caught cold yesterday and are ill, and would rather drink your coffee in your room; I will bring it to you. You cannot present yourself to the gracious madam in such a state; you yourself will be obliged to admit that.”

He rose and slowly took off his coat. “If you hand me the brush—”

“No, just give me your coat. Everything must be done properly—that is my work here.”

“Frederica!” the cook’s voice resounded in rather unpleasant cadence from the floor below. “How long are you going to stay up there?”

“Now I must take a scolding yet on your account,” she grumbled, and hurried off.

V

The brothers had consulted about the best ways and means to help Arnold—of course without asking his participation. "It would be very injudicious," the Geheimrath had said, "to awaken in him hopes which could afterward not be fulfilled. If we must finally let him go his own path, it may perhaps be the most advisable not to detain him with us longer than is necessary. With that I do not mean to say that he cannot remain here. We must take matters as they are, and not be sentimental. It is not our fault that this trouble has come into our family; it cannot be mended. I fear that, with all our exertions, there will be no possibility of escaping from it. As soon as we agree to recognize this fact, it is our duty to act accordingly. We will give Arnold the necessary means to continue his wanderings, and, as for the rest, let him try to make his own way. For a government office, which my recommendation could procure for him, he is not fitted, as we have ascertained during the past few days."

Ewald had agreed with these views, but it was in his opinion very desirable for all parties if Arnold could be more securely provided for.

"Otherwise he will come back to us, and probably in a still worse plight. What shall be done then? My wife has had a very clever idea. We will wait and see if she will succeed in carrying it out. There is indeed but one way to conceal the disgrace of which you speak—at least before the world: Arnold must become a prosperous business man."

"Ah! it is useless to think of such plans."

"Sarah makes them. And you must admit, if we succeeded in establishing Arnold as a builder or manufacturer, we could receive him into our families. Many a one has become prosperous, who has afterward even been esteemed for having risen from small beginnings. Of course it takes luck. But is it not already a lucky circumstance for him to have among his near relatives some distinguished men who take a lively interest in his welfare, in order to avoid public disgrace? If he understands how to rise, I will offer him my shoulders."

"H'm! Of course, that would be— But I do not see—"

"Neither do I. That is of no consequence. My clever wife has sense enough for both of us, and will know how to persuade her papa. She is quite charmed with her beautiful plan, and is very eager with her preparations."

The Major's wife had just come home. Without taking time to remove her hat and cloak she joined the gentlemen, sank into an arm-chair with an air of exhaustion, and exclaimed:

"It is truly no easy task to go through the fire for a good idea! Before, it is only comprehended. There are so many objections—very reasonable objections, very plausible; but they are so trivial, so low—and high ideals do not like to stoop. A woman who knows her own mind cannot be so easily discouraged."

"You know what you want," said Ewald, laughing.

"Of course I know what I want," she replied quite seriously. "I want a brother-in-law whom I can invite to my house when I have other guests. Is that nothing?"

"Yes, dear child, but if it shall cost so much—"

"Oh, the money is the least. Papa is so very good. A few hundred marks he would immediately give at my recommendation for any needy person—not as a loan, but as a gift. And why not for your brother? But that is just it. I do not want a present for Arnold. Papa should set him up in business on solid grounds of mutual interest. And then he only smiles compassionately, and says that I understand nothing about business. But he cannot contradict my idea with numbers and reasons. I adhere to it."

"To be brief, therefore, papa has refused you," said Ewald, somewhat sarcastically.

"Refused!" she exclaimed, indignant about such a supposition, while she began to unfasten her cloak. With a graceful movement of her shoulders

she threw it over the back of the chair. "It is fearfully hot here!—do you not think so? Refused! As if that could be possible! No, it is not as bad as that. Papa will consider the matter and see Arnold first."

"I find that very natural," remarked the Geheimrath. "Of course, I can only make a conjecture about your plans. But if the active coöperation of the old gentleman is requested, he must at least know for whom he is to take such an interest."

The Majorin drew the hat-pin from her chapeau, took it off and playfully twirled it about in her hand. "Papa should have said yes at first," she said; "there would have been time enough for all kind of objections afterward. It makes such a good impression when one asks for something and is immediately responded to with yes. If it cannot be done—well, there is time enough for reasoning afterward. But to take so much time to consider and to investigate—then it is better to flatly refuse. I am so mortified! Will you not put my hat aside? I cannot reach to the table. I hope Arnold will make a good impression. But do not wrinkle the lace, darling! You men always take such a firm hold of anything, as if it were made of iron."

Ewald endeavored to satisfy her. "So papa is not entirely against it," he said, chuckling. "You may be proud of your success. We can be glad that papa looks at this matter from a business point

of view. Arnold will be placed in a better position thus, and we have no responsibility."

"Arnold must behave with some self-assertion and pride," interposed the Majorin, "so that papa may gain confidence in him. He has such an ugly habit of hanging his head, as if overwhelmed with a heavy burden. Please, dear Siegfried, send him to me; I will instruct him. He must have more confidence in himself—such a fine-looking man! But he seems to lack that most of all. What does Goethe say? 'And if you have confidence in yourself,' and so forth."

The Geheimrath asked for some further information, and thoughtfully shook his head when he had received it. "It will be best not to tell Arnold much of your plan. He may learn that your papa will perhaps help him to procure an independent position, but it would be better to keep him in ignorance of the high plans you entertain for him, my honored sister-in-law. It might cause him to expect too much. Let Mr. Hirschel test his capability himself, and then decide."

The Majorin insisted on seeing Arnold before the interview. She inspected him like a recruit, and gave him advice as to his bearing; she repeated her injunction that he should answer all questions courageously, and not hide his light under a bushel.

"You must always think 'I will succeed,'" she persuaded him, "and everything else will be easy. If my papa offers you his help, you must not hesi-

tate; you will not soon find such a man again. It was my idea to send you to him. Now take care that it ends well."

Arnold had been sufficiently excited by his brother's communication, but now he was still more mystified about what they wanted with him—surely something good, but of what nature? He had an instinctive feeling that the people who were apparently so kindly concerned about his welfare thought mostly of their own interest, and were not able to understand him. If they helped him they would want some return, and he was uncertain whether he could perform that. He thought this quite natural. Among the class to which he belonged, there was no other way of thinking than that every favor and assistance had to be repaid by an offering of equal value. But that was done without reservation. It seemed impossible to him to ask his sister-in-law Sarah for further information—he could not find the correct form of expression; and yet he would have liked to know more before he was introduced to the strange gentleman, of whom he had some secret suspicion, as he was a rich Jew. So he lingered in great embarrassment one minute after another, still waiting for a more definite explanation. He inquired again for the way, and asked again for a description of the house, and continued twirling his hat in his hands.

"I see," said the Majorin at length, "it will be best for me to accompany and introduce you. Of

course, I cannot speak more in your behalf than I have already done; there you must help yourself." Thereupon she said: "But if you stand before my papa as you are standing before me now, with that woe-begone expression on your face, then I cannot promise success. But I do not wish to discourage you."

She was going out for a drive; the carriage was at the door. She asked him to enter the equipage; he was about to take a back seat, but she motioned him to sit beside her. "People will be dreadfully curious to know with whom I am driving," she whispered smilingly; "so many of the lieutenants know me; just raise your hat whenever we are saluted. That is good practice—and the Geheimrath's stove-pipe is, by the bye, very becoming to you. But you must not wear it so far back; put it down almost to the eyebrows. Yes, indeed, people will think you a very fine gentleman."

The banker's house was situated on one of the finest business streets, and differed but little from the surrounding buildings. On the first floor were the bank and offices; on the second the parlors and sitting-rooms, which were connected with the lower floor by an iron spiral staircase; on the third floor were the bedrooms. The vestibules and staircases were tastefully furnished and well-heated. Walking over rich velvet carpets, between rows of tall plants and palms, past fine statues and bronze candelabra, the ante-room was reached, the doors o

which were hung with dark portieres. Here there were high cabinets, on which stood busts of famous authors. Arnold merely glanced at everything. It was indifferent to him how Mr. Hirschel's house was furnished. He had the general impression of being in the house of a man who belonged to the wealthy classes, of whom he had not the best opinion. They were to him a species to which he felt himself in strong opposition. Still he cherished no feeling of envy toward the individual rich man.

The lackey opened the door. "Come with me," said the Majorin to Arnold; "I want to introduce you to mamma."

She approached an elderly lady reclining on a chaise-longue with a book in her hand, kissed her, and paid her some compliments on her appearance, which were received with a smile, but a declining motion of the hand. "Is that—"

"Oh, before I forget, dearest mamma—my brother-in-law, Arnold Berken, of whom I have told you so much. Now you can see a real socialist—ha, ha, ha! He does not look so terrible, eh? Of his radical ideas he can tell you some other time, if you wish to have a philosophical discussion with him; there is no time for that to-day. I have to take him to papa, who wants to see him, and I have an appointment with my modiste to have a dress fitted." She turned toward Arnold, who had remained standing near the door. "My mamma is a great philosopher, I must inform you; she

studies Schopenhauer, Darwin, Häckel, Buchner, and, what may astonish you still more, Lassalle." She took a book from the table, which, concluding from its blue cover, must have been taken from the library, and looked at the title-page. "A novel by Tolstoi. Do you like that author? or do you find him too ascetic? Yes, you can hardly tell my mamma anything new."

"Of that what is in the books I know very little," remarked the carpenter candidly, but a little sharply, as if such wisdom seemed of little value to him.

"Your information, gained from direct observation, will be of great use to me as an adjustment and completion for my conception of the world," replied the old lady, in a somewhat didactic tone. "When one stands in the midst of the movement—but will you not take a seat?"

"No, mamma, I cannot allow it," cried Sarah; "I will send him to you some other time for a long discussion. If I neglect the fitting, my dress will not be ready for the ball at court. Now make a fine bow, dear brother-in-law—so! that will do—and now follow me. I'll come back, dear mother."

She hurried through a series of rooms, until they reached the iron staircase. "Now go down-stairs and knock at that door; or wait—I will grant you a minute yet." She led the way and opened the door. "Are you alone, papa? Here is the guest I have announced to you. Be good to him."

She beckoned Arnold to approach, and gently

pushed him in the room. "Adieu, adieu!" After that she tripped into the room, put her arms around the old gentleman, who was seated at his desk with his back toward the door, turned his head around, and gave him a kiss before leaving.

The office was very plainly furnished. The plain desk was so placed that Mr. Hirschel could see any one entering from the opposite rooms. A few chairs were standing around. Near the window hung the quotations from the board of exchange, held together by a string. Against the wall stood a sofa covered with leather, and before it was a table with two boxes of cigars, an ash-receiver, and an alcohol lamp; above the table hung a life-size photograph of the German emperor, the only picture in the room. On an iron safe stood a marble bust of the first founder of the bank.

The old gentleman beckoned to Arnold to be seated. His head, with the high brow, aquiline nose and well-formed chin, and long side whiskers, might have been called beautiful, had it not been somewhat too small. The large, expressive eyes mustered the approaching visitor without curiosity, but with much discernment.

"You are Mr. Arnold Berken?" he asked in a low, almost mellow voice, in order to open the conversation.

'Arnold Berken.'

"The brother of my son-in-law?"

"Yes, sir."

"My daughter has given you a good recommendation. Take a seat."

"I can just as well stand."

"But please!" He extended to him his long, slender hand, on which he wore a large signet-ring, and pressed him down into the chair. "So you are a mechanic?"

"A carpenter, sir."

"Are you still at that trade?"

"Yes; that is—mostly as a workman in a factory, if I can find a place."

"Why do you not work with a master carpenter?"

"Well, there are not many such places; and then in the factory one is more independent."

"Do you know your trade thoroughly?"

"Yes, sir. I have also learned sculpturing; it was my father's wish. But for some time I have made models for a foundry."

"You also worked in foreign countries; do you speak foreign languages?"

"I know some English and French."

"Can you also write these languages?"

"No, sir."

"But you can write German well?"

"Well, as much as I remember from school; I used to stand well in school."

"Please take this paper and write what I will dictate to you." He gave him a lead-pencil.

Arnold looked at him in astonishment. "I shall write?"

"Yes, if you please. I want to find out your ability. Please take off your glove."

"I cannot do that; my sister-in-law has forbidden me to do so."

Mr. Hirschel smiled. "You may get along this way, perhaps." He dictated to him a business letter. Arnold wrote rather slowly, and in very large letters, but with a certain precision.

"Could you write any faster?"

"Yes, sir; but it will not look so well."

"Try it. So—I thank you." He looked at the writing. "Are you good in arithmetic?"

"We have not much to calculate, sir."

"May I give you an example to compute?"

"Yes, sir; but I don't know—"

"You have bought some timber, boards of two-inch thickness, the foot at—what's the price for that?"

Arnold named the price, and Mr. Hirschel gave him the example. With some difficulty Arnold made the calculation, and did also an easy example in interest—of course not by the best method. Mr. Hirschel seemed satisfied. "You know more than a common workman," he said; "how is it that you have not succeeded better?"

Arnold shrugged his shoulders. "If one has no capital to invest—"

"And if some one could be found to furnish you the capital, what would you do with it?"

This question perplexed the carpenter. "I must

first know how much?" he answered, after a pause.

"Quite right; but take it for granted that you could have as much as you pleased?"

Arnold laughed. "Why should I uselessly trouble myself about that?"

"But if some one really wished to help you? You must have considered, sometimes, what you would do if you had the money."

"H'm! for money one can buy anything—even a large furniture factory."

"And if you had such a factory, would you know how to manage it?"

Arnold meditated. "It is not so easy—I have not worked much in furniture; but, yes, I could do it if I could keep a good book-keeper."

"Would you rather be a builder?"

"Yes, sir. The business is simpler. One has to furnish definite work, and one works to order, and needs no large supply; that is a great advantage. Of course, one has to give credit, and is apt to lose sometimes."

"How much capital does it take to establish such a business?"

"H'm! Well, it depends if one begins on a large or small scale."

"We will begin on a small scale."

"We?"

"I only put the case thus."

"Oh! Well, one must have a shop, and a foreman; and one must buy the wood and pay the work-

men; and one must live before the business begins to pay. It takes some time to get customers. It would take several thousand marks even for the smallest beginning."

Mr. Hirschel put paper and pencil before him. "May I ask you to make an exact calculation of that? You may put the figures rather high."

The carpenter looked at him inquiringly. But as the strange gentleman seemed quite serious, he made no further objections, moistened his lead-pencil with the tip of his tongue, and began the calculation.

Mr. Hirschel in the meantime finished the letter which he had commenced to write at Arnold's entrance.

"That seems to be about right," finally said the carpenter, passing the pencil over his forehead.

The banker took the paper in his hand and looked at it. "You have made a mistake in multiplication here," he remarked; "but the difference is not of much consequence. H'm! and if some one would lend you this capital?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No one would be so foolish as to do that."

"But what if some one would do so—would you be grateful for it?"

"Why not? He would be the only loser if the business went wrong."

"But it would hardly have to be taken for granted that it will go wrong."

"No, not if I could help it."

"I think there is an honest name at stake."

"You mean because my brothers—"

"Certainly. If you would succeed in maintaining a good social standing, that would again bring you into their circle. But then, of course, it would be necessary that you throw off various elements with which you have hitherto been associated." Arnold raised his head with a questioning glance. "First of all, your association with any elements termed dangerous by the government. You are, as I have heard, a socialist."

"I do not deny that."

"Your former circumstances may offer an explanation for that. But if you now become a proprietor yourself, that would be quite a change, and might alter your views."

"That may be; a man is only a beast—"

"Pardon me! It seems quite natural to me that altered circumstances lead to altered views of life. Any one who has aught to lose will not speculate on the destruction and annihilation of the existing state of things."

The carpenter smiled rather compassionately. "That is your idea; but we only desire equal rights for all."

"And equal share of property?"

"Equal rights to the property belonging to the state. Let the government be in possession of all

property, and give to each what their work would merit."

"But, first of all, I would lose all that I possess. If I were the person who would give you a portion of his property in order to improve your condition and thus show his confidence in your honesty, could you be so base as to contemplate and accomplish my ruin?"

"Dear sir, no one would demand that of me."

"But you do endeavor to accomplish that, and the ruin of all property-holders, to whom you too hope to belong, if you do not part from an association which spreads even more dangerous doctrines than have perhaps yet come to your recognition. This separation will have to be the condition on which I insist, if you desire my assistance in shaping your future course."

The carpenter had listened with increasing astonishment, and he looked at the large eyes, the stern expression of which now seemed to advise him to choose. "Yes—if you really intend—for me—I cannot understand all this."

Mr. Hirschel rose, and paced up and down the room a few times. "I have not yet decided," he said; "do not be too hopeful for the present. I will consult with your brother, the Geheimrath. Certain recommendations—at all events, I thank you for your visit. It would be a matter of satisfaction to me to consent to my daughter's wish without—but we will see. Remember me kindly

to Geheimrath Berken." He extended his hand to Arnold, and opened the door for him.

Arnold felt rather dazed after this long interview, which had seemed to him like an examination, was ended. Wherefore all these questions? What intentions had they concerning his future? There was surely something on foot to assist him; or was this only for his brother's sake? Mr. Hirschel had impressed him agreeably—only his last advice; he spoke of a condition "on which he would insist"—he remembered the words distinctly. He should—well, yes, that depended on circumstances. "Of course, I might be so placed that it would be self-understood; but I must know first what they really intend doing for me. If they think I would do that for a loaf of bread, that is quickly eaten, and then—do not allow yourself to be fooled! Bah! even our class has some sense. But if I wish to leave them, they cannot hold me. First of all I must look to my interest, and if that is all right—well, yes!"

Thus he soliloquized on his walk homeward. He informed his sister-in-law with a few words that he had spoken with Mr. Hirschel. "I do not exactly know what he intends doing for me, but Siegfried will hear of it. I had to write and reckon for him; it was odd. But he is a very kind man—very. It seems he thinks of establishing a carpenter-shop."

But at the first opportunity which presented itself he told Frederica about the interview in all the

detailed facts. "What do you think about it?" he asked her.

"Yes, how can I—"

"It must mean something."

"I think your brothers are not satisfied with your being only a workman; so they want to do something for you."

"But what?"

"That they tried to find out from you."

"From me?"

"So I think—whether you are fitted for this or that."

"What will be done?"

"Of course, I cannot tell. But the father of the gracious Majorin is said to be very rich."

"I believe that—a banker;" and he chuckled.

"Perhaps he will give you the money—it may be, for your brothers' sake."

Arnold sat for a while in deep meditation; then he suddenly raised his head and asked: "Do you think that I can venture to accept it?"

"If you have learned your trade well, and are industrious."

"Yes, but—do you know, Frida, this question has a crook somewhere? I do not know as yet what may be involved in it; for one can get nothing for nothing—is that not true?"

"Certainly."

"Do you see? I must be on my guard." After a

while he looked at her smiling. "Have you decided about next Sunday, Frida?"

"There could be no decision about that."

"We might go just for a walk."

"If Mr. Hirschel would hear of it he would immediately withdraw his interest in you."

"Let him do so, if I cannot be my own master."

"Do not say any more about it."

"It would be so nice, Frida."

"I asked you to be quiet about it; there are two ears too many here now."

"Oh, yes, yes;" and he did not continue the conversation.

Wanda, who had been playing with her doll, began to grow attentive. She glanced around the room. "Where are the two ears that are too many?" she asked.

Federica laughed. "They are my two ears," she answered.

"But you need those."

Now her uncle began to laugh.

"Why are you laughing?" inquired the child. "Mamma says the walls have ears—is that true?"

"Yes, indeed."

Now she also laughed, although somewhat perplexed.

When the Geheimrätthin entered she ran to meet her, and cried: "Frederica says there are two ears too many here, and that those are her ears—is

that not stupid? How many ears have the walls, mamma?"

"Frederica ought to say nothing where she must fear that two ears are too many," remarked her mother, with a warning glance toward the girl, who had blushed deeply.

"Oh—I—gracious madam—"

"Dear Arnold, my husband has just come home—if you will go to his room?"

"Certainly." He rose and withdrew.

Wanda was persevering. "Mamma, how many ears have the walls?"

"A thousand," she sternly replied.

"These two people begin to be troublesome," she thought with displeasure.

The Geheimrath called to see Mr. Hirschel. He had received a card from him inquiring when he could be found at home; he had answered this in person.

"Well, what do you think of my brother?" he asked, after greetings had been exchanged. "Do you think that anything can be done with him?"

"Oh, I do not doubt it," answered the banker. "Of course, just as Sarah has planned—" He shrugged his shoulders. "It is to be deeply regretted that your brother did not apply to you much sooner, while the influence of his parental home was yet prevalent. His aims were not very high to begin with; he submitted to the force of circumstances, soon missed the path to success, and

finally sank deeper and deeper. Then, of course, he was an easy prey for the socialists, and probably became a very useful tool for their agitation. His general knowledge is far above that of most of his associates among the laboring class, but still it does not suffice to raise him to a higher sphere of society. I do not know whether he is especially capable as a mechanic; nor do I know if he has any special ability for anything else."

The Geheimrath sighed. "Yes, yes," he said, "you are quite right. It was his misfortune to be alienated from his original station, and it is perhaps not for his advantage that the family now endeavor to reëstablish him in it. But Ewald wishes to do his duty, and your daughter has so kindly interested herself in him."

"Yes—Sarah! As I already implied, the plan which her lively imagination and kind heart suggested will be difficult to carry out, and hardly profitable. I am a business man, and can only give my assistance as such. Every experiment is made at some risk. But here the most dangerous would unquestionably be that of jumping over all medium grades, and placing a man who has hitherto been accustomed to provide only for his daily needs at the head of a large establishment of great responsibility. I cannot make a great merchant of him, any more than I can make a gentleman of him."

"You may be assured," responded Berken, "that I have never entertained such foolish expectations.

Even now your views strengthen my opinion that it would be the most advisable to allow Arnold to choose his own path; of course, not without assistance, but yet without sentimental compassion, as nothing else can be done."

"To that I would not agree," said Mr. Hirschel, with a subtle smile; "my daughter would blame me severely. I believe that' your brother can advance, and because I believe that I am quite willing to extend to him a helping hand. I am ready to risk something on the venture, but not imprudently, or to his own disadvantage."

"What—you would—"

"I will establish a factory where he can make a good profit, if he is industrious and capable. I wish to place him like a mechanic who has some capital at his command—according to his and his associates' views, quite a large sum. He will also have credit at my bank up to a certain amount, which will be necessary to carry on his business, and I will gladly increase it when I see that he understands how to use it. But I must keep an eye on him; and therefore I would demand that he stays here, in order that he may not lose the moral support which he can receive from his brothers. I do not know if this will meet your approval; if not, on no other conditions would I help him."

The Geheimrath hastened to assure him that the assistance which he had just promised far exceeded

all his expectations. He quite agreed with him that the only method of procedure should be step by step, as Arnold had to prove his metal. "That you wish to establish him in this city," he continued, "I admit might be rather inconvenient, but the city is large; it is self-understood that my house will always be open to him, even if his company is not—at least at present. I think Ewald's views will correspond with mine. I thank you—I thank you sincerely; I am quite overcome by your kindness." He rose and took an affectionate leave. "By the way, may I not congratulate you yet?"

"Wherefore?"

"Ha, ha, ha! For receiving your new title—Kommerzienrath."

"Yes, there was some talk about it, on account of my son-in-law, but—"

"It is certainly near at hand, and further advancement will soon follow."

"But, please!"

"Yes, yes, indeed; the authorities show very gracious acknowledgment for those who are active for the elevation of the laboring classes."

"I hope that you do not intend—"

"Of course not. This affair will speak for itself, but now, good-by. I will not anticipate. Please do not trouble yourself—I can find the way."

Nevertheless the banker accompanied him to the door.

VI

Arnold Berken received this communication without betraying any special emotion. "So, so," he said, "that is the plan. Well, I might have expected it; your influence can do much."

"It was certainly accomplished by our endeavors; I hope that you will show your gratitude."

"How?"

"If you understand your position, certain responsibilities will arise from it as a matter of course. It would be very disagreeable to us if Mr. Hirschel should have wasted his liberality."

"I can only work for his money, for he must receive his interest."

"It seems to me that you do not feel equal to the task."

"Yes; I must try it first, and altogether—to accept anything so blindly—I must consider it; to-morrow I will tell you."

The Geheimrath grew angry. "Very well, then, to-morrow. But you must see that there is either one way or another. If you prefer the life of a vagabond, we cannot compel you to resign it; but our paths must then diverge for all time—forever."

Arnold really needed no time for considering the subject himself, but he wished very much to hear Frederica's opinion—which, of course, he could not disclose to his brother. She was the only person in whom he placed full confidence. In reality, he rejoiced more than he would admit at the good prospect, but he felt some anxiety at the thought of entering on a higher plane. "They will not do it for nothing," was always the conclusion of his remarks. He said this to Frederica as soon as he found an opportunity to be alone with her a few minutes.

"But everything seems quite reasonable to me," she said. "Why should you not allow them to help you? It is like a gift, and yet it is not a gift. You shall pay interest and earn the capital. If you have any luck, you can become a very prosperous man."

"Then you advise me to accept, Frida?" he said, hesitatingly. "Yes, everything sounds very well, but—"

"But you must give up drinking, and you must choose good company; and you must put the interest money and your rent carefully aside, so that you can pay it promptly; then it will be all right."

"Yes, it will be all right; I believe that. But I do not know for whose sake I am doing this. A single man like I am has little to care for. I am now clothed, and they could give me some money

to travel further, and then I would leave and bother no one, and no one would bother me."

"And after a few months you would be in a bad plight again," eagerly interrupted Frederica. "Then you would return to your brother."

"No, never again!" he said firmly, and calmly looked into her eyes. "Rather die!" Then he lowered his gaze and began to drum on the table. After a while he began: "And perhaps it will not do at all. For such a business one must have a wife; you must admit that."

"Yes, indeed," she consented, quite seriously. "But if you are once established, you could get married."

"To whom?"

"That I cannot tell. You will find a good wife when you make a living."

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly."

"Perhaps such a fine lady, you think."

"But we will not trouble ourselves about that yet, Mr. Berken."

"So you think; very well, that is a good way of looking at it. But thinking of marriage—"

Frederica was called away. He did not return to this conversation again, but could not rid himself of the thought that he ought to marry, and thus lead a settled life. "Everything but that!" he had formerly always said. A family life such as the laborers of his acquaintance led—want in every nook

and corner, the wife going out to work, the children neglected, the narrow, crowded dwelling, quarrels, and discontent at the misery which the small wages could not alleviate—that was nothing for him! And there was no other prospect! Now, it was entirely different. With a neat wife, just to his mind!—his fancy pictured this in rosy hues and vivid pleasure; and when he went to his brother, the Geheimrath, and with glad face declared his agreement to the banker's plans, he seemed a changed person. Siegfried patted him on the shoulder.

"That is the way I like to see you; always hold your head high, my boy! Such people always prosper."

After this, necessary preparations for the business were made. Hirschel commissioned one of his assistant book-keepers, a former lieutenant, who had received the position on the recommendation of people of note, to arrange everything according to his orders. Arnold Berken went about with Mr. von Kranich for several days from morning to night to find a suitable business-house. It was to be a large shop, which was to have sufficient space for at least six workmen, a large yard for storing lumber, and a shed for placing the finished work. It was to contain also a sitting-room and a bedroom, and a somewhat larger room for an office, wherein the designer could also place his table. Mr. Hirschel had inquired about the necessary

arrangements from a proficient builder. At first Arnold made but modest demands. The places which they looked at seemed much too large, too elegant, and too expensive to him. But Mr. von Kranich was of quite a different opinion. "If I am able to choose the best," he said, "why should I content myself with anything less? We will follow the instruction of my distinguished master—*coute qui coute*. He is a rich man, to whom a trifle more or less is a matter of indifference. Then it pays to start well. Nowadays, you must know, everything depends on show. Even the most solid business—bah! show-windows! show-windows! If you hide yourself in some little by-street, who will look for you? We must have a location which is quite central. 'He has courage,' is what you want them to say. Courage is the main quality for a beginner—that is what impresses people. He who has, to him it shall be given. That is an old story, I tell you. Do not allow yourself to be daunted. That should be your point of view—do you understand?"

To Arnold these and similar utterances seemed more and more convincing, and he contradicted his companion less and less frequently. He felt himself elevated without any exertion on his part. Mr. von Kranich seemed to understand everything. For refreshment he took him to the best restaurants, and it was apparent that he knew how to order from the bill of fare, and also from the wine-list.

And how he treated the waiter! He always paid the bill. "That is nothing of consequence—who would mention such a small matter? When you will confer with architects, some day, you will also have to show your liberality. Those people know how to live."

And Arnold's spirits rose still more. The wine began to be to his taste. He lit a cigar which had cost twenty pfennig, and smoked it with evident satisfaction. He laughed, and tried to be witty. The lieutenant was really such an agreeable companion, and he paid for everything! What more could he demand?

At length quite a suitable business place was found, and the contract for the rent agreed upon. Then they went to a furniture dealer to provide the furniture for the dwelling-rooms and office. At this selection Arnold showed but little timidity or hesitation. "Mr. Hirschel said that everything was to be respectable," the book-keeper had assured him, "and that implies a good deal." But to the purchase of a large looking-glass Arnold would not consent; he thought the price exorbitant. "I know how much profit is made on such articles," he whispered to his companion. He also succeeded in inducing the merchant to take some discount from the entire bill. It seemed extravagant enough as it was.

At another place all the required tools, saws, chairs, and tables were purchased. They had been

already used, and were put up for sale; Kranich had read the advertisement in the newspaper. Everything that was necessary for Arnold's establishment was found here, and a good bargain was arrived at. "We could easily add a few hundred marks to the old man's bill," the sly book-keeper remarked. "Of course, we will not do so," he added, when he noticed the look of surprise on the carpenter's face; "honesty is the best policy."

A steam-engine was also bargained for.

"I suppose we cannot do without it," said Arnold; "in the beginning, at all events."

"Let us have it," commanded the lieutenant. "We must provide for everything that is needful."

Then they went to a lumberman. Banker Hirschel's name sufficed to procure for Arnold the most cordial reception. An order for an immediate supply was given.

Some well-known architects and builders were also sought out, and from these they received assurances of interest. Everywhere the name Hirschel was the best recommendation. Promises of ready work were given and gladly received.

The modest estimate which Arnold had himself made had been much overstepped. The great numbers whirled about his brain until he became quite dizzy. When he approached Mr. Hirschel he feared to receive his reproaches. But he was mistaken. "You see," said the kindly gentleman with a smile, "that you have made a great mistake

in your calculations; I hope it will be for the last time. But you will probably understand that I must also have some security; I am a business man."

"Of course—certainly," answered the carpenter, in great embarrassment. "That is just it; how can I? You surely know that I have nothing—really nothing at all. If you thought that—"

"Listen to me, please," interrupted the banker. "I am quite sure that you will not consider me in the light of an extortionist. What I am doing, I do for the sake of my son-in-law and my daughter. I know that I am risking a good deal, and am prepared for loss. But it is only reasonable that I should try to have the loss as small as possible, should it be inevitable. For this—we will hope unnecessary—case, I must have some security. Therefore you are to acknowledge yourself my debtor to the sum which I place at your disposal, before a notary and witnesses."

"For my part, before the courts," said Arnold; "but that will avail you little, if I have ill-luck, or—"

"But that is not sufficient," continued Mr. Hirschel. "You must also declare that you are bound to return the loan at any time, at notice given within four and twenty hours."

"How can I do that?"

"Otherwise to submit the business to me."

"Yes, but—"

"I must be legally entitled, by unquestionable right, to take away all you possess before any other creditor can lay hand on it. I ask you to place entire confidence in me, for I will only make use of my right in case of extreme necessity. But I will exercise it the moment that any claim arises from any quarter; that you may rely on."

The stern glance which accompanied these words sufficiently attested that they were seriously meant.

"I will promise you," he continued, "that, in any other case, I will not press you to return the loan, and will leave it entirely to you when you wish to settle it, on condition that the very low rate of interest is regularly paid. For two years you may have the loan unincumbered by interest; that is a gift to my son-in-law. The right to the properties which I have purchased for you belongs to me until you have entirely repaid the money I have lent you. You receive these from me only that you may have the use of them."

"I understand," said Arnold timidly; "I am to work for your money."

"You work with my money," the banker corrected him, "for your own profit. The entire profit falls to your share. I hope it will be large enough to enable you in a comparatively short time to be quite independent of me. I hope and wish this. In order that I may be still more confident of your success, I will make yet another condition."

Arnold grew still more intimidated. "Another?"

"You have never managed a business of that kind; perhaps it will assume such proportions that a careful system of book-keeping will be necessary, and it is altogether well to have it from the start. So I will commission Mr. von Kranich to go to your office daily, look through the calculations, and the cash and credit account. You must allow me to inspect the accounts at any time."

Arnold scratched his ear. "Yes, yes—yes, indeed," he murmured, with some displeasure; "that may be—if, after all—I suppose it must be so. You understand more than I do about these matters, and—well, yes, you are furnishing the money."

This latter statement had been the only tangible idea which he had been able to retain during this flood of conditions. Mr. Hirschel was giving the money; therefore, he might demand whatever he wished. But just for this reason the matter looked serious.

The banker probably noticed that he was not understood as he had wished. "If we are to come to an agreement," he said, "you must throw off any suspicion that I could in any way profit by my assistance to you. My money!—well, certainly, that I am giving you. But you are not to do me, but yourself, a favor by accepting it. I will not even make you responsible for any lack of ability, or for any unfortunate circumstance which may arise; only your good will. I wish to obtain your desire to work at your business with your best energy,

and to help me to insure myself against loss." He repeated the terms again, and tried to bring Arnold to a better view of them. The kindly manner in which he did so was not without effect. Arnold felt less oppressed than he had a few minutes before, and finally signed the papers which the banker handed him, with good grace and cheerful heart.

"I thank you, Mr. Hirschel," he said, "and whatever an honest fellow can do—why, certainly—"

Then the agreement was also concluded at the notary's, and in a few days Arnold Berken moved into his cozy establishment, put an advertisement into the newspapers, engaged several workmen, and waited for orders for work.

His brothers promised him to use their influence in quickly obtaining for him orders for fiscal buildings. The Majorin, who felt that she was really his protectress, told her brother-in-law to expect her to lunch some day. The Geheimrätthin did not fail to encourage him not to neglect visiting the family. "You cannot be too cautious in the choice of your company," she said to him at taking leave; "always remember that you bear the name of Berken."

It was entirely in accord with his own desire to sustain his intercourse at their house; not because he felt impelled to do so for his brother's, and still less for his sister-in-law's, sake; but he had grown attached to the children, who now considered their

uncle a dear, good man; and he especially longed to see Frederica. Now that he was alone during the week, he keenly felt the desire to communicate all the new impressions which kept rushing upon him, to some congenial person; and he found Frederica far more congenial than his relatives. Whatever he had to tell them was quickly and briefly told, whatever they found to inquire about soon answered; his carpenter-shop concerned them but little. But with Frederica, or "Frida," as he liked to call her, he could have chatted for hours without losing the thread of his theme, which might revolve about the most trivial circumstance. What he was at work at, how he worked, with whom and for whom he worked, how much profit he realized on every piece of work—what had happened on Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, from morning until night—whom he had seen, and to whom he had spoken—all this was of interest to her. And it was of no consequence if he repeated his communications; she was always an attentive listener.

Of course it was not always easy to find time and opportunity for such interchange of ideas. Fortunately the Geheimrath and his wife were occasionally invited to dinner. Then Arnold requested to remain with the children, especially when he knew that Frida would be at home. Sometimes Arthur entertained a school-mate, who would beg Wanda to "play along." And little Fritz never disturbed them.

His uncle let him ride on his knee, and conversed the while in the liveliest manner with Frederica, only calling a "ho!" once in a while. When the boy was tired he went to sleep, and then they had leisure to discuss the most confidential subjects.

Arnold endeavored to convince Frida that she must come to see him some Sunday afternoon, in order to see his two rooms with the nice furniture, the large office, the workshop, and the lumber pile. "I am always telling you about things that happen there, and you do not even know what the place looks like, and how it is arranged and managed. That cannot be entirely described. But if you have seen the whole place, you will know what I mean when I tell you about the details. My sister-in-law, the Majorin, thought everything very nice, and sat down on every chair—"to try it," she said; and then she looked at the machines and the tools, and asked many questions about them. She is just like quicksilver; I do not know how my brother can keep her from dissolving under his hands. Of course, he also is so—he feels above everything that is not in the military line. What did I want to say—yes, you ought to see the place, Frida. Next Sunday—what do you think?"

But she refused this time, and soon after again. "It would not be proper," she said.

"Oh, Frida!" he cried reproachfully.

"Who does your house-work?" she inquired.

"The wife of my head workman, Leopold Haber.

But on Sunday afternoons she goes out with her husband."

"That is just why I would rather not come then."

"Well, I can tell her, and I will do so, if you wish. She will cook us some coffee and bake some cake for us."

"No, do not trouble yourself; perhaps some other time—when you are married."

"Oh, till then!—that may be a long time yet!" But in spite of all his persuasion he could not succeed in obtaining her consent. One Sunday, however, when he conjectured that she would go out, he remained standing near the house, and waited until she stepped out. He hid behind a door and let her pass. She had attired herself in holiday garb. She wore a light dress of neutral tint, a gay ribbon fastened at her neck with an amber pin, a hat with flowers, and carried a parasol. She looked very pretty and neat, like a girl of well-to-do family. "Why!" he involuntarily exclaimed, "she must have a well-filled purse!" He allowed her to walk quite a distance in advance. When she turned into a side-street, however, he followed her, but at such a slow pace that it was full ten minutes before he caught up with her.

"Good-day, Frida," he said, summoning up his courage.

She looked around in sudden alarm. "You, Mr. Berken? What do you want?"

"Just to walk a little way with you, as we have

met so accidentally—if you will permit me, of course.”

She smiled with some embarrassment. “So accidentally?”

“Do not be so particular,” he begged. “You did not expect me, at all events. I must tell you yesterday a contractor of the government railroad came to me. He said I have been recommended to him—I suppose by my brother, the Geheimrath. They are going to build a new house for the officials—ten-window front, and two stories high. I am to furnish the wood work, if the prices suit me. They are so much apiece, and five per cent discount from the entire bill. Why not? With thirty-six windows, and even more doors, there is something to be earned, if the wood can be paid for immediately. And day before yesterday—”

They were walking side by side. Frederica offered no further objections to his company, and listened to him with interest. He told her all the news he could think of.

“Listen, Frida, he said at length, as if suddenly remembering something that had escaped his memory, “to-day you might allow yourself to be persuaded—”

“To what?” she asked in surprise.

“Oh, you know—what I would so much like to show you.”

“No, no; that cannot be.”

“As we are going that way—”

"I am going to my cousin's."

"It will not take you long—just to look in; and if you wish, I will stay outdoors."

He coaxed her so persistently, that she at length consented. Of course she felt a little curious also.

Arnold unlocked the door.

"At the left is the office; just go in." And for a few moments he remained in the narrow hall; but then he followed her, after all. "Well, how do you like it?" he asked.

"Here at this desk, at this side, I sit when I must write or cipher; on the other side, Mr. von Krnich. And there the designer. Would you like to see what he is at work at now?"

He raised the tissue paper and explained the sketch. "That is the way anything looks if you stand facing it; and this is the side view. But the shadows are yet missing; the cornice above the mantel will be more effective in reality." He opened the door leading to the sitting-room. "Have I told you too much about it? It is very nice, eh?"

Frederica inspected every piece of furniture, the window-curtains, the rug under the table, the pictures on the walls. She found great pleasure in doing so; and Arnold behaved with great courtesy, and found satisfaction in her approval.

"Mrs. Haber seems to be a neat housekeeper," she said.

He begged her to sit down on the sofa. At first she declined, then she said she would do so to try

the springs. Arnold took a seat opposite her. "I have nothing in the house to offer you except some whisky," he said, laughing, "that I must keep on hand for customers."

She laughingly declined, and rose to leave. "Do remain a little while longer," he coaxed. "You have no idea how beautiful the sofa looks when you sit on it."

That flattered her vanity. She bent down and examined the table-cover. "For every-day use you ought to cover it," she said, "for the dust will settle on it."

"Yes; it is not easy to take care of anything," he said. "I cannot look out for those things; and a stranger—what difference is it to her whether an article remains in nice condition a year longer or not? You once said something about marriage, Frida—do you remember?"

"Why should I not remember it?" she answered, without the slightest embarrassment. "You will certainly have to marry before long. You can hardly get along this way for any length of time."

"Yes, that is true," he said. "The two rooms are large enough, and there is a very nice kitchen, too, which is not used at all now—would you like to see it? There is a small cellar, too; and the washing can be dried in the yard. Very few women can expect to have such a comfortable home,"

"Yes—but for such an one—"

"What kind of one?"

"One who would be suited to you, Mr. Berken."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That is easily understood. As you are now situated, Mr. Berken, you must assuredly select such a wife who would please the Geheimrätthin and the Majorin—and she will hardly have room enough here."

Arnold looked at her a long time in astonishment. She had just made an assertion, which she termed self-understood, which he had never considered; and it could not be hastily denied and crased from his mind. She certainly had some good reason in naming the wives of the Geheimrath and the Major, instead of his brothers themselves. They clearly stood before his mental vision, and certainly Frederica was right—they ought to be pleased with his choice; there was nothing to be said against that. The sudden revelation had been at once so bewildering and overwhelming that he found no expression to resent her suggestion. After a moment it was too late to answer it at all; he felt that. Perhaps, if he would tell her—what?—to have a wife like Frederica had been his dream—she might have been the one he desired! Certainly, she. It was really for her sake that he had silenced all his premonitions and entered upon the business. If he could have won her over—perhaps that had been his leading thought of late. But—

Frederica rose and slowly approached the door. "Now it is certainly time for me to go," she said,

"What will my cousin think?" And her tone of voice did not reveal that she had been disappointed in any expectation she might have cherished.

Arnold followed her, not hastily, but with slow tread. He did not wish to detain her—why should he? He had wished to speak to her; but what should he say, if he could not—well, he would have to consider the matter—consider it carefully, leisurely. He went with her through the office to the hall, feeling vaguely oppressed, discomfited. "This is the kitchen," he said, and placed his hand on the knob; but he did not succeed in opening the door. "Ah! Mrs. Haber has probably locked it. Women always wish to keep everything under lock and key."

"That is only proper, she replied.

"Well, then, some other time."

Frederica nodded slightly, and stepped into the street. "Do not forget to lock the door," she said.

"No." He followed her. She extended her hand to him and said, "Good-bye, Mr. Berken. It was very nice." Thus it seemed she did not expect him to accompany her.

He did not intend to do so, but he held her hand in his a few moments, nodded, and murmured, rather incoherently, "I thank you; yes, it was very nice." Then she turned away.

A few minutes afterward he was still standing near the curb-stone, looking after her. He felt gloomy—he could hardly explain for what reason.

He felt as if something he had treasured had been broken. He did not realize how much he had prized it, but for the moment he could not lightly dismiss it from his thoughts.

He went back the same road he had walked with Frederica, and then walked up the steps of his brother's dwelling.

"To-day we can play so nicely together, uncle," cried Wanda; "our girl has gone out."

Thereupon he looked at his sister-in-law, trying to discern from her face what sort of a wife she would welcome for him. "That would never do in the world," he thought.

VII

Arnold's business prospered. New orders were received almost every day. As soon as it was known that the wealthy Hirschel was the carpenter's patron, people felt they could repose confidence in him. The only trouble he had to guard against was to give too much credit to the bad customers of the trade--building contractors who demanded large bills of orders, and could not even give acceptable security. How well he had been recommended, became evident during the first few months. Before he had even finished the work for the railway building contractor, he was already engaged to furnish work for a post-office, and also received orders from military headquarters. Berken had to employ as many workmen as the space in his shop permitted, and was thinking seriously about employing help from other shops. He only feared that the business would grow too extensive for his management.

This was indeed the case even now, when he found he could no longer distinguish the sums he received for the various orders, and accurately ascertain the cost and profit of every piece of work.

He had but the slightest knowledge of book-keeping. He kept a day-book in which he entered all his receipts, but that did not suffice to show him the general state of affairs. Daily new orders had to be noted down for future reference, and deferred payments accounted for, of which his memory soon lost track. For a time he troubled himself vainly to light the taper which was to illumine the darkness; but when he saw how fruitless was the effort, he reached the conclusion that he should let matters take their course, and wait for the result. And then he felt light-hearted and cheerful once more.

Without Mr. von Kranich he could not have proceeded at all. The lieutenant soon spent the greater portion of the day—finally the entire day—at the office. There were books to be kept in order, letters written and answered, bills attended to, contracts filled, and orders estimated. He took the reins into his hands, and did not let them loose again. It was astonishing to Arnold how much he understood about everything—how confidently he gave his advice, how carefully he superintended the establishment. Feeling his superiority, and unable to take the management of all these affairs into his own hands, Arnold Berken soon abandoned all attempts to assume a position of command. He was quite satisfied if he was only consulted once in a while. He signed whatever was handed to him, almost without examining the document; he scarcely pretended to read it over. He did not venture to

ask any information about this or that which might be unfathomable to his mind. Mr. von Kranich always plainly showed that he could not imagine that any one could not understand such a plain and simple matter, and thus Arnold guarded himself against displaying such ignorance. He treated him with the greatest deference.

In the work-room Berken was more at home. He knew the work thoroughly, and was pleased to play the master. At first he had worked among his employes, but as Mr. von Kranich intimated that he must only superintend if he wished to be respected as the master, he did so no longer. Now he only went from one table to the other, and occasionally volunteered his assistance if there was anything to correct in the work. He wished them to know that he understood the trade.

The working-people soon heard and circulated the news that Arnold Berken, who had been expelled from Hamburg for his pronounced socialistic views, had now established a large carpenter-shop, and was leading a luxurious existence. Thus he often received calls from members of his party, demanding occupation or assistance from him. Now was the time, they thought, to show them that he did not deny his principles, even when fortune smiled upon him. There was already a great deal of talk, they maintained, about his sudden and unexpected good luck. Ed Blank called, and tried to win his confidence; also Henry Brander. They treated

him as if they had been life-long friends, and drank glass after glass of his liquor. He would have liked to shake them off, but that was not easily done.

"What do you want?" he said. "I am not working with my own money; I am only here as manager at present. When I own such an establishment, then apply to me again. Now I cannot do as I would like—not yet. I have very little now, although it may not appear so. No one can expect me to do what is impossible."

He indeed lived very plainly during the first month or two—not much better than a common laboring man. He set himself a standard of expenditure for every week, and tried to make it suffice for his modest wants. For breakfast he drank a cup of coffee, and took some bread and butter from his commode; sometimes a piece of cheese or sausage. At noon he went to a cheap restaurant near by for his dinner. Mr. von Kranich ridiculed him for his economy.

"You are a strange man, Berken," he told him, "and do not wish to make use of your good fortune. Or can't you shake off your old habits? You do no one any favor by economizing, as if you could barely earn your bread. Certainly, Mr. Hirschel would not object to your living well. You always consider yourself only as a workman, but you ought to think yourself a proprietor and a gentleman, and act accordingly. The business is certainly paying well. You need not be anxious about that. And

when one has such backing as you have! Mr. Hirschel will be astounded when he sees what a trifle you expend on yourself. No one can subsist on that. You ought to let people know that the Geheimrath Berken and Major Berken are your brothers. And now you are still wearing those old clothes, which plainly show that the tailor did not make them for you, and you have not even a watch to draw out of your vest-pocket; you look at every nickel three times before you spend it, and eat your meals at the same table with people whose society cannot be of value to you. You must learn a good deal yet, Berken. Goodness! a man placed as you are—why, you only need to use the cash."

Arnold disliked these taunting speeches exceedingly. The lieutenant was probably not far wrong; perhaps it was indeed folly in this case to economize instead of making use of his opportunity to improve on his former mode of life. His sister-in-law Sarah had repeatedly exclaimed, in their recent interviews: "But one cannot notice any change in your appearance and manner!" And he knew that this implied a reproof. But he could not silence a secret suspicion which told him that von Kranich wished to render him still more dependent on him. It seemed sinful to him to carelessly squander other people's money. He did not even know how this could be done. But to be an object of ridicule to one's own book-keeper was not pleasant.

Von Kranich continued to persuade him: "I must

have mercy on you," he said to him some time after, "or you will never succeed. The business is prospering finely, and still you lack courage. I cannot withhold my good advice any longer. I think there must be some reason for Mr. Hirschel's having selected me for your book-keeper. He surely must have hoped that I would make a man of you. Do not take my saying so amiss, my dear Berken; but thus far I have been able to do very little for you, and I feel that I am responsible. I wish the Majorin to certify that I have not spared any pains and trouble. Will you submit yourself entirely to my direction? I will bet that you will scarcely know yourself again in six weeks."

Arnold submitted. Mr. von Kranich took him to a clothing-house and selected for him a complete suit in the latest style; also fine linen and elegant foot-gear. The prices were not even asked, but the clerks were told, "Send your bills." At a barber's Arnold's hair and mustache were attended to. "Now you are beginning to look like a gentleman," von Kranich assured him; "you only need a watch and chain yet—the watch need not be the finest make, but the chain must catch the eye. We will put a few charms on it, too; of course, that is only nonsense, but it looks well. I would advise you to wear a signet-ring. Our customers, the building contractors, always wear one—sometimes also a glittering gem on the little finger. Their hands are usually not very nice, therefore they wish to

ornament them as much as possible." Watch, chain, and ring were purchased; also a pretty cigar-case and a neat match-box. The hat was the latest shape, and the gloves a good fit.

"Now we can dine together," said the mentor. "You need not be embarrassed." He took him to a restaurant which was frequented by officers, assessors, business men, and book-keepers of large establishments. They regularly drank a bottle of wine at dinner. After the meal they played billiards, a game of cards or dominoes. Mr. von Kranich was master of all these games, and imparted to his pupil instruction in them. That was of course an expensive pastime for Arnold, for his teacher always won the game; Arnold was also expected to pay for the wine. "You must accustom yourself," he was told, "to be liberal at the right time; that gives a good impression. Just see how respectfully the waiter then treats you. It is also remarked upon from other tables."

The evenings, too, were no longer spent in the usual quiet manner. Mr. von Kranich had determined on educating his friend; therefore he took him to the theater, to the circus, and to concerts. Afterward they lunched at some restaurant.

Arnold soon considered this mode of existence quite pleasant—if it were only not so expensive! He was shocked when he added the sums which he had expended for his personal uses. The lieutenant soothed him. "What do a few thousand marks

signify in such a business? It is growing much larger than we had expected. Of course, the profit must be correspondingly larger. After all, if you consider it disagreeable to answer for so large a sum for yourself—"he winked at Arnold, and then looked at him searchingly. "You do not know how to make use of your advantages, my dear Berken. I have noticed that you enter the workmen's wages into the book, with the real sum you pay them. Now, according to my knowledge, it is customary the world over for the master to make some profit on the wages. That is his right. Why should you wish to lose it? If you add your trifle when you enter the amount, you will have a pretty little remainder on pay-day, which you can simply put in your pocket."

"But the customers have to pay the full amount, and thus the money returns to the cash receipts."

"That is a different matter. If it returns, so much the better; but just as you like. I am only telling you about a simple plan to increase your profit; but if you wish to stand in your own light, that is your own affair."

Arnold felt that this good advice implied something of an unworthy nature. He did not know how to understand it. Even before this episode the book-keeper had aroused his suspicions. That he was always on the alert to extract the greatest advantages from his position, was certainly very evident, but perhaps he was not to blame for that.

He was really the head of the business; and his employer surely knew whom he had appointed to this responsible position! For a time Arnold weighed the question in his mind whether it was not his duty to inform Mr. Hirschel of his book-keeper's actions. But why should he do this? He could not prove anything against him. And ought he to reward Mr. von Kranich's kind exertions in his behalf in such a manner? If another were to take his place, would it be better? "Live and let live."

After all, the proposition was not wrong. If he followed the advice he would not cheat any one except, perhaps, himself. His conscience was not very tender. A short time he resisted the temptation, then he began to scold himself for acting like a simpleton, and put his provision in his pocket on every pay-day.

The Major now thought him "very much improved;" and Sarah did not withhold her meed of praise. "That is right," she said; "you might be taken for an architect or something of that kind. Just look, Ewald, how well he looks in that standing collar and that pretty neck-tie! The watch-chain is very nice, very neat. And—oh! let me see"—he put his hand behind him—"I believe, a ring! Really, I call that making rapid progress!" Ewald began to laugh heartily. "Why do you laugh? We can see that he is trying to advance in culture and refinement; and the selection shows decided good taste. But try to take care of your hands. I can

recommend a soap. One of our servant-girls, who was betrothed to a wealthy brewer, used it for only fourteen days, with wonderful results!" She also asserted that he was gaining self-confidence, and overcoming that timidity she had found so painful to her. "Papa could not have selected a better companion for you than Mr. von Kranich; even at a book-keeper's desk he does not forget that he is a cavalier and a former officer in the army. In fact, I spoke a good word for him several times. Follow his advice in everything, and you may expect to meet with the most brilliant success."

At the Geheimrath's he did not receive so many expressions of approval. "Do not spend more than your circumstances permit," the Geheimrath admonished. "Not until the end of the year will you know how much profit has resulted from your efforts."

His sister-in-law, as he afterward told Frederica, looked at his watch-chain with envious glance, and could not refrain from remarking: "My husband has as yet not permitted himself to indulge in such an unnecessary expense; he wears his watch on a thin chain which he purchased with the sum paid him by his first client, years and years ago. You may be able to invest your money in that way, dear Arnold, and if so, I am very glad of it; but nevertheless—I hope you will excuse me for saying so—such jewelry always looks rather pretentious. I

do not know whether you might not have spent your money to better advantage."

"These things always retain their value," he said, in apology. "And, you see, if one of our class wears anything of that kind, it must be real gold."

Wanda was all admiration for the beautiful chain, and wanted her uncle to give it to her to play with.

The ring he had kept in his vest-pocket. He only showed it to Frederica when they were alone together a few minutes.

She laughed. "I would not have believed that you were so vain," she said.

"It is foolishness, of course, but it is the fashion." He took a little case from his pocket and handed it to her. "There," he said, "I have brought something with me for you."

She looked at him inquiringly. "For me, Mr. Berken?" She took it with some hesitation. She opened it and looked at the contents a moment. "Oh!" It was a gold breast-pin. With a perplexed smile she looked at the small stones which formed the initial "F;" then she placed it into the case and returned it to him. "Just keep it," she said; "that is nothing for me."

"You must not act so," he retorted. "If I give you this—"

"But what put that thought into your head?"

"Well, I think, as we consider one another—"

"We do not consider one another at all." But she blushed scarlet.

"We will not talk about that now. But don't you like the pin?"

"Very much, but—"

"You see, it is intended for you; there is your initial, "F," on it."

"But I do not wish a present from you."

"Oh, this is not worth talking about. And, then, I really owe you something."

"Me? What for?"

"For your attention while I staid here. You had a good deal more work on my account."

"That is nothing. No, just keep it."

"No, I will not, Frida. If you refuse this trifle you will make me angry. I could not have given you money!"

"I should say not! But I do not want any gift at all."

"Then throw it out of the window. Such stubbornness!"

"So you wish me to keep it, Mr. Berken?"

"Yes, as a keepsake, a memento."

"Oh, I would not have forgotten you, even without this gift."

"Who knows? But you must wear it too; otherwise I will think that you do not like it."

She considered this a moment. "The Geheimrätthin would notice it immediately," she then asserted, "and would ask about it—well, I cannot tell a falsehood."

"You cannot tell a falsehood?"

"No, my face betrays it immediately. And if I told her, you might not like it."

"Yes, you are right; as my sister-in-law is rather—"

"Many thanks, then," said Frederica. "I will go and put it aside before any one sees it." And she hurriedly left the room.

This interview would probably have been interrupted by the children, had they not been otherwise entertained. Their aunt Ulrica was visiting them, and engrossed their attention. On Sundays she had nothing to do, and was pleased to devote her time to them.

This aunt Ulrica was a cousin of the Geheimrätthin—a lady in the thirties, rather attenuated, and very pale. In her youth she had been quite pretty, and even now her large, melancholy eyes and long eyelashes rendered her impressive and interesting. Arnold had often met her. She usually came one day in the middle of the week, and busily helped with the family sewing and mending, or with the household work; sometimes she also came on Sundays, when she was treated like a guest. She had a rather dignified, aristocratic appearance; usually dressed in black silk, and wore a gold cross as her only ornament. She spoke little, and ate less—Arnold could not imagine how she could subsist on so little. She was always kind and pleasant, and was beloved by the children. The Geheimrath very respectfully conversed with her

about books and magazine articles which he would have liked to read had he been able to find time for it. She played the piano also, and sang a few songs with rather a weak voice, but with good enunciation and feeling. Her relation to the Geheimrätthin was sometimes very intimate; then again the Geheimrätthin treated her as if she were only a paid seamstress.

From Frederica Arnold had learned that Miss Ulrica did not render these services because she found pleasure in doing so. "She is paid for it," she had said; "not every time, but so much every month. She goes about among her relations. Sometimes she works for a store even, I think. But she acts very haughtily, and never speaks one more word to me than she is compelled to." The Geheimrätthin had once said that her cousin was the daughter of an officer, who had died early, and left his family in very straitened circumstances. But she had nevertheless received an education "befitting her station." For a long time she had been companion to a countess, who had promised to remember her in her will, but had not kept her word. Now she had to subsist on the help her relations were able to give her. The Majorin, who had also casually mentioned Miss Ulrica, said that she had heard from good authority that the countess had discovered that Ulrica had designs on her son, and had therefore withdrawn her promise. "She is a rather pleasant person," she had

added; "though sometimes a little whimsical. But that is easily accounted for. I pity the impecunious daughters of high rank! They will not marry a man of inferior social standing; thus they are often left to provide for themselves. But they have not been trained to make an independent living. They must even try to conceal the means whereby they earn an honest penny."

Arnold Berken had, in his first meetings with Miss Ulrica, timidly avoided entering into conversation with her. She, too, seemed to find it difficult to address him. Still, she may have considered it her social obligation to bestow some attention on him, and to make some overtures of friendship. But he always replied in such an abrupt manner, that the conversation soon halted. He imagined that he could notice a certain degree of condescension in her demeanor toward him, and this irritated him.

"She is not better than I," he thought to himself. "We are both of good family, and are both compelled to work for a living. The only difference is that she has kept her hands looking nice, and then she is a lady. But for all that, she does not need to act as if she were conferring a favor on me by looking at me. Stupid girl! her mother was of course a Fräulein von Liebenhausen; therefore, my sister-in-law is so kind to her."

When she afterward learned that he would establish a large carpenter-shop with Mr. Hirschel's

help, he apparently rose in her estimation--now he would be a proprietor, not a common workman; and when she perceived the change in his appearance, she very plainly changed her demeanor toward him. It seemed that she had resolved to assist him in assuming more refined expressions and manners. He also began to feel more confident of himself. But he never felt quite at ease in her society; he knew that he had to exert his powers to appear well before her, and sometimes this vexed him.

Ulrica began to interest herself in the social problems of the times. She read the newspapers carefully, and discussed the subjects with the carpenter. He deemed her method of accepting these facts and drawing her conclusions from them very queer; and she, on her part, often misunderstood his views on the subjects. Once she carelessly asked his opinion of women's work in the factories.

"Do you not consider it wrong that married women work in factories, instead of tending their households?"

"Yes; but this matter can be viewed from different standpoints."

"What do you mean?"

"That is very plain. The laborer does not earn enough, and so his wife must help."

"But the household demands some attention "

"Yes, that may be; but the family must live--that is the most important factor in the case."

She began again: "Even in the higher classes this question of woman's work ought to be carefully considered."

"H'm!"

"Comparatively few girls of aristocratic station marry nowadays."

"That is no wonder, with their demands."

"Oh, do not believe that—they would gladly—but it is difficult, without a fortune."

"Do you see?—individual property is at the bottom of all this trouble. We must do away with that."

Ulrica smiled. "But until that will be accomplished, the poor ladies must find some employment for a living. I think the daughter of a laborer can find it with less difficulty than the daughter of a Geheimrath. If the teacher's examination cannot be passed—and even in that line there is greater supply than demand. And needle-work—"She sighed.

"Yes," replied Arnold; "the ladies who secretly work for the stores take the bread from honest workers."

The lady blushed. "Whom do you call honest workers?"

"Those who make a living by their work."

"But do you not consider it honorable if girls of good family, who do not marry, endeavor to maintain their social standing by earning their living in some independent way? Unfortunately, competition is too great. There is real misery resulting

from it. And there are proud hearts who wish to be under no obligations—least of all, to those who would enumerate their benefactions.”

Arnold shrugged his shoulders.

“That may be,” he replied with hesitation. “Yes; the matter can be looked at in that way, of course.”

Thus the conversation ended. He felt as if Miss Ulrica had endeavored to justify herself in his opinion. That was very nice of her. Why should she care to do so? Of course, she was a very honorable lady—in her way; but still, he could not trust such people.

VIII

One day the Geheimrätthin called to see her sister-in-law. It was in the forenoon, and, in order to be sure of finding her at home, she had announced her visit some days previous.

Nevertheless, she did not disclose the fact that some especial reason had been the cause—the cherished wish to chat an hour undisturbed with her sister-in-law—The conversation turned for a while on the themes they usually were accustomed to discuss—their husbands, their children, their servants, little family occurrences, the theater, the dressmaker, the latest fashions. At last Arnold Berken's name was mentioned. The Majorin said:

"He is doing very well. Do you not think that he has improved very much?"

Matilda hastened to give her assent.

"Yes, indeed; he has exceeded my expectations," she answered; "although—"

"How well he dresses now! And his manners, too. Recently he even kissed my hand—yes, yes; quite like a cavalier, I assure you."

"Yes; he is becoming more cultured; although even yet—but that cannot be wondered at. We

truly owe you our sincere gratitude for the interest you have taken in him."

"Oh! I only had to speak a word in his favor. I am so glad that papa, too, is well pleased with him. Something may yet be done for him."

"I hope so, if—h'm, h'm. It would be well for him to marry."

The Majorin burst into a merry peal of laughter.

"Arnold?"

"That is my idea. Just a man of his stamp—he needs some permanent moral support to guard him against retrograding. A wife would determine his social intercourse and standing."

"Yes; what kind of a wife?"

"Of course, some one congenial to us."

"How can he ever find such an one? He is so shy. After some years have elapsed, probably."

"That might be too late. Now he can be more easily influenced. When he grows more self-asserting he will wish to decide for himself—and who knows?" And she thoughtfully shook her head.

The Majorin looked at her hand attentively.

"You may be right. But what can be done about it, dear Matilda? In our circles—he is only a workman, after all. I really do not believe—"

"That is just the difficulty. If Arnold is to be benefited, he must have a wife who is much superior to him in education and refinement. He must look up to her, entirely submit to her decisions.

She must belong to our sphere, and her influence will do wonders. We, too, could contribute our assistance."

"But, I cannot think—"

"We must consider this. Perhaps we may succeed in finding a suitable match. Arnold cannot think of youth and beauty, of course."

"Do you think so? Perhaps a rich widow, of advanced age—ha, ha!"

"I would not advise him to consider money desirable. He has been especially favored by fate in obtaining such a good position with your father's assistance. If wealth would fall to his share, it would be indeed a miracle if he did not become supercilious, careless of his business, and extravagant. I think it is necessary for his general welfare that he should exert his energies. It seems to me he lacks energy and will-power. He wishes to be pushed and stimulated. If he had to provide for a household—for the desires and wishes of an educated, though not spoiled, wife—I believe this would be a good incentive. A marriage for money? No! that I would never advise. But why did you think of a widow?"

"Oh! because it seemed so comical. Really, is it not comical for us to plot in this way?"

The Geheimrätthin looked rather displeased.

"I consider the matter in a very serious light, my dear," she answered. "Why, there are so many girls, not very young any more, who consider

themselves old maids, and who would be very glad to make such a good match. Arnold's relationship to us would remove the objection that the marriage would not be suited to their station. If we will but look around us—"

"Oh!" cried Sarah, and jumped from her chair.

"You frightened me. What is the matter?"

"I just had an idea—really, an idea! Would your cousin, Ulrica—"

The Geheimrätthin seemed to ponder a moment before she replied:

"I never thought of her."

"Really?"

"You will not think—"

"But am I not right?"

"I can imagine that you thought of her; I myself overlooked her, because she is so near and dear to me. How easily one forgets anything near at hand! But yes; Ulrica was very pretty once, and there are gentlemen who still think her so."

"That will be of no consequence; Arnold's future wife need not be decidedly ugly."

"Of course not. Only, I cannot tell whether Ulrica—she has very idealistic views."

"But she is as poor as a church-mouse, and not in her first bloom—thirty-six, is she not?"

"Thirty-four, at the most; she would hardly be thought so old; and she has excellent qualities. The more I consider the matter—she would really be the most suitable wife for Arnold. He knows

her, too. But how can she be approached on the subject? I would not venture—”

“Why, it will not be so bad. I would bet that she would not say nay.”

“You may be mistaken.”

“Yes, if you will not venture the trial.”

“I will see. But Arnold— you surely will understand that I cannot ask him to marry my own cousin!”

“He must be asked by some other party, then.”

“Just so; if you would, perhaps—”

“I?”

“I only mention it, because you were the one to propose the match.”

“I proposed the match? Very well; I will talk over the matter with my brother-in-law. He will listen to reason; he is really a good-hearted fellow.”

“I hope you do not mean to imply— Assure him that he will be especially fortunate if Ulrica consents. No; I can really not expect her to—”

Sarah induced her to take a more hopeful view. When the sisters-in-law parted, the whole campaign had been planned. They were to proceed at once.

When the Major came home, an hour afterward, his wife received him with merry laughter.

“Do you know what Matilda wanted?” she asked. “I immediately guessed that she wanted something when she announced her visit. She wants your

brother to marry—guess whom?—you will never guess—her cousin, Ulrica.”

“Well, well!”

“I am convinced that the two are quite agreed.”

“Arnold and Ulrica?”

“Oh, no! But Matilda and her cousin—although she pretends—but I know her. Does it seem plausible to you, Ewald?”

“H’m, yes, in some respects; why not?”

The pair discussed the matter in joking tones.

“You must advance, dear heart,” said the little woman.

“I?—that would suit me!”

“Yes, you—just to smooth the way. If the first word is spoken by a man, the effect is much better.”

“Oh! let me out of this plan.”

“No, no! Not this time.”

She coaxed him so long, that he promised to speak to Arnold at the first opportunity; and he kept his word.

“How is business?” he asked Arnold at his next visit, after having invited him to his room and offered him a cigar.

“Thank you,” answered Arnold; “very good, I think.”

“You will soon be thinking of getting married?”

He became embarrassed. “I?”

“You are old enough.”

“Well, yes. Sometimes such thoughts will arise. But if it is only desirable for all parties—”

"That depends on the wife. Have you not thought of any one?"

"Seriously, I could not say that. Even if I might have some choice, I would hardly find courage."

"Yes, courage is necessary," the Major assented. "Nothing venture, nothing win. Sometimes it is not so hard at all. So you are not disinclined?"

"Oh, no! not at all. On the contrary; I cannot imagine, though—"

"Talk with my wife about it."

"With your wife? Oh!"

"Yes. She likes you, and will certainly give you the best advice. Just try."

"But she cannot know."

"Yes. Women are shrewd in those affairs. But do as you like."

"Yes." Arnold had grown very thoughtful. "If you would give her a hint—"

"With pleasure."

When the brothers met again, Ewald said, tapping Arnold's shoulder:

"Sarah has a good match in view for you."

Arnold looked up in amazement.

"What! She—"

"Why, yes; just speak to her."

"Well, I am curious to know if she—very curious."

He had in the meantime resolved that Frederica was indeed the wife for him. Of course, she must leave her situation, and return to her brother's

house. There he would go to woo and win her. But he had hardly expected his sisters-in-law to be so well satisfied with this. That they had selected a wife for him themselves, never entered his mind. What could Ewald mean?

But the Majorin soon solved the mystery.

"That is very sensible of you, to wish to marry," she began. "Ewald told me about it."

"Has he told you?" he stammered. "Yes; but what—I do not know whether the matter—and what do you mean by 'sensible'?"

She twisted her serpentine bracelet over her little hand.

"We will not try to discuss such learned questions," she answered lightly. "Those are subjects—do you know what I mean? For instance, what is truth? what is reason? What qualities must a woman possess to make a man happy? After all, what is happiness? Every person has his own views on that subject—it only depends on your standard; if you know what that standard is—but even that is only theory. We will speak about that some other time."

She bit her lips, and, suddenly raising her charming face, she asked:

"How do you like Miss Ulrica?"

Arnold was a little taken aback. But he did not suspect his clever sister-in-law's design in the least. Thus he replied to the question quite seriously:

"What can I say as to that? A very worthy lady,

certainly—at least, I think—the cousin of my sister-in-law, Matilda. A very worthy lady, certainly.”

“So you seem to like her?”

“That is, we get along pretty well together.”

“Do you know, Arnold, that she would be a good wife for you?”

He stared at her a moment, as if he had not comprehended the meaning of her words, and then burst into a hearty laughter. It was contagious—the Majorin also began to laugh.

“Miss Ulrica and I—ha, ha, ha!”

She laughed so heartily that she was finally obliged to wipe away her tears with her handkerchief. Compelling herself to look serious once more, she said:

“But the matter is not so comical at all. It is my sincere opinion Ulrica would be a good wife for you.”

“She would give me a pretty reply!”

“Who knows?”

“She is proud.”

“That would not matter. She has little cause for it. She is poor, lives on our charity, and works a little, too.”

“Yes, but—”

“Of course, she belongs to the higher class of society, has had a good education, and is cultivated. I cannot think of any one who would be better suited to you. She is very aristocratic in her

manner. Beside her you will—oh, dear! I think you are nice enough as you are; but you will admit that you still lack a good deal to do justice to your standing. If you find a wife who will so well fill the station—or is she too old for you?”

“Oh! not that.”

His sister-in-law's earnest expression now warned him to consider the matter seriously.

“Or not pretty enough? She has very fine eyes.”

“Yes, indeed.”

“So you must reflect about it. Your sister-in-law's cousin!—why, the affair is very easy.”

“Yes? I cannot think so. You have planned this in your own mind, but it is not very firm. Matilda would laugh at it.”

“Shall I ask her about it? I do not think she will laugh—the match is so advantageous for both parties. Shall I?”

“And then I ought to have some sentiment—”

“Yes; if you look at the matter in that light. But in your circumstances—” She shrugged her shoulders. “You are hardly entitled to a wide range of choice. If you want to wait until you can marry for love—that is different. But I will hardly dance at your wedding. Such a chance may never come. How many circumstances would have to be altered before that might take place! I thought you would listen to reason.”

“Of course, that would be the most sensible,” he

answered. "You seem to be in earnest. But I and Miss Ulrica!—dear me!"

Yet he grew more and more accustomed to the thought. When he met Miss Ulrica again, he felt a greater interest in her than before.

"It is very ridiculous," he had exclaimed to himself a thousand times during the last few days; but he could not resolve on speaking a determined "No!" to the plan. A fine wife!—that was indeed a pleasant subject for contemplation. And Miss Ulrica was refined—very refined; and she had beautiful eyes; and it seemed to him as if these beautiful eyes gazed at him with a very friendly expression whenever he met their glance. He had never noticed that before; and now—truly, she let her hands and needle-work sink into her lap while she spoke to him. And she spoke in such a soft, pleasant tone, even when she disagreed with him! Evidently she encouraged his conversation. Whatever he said seemed to interest her. He could not resist feeling flattered by the attention she showed him.

The Geheimrätthin must surely have been informed of the plot which Sarah had planned. Arnold had been prepared to meet a very stern countenance and cool manner at their next meeting. He thought she would immediately show him by her manner that she did not approve her sister-in-law's views. That would have pleased him very much. But he had deceived himself with

such a hope. Matilda was much more amiable than usual. She was apparently in the best mood, and treated him with unaccustomed kindness. He did not know what to think.

To crown all, she casually mentioned that her sister-in-law had been to see her.

"She is a very clever woman," she assented; "far more so than I had formerly believed."

What could she imply by that? He was asked to name the date of his next visit, and found Miss Ulrica at the house, although it was not her accustomed day. The Geheimrätthin arranged that the two should be left alone together as much as possible—even the children were kept out of the way. Arnold still continued to think, "It is too ridiculous!" but then again came the thought, "If I wished--"

The Geheimrätthin would probably not object, and the lady in question would not faint if he proposed to her. If he wished—!

But he could not make up his mind. If Frederica had not been in the house! But he saw her every time he came, and he could not forget her. The arrangements of the Geheimrätthin in behalf of her cousin prevented him from seeing Frederica as much as formerly. He could scarcely exchange a few words with her. But sometimes he could see her, and he always looked at her with as much pleasure as heretofore. He began to feel as if a heavy burden were resting on his shoulders. When-

ever Frederica stepped into the room, he felt relieved and cheerful.

Of course, there was no comparison possible between Miss Ulrica and Frida. Even when he did not address her, he always thought of her as "Miss Ulrica," or sometimes with the children's designation, "Aunt Ulrica." She was a lady; Frida a country-girl. He could not imagine Frederica dressed in such fashion. Of course, the lady had white hands, and carefully tended finger-nails. He considered them like playthings which he could not handle, for fear of breaking them. And her entire figure—so slender, so dainty! She was too ethereal. And her melancholy eyes, and soft voice! The lady had a suggestion of being faded; Frederica was in the bloom of youth and perfect health. The touch of her hand, a kiss on her lips—he could dream of that. Miss Ulrica excited quite different feelings in his breast. If he would have confessed it, he was a little afraid of her. And yet he endeavored to please her. He was very polite and deferential in his manner, and careful in his choice of language. At table, he received a seat next to Ulrica, and did not forget his duties as a gallant neighbor. The Geheimrätthin praised his progress, and jestingly told her cousin to continue her instruction. She treated Ulrica more respectfully and affectionately than before, probably to raise her in Arnold's estimation.

His prospects for the future were certainly good,

if he only grasped the opportunity. But he determined to do nothing to bring about a decision. He would not have known how to do so. He concluded to wait for further directions.

But he could not prevent the thought of Frederica from rising in his mind. He had really had intentions concerning her; and even if he had not given her his promise, he had often hinted to her how much he thought of her. If she had been rather distant, he knew that it was easily accounted for—girls of her station considered it good breeding to pretend indifference in such cases, and to assume an attitude which might imply, "Do not imagine that I cannot have other chances!"

She probably liked him very much. Now she must feel hurt at his turning from her without any reason—that was to say, without any reason for which she was to blame. These thoughts whirled about in his brain, and rendered him very uncomfortable when he met her again.

He had noticed how surprised she had looked on when Miss Ulrica so kindly addressed him, and received such deferential replies from him. He imagined how scornfully she had smiled; and on one occasion, when Fritz was provoked at receiving no attention from either aunt or uncle, she had lifted him in her arms, and said:

"Come, dear child; we will go—we are in the way here."

After that she had avoided even meeting his

glance. She must have done so purposely, to show him that she had no use for such a false and fickle man.

One evening, when she opened the front door to admit him, and was about to hurry away, he seized her hand, and whispered:

"Just a word with you, Frida."

She tried to escape.

"Well," she exclaimed with displeasure, "what is it?"

"Why are you angry with me?" he asked. "What have I done?"

"I am not angry," she retorted. "Please let me go."

"I want to know—"

"Why do you not hurry to the sitting-room? Miss Ulrica has been waiting a long time."

"Oh! never mind that."

"Do not pretend—"

"That is stupid nonsense."

"If you do not let me go, I will speak so loud that the gracious madam will hear me."

"Oh, you would not do that! I only want to tell you—"

"It is not necessary."

"Very well, then; good-bye." And he released her hand.

"Do you want to go away again?" she cried.

"Yes; just say that I came to excuse myself for to-day. An urgent business matter—that is to

say— That is really not the truth," he added, in a whisper. "I only do not want to be bored again."

"Oh!" she cried in surprise, but went toward the sitting-room.

He had told her what had suddenly come into his mind. He had considered this a good method of proving to her that he did not long for the company of Miss Ulrica. But now he was provoked at having done so.

For several days he felt discontented and morose.

"Shall I? or shall I not?" he asked himself a thousand times. He felt that he was standing at a cross-path, and that he would be committing as great a folly in going toward the right as in going toward the left.

On the following Sunday he waited near the house for Frederica; he thought she would go out. She was much displeased when he stepped up to her.

"I will not trouble you long, Frida," he said. "I only want to know whether you are angry because I—"

"I am not angry," she said; "and wish you would let me alone."

"But you do think unkindly of me," he insisted; "I can read it from your face. And I am not at all surprised at that. But what shall I do? I could not avoid it. My sister-in-law, the Majorin, is quite bent on it; and as I owe her father so much gratitude—"

"That was never the Majorin's own idea," she said quickly, hastening her pace. The Geheimrätthin is at the bottom of it, and planned it with Miss Ulrica, and then they beat about the bush, and got the Majorin to help—that is all about it."

"You must be mistaken."

"Why, a child could see that! Of course, it is not my affair. But, as I felt sorry for you—"

She would have said more, but suddenly paused, and bit her lip. Arnold walked on a few paces in silence; then he said:

"So you felt sorry for me?" She did not reply. "H'm—if I could do as I would wish. You see, I must consider my relatives."

"Yes, you must listen to their counsel."

But it seemed to him she said this as if but half convinced of its truth.

"Do you not think so?" he asked.

"Why, I just said that," she replied; "and it is quite right."

"What is quite right?"

"That you do not wish to take such a step without your relatives' consent."

"But they wish that I should ask Miss Ulrica."

"That is your own affair."

"Of course, I am not compelled."

They walked along in silence. He glanced at her a few times as if to read her thoughts from her face.

"So you do not approve of Miss Ulrica?" he stammered.

She started. "I?"

"I just thought so. You said you felt sorry for me. Why did you say that? You always seem to strike the nail on the head. It may be as you say that my sister-in-law planned this to marry off—her cousin. Now, I come to consider it, that may well be."

"Oh, that would not be wrong," said Frederica. "Why should relatives not care for each other? But you are also a relative—and just for you—"

"You do not think it suitable?"

"No, I do not. She is poor, and still wishes to keep up her proud position; and if she marries a carpenter, it will be the same story—she will wish to be more than she is; and that may be unpleasant for you."

He understood her meaning completely, even though she had so indistinctly explained it.

"That is true," he said. "What shall I do?"

She did not reply.

After a while he began: "Frida?"

"What is it?"

"You must not be angry with me."

"Oh! for that reason?"

"No; not for that reason. But—do you know, Frida, we two—we two suit together much better?"

"Oh, nonsense!" she exclaimed, and turned her head aside.

"No, no! It is not nonsense! I wish a wife just like you!"

"You cannot be serious, Mr. Berken?"

"Oh, never mind Mr. Berken! I am the carpenter, Arnold Berken; and if you are willing, you may be the carpenter's wife, Frederica Berken—that just suits."

She seemed to be controlling a burst of merriment.

"That does not suit at all."

"I think so, Frida. I liked you from the start—truly; and if you tell the truth, you did not dislike me so much, either. But it may be that you do not care for me very much; but if you consider that I am in good circumstances, and will be in better—"

"There is nothing to consider, Mr. Berken"—she interrupted him in a serious tone. "Whether I care for you or not, that is my own affair, and concerns no one. I might like you very much, and still have to say, 'It is nonsense.' It would be worse than the other match; for your relatives are pleased with that, and will help you on as much as they can, for your wife's sake. But if you marry me—oh! it is too comical!"

But he did not see it in that light.

"I do not know—"

"Your brothers would consent to it, do you think?"

"I am not under their control."

“And the gracious madam, the Geheimrätthin, and the Majorin—they would be delighted to receive me!”

“Even then— They did not concern themselves about me formerly.”

“But now—what do you imagine? If you scorn their counsel, do you think you will not have to suffer for it? You have a nice business now, and earn a good living; but what if this is withdrawn?—and they will surely do that. Then you can see where you can find work. What would you do, then, if you were married to a girl who has nothing, and who has even brought about your misfortune? It is nonsense—you must see that, even if you have but little sense.”

Arnold looked gloomy.

“It need not be immediately,” he murmured, hesitating over a chain of thoughts which he would not express “If you like me, Frida—”

“It will not be better in the future,” she said; “quite the contrary.”

“I do not know about that. When the business is my own—”

“It will never be your own. Any one who does not start on his own energy from the first, never reaches the top by his own exertions. And how long do you wish to keep the secret understanding between us? Altogether, I do not like such secrecy. So do not mention the subject again. Have you understood my meaning?”

He had not the courage to dispute the question any longer. He looked at his watch, walked a few paces, but knew he must beat a retreat.

"Perhaps you will change your mind, Frida," he said, and stopped.

She continued her walk. He looked after her until she was out of sight.

"Such a stubborn girl!" he muttered; "but clever—clever—and such a dear girl, for all that. If she only were willing! What can I do?" he asked himself. "I cannot run after her. And to go to see Miss Ulrica!—I feel wretched, miserable."

He did not go to his brother's house that evening, although he knew he was expected there.

IX

Soon after, the Geheimrath called on Arnold at his rooms. That happened very rarely—he must have had some motive.

Yes, he had a motive. Arnold thought at first that he would want an explanation for his non-appearance. But that was scarcely mentioned.

“My reason for coming,” said the Geheimrath, seating himself on the sofa—“you know the elections are close at hand.”

“The elections?” asked Arnold, astonished.

“Don’t you read the newspapers?”

“Yes, sometimes. Why, of course—quite right the elections—yes, I remember.”

“It will be a fierce contest this time—an unusually fierce contest. All lovers of order must unite to overthrow the enemy of law and order.”

“So—h’m—who is that enemy?” asked the carpenter falteringly.

“I think there can be no doubt about that,” answered the Geheimrath, shrugging his shoulders. “The socialistic movement threatens state and society—that is the enemy whom we must oppose, or else we will be crushed.”

"What! so bad?" murmured Arnold, while he anxiously moved to and fro in his chair.

"It is so bad, and even worse," asserted the worthy office-holder, reprimanding him by a severe look. "It seems to be a sickness with which humanity is afflicted—a dangerous, contagious disease. You yourself have been affected by it, and know its deadly effects. It might be called an epidemic frenzy. I hope that you have recovered your health in this different atmosphere."

"It does not pay to dispute about that," said Arnold evasively; "you have that opinion."

"Every reasonable person is of my opinion," canted the Geheimrath; "every patriot, every peace-loving citizen. It is only a cowardly make-believe when the party leaders speak of reforms by lawful means. They will not tolerate the government; they want a republic, and wish for a revolution."

"You must know that!" remarked the carpenter with some sarcasm.

"Do you deny it?"

"Very well—there are such. I know some of the anarchists quite well. But the majority of the socialistic party want only higher wages and better conditions for the workman. They will not overthrow the government."

"That may be. But they have been misled. We must take care that the influence of the agitators is stopped. Do not let us deceive ourselves that in times of revolution they will not blindly

follow their leaders. You yourself now belong to the employers—to the capitalists. You must understand that we are threatened by a terrible calamity. You have the best reasons for arming yourself against it and joining the ranks of those who uphold the banner of order.”

“But no one harms me.”

“Will you wait until they demolish your machines, plunder your safe, and burn the roof over your head?”

Arnold looked puzzled. He did not conceive what his brother wanted, but supposed that he must have come with a definite purpose, against which he must be on his guard. He concluded to let him talk, but to withhold his own opinion. Therefore he only smiled incredulously, and said nothing.

“A movement has been started to effect a close coalition of all parties, excepting only the extreme, for the fight against this all-too-powerful enemy. Regardless of all other difference of opinion, all good citizens will unite for the purpose of defense against the common enemy. This programme will be adhered to in the next election. I take it for granted that you agree.”

“But that is of little consequence—”

“Not at all, dear Arnold. Every vote is of importance.”

“Then tell me, finally—”

“In one word: A proclamation will be published, containing the ideas I have just expressed.”

Putting his hand in the side-pocket of his overcoat, he took out a printed paper. "Here it is—would you like to read it?"

The carpenter pushed the paper aside. "It is not necessary," he said. "I know that kind of talk."

"You know the contents? Impossible! the matter has been treated quite confidentially."

"I mean—those are always the same phrases."

The Geheimrath was perplexed. "You can convince yourself—"

"Oh, you cannot catch a person with that!" cried Arnold impatiently. "Those who are on the top of the ladder are high; those who are at the bottom—but I will not dispute about it. Try your programme."

The older Mr. Berken looked very serious. "Dear Arnold," he said in a tone of infallibility, "in such a proclamation as this, it is of the greatest importance by whom it is signed. The name speaks for the cause. We have the signatures of many prominent officials, capitalists, manufacturers, and merchants; that is not sufficient—we are sure of those anyhow. We must have the confidence of the middle class—the citizens, the small tradespeople, the lower officers, the mechanics. Therefore we endeavor to get many signatures from these classes. Here you find the shoemaker's and the tailor's names next to the president's, the small shopkeeper's next to the chef's of a prominent firm. Some

of these have individually much, some little, influence; but our aim is to win the cause."

"Yes; try it," repeated Arnold.

The Geheimrath nodded. "That is just what I am here for. I ask you to sign this paper."

"I shall sign?" Arnold sprang up.

"Yes, we want your signature—just yours is of great importance to us."

"But—"

"It is known that you have belonged to the socialistic party. It will make the best impression to see you now at the head of the conservatives."

"Quite the contrary."

"Depend on me, it will make the best impression. You will be an example to be emulated by hundreds and thousands. You will be able to win the best elements from those circles which we could not reach heretofore. If you are converted, others will be willing to follow."

"No, you go too far," cried Arnold. "I have been silent, I have taken no part in the agitation—but I will not be so vile. No, no, no!"

"Consider what you are saying, and do not be excited," cried his brother. "I think you ought to be glad to get rid of your false position. Now you have an opportunity. I presume that you wish to belong to us. Why will you not honestly confess that you have abjured the past?"

"Honestly? Such desertion—such—" he meant to say meanness, but interrupted himself.

"Yes, what do you imagine?" asked the Geheimrath with astonishment. "You cannot get anything without recompense in this world. We have a right to expect that you should show yourself grateful for your good fortune. I have, so to speak, guaranteed the authorities for you. In consequence of that, they have given you very lucrative orders, and intend giving you still more. I will not assert that they expected you to reciprocate, but no one will be able to comprehend that a man who has been so much patronized should refuse to support the most benevolent endeavors of the government. I myself cannot understand you at all."

"You—yes, probably—indeed, you—" ejaculated Arnold, with beads of perspiration on his brow. "But I—? Why must I be forced to sign? If I had known—in short, it is not fair of you."

The Geheimrath arose. "In three days more this list will be closed, dear Arnold," he said, very calmly. "If your name is not thereon—but you can do what you like, and I will not lose another word about it. You can, of course, not hold me accountable for the consequences. Good-bye!"

He extended to him two fingers of his right hand for leave-taking, took his hat from the table, and went.

Arnold was in a very bad humor. "I will not do it," was his first thought. "They try to bind me hand and foot! No, they shall not succeed!"

He went into the work-shop, stepped up to a

joiner's bench, and began to work at the boards so vigorously that the shavings flew about. The men around him spoke about the elections. "In this district we are pretty sure of our man," said the foreman Haber, "if every one does his duty; also in the next district; but in all others the prospects are not so good. We must exert ourselves to the utmost to have any success. Fortunately our antagonists are so embittered against one another that they will hardly help each other. Not one man must stay away from the polls. I think that is also your opinion, boss?"

"Do not count on me this time," said Berken; "my head is full of other business."

"You will have room enough left for that," answered Haber, laughing. "And I also wish to ask you if you would allow some of our meetings to take place here? In the taverns the police are always interfering."

"What goes on here when I go out in the evenings does not concern me," said Berken, gruffly. "I give no special permission for it. Do not get me into trouble."

"We understand," asserted Haber.

Arnold found the proclamation still on his table. He pushed it away with his hand, and it flew to the ground. After a while, however, he picked it up and glanced at it. "It is mere bribery! How big they talk! Promises, promises—that costs nothing. And I shall—but it is ridiculous!"

He put the paper in his pocket, and kept it there for a day. His brother's words were always in his mind. It was only the truth—they expected it from him; they were his benefactors, and had a right to demand it. "An abominable affair, but—! He is right—it is the way of the world. Those on the other side are just the same—if they have one, they hold him in their power. My circumstances are changed. Whose fault is it? A man does not look far ahead, and goes on—all at once the trouble comes. Stand still?—that cannot be. Go back?—still less. Oh, oh, oh!"

He showed the paper to Kranich.

"What do you think of it? They want me to sign."

"And why not?" asked Kranich.

"When people see my name there— It is as if I had been turned inside out, like you turn an empty bag inside out."

"What of that? It can be used just as well on the other side—and there will be somebody's name there."

"That is just it."

"I do not understand how you can trouble yourself about such a trifle! Everybody knows that such a signature means nothing at all. It is as if a person throws a bone to a dog to stop his barking. I can assure you the best people think so. Do you think that anybody will write his name under this circular for any other reason than because it is useful to him, or inexpedient for him to decline?"

"So that is the way you look at it?"

"I have no opinion in regard to it; but I hope that you will not quarrel with your brothers or aggravate the Kommerzienrath for such a small matter. Mr. Hirschel signs everything they ask him to. He does not always agree with them, nor like to do it, but that is the way in politics."

Arnold began to feel easier. Politics—that meant cunningly to know one's own advantage, to sit between two chairs, to exchange favor for favor. It seemed reasonable to him that the workmen should wish him to be prosperous. He could not imagine himself in poor circumstances again. "I will not be so scrupulous."

On the third day he went to see his brother. He took the paper with him and signed his name. "I have reconsidered it," he said; "it is in the end of little consequence." He blushed when he said this.

Siegfried smiled. "You begin to grow reasonable. But now no more relapses; or rather—that is really only a small beginning. If you take my advice you will proceed so far that it will be impossible to go back. You must be firm. If you are timid, you will not thereby regain the good opinion of the party you have left, nor can you win the full confidence of that which you join. Act accordingly."

Arnold did not contradict; but he mentally compared Siegfried to a large spider that had enticed

him into its web and held him entangled with its long threads. There was no escape.

Mrs. Matilda tried to win him over for the Christian Home, a blessed institution of the home mission. He should send there his young employèes who could not find enough moral support in their homes. She invited him to a meeting where a famous preacher was to speak. "You will be convinced that the prejudice against our endeavors is not justifiable, and you will give us your support."

He did not agree to this, but had not the courage to say so.

"My cousin Ulrica takes great interest in the labor question," continued the lady. "Since she has made your acquaintance, dear Arnold, she pays more attention to these things than formerly. It must be personal sympathy—don't you think so?"

He murmured an inaudible answer.

She moved nearer to him. "Sarah informs me that you entertain some hopes—"

"Oh! that is—"

"She even mentioned definite intentions."

He grew much embarrassed. "Yes, she spoke of—"

"I only wonder, dear Arnold, that you have not confided the matter to me. I was, so to speak, the nearest concerned—excepting Ulrica."

"Yes, if I had supposed—"

"Well, I must confess that I was a little startled at first. Ulrica is a highly educated and respected

lady, and you—well, you will not be offended if I say that you still lack much that a lady of this kind might demand. But yet I cannot deny that this match would be desirable for many reasons. And also Ulrica seems— Have you proposed to her yet?"

He sprang up, frightened. "Oh, no! how could I—?"

"Well, if not in so many words—but your manner surely indicated your wish to be so understood. We ladies have such a fine perception for that!—a look, a suggestion, is sufficient. I think Ulrica expects that you will soon ask the important question."

"Do you think so? Yes—yes, it may be."

Now she said sternly, "I could otherwise not allow these meetings in my house."

"But, honored sister-in-law, I have not said—"

"No, no! It would be inexcusable if I let matters go on thus. I must know definitely whether you entertain the intention of proposing to my cousin."

"Dear me—yes!" he cried, driven to desperation. "I really cannot deny it—"

"But why do you delay? Why don't you speak?"

"Speak! How shall I begin? The lady is so—I would not know how."

She smiled. "We can no longer remain in this suspense. I see that we must help you to attain your happiness. Will you authorize me to act for you?"

"Certainly! If you will be so kind—only I cannot imagine how the future—"

"We will see. Of course I can give you no assurance before I have seen Ulrica. But perhaps when I tell her that I am not opposed to the match—well, we shall see."

She extended her hand to him, which he kissed. He felt dizzy. He had given up the attempt to steer the ship of his life himself, and now the sails were set to hasten its movement toward the direction which he would have liked to avoid most. Now he began to grow indifferent. They disposed of him, and he must submit.

The Geheimrätthin thought it her duty to take immediate advantage of the authority he had given her. She wrote a few words on a card, inclosed it in an envelope, and commissioned Frederica to take the note speedily to Ulrica—she might take the horse-car.

That lady made her appearance before half an hour had elapsed. Her cousin immediately took her to the parlor.

"You see how excited I am!" whispered Ulrica. "Your mysterious allusions—what can you mean?" She bowed to Arnold somewhat bashfully.

Mrs. Matilda closed the doors of the adjoining rooms. "Imagine, dearest," she said laughingly, "my brother-in-law has just confessed to me—"

"But—" he interrupted her, anxiously.

"It is the truth, and it must be told—the sooner

the better. Just think, he has confessed that he adores you."

"That is true—of course."

"And that he entertains the hope—"

"But, honored sister-in-law—!"

"Do not interrupt me, you bashful man! I say that he entertains the hope of being accepted if he were to propose to you."

"Oh!" cried Ulrica, feigning to be much frightened. She stepped back and supported herself on the back of a chair.

"That is to say—" remonstrated Arnold.

"His modesty prevents his telling you himself," continued the Geheimrätthin. "And, in fact, perhaps he does aspire too high."

"Oh—!" sighed the lady.

"But, as I have observed that you do not dislike my brother-in-law, I thought it best not to discourage him, and so leave the decision entirely to you. Although he is only a mechanic—"

"That would not lower him in my estimation," Miss Ulrica quickly replied. "But is Mr. Berken sure of his sentiments? I must confess it has sometimes seemed to me—but I am so confused. Are you really serious?"

"Why don't you speak?" said the Geheimrätthin. "You must perceive that you need not fear. Ulrica does not appear to be unwilling."

"What shall I say?" he murmured in painful

anxiety. He felt at this moment that it would be impossible for him to marry Ulrica.

"What you shall say!" interposed his sister-in-law. "But he is too bashful! Ulrica has a right to expect a declaration of love—and you ask me what to say! Tell her the same you have told me."

"Yes, indeed. I have said—if Miss Ulrica—"

"Very good. Take courage!"

"You must not urge him," whispered Ulrica. "If he has any doubts—what a strange situation!"

She put her hand to her heart and looked up to the ceiling.

"My dear madam," stammered Arnold, "you can well imagine—"

"Go on! go on!" encouraged the Geheimrätthin, as he stopped again. "Let us look at the matter from the practical side. If both of you think that your union would be for the best—" she took Arnold's arm and led him to Ulrica—"I think that was your opinion?"

"Yes, certainly! If the lady would wish it—"

"Now you have heard it—it depends on your decision. I will not persuade you—not I!—especially as the circumstances are not quite normal. A certain degree of self-denial will be necessary in your case, dear Ulrica. But the basis of a Christian union—"

"If your heart really responds to my sentiments," Ulrica cried, turning to Arnold and gazing at him

with a tender expression in her soft eyes, "all the rest is of little importance.'

Her pale face glowed, her eyes looked bright, and her expressive lips were parted. She looked much more youthful than she had ever seemed before, and Arnold was for a moment touched by her beauty. He grew more courageous and extended his hand to her.

"You may rest assured about that, dear Miss Ulrica," he replied with some warmth. But as soon as he had said this, he felt as though he had told an untruth. But a small soft hand stole into his own—such a small, soft hand!—and the five little fingers were trembling. This sent a thrill through his veins. "You can have her," he thought; "do not be so shy! It is too late to retreat now. And why should I wish to do so?" These thoughts flew through his mind. He pressed her hand, and the next moment—he did not know how it happened, and it seemed strange to him—he was holding Miss Ulrica in his arms.

"Thus it was destined to be," said the Geheimrätthin with emotion. "God grant His blessing." She kissed Ulrica, and shook hands with Arnold. "Now I entertain the best hopes for you both."

"I hope you will be very happy," whispered Miss Ulrica to Arnold.

"But I have every reason to be so," he answered politely. "If you are only—I am surprised that you consider a carpenter good enough for you. The dif-

ference between us—well, you must know what you are about. I am quite satisfied."

She looked at him fondly. "Oh, if one is in love—! You must have noticed long ago—"

"Hush! Do not make such hasty confessions!" the Geheimrätthin interrupted. "Arnold has certainly good cause to be proud of his conquest. He is doing better than he had ever dreamed. And you—well, I hope you will succeed in training him so that he may become a husband who is worthy of you. I see that he is on the right road to success. But for the present let this affair remain a family secret. People must be prepared; it is time enough if they hear of it shortly before the wedding."

"For my part, all the world may know it," cried Ulrica, with unusual fervor.

That pleased him. He thanked her with a kind glance. She was certainly a pretty person—the slender figure and the large, fine eyes!—why, he would have to be blind— "That is nice of you, dear Miss Ulrica," he said, and pressed her hand; "yet it really concerns no one but Ewald and Sarah. Yes, they must know of it."

"Of course," said the Geheimrätthin, "Mr. Hirschel and his wife must also be informed. But we must be careful here in the house; the children—"

"Yes, and Frederica!" This exclamation escaped his lips; the next instant he blushed deeply; the sister-in-law shrugged her shoulders and smiled.

"Oh, well, she need not be considered."

"She need not be considered," he repeated mechanically; and he suddenly felt uneasy and perturbed.

The Geheimrath came home from a walk; the great news was immediately communicated to him, and he congratulated the pair with visible satisfaction.

"Let us have a bottle of wine for dinner, dear Matilda," he said.

His wife assented to this. Arnold and Ulrica sat next to each other at the table. She ate very little, and only watched him.

"Let us drink to a very good sentiment," exclaimed the Geheimrath; "you know what I mean—Ulrica, you must also drink to that."

"Why must Ulrica drink wine to-day?" asked little Wanda; "she always says it gives her a headache."

Ulrica blushed.

"That is only proper," answered Arnold; "if one drinks, the other must follow the example;" and he raised his glass with a meaning glance at his neighbor.

Wanda looked at the two in astonishment; they seemed very odd to her to-day.

Frederica waited at the table; she was very awkward, and received several reproofs from the gracious madam. Arnold did not doubt but that she had immediately guessed all. This was very disa-

greeable to him, and he avoided looking at her. But she is to blame for it, he thought; if she had been willing—! He exerted himself to adopt a lively tone. His sister-in-law was right—she need not be considered. Once he ventured a timid glance at her. Her cheeks were glowing, but her brow was very white. She looked severe and scornful; he did not glance at her again. When the guests departed, Frederica was called to unlock the front door for them. Ulrica was in an unusually gay mood, and hummed the melody of an old love-song which she had just sung. "Good-night, Frederica," she called in the gayest tone.

"Good-night, Miss," responded Frederica, very calmly.

Arnold wished to pass her without recognition, but he could not do that. "Good-night, Frida," he softly said, and tried to grasp her hand.

But she angrily exclaimed, "That would be very nice and proper!" Ulrica looked around, but he was descending the steps, and the door was closed with a crash.

Arnold had escorted Miss Ulrica before, as his sister-in-law had requested him to do so. He walked beside her a while in silence. His thoughts were occupied with Frederica, who was evidently angry with him because he had not heeded her advice—as if he could have done as he wished! But she may have been right; perhaps he had committed a downright folly—of course, a downright

folly. Well, he might commit a folly—whose affair was that but his own?

"You are so quiet," said Ulrica at length.

He raised his head. "I? Ah! yes!"

"Do you know, you ought to offer your arm to me to-night?"

"My arm? Very well. Excuse me, dear Miss Ulrica."

She accepted his proffered arm. "But why do you still call me Miss Ulrica?"

"Why, how should I—?"

"You know my name."

"Ulrica—"

"Do you see?—that sounds much better. I will call you Arnold—you will permit me to do so?"

"Certainly; but it is not easy to accustom one's self so quickly."

"But if you endeavor to do so, you can succeed—do you not think so?"

"Oh, well, I suppose so."

"Do not doubt it, dear Arnold. I must confess that I have felt a deep interest in you for some time, even before my cousin—" She suddenly interrupted herself with a slight cough. They walked a few steps in silence, then she began: "I think it would be best if we would be quite honest with each other."

"Yes, that is true."

"Tell me, you have been influenced by others in

this affair?—you would not have offered me your hand of your own accord?"

"But, dear Miss Ulrica—"

"Just admit it candidly—I know it, I am sure of it—your relatives have induced you to take the step; perhaps you even felt as though you were compelled to."

He looked at her in amazement. What did she mean by such a display of candor? Did she think him a fool? But she continued:

"Do not believe that I am also in the plot. My cousin—it chanced that my wishes corresponded with hers. But you—it may be that you heartily dislike me."

He did not feel impelled to contradict this statement very energetically, thus he merely answered, "No, I do not exactly dislike—"

"But you do not think me entirely to your taste. I do not know why I am so happy at our engagement, even in spite of this fact. I think it is because I cherish the hope of winning your confidence, but if you conclude to withhold that from me, of course it would grieve me deeply; still I would be grateful to you if you would tell me so candidly. Then I would help you out of your dilemma, by declaring that I had changed my mind. That would not be your fault—you would not be blamed, and whatever might be thought of me, that would be indifferent to me." She extended her hand to him. He seized it and pressed it warmly,

to show his gratitude for her magnanimous proposition.

They were passing a street-lamp. Ulrica looked up at him, as if to read the effect of her words from his face. He, too, involuntarily returned the glance, and thought how well she looked in that pretty little hat and dotted veil. "Now tell me sincerely, dear Arnold," she continued, "what are your true sentiments? Do you believe that you will be able to grow fond of me? and will you endeavor to do so? Do not spare my feelings."

"Sincerely!" Did she really mean this? It sounded so, but she was probably only feigning. How tenderly she pressed his hand again! "You need not worry about that," he confidently answered. And for the moment he knew that his convictions had prompted the reply. It was quite possible that everything would be well in course of time. He had not believed that Miss Ulrica would meet his advances with such warm affection. "No, indeed," he repeated, "you need not worry about that. If I have once pledged my word—but here we must wait for the street-car."

"I thought," she whispered, "the weather is so fine, and if you do not mind the distance—"

"Oh no—not at all," he assured her. "I only thought, on your account—just as you like."

"We have so much to tell each other yet."

"Yes, indeed."

They walked on.

The elections were drawing near. The proclamation was published in all the newspapers, it was posted up in all the thoroughfares. "Arnold Berken, builder," was near the top among the alphabetically arranged names. His name was even before his brother's. A carpenter was of more importance here than a councilor.

In the work-shop the matter was of course much discussed, not only in the absence of the proprietor, but also in his presence. Remarks were made which could leave Arnold no longer in doubt that the workmen believed that they had good reason to assume a cautious attitude toward him. Sometimes when he entered the shop the conversation suddenly ceased. This aggravated him. Why could they not have confidence in him, in spite of all, he thought. For some time he pretended not to notice it. Occasionally he started a conversation about the elections, and remarked that he expected the workmen to be firmly united. But they paid no attention to him. The one would whistle, the second sing, the third rattle with his tools, and the fourth would say a few meaningless words. "What is the matter here?" he broke out at last; "you act as if you were in a conspiracy against me."

"You need not look at it so," said Haber; "but you know our opinions, and we know yours."

"So you know mine?" he shouted. "You think, on account of that proclamation—Bah! that means nothing."

"But, Mr. Berken—"

"It means nothing—nothing at all."

"But—"

He did not succeed in getting on the former confidential footing with them. It must have been mentioned in larger circles, however, that he would not acknowledge having gone over to the other camp. One afternoon the masons, Ed Blank and Henry Brander, came to the shop, invited the men to a meeting, and inquired for Berken. He had seen them from the window, and went to the shop to prove to them that he was not afraid of meeting them. When he learned that they had also meant to call on him, he took them to his room and placed a bottle of whisky before them. They did full justice to it.

"Well, what attitude do you now really take?" asked Blank, wiping his mouth.

"What do you mean?"

"Well," said Brander, "you must permit us to inquire about that."

"Do you come on your own accord?"

"Not exactly. The others would also like to know. If it can be read on all the street-corners, we think—"

"Oh, that!"

"Yes, that—you have signed that proclamation. It is against us."

"My name is there, that is true."

"How did it get there?"

Arnold murmured some inaudible words, and considered, meanwhile, how he could defend himself, and whether it was advisable to attempt any defense. He remembered well what Siegfried had impressed on his mind—to stand firm by his public declaration. But he was ashamed before his comrades. “You know very well what positions my relatives occupy,” he said evasively.

“Have they put your name there without your consent?”

“I would not affirm that.”

“Very well; consequently you are against us.”

Arnold wavered. He could still get rid of these people by a courageous “yes!” It was ridiculous to have given his signature without having intended to stand by it. And yet he preferred to play a dangerous game. “I cannot deny having signed,” he said slowly; “but for all that, I am not against you—not at all—no. I am still with you. It is easy for you to condemn me, but first put yourselves in my place. Can I swim against the stream? It was a question of life and death. If a person is in such a business, and receives such paying orders from the government, and would not quarrel with his brothers, then it is impossible to refuse a request. But it is only a bluff. You know me well enough to have confidence in me, for all that.”

Ed scratched his head. “It is pretty strong,” he grunted. “There are plenty rascals in the world who are ready to desert if the other side offers

greater advantages. That has happened often enough, and here the temptation was very great. Well, I don't wish to insinuate, but we want to know whether we can depend on our friends."

"Now you know it," said Berken.

"And may we communicate this to our comrades?"

"Of course; but be cautious, and don't make a fuss. To whom could that be of any use?—surely not to the workmen. Now they have one among the employers who is their friend. He may still advance in time; many a man has worked up from a small beginning. But if they hurt me now, I am a ruined man. Those at the head must believe that I am one of them. Let me first gain ground."

Ed Blank raked with his thick fingers through his rugged beard.

"Well, yes, that is not unreasonable," he said, turning up his nose. "But, of course, if only fine speeches—"

"Who is making fine speeches?"

"That will be seen. Fine speeches or not, the question is, what do you intend to do for us?"

"What can I do?"

"You can silently support us."

"If you need money—"

"Yes, we do—much money. But money is not everything. The principal thing is, will you allow us to hold our committee meetings in your shop as often as we like? If you would promise us that, Mr. Berken—but you are making a grim face."

"Oh, oh! that sort of thing will cause me trouble yet. Is it absolutely necessary that in my shop—? Oh, oh!"

"No, not absolutely. We could meet elsewhere, but we are more secure here. As you have given your signature the police will have no suspicion; so we could have the advantage of it."

"That may be; but—"

"If you are afraid—"

"No, not in the least! Do what you like. Haber has the key; if he should forget to lock the door, what do I care? I need not be at home; I will know of nothing."

"That was well spoken," remarked Brander, as he drank another glass of whisky and put on his hat. "Come, Ed; we are now satisfied."

"And the money? Shall I call again for it? or would it be convenient now?"

Berken took out his pocket-book, opened it and looked in. "That is not sufficient. Can you not wait till—or, sit down, I will go and see if the book-keeper is still here." He went to the office. Mr. Von Kranich was still at his desk writing letters. "Can I have some money?" asked Arnold.

"You have but to command," answered von Kranich, shrugging his shoulders.

"Oh, indeed not! I only asked—it was of course only yesterday—"

"Quite right, and we had very large payments to make to-day."

"If it cannot be—I only wanted to get rid of those fellows; but they can come again."

"What fellows?"

"Oh! some old comrades."

"How much do you want?"

"I intended to give them a hundred marks to pacify them; perhaps fifty might be enough—don't you think so?"

"I don't know." He placed two fifty-mark notes before him.

Arnold took them. On his way back he put one of the notes in his vest-pocket. The other one he gave to Blank, who seemed rather disappointed. "We are just now a little short," he explained. "I will give you more at some other time."

"Only fifty," grumbled Brander to his companion; "he'll have to fork out more."

"Yes indeed," said Ed; "we have got him now."

Arnold felt ill at ease. It aggravated him deeply to have shown so little resolution. He had acted against his convictions when he had not resisted his brother, but now he had been still more cowardly. What hypocrisy! And now this game would have to be continued. It seemed intolerable to him.

Kranich knocked at his door and entered soon after.

"Will you go and take a glass of beer with me, after the trials and heat of the day?" he asked.

Arnold made a desperate effort to overcome his ill-humor and accepted the offer.

"But first I want to ask a favor of you," said the lieutenant.

"With pleasure—what is it?"

"Oh, I merely want your signature."

Arnold shrugged his shoulders. "My signature? Let me tell you, I have already burnt my fingers with that. Are you also interested in the elections?"

Kranich laughed. "You need not be alarmed; I do not meddle in politics. To be candid, I think it the greatest foolishness for men in our position to meddle in politics. We Germans—dear me, we have our constitution, and vote once in a while, if we want to show our great importance as citizens for a few minutes. But what more? We have nothing to say. In Germany the majority does not elect the ministry, but the ministry procures a majority. That is the principle. Practically it is not always so easy; then a compromise must be made. There are interminable debates whether to go two paces forward or backward; the newspapers are full of it, some very doubtful compliments are exchanged, and a good deal of bargaining or disputing is indulged in. The politicians talk about their victories or defeats in the tone of heroes who are about to conquer the world. Finally, nothing is accomplished. They have only acted a little comedy for political children, and afforded them the harmless pleasure of applauding or hissing. Yes, some enjoy it—I do not. The only solid principle is, 'Take advantage of the situation.' That you

have done by signing that proclamation. Now, please put your name to my paper."

Arnold sighed. "And afterward the others will come—"

"And they will also wish to make their profit," Kranich interrupted him. "I saw those people passing by my window, and can imagine how they impose on you. I would not have given them anything, if I were in your place."

"That is easy to say."

"What will it help you? They will not be satisfied, and demand more. And finally you will have to refuse them, and your money will be thrown away. What a pity! Why don't you refer them to me?"

"To you?"

"Yes; I have charge of the cash. Tell them that I will not give you any money."

"That is a good idea. Yes—I could say that."

"We two must kindly help each other, Mr. Berken—that is to our advantage. You are now dependent on your brothers and on Mr. Hirschel. You will not always like that; you do not like it at present. You can only become independent if you unite with me, for I am indispensable to you. I also have the ambition to become independent; hand in hand with you I could reach that aim; therefore you can place more reliance on me than on any one else. It is just possible that Mr. Hirschel has placed me here to be your overseer, your keeper; I

understand my duty differently, and consider myself your partner. When we have the necessary capital we will pay off Mr. Hirschel's loan. I must confess to you that I am speculating a great deal on 'Change now, to make enough money. You have no idea how much a clever person can make there if he has something to risk. Of course I am very careful not to go too far, and it is but natural that I should come to inquire if I can rely on your support."

Berken nodded assentingly, but could not comprehend the drift of this talk. "Yes, of course," he said, "it is quite reasonable—but I really do not see—"

"The question is, if you will do me a small favor—mutual favors without expense. I have often obliged you, and always willingly. One kindness is worth another in return. I want a favor from you which will cost you nothing."

"That is fair enough."

"You see, I need some capital for my business on 'Change, and I can only get it on a promissory note."

"A promissory note!"

"You need not be frightened. The papers will be put aside, and will not come in circulation. When they are due they are replaced by equal notes. They are nothing but a guarantee to procure me the necessary credit. Such a paper must have three signatures—"

"Signatures!" Arnold exclaimed, entirely perplexed. "And I shall—"

"Put your name to it—no more."

"I will not do it!" he cried with great decision—"under no condition."

"But why not?"

"Why not? Mr. Hirschel has strictly forbidden it."

"What has he forbidden? For your own business you should get the money only from him. But this has nothing to do with your business; and these are not your obligations. Don't you see the difference, dear friend?"

"Yes, but—"

"This is a signature only for accommodation, nothing else. You have no profit from it. The paper needs three names, and as I can only give one, I must apply to my friends for the others. It is a confidential matter. I hope that I possess your full confidence."

"Of course! But I do not see of what value that can be, if I—"

"You do not understand it. I do not think hard of you. I understand it—rely on me—you can do it with a clear conscience." He threw some formularies on the table. "You see, these are innocent papers. There is nothing on them as yet but my name. Now write yours below. The third name will be written on the back."

Arnold looked at the papers with some curiosity. "And that is really all?"

"That is all. I only need to put the numbers and date to it and can then use the paper as a guarantee. You need never to trouble about it again, and I will tear it to pieces when I don't need it any longer. It is only to oblige me."

"If only—"

"But, dear friend, it is surely to my own interest that you should lose nothing. I only speculate that I may become a partner in your business. It would be the greatest folly of me to harm you. It would be to my own disadvantage. So you may sign without fear. I will oblige you some other time. If those people come again who troubled you so to-day, send them to me, and I will take care of them."

"If the matter is really so—" he looked at him sharply. Mr. von Kranich did not move a muscle of his face.

Arnold Berken signed three papers.

"Many thanks! And now let us drink a glass of wine."

"All right." He was calm for the present, but later he began to question himself whether he had not got himself into a scrape. It was not probable, but it was just possible. He was not quite clear about it, where the danger lay. He could not get rid of the thought that Mr. Hirschel might be mistaken in Kranich. He saw no possibility of

getting rid of him, however. Probably those signatures would prove a new chain to bind him. Repeatedly he thought of going to Mr. Hirschel and confessing all to him. But the consequences! A week later he asked Mr. von Kranich to return the papers with his signatures to him, as he would rather have nothing to do with the matter.

"You are comical," Kranich answered with a shrill laugh. "Do you imagine that a man keeps such papers in his pocket? I told you what use I would make of them. Do not be so uneasy. You are not in the hands of a robber."

"I only thought, if it did not matter to you—" the carpenter excused himself. He began to see that he had to let matters take their course. Was it only imagination that the good friend seemed to negotiate with him in a much bolder tone?

He avoided meeting his betrothed. Her cousin had objected to his visiting her in her boarding-house. Sometimes they took a short walk together, but their conversations did not become much more confidential. Ulrica was always very affectionate, but he met her advances gruffly. He had a suspicion that she tried to make him fall in love with her, but he was on his guard against it. He did not want to lose his liberty entirely. The Majorin, who had once entertained the couple at her house, could not fathom their relations, and expressed her opinion about it.

"I have never in my life seen a funnier couple,"

she said. "I believe you have never kissed each other. Please try it once. I will hold my hand over my eyes."

"You will look through the fingers," jested Miss Ulrica, blushing deeply, but looking very affectionately at Arnold, to encourage him by her loving glances.

He did not stir. "In course of time—" he murmured; "we are yet almost strangers."

Ulrica suppressed a sigh.

"Such a shy Joseph!" teased the Majorin.

One evening when Arnold returned home in ill-humor he found a man in his room who had been waiting for him several hours. He smoked from a short pipe some vile tobacco, which poisoned the air of the room and hall. He lay stretched out on the sofa, soiling it with his dirty boots. His clothing was very shabby, the coat threadbare, the trousers fringed. No linen was visible; the vest had but a few buttons left. His thin red hair fell over his shoulders. On the table lay a bundle of papers tied together with a string; near that a broad-rimmed dusty felt hat, and a thick stick with an iron point. The stranger took the pipe from his mouth, rose, spit on the carpet, and opened his broad mouth, which showed defective teeth, to ask the question:

"Well, have you come home at last?"

Arnold seemed frightened as soon as he recognized his visitor.

"What in the world—is it you, Fred?" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"So you know Fred Reichelt yet, after all," he answered, derisively. "That is very kind of such a fine gentleman—yes, yes, yes! But I expected that, in spite of all I have heard about you here and there. Many things are not what they seem. We two—well, we know each other, I think, and I will not change my opinion until I find out from you yourself that I have been a simpleton. We have seen hard times together—do you recollect? Such comradeship knits two people into brotherhood."

"Have you eaten anything yet?" Arnold asked, evasively.

The guest rose from his reclining position and then sat down again on the sofa.

"Oh, a little," he answered—"at the depot when I arrived, but not much. A policeman stood at the door of the waiting-room; he took pleasure in watching me very attentively, so I had but little appetite. That is very comprehensible, is it not? And I expected to find a big spread here. I suppose you live well now?"

"But why did you not write? If you had informed me of your arrival—"

"I did not care to do that. Sometimes it is well to surprise one's old friends. No one knows how they may have changed; but if you have anything at hand—"

Arnold opened his cupboard.

"There is bread and butter; also a piece of cheese. If you wish a drink of whisky—"

"Just hand it over. I always eat whatever is within reach." He pushed his bundle aside and put his pipe on his hat. Then he took out his pocket-knife and cut off large slices of bread, generously helped himself to butter and cheese, taking a draught from the bottle from time to time, without heeding the glass which Arnold had placed next to it. "So you are getting on very well?" he said.

"Yes, thus far; and you?"

"Just as ever. Men like ourselves must wait until our aims are realized—when the great must divide with the small."

"Who lit the lamp this evening, Fred?"

"Mrs. Haber; she was just busy cleaning here when I arrived. We talked a while together; she told me about the business, the people you employ, and how everything is carried on. Thus I heard several hints which led to certain conclusions." He winked at Arnold slyly. "The comrades meet here—I could easily guess that."

"I know nothing about that."

"I understand, I understand. Nevertheless, I was pleased to hear that. If one has gone through thick and thin for a whole year with a comrade and trusts him like a brother, and then fears that he has played the deserter, and finally learns that he is all right—I understand, I understand." He

glanced around the room and pointed to a photograph in a gilt frame under the mirror. "Who may that fine person be?"

"That is—my intended bride."

"Well, that was quick work, my boy." He rose and took the portrait in his hand. "I must say she is fine-looking, but dreadfully aristocratic. I am surprised at your choice."

Arnold shrugged his shoulders, and said: "Well it may be, and may not be; if my taste alone had been consulted—"

"So she has money?"

"No, not a penny."

"No? Take care; such an one costs more money than she earns. But perhaps you do not mind that. I suppose your brothers also arranged that affair?"

"My sister-in-law, rather. But it may be—well, never mind. The wedding has not come off yet." Fred shook the ashes from his pipe. Arnold handed him his cigar-case. "I wish you would rather smoke one of these. My whole room will be close with that stench."

"With pleasure." He threw himself on the sofa, struck the match against the sole of his shoe, and puffed at the cigar.

Arnold sat down opposite him. "Do you intend looking for work here?"

"Yes, of a certain kind—you know the work at which I am engaged—ha, ha, ha! Good work—of

a special kind. They have sent me here to look to it that nothing goes amiss."

"Who sent you?"

"Who? Blockhead! We cannot do anything by mail; the police know the addresses, and are always on the watch. If such a letter is investigated, they are immediately on the scent, and there are always rascals enough to serve as witnesses. Whatever we resolve upon must be told our comrades by word of mouth. For that purpose I came here from Switzerland. Every part of our organization which sails under the red flag must take the same course."

"Under the red flag!" Arnold's face showed a discontented expression.

"There is no other flag for us. The government would like to persuade us to believe—but we know why they are so friendly toward us now—they tell us only to withdraw our red banner, and then we can have whatever our hearts desire. But then we are done for—our power is at an end. Childish nonsense! And what I wished to ask you also—I conclude that I may lodge here with you?"

Arnold grew pale. "With me? So many people come and go here all day—"

"Oh, during the day I will be out among the workmen, but at night I need a safe lodging. I do not wish it known that I am here at all, so I cannot go to any tavern. The police must be kept in the dark, and if they should learn of my presence in the city—well, I want to sleep undisturbed, at

least. I will not be suspected of stopping with you, for you have played such a clever game. I hope you have not become a cowardly rascal since we parted."

Arnold shook his head impatiently. "Oh, no! But if you were found here, I would be in a terrible scrape. You know that I have never shared your ideas entirely. With force nothing can be—"

"Do not speak so foolishly!" Fred interposed. "Who speaks of force? I am not so crazy, either, as to imagine that I could fan a revolutionary flame at present. Why, we laborers would be shot down like dogs!" His eyes flashed. "We must strengthen our cause first. At present the most important object we have in view is to organize—firmly, more and more firmly—so that a split cannot be made in any of our branches. I hope you will agree with us in that. What are usually termed our final aims and ends—the other side often uses these as an argument against us. We must travel a long road until we reach our goal—we know that—and it may be that we may never reach it at all. We will not quarrel about that. But whenever we wish to take any step whatever, we are stopped with the cry, 'Halt! What are you about? We know your designs, the aims you have in view.' And they use this pretext to alarm our followers." He untied the string of his bundle, unrolled a soiled handkerchief, and took out a roll of printed pamphlets. He handed this to Arnold. "It seems that you have

neglected reading our last issues; there you have them. They are printed in free countries like Switzerland and England. Those are our dynamite bombs with which we hope to overthrow the present state of society."

Arnold felt as though he were handling glowing coals. "I will put them away under lock and key," he said; "I cannot tell who might accidentally—"

"But read them—read, and grow wise. So I can stay with you? You have a wide berth, I have noticed. Or would you rather sleep here on the sofa? I do not mind. Your cigars are really good; let me have another."

Arnold made no further objection, but he anxiously meditated how he could get this troublesome friend out of the way early enough the next morning.

X.

After that occurrence, Arnold Berken was in continual anxiety. He felt as if he were living in a house built with cards, which might be overthrown by the slightest movement of the wind. The ground seemed tottering under his feet; every prospect seemed to melt away into fog. Even in the darkest days of his existence he had never felt so wretched; he had been his own master at least—had been at liberty to make his own decisions; now he was pushed hither and thither in different directions, according to the inclinations of others. He did not even find pleasure in the luxuries money could procure for him. His heart was not at peace anywhere, and his brain throbbed with anxious thoughts which kept jostling each other in hurried succession.

One day his brother Siegfried intimated to him that he might expect a visit from an influential personage. "You may well be proud," he had said, "that you are considered of so much importance. I hope that you will do your best to preserve the good opinion which is now entertained of you. Let the cause be of more consequence in your eyes than any person!"

This rather mysterious preparation was well adapted to increase Arnold's anxiety. What could they want of him? It was probably something of a serious nature, otherwise his brother would have expressed it more clearly. He tried to learn the particulars from Ulrica, but she seemed totally ignorant of the matter. But she advised him to welcome the visitor very courteously and deferentially. "We will see!" he responded.

One Sunday morning, soon after that time, just after he had had breakfast with Fred Reichelt, a knock was heard at the door. Fred immediately withdrew to the bedroom, while Arnold rose to see who it might be. In the office he found a gentleman who had probably been admitted by Mrs. Haber, who was sweeping the hall. The visitor was standing with his stove-pipe hat in his hand, and looked at Arnold through his eyeglasses in a kindly yet, at the same time, scrutinizing manner.

"Mr. Arnold Berken?"

"Yes, sir; that is my name. What can I do for you?"

"Oh—oh—oh, I only wished—can I speak to you a quarter of an hour undisturbed?"

Arnold closed the door leading to the sitting-room. "We can do so right here."

"And there is no one in the adjoining apartment?"

"No, sir."

"Excuse me for inquiring about that. The

woman to whom I spoke out there a moment ago seemed rather doubtful about it."

"Who should be there?"

"I do not know, and I do not care about that—only that I wish to speak for your ears alone. It is about—your brother has been so kind as to mention the matter to you already."

Now Arnold stared at the visitor. "Ah, so! My brother—yes, indeed. You are—"

"Police-commissioner Liedemann."

"Police-commissioner—" Arnold involuntarily glanced back at the door.

"If some one is there, after all—"

"No, no! I beg of you to be seated." He motioned toward the desk, at which two chairs were standing. He was quite convinced that the police had been informed of Fred's arrival in the city, and that they were on his track, but he was also determined not to betray him.

The Police-commissioner sat down and commenced in a low tone: "My dear Mr. Berken, we will not try to play at hide-and-seek with each other; an honest and open avowal of our plans will be the easiest method of understanding one another. Your antecedents—you cannot doubt but that these are well known to us."

Arnold involuntarily shrugged his shoulders and bit his lips.

"I only tell you what is quite self-understood," the guest continued. "It will also not be

news to you to learn that you may thank your brother for the kind consideration we have shown you. His guarantee was sufficient—do you not think so?" He lowered his head and looked over the rims of his glasses.

"Yes, I think so," answered Arnold, rather unsteadily; "although, if you have changed your opinion in regard to that—"

"I hope we have no reason to do that," the Commissioner assured him, smiling; "on the contrary, we are rejoicing at having won you over to our side."

Arnold looked at him in a perplexed manner. Did the man really believe this? He had said it in a tone of conviction, but he could not look into the Commissioner's eyes—the silver rim of his glasses effectually prevented that.

"May I ask, Rath Liedemann," Arnold said, "what—"

"What I want to see you about? Of course, you very naturally infer that I have come on some errand or duty. If you have really changed your sentiments, and in consequence also your political standard, as I have been glad to learn—" He drew several circles on the top of his stove-pipe, drawing them closer and closer, and finally put the tip of his finger in the exact center. "You can be very useful to us," he began again. "You have had opportunity to gather experiences and to make the acquaintance of people who usually shun general observation. The education you received, and your

early associations under your parents' roof, must have rendered you capable of judging these from a critical stand-point. It would be of great value to me to hear your opinions, to learn your impressions, and to heed your advice. If you would be kind enough to grant—"

"Sir," the carpenter exclaimed, "it seems that you wish to make use of me—I do not know for what purpose," he concluded in a low voice.

"I will tell you without circumlocution," the Commissioner replied, without hesitation. "I wish to use you as I would a book of reference, which can give me information about interesting personalities who are apt to appear in our midst, and about occurrences in which they took a prominent part. The authorities wish to be enabled to obtain a good insight into these circumstances, in order to make sure of employing the proper measures. It is our desire to place obstacles only in the way of very dangerous individuals, but to deal leniently with their followers. Thus you can help us to pick out the black sheep of the flock."

"So I am to act as an informer?"

"That is an ugly term. It leads one to think of people who act from revengeful motives, or who sell their secrets for gold. We are compelled to deal with such persons too, unfortunately, and are often enough misled by their statements. No, no—not so. But how can you further the general welfare better than by using your own past experiences

for the common good? You thereby atone for past faults and attest your gratitude for being respected as a law-abiding citizen. My request is addressed to a man who has the interest of the public welfare at heart. To such a man it will seem but self-understood to comply."

"Self-understood," Arnold repeated, hanging his head. "Of course, when one is so far—"

"You are so far if you return confidence for confidence. I extend my hand to you in friendship. Believe me, the other party think they have you in their power. I will tell you candidly what I know. Because they imagine that the public does not think you a suspicious character, they use your work-shop for secret meetings of the leaders—"

"Commissioner Liedemann!"

"That alarms you, and not without cause. Still more: we have good reason to suspect that a decidedly dangerous individual named Fred Reichelt—" he looked at him searchingly—"you know the man well, and will agree with me that he is a very dangerous individual."

"Certainly," stammered the carpenter.

"I say that we have good reason to suspect that he lodges in this house."

Arnold gasped for breath. "That must be a mistake," he hastily replied. "I do not even know that he is in the city."

The Commissioner curled his lip. "It would, at all events, be an easy matter for you to ascertain the

truth," he responded. "You, my dear friend, could gain admittance to their conferences without any difficulty—could listen to their discussions and discover their plans. You will be regarded as a comrade in thought and deed, and no secret will be hidden from you. Thus you will learn everything which will be of use to us. You cannot but recognize that you cannot give us a clearer proof of your trustworthiness than by making the correct use of the advantages afforded by your position. You may be sure that we will treat your communications very discreetly, and will execute our further measures in such a manner as to exclude the possibility of the slightest unpleasantness to you arising from them. No one will learn anything of your aid; your evidence will not be required by the courts. You know that we can at any time refuse ours where the interest of the government is concerned. You need not fear that we will betray a man, who has given trustworthy support to the government, to our unprincipled opponents."

Arnold jumped up from his chair. "That is—!" He seized the back of the chair and lifted it from the floor with an impetuous, angry movement, as if he wished to use it as a weapon. But after a moment he knew that it would be great folly to disclose his true sentiments to this guardian of the peace, who considered him contemptible enough to act as a spy. He controlled his fury, set the chair on the floor quietly, and cried: "That is—a remark—"

ably bright plan, sir; and perhaps I am just the right man to—why, my brother knows me—he has my signature. I will see what can be done—depend on that!

The Commissioner rose. This energetic approval seemed rather dubious to him after all. He looked at Arnold over the rims of his spectacles again, and said: "Well—very well, I will depend on that. Be kind enough to call and see me at my house; I am sure we can talk there without fear of interruption. You will find me there at seven o'clock in the evening. It would be still better to drop me a line to inform me of your call." He gave him the address, shook the carpenter's hand, and retained it a few moments and whispered to him, carefully emphasizing every word: "After all, if you might deem yourself wiser than I, you will be vastly mistaken. I only mention this, as you might meet with very serious trouble in consequence. You were at liberty to refuse my request. If you give me your assurance that I may rely on your friendly aid, there cannot be any risk on your part. You understand that clearly, do you not? But if I must let you fall, you will fall very low, and will never be able to rise again. I will say, as you have just done, you may depend on that."

With a courteous bow he then took his leave, pressed his hat over his forehead, and left the office.

Arnold could have screamed aloud with rage and disdain. This man—this brute!—how dared he come

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to him with such a proposal! He to act as a spy! How could he be considered capable of such treachery! Had he indeed sunk so low that any one might suggest such baseness to him without being prepared to receive a slap in the face? And Fred Reichelt—that was not so bad. But this—and his brother!—he knew of this! His brother—his brother!—that wounded him most deeply—his own brother!

His face burned. He passed his hand over his hot forehead. He paced to and fro with great strides, gesticulating wildly; he did not know what he was about.

At length he tore open the door of the sitting-room and called in: "Where are you? Take yourself off—immediately—right away! and do not come back. I never want to see you again—I do not wish to know where you may be found. Do you hear?"

"What is the matter?" asked Reichelt. "That was a very long conference. Who was here?"

"Do not inquire, but go!" Arnold answered, his breast heaving. "You are not safe here. Who knows?—I may become the beast—ha, ha, ha! I may earn something by means of you. Take care! I may sell your secrets—I—I—"

Reichelt grinned. "Ah! that is it!" he drawled. "So they have you in their power! That accounts for your signature, you weak-minded fool! And do you think we will resign our claims on you? You are greatly mistaken, my little fellow. Any one

who drops from our tree is trodden upon like rotten fruit. Take care!"

Arnold stared at him as though unable to comprehend the meaning of the words; then he took his hat and rushed out into the street. He felt the necessity of fleeing from so many antagonists, who all rushed toward him from different sides. If he could only flee from them! But where should he go? He thought of leaving everything to take care of itself, and, without bidding farewell to his brothers, going out into the wide, wide world. He also thought of various methods which would put an end to his existence. A desperate mood always prompts the wish to be beyond further vexation and misery.

Arnold hurried along the street until he reached the open field, and then began to ask himself where he really wanted to go. He crossed some lots, which were marked off to form an extension of the city, and reached some dwellings which were just being built. For one of them he had furnished some wood-work. To-day, on the Sabbath, no one was busy there. He approached, climbed up a scaffolding to the roof, and stepped into an opening in the wall designed for a balcony door. If he had fallen from there, he would have fractured arms and limbs—probably his skull also. Just then the bells of the churches began to ring distinct and clear in the silence of the Sabbath-day. He could not have accounted even to himself what influence this exerted upon his intentions, but he was aware

that he was succumbing to some influence. For a while he listened to the peals, then he said softly, "The church-bells are ringing." Then he slowly and carefully climbed down and went back to the city.

But he did not return to his dwelling; neither did he go to a restaurant where he might expect to meet Mr. von Kranich or other acquaintances. He felt as if he must drink—drink hard, to forget, to drown his sorrows.

He soon reached a basement saloon, entered, and asked for a bottle of rum. He hastily drank one glass after another of the fiery liquor. His head grew hot, his thoughts confused; many shadowy figures danced before his eyes—his brother, the Geheimrath, in a frock-coat decorated by many insignia of honor, attached to a long chain which dragged behind him; his sister-in-law Sarah in a bright red dress; Mr. Hirschel, Kranich, the Police-Commissioner Liedemann arm in arm with Fred Reichelt. That seemed funny to him—he laughed aloud. Then he leaned his heavy head on his hands, and was soon fast asleep. When he awoke it was already dark. He paused to think how he had come here. "Oh, yes!" now he remembered. He paid the host and left.

He began to collect his thoughts, to form some conclusion. Should he go to his brother's house?—no doubt they were expecting him. Ulrica was certainly there. Bah! Ulrica! Why should he listen

to more of her instructions? He was heartily tired of them. And what should he say to his brother, if he asked him about his interview with the Police-Commissioner, as he surely would? He took the longest road to reach the dwelling of the Geheimrath. Three times he stopped before the door and could not determine to go in. "What do I want in there—what can I want? This must come to an end," he murmured. Finally he stopped at the crossing leading to the yard. "Yes, that—that might help!—she is the only one—yes, that would do!"

Without further hesitation, he approached the winding stairway which led to the kitchens of the different flats. He descended them until he reached the door-plate "Berken;" then he knocked at the door.

His hope that the old cook might be out, and that Frederica would open the door for him, was realized.

"Who is there?" he heard her ask. At the same time the door was opened. "Oh! Mr. Berken—you?"

Just so he had once before made his entry into his brother's house—as a beggar. Perhaps she remembered it at the moment. He thought he read her intention to close the door from her face, so he quickly stepped into the kitchen. "Yes, I, Frida," he said; "have you any objection?"

"Dear me! but what do you want here?" she exclaimed. "You know the entrance for visitors."

He softly closed the door. "I came to see you, Frida."

"To see me? That must be a mistake. Miss Ulrica has been here a long time waiting for you. You will not be received very graciously to-day; but you are to blame for that, and must bear the consequences. Why did you come so late? But I cannot admit you from the kitchen; that would look very strange; so go back again and ring the bell."

And she was about to put her hand on the door-knob. But he caught her hand and exclaimed: "I am not going in there at all, Frida; you may be sure of that. I have come to see you."

She stepped back in surprise.

"Oh, Frida! If you knew!—if you could read my thoughts!" She noticed that he seemed very disconsolate and forlorn. She said nothing, but she looked at him as if she expected some explanation. "Do you see, Frida," he continued, "a man may be burdened with many loads, and bear them one after the other; it becomes very oppressive, but he thinks it cannot continue so, and keeps his peace. But then at last one comes which is beyond his power of endurance; and then he feels like shaking off the entire lot. Is that not so?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I do not know—it

may be. But you—you have nothing to complain about, Mr. Berken."

He laughed harshly. "Oh, no! I have nothing to complain about. Bah! that is not your true opinion—you know me well enough for that."

Frederica moved away uneasily. "We cannot talk together here any longer," she said—"here in the kitchen—you and I! If the gracious madam—"

"I do not care."

"Oh, do not talk so!"

"Believe me—the gracious madam, and the gracious master, and the gracious Miss Ulrica, and the entire gracious crew—I am heartily sick of them all; and also of the Majors, and of Mr. Hirschel and of Mr. von Kranich, and all the rest. They have wound a chain around my limbs and put a ring through my nose—"

At first Frederica had listened in great surprise, but now she began to laugh. "Just like a dancing bear," she cried. "I have seen such an one. He had to perform some tricks, and if he refused—"

"Then he received a lash," Arnold completed the sentence. "I know! I do not want any further favors from them, but I wish to be released."

Now she grew serious once more. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"I am unhappy, Frida, in this state of affairs. They are not suited to me. As I am—that is just it—I am only a plain workingman, and I cannot rise above my station without becoming dishonest.

I cannot do what they demand, and I do not wish to do it. They wish me to ascend the ladder; but my head is not so steady—I feel dizzy at the prospect. And with such a wife—”

“Yes, that is the worst,” she assented.

“Oh! I will not submit to it. Before my whole life—that engagement must be broken off.”

“Mr. Berken, just consider”—Frederica seemed very much shocked—“it is too late now—”

“There is nothing to consider. I have been inveigled into this—you know that, Frida. When I consider the result—no, indeed, it is not too late.”

“Is it possible! You would really— What will the Geheimrätthin say?”

“I am not marrying in order to please her.”

“And the whole family—”

“Of course there will be a great commotion—a dreadful commotion. But I will remain firm, if I am only sure of one person—only one.” He glanced at her very affectionately. “I suppose you know what I mean?”

“Oh, Mr. Berken!” exclaimed Frederica; “now you are joking again.”

“I am quite serious,” he assured her. “Do you know, Frida, that was really the greatest mistake I ever made, to suppose that I could ever be indifferent to you; for at the first glance and after the first words we spoke together, I knew—”

“Now, please be quiet. I have told you my opinion once—”

He seized her hand. "No, now I will talk. If I do not tell you now, it may be too late afterward. You surely do not wish me to be driven to ruin, and that will surely happen if you do not act honestly toward me. Tell me the truth, Frida—do you not like me with all your heart, and did you not feel wounded—but do not act so toward me! No one in the wide world can love you more than I do."

"I suppose you have proved that? Leave me in peace, Mr. Berken!"

"But I will prove it. You shall be my wife, Frida, and if the whole world protests against it—you, and no other! You are the wife for me, Frida. And now give me a kiss, and the matter is settled. Truly, you must consent to be my wife."

He drew her toward him, clasped her in his arms and tried to kiss her. But she struggled with all her might. "Oh! do go, Mr. Berken! What are you thinking of? Here—"

At this moment the glass door leading to the hall was hastily opened. The Geheimrätthin crossed the threshold, her face flushed with anger.

"What is this?" she cried, with trembling voice. "Frederica—my brother-in-law, Arnold—"

Neither of them had noticed that a curious little face had peeped through the glass panes a few minutes before. Wanda had gone to call the girl, but had paused in surprise and then run to her mother to tell her the startling news that Uncle Ar-

nold was in the kitchen with Frederica. They had been too engrossed to hear the steps approaching along the corridor. Now they drew asunder. Frederica burst into tears, and held her hands before her glowing face. Arnold looked defiantly at his sister-in-law, whose white lips seemed to be endeavoring to frame words strong enough to give vent to her indignation.

"I am not to blame, gracious madam," Frederica defended herself. "Mr. Berken—"

"Do not try to apologize, you bold girl," the Geheimrätthin interrupted. "How could this have been possible if you had not offered encouragement? But that you have so forgotten your dignity, Arnold—"

"I will answer for that," answered Arnold, summoning up courage. "Frederica is telling the truth. She did not know that I would knock at the back door. I surprised her, and she wanted to send me away immediately. But—I did not go."

"You are dismissed instantly," the Geheimrätthin declared with decision—"instantly! Pack your things and go wherever you like. I will send you your wages."

"Yes, I will go," the girl sobbed. "But I did not deserve such treatment. The gracious madam must admit that I did my duty faithfully, and that I deserve a good recommendation."

"Yes, I will give you a good recommendation," the angry dame grimly asserted, "such an one as

you deserve, and now do not cry in such a heart-rending way. You should have considered the consequences before."

But Frederica sat down on a stool at the kitchen table, put her face on her hands and sobbed aloud.

"And you, sir," the Geheimrätthin exclaimed turning to Arnold and pointing to the hall-door, "you belong in there and not in the kitchen. It is outrageous of you to bring about such a scene in my house. How could you forget your duties, your obligations, in this manner? You know who is waiting for you in there."

Arnold was so incensed at the treatment which Frederica had received in his presence that he forgot all the dictates of prudence.

"Listen to me now, worthy sister-in-law," he cried, "I will explain why I came here. You imagine that you have done wonders for me—"

"Will you please speak in a lower tone?"

"No! For my part every one may know this. I must put an end to all this nonsense! I wish to be a free man again and live according to my own inclinations. I will not be tied to leading-strings—I am too old to submit blindly. I have grown fond of Frederica here, and love her for her good qualities, for she is good and pretty, and I wish her to become my wife; and I have just told her so."

"But I am not willing at all," sobbed Frederica.

"That does not matter," he continued energetically. "She is not willing, because she thinks I

have pledged my word to another. But that is not binding. It was not done of my own free will. You and Sarah and my brothers forced me to it. I am sorry that Miss Ulrica became a tool in your hands—”

The door leading to the salon must have been left ajar. A shrill scream was now heard from the room.

“You will kill the poor girl,” cried the Geheimrätthin and hurried away.

Ulrica, who had overheard the entire conversation, had fainted. At least she lay on the floor as though she were lifeless, her face colorless and her eye-lids closed. Little Fritz, whom she had held on her lap and dragged down with her in her fall from the chair, screamed as if he had met with some personal injury; Wanda had shyly crept into a corner. The Geheimrätthin sent Arthur for a glass of water, and endeavored to raise Ulrica’s head. The Geheimrath, who had heard the commotion from his study, came to inquire what was the matter.

“It is scandalous,” said his wife, bending over Ulrica, who now seemed on the verge of an hysterical outbreak. “Your excellent brother—go and bring him here from the kitchen. To have such a scene in my house!”

Siegfried stepped into the corridor. Arnold advanced to meet him. He knew that an explanation was now unavoidable, and felt in the proper

frame of mind to engage upon the controversy. "I suppose you were the one to send the Chief of Police to me," he began as soon as they had entered the study. There was a loud and stormy discussion. One word led to another; accusations followed upon accusation. Arnold did not try to restrain his wrath, but gave full vent to his pent-up emotions. The Geheimrath called him an ungrateful wretch—a coarse, vulgar person. Arnold laughed scornfully. "That is not nearly as bad as to be a thief."

The Geheimrätthin entered, and said that Ulrica wished to speak to Arnold. "She will pardon all," she said, "everything may yet be arranged."

Arnold turned away. "That cannot be any more. I have said it, and Frederica knows what my intentions are, and who will stand by her when she is dismissed from this house—"

"But do not scream so," the Geheimrätthin exclaimed with displeasure, "I am quite nervous already. But you surely will not refuse to say a word of farewell to your intended?"

He straightened his figure and followed her to the sitting-room.

The children had been sent out. Ulrica reclined on a sofa, and extended her hand to him. She looked indeed miserable. "I cannot believe it—" she said, with trembling voice. "What provocation did I give you—?"

"None, none!" Arnold assured her; "none at all.

It is a misfortune which cannot be avoided. We two should never—but that is past. But now this has happened—and it is better now than later."

"But if it is only a momentary aberration of the heart—?"

"You surely cannot be thinking of marrying Frederica," interrupted the Geheimrätthin, "my former servant-girl!"

"That is my affair," he replied, "that remains to be seen. I am sorry, Miss Ulrica—"

She started at the last words, leaned her head against the cushion and closed her eyes.

"You will probably understand that we expect no further visits from you," said the Geheimrätthin. "I will not speak about further consequences of your behavior."

"I cannot help it," he retorted, hanging his head. "Good-bye, Miss Ulrica. And do not take the matter to heart—it is really not worth while. No, no, indeed, believe me!"

Ulrica rose and opened her arms as if to clasp him and hold him back. But her cousin stepped up to her and pressed her down on the sofa. "Forget the wretch!" she said, "the ingrate!"

Arnold silently departed.

XII

Arnold was not immediately relinquished. After a few days—it was thought best to give him time to come to his senses—the Major came to see him, and gave him a lecture on account of his unpardonable folly. “You are a perfect fool,” he told him, “to wish to swim against the stream in which you have thrown yourself in order to advance with it. What do you want? No one has wronged you—Ulrica least of all. The match seemed a very suitable and congenial one. Ulrica behaved very cleverly and well, under the circumstances, and deserved credit. That you may have found the relations rather uncomfortable in some respects—well, do you think that Siegfried submits to all his wife’s whims and peculiarities without a stifled sigh, or that I do not need to make allowances for circumstances? And wherefore this scandal? On account of that stupid person—”

Arnold objected to the designation.

“Oh! It is too silly,” cried Ewald. “It may happen, that one may admire a pretty servant-girl. But to lose all the advantages of the present and all good prospects for the future, for that reason—”

that is unpardonable folly. You must make haste to return to common-sense."

"You do not look at this in the same light as I do," the carpenter replied. "Altogether—you do not consider anything as I do. That is just it. We only grow further apart."

He repeated this sentiment in different variations, and Ewald drove away in an angry mood. Soon after Arnold received a note from the Majorin with an urgent invitation for a specified hour. Disagreeable as he thought it to comply, he accepted it and went. The bright little woman received him with great cordiality.

"Do not be afraid of me," she said to him. "I do not intend to allure you by magic spells, and make a blind slave of you. But I am curious, dreadfully curious. You know me well. You must tell me all about this; it is certainly a very romantic love-story, is it not?"

"Oh, not at all," he assured her. "Not as you mean to imply; it was not a love-story at all. That is, of course, it was so, on my part—yes, indeed. The girl pleased me from the first, and I liked her better every day; but nothing definite was said until this last time, and whether Frederica is willing or is not willing, that is yet to be decided."

"But you must have seen her again during the last few days?"

He sadly shook his head. "No, I do not know where she is; perhaps she went back to her home."

"And that is all?"

"Yes, that is all."

"Oh! my dear brother-in-law! Can you not forget such a simple little episode? Think no more of Frederica. You need not marry Ulrica, if you do not wish to, although—she seems very fond of you. But as I have said, it is not necessary. But as for the other affair—"

"What objection can there be if a carpenter—?"

"A carpenter! You know, dear Arnold, that I have your welfare at heart; do you doubt it for a moment? Now heed my advice; I warn you against taking such a step. If you were a rich and distinguished man, you might allow yourself to think of such folly. But in your circumstances—listen to my friendly warning; my father will not feel indifferent to the attitude you assume toward your relatives. And they are really not so situated as to countenance such folly as you think of committing. Promise me not to follow the girl; promise me to forget her."

She extended her small white hand to him, but he did not heed. "In this matter I can listen to no advice or admonition," he answered sullenly.

His sister-in-law was compelled to abandon her attempt to dissuade him, and dismissed him with some displeasure.

Soon after this interview, the Kommerzieurath appeared at the office, and undertook a much more careful revision of the books and cash-account than usu-

ally. He expressed his dissatisfaction, and spoke of limiting the credit. "I have been informed of strange proceedings," he said; "you are abusing the privileges I offered you. How can you act so senselessly? Do not forget that you are in my hands."

Arnold noticed that the storm was brewing from all sides, and rapidly approaching, but he could not determine to take shelter under the only roof which would afford him safety.

He neglected the business, and spent much of his time wandering about the streets, in the hope of accidentally meeting Frederica. He had inquired for the dwelling of her cousin, Mrs. Angerstein, and had gone there. From her he had ascertained that Frederica was still in the city, looking for another situation. The Geheimrätthin had refused to give her a good reference; therefore it might be a difficult matter for her to find a situation.

"Tell Frederica," he begged her, "that I wish to see her. Also that I have broken off with my relatives, and if she is satisfied, we can be married soon, and then she need not look for another place. Why is she so proud?"

To his great surprise and joy, Frederica called to see him a few days after this. He begged her to sit down on the sofa, but she declared that she was in a great hurry. "I only came to thank you for defending me to the gracious madam, and I hope you have had no trouble on my account."

"I would not mind that at all, if you are only not angry with me."

She laughed. "Yes, I was indeed provoked at you for some time. What scrapes you will get into! Now I hope you have become reasonable."

"Or you, Frida?"

"No, no, do not speak about such nonsense; it does not please me at all. But that you have broken off with Miss Ulrica; that is good. I know Miss Ulrica—it would not have ended well. Now you must look for a wife who is not so far above you, and who will bring you a nice dowry, so that you may own the business yourself."

Arnold looked very serious. "Oh, the business—" he sighed. "Do you know that I have lost my interest in that? Perhaps it may not be so profitable, after all."

"Do not let your head hang," she admonished. "And now, good-bye."

"Where are you now, Frida?"

"Oh! I have taken a place to tend an old gentleman who has an iron foundry and large machine factory, and who is said to be very wealthy. My cousin procured me the situation. Her husband has been working there for many years. The workmen say he is a good master. But he is unfortunately very ill."

"What is his name?"

"Nesselblatt."

"Oh, yes!—yes, I have heard that he is so much

respected by his employèes, and they are alarmed lest he may die soon. He worked his way up from a locksmith, and is said to have remained true to his principles. There has never been a strike among his people. So you are to tend him?"

"Yes, he needs a person on whom he can depend, to hand everything to him and roll his chair for him. He has never married, and he does not wish his distant relatives to come near him. I suppose he has good reasons for that. But now, farewell; I must go."

She shook Arnold's hand, and hurried away before he could say more to her. "At least I know where to find her," he consoled himself, "I suppose she will listen to me yet. What a clever girl she is!"

Late at night Fred Reichelt again put in his appearance. He could not get rid of that man; if he staid away a few days, he always reappeared quite unexpectedly and demanded a night's lodging. "I am safe here," he declared. But this time he was mistaken.

Very early the following morning, several policemen entered the yard. They guarded the door and watched the windows. No one could have succeeded in leaving the building without their knowledge. Soon after, Police-commissioner Liedemann came and rang the door-bell. Some minutes elapsed before Arnold opened a window and asked, "Who in the world is here? Where is Mrs. Haber?" He quickly drew back his head when he recognized the

Commissioner and the policemen. The window was closed. He shook Fred to rouse him from his sleep, and said, "They have come for you. Now you have really succeeded in bringing matters thus far."

Reichelt sprang to his feet. "I must have been betrayed," he cried; "hide me!"

"Nonsense! where can I hide you? They will surely search the whole building."

"We must try it—perhaps I may escape, after all." He threw his clothes under the sofa and then crept under it. "Say nothing."

The bell rang again.

"It is perfect nonsense," Arnold murmured, "but it is all the same in the end." He opened the door.

"I have waited in vain for a friendly visit from you," said the Commissioner. "To-day I am here in official capacity. But I will give you time even yet for consideration. Have you anything to disclose to me?"

"What should I—?"

"So you have nothing to tell me?" He looked at the carpenter with a scrutinizing glance.

"No."

"You had a visitor last night."

"I?"

"Yes or no?"

"I know nothing about it."

"Mr. Berken, it is very unwise of you to deny what we already know as a fact. You can even yet resolve upon giving us particulars—"

"Let me in peace, sir; I know nothing."

"Just as you like. I will therefore proceed to do my duty." He motioned a policeman to follow him, and entered. "You must permit us to search the premises."

"I cannot prevent you."

The Commissioner glanced about him in the office and then went into the sitting-room. "To whom does this cap belong?" he asked, raising it from the table.

"To me."

"To you? So! here are a pair of boots."

"That may be."

"Your boots?"

"Of course."

"I think, Mr. Berken, you are telling a lie. Is that your bedroom?"

"Yes, sir, just look under the bed."

H'm! that will not be necessary. But—you will kindly assist me in moving this sofa a little."

Arnold probably turned pale, for the Commissioner laughed triumphantly. "But I can also call in a policeman, in case you would not care to help." He clapped his hands.

"Never mind that," cried Reichelt, creeping from his hiding-place. "What do you demand from me?"

The Commissioner did not seem to be surprised in the least. "Dress and follow that policeman," he replied, very calmly. "You see, Mr. Berken—"

he shrugged his shoulders, "have you any prohibited writings in your possession?"

"I know of none," the carpenter replied in an angry tone. "If any one to whom I have repeatedly shown the door, pounces in on me so unexpectedly—"

"That is true," Reichelt assented, dressing himself very leisurely. "But what can you wish to do with me? I have done nothing wrong."

"For the present, we have succeeded in learning your lodging place. The rest will be disclosed at the examination. May I ask you for your keys, Mr. Berken? I sincerely regret—all your keys."

The search of different drawers resulted in the discovery of a large package of papers. Reichelt had brought his old friend various pamphlets almost daily, which Arnold thought advisable to keep under lock. "These do not belong to me," Arnold affirmed.

"That is a matter of indifference to us," answered the Commissioner, gathering his spoils, and preparing to leave. "Mr. Berken, you should not have refused my friendly overtures. Perhaps you have still something of importance to communicate. We are very generous sometimes."

"Dog!" Arnold muttered after him, gnashing his teeth.

The same evening, after the work was over, the leaders assembled in the workshop for a conference. It was the evening they had appointed for their

weekly meetings. The police must have received some intimation of it. Several policemen entered during a very warm debate and declared the meeting adjourned.

The following day several newspapers contained forcible articles about the matter, penned by the Police-Commissioner Liedemann. There was a warning also against "wolves in sheep's clothing." Such a one had recently endeavored to deceive the authorities by placing his name under the proclamation for the elections. The deception had been successful for a time, especially as distinguished relatives had also been duped by the game. But the watchful eye of the police—and so on.

With one of these newspapers in his hand, Mr. Von Kranich stepped into the office. "This is the beginning of the end, my dear friend," he said in a discontented tone. "You have prepared a pretty mess for us."

"I will bear the consequences," Arnold retorted, defiantly. "It is better thus than—"

"You will not find it so easy as you may imagine," the book-keeper interposed. "And as for me, I intend to escape from the danger I see near at hand."

"But you are not concerned in this affair."

"Yes, indeed, I am; your business is my business."

"What has the business to do with it?"

"Oh, you simpleton! Why did Mr. Hirschel so

kindly lend you his aid? Do you think it will give him pleasure to be accused of lending countenance to socialists? Your brothers have abandoned you; the police is on your track. That is enough, I should think!"

"I do not care."

"That is stupid talk. At all events, it is not indifferent to me to watch my approaching ruin; and I will be ruined, if you are. You have behaved shamefully toward me—your best friend."

"Well, well—!"

"Yes, it is the truth; I counted on successfully working with you a long number of years. All my arrangements were founded on that supposition. For this reason I abandoned opportunities which would have afforded me safety, and shouldered responsibilities which may prove very oppressive burdens. You will admit that you owe me some reparation."

"I—you?"

Mr. von Kranich laughed angrily. "Now provide for my safety in another manner. I must leave—for America. Indeed, you would do well to accompany me."

"You jest!"

"Why should I?" The book-keeper placed his hand on his arm and drew him toward him. "I will tell you something," he whispered, "and pay good attention to my words. You have signed notes—"

"Notes?"

"Don't you recollect?"

"As a favor—"

"Yes. We thought we would remain good friends, at that time. But if you rob me of the possibility of paying them—"

Arnold started. "What do you mean by that?"

"That we have both good reason to escape while there is yet time. But we would be fools to run away with empty pockets. How far could we get then? I will give you some good advice, but do not urge any stupid objections. To-day we still control this business—to-morrow probably not. Let us make use of this time. Write a draft on Mr. Hirschel's account—a good round sum of course, several thousand marks."

"You are insane!"

"He cannot refuse to meet it, for he has not withdrawn your credit. I will obtain money by it, and thus it is in the hands of a third party; it may be a long time until it reaches him, and then he must pay it. We will divide also what may happen to be in our cash-box, then we will immediately buy a railroad ticket and—"

"Villain!" cried the carpenter, and rushed upon him, seizing him by the throat.

Kranich tried to escape. "Stop this nonsense! do you hear—let me go!" But Arnold threw him against the wall, opened the door and flung him into the hall. "You will have to pay dearly for

this," the book-keeper threatened, but did not dare to return.

Arnold's wrath did not quickly subside. Had he sunk so low in the eyes of this man that he had deemed him capable of such treachery? It was indeed a theft. And what of those notes? And what was he to do now? He soon noticed how incapable he was of maintaining the business. He could not give necessary information to those who came to inquire about various orders and bills, nor did he know the means of disentangling the problems that arose in the business during the course of the day. He was just about to close the office when a strange gentleman appeared, who announced himself as the broker Pauli. He wore a pair of spectacles with blue glasses on his thick nose, and his greasy double chin shook at every movement of his head. His vest and trousers looked greasy also. He breathed quickly and was a little lame. His voice was of a falsetto quality. He sat down on a chair without waiting to be requested to do so, hung his hat on his cane, on which he supported both hands, and said, "Mr. Berken? Of course, Mr. Berken; Mr. Arnold Berken. I suppose I am right?"

"What can I do for you, sir?" asked Arnold. "My book-keeper is not here at present."

"I know, I know; Mr. von Kranich is not here at present. A very good friend of mine, Mr. von Kranich. I had the honor of knowing him when he was yet a lieutenant. A very agreeable, reliable,

worthy gentleman. I honor him for these qualities, and I may say, he esteems me also. Every one who learns to know me, esteems me. You do not know me. Oh! that is of no consequence. Broker Pauli, old Pauli, fat Pauli—hi, hi, hi! Every body comes to him at some time of his life, I will not say every body, but all those who wish to get on. I have very distinguished patronage."

Arnold grew impatient. "Do you wish to leave an order? We have a great deal of work on hand now—"

"Oh, no! What do you think? I do not spend my time building houses. Yes, loans of course—mortgages! Old Pauli—"

"What else can I do for you?"

"I only came to inquire, dear sir—only to inquire about a little matter. In order to be sure—that is, I have no doubts at all, but no one can be too cautious. Am I not right? Caution is better than consideration—hi, hi, hi! May I ask you to tell me whether—" he fumbled in the side-pocket of his coat and drew out a leather letter-case, opened it, laid several letters and papers one side, and finally produced a long thin strip of paper. "Will you be so kind, dear sir, as to tell me—but it is not urgent—there is plenty of time to settle it, but for the sake of precaution, is this your signature?"

He reached the paper to Arnold, but did not let him take it in his hand, as Arnold would have done to inspect it carefully.

"Arnold Berken—yes, I wrote that, but—" he glanced at the paper and noticed a large number at the top, which startled him. "But that number was not there—certainly not."

Mr. Pauli folded the paper and produced another.

"Of course you have also signed this," he said, "just the name, certainly—just the name. The rest does not concern you. But you have signed the name?"

"Yes, the name—" there was another sum of four numbers.

"I thank you," said Mr. Pauli, "that is all; I am quite satisfied now. There is yet another note—I do not doubt but that the signature is also yours. Mr. Von Kranich is a man of honor—oh!" He put a rubber band around the case, put it in his pocket and clapped his hand over it, to convince himself that it was safely stowed away.

Arnold saw the numbers dancing before his vision. "And these notes, sir?" he asked.

"I will produce when they are due. Till then they are in good hands—in very good hands. There is no hurry."

"And I am to pay them?"

"You or Mr. Von Kranich, or someone else—hi, hi, ha! that will be all right. You must consult about it together; it makes no difference whatever to me. Well, till we meet again, dear sir, and my best thanks."

He left, dragging his left foot behind him, and slowly walking toward the door. Arnold remained as if in a stupor. He pressed his hand against his forehead. "Oh, the rascal!" Suddenly he began to grasp the true state of affairs. "These notes—he has sold my signature. And I—no, that cannot be. What in the world shall I do?" He paced the floor. "Yes, he must know this."

He thought of Mr. Hirschel, his benefactor. He did not exactly know why he must be informed or how he might be benefited by it. But he felt that he owed it to this man to disclose Kranich's rascality to him. As though the danger were near at hand, he hastily took a cab and rode to Mr. Hirschel's office.

He was immediately received. The banker greeted him very coldly, and did not even ask him to be seated. "I was just about to come to you; you are acting very strangely, my dear sir."

Arnold told him that he had thrown Kranich out of doors.

"But why, why?"

"He is a rascal, sir." Now he narrated all he knew.

Mr. Hirschel listened without interrupting him. He merely shook his head a few times. But he did not express his dissatisfaction. "So the experiment was unsuccessful," he remarked, apparently quite calm. "Let us do to-day, what would have been done to-morrow, at any rate."

"You command—"

"Nothing. Go home. I will soon send you another young man; give the books to him. You may then await further developments."

He motioned toward the door. Arnold understood him, but hesitated yet a few moments before leaving. It seemed to him as if he had not found the correct expression to convey his meaning to Mr. Hirschel, and as if he must yet seek and find it.

"Do you wish anything else?" asked the banker.

Arnold considered in vain for a few seconds, which of the jostling mass of impressions he ought to seize and retain; he imagined that a wheel with many spikes was rapidly revolving before him; if he wished to grasp one of them, it was already out of reach. He gave it up, and turned to go.

Mr. Hirschel may have read some of this from his face. Or had he also the impression of owing this man some explanation? His natural good-nature struggled to overpower his business shrewdness. "What I wished to tell you yet—" he murmured. Berken remained standing near the door. But the business man had changed his mind. "It is not necessary. Just go; I will see to the rest."

And the further developments were soon apparent, and were after all, surprising to Arnold. The following forenoon a constable appeared and, according to the instructions of the Kommerzieurath Hirschel attached everything in his possession. The young man whom he had sent, was appointed

supervisor and manager. The deeds of trust in the banker's possession entitled him to take these measures. This had not been mentioned yesterday, to prevent the carpenter from taking advantage of the situation.

"Will you wait for further measures of the law," the constable asked, "or will you go voluntarily? I would advise you—"

"I will leave at once," Arnold quickly interposed.

"That is sensible. You may take your personal belongings and as much money as you require for the next few days. I do not wish to be severe, in your case."

"No, no, I need nothing." He looked around once more in his comfortable rooms. His eyes grew moist; it seemed as if he were gazing at everything through a veil. Was not Frederica sitting on yonder sofa? No, no, it was only imagination.

He went to the work-shop to take leave of the workmen. "I am turned out of doors, but you will receive your wages."

They glanced at him suspiciously. The occurrences of the last few days had aroused their suspicion that someone had played a false game. That was always their first idea when the police unexpectedly interfered. They suspected Berken of acting as an informer against them. Who could tell what secret intrigues were now being planned? It was incredible to them that he was so summarily discarded.

‘It will not be quite so bad,’ they remarked.
He shrugged his shoulders and hastened
away.

XIII

So he was now turned out of doors. In his pocket-book he found yet a little change, which would only be sufficient to maintain him for a few days. He was, however, not in the humor to exert his mental faculties in devising how he should live, or where he might find employment. On the contrary, everything became indifferent to him. The next day he began to drink heavily. To forget, to know nothing of himself, seemed the only bearable condition.

Ed. Blank, who met him on the street, procured for him a bed in his lodging house. Here he slept in a small garret room together with two or three other men. This room had not even the means of ventilation. When his money was gone he pawned his watch, later on the chain, and finally also his ring. He did not like to part from that ring; as long as he wore it, he felt still a little pride; now he thought everybody would notice that he had been compelled to pawn it. Nothing was left of all the glory! He thought it folly to regret it. Was it not his own doing? If he had been submissive—Bah! If some one had given him work now, he would have been industrious enough, but

he had no inclination to make the effort of looking for it himself. For whom should he exert himself?

He met his brother Ewald. The Major had surely seen him, but looked in the opposite direction when he passed him. "Of course! They do not recognize me any more."

One day he received summons to appear in court. The broker Pauli had sued Kranich as soon as he had learned of the disappearance of that gentleman and the failure of the factory. He declared that Kranich had shamefully deceived him by keeping him in ignorance about the character of his bondsman. Despatches had been sent in all directions, and the fugitive was arrested at the harbor of Bremen, from whence he had intended to sail, and was transported back home. The Kommerzienrath had also brought in his accusations against Kranich, but had spared Berken as much as possible. He was under suspicion, however, of having a hand in swindling Pauli, as he had signed the notes. He was carefully examined and gave very unsatisfactory answers. The Judge was much provoked at him. "You seem to have the intention of concealing the true facts," he said; "I must keep you under arrest; perhaps you will then be able to remember all the details which seem to have escaped your memory. I am very sorry on account of your relatives, but you wish it so."

Arnold Berken was taken to jail. He remained there for several weeks. At first it was quite in-

different to him. His faculties were so benumbed that he spent most of his day in sleeping, and had not even the desire for occupation. He did not understand what they wanted from him, and did not cogitate about it. He had the general indistinct perception of being at fault somehow, and suffering the penalty for it.

He was frequently examined, and also confronted with Kranich and Pauli. He was always calm at the trials: "They cannot say anything else; that is all I know." Kranich acted quite decently toward him, accused him of nothing, and remarked only that the temptation to profit by his weakness had been too great. "He was not in his right place," he repeated. "I would have paid Mr. Pauli, had I been given sufficient time to carry out my plans; I could not suppose that Mr. Berken would heedlessly saw off the branch on which he had been so well placed. He must have committed follies of which we are ignorant". It was ascertained, however, that Berken had not received a penny of the ill-gotten money, the loss of which Pauli so indignantly deplored.

Gradually the inactive prison-life became very irksome to Berken; the need of rest disappeared; he could not sleep. What terrible long nights he spent on the hard couch! He had no more comforts than the other prisoners. As everything had been taken from him, he had no means wherewith to supply himself with special comforts, and his brothers

did not help him. He had grown accustomed to nourishing, palatable food. The prison-fare on which he was now to subsist became daily more distasteful to him. He could not swallow the hard, stale bread; and the grease with which the soup was prepared nauseated him. He would rather go hungry than partake of it. A drink of liquor was not to be had, and his only refreshment consisted in a little tobacco which the overseer sometimes offered him. He asked for work, in order that he might earn some money for his wants, but as he was only retained as a witness, the request was denied.

Arnold became ill, very ill. The physician visited him in his cell and ascertained that he was in a critical condition. "Why did you not call me sooner," he asked. Arnold had waited until the overseer had acted in his behalf. He had no will-power left. Everything was indifferent to him.

Nothing had been proved against him; it seemed useless to detain him longer. He was sent to the City Hospital temporarily. He had expressed a wish that his relatives should not be informed of his illness.

In the hospital he was treated only as a man of the lowest classes; but he soon felt the good effects of the medicine which was given him. In a few days he learned that some money had been paid to procure for him better food and some wine. He wanted to know to whom he was indebted for this kindness, but could not obtain much information.

A girl or a woman had brought the money, he was told. For a moment he thought of Ulrica, but then they would have designated her as a lady. Perhaps she had commissioned some one. Did she wish to show herself so generous? It oppressed him to feel that he was under obligation to her. How strange that he should so frequently think of her. Perhaps it was his guilty conscience—and who else would care for him—surely not his relatives.

One afternoon, upon opening his eyes after an hour's rest, he beheld at his bedside such a strange apparition that he imagined he must be dreaming. "Frederica!" he cried, raising his head.

"Well," she asked, smiling, "are you awake at last? I intended to go away already."

"And is it really you?" he said. "You! Let me take your hand, that I may be sure—"

She extended her hand to him. "Dear me, why should you doubt it?"

"Yes, why should I? It is your hand and your kind, friendly eyes!"

"Do you know, Mr. Berken, that you have changed very much? You look miserable. But it is not to be wondered at."

"But how did you know I was here?"

"I knew that you were in jail; I wanted to see you there, but they would not admit me, as I was not a relative of yours."

"You did not shrink, Frida, from coming to the jail?"

"Dear me! You could not be guilty of a crime—I knew that. And probably you were entirely innocent, and brought there by the wickedness of others! How they have treated you! Angerstein told me all about it; and a few days ago he brought the news from one of the workmen just dismissed from the hospital, that you were here and were very sick. Then I began to inquire—"

"You, Frida?"

"But that was only natural. Should I have forsaken you in your helpless condition, as others have done?"

"And you also brought that money?"

"Of course. You were used to good living, and especially needed it in your illness. Do not make such a comical face or you will make me laugh, and I really feel like crying when I look at you. How thin you have grown, and how pinched your features look!"

"But you have not much money to spare."

"The poor must help each other. And I have saved some money. Now you must try to get well soon, for I could not afford it much longer—but how stupid of me to say that! But you will understand me."

He passed his hand over his eyes. "Yes," he said, "I understand you. But you were right after all when you refused me once. It is evident now that my house was built on sand."

Frederica looked down. "That may be so, Mr.

Berken. Your house has tumbled, but it was never very firm. But what will you do now?"

"I have not thought about it yet. It was not worth my while to consider it until to-day. I once saw a man who had fallen from a scaffolding. He was still alive, and had not broken his arms or limbs; but he could not get up; something was broken internally. And when they wanted to assist him, he always repeated: 'Let me alone, let me alone; I do not want to get up—it is not worth while!' Now I can understand that poor man's feelings."

"You look at everything in a gloomy light, Mr. Berken."

"Perhaps I do." He held out his hand to her. "How happy I am that you came to see me, Frida! I would not have dared to visit you, of my own accord. No indeed!—a man who has been in jail!"

"That is the least," she replied, "but how you conducted yourself before that, after your factory was taken from you. I know it all, and think it was disgraceful."

He shuddered. Frederica noticed it and interrupted herself. "You seem to be sorry for it now," she continued, more cheerfully. "But you must not lead such a life again, or I will never have anything to do with you again."

"You must forgive me, Frida," he said. "When I am strong again, I will work, and will repay you

all the money I have cost you, and may yet cost you. I will not accept any gifts."

"You are too proud! You will not accept a present from a poor servant girl?"

"No, Frida, it is not that! You misunderstand me. I am so low now that I must work very hard to become worthy of you. I am afraid that I may have to go back to jail," he added, sadly.

"Are you really guilty of anything?" she asked.

"Only that I have been very foolish. I know of nothing else."

Frederica rose. "You must patiently endure everything now, Mr. Berken. But—after that, Mr. Berken, you must begin a new life, and never act disgracefully again. Will you promise me that?"

"Yes, I promise it," he cried, "and I will try my utmost to keep it."

She bade him good-bye. He asked her to come again to look after him. "No physician can help me," he said. She would perhaps call again, she answered, but could not be detained so long, hereafter.

Frederica came again. She found him much improved after one week, and two weeks later he was sitting up. He was quite cheerful, and anticipated with pleasure the busy life he would lead after being dismissed from the hospital. "I wonder if Mr. Nesselblatt would engage me?" he inquired of her.

"Yes, in what capacity?" she asked.

"As modeler. I would like that best."

"Will you work like a common workman?"

"Certainly! How I should like to begin! I am skilled in my trade, and I hear that Mr. Nesselblatt pays the highest wages."

"Yes, he does, if you are orderly and sober."

"Frida!"

"And if you quietly do your work, and do not listen to the useless people, who are misleading the workmen and wish to upset everything. Mr. Nesselblatt has a poor opinion of them."

"I cannot think hard of him. I have formerly howled with these wolves, but I would rather be in different company; you may believe that. I have had experience enough!"

She promised to find out from Angerstein about a place in the factory.

Arnold was glad to be informed by the physician that he was well enough to be dismissed at the end of that week. He rejoiced still more when he learned that he need not to return to jail. He was only to leave information of his whereabouts at the police office, in case he should be wanted again.

The following Saturday, when he reported at the police head-quarters, he was asked by Police-Commissioner Liedemann to follow him into the adjoining private office, as he wanted to see him alone.

"What are your intentions for the future?" asked the official, adjusting his eye-glasses.

"I was told that I was free," answered Berken, who was much frightened. "Was it a mistake?"

"No; the investigation has not proved enough to make out a case against you. Besides, the State's Attorney wants to be as lenient to you as possible, out of consideration for your family. For the same reason the police will not proceed against you for your intrigues with Reichelt." He made a grimace while stating this. "In short, you are free; and only the question remains what advantage you will take of the unexpected and favorable turn your destiny has taken."

Arnold took a long breath. "In that case I am at liberty to follow my own plans, and I beg to be dismissed."

"Please permit me to give you a friendly hint," said the official. "I should think it would be intolerable for you to contemplate remaining in this city."

"How am I to understand that?"

"Just as I have expressed it. Besides, you have no means of subsistence."

"I will work."

"Very well, but not here. You have played a very conspicuous part, forfeited the confidence of your new friends as well as your old, ruined yourself financially, compromised your relatives. Were I in your place, I would not wish to be seen in the streets. It would be to your interest to go from here to the railroad depot, and take the first train

you can catch. I am willing to supply you with the necessary money."

"Do not trouble yourself, sir," replied the carpenter, "I do not intend leaving. You do not know—but that is no one's business. I have my own reasons for wishing to remain here."

The police-commissioner looked at him very sternly. "Let me tell you, my dear friend, the police has a thousand ways to make you very uncomfortable here."

"If they want to annoy me—"

"Not at all. The police annoys no one, but it is our duty to watch all elements that might become dangerous to the state and society; unfortunately this cannot be done without a certain discomfort to that class of people. It would be better for you to prevent it."

"Your implication can not be applied to me. I want to try honest work. The police cannot interfere with me at my work-table."

A bitter-sweet smile played about the commissioner's lips. "So, so—h'm!—these are praiseworthy resolutions. You don't want to evacuate?—you don't want to?"

"No, honored sir, I don't want to go. It is now a point of honor for me to find work here in this city, and to show what I can do."

"Well, well, that is very nice, my dear sir," stutted the Rath, "very nice, but I must now candidly

tell you what has induced me to talk to you about this matter. Your brothers wished it."

"I thought so!"

"Yes, it is but natural. You have been a source of great vexation to them. The newspapers, always on the lookout for spicy gossip, have dicussed these affairs; they have modified or exaggerated them according to the views of the political parties. Your brothers have the plausible desire to remain unmolested in the future; and as you know, there is also a lady who would not wish to meet you on the street. If I thus tell you that I speak to you at the request of these parties, would you not consider my advice of greater value?"

Arnold looked gloomily to the ground. He had put the thumb of his right hand in his vest pocket, and was impatiently moving the tip of his foot. "My brothers—" he murmured, "and the Fräulein—they would like it best if I were dead. And my sister-in-law, the Geheimrätthin—she would gladly poison me."

"Do not talk so foolishly."

"And so I shall go—disappear—and if I were to die on the road, it would not matter to them, if only the newspapers did not mention it. And so they want to send me off with a kick!—Oh!"

Now the commissioner resolved to play his last trump. "You are much mistaken," he said, glancing at him over the rims of his eyeglasses. "Your brothers do not wish to desert you; they will not

send you away so helpless and destitute. On the contrary, so that you may be safe from temptation and able to begin a new life in a foreign country, they will make you a present of a few hundred marks. What do you think of such generosity?"

"That I—!" exclaimed Arnold angrily, but controlled himself immediately. "Thanks; I will not take anything from them—I have already accepted too much. I will never trouble them again; but they shall leave me alone. Let them think that their brother is dead. Anybody who is not at all related to them may have the name, 'Berken.' I am dead to them."

"What? You will obstinately insist—"

"To remain here," said Arnold. "Now I am more resolved than ever. My brothers may keep their money, or rather Mr. Hirschel shall keep his money—for they will be sure to draw on him. I am not so base that my relatives must send me far away from this country. I will prove that I have still some sense of honor. Not to them—that is of no consequence—but to myself and to one other person. Now I am determined."

The police-commissioner rubbed his hands so that the joints cracked audibly. It was evidently very disagreeable to him to see himself defeated. He glanced repeatedly over his spectacles at Arnold to assure himself whether it would be of any avail to renew his attacks. "And if a few hundred

marks could be increased to a few thousands?" he asked in a low voice.

"I will stay here," replied Berken with decision.

"Very well!" The commissioner waved his hand to indicate that he had no more to say, at the same time drawing himself up to his full height. "You act very foolishly, but I cannot compel you to accept your good fortune. You are dismissed."

Arnold hastened out of the office into the street.

At some distance from the hospital, he stood still and took a long breath. Now he felt that he was free.

XIV.

He walked through the park and took a seat on a bench in the most secluded part. He was quite alone, and could now calmly reflect on his plans for the future. He would not return to the lodging house; but he had no means to stop, even temporarily, in a cheap hotel. He did not need to open his portemonnaie to convince himself that it was empty. He fumbled about in all his pockets in search of some article of value that could be sold or pawned. It was in vain; and it was even doubtful whether Mr. Nesselblatt would employ him. What was he to do, then?

"Yes, it must be done!" he cried, after some reflection. "If she is able, she will do it." He was thinking of Frederica—rose immediately and went in the direction toward Nesselblatt's foundry, the high chimney of which soon became visible.

The proprietor lived in a one-story house on the same street, close to the factory buildings. It was one of the smallest of the buildings which inclosed the large yard, full of materials of all kinds. The noise of the machinery and hammers could be heard on the street. Through the railings a number of workmen could be seen constructing an iron bridge.

Volumes of smoke ascended from the great coal fires. Every stroke of the hammer on the heavy iron rails resounded loudly, and the noise was almost deafening.

The street-door was at the side of the house. The porter asked Berken what he wanted, and added, "If you want to go to the office, go to the other door, so that you may not disturb the sick gentleman."

Berken told him that he wished to see the servant-girl Frederica, and was told to ring the bell at his right.

He was admitted by an elderly woman. "Is Frederica at home?" he inquired.

"Certainly, she is always with the sick gentleman."

"I would like to speak to her," he said.

She mustered him with a scrutinizing glance. "You must be the person she visited in the hospital."

"How do you know?"

"You look pale, like one who was not out in the sunlight for a long time. Well, wait!" She opened a door and called: "Frederica! are you in there?"

"What is it?" was the reply.

"A gentleman wants to speak to you."

"Who is he?"

She turned to Arnold. "What is your name?"

"Berken—Arnold Berken."

"Arnold Berken," she called.

"Take him to my room; I will come immediately."

Her room was next to the kitchen, and had one window hung with nice white curtains. On a bracket he noticed some of the little figures he had carved for the amusement of his brother's children. The children had probably thrown them away. It pleased him to see them here.

After a few minutes Frederica entered. She went up to him, extending her hand, "I am glad that you are well again and dismissed from the hospital," she said. "I expected that you would come to see me."

"Of course, I came to you immediately," he assured her; "you are the only person who is interested in me."

"Sit down!" she urged him, brushing her apron over the chair, as if afraid that it might be dusty. "The kitchen-smoke penetrates here, and one must always be dusting. The curtains look quite black again."

"Listen, Frida," he said, without taking a seat, "I don't want to detain you long from your work. And I should also like to begin some occupation."

"That is well;" she said; "will you start working to-morrow?"

"I would like to, but I have not yet found a place." Now he related to her what the police-commissioner had advised him, and how he had declined the offer.

Frederica had become thoughtful. She was leaning against the bureau and smoothing out the folds

of her apron with her fingers. "Perhaps you have not acted wisely," she said deliberately.

"Oh!" he cried, "how could I go and leave you, Frida?"

She blushed and smiled in an embarrassed manner. "That would have to be considered, and all in all, you were right not to be persuaded to it. You can make an honest living in your own native country."

"Yes, and I have experienced how it is away from home. I don't care much for their money—and yet to be without a penny—" it cost him a great effort to continue: "I will be quite candid with you, Frida; you have done so much for me already, and it is impertinent to ask you for more."

"Don't talk so!"

"It is the truth. But what can I do? I wish to begin a new life, but I do not look decent in these clothes; they are not suitable for a workman, and so worn-out, especially the boots. I make the appearance of one who has seen better days, but has come down very much. I need a strong suit of clothes, some linen and shoes. I must pay in advance, if I want to board at a respectable place. If I had some money I would surely pay it back as soon as I have work, and that will not take long. But who will give me a loan?—and then I thought I would come to you."

Her face brightened. "Shall I give you the money? "

"Only as a loan, of course. I owe you some money already. And it is not indifferent to you what becomes of me; so if you have the money—but perhaps you have none?"

"Yes, I have plenty!" cried Frederica. "It was very good of you to come to me, and to be so sincere. Now I see that you are on the right road, for, to pay me you will surely work; I know it. I would have offered you the money, but I am all the more pleased at your asking me for it. Wait a minute; I will get it."

She ran away quickly. Arnold was astonished. He had not expected that she would so willingly give him her savings, and now she even pretended that he had done her a favor to ask her for it! Pretended! no, it came from her heart; and his heart became gladdened. "She would not do that for anyone else," he thought.

Quite a while elapsed before she returned. Her cheeks were very red, and in her hand was a little book with a blue cover. "Here is my book from the savings bank," she said, seriously. "You may draw as much as you need, or the entire amount. The book has been in Mr. Nesselblatt's keeping."

"Has he dissuaded you from giving it up?" Arnold asked.

"Yes, but with the best intention, and with very good reasons. But he is not in the right, and I know what I am doing; and if it should be lost—I will not grieve about it."

She gave him the book. "It shall not be lost!" he cried, "and you shall have nothing to regret; and I know now what we are to each other!"

"You can inquire of my cousin," she said, as if she had not heard his last remark, "if she has any room for you. She does not care to take boarders, but she may make an exception in your case. Tell her I send her my regards, and will call to see her next Sunday for an hour, if Mr. Nesselblatt does not need me."

He thanked her, put the book in his pocket and intended to go. "But I forgot," she said, at the door, "Mr. Nesselblatt wants to see you."

"Mr. Nesselblatt?"

"Yes, I have told him that you are looking for work. Go in and speak to him sensibly, so that you may gain his confidence; he knows the most important facts about you already."

She accompanied him through the hall, opened a door and announced: "Here is the carpenter, Berken."

In the second room, on an invalid's chair, sat an old gentleman with gray hair and beard, before a large table, covered with books and drawings with which he seemed to be occupied. His wrinkled face was as yellow as wax, his back was bent, his chest sunken, but his eyes were yet lively and bright. A thick cover was spread over his limbs and feet. He coughed feebly, and now and then, with trembling hand, held a handkerchief over his mouth. He

beckoned Arnold to approach, and looked at him searchingly. "So you are—" he said in a weak voice. "I have heard that you would like to be employed by me as a modeler."

Arnold bowed. "If I could get work, Mr. Nesselblatt—"

"That depends." Then after a few seconds, having scrutinized him a while longer, "Do you really want to work?"

"Certainly, Mr. Nesselblatt."

"I mean, will you work as a laborer?"

Arnold considered. "There is no other way of working."

"No. If a man wants to make an honest living and is dependent on it. Candidly speaking, you look—"

Frederica had stepped behind Mr. Nesselblatt and smoothed out the cushion on which he was reclining.

"You look as if you considered yourself too good for a laborer."

"That is the fault of my clothes; they have not the correct cut for a workman."

"It is not only that, your entire appearance—quite natural! You are of good family."

"That is not my fault, Mr. Nesselblatt."

"No, you cannot help that, but it is no advantage for you."

"I have experienced that."

The old gentleman nodded. He himself, the rich

manufacturer, had the appearance of a born laborer, big bones, strong features, a rough skin, also the large hands with the bony stump fingers which, although they had been so long spared, plainly indicated that he had performed the hardest work. "So you are willing to work?" he said.

"Yes, Mr. Nesselblatt, it is my honest intention."

"And you are competent in your work?"

"Yes, sir; I ask you to give me an examination."

"Very well." He took a paper from the table and handed it to Arnold. "Could you make the forms for this casting? The measurements are described."

Arnold examined the drawing. "Yes, I could undertake it," he answered, "but the form for this piece must be made in two parts; otherwise it could not be removed."

Nesselblatt nodded again. "Quite right—the designer has overlooked that. Well, I will give you a trial." He smiled. "Frederica has recommended you, and as she is an honest girl, in whom I can place confidence—"

Frederica raised her eyes. "But, Mr. Nesselblatt, not only on that account?"

"Yes, at present only on that account. I will see what kind of a workman Mr. Berken is. If he is not satisfactory, your good opinion will not help him." He looked at Arnold seriously. "Yet one word! Remember it well! I will have nothing to do with the so-called socialists. A few enlightened

minds and idealists have propounded a new theory which can find no application in real life. For those who fully understand this theory it may not be dangerous, but the masses who are to accept it, do not understand it, fight for a phantom, suffer for an inadjustable contest of opinions and interests, without reaching the promised goal; and thus they deprive themselves of the small share of happiness which generally falls to the lot of people with modest requirements. I will not deny that the working classes have a right to organize themselves in order to improve their condition, and to exert a certain pressure on heartless capitalists who will yield to nothing but might and power. But where the workmen find fair consideration, they should not abuse their power and endeavor to force unreasonable demands by strikes, thus destroying the value of capital, which is after all indispensable to them. I have voluntarily accepted some of these new ideas, which are really very old ideas, and adopted those which are practical and can be carried out. Whatever goes beyond these I deem impractical and unattainable, and I consider any one who wishes to promulgate them an enemy of the working class and their sympathizers. I have been a workman myself, and will not admit that I have ever ceased to be one. Thus I recognize the needs of the class, but I also know the limits of the attainable. My employes receive wages according to the times—they are sometimes increased,

sometimes decreased. They also receive a share of the profits; but that is added to the capital until enough is accumulated to cover any possible loss. Whoever leaves before that time loses his share, and it falls to those who have remained in faithful performance of their duty. The funds for the support of our disabled workmen or for their widows and orphans are managed by representatives elected by the employes themselves. Every quarrel is adjusted by judges chosen by each party, and I submit unconditionally to their decision. We give confidence for confidence. Whoever tells my people that this is not sufficient, and they must insist on further demands, cannot be allowed a place in my factory. Such a man may try to find the happy isle—somewhere on the moon, and look for luck there. Now you know my ideas on that subject. I do not ask you to give me any promise, but I will keep my word."

"You will have no cause for dissatisfaction, Mr. Nesselblatt," Berken fervently assured him. "Any one would have to be entirely bereft of his senses, to forget the obligations he owed to such a master."

"Well, well," the old gentleman replied, "tomorrow you may go to work."

Frederica motioned to Arnold to take his leave. He understood her gesture, nodded to her cheerfully, and went backwards toward the door, not so much to show his respect for the old gentleman, but to look at the girl as long as he could.

He went to Mrs. Angerstein at once, delivered Frederica's message, at the same time showing her the bank-book to prove his statements, and informed her of his wishes. She would have to consult with her husband, she said, before she could tell him definitely whether she could take him as a lodger. But for the present he might remain with them. She accompanied him to the savings bank, and then to a clothing store where her husband traded. The following morning, when both men started to the factory, Arnold looked like a workman again. Angerstein had agreed to his wife's proposition that Arnold might board with them temporarily. Angerstein was a very respectable man, did not drink, and always handed his week's wages to his wife, who managed to defray the household expenses with it, also to send their two children to school neatly dressed, and to lay by something for the savings bank besides.

The two men soon became good friends. Arnold worked very industriously, in the carpenter shop of the factory, filled Mr. Nesselblatt's first order very satisfactorily, and received gradually more and more intricate pieces of work, for which he was well paid. Thus he always brought a neat little sum home with him every Saturday night. After paying Mrs. Angerstein for his board, he always requested her to take the remainder and add it to the bank-book, with which he had also intrusted her.

For months he did not permit himself to spend an unnecessary penny, and directed all his energies toward paying the debt he owed Frederica. He had inquired and been informed, at the hospital office, how much Frederica had expended for him. This amount, and also the sum he had taken from the savings bank, would have to be repaid with ample interest, before he could think of himself. But what joy when the entire sum had been accumulated! He had it entered in the book, and could then scarcely await the following Sunday, when he would meet Frederica at her cousin's, and return it to her. She had so strictly prohibited him from visiting her at Mr. Nesselblatt's residence, that he had not the courage to disobey her, even in such an extraordinary case.

Frederica usually came to see her cousin on Sunday, but only remained a few hours. She did not wish to leave the old gentleman, who had grown very dependent on her, for any length of time, even though he himself did not limit her holiday. These Sunday afternoons were always spent in the same manner. Mrs. Angerstein had the sitting-room in the neatest order, and always placed a better cover on the table. The children played very quietly in a corner, and were not allowed to go out on the street, lest they might bring muddy shoes into the house. Angerstein smoked his pipe, and read the newspapers of the preceding week; sometimes also an old book of sermons which he had

inherited from his mother. After dinner, which was served in the kitchen, Mrs. Angerstein went to the glass cupboard and took out some cups with gilt inscriptions and portraits of various celebrated personages, also some silver tea-spoons, which were the pride of her heart, and then rinsed out the white coffee-pot once more. She also had a cake-dish of curious design, a dainty cream-pitcher with gold band, a sugar-bowl of cut glass, and a lacquered waiter covered with strange flowers and birds. All these things were placed on the table in the sitting-room. The cake-dish was heaped with rolls, and in the center of the table was placed a large coffee-cake, the circumference of which might have led one to judge that a large number of guests were expected. But Frederica was the only one to appear, and she never omitted bringing some gift for the children or some trifle for the household, in return for her cousin's hospitality. Mrs. Angerstein received these gifts with evident pleasure, but always hastened to assure her that "it was not at all necessary."

Now the men entered, and were allowed to sit down to the table. The housewife busied herself a little while in the kitchen, and soon a pleasant odor of coffee filled the room. Then a good deal of coffee was partaken of, and many rolls were eaten, but a piece of coffee-cake was always left—that merely showed good breeding. Then the men were permitted to smoke a cigar, which was not lit, however, before Angerstein's remark—"If you

do not dislike it, Frida," was responded to by Frida, "on the contrary, I like the smell of tobacco." Frederica was always well-dressed, and the others also wore their Sunday-clothes. The conversation was not very lively, but gradually all the little experiences of the preceding week were discussed—for the most part incidents arising at home or at the factory. A humorous tale was received with applause, and was greeted with laughter, even at the tenth repetition.

If the weather was fine they would all set out for a walk. When they had arrived at Mr. Nesselblatt's residence, Frederica expressed her gratitude for the friendly reception by the assurance that "it had been very pleasant," and Mrs. Angerstein often replied with the jocular hint that in future they would exchange visits. Frederica did not contradict the remark, but sometimes merely responded, "Oh! that may not be for a long time!"

They seemed to take it for granted that Arnold Berken and Frederica were intended for each other, and would eventually marry. But they also seemed to recognize that the marriage was likely to be postponed for some time, and that it was best not to speak about the matter seriously.

Of course Arnold always sat next to the young girl at the table, and was at her side in their walks; but they never indulged in courting or tender confidences, not even when Arnold escorted Frederica home in the evenings. Their intercourse was in-

deed thoroughly conventional. This was in accordance with the views of the Angersteins, to which Arnold willingly submitted, as he knew that they had his interest at heart, and that he had to endeavor to win their full confidence.

At length the Sunday arrived which was to put Frederica in possession of her bank-book again. Arnold had asked Mrs. Angerstein to present it to her, as he was too bashful; thus it was handed to Frederica in his presence in a business-like manner.

"There is your bank-book. Mr. Berken has paid off all he owed, with interest. Now it is all right."

Frederica desired to assure him that she had not been at all anxious about it. "Dear me!" she exclaimed, "there was no hurry about that. It was in good hands." At these words she did not glance at her cousin, but at Arnold, who was standing at her side.

"But now it is in still better hands, Frida," he said, "and I am glad to get rid of it. I think you will understand my meaning?"

"But it did not take you long to pay me," she said approvingly. "I had not expected it yet. You must be earning good wages now."

"Yes, I work by the piece, and Mr. Nesselblatt pays the work accordingly. That is a good plan."

Now the conversation turned at once to Mr. Nesselblatt—how busy he was, and what an interest he displayed in spite of his illness; how he had himself pushed in his invalid's chair from one work-

room to the other, inspecting and supervising everything. It was only to be hoped that he would live a long time yet, for such a master could not be easily found.

This topic also must have been frequently discussed, but it was still a fertile one. Frederica seemed desirous of showing Arnold to-day, that she was well pleased with him. She often gave him an affectionate glance, which he thought implied a good deal. She was probably occupied with pleasant thoughts, for a smile often flitted across her pretty face, her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes shone with a happy light.

The sky had been cloudy when Frederica came. Soon after it commenced to rain, and it was still raining when she prepared to leave. Arnold of course begged to see her home. Her cousin lent her an old shawl to cover her dress, and Frederica tied a handkerchief over her hat. She could take a cab, she declared, but nevertheless continued her preparations. Her bank-book she carefully wrapped in a newspaper. "It would not do for that to get wet," she jested:

As they stepped out, the rain descended in torrents. "Perhaps we had better ride," said Arnold.

"I could do that without an escort," she answered, mischievously. "But never mind, the rain will soon cease. Why should such an expense be incurred?"

He held the umbrella over her with outstretched

arm in order to shield her as much as possible. "But you will be quite drenched," she remarked, after a while. "Yes, that cannot be helped," he assured her. "If two persons wish to get along with one umbrella they must—" he looked at her inquiringly, as if to ascertain whether he might venture further. "Then they must walk arm in arm—" he bent his arm with which he was holding the umbrella and stepped up close to her. "What do you think, Frida?"

She considered for a moment and then accepted his arm. "It is really raining very hard," she said, "and your hat might be spoiled."

He drew her close to him, and pressed her in such a firm grasp as if he never wished to release her again. He was in a very happy frame of mind, for Frederica had never before smiled on him so kindly. He was so occupied with thinking about this that for a few moments he forgot to say anything. In her left hand which rested on his arm, Frederica held her bank-book. "Shall I carry it for you?" he asked at length.

"What?"

"The book."

"Oh, it is very light; a great deal may yet be entered in it and it will be no heavier for it. Do you know, Mr. Berken, you must get yourself such a book, too."

"Yes, I will do so."

"You very quickly paid your debt; now you must begin to save money for yourself."

"For myself? What shall I do with the money?"

"Well! You do not want to squander it again, do you?"

"No, Frida, you may be sure of that."

"Who knows!"

"Truly, Frida, but do you not think that I could make still better use of the money I earn?"

"Still better? What do you mean?"

"Don't you see? H'm! Why—Angerstein does not earn as much as I do, and supports a whole family."

"Yes, his wife is very saving, though."

"I might have such a saving wife also. Don't you think so? We must talk seriously about this once. This is a good opportunity, for several reasons. You will not refuse me this time, Frida?"

"No, as everything happened—"

"That is just it. Now I am at the right place, and I intend to remain there. I was meant for a workman, and that is what I have become. And I do not wish to rise above that station, after having seen what any one in my position must do in order to gain success. But a workman needs a real helpmate for a wife, and you need not grieve about my jumping off the coach for your sake and placing myself on my own feet. One of our class feels very uncomfortable in such a coach, and there are so many stones in the road! It is fortunate for me

that I met you at the right time, Frida, and therefore I only ask you—when shall the wedding be?”

“Oh! that cannot be as soon as you seem to think. In the first place you are not secure enough of your place, and then—I am in service, and must remain there a while longer.”

“Mr. Nesselblatt will release you. If a girl wishes to get married—”

“But I do not wish to leave him, for he is such a good man and has been kind to you at my request. Till now you have worked so industriously in order to pay the debt you owed me; now that incentive is gone, and it may be that you will grow lax again and—”

“No indeed, Frida, no indeed!”

“I would willingly believe it, but Mr. Nesselblatt must know how well and how faithfully you can perform your work, and he must not think me frivolous either. Recently I consented to make a contract with him for a year’s service, and I would not break it. If this seems too long a time for you to wait for me, you may do as you like.”

She could not be prevailed upon to alter her decision. During the year they might both lay by a nice little sum, she thought, and thus afford to furnish a home pleasantly. “We ought to have as nice a place as you had next to your carpenter-shop. You were well pleased with it, and I also. Only we

must own it by our honest efforts; your relatives shall have no cause to be ashamed of us."

They had reached the house. The rain had ceased, but they were still walking arm-in-arm under the umbrella. Arnold bent his head to one side and whispered, "I will do everything you wish, Frida—but I ought to have a kiss at least, as a reward."

"What notions you have!" she reprimanded him.

"Well—as we have agreed—" she turned her face toward him. "But a hearty kiss!"

He did not require further encouragement.

XV.

During this year the relation of these two people was but little altered. Frida had very strict ideas of propriety, and though she liked Arnold very much, took great pains to conceal the fact. She was indeed more frightened than pleased when he would sometimes passionately declare his love for her. She deemed such demonstration "superficial," "not lasting" and "altogether superfluous." He accepted her decision good-naturedly. "Well, just wait until we get married!" he would exclaim.

They met just as formerly at her cousin's house on Sundays, when Frederica had a few leisure hours, and occasionally they took a stroll, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Angerstein. At their greeting and adieu they kissed each other, and he sometimes pressed her hand at table. She was always in a cheerful mood, and succeeded in keeping him in good humor also.

Arnold, in the meantime, was working with great industry. He was more experienced and capable than his associates in the carpenter-shop, and more persevering in conquering difficulties. Mr. Nesselblatt was well pleased with him, especially as he easily comprehended any new project, which was

to be tried as an experiment. Such a man he could make good use of, and his wages increased with the difficulty of the work he performed; in six months Arnold was one of the best-paid workmen in the large iron-foundry.

But he succeeded slowly in gaining the confidence of his co-laborers. The Nesselblatt factory formed a sort of workmen-colony. The laborers lived not merely in the same part of the city, but for the most part in the same streets and houses. They were well aware that especial privileges were extended to them, and appreciated these sufficiently to obey Mr. Nesselblatt's stipulation, if not from motives of gratitude, at least from dictates of policy. Many of the older workmen, however, were faithfully attached to their master, and it was their fervent desire to keep aloof from the restless spirit of the day and to preserve peace and harmony among their associate workers. "We are far ahead of the socialists," they declared, "and have already succeeded in attaining a great portion of that for which they are yet contending. What cause have we to participate in their agitation? We would only be the losers thereby." The younger portion of the laborers did not fail to recognize their favorable circumstances, and were not at all inclined to discard them heedlessly; but they felt more sensitive about the reproach they received, from outsiders, that the Nesselblatt workmen excluded themselves and turned from the common cause, because they were

accidentally better situated than others. They thought it wrong to be so exclusive, and to abjure the general principles of the great body of working-people. Thus intercourse with the socialists was not entirely renounced, and every meeting resulted in an exchange of views and experiences. The leaders of the great party did not fail to discover that the carpenter, Berken, had "smuggled himself" into Nesselblatt's realm. He avoided them, they declared, and firmly refused to renew his association with them. Therefore they warned his co-laborers against him. "Take care; he is double-faced; no one can tell his true sentiments."

Such speeches did not fail to have the desired effect. Although Angerstein, who was highly respected, defended him, he was regarded with suspicious glances from all sides. No one cared to converse with him, or walk home with him in the evening. It was apparent that Mr. Nesselblatt showed him extraordinary favor, and thus it was even whispered about that he was employed as a spy. Arnold felt that he was not entitled to better treatment; he told himself that his comrades were justified in suspecting him thus. He knew that assurances and promises would avail him nothing; only by displaying a uniformly pleasant disposition could he conquer their distrust. As for the rest, he thought, his work would be ample proof of his capacity and persevering industry.

Ed Blank and his confreres endeavored to win him

over to their views again. The position which the Nesselblatt employes took at every strike, and which exerted a bad influence on the agitation, was a source of great provocation to them. Thus they thought that Arnold might prove a useful tool for their purpose, propound their views, and gain adherents to their party. But, since they found him thoroughly disinclined to listen to this scheme, they became very much incensed against him. "We understand the true state of affairs," exclaimed Blank, derisively, "Mr. Nesselblatt has a young lady at his house whom he wishes to marry off; he has found the man." But Arnold did not submit to the insult. He threw himself upon his adversary and gave him a sound beating. The masons revenged themselves for this by waiting near the factory one evening, until Arnold started to go home with Angerstein; then they rushed upon him and attacked him. But Arnold defended himself so bravely that it was some time before they gained the upper-hand, and then several workmen came rushing out of the factory to answer Angerstein's call for help. A general skirmish followed, and the masons were badly defeated and had to abandon the field. Arnold had been roughly handled, and had to remain in-doors for a few days; but the men now had a better opinion of him, and he was consequently no longer molested by insinuations or slanders.

Frederica, who learned from her cousin what had been the provocation of the quarrel, was as

proud of the defender of her honor as any lady might have been of her knight who had risked his life in fighting a duel for her sake.

Shortly before the expiration of her term of service, Frederica informed Mr. Nesselblatt that she could not remain with him much longer, as she wished to get married. He had expected this, and knew the man whose claims were preferred to his. He submitted with a sigh. "Of course, it is but natural," he said, "that you should seek your happiness in marriage, and that you do not wish to postpone it until after my death. Berken is an industrious, capable man; I cannot say anything to his disadvantage, but I will now have to look for some one to replace you. That will be very difficult; such a willing, reliable and patient nurse, I may never be able to find again."

"Oh, perhaps you can, Mr. Nesselblatt," Frederica responded consolingly. "Do you know what I have planned? I have a younger sister at home, who is to go out to service now. I have considered for some time whether I ought not to have her here in the city; and now that I am to be married, she would always have a home with me when out of employment, and could come to see me once in a while. She is very much like me in her ways, and looks almost exactly like me. The neighbors used to say it was laughable, how much we resembled one another—the same figure and the same hair and eyes. If you wish, Mr. Nesselblatt, I will write to her to

take my place here. Of course she cannot expect as high wages as I have been paid, as she has no experience, but if you are willing, we will send for Lotta before my time expires, so that I may teach her a good deal yet. I am sure she has plenty of good will, but everything must be learned first."

Mr. Nesselblatt gladly agreed to this proposition. "Lotta will have time to find out," he said, "whether she wishes to remain with an old, sick man. I would not wish such a young girl to grow gloomy and morose."

"Oh! you need not worry about that," Frederica assured him, "It is much harder to stay with a gracious madam and take care of the children—I know that; and it would be hard to find such a kind, patient master as you are. I will explain all this to her. She will not think of getting married for a long time to come, and then you will not have any anxiety about her leaving you. She will stay with you and serve you faithfully as long as the dear Lord prolongs your life."

The letter was written, the money for the journey sent, and one day Lotta was met at the railroad depot. Frederica had really not said too much in her praise; her sister was very much like her—just as good-natured, cheerful and industrious, although still rather crude in manner. In a few months she was able to fill her position very satisfactorily.

Frederica now spent much of her time looking

for a pretty little dwelling for a low rent. She was not easily suited. She wished a large, light sitting-room, with an adjoining bedroom, and a nice kitchen. She did not wish Arnold to feel as if their home was too small for comfort, she said.

He had given her his bank-book, and she set about buying pretty furniture for the house with their joint funds. Her cousin sometimes accompanied her on her shopping tours, and they went from store to store, asking the prices and selecting the prettiest articles at the cheapest rates. But her cousin soon grew tired of accompanying her. "You always act as if you were about to purchase the entire store," she said, "and then you often do not buy anything at all."

"But I may be able to do better somewhere else," replied Frederica. "Such things are to last a lifetime, and cannot be bought so quickly."

Only a few days before the wedding, which was to be celebrated at Angerstein's, was Arnold allowed to inspect the completely furnished dwelling. He could not believe his eyes: "Frederica, you must know the art of magic!" How had she managed to furnish the rooms so richly and tastefully with so little money? There was a sofa covered with red plush, an arm-chair, a table with a bright damask cover, a beautiful rug, a bracket with a lamp on it, a wardrobe and a large vase. The windows were hung with dainty snow-white curtains; near the one was her sewing machine, and

at the other one a little rustic stand with some flower-pots. And then the bedroom with a good comfortable bed, and the kitchen with the bright tin dishes. "I don't think that my parents' house was furnished so handsomely," he cried.

Frederica was happy, led him from one object to the other, made him inspect everything and guess the price of each article, and gave him a kiss whenever he did not make the correct estimate. That increased his zeal considerably. He could, however, not induce her to sit down and have a chat with him. She was too busy for that. "Do not be uneasy," she said, "that the rent will be burdensome. I think I will be able to contribute a third of the sum. I will have enough time to spare in this small household. It won't take me long to clean up the rooms and cook the dinner, and I must have some occupation from morning to evening, so that I may not become melancholy. There are not many of the workmen's wives that I care to associate with. Fortunately, this house is occupied by some nice people; there is a letter-carrier, a clerk, a notary, and, on the first floor, even a book-keeper. Such people are very respectable, and care for good manners, and do not let their children play on the street in ragged clothes. But what I wanted to tell you: I intend to take in some plain sewing. I bought the machine for that purpose. I cannot earn very much with it, but

every little helps, and I don't want to be quite useless."

"What, you—!" he cried. "I tell you it is not necessary. I can earn enough to pay the rent and all we need."

"Then we will make other use of the money," she explained. "We want to have some nice clothes to wear, when we go out on Sundays, so that the people we meet can respect us. And you don't want your wife to sit on the sofa and idle away the time, do you?"

"Manage it as you like," he said, patting her shoulder, "you know what is best for us. But you will not be busy, when I come home from my work in the evenings?"

She slapped him lightly with her hand and replied mischievously, "Oh—! It will seem tedious to you soon enough."

He would not admit that. When it was time to go, he hesitated. He had grown quite serious, and had evidently something of importance to propound. "Frida," he began, "I wanted to consult you about something."

"Go on," she encouraged him, "I am listening." She closed the door, which she had already partly opened.

"When a person gets married," he stammered, "that is an affair which concerns the whole family, so to say. And if a man has brothers living in the same city—"

"You don't wish to invite *them* to our wedding?"

"No, Frida, not that. They would hardly come. But I ought to inform them."

"You may be right as to that."

"I thought so. But I don't know whether I should write to them or have some cards printed. It would not cost so very much."

Frederica considered. "That makes but little difference. But the announcement must be sent to them after our wedding, or perhaps on the same day; otherwise they may think that we want a wedding present."

"No indeed!"

He knocked his fist against his forehead. "That is true. I am so glad to know what to do. The thought of it has troubled me for some time."

"I think you ought to write a short note like this: 'Dear brother, and so forth, I only announced this to you and your lady, so that you may know it, and because it is proper. With great esteem, your brother, Arnold,— or something like that.'"

"Let us compose the letter together," he said, coaxingly.

Arnold had taken out his marriage license. He wished to be married by the magistrate, but Frederica was of a different opinion, and wanted the sanctification of the church. "It may be all right

the other way, but I don't think it is a real marriage. In this life, we never know when we may need the help of our dear Lord. And it is no real wedding if we don't ride to the church and hear the organ play."

"Let her have her will," advised Angerstein; "the women-folks are all religious."

"It is all the same to me," Arnold assured him. "I only thought, because we cannot have our wedding in private, like the rich people, and a dozen couples must stand up in church at the same time—of the sermon, I cannot remember much anyhow."

"But the blessing is spoken over each couple separately. I have seen it done," said Frederica.

The happy day arrived at last. Before Angerstein's dwelling stood a handsome carriage in which a Baron would not have been ashamed to drive. At the side of the coachman sat a lackey in black dress-coat and with white cotton gloves. A second carriage was to call for the other "best man," and Angerstein with his two children. Mrs. Angerstein had taken a seat beside Arnold. They rode to the Nesselblatt residence, where Arnold alighted to call for the bride and her sister. Frederica had put on a new black dress, and wore a myrtle wreath above her long, white veil. Her blonde hair was arranged as simply as usual. She looked very pretty.

Mr. Nesselblatt had expressed a wish to see the couple. Before going to his room Frederica placed

something in Arnold's vest-pocket. He put out his hand and grasped a chain. It was attached to some heavy object, probably a watch. "What is it?" he exclaimed in great surprise.

"I had just enough money left," said Frederica, bashfully. "You must have a watch. But do not imagine that the chain is of pure gold! Perhaps at some future time we can be so extravagant!"

He was too much astonished and overjoyed to speak, and pressed her hand again and again. "Now you must come," she urged; "the horses must not be kept waiting."

Mr. Nesselblatt dismissed them with a hearty congratulation. "I do not doubt, dear Berken, but that you will prosper. You are getting a very clever wife."

"I should think so," cried Arnold, "and I hope to deserve her."

They drove to church where the parson married them. After that ceremony was over, they rode to Angerstein's dwelling where the wedding feast was ready. A kind neighbor had prepared the dinner: Soup with boiled rice, a roasted goose and a pudding. In the center of the table stood a large wedding-cake and on either side of it a bottle of Rhine wine. These luxuries had been contributed by Angerstein.

When they were seated around the table, Mr. Nesselblatt's old cook came to deliver a parcel. They made her take a seat and eat a piece of cake.

Meanwhile the bride unfastened the string and took off the wrapping paper. "How heavy it is," she said, weighing the package in her hand.

It contained six silver dinner-spoons and a dozen tea-spoons. On the handles the letters F. B. were engraved. "Frederica Berken," said the cousin, in explanation of these initials.

"Yes, really," she said, very much touched. "The kind gentleman!—it is too much; and they are of solid silver! I only hope that we may always have enough to eat! Well, they will not be put on the table for daily use; but I will always feel uneasy lest they might be stolen."

"It is well to have something so valuable in the house; in case of necessity a pawnbroker would lend you a nice little sum on it," said the old lady. They all laughed heartily about her witty remark. "Here is also a letter for you, which was brought to our house," she continued. "Here—'To Mr. and Mrs. Berken.' A lady brought it. She wanted to know if the wedding had been already, as she had noticed your names in the newspapers under the marriage licenses."

Arnold opened the envelope a little timidly but with a good deal of curiosity. It contained a beautiful card with a gilt border, and in one corner was a pretty scrap-picture representing a horn of plenty filled with flowers and fruits. On the card was written the inscription:

"Congratulations and best wishes for your happiness. From yours sincerely—Ulrica."

It took Arnold a very long time to read the two short lines. He smiled with some embarrassment, when he noticed that everyone was gazing expectantly toward him. At last Frederica looked over his shoulder at the card. "What is that we have received?" she asked. He handed her the card. She was startled for an instant. "Ah! from her!"—she exclaimed.

"Yes, and sincerely!" he added.

Frederica considered a moment. "Well, that may be," she then said. "The lady was very nice, only not suited to you. Probably she recognized that long ago. And it is truly kind and pleasant of her to congratulate us. Not every girl would do that in her place."

He turned his head aside and kissed her heartily. "And not every girl would accept it so kindly," he said.

A moment ago it had seemed as though a shadow had flitted across the sunny landscape. But now it had vanished again.

Until evening, the party remained together in cheerful conversation. Then Lotta was sent home, as Mr. Nesselblatt might miss her; and Mr. Angerstein kindly volunteered to escort her, as she hardly knew the streets in the strange city.

The young couple soon after drove home in a cab. Frederica's veil and wreath had been packed into a

box and the card placed on top. Arnold took care of the box, and Frederica held the package of spoons in her hand. "You might perhaps leave them in the cab," she said in jest. "And do not forget to mail those letters."

They drove to their pretty dwelling.

In the course of the same year Arnold was appointed foreman of the carpenter-shop of the Nesselblatt factory, a position which his ability and energy well entitled him to fill.

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THE END



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