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Young woman of Europe

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YOUNG WOMAN
OF EUROPE

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THREE CUPS OF COFFEE

YESTERDAY'S DREAMS

SUNSET AT NOON

FIRES IN MAY

CAT ACROSS THE PATH

YOUNG WOMAN OF EUROPE

by

Ruth Feiner

*My generation is already deliriously
happy when things don't turn out quite
as badly as we expected*



ANDREW DAKERS LIMITED

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NOTE: This is not my autobiography, This statement I owe to the untarnished and loving 'memory of my late mother.



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TO MY FRIEND
MARGARET RUEFF
ON THE EVENT OF HER WEDDING

PART ONE

THE WRONG SIDE OF THE CHANNEL

I AM always strangely disturbed by Betweens. For instance the hours between night and dawn—the seasons between summer and autumn—political parties between right and left—minds that cannot be made up—compromises. That's rather silly, isn't it? Because, when you look at life, everything is "between." Even to-day—this very ordinary day—is nothing more or less than the day "between" yesterday and to-morrow. But, really, I don't mean that sort of a between at all. I don't mean any solid, tangible "between." There is a great difference between a person living on the second floor of a house—namely, between the first and the third floor—and a person dangling up-side-down from a rope between a rock and the solid earth. That is the kind of between I represent myself.

I was born between two races, two countries, two religions, two families with extremely different viewpoints. I lived between desperate poverty and comfortable wealth. Oh no—not that I was ever moderately well-off—that would be like the person living on the second floor. I mean I have always been dangling up-side-down from the rope of finance between the steady rock of riches and the bare earth of poverty. And right now while I'm telling this story I am in the worst state of a "between." I am something between an Enemy Alien and an Ally. Sounds silly, but it's right. I run around free and unmolested and yet, although I walk through this beautiful and grim autumn of the year of disgrace 1940 without many obvious restrictions, I don't really belong to that brave, bruised, and battered city of London.

The life I live is the result of a madness, a pest, a gigantic upheaval in the world. What that upheaval is the result

of I don't know very well. There must be hundreds of learned and wise people who have studied history and economics and politics. They are the ones to tell the world why all this happened. I only know it did happen and I am in it. Knee-deep. The man I love says I am ignorant and illogical and primitive because I don't go into things, I had a violent quarrel with him one day when I heard that certain foodstuffs had been burnt because there was a surplus of them. He smiled very indulgently and lectured me on economics, and ended up by trying to explain the gold standard to me. I didn't understand a single word—but then I'm pretty sure he didn't either! Only I didn't say so. One must never tell a man when one feels slightly superior. That wisdom I acquired only lately. Had I known it earlier in life I might have saved myself quite a few heart-breaks. But I always succeed in getting all the heart-breaks—in and out of season. My own fault entirely. Now my cousin Elisabeth—pardon, Betty—never had a heart-break in her life. But then—she's no "between." God knows how she does it. We started off under more or less the same circumstances, yet she must have made up her mind early in life to be one thing thoroughly,—namely, always the thing that's most popular. But one can only be like that when one is really nothing at all. Anyway she is rather well-off, she is a wife, she is efficient, she is British. She will always be an ally wherever she is. She did not come by her wealth through effort—she married money. She has never been faithful to her husband for more than a month at a stretch. Nevertheless she is a respected wife. She criticises everything the British Government is doing, and breaks every law as regards controlled prices. Yet she waves her flag and buys war-bonds and has her British Passport. She refuses to be called Elisabeth (with the German pronunciation), she calls herself Bessy. She used to dislike the Americans thoroughly (she knows only two), but lately praises everything that comes across the Atlantic. Oh,

never mind Bessy I I feared her when we were kids and I don't like her now. Only my childish distrust of her has turned into a mixture of contempt and wonderment.

* * *

My two grandfathers should have been more consistent. Grandfather Dressel should have stuck to his guns that no daughter of his should ever marry a Jew. And Grandfather Feldt—the Reverend Rabbi Dr Joseph Feldt—should never have put any obstacles in the way of his boy's wish to become an artist. If my father could have written his plays and poems at home, instead of having to sit around in parks and open-air cafe's, he'd probably never have met my mother and I shouldn't sit here as the living representation of all that's completely hopeless in our blessed age.

But there it was! Young Fritz Feldt was meant to be a merchant. So his father decreed. Because his father's brother owned a nice business. My grandmother, a Polish Jewess, who never learnt to speak German properly to her dying day, did not mind one way or the other.

"If the boy wants to invent people—let him!"

And grandfather said: "Who cares? But who can live by inventing people?"

"Oh, lots of men did. Your Goethe and Schiller for instance."

"Rachel, be sensible. Is our boy a Goethe? He is not a Goethe. So he goes into Simon's business!"

So—father did not go into Simon's business. That was no great loss for Great-Uncle Simon, for he had a son of his own—Erich. No—Erich did not invent people or anything else. Rich liketiis cousin Fritz, because Fritz invented the best games, had imagination, and was of a much slighter physique than Erich. That gave Erich the opportunity to protect Fritz against the assaults of his stronger schoolmates. In return, Fritz did Erich's homework, particularly history and composition.

Naturally Erich was heart-broken when his idol, at the age of nineteen, fell in love with Margarete Dressel (a Prussian civil servant's daughter of eighteen) and ran away with her. Yet, his love for Fritz was stronger than his prejudice against the fair-haired, cold-eyed Margarete, and he actually aided and abetted them.

Old Simon Feldt was a man of foresight and imagination. If a young fellow was to run a steadily growing import and export business he'd better see the world first. So young Erich was sent over to England to learn the trade. He entered the house of Thistlehorn & Druce of Old Compton Street, and in due course fell in love with Thistlehorn's daughter Mary. They married, and he brought her back to Germany, where their daughter Elisabeth was born. Yes, Bessy was lucky even before she entered this world. She had an English mother. Never mind the fact that during the Great War she was a small nuisance. It did not prevent her from heading all her homework with the line "Gott strafe England."

But long before lucky Bessy made herself a nuisance to everybody, her father, then a young clerk, sheltered his cousin Fritz in his one-room apartment in Hammersmith. Fritz and Margarete had run away to England to get married, because you couldn't marry in Germany without your parents' consent unless you were of age. And Margarete waited in a Y.W.C.A. hostel in Fulham to be married to her beloved Fritz. Erich even found him a job with a small theatrical agency called Timothy Truelove & Partners, and Fritz earned quite a decent salary by reading plays for them which were written in German. Nothing would have prevented the young couple from remaining in England after their wedding. But this is where I come in. I was in a great hurry to be born and my mother was sentimental enough to wish her "baby to be born on German soil"—bless her! Oh, Mother, Mother, why couldn't you have stayed for ever in Fulham !

I made a final attempt at common sense by trying to get

into the world on the British boat that carried Fritz and Margarete from Southampton to Hamburg. But I failed. I was doomed to be born on German soil—with hardly a drop of German blood running through my veins. For father's people had come west only a few years ago from the farmlands of the Ukraine, and mother's people were partly Swedish and partly Latvian. But a German baby was born and registered as a German citizen at Hamburg in late September, when Summer made a desperate attempt to retain her power and Autumn had not quite succeeded in taking over the reins. Between the seasons. At dawn.

"The child shall be baptized," said Margarete.

"The child shall be brought up in my father's creed," said Fritz.

The child was not baptized and was not brought up in her grandfather's creed.

I had a Christmas tree every year. Even when there wasn't enough money in the house for food we had a Christmas tree. But I also went to my grandparents to celebrate the high festivals of the Jewish New Year and I fasted on Atonement Day. I looked for Easter eggs on Easter Sunday and—according to the rites of the Jewish faith—I ate Mazzohs for Passah. In school the teacher told us the heart-breaking story of Christ and his desperate attempt to save mankind. In grandfather's old, dark, musty study on the Grindel Allee I learnt of Moses and the angry Jehovah and how He punished the people who abused His laws. I was rather puzzled. One of them was a liar. Either teacher or grandfather. I felt terribly guilty and unhappy for calling grandfather a liar—even to myself. But how was I to understand God at all when one told me that He was a gentle, loving, ever-forgiving God who sent His own son among the people to die so that they might live and be saved, and the other declared that God was a jealous God who meted out punishment, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth? I was awfully sorry for Jesus of Nazareth—but I was terrified by Moses

and his anger. But what puzzled me more than that intangible, invisible, incomprehensible God were the people who followed His laws, or rather did not follow them.

I still remember that that teacher in school, who had just spoken of the miracles of Christ and his never-changing kindness, beat up one of my fellow-pupils for not having done her homework. "You have to learn discipline," she roared; "laziness must be punished." I raised my finger and asked rather timidly why laziness must be punished. According to what she had just told us, Christ would not wish her to beat up Edith for not having done her lessons properly.

Only when I saw the open-mouthed, gaping faces of my fellow-pupils did I realise that I was being insolent. Now I was probably for it!

But Fraulein Schmidt did not roar at me. Nor did she beat Edith for that matter. She only said coldly: "What do you understand about Christ? You are a Jewish girl. So sit down and don't waste my time. But just this once will I be lenient with Edith."

I felt rather crushed. At the age of six-and-a-half one is apt to take a teacher rather seriously. I should have liked to talk the matter over with somebody. But whom? I hated to bother my father, who was so busy writing plays and things. And mother never answered my questions. She always said: "Children should not talk so much." Grandfather Feldt? Oh, dear me!—he would be very upset if I told him that I took Religion in school. That was a secret from Grandfather Feldt. And besides, the Feldts lived right at the other side of the town and I saw them very rarely. And my other grandfather, Ober Post Sekretaer Dressel, either did not speak at all or he talked an awful lot and then very funnily. That was when he smelled of beer. Then he was very red in the face and roared with laughter at nothing at all, and took me to fun-fairs and gave me a good time. But whenever I attempted to ask him a serious question he said: "Forget

it! Never ask too many questions. Once upon a time I asked one too many. And your grandmother said 'yes.' Look at it now!" And then he simply rocked with merriment. Sometimes when he was in such a good mood he would give me ten Pfennigs or more. I treasured them, because I knew the value of money even at that age. Most of the rows at home were about money. Father wrote plays for the theatre but made no money. He also worked for newspapers and periodicals and wrote things he didn't like to write, and with that he did make money. But never enough. Mother was sometimes given money by her father, which my father resented, and again there was a row. Yes; whatever happened in connection with money was always wrong and upsetting.

The only person whose help father never resented was Uncle Erich Feldf. He and his family usually came to visit us on Sundays (unless we went to visit them), always looked forward to Aunt Mary, who spoke German with such a wonderful English accent and mixed up all her genders. But I was not so keen on seeing cousin Elisabeth, who was dressed in lovely lace frocks and white suede shoes, and had golden curls all beautifully and evenly dangling down her back. She mostly carried a huge doll, also becurled and beautifully turned out, and laughed at my mongrel puppy, Hans. She called him a dirty little thing; I called her doll Lisa a stupid, wide-eyed, deaf-and-dumb little hag. I secretly envied Elisabeth her lovely frocks and bows and frills. But I did not envy her the doll. I hated dead things. I never played with dolls. I was even a little scared of their lifeless rigidity and their glass eyes. Hans was like a child. He could sit up and beg for a bone, he greeted me when I came home from school, and he shared my enthusiasm for walking in the park. Mother disliked Hans because he was, I'm afraid, not very well trained. But father had found him in the gutter, half dead, and brought him home to me. "Here you are, old thing—this will give you both company and

responsibility. A living thing is worth a million dolls." Funny how father always knew what I wanted and needed, and how he always succeeded in getting it for me even if it was by accident! I often wished he had more time for me. But I have never known my father to have much time. For days on end, father would bury himself in the front room to do his writing, and I was not allowed to make a noise. We actually shared that room because we had only one other room, and that was my parents' bedroom. The "office," as mother used to call the front room, to father's disgust, constitutes one of my most vivid childhood memories. It contained very little furniture. Besides father's desk and huge, leather armchair there was only a narrow divan (my bed), a little brass smoking-table, and several shelves stacked with books. In one corner stood a smallish square table with a gramophone on it, and the other corner was filled up by a huge, white-tiled stove. That was all. A poorly enough furnished place to sit in and invent all those lovely plays and essays and poems. Yet, to me that room was heaven. It was the little odd things, which mother grumbled about when she dusted the room, that held my childish imagination. There was, for instance, a paperweight representing a roaring lion. I called him Otto, for no particular reason. But then I gave names to everything, for a name seemed to take the deadness out of things. In later years I retained that habit. My first typewriter was called Emile and my car Maurice. Come to think of it, it may well be that a lack of real friends makes one resort to dead things as companions.

And then there was that funny figure on the smoking-table, a pot-bellied little man who grinned and nodded all the time. He was christened Emmerich, for that was the name of our milkman, whom he resembled to the most astonishing degree. But much more thrilling than Emmerich or Otto were the books. Especially the ones with pictures. On the very rare occasions when father

had time for me he would take me on his knee and show me those pictures, and never got tired of answering my questions. But alas! those moments were so rare that I can count them on the fingers of one hand.

Books were never dead things to me. Long before I could read I loved to handle them, adored to turn their pages and dust their smooth covers. The geographical ones were my favourites. Father could tell the most beautiful stories about one single picture. There were coloured prints of blue skies or yellow sands or white, snow-capped mountain peaks. Pictures of black people, strange birds, tall houses, ships, the sea. But father never just said: "This is the Desert"; or: "That is an island in the South Seas." Oh no; he told a full story, while I turned the pages. He spoke of a beautiful prince who went in search of a princess and came across those places. One would think that father might have been greatly embarrassed by some picture that showed nothing but, for instance, a rare bird. No fear! That bird was quickly transformed into a fairy in disguise and the story went on without a hitch.

Mother did not like us to sit thus and dream. She would come into the room with a deep frown on her forehead, and say angrily:

"Putting silly ideas into the girl's head again? Instead of trying to make some money so that we can move out of this hole. Oh, why did I ever allow myself to be carried away by all your wonderful talk about a golden future! Not much gold in your writing, to be sure! And as for you, young lady, go and wash your face. A big girl like you should know by herself when she needs a wash!"

"Go on, Reny, and do as your mother tells you/*

The spell was broken, and I slunk out of the room to collect Hans and take him downstairs into the yard, where we could sit under the one and only tree in the neighbourhood.

All our meals were taken in the kitchen except when

mother's people came to visit us. Father's people never took meals with us, because Grandfather Feldt did not allow his family to eat anything but strictly "kosher" food. Uncle Erich was less orthodox, and when he and Aunt Mary and cousin Elisabeth came mother never took the trouble to lay the table in the "office." Neither Uncle Erich nor Aunt Mary minded having their coffee in the kitchen, which was really a lovely place, with the polished tiles and shining brass and glittering pots and pans. Only Elisabeth disliked it. "We never have a meal in the kitchen," she said with a sniff. "Our maid Ella eats there." And before she sat down she would lift her little skirt so as not to get dirty. My fingers itched to pull her curls. But I knew mother would beat me for it. I asked mother why I never wore such heavenly frocks of lace and silk as cousin Elisabeth.

"You? My goodness 1 they wouldn't last ten minutes, what with your crawling about on the floor with that nasty little dog. And besides—look at yourself 1 Your hands and your face and your hair 1 I have a good mind to cut off all your curls and put you into a pair of short trousers, like a little boy."

I screamed with horror. I did not want to look like a little boy 1 I held my hands over my short, unruly brown curls as though to protect my womanhood. No! I certainly did not want to be a little boy. Boys were always talking about going to war once they were grown-up, and killing people. They fought until their noses bled, and then ran away instead of taking their punishment like the heroes they made out to be. I was quite happy to be a little girl. Only, of course, I should have liked to have more of the things other little girls had. But that was again a question of money.

Money 1

So many years lie between the days of Hans the dachshund and this night of horror 1 But, up to this minute, money has never been a faithful friend to me, only a fleeting

acquaintance—and often a hostile one at that. It came into my life and laid its cold, dirty fingers on my mind, reassuring me, lulling me into security, only to withdraw with an ugly grin and leave me desperate.

The first time when all the sinister importance of money was brought home to me was when I was not quite seven years old. I knew that we—"the Feldts of the Nordstrasse" as opposed to the Feldts of Mozart Allee (meaning old Grand-Uncle Simon and his family)—were the poor Feldts. But apart from the little things we had to do without I never really worried very much about being rich or poor. Nor did my father. He always made enough to keep us clothed and fed and roofed and give mother little presents. But I know mother was terribly concerned about it. It was Elisabeth who put me wise to the fact that money was the root of more or less everything.

It was on a Sunday afternoon when we were at Uncle Erich's for afternoon coffee. The grown-ups were sitting in the large dining-room and we children had our meal in Betty's nursery. I never admitted it, but I adored that room. She had everything a child can possibly want. Her own small wardrobe, her own table and chairs, masses of toys, which she never really liked enough to deserve them. The place was all white and pink. That sweetish pink with a tinge of blue in it which children adore and grown-ups detest.

We had chocolate instead of coffee, and coloured iced cakes and buns and plenty of cream. The Little table was laid by Ella the maid, whom Betty either ignored or ordered about. I always shook hands with Ella, because father had told me to be particularly polite to servants. "It's no fun," he said, "to clear other people's mess away when you have to do it for money." That was the truest of the many true things father had ever said. And did I find out!

"How d'you like it?" asked Betty expectantly.

"I think it's lovely! The chocolate is marvellous."

"Don't you get chocolate in the afternoon?" she asked casually, although she knew perfectly well that I didn't.

I became immediately aggressive and said rather rudely: "My mother does not think it's too healthy to have chocolate every day."

"Well, maybe. But I think you have not enough money and can't afford it."

"What's that to you?"

"Oh, nothing. Only, you would have much more money if your mother hadn't married your father."

This was completely incomprehensible to me, but I sensed that something was very, very wrong. I felt Betty was about to let me into some terrible secret. And she wasted no time.

"Well, I heard from my mummy, who told it to Aunt Ida, that your father could be a partner in my dad's business and that your Grandfather Feldt would have given him the money if he hadn't married your mother. There!"

I was bewildered. I couldn't really make out what this was all about, but I felt that both my parents were being besmudged by ugly gossip.

"How dare you repeat such a thing! It's a lie, and you know it."

"My mother doesn't lie. My mother is English!"

"What's that got to do with it?" I asked, completely at a loss.

"English people don't lie!"

"Don't they?" I was terribly interested. So interested, in fact, that I almost forgot the terrible secret about father and mother. But Elisabeth obviously did not want to enlarge on the statement that English people don't lie. She wanted to carry on about my parents and the money question. And there was nothing to stop her. Besides, although I felt horribly guilty about discussing something that I shouldn't know anything about, I was rather curious.

"Yes," continued Betty, eager to see me unhappy; "and

your grandparents Dressel are quite well-off, but they wouldn't help your mother with money. They say, if your mother chose to marry a silly man with a lot of fancy ideas, and a Jew on top of that, she should jolly well suffer for it."

If Betty had wished to deal me an almost deathly blow she had succeeded. I did not want to cry, oh, I did not want to cry, but I couldn't help my eyes getting hot and then beginning to smart, until the tears streamed down my face. Now Betty got excited:

"Don't let your mother know you've been crying! And don't tell her why, if she finds out. If you do, I'll—I'll do something terrible to you!"

"What?" asked I. In spite of my misery I was terribly eager to know what Betty intended to do to me. Maybe she would hurt me—then I should be ill and lie in bed, and get spoiled and pampered by sympathetic grown-ups.

"I don't know yet, but I'll think of something," she assured me.

I shall never forget her as she sat in her little white chair, dressed in white muslin with a shining pink bow in her golden curls, her bright blue eyes shining with the fun of terrifying me. I really should have climbed out of my chair and poured the remaining chocolate over her immaculate white-and-pink appearance. But I was paralysed. My primitive, never-failing childish instinct, the beginning of the subconscious mind of later years, made me sense that I should never be able to cope with viciousness. I can face any open enemy, but to this day I am completely helpless against any evil clad in pink and white.

She knew now that I would not give her away. And I did not. But I couldn't help hinting things to my father. I hated it. I should have liked to go to him and ask him right out if there were any truth in Betty's story. But I was scared. It was not decency on my part, wishing to spare Betty the good hiding she deserved. Many a child has been called a "good sport" for shutting up. God knows what a lot of silent blackmail goes on amongst

children, whose primitive cruelty is capable of almost anything.

I approached father with typical childish cunning. One afternoon I brought the tea-tray into the "office" and, while father stirred his tea, I asked harmlessly:

"Father, do you earn money with your writing?"

"I hope so. Why, Renate?"

"Oh, nothing—only when I grow up I want to earn money."

"That's a very good resolution. Only, you must like the work, whatever money you might make by it."

"Do you like your work?"

"I love it very much. Otherwise I shouldn't do it."

"Does mummy like it?"

"Sometimes. I always read everything to her. Sometimes she tells me I could do better."

"That means, you could make more money?" I cried.

"Oh no—I don't make any money by writing plays. I make money by writing little things for advertising firms. You know—people who want to sell their goods must tell the people about them. I write that."

"Why don't you tell the people about your plays, if you want to sell them?"

Father laughed.

"A play isn't just a piece of soap or a certain brand of shoe-polish. You don't sell it like that."

"Why not?"

"No, darling girl, this is beyond you I. You wouldn't understand if I explained it to you. But you certainly said a mouthful—why don't I tell the people? . . . Now you'd better run along and leave me to my work."

I went to the kitchen, where mother was ironing last week's washing. But if I had hoped to hear any more from her than from father I was sadly mistaken. I sat down on a little stool near the ironing-board and Hans settled on my lap. Mother hummed a tune while the big, heavy iron went smoothly over the white linen. A second

iron was on the gas-ring and I was allowed to find out if it hissed nicely by spitting on it.

"Mother, is that work you are doing?"

"Of course, child."

"Do you earn money with it?"

"Nonsense! Whatever are you talking about?"

"Oh, I thought when people work they earn money."

"So they do." And with a sigh mother added:
" Sometimes."

Aha, I thought so. Mother is worried about something. Maybe I'll find out a little more. Maybe Betty was right after all.

"Grandfather Dressel makes money, doesn't he?"

" Oh yes. He has his monthly salary as a civil servant."

"And Grandfather Feldt?"

"Is being paid by the Jewish Community." And then mother suddenly put her iron down and looked at me with her beautiful, large blue eyes. "Now, Renate, what exactly are you trying to find out?"

"Nothing, mummy—really."

" Listen, Renate. I don't like all this talk about money from a little girl. I suppose it's those kids at school putting ideas into your head. Well, you happen to go to a very, very good school, because your father and I want you to learn all you can. But the fact that there are a great many children with very rich parents is none of your business."

Mother was rather annoyed. At the time I didn't realise that her anger was rooted in her infinite misery through the lack of money. But again the primitive animal instinct of the child cautioned me not to carry on. Here was a sore spot and I shouldn't touch it. But I made up my mind, on that little stool in our kitchen, that money was something very worrying ! Yet, if it made me into a nasty, conceited little prig like cousin Betty I wouldn't want any part of it. As long as father didn't worry—all was well with me.

And this happened to be my first introduction to money in the negative sense of the word.

Very soon after, the money problem receded into nothingness compared with the horrible, ghastly secret that again made Betty the evil spirit of my childhood. Yes, it was Betty who told me all about sex. And a nastier, more hideous way of telling it could not be imagined. At first I refused to believe her, but she succeeded in convincing me that everything she said was the truth; but more than that—she made me almost feel guilty of existing at all, as though every child born was really no more or less than the living proof of two people doing something sinister and terrible together. And again her blackmail worked. I was sworn to secrecy. And God help me if I ever breathed a word. She need not have been so elaborate about it. For even though I yearned to ask my father for confirmation of these facts, I should not have dared after the way she had described them. Surely, about so horrible a thing I couldn't talk to anybody. But worse than the knowledge about this deadly secret was my reaction towards my father. I began to fear him. In fact I began to fear all men, including my two grandfathers, Uncle Erich, Grand-Uncle Simon, and even Emmerich the milkman. In the light of my newly acquired "knowledge" I saw them all as detestable and terrifying brutes, who were out to hurt the women around them. And the women? My feeling towards them was a mixture of pity and contempt, mingled with a certain amount of solidarity, for one day I should be grown-up and a woman ! What a terrible thought! But I had one satisfaction. Elisabeth would be a woman too. And there was a certain consolation for me in the fact that I need never get married. Thank God, Betty had only referred to married people and had at least left one illusion for me! And so I made up my mind, whatever happened, Betty should get married first and find out for herself if everything was really as bad as she imagined.

So at the age of not quite eight years I knew about two very important factors in life: money and sex. And both were introduced to me as enemies, by that little pink-and-white devil Elisabeth. And yet, a curse very often turns out to be a blessing in disguise. And if Elisabeth seems at first sight the evil spirit of my childhood, she has unwittingly and unwillingly turned out to be a good fairy. She has provided me with a healthy contempt for money and has held me in check where men are concerned. For I have inherited my father's quick temperament and my mother's romantic blindness and lack of foresight. And if with these inherited traits I tended to fall in love too easily, I have always suffered from a certain fear of Man. Until David happened. David took my fear away, for David took my heart away. And then they took David away. But I must not think of David. . . .

The outbreak of the Great War overshadowed Betty's tales about the importance of money and the fearfulness of sex. With the War came the burial of my childhood, or indeed my youth. The blood of millions washed away the few happy memories I have of that short time of blissful carefreeness. Hunger and misery ate away the importance of Betty's blackmail, and the "Farewell" from my father swept clean the conscious fear of him as a male.

On that hot, sun-drenched, dusty afternoon in August 1914 I happened to be at my Grandmother Feldt's for coffee. I loved going to Grandmother Feldt's. She baked the finest cakes, she told the joiiliest tales in her funny broken German, and she never grew tired of knitting and crotcheting the daintiest things. She was, as I found out much later in life, far more than a pleasant grandmother. She was a woman of strong principles, of a generous heart and infinite wisdom. In that fragile, petite body of Rachel Feldt lived a terrific spirit, a defiance of which many a big, strong man might well be proud. I have tried to fight Anti-Semitism many a time in later years, but the best I could ever have done would have been to hand

Grandmother Rachel Feldt around as the living example of the best in Judaism.

I had been looking forward to my visit, as I had always looked forward to visits to grandmother. But alas, no sooner had I had my coffee, and settled down on the footstool near grandmother's armchair with my knitting needles, when father and mother arrived and shouted at the top of their voices something about "The glory of the Fatherland." Soon after that Uncle Erich arrived with Aunt Mary, but without Betty, and Grandfather Feldt came out of his study, glasses on nose, cap on his head, to join us all in the living-room.

War! War! War!

I cannot exactly remember all that was said in detail, for they all talked at the same time and that at the top of their voices, but it all boiled down to the fact that Germany was out to do something great and wonderful, and that everybody else in the world seemed set on doing something terrible. The only one who was rather quiet was Aunt Mary. She seemed to have been weeping, for her eyes were red, and so was her nose, and during the noisy debate she looked anxiously from one to the other and occasionally murmured: "Supposing my people come into it—what will I do? Oh, what will I do?" And then Uncle Erich patted her hair and said: "There now, Mary dear, don't you worry—I'd rather die than see you unhappy."—"But I don't want you to die!" And then she wept in earnest.

Mother was more excited than all the others. She was proud of father going to fight, and her brother Emil also going to fight, and she, too, would do something, to be sure.

Father said something like: "I hate war, but if it means to defend my fatherland I have to go, and that's that!"

Grandfather Feldt shook his head and repeatedly said: "God be merciful and help us to defeat our enemies!"

Uncle Simon went on consoling the unhappy Aunt Mary and Grandmother Feldt said nothing at all, but went out

into the kitchen to make coffee for everybody, and I went out with her.

"Grandmother, what is war?"

"War is the result of the Government of one country imagining that the Government of another country might do something that the Government of a third country does not like."

"Oh! And then—what happens?"

"And then men put on uniforms and go out to kill each other."

"The Government?"

"No—they stay at home. The people—you know, daddy and Uncle Erich and Emmerich, your milkman—they get killed."

"Then—why is everybody so happy about it?"

"Who's happy?"

"Oh—mummy and daddy."

"They're not happy. They're just excited."

"But they say in the Bible: Thou shalt not kill. Why then does grandfather ask God to help us to defeat our enemies?"

"You'd better ask him. I see no point in it, because all the rabbis and clergy in all the other countries are asking exactly the same thing."

"And why is Aunt Mary so unhappy?"

"Because she is English and England might fight against us. And that would make her our enemy."

"But Aunt Mary can't be our enemy! She is Uncle Erich's wife."

"So she is. In our own family circle she will never be looked upon as an enemy. But outside the family I"

And suddenly a spark of hope flashed through my mind: "Does that make Betty an enemy too?"

"Partly. But again, only outside our own circle." And suddenly grandmother looked over the rim of her glasses and frowned.

"What do you look so crafty about? Are you up to

some mean trick? Have you had a row with Betty? I don't care if you had—but if you take it out on her because she has an English mother, by God, I shall give you the best hiding you ever had."

I said nothing, but I wondered what Grandmother Feldt would say if I told her everything that Betty had told me!

Later, back in the living-room the discussion still went on. I did not understand a single word of what they said. But I felt that terrific, big, tremendous things were afoot and I was uneasy about them, because grandmother had told me people were putting on uniforms to kill each other. I thought of several little boys I knew. How they would envy their grown-up brothers and their fathers and uncles for this! But all the time I was wondering how I could put one over on Betty without running into danger of grandmother's promised "good hiding." After the sleepless nights Betty had caused me with her wretched secrets I should have loved to march into her pink-and-white nursery and say outright: "You're an enemy!" And march out again.

Enemy! Not that I really grasped the meaning of the word in its full measure. To-day I know. And I cannot help smiling at my conception of the word "enemy," applying it to a little girl with golden curls and pink bows! No, Elisabeth was no enemy to the country of her birth. She was in fact a very patriotic little thing, who exchanged her pink bows for black-white-and-red ones. She wore a small brooch with the Prussian eagle on it. Just as she wears now a miniature Union Jack—in diamonds, rubies and turquoise. Bless her!

That night I couldn't sleep. I was over-excited. I remember that I lay awake, peering into the darkness, which was only broken by a small ray of light falling through a chink in the curtain. The ray fell slanting across the wall-paper and sat on the head of Otto the Lion on father's desk. And suddenly I sat up. What would become of father's wonderful surprise for mother? He had let me into a-bip-

secret only a week ago. But this secret did not make me feel guilty. First of all I shared it with such an authority as my father, and secondly it was a lovely secret—which would soon be turned into joy and happiness for all of us. Father had finished a play and, for once, the agent had not turned it down with a shrug and called it "idealistic rubbish." In fact there was every possibility that that particular play would be produced at one of Hamburg's most important theatres. Oh, my goodness—supposing father should have to leave us before all these plans were realised!

I crept out of bed very quietly, because I did not want my parents to know that I was awake, and tiptoed stealthily towards the door and opened it very, very gently. I could hear my parents' voices in the bedroom. They were still talking about that awful War. Father seemed much more excited than this afternoon.

"... there will be my pay, of course, and your allowance—but that won't be enough. No, Gretl; you must keep in touch with Willinger about that play. See that it is put on—oh, damn this rotten War!"

"For heaven's sake, Fritz, use your logic ! War has been declared—how can any theatre put on a play concerning the brotherhood of mankind!"

I did not quite get the full meaning of mother's words, but a cold shower ran down my spine. Something about that play seemed to be quite, quite wrong. I strained my ears and heard nothing for a long time, for there was a deadly silence. Then came father's voice, hoarse and strained:

"Of course, Gretl—I forgot that. They couldn't put that on now." And then there was some horrible laughter.

"You must change the tendency of that play, Fritz. Instead of advocating brotherhood, make it a national play. Glorify War instead of denouncing it. Don't let Benjamin become a monk, let him become a hero. ..."

"For heaven's sake, stop it!" cried my father. "I can't do that sort of thing."

"You have tol You must move with the times. Otherwise you'll never get anywhere."

"It's bad enough that I have to go out and kill a lot of innocent men, whom I've never seen before in my life. But I refuse to sell my soul along with my body."

"Now, Fritz, I won't have this kind of talk! The country and the Kaiser need you and you should be proud of it!"

"They need me and they shall have me. But I jolly well refuse to be proud of it. So there!"

"Well, if you want to be stubborn and rather see me starve than alter a few phrases in your play ..."

"Margarete, dear girl, it isn't just a few phrases I shall have to alter! It would mean readjusting my very deepest convictions because it is opportune to do so. Would you not despise me if I did that?"

"I don't know, Fritz. We've been married now for over eight years and these eight years have been a continuous struggle against poverty—only because you refuse to see things my way. If you don't think of me, think at least of Renate."

My heart beat faster. I felt terribly important, and was thrilled to the core when father answered:

"I am thinking of Renate! Gretl, supposing I followed your advice and changed the tendency of my play, and supposing even I made a success of it—well—I could never face that girl squarely."

"Oh, don't be so dramatic, Fritz. What does a child know about tendencies and ideals?"

"She might not know anything about that now. But the day will come when she will be grown-up and probably get hold of that play somehow. What will I answer when she asks me: 'Father, did you mean what you wrote there?'"

"She will probably be very pleased that her father had the good sense to move with die times."

"I should hope not!" cried my father. "I should hate

my daughter to become an opportunist, a weathercock, a weakling! I should always bring her up to speak her mind and stand by her convictions. Gretl, promise me one thing—swear to me now—whatever may happen to me—however long this bloody war might last—never force Renate to hide her feelings—to cheat or lie for the sake of an advantage! Never! Do you hear me? Never! And don't make her hate our enemies for the sake of hating. Don't ever let her be cruel or unkind for the sake of getting something out of it. Don't let her join in a lot of super-patriotic nonsense. And let her learn all she wants to learn. Give her knowledge. Knowledge! Let her learn languages—the languages of our enemies. And let her choose her own religion. ..."

"Fritz, you speak as though you expected never to come back!" said my mother flatly.

"What do I know? I may or I may not come home. I may be a cripple. I may lose my reason. Anything may happen. And in case it does, you are responsible for this child—d'you hear me? Responsible for the soul and welfare of a human being. I know you are terribly young yourself—almost a child—if you don't trust yourself to bring that child up properly—send her to my parents. . . ."

"Oh, so you want your daughter to become an orthodox Jewess—is that it?" asked my mother coldly.

"I want nothing of the kind! She must choose her own course in good time. She will find her way to God—her own God. I don't know why—but I have a terrific trust in that child."

"She gets out of hand at times."

"That will pass as the years go by. But I do know one thing: she is honest—she is decent and she has a sense of justice. I have watched her at play—I've seen her knock down bigger children when they attacked another weaker child. I have listened to her questions carefully. They reveal a deep sense of fairness. That girl will fight the Devil for the sake of justice."

My mother sighed. I did not really half understand the meaning of all my father had said. But I felt vaguely that he expected great things of me and I was proud of it. Only the idea of fighting the Devil was rather disconcerting. Surely, father did not want me to fight a horrible thing with horns and a long tail, who danced round in Hell frying little children? Huh! I raced back to bed and pulled the bedclothes over my head.

* * *

My recollections of that first war of my life are few. Out of the profusion of flag-waving, Extra-Blaetter, long food queues, ice-cold rooms, soap made of sand, bread made of straw, millions of dead Russians, schoolmates dressed in mourning, patriotic songs, desperate women, underfed children, hatred born out of a false love for one's own country—only a few happenings stand out vividly.

There was first and foremost the farewell from my father, on a scorching hot morning in August 1914, on the platform of a Hamburg station. Father in uniform looked handsome enough. But his face was set and unsmiling and he did not join in all the shouting and laughing and joking that went on around us. The platform was crammed with soldiers and women, many of them weeping. The train bore the chalked inscription: "Through-train to Paris."

We were quite a large party. There was first of all mother and myself, there was Grandfather Feldt and Uncle Erich—who had not yet been called up—and there was Aunt Mary. Grandfather said a long blessing in Hebrew and kissed his son, which he rarely did. Grandmother had stayed at home. She had sent along a large parcel, which looked thrilling and mysterious. I was sure it contained the most wonderful pastries and home-made sweets. Uncle Erich slapped father's shoulder and said: "Meet you at the Champs-Élysées !" And mother sobbed

quietly.' Father lifted me up and pressed me against his tunic.

"So long, Renate. Be a good girl. Don't make things difficult for your mother, and don't—please don't forget me . . . and our little talks . . . and——"

He put me down abruptly and shook hands with Aunt Mary.

"Bye-bye, Mary old girl. Should I meet any of your compatriots I shall try my damnest not to hit 'em."

"Fritz !" hissed my mother. Aunt Mary hardly smiled. She stood rigidly still and stared past my father. And there, for the first time in my life—if unconsciously—I caught a glimpse of the mentality of the English. The unfathomable, incomprehensible, impossible English, who take death so lightly and football so seriously. I do not pretend to know them even now, when I have lived amongst them for so many years, but I believe it must be something like this: they realise that Death is controlled by God and that football is controlled by Man—and what you can control yourself is serious—because you are responsible for it. . . .

Aunt Mary did not speak one word. Mother told me later on it was for fear of her English accent. It sounded rather puzzling to me at the time. But to-day I know the tragic meaning of a foreign accent in war-time in a country that happens to speak a language different from your own. That foreign accent, charming, amusing, and engaging as it may sound in peace-time, when it even adds to one's popularity, rendering people helpful and sympathetic, in war-time becomes a stumbling stone, a black mark, a motive for self-consciousness and suspicion 1

At first I missed my father fearfully. But I must have soon got used to his absence. It was summer, and summer-time for a child is the time of adventure. I spent most of my afternoons in the parks with other children, or at the Zoo, or some grown-up person took a handful of us kids up the River Elbe to Blankenese on a steamboat. Some-

times Grandfather Dressel would take me to the fun-fair at the H-H Park, that huge, riotous place of never-ending surprise and thrills. We rode on the switchback four times, five times, in succession without getting dizzy. Or we laughed until the tears streamed down our cheeks about the funny man in front of the curiosity pavilion, who wore a red top-hat and a huge beard and waved a golden stick, shouting at the people in front of him to come in and see the monstrous fat lady or the man with three legs. I thought those things fearfully funny at the time. Then we would go to the coffee-garden and I could eat my fill of sweets and icecreams, and grandfather never stopped me, or scolded me when I became violently sick afterwards.

These hot, sun-drenched afternoons, filled with laughter and thrills, could easily constitute the few happy memories of my childhood, had they not so often ended in grandfather becoming abusive and nasty about Aunt Mary and my father. He usually drank an enormous amount of beer, and in due course his otherwise kindly, reddish face, with the large moustache and bushy eyebrows, would take on a bluish-red hue, and his eyes would become small slits, and there would be thick, red veins standing out at his temples. And that was a sure sign of his becoming angry. At first he would grumble about his being too old to fight. Then he would start to growl about having a damned Englishwoman in the family, and finally he would end up by sneering at my father.

"Ha—the chap will never even be able to become an officer ! A Jew ! Poor kid, having a Jew for a father."

"How dare you say anything about my father ! Or Aunt Mary !"

"Til say anything I like about them. Try and stop me, you silly little goose!"

"You say another word about my father and I shall never go out with you any more."

That amused him, and he shook with laughter. And suddenly he became grave and glared at me:

"So—you will not come out with me any more to the fun-fair? You will not go on the steamboat and hear the band? You will not eat any more icecreams and sweets at Mother Graumann's? Don't you believe it!"

"Well, I won't."

True, it broke my heart when I thought of all the lovely things I should have to miss if I really gave up my outings with grandfather. But something told me I must stick to my word, sweets or no sweets—steamboat or no steamboat. Yes, one has to give up quite a few amusements if one decides to stick by one's convictions.

Mother would not hear of such nonsense. "Of course you will go out again with your grandfather, you ungrateful little brute."

"I won't, I won't, I won't!"

I didn't. Only when mother dragged me along to the Dressels did I go, reluctantly. But there was open enmity between grandfather and myself. I was fearfully rude to him whenever I had the opportunity and I tried everything to annoy him. Mother was desperate. She scolded me, she even gave me several good hidings. She punished me by cutting short my daily chocolate ration. And finally she gave up. I was very sorry that mother should be so upset. But I couldn't help that. Grandfather had behaved badly and he must be punished for it. And since grown-ups always stick together and never punish each other, but only their children, who cannot defend themselves, I had to resort to my own measures of punishment for him.

Surprisingly I found an unexpected ally in cousin Elisabeth. One afternoon, while we were doing our homework together at her place, I told her all about grandfather's nastiness. Her blue eyes gleamed with joy and she grinned.

"That horrible old hound ! Why, I'd give him what for! But mind, Renate, it's no good being rude to his face. And it's certainly silly to give up all the good times with him! No—you must handle this differently. Hide

his favourite pipe, or smash something he likes, or put a dead rat into his slippers. But for heaven's sake don't admit it was you!"

"But I want him to know that it was me!"

"You're an idiot! You want to annoy him? Very well then, annoy him for all you're worth, but don't suffer for it. Let him take you out by all means—why, he's giving you the loveliest time! There! But do him harm where it hurts him most without getting yourself into trouble."

"That's not fair."

"Fair! Who wants to be fair? You want to be nasty! Go ahead and be nasty—and don't get caught!"

"But—but—it's no fun to annoy anybody secretly. I want him to know that I hate him."

Elisabeth shrugged.

"Do as you please. But you're a fool. It's certainly no fun to be naughty and get punished for it. It's much more fun to put one over the old boy and get chocolate on top of it!"

There was, of course, something in what Elisabeth said. But somehow it went against my grain. I felt that Elisabeth was much cleverer than I should ever be. I changed the subject.

"I say, what about your birthday? Any party?"

"No—not this year."

"Oh, what a shame! I did look forward to that."

"Well—I can't. Most of the kids won't come." She threw her curls back.

"Why ever not?"

"Mother!"

There was faint tinge of hostility in the way she spoke that word.

"Oh, those horrible, nasty brats!" said I furiously.

Elisabeth shrugged.

"Well, after all—mother is an enemy to our country I"

"Betty! What a horrible thing to say!"

"It's true, isn't it?"

"But, damn it ... which of those kids refused to come? Til beat the life out of them!"

"You'll do nothing of the kind. I did try—I mean, I did tell them mother was only my stepmother. I had to—they're getting an awful nuisance."

I sat speechless. Stepmother! I stared at my cousin in cold horror and then, seized by a terrific fury against everything and everybody, including my grandfather and those kids at school, some dark, undefinable power made me jump at Elisabeth. I hit hard and tore her curls. Soon we were rolling on the floor, beating each other up and screaming. We never heard the door opening. Only when I heard the horrified shoutings of Aunt Mary did I let go of Elisabeth. And a fine sight she was! All messed up, her frock torn, her hair hanging wildly about, her nose bleeding.

"Bessy, Reny, you—you impossible children!" In her bewilderment and disgust Aunt Mary fell into her mother-tongue. "Well, I never! Get up at once. Aren't you ashamed of yourselves?"

I picked myself up and grinned self-consciously. Elisabeth remained on the floor, howling and rubbing her arm.

"Renate, that little beast, said something about your being——"

I swung round and glared at my cousin. If she had the audacity to lie and say that I had said something horrible about her mother I'd kill her. But there was no need to worry. Aunt Mary looked first at her daughter and then at me, and very slowly a smile spread over her long, narrow face.

"I don't want to hear what any of you said," she retorted quietly. And then she gave me a long, searching look. I looked straight into her eyes, and all of a sudden I felt a terrific urge to put my arms around her neck and hug her. But I knew that Aunt Mary hated demonstrations of this sort, and just remained standing as though rooted to the ground in the middle of the chaotic nursery.

"I think Pd better run along home."

"There's no need for you to go, Reny," said my aunt. "I thought you were going to help me with my knitting."

"May I?"

"I'll come too," growled Elisabeth, with a black look at me. I knew those looks. They conveyed a silent message: If you as much as breathe a word about what happened I'll murder you!

But by this time I had lost a great deal of my fear of Elisabeth's blackmail, and Elisabeth, too, must have realised that her threats did not impress me any more.

"No, Bessy; I want you to finish your homework first. You may come in after you have finished your essay. Unless—Reny has already done that for you."

Aunt Mary's voice carried a faint tinge of irony. Yet she spoke with authority without being a bully.

"No, she has not!" said Elisabeth hotly, and scrambled to her feet, and without giving either of us another look she sat down at her desk and opened her exercise-book with a disgusted sigh.

I followed Aunt Mary into the drawing-room at the other end of the passage. There by the window, looking out on to a pleasant square with trees and flower-beds, stood her armchair and her work-basket. She directed me to pull up another chair and then we settled down silently and began to knit. Field-grey mittens for our soldiers. Aunt Mary knitted differently from myself. I often stared fascinatedly at her fingers. That was the English way to knit. And it suddenly dawned on me why Aunt Mary never knitted in public or at meetings. She then sewed, or rolled bandages for the wounded. Little did I realise at the time that exactly twenty-five years later I should omit to knit in public because everyone would immediately recognise my German way of knitting.

Our needles clicked and the clock on the desk chimed. Otherwise there was silence that September afternoon. Until I suddenly burst out: "Are you sometimes very home-sick, Aunt Mary?"

My aunt did not stop knitting. She looked steadily at her working hands and answered calmly: "Yes, Renate, I am."

"Do tell me about England!"

"What do you want to know?" she asked kindly.

"Oh—anything. What is England like? Is London very much like Hamburg? Have you got the same sort of streets and parks and things?"

"Yes, we have parks—wide, spacious green parks with lovely flowers and large, shady trees. And the town itself is different from any other town in the world. ..."

I did not interrupt Aunt Mary, who spoke now without pausing. She described her father's house in Westbourne Grove, she talked about Hampstead Heath and the river, about the countryside in spring, the rolling downs, the winding country lanes, the quaint little cottages tucked away among the sloping woods. She told me about the cathedrals and their ancient history, the North and its busy industrial towns, the white cliffs along the coast, the heather of Scotland, the red earth of Devon.

I was thrilled and fascinated. I hadn't travelled very far. My parents had taken me to the seaside or the small, inexpensive holiday resorts of the Harz. I knew from our geography lessons that there was much beauty in Europe and I was resolved to see it. And hadn't my father told me endless stories about the wonders of the world? But somehow I had the feeling that nobody had ever drawn a picture of any country more beautifully than Aunt Mary had of England. Nostalgia and true love for the country of her origin had lent that otherwise taciturn woman a gift of description that was far more powerful than the gift of many a detached writer of travel-books.

"England must be very lovely!" said I with conviction, and added that country to my already ample list of places I was resolved to visit.

"It is. To me it is the loveliest country in all the world." My aunt spoke without pathos.

And from that day onwards England to me was a vision of a million colours bathed in a haze of gold and blue. And never shall I forget the night when I gained my first impression of that country! It presented itself to my distressed eyes as a wet mass of greyish ugly houses, wrapped in fog and drizzle, with Liverpool Street Station in all its hideousness dominating the scene. A foreign traveller to England should be forbidden to arrive on an autumn eve at that particular station. Each stranger should be made to arrive in spring, at a West Coast port, and be carried off without delay into the heart of the loveliest country that God ever made.

From that afternoon onward there was a silent pact between Aunt Mary and myself. We never talked of England again. Outwardly we remained very much the same: an aunt and her niece. But inwardly we had become close friends. For life.

* * *

I reflect with amazement upon the strange, symbolic fact that at so early an age I should have made one enemy and one friend: my enemy being a Prussian civil servant who punished me for having my own convictions—my friend being a kind-hearted Englishwoman whose hands were tied, and who herself was a victim of the Great Upheaval. For in spite of the fact that Uncle Erich, too, was a soldier fighting for Kaiser and country, Aunt Mary remained lonely. Even my mother saw very little of her, and when she did she asked her to our home by herself, and without inviting anyone else. And yet I knew that my mother liked Aunt Mary very, very much. It was a miserable and confusing thought that my own mother should thus be influenced by public opinion and not stick to her own convictions. I knew that father would have acted differently. He would have knocked anybody down who would have dared to raise his voice against Aunt Mary. By-and-by I began to miss my father terribly.

He wrote regularly, and his letters were full of longing and love for mother and me. He was so much looking forward to his Christmas leave. But that leave never came off, for late in November we were notified by the Kriegs Ministerium that father was taken prisoner.

Prisoner for the first time. . . .
* * *

I have been asked fairly often how old I was during the Great War, and when I confessed that I was only a school-girl in pig-tails people beamed benevolently and said somewhat condescendingly: "Ah, but then of course you don't remember!"

It is true I am mercifully spared any vivid memories of death and destruction and other horrors of that War, which laid the foundation-stone to the House of Misery that mankind built. Yet, however trivial and commonplace the happenings of my war-time childhood might sound to a person who had actually been "in it," these little things resulted, as is so often the case in life in big events. Life is a great one for turning molehills into mountains, as the proverb has it. And one of the molehills in my life was Herr Hermann Gellhorn, although that might seem an inappropriate name for one so tall and big.

We were never well-off at any time of my childhood, but with father away and prices going up and myself growing out of all my clothes, and mummy insisting that I should continue to go to that expensive school, she had a really hard time of it, and it was Grandfather Dressel who put an end to her constant worries. Not that he gave her any money. Grandfather did not believe in that sort of thing. But he came to see us one afternoon, much to my annoyance, and squeezed my mother for all the details of her struggle (which is at any time an insolence unless one accompanies one's inquisitiveness by actual help). He boomed:

"You find it hard to pay the rent, Gretl? Well, why don't you take a bigger place?"

"Now really, father," began my mother. But he cut her short with a laugh.

"That sounds all wrong, doesn't it? But, believe me, it's all right. Because you could take a lodger or two, and live rent-free. How's that?"

The idea appealed to me enormously, although it came from Grandfather Dressel. But the prospect of moving, with all its muddle and excitement, was very much in my line. Anything for a change ! And besides, a new place always holds a certain quality of adventure for a child, because it gives scope for exploring and making new friends.

I was rather anxious lest my mother might not pursue this idea, but after grandfather had generously agreed to pay the moving expenses ("A loan, my dear, so as not to embarrass you!") she finally consented, and during the following weeks we set out in the afternoons to find a suitable place.

Unfortunately we never agreed on a place, for mother seemed to follow up ideas quite different from my own as to what an ideal flat should be like. Neither long, dark, winding corridors nor quaint attic rooms appealed to her, whereas I heartily disliked the straight-cut, unromantic rooms of her preference. But in the end we found something fairly decent. Ground-floor with a strip of garden (which to me seemed as near heaven as one could get), four medium-sized rooms, which I found uninspiring and dull, a tiny hall, kitchen, and bathroom.

"Mummy, there aren't any interesting corners !" complained.

"But there are some beautiful straight walls, where one can put one's furniture up properly." And then mother stopped dead. Furniture! We occupied only two rooms now and how were we to furnish two more?

That problem was solved by Aunt Mary, who offered us all her surplus stuff, and since Elisabeth had rather outgrown her nursery I was to have all her furniture. My heart

jumped at the idea of the lovely things I had secretly admired for so many years. If only they had not belonged to Elisabeth! It is hard even at ten years of age to accept from someone who does not give because he wants to give, but because he discards through lack of need. But if my cousin was rather high-handed about the whole thing, and bragged about the new rooms she was to have, Aunt Mary's tact and natural talent for giving made my joy of having my own white room all the sweeter. Aunt Mary proved a great help to mother in arranging the new flat.

Mother thought of taking either a married couple or two friends into the front rooms. But the people that were sent along by the agent all proved the wrong ones for some reason or another, and after a while mother began to wonder if it had been such a good idea to take this big place after all. In fact she looked more worried than ever. Grandfather Dressel was angry, and said she was much too fastidious, and probably wanted members of the Imperial Family to move in. But Grandmother Feldt, who visited us one Friday afternoon on her way to the Synagogue, said mother was quite right not to take any Tom, Dick, or Harry. And after she left mother found an envelope with some money inside and a note from grandmother: "Don't worry. God will help."

And then one winter afternoon, when I was all alone, doing my homework, and with mother out queueing up for food, the Lodger arrived. Whether he had been sent by God or the agent I did not quite know; the main thing was he arrived!

Mother had ordered me to open the door and, should there be a prospective tenant, to be civil and polite and bid them to wait for a few minutes. I was just trying to do sums (something I haven't learnt up to this day) when the bell rang. Relieved to be interrupted from a monotony that only rows of figures can present at any time, I raced to the door, accompanied by the barking and howling Hans, and there in the gas-lit dimness of the landing stood a man.

"Good evening," said I, with all the good manners I could muster.

"Hm—er—good evening, young lady. Is—er—anyone at home?"

"Have you come for the rooms?" asked I in return.

"I have—I have!" the stranger man smiled. He seemed to be a nice sort of person who brushed his teeth morning and night, for they gleamed whitely in his darkish face.

"Please come in. Mother is out shopping, but she won't be long."

"Thank you." The stranger stepped in and stood in the tiny hall. He seemed awfully big in that small place and I thought he might be more comfortable in one of the rooms. And maybe I could help matters along by persuading him to take one.

I opened the door and said: "Come in, please, sir." And he walked in.

"Is this the room?" he asked rather indifferently.

"It's one of them," I cried, rather on the defensive. I had an idea he did not think much of it. And yet this particular room had been furnished with the stuff out of father's "office." I was secretly rather unhappy that it should be let. I resented the idea of a stranger sitting at father's desk or resting on the old couch on which I had slept for so many years. But I felt I had to do my best to boost up the room because it would not have been fair to mother to spoil her chances for selfish reasons.

"Rather small—er—don't you think?" The stranger showed once more his beautifully brushed teeth.

"But look at all the lovely books!" I was rather fed-up with that man. How dare he say the room was small! Being small myself, and resenting it, I felt that the word "small" held a certain quality of disparagement.

"Yes—books. I have quite a few books myself. These—er—will have to go out. That is—er—if I take the room."

"But these are my father's books!" Now I was definitely bellicose.

He laughed. "You seem to be very fond of your father."

"Of course I am fond of my father." And I added somewhat proudly: "He is a prisoner of war!"

"Oh—he is—well—well."

The stranger had begun to wander about the room, looking at the packed shelves. Now and then he pulled out a book, opened it, turned a few pages and replaced it. He repeated this several times.

"Your father seems to be a well-read man, and a clever one at that."

That appeased me. Maybe he wasn't really so bad after all. We began to talk quite friendlyly about school, about his work (he was something at the Bloom and Voss Werften), and finally he told me that he was forty-one years old. Well, I knew from the beginning that he was an old man. And at that point I heard the click of the latchkey.

Mother, who had heard our voices, came straight into the room. It is strange that, of all the thousands of times that I have seen my mother walk into all kinds of rooms, this particular instant should have fastened itself upon my mind never to be forgotten. Out of the many childhood impressions only a few stand out clearly, all else is blurred and seems to have happened to quite a different person—some strange little girl with whom my grown-up self has nothing to do. And only memories like these bring it home to me that that same little girl is still there—bigger, taller, and older, and that one has not changed so much in quality as in quantity.

My mother stood in the open door, the long coat of the fashion of that period clinging to her slim figure, a wide-brimmed felt hat sitting on one side of her head and showing masses of fair hair, moist from the rain. There were also raindrops on her nose. Her cheeks were pink with cold, and her large eyes were very brilliant and very blue.

Mother looked particularly beautiful in the half-light that afternoon.

The strange man bowed politely and said that he had had a very interesting talk with the "little lady."

"I am sure Renate has talked too much as usual," said my mother, with an apologetic smile.

"Renate? Is that your name? What a beautiful name! Hm—yes—er—very beautiful, very beautiful indeed."

Lots of people had told me that they rather liked my name. But nobody had ever made such a fuss of it. And all the time the stranger stared at my mother.

He took both rooms there and then. And he had not even seen the other one. Some people are funny.

* * *

The entry of Herr Hermann Gellhorn made a remarkable difference to our lives. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that the mere letting of two rooms could change things so completely. At first, therefore, I regarded the tall, quiet man as an answer to all our prayers, and I was terribly sorry that my father was not there to enjoy all the luxuries that our lodger brought in his wake. Mother bought masses of new clothes for herself and me, and also many pretty things for the flat. That man seemed to pay a fortune for those two rooms. But I never asked my mother how much he actually did pay. Mother always discouraged me from discussing financial matters. It wasn't nice, she told me, to ask people about their incomes or to mention money at all. That was really rather queer. Because money seemed to be something frightfully important, and if something was so important, then why the devil was it rude to talk about it?

But as time went on I learnt to dislike Herr Gellhorn intensely, because he ceased to be a mere lodger and instead made himself the head of the household. He suggested alterations in the flat; he questioned me about my progress at school and demanded to see my homework; he told my

mother which frocks she should wear; he took all his meals with us instead of in his own room, as he had done in the beginning. On Sundays he took my mother out and sent me off to the park or to visit a friend. And finally he decreed that little girls have to be in bed at eight-thirty, whereas mummy had allowed me to stay up until nine. That put my back up. Mother had never broken her word, but now she suddenly declared that Herr Gellhorn was quite right and that eight-thirty was the proper time for me to be off to bed.

The fact that Herr Gellhorn succeeded in making my mother go back on her word infuriated me far more than the actual going-to-bed business. That in itself was bad enough. At no time of my life have I needed much sleep, and to this day I marvel at people who drop off the minute their heads touch the pillow. Oh, how often have I wished for a natural, gentle fatigue to overcome me and make me fall peacefully asleep! I am always so damnably wide-awake, and there is no lonelier business in the world than to lie in bed and listen to the odd noises of night when the rest of the world is blissfully asleep. I have watched countless people in their sleep—in dormitories, in night trains, in hospital, in air-raid shelters—and I have found that there is no barrier more unsurmountable than that which sleep puts up. The sleeping person has gone away into some mysterious, intangible land into which those who are awake have no admittance. But insomnia also has its good points. The sleepless nights of my childhood plus my fury against Herr Gellhorn plus the longing for my father set my imagination aflame, and as I lay there in Betty's discarded bed with the pink coverlet I began to tell myself tales. I must confess that they were not entirely of my own making and therefore not fearfully original. But then, what tale is really quite original? And dare one blame the author of any tale for telling a story that has been written before, when the greatest narrator of all, History, repeats itself?

Later on I found different ways of passing the solitary hours of wakefulness. I waited until I felt pretty sure that Gellhorn was asleep and then lit a candle (I spent most of my pocket-money on candles in those days) and read. There was a plentiful supply of literature in father's library, and since nobody told me what to read I just read anything and everything I could lay hands on. At that age I was too old to enjoy fairy tales and too young to appreciate them. But I liked the heroes of both legend and history. The Saga of the Nibelungs fascinated me to a point of hysteria. Everyone around me became a figure from that rather overcrowded tale, and it was natural that Herr Gellhorn was identical with the sinister Hagen of Tronje. And who else could possibly take the part of heroic Siegfried than my own dearly beloved and much-longed-for father, in spite of the fact that that dark-haired, gentle creature, with the large, brown melancholic eyes, was the direct opposite of the fair, thoroughly teutonic and certainly completely "aryan" medieval hero!

From the Nibelungs to the sinister and drab figures of Russian literature is certainly a long step, but I took it in my stride. Siegfried faded into oblivion and Alyoscha of the Brothers Karamazoff became my idol. He, however, was quickly replaced by the slightly more colourful personality of Cesare Borgia, until that morbidly dashing and elegant gentleman had to make room for Napoleon's unhappy son, the Due de Reichstadt, whose biography! read three times in succession from cover to cover. The tragic fate of the little Eagle tore at my heartstrings. He satisfied my hunger for sympathising, which is at any time a good thing, especially for a female. One could admire Siegfried, despise Alyoscha, fear Borgia—but one was **sorry for Reichstadt! God, was I sorry!**

sorry for Reichstadt! God, was I sorry! M
reading. In fact, as time went on, mother seemed to lose all interest in me, and I felt very lonely during that third year of the War. I did not like my home any more, because,

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of late, Herr Gellhorn brought his friends to our flat, and if he was a nasty specimen of mankind, his friends were worse. They drank any amount of beer, they sang, they laughed noisily, and voiced the hope that the War should last for ever. They all had a lot of money and intended to make plenty more. My mother seemed to enjoy their company, which made me terribly unhappy. Grandfather Dressel visited us more often than ever before. He and Gellhorn got on like a house on fire, and I heard the old man say to my mother that she was very lucky to have a man like Gellhorn about the house, and what a crying shame it was that she was not married to that level-headed, sound fellow instead of being hooked up with a dreamy, good-for-nothing little Jew, who for all we knew might be dead and buried. Why didn't the fellow write? Other prisoners of war wrote through the Red Cross organisation. He was either dead or else didn't want to write home, but would vanish after the War so that he would be rid of all responsibility towards his family.

This sort of talk made my blood run cold. Maybe grandfather was right! Maybe father was dead and would never, never come back ! It was queer that he never wrote. Elli Franken's father was a prisoner of war in Siberia and he wrote through the Red Cross. So did Leni Herzog's brother Gerd. Get rid of us ! Why? He loved us both much too much to do such a thing! In my heart of hearts I knew that father was alive and that there was a very good reason why we heard nothing. Oh, if only this beastly War would be over! I had none of the enthusiasm of my fellow-pupils at school. Every five minutes we celebrated some sort of victory. We had killed so many thousand Russians and so many thousand French and so many thousand English, and everyone seemed to enjoy it tremendously! Except Grandmother Feldt and Aunt Mary. Each of those two, in their respective language and their own creed, prayed continuously for peace. Peace! At school we were constantly reminded that the glorious

War was being fought to make the world a safer place for us. US. My generation.

"You children will reap the harvest of what our brave men out there are sowing! You are young! You have the whole of your lives before you! Just think—when you will be our age the world will be a happy paradise," said Dr Burckmeister, the history mistress.

(*Whizz—crump—bang!* That's paradise out there, Dr Burckmeister. A blacked-out, bomb-ridden, blasted, burning paradise.)

Mummy was out a great deal in those days. It happened more and more frequently that she wasn't even in when I came home from school. We had an arrangement that the key would lie under the mat and the dinner be in the oven. I ate a number of solitary meals in the company of Hans, my dog, who sat by my chair and watched every bite I took with hungry eyes. I knew then that mother had forgotten to get dinner for him. I shared my food with Hans, and little enough food it was. Meat once a fortnight. No sweets. No fats. How I longed sometimes to sneak into Gellhorn's room and break into his corner cupboard where, I knew, he was hiding all sorts of precious foodstuffs. How I knew? I had overheard a conversation between him and Grandfather Dressel. They thought I was asleep and talked in the passage outside my door.

"Got everything, old man ! Every damned thing under the sun! Have a look !I keep the things under lock-and-key and never let that brat see them. She talks too much."

"Get butter?" I heard my grandfather ask eagerly.

"Butter? That's nothing. I have even got cocoa, rice, pure coffee, ham, honey—every damned thing I want. Plenty of stuff about. You only have to keep your eyes and your purse open."

"You are right not to tell my granddaughter anything about this. She might get you into trouble."

" Exactly. Come on, let's have a decent meal. I believe Gretl has laid the table in my sitting-room."

And off they went.

Gretl! That was my mother. . . . She knew then about these foodstuffs which Gellhorn got in some forbidden way. Why else should he make such a secret about them? And she kept a secret from me! Didn't mother trust me? I was bitterly hurt, and there were times when I seriously contemplated running away. But where could I run to? My Grandparents Feldt would certainly send me back to mother. And so would Aunt Mary. No; it was perhaps better to stick it out until the miserable War was over and my father was back. Then—everything would be all right! The natural and perfectly normal longing for my father turned into something unnatural and unhealthy. Hitherto I had been attached to my father with filial love and admiration. But now I began to idolise him, see in him a sort of saviour, a hero and martyr, a demigod who, one day, would come walking through the door and with one gesture of his hand sweep away my misery and open for me the very gates of heaven!

Meanwhile the afternoons of that late summer were endless. My homework took up very little time. I was cursed with an excellent memory, and although I never worked seriously I was top of my class, and stayed there without any effort on my part. Sometimes I went to visit one or other of my schoolmates. But somehow I never got frightfully intimate with any one of them. Most of them were the daughters of very rich parents, and even the fact that their fathers were soldiers made little difference. They had their "Kinderfrauleins," they gave their regular children's parties, they were prim and proper young ladies already at the age of eleven, little Prussian prigs who bragged and boasted when one of their male relatives had "fallen on the field of honour." Cousin Elisabeth was, of course, boycotted because of her mother and I felt really sorry for her. I had forgotten our rows, and tried to

assure her that she didn't miss much even if she was not invited to the children's parties.

"Oh, but I do miss everything !" she cried. "All those lovely games and sewing-bees and outings!"

"If it makes you any happier, I won't go to any of them any more."

"Don't be a fool, Renate. Why should you suffer because of my English mother?"

"Oh, I wouldn't suffer so much. I don't care much for those kids, and besides—your mother is my aunt, and they might as well know that I like her a damned sight better than the bunch of them rolled together."

"I'd give my life to go to Elionor von Trcstow's birthday party!" exclaimed Elisabeth dramatically.

"I wouldn't give a damn to be anywhere where I wasn't wanted."

"That's easy to say when you are asked!"

"Well, just to show you—I shan't go."

Elisabeth stared at me in wonderment. And suddenly she flung her arms around my neck.

"You are not going because I wasn't asked; isn't that it?"

I freed myself and shouted at her: "Let go of me! Don't be silly. I am not going because I—I don't like the Trestows."

Elisabeth sat on the table and dangled her long legs. She looked away when she asked me: "D'you do all this because you like me?"

"Certainly not. Because I don't like you. Nor do you really like me. You are only nice to me now because you haven't got anyone else. But we are cousins and might as well stick together."

"That's a fine way to talk!"

"Well, it's true, isn't it?"

"One doesn't tell people to their faces that one dislikes them. It isn't polite," said Elisabeth primly.

"Who wants to be polite I I for one want to be honest.

And besides, do you think it's very polite of those brats at school to make you suffer for the fact that your mother was born in England?" I asked furiously.

"They are merely patriotic and do what their parents tell them."

"Your father is a German soldier. Doesn't that count anything with them?"

"Obviously not."

"Oh, come on, and let's forget those miserable kids at school. Done the essay?"

"No."

We settled down at her desk and Elisabeth opened her exercise-book, looking at me expectantly. The essay was to be about Wilhelm Tell.

"All right, let's go," said I, and my cousin put a new nib into her pen, licked it, dipped it into the ink and wrote nicely and tidily in the top-left corner: "Gott strafe England." And then in the centre of the next line: "Wilhelm Tell, a study in generosity and justice."

* * *

That night I lay awake longer than usual. I stared into the darkness of my room until that darkness became dimness and the contours of the furniture became visible. That short time between plunging the room into blackness and getting used to it until I could at least see some shapes and shadows was always a nightmare to me. My eyes are weak, and I am completely night-blind. (And that, of course, adds one more attraction to the howling "paradise" outside my four walls!) I lay flat on my back, with my hands folded under my head, and gazed at a point where I knew my little dressing-table stood. And when I finally picked out its shape I settled down to do some serious thinking. I tried awfully hard to get to terms with "life." People around me were queer all right! Grandfather Dressel punished me for not allowing him to abuse my father. Herr Gellhorn professed to be a

terrific patriot and yet bought foodstuffs at super prices and hid them. Betty was treated rottenly by our fellow-pupils because of her mother's nationality, but instead of kicking their teeth in kept hankering after their silly parties.

And the queerest of the lot was certainly my mother. I had never known her to raise her voice or to lose her temper. She had never forgotten anything concerning our home, never been late for a meal, never spent a penny more than was absolutely necessary. And now she was often irritable and shouted at me for no particular reason; she was hardly ever in at dinner-time, and forgot to pay the baker for five weeks in succession. She, who always scolded me for being untidy, left all sorts of dirty dishes and food remnants in the kitchen. That wasn't like mummy at all! I had an idea that this change in her had something to do with Gellhorn. If only I had a friend in whom I could confide! But I felt vaguely and instinctively that it would be extremely mean to talk about my mother with any member of the family. It should be somebody who had nothing to do with us at all.

If only those horrible people would go away! I could hear them laughing and giggling and playing the gramophone. There was something frightening in their gaiety, and the worst of it was, mother was in there too. Full of resentment and anger I cried myself to sleep. I had even forgotten to say my prayers.

* * *

It was after the Michaelmas holidays of that same year when God gave me a friend. I was rather keen on going to school at all times, but lately that large, red-brick building at the corner of Ulmen Weg and Johannes Strasse had become the only place where I felt really happy. Not that I cared very much for our teachers. Except for Fraulein Dr Burckmeister they were a dry and pinched-looking assortment of old maids. But I had come to hate

my home so much that school seemed paradise. And learning was just child's play to me. I disliked physical drill and didn't care much for natural history and arithmetic. Rows of figures still defeat me, and as for taking flowers and insects apart—well, it bored and horrified me. I shall never forget that incident one morning, when Professor Weber made me pull a dead bee to pieces and I screamed with horror and got the cane. But then, the word child-psychology had not yet crept into the everyday language of my enlightened ex-fellow-countrymen.

But I did like geography, history, literature, and languages. In fact everything where one could use one's imagination. Not that I didn't use that rather freely when it came to the scientific subjects. What I didn't do to the most fundamental chemical or physical formulas is nobody's business! No, I was not cut out to be an exact and meticulous scientist!

Dr Burckmeister was our geography and history mistress during that term, and if my father had awakened my interest in foreign countries by his story-telling, she kindled that small flame and transformed it into a blazing fire of travel fever. That fever has eaten its way so deep into my mind that I never see a train, a boat, or a plane without getting a lump in my throat and a pain in my chest. But I am afraid the screens of the movie theatres have to be the poor substitute for the real thing. And, like every substitute, it leaves you worse off for want.

Elisabeth, of course, hated school altogether. The only lessons she did enjoy were music and physical drill, for Betty had a pretty voice and a lovely, slim, supple body with which she could perform miracles. But as for geography or any other subject she was hopeless. She would as soon make Montreal the capital of Mexico as she would crown Abraham Lincoln King of Scotland. Her memory was appalling, her indifference unsurpassed. I wrote every one of her essays, and I regretted that she could not do my physical drill for me in return. How I hated

to stand on my head! And how I loathed Fraulein Krone for telling us that every German girl ought to be able to stand on her head! If those excellent pedagogues of my schooldays had taught the German girls to stand on their feet, and use their heads for thinking, the whole of Europe might look different to-day. If—if—one more of the famous "Ifs in History"!

But bombs fell then as they fall now. Only I didn't know anything about them then. It was Christine Ullmann who told us about them. Christel (now Dr Christine Ullmann) was the new girl in our form when the fresh term started. She was a refugee from the Ruhr, where English and French bombs were driving the population east and where the thunder of the big guns across the Rhine made life in that district hell. Christel always manages to get her war at her front door. She is one of those young women of Europe around whom, one day, a hundred years hence, a ballad will be written, if indeed there will be enough people left to practise the beautiful if unprofitable art of writing.

Christel was a nervous kid. Every time a door banged she started, and when a motor-bike passed anywhere near the school she grew green in the face and whispered "Planes!" The other children pulled her leg and scared her on purpose. I thought that mean. But then didn't I know those foul little prigs well enough from their behaviour towards Elisabeth!

There were only two other girls who were really trying to help Christel to forget her experience of planes and bombs—Hilde Harmann and Elisabeth. Hilde was a decent, quiet girl who wouldn't hurt a fly, and Betty, of course, made herself agreeable to everybody these days, because she was friendless. It did not take long before Christel asked me to come and see her, and I jumped at the offer. One could talk to Christel. She was as good a listener then as she is now, when I pace her room like a mad lion, raving at this, cursing that, building castles in

the air and smashing them up in the same breath. Her judgment is sound, her criticism never destructive. Christel offers a good example for the theory that human beings change very little fundamentally from the day they are born. She was as level-headed at the age of eleven as she is now. Only at the sound of an enemy plane does she grow pale and scared.

Her mother was a wonderful woman. With Professor Ullmann, eye specialist, away at the front at Stabsarzt, Frau Professor Ullmann, after her flight from Essen, took up music teaching at a private girls' school. The Ullmanns had many relatives in Hamburg and, as far as Christel knows, still have. Every time a bomb comes whizzing down in our neighbourhood Christel disguises her terror with such a remark as: "That might have been cousin Gerhardt. He never had any manners/"

It was Frau Ullmann who awakened in me a love for music. She was an expert pianist and often, when she came home from school, would sit down at their hired baby grand and play to us. I had had little opportunity to hear classical music except at our regular school concerts. But they were truly dreary affairs, for the pupils did their damnest to make Bach and Mozart sound like the wailing of the tortured souls in Hell!

But when Frau Ullmann played a sonata by Beethoven something happened inside me. Never is the human mind more receptive than during adolescence, when one emerges from the land of fairy tales into the world of realities. And there was certainly no lack of realities for us German kids! Crippled brothers, dead fathers, overworked, hungry mothers, freezing children, hatred and hysteria. We took it all as a matter of course, because we didn't know any better. And into that world of misery in general, and my world of resentment and unhappiness in particular, suddenly floated Music, and beautifully interpreted music at that. At first I just listened. But as time went on I began to see pictures and colours before my mental eye. And later

still certain pieces of music would give me the sensation of acute joy or pain. My favourites at that time were Chopin and Schubert. And there is one of Chopin's nocturnes which I still cannot hear without seeing that little, brightly furnished room in a Hamburg villa, and without feeling a sharp, sweet pain half-way down my back. After Frau Ullmann had played that for the first time I cried: "It's so beautiful, it almost hurts!"

And she looked kindly at me and said: "I must go to your mother and talk to her about letting you learn an instrument. You are highly musical."

"Oh no—no! You see, my mother is terribly busy."

Not for the world did I want Christel's mother to come to my home. I told Christel so when we were alone.

"But why ever not? Mother won't mind even if that awful lodger of yours is at home. After all, your mother earns her living by letting her two front rooms just as my mother is earning hers by teaching music. We just couldn't live on father's pay alone."

"I'm not ashamed of my mother's letting rooms. But—oh, I can't explain—somehow I'm scared!"

A child is never scared without a good reason and I sensed that something was desperately wrong at home.

Christel did not ask of what I was scared. She simply said: "Soon this War will be over and our fathers will be home and—everything will be all right."

"Yes. Oh, Christel, let's pray for peace every night at the same time, shall we?"

"That's a good idea."

* * *

There was not very much to look forward to that Christmas. All the good things of that typically German family-festival were out of reach. The presents, the sweets and cakes, and the roast goose were things of the past—and possibly of the future. The only excitement in anticipating Christmas was offered by the packing of parcels for the soldiers, and I had not even a soldier to pack

a parcel for. My personal soldier was missing, or possibly dead, and I slowly began to give up hope of ever seeing my father again. Mummy never mentioned him, nor did Grandmother and Grandfather Feldt. I believe Grandfather Feldt even said "Kaddish" (the Jewish prayer for the dead) for his only son. Grandfather had aged terribly during those years of war. His beard was quite grey, his face drawn, and often, when he thought himself unobserved, he clasped his side and pulled a painful grimace.

"His heart is breaking," said my grandmother. "He won't admit it, but his heart is breaking."

Early that November Uncle Erich came on leave. Naturally, Aunt Mary and Elisabeth were overjoyed, and we were all terribly glad to see him. But his home-coming also brought it home more poignantly to us that the family was incomplete without my father. Christel Ullmann's father, too, was due for Christmas leave, and most of my schoolmates were busy putting the finishing touches to their respective socks, scarves, and mittens. My sadness became fury. A lovely Christmas it was going to be with Herr Gellhorn as head of the household and Grandfather Dressel probably hanging about most of the time. Oh, those cursed holidays! Fourteen days without school! Christel would be far too busy to see much of me, and I could only hope that Aunt Mary would invite me a lot.

I also knew that my mother was none too keen on those holidays. I heard her say to Gellhorn: "The child will be home for two whole weeks. Whatever will I do with her? And there is not even a pantomime this year."

(Pantomime 1 As though those silly fairy tales interested me 1 I knew, and had known for years, that all that Santa "Glaus business was eyewash and kid-stuff!)

"Dump her on her precious grandparents!" growled Gellhorn.

"You can't let the child always sit around with old people. It's no fun for her."

"Hasn't she got aay friends at school?"

"She doesn't make friends easily."

"And no wonder! She is not exactly lovable as brats go. Not that I think much of kids anyway, they're a damned nuisance all round, but some of them are at least civil! Your little niece is much more in my line, although her mother is a damned Briton! That girl has decent manners and knows her place."

"Elisabeth is better-mannered—but I think she's not always quite honest."

"Good for her. A fat lot you get out of life if you are."

"Well, I don't know—I rather like Renate for being straight."

"Oh, you'd better think of a good plan to get her out of the way for a bit. We want to have a good time."

"I'll see what I can do."

I was numb with horror. So—they wanted me out of the way over Christmas? Not only Gellhorn, but my mother too. All right! I'd show them. I'd run away. And then let them worry and run after me and search for me all over the town. I made the wildest plans that night in bed, and the next day, one day before the holidays began, I told Christel. She listened without interrupting me and I painted a truly stirring picture of a poor child wandering about in the dark, cold streets of Hamburg, living on dry bread, when she suddenly said:

"You can't have the bread. You haven't got your ration card."

Oh, blissful age of glowing adventure! When a child's dream of running away from home is rudely shattered by so unromantic a thing as a ration card! Children of every generation have wanted to run away from home. But only a child of my generation could have had such sober and practical considerations as Christel had then. Well, there was nothing for it but to give up my plan. I resolved to stay at home and suffer. I had not quite reached the stage where one rather goes hungry than be humiliated. That came later.

But I did look ahead to a dull and dreary time and I counted the days for school to start again.

It was two days before Christmas Eve. In the early afternoon I had gone to visit the Feldts. Grandfather had at last consented to lie down and let grandmother nurse his aching heart. The atmosphere had been sad and depressing and I was rather glad to get away. At dusk I walked home on foot, lingering before the shop-windows, which displayed precious little. All the toys consisted of guns and cannons and tin soldiers, which bored me. I spent, however, one mark of my pocket-money on a tiny slab of ersatz chocolate, a truly horrible concoction of malt and saccharine, and another mark on a pad of grey, coarse writing-paper, for I had decided to use my endless holidays for starting my first novel. Not a bad resolution at the age of eleven! But I had stored up so much resentment and fury, and I was so lonely and unhappy, that I simply burst with self-pity, and many a first novel springs from that very source. That is why a "first novel" very often remains the only novel a person ever writes.

Thus armed with paper and ersatz chocolate, and resolved to find ersatz relief in pouring forth my fury against Herr Gellhorn upon the innocent grey paper, I entered our flat and found it empty, except for Hans. There was a note on the table in the hall, saying that mother would not return home until late and that I was to take whatever I fancied from the larder. I had the terrific choice between warming up some thin potato-soup or eating bread, marge, and syrup of swedes.

I did not feel hungry. It may be that the ersatz chocolate had momentarily taken away my appetite, or it may be that my spiritual hunger for expressing myself silenced the growling of my more or less empty stomach. I left the cold soup in its enamel grave and went into my room. I drew the curtains, switched on my little table-lamp, and wrapped myself in a rug and sat down before the writing-pad, pencil in hand, death in my heart, and ersatz chocolate

in my stomach, to begin there and then my up-to-date obscure career as a writer. And then the bell rang.

On the short route along the passage I calculated who on earth could be calling on us at this hour. The afternoon mail had been over an hour ago. My schoolmates never called after dusk, because their mothers did not permit them to walk about in war-time Hamburg except in broad daylight. Aunt Mary usually announced herself by postcard the day before she intended to call. Grandfather Dressel? Hope not! And at that point I had reached the front door and opened it reluctantly. Outside stood a man. It was a soldier in a greatcoat, with his cap in one hand. He wore a small beard and large moustaches.

"Yes?"

He stood quite still and said nothing. And again I inquired: "Yes?"

And then the soldier moved. In fact, he seemed to sway. I suddenly felt awfully sick. My head whirled and my ears hurt with the blood rushing to my face. And then the soldier stretched out his arms and I let out a yell. We clung to each other on the landing without moving. And at last I sobbed:

"Come in, father—come in! I'm all alone."

* * *

My father's home-coming marked the end of one more chapter of my childhood. If I had hoped that with his return the gates of paradise would open I was sadly mistaken. For my father was no longer the smiling, story-telling, dreaming creature of my memories. His smile had changed into a painful grin; his stories no longer dealt with fairy princesses and magicians but with the bloody realities of war; and his dreaminess had given way to long-lasting attacks of apathy and depression. I noticed the change the very first evening when we sat together in the kitchen, where I hastily prepared some malt-coffee and cut black, coarse bread, which I spread with margarine and syrup of swedes.

Very few people, whether eleven or thirty-one years old, realise that the other fellow's problems are much more vital to him than one's own, even if that other fellow happens to be one's father. I was taken aback and disappointed that my father did not seem to take my personal grievances and worries seriously enough. I flooded him with tales of Herr Gellhorn and Grandfather Dressel and the nasty kids at school who boycotted Elisabeth, and I expected him to rise up and with one sweeping gesture "do something drastic" about my misery. Next to God the Almighty my father was the only creature with real authority, who could do anything short of performing miracles. That privilege I left generously to the Lord. But father did not say very much. He sipped his coffee and chewed his bread, and then smoked one cigarette after another, and his only comment on my breathless narrative was a short nod here, or a more or less indifferent "Really?" there.

I began to realise that my father was no longer interested in our domestic affairs. Why, he wasn't even surprised that we had moved! After all these years I apologise to my father for having blamed him so bitterly at the time because he did not find it very remarkable that his wife and child should have moved from one district to another, whilst he himself had crossed half a continent in his flight from a Russian prison camp with the fear of recapture or death tearing at his nerves; and that the petty restrictions which Herr Gellhorn imposed on me should have seemed to him a trifling matter compared with the ghastly horrors he had seen and experienced. He did not talk about his adventures that first night at home, in fact he never told the full story for a long, long time. All we found out during the next few weeks was that he and another soldier, who had been his fellow-fugitive, had reported back to their unit three weeks ago and, after having received the Iron Cross for bravery and endurance, had been sent home on long leave. It took father many years to digest his

fantastic adventures during his flight through topsy-turvy, revolutionary Russia, until, as is the case with all artistic and creative people, his sufferings underwent a strange metamorphosis and finally sublimated into that world-famous book, *No Hero At All* the book for the success of which he paid so dearly.

Father did not even seem to mind that mother was out. He thought it natural. After all, she had no idea that he was coming home, and like a fool he had wanted to surprise us.

"Daddy, aren't you completely on edge with excitement? Aren't you counting the minutes till mummy walks in?"

"Of course, of course, Renate!" But somehow he did not sound very convincing. I had an idea he looked a little scared. Fancy my father being scared of anything! I looked at the kitchen clock. It was getting on for eight. It would probably be hours before my mother would come home. And I itched to see her face when she would walk in and see father. And Gellhorn's face! And hoped and prayed that father and Gellhorn would dislike each other intensely and that father would throw him out, together with his trunks and his damned smuggled food-stuffs. I hinted something to that effect, but father shook his head.

"My dear child, you may not like this lodger, and for all I know he may not be a very lovable person. But surely one cannot throw a man into the street for no particular reason at all."

"I bet you'll loathe him!" said I with emphasis.

"I hope not! You see, child, if your mother can make a descent living out of letting those rooms, instead of having to take a very hard war-job at some factory, I should be jolly grateful for this man Gellhorn affording her a little comfort."

"But he's mean and he's got a lot of horrible friends, and—oh—father—don't go away again, and if you do—take me with you I"

I stood next to father's chair and suddenly thrust my

arms around his neck and sobbed. He pulled me on to his knee.

"There now, Renate—whatever is the matter with you? Don't carry on like this! Heavens, girl, you are almost a young lady, and you should be a help and a comfort to your mother. Instead you behave like a selfish baby with crazy ideas. I will not have it. I want my girl to be reasonable, reliable, and unselfish. After all, you're not having a very bad time. Think of the poor, unfortunate children who have lost their fathers and whose mothers are away all day!"

I was confused. I could at that age not formulate the proper answer: "I too have lost my father and my mother is also away all day." With the self-centred intolerance of youth, and suffering youth at that, I simply refused to understand my father. The fact that he, the tired, weary Hero, did not immediately speak and act according to my wishes and demands filled me with renewed resentment and bitterness, and thus, my father constituted the first man to disappoint me thoroughly through no fault of his own. I heard the gates of paradise slam to.

The most poignant memory of those particular Christmas holidays was the fact that father and Gellhorn, once they did meet, got on well. Gellhorn proved himself the kind of person I still loathe and detest from the very roots of my existence—the perfect opportunist. He was charming. He was polite. He was helpful. He did everything within his power to make my father's first leave a true festival. My mother looked more beautiful and more radiant than ever before. At the age of eleven I was blissfully oblivious of the fact that certain women flourish and become more attractive when the number of their lovers increases.

Grandfather Dressel seemed to have forgotten that my father was a "good-for-nothing little Jew" and duly admired his Iron Cross, and slapped his back and boomed: "Well done, my boy, well done indeed I"

Gellhorn told my father, with a kind, benevolent smile, that he had taken it upon him to "be a substitute father to the little girl," and that "a fatherless child was apt to run wild and this little lady was quite a handful."

I could have kicked his beautiful white teeth right down his throat, for I sensed the hypocrisy and foulness of his smooth kindness. But what was the use? My father nodded happily and was glad that "his little girl was looked after." He had shaved off his beard and his moustaches, because mummy had protested against being kissed by a "caveman of prehistoric appearance," and I saw now that father's face was very thin and lined, and that his large, dark eyes seemed more enormous than ever.

The old Feldts were overjoyed to see their only son at home. Grandmother outdid herself as regards cooking and baking, and in spite of the shortage of everything she performed miracles. Grandfather said a thousand blessings both in German and Hebrew, but his poor old heart proved too weak to stand this unexpected and surprising joy. Shortly before the end of the old year, on a Friday night at the Synagogue, grandfather collapsed in the middle of his sermon, and with the words: "Scholaum becol Jisroel" (Peace be with Israel) he died of heart failure.

I have vague recollections of an icy-cold, windy, wet day at the Jewish cemetery far out of Hamburg, of a sad little shivering procession and the doleful voice of a brother Rabbi of my late grandfather who spoke the Prayer for the Dead. I saw my little, birdlike grandmother stand quietly by the open grave, a picture of deep sorrow and intense grief; I s^aw my father's tears dripping down on to his tunic; I saw Aunt Mary and Great-Uncle Simon looking embarrassed and sad; I saw my mother sobbing and clutching father's hand. I myself howled out of sheer sentimentality, for although I had respected and liked Grandfather Feldt greatly I was not really all that heart-broken. But the Hebrew prayers pulled at my heartstrings, and there and then, in that damp, miserable, windy cemetery,

the Jewish strain in my blood seemed to call forth to my heart much stronger than ever before. Maybe it was the simplicity and lack of pomp which marks a Jewish funeral that appealed to me. Maybe—the fact that by sheer coincidence my dead grandfather compared so favourably with my living Grandfather Dressel—I don't know what it was—but I suddenly felt intensely Jewish. I stared at the star of David which adorned the simple black cloth over grandfather's coffin and then into the set and mournful face of the bearded Rabbi, and knew with poignant clarity: this is where I belong. It was probably only coincidence that after the funeral, when we stood together by the entrance gate of the cemetery in a small group, Dr Kahlmann, the Rabbi, asked me if I had been properly confirmed.

"She hasn't," said my father in my stead. "My wife is not a Jewess, and I wish my daughter to choose her own course."

"And for that she is too young," said my mother quickly.

"No, I'm not!" declared I. "I am a Jewess. And I wish to be confirmed."

"Good! Good!" cried the Rabbi.

"Oh!" said my mother. And my father also said "Oh!"—but there was a hint of joy in his voice.

"Your late grandfather was a dear friend of mine, Renate. If you will call on me next Monday afternoon we can discuss the times when you will have your lessons. I shall teach you the history of our people and also the necessary Hebrew. Peace be with you." And the Rabbi walked away.

* * *

All my life I have been fascinated by anything new, and particularly the secrets of a new language invariably succeeded in arresting my otherwise drifting imagination. I was keenly looking forward to my lessons at Dr Kahlmann's. With a zest and steadfastness that is quite

alien to my character I made myself familiar with the strange sounds and signs of the language of my forefathers, and listened most attentively to the history of the Jews, which Dr Kahlmann taught from quite a different angle than our Religion mistress at school. He did not attempt to cram dates and names of historic places into my head, he rendered the story of the children of Israel as a mixture of philosophy, history, and religion, and threw an explanatory light upon the sometimes queer and incomprehensible rites and customs of our creed. The manifold little things that Grandfather Feldt had performed, and at which I sometimes giggled in ignorance, suddenly took on meaning and, in the light of my newly acquired knowledge, changed from the ridiculous into the sublime. Dr Kahlmann deplored the fact that so many of our co-religionists had departed from the ancient customs and habits of Judaism, but he was by no means rigidly intolerant towards his more liberally-minded brethren. I liked Dr Kahlmann apart from respecting him. He had wit, gentleness, and a wealth of knowledge, and when my lessons came to an abrupt end I was very sorry. And so, I believe, was he.

But in the month of February of that fateful year 1918 it was suddenly decided upon that I should go away to a girls' boarding school. I did not mind leaving home, for, after my father had gone back to the Front, life was very much as before, and where, before my father's unexpected appearance, I had had the consolation of day-dreams concerning the drastic changes he would bring about, I was now left to the certain knowledge that he wouldn't do a thing. Not only did he not throw Gellhorn out on his ears, he actually thanked him profusely for "being such a help all round" 1 Well, daddy, I've had ample opportunity to find out from whom I inherited my blind, stupid, unworldly trustfulness. Taking people at their face-value, believing everything I hear, and putting a sense of sincerity into the most outworn platitudes—those are the legacy you left to your daughter. But I don't really mind. I

firmly believe it's better to receive a few hefty blows of disappointment than to nose one's way through life with an eternal snivel of suspicion and cautiousness.

One day after dinner my mother called me out into the kitchen, and handing me a dishcloth to dry the crockery she suddenly said:

"As you probably know, your late grandfather left your father a small sum of money. Your father intends to use this money entirely for your education. It is his wish that you should go to college and later to the University, and take your degree for whatever faculty you think you are suited best. In the meantime we have decided that it will be very good for you to leave home for a while and go to a girls' boarding school. We have chosen a very good place in the heart of Thuringia. You should like it there very much."

"But, mummy, our school is a high school, and I can make my matric——"

"It has been decided that you should go away."

"Oh, all right. I don't mind."

My mother continued to explain at great length how lovely it would be for me to be with a lot of other girls in such wonderful surroundings as Thuringia, with its forests and mountains and historic places. I did not really listen very carefully. I was puzzled, and I wondered if father really wanted me to go or if this was one of Gellhorn's bright ideas. But a few days later a letter from daddy from the Front cleared my doubts away. He stated that it was his particular wish that I should go and that I should make the most of the first-class education I was to enjoy. Well, that was settled. I gave a little farewell party to Christine Ullmann and cousin Elisabeth. Christel was very sad to see me leave, but Betty sniffed:

"Girls' boarding school in Thuringia! Why, that's no fun. I am going to stick it here until I am seventeen and then my parents will send me to a proper finishing school in French Switzerland!"

"But the French are our enemies!" cried Christel.

"Oh—well," murmured Elisabeth, and changed the subject. Later on I made my farewell visits to lonely Grandmother Feldt, who was about to disperse her flat and move over to the Simon Feldts'. I went to Aunt Mary, Mrs Ullmann, and to one or two of my schoolmates. Amongst them Elli von Trestow. Elli's father had been invalided out of the army and was at home. I mention Major Hugo von Trestow und zur Langenbach because he played an important part in the future fate of my people. Von Trestow was a tall, slim, elegant man in his late thirties, with sleek, fair hair and well-groomed moustaches. Although he had been badly smashed up he carried himself erectly and gave one the impression that he would rather die than speak of his wounds. His speech was curt, crisp, clear. You knew immediately here was a man used to giving orders and being obeyed and, on the other hand, ready to obey blindly the commands of his superiors. He was rooted into the German soil by generations of landed gentry on his mother's side; and he was the perfect embodiment of Prussian militarism. When he walked through a room one seemed to hear faintly the rattling of a million swords, for his paternal ancestors had all been soldiers.

Frau von Trestow was also very much the Prussian aristocrat. Almost as tall as her husband, and just as fair and blue-eyed, she was the typical Potsdam lady. There was a faint scent of lavender and leather about her. No wonder the von Trestows wouldn't have the daughter of an Englishwoman in their house! And yet—many years later certain members of the English aristocracy were among the most intimate friends of the von Trestows! And to-day, I am sure, the von Trestows will not even allow an English print to adorn their walls. Yes, people like that are busy changing their sympathies and their minds. It's these people who do not live by conviction but by conventions.

Elli herself was rather a nice girl in spite of the fact

that she behaved abominably towards Elisabeth, with whom she had been extremely friendly during our first two school years. But it was quite plain that she acted upon her parents' instructions. She was a good-looking girl, graceful, slender, with light grey eyes and fresh, clear colour. She wore her ash-blonde hair in thick plaits round her head and walked with the natural dignity and elegance of the thoroughbred. She was a good pupil, not by virtue of natural intelligence but by her never-failing industriousness and good behaviour. I envied her her tallness, and invariably managed to sit on a table when she sat in a chair so as to make up for my lacking inches. We talked for a while about my prospective journey and then had coffee with her parents and her younger brother Karl-Heinz Joachim, who was miserably unhappy because he was not old enough to go to war.

"Don't fret, my boy," said the Major to his son; "one day you will be able to fight for your fatherland just as your father and grandfather and great-grandfather did before."

"Will this war last till I'm old enough?" asked the boy hopefully.

"That I could not say," answered his father curtly; "I was really thinking of the next war,"

I nearly choked over my piece of bread-and-marge. Another war! But surely old von Trestow was only trying to comfort his martially-minded offspring? At this point I clearly remember the table of the von Trestows. There was silver and beautiful china in abundance, but there was not a scrap of food beyond the permitted rations. I wondered silently if they, too, had foodstuffs hidden away in a cupboard. But somehow I couldn't imagine it. They were far too genuinely patriotic.

"Wasn't it your father who performed that terrific feat of escaping from that Russian prison camp and being at large for almost two years?"

"Yes, Major."

"Good man! Almost unbelievable!" said Frau von Trestow.

"As long as we have men like that in our army Germany cannot go down!" rasped out the Major. These words imprinted themselves on my mind and I reminded him of them sixteen years later. He had conveniently forgotten them.

* * *

The following eight months at the "Sonnenhaus" (House of the Sun) on the outskirts of Eisenach in Thuringia are not important enough to be related in detail. They may have some significance in so far as they represent a sort of breathing space between two periods of great unhappiness.

The girls at the Sonnenhaus were all ages between six and sixteen. Most of them came from homes where "something was wrong" or whose mothers, too occupied with war-work, could not look after their daughters properly. So we were more or less all there for a negative reason, and we knew it. (I must confess here that I believed myself to be more or less the only girl who was there for purely educational reasons, although I could not help feeling very vaguely that, after all, Gellhorn had something to do with my sudden departure for the Sonnenhaus.) But the other girls were keenly aware of the fact that "circumstances" were responsible for their being brought up by strangers. Remembering my fellow-inmates of the Sonnenhaus and comparing them with children of the same age of this new generation I marvel I We were no children at all. Whether six or sixteen we were all perversely grown-up and aged. A generation of underfed gnomes, with young bodies and ancient minds, with tragedy, death, deprivation, hatred, and tears as our invisible companions. We were the sad cocoons from which later on emerged one of the most harassed bodies of human history: the young woman of Europe.

Sonnenhaus was run by two middle-aged spinsters,

Fraulein Riedel, short and fat, and Fraulein Preiss, tall and fat. Then there was the "House-Mother," who was responsible for our bodily welfare (including the daily soups consisting mainly of flour and water), and there was Fraulein Gruen, who supervised our homework and games and accompanied us on our walks in crocodile fashion up the hill and down the dale, rain or shine. The school—the Staatliche Gymnasium for Girls—was at Eisenach proper, and was run on lines of iron discipline and no nonsense. Each morning we were taken to town in a private coach, which again called for us at midday. I did enjoy those rides! The road, flanked by sloping woods, looked different every day. And there was so much to be seen! There were trees and huts and vehicles drawn by oxen, there was the distant mountain ridge changing colour every minute, there were the fleeting clouds in a cool morning sky, there was the splashing brook which suddenly came springing out of the forest and accompanied us for a while, only to vanish mysteriously with a sharp turn to the left. These short rides satisfied some of my burning hunger for travelling and I was always sorry at the journey's end.

The afternoons were mostly devoted to homework, walks, music lessons, and letter-writing. Supper was at seven, and after supper we did our knitting and sewing for the Forces. The big girls went to bed at nine, the little ones at eight, and we, the middle ones between eleven and fourteen years of age, at eight-thirty. I asked permission to stay up with the "big" girls until nine and was refused. That reminded me rather sharply of Herr Gellhorn.

I shared my room with two other girls, aged thirteen and fourteen respectively—Tony Hagen and Maria Roth. Whatever has become of them? Are they Nazi wives with droves of children and a swastika brooch stuck to their bosoms? Have they fled their country and live God knows where? Are they stuck in Germany with perhaps

a conviction different from that of their wretched Fuehrer, not daring to speak up, but listening secretly and heroically to the wireless messages of a civilised world? Are they perhaps dead—the innocent victims of bombs which were not meant for them but for the railway line behind their back gardens? Or are they by any chance the unknown, superhuman heroines who work silently and industriously underground for the freedom of their fatherland? If indeed there are such people. If indeed they are not a myth!

I remember them as nice, helpful, and harmless companions with a distinct *esprit de corps*. Tony was an orphan, for her father had fallen fighting and her mother, in a fit of despair, killed herself. Tony was sent to the Sonnenhaus by a benevolent uncle who made a lot of money by manufacturing bigger and better gas bombs. Maria's father had been shell-shocked and gone mad and her mother lived with another man, whom she could not marry because her own husband was not quite dead. We exchanged our "experiences" and discussed the ghastly conditions of our young lives with a matter-of-factness that would make the blood of the most seasoned student of human misery run cold.

The most joyful diversion from the routine of the Sonnenhaus was the mail from home, which usually consisted of long letters and tiny parcels, and here and there a rare letter from a beloved one at the front. Sometimes one of the girls was called into Fraulein Riede's private drawing-room, and that invariably meant that a father or brother had been killed in action. On such occasions we all kept very quiet during the rest of the day, and the very young ones among us would show their sympathy by offering their share of afternoon cake or a rare stamp to the bereaved comrade.

It was late in the month of March when I received news that Uncle Erich Feldt had fallen, somewhere between Croisilles and La Fère, during the great Spring Offensive.

Mother wrote that Aunt Mary had for once lost her self-control and had a complete nervous breakdown. I longed to be with my poor aunt, but that was not to be, and so I sat down and wrote her a long letter of condolence. How easy it was at the age of nearly twelve years to write such a letter! At that age one has no inhibition to express one's sympathy and sentiments and words of genuine grief come easy. This was the second death in my family within six months, but each of them touched me only remotely and my sadness was much more for my surviving relatives than for myself. But at night I would lie awake in the darkness and think of both my grandfather and my uncle, and puzzled if they were in heaven by now and were thus enabled to watch very closely over all I did. That was rather embarrassing and one had to behave!

My father's letters from the Front were very much delayed and infrequent. But in every one of his letters, however short they were, he urged me to learn hard at school, to acquire all the knowledge I could get, "for knowledge is something that nobody can take away from you, my child, and it proves a consolation in moments when one is apt to despair at the stupidity of mankind."

I could not quite see how the knowledge of the date of certain battles, fought some two hundred years ago, could possibly be a consolation to anybody at any time, but still, father probably knew what he was talking about, although my trust in father's judgment had lately been somewhat shaken.

It was Elisabeth who answered my letter of condolence. She wrote:

"Mummy is not well enough to write letters. Daddy's death has made her quite ill. But the girls at school are much nicer to me now that my father has fallen on the field of honour and even Elionor von Trestow is quite friendly again."

The rest of the letter consisted mostly of gossip about school affairs, but the last sentence puzzled me: "By the

way, you are in for a surprise. But I must not say anything about it. You'll know soon enough."

I racked my brains as to what on earth Betty meant by that, and could not come to any satisfactory conclusion. I had a vague hope that Gellhorn might be dangerously ill and about to die. But surely mummy would have mentioned that in one of her letters. Or maybe father was due again for leave? But he would also let me know, and arrange to visit me at the Sonnenhaus. No—there was something decidedly mysterious going on and I couldn't for the life of me guess what it was. I pestered Elisabeth in my next letters to let me into whatever secret she had, but my cousin was cruel enough not to even touch the subject again.

During the long vacation most of the girls went home, but some stayed behind at the Sonnenhaus, including my two room-mates and myself. And we did have a wonderful time. Fraulein Gruen had gone home and was replaced for the holidays by a very young and gay teacher. She was only twenty-two years old, had just finished her State exams, and we were to be her first real job! Fraulein Holland looked like one of our older inmates and not a bit like a teacher. We were all in love with her within a week of her arrival, and her little room was flooded with fresh flowers and little gifts of needlework. She disposed immediately of the crocodile-fashion walks as soon as we were out of town, and allowed us to scamper about like so many puppies let loose. She taught us gay songs, she raced us across the fields, she drew our attention to the beauty of nature, and when she took us to historic places never pestered us with dreary dates. She listened sympathetically to our worries and problems and did not, as did Fraulein Gruen, dismiss any reference to our homes with a curt: "That is none of our business," She also arranged for us to help a farmer in the neighbourhood to bring in the harvest, in short she made that long vacation the most beautiful holiday we ever had had.

As a rule I am not frightfully keen on dwelling upon my childhood memories. But those few golden days among the dark green mountains of the Thueringer Wald seem to me a patch of beautiful colour on a drab, grey cloth. We forgot the War, that raged outside that mountain range; we forgot our homes with their respective unpleasantnesses. We were children for once: happy, care-free, wild kids. Frauleins Preiss and Riedel looked upon our hilarity with a somewhat doubting benevolence. Would we ever again get used to order and discipline? Would we not take it into our heads that we were for ever going to behave like gipsies and hate the idea of being "nice young girls" with good manners? They were not far wrong there, but, like the good little German brats we were, we settled down to our routine life the moment the holidays were over. Only occasionally would our gaze travel through the class-room window and seek the blue September sky and the dancing clouds and the softly yellowing foliage of the old chestnut-tree outside in the yard. And then perhaps a gentle sigh would give expression to a longing for more freedom and eternal play.

The time between the long vacation and the Michaelmas break was always a hard one. The first week alone was devoted to repetition of what we had learnt before the holidays and to such easy essays as: "What did I do during the Holidays". And then life would begin in earnest. New subjects were introduced, the tasks became longer and harder, homework was more plentiful and much more complicated, because Michaelmas meant the promotion to a higher form, and to fail the exam meant a second year in the same form and that, in turn, meant eternal shame!

I worked like fury. Promotion to the next form was all-important, for we were to have a brand-new subject: namely, English. And although we still headed our homework with "Gott strafe England" we had to learn the language of our deadly enemy. I was keenly looking

forward to that. It would one day enable me to converse with Aunt Mary in her mother-tongue. Gosh! had I realised that the school English we learnt was hardly adequate to order the simplest meal in a London tea-shop I would not have swotted the way I did. We were emphatically informed that "an Englishman's home is his castle," that "early to bed and early to rise did not only make a man healthy and wealthy" but wise on top of it, and that "life was real, life was earnest and things are not what they seem." What we were never told was, that with an exclamation such as "Isn't it a lovely day?" we could have ridden the waves of conversation much more easily than with all the proverbs in the world. Yes, I was certainly looking forward to Michaelmas.

And then came that day in the middle of September, when everything was blotted out: holiday memories, school, homework, routine, and play. When the little joys and the little worries of the life at the Sonnenhaus were wiped out by the bony, remorseless hand of Fate.

As usual our private coach unloaded us punctually at one-thirty at the entrance of the Sonnenhaus, and as usual we scampered through the old Gothic oak front door into the tiled hall, clattered up the stairs noisily to wash our hands and brush our hair before lunch. But before I was half-way up the staircase our house-mother came waddling through the hall and beckoned to me. She smiled, but her smile did not hold the usual quality of comforting motherliness. It was a forced sort of smile. I saw that immediately.

"Yes, Fraulein Katie?"

"Fraulein Riedel wants to see you in her room before you go upstairs."

I stood motionless. Terror and apprehension paralysed me completely. For my first thought was naturally: My father!

"What ... why .. ."

Fraulein Katie shrugged. It was an iron rule that no

one except Fraulein Riedel herself was to convey any important message to the girls. An unauthorised person might corrupt the news and frighten the children unnecessarily.

"Come along, Renate. . . . Come along."

I followed Katie right through the hall, into which the sun was streaming from the large french-windows at the far end. I was painfully aware of the beauty of this early autumn day. No bad news, please, dear God! Don't let my father have fallen, please, dear God! Schmah Jisroel Addonoj Ehluhenu. . . . Please, please . . . I shall never have any nasty thoughts again. . . ."

The house-mother knocked. Fraulein Riedel called "Come in!" and a few seconds later I stood in the middle of that little drawing-room, that over-heated, over-furnished sanctum of our ersatz mothers.

The house-mother withdrew reluctantly. She was very curious about bad news and also liked to be sympathetic. But Fraulein Riedel did not say a word until Katie's shuffling footfalls were well out of earshot. I could hardly stand the suspense any longer. I cried:

"My father . . . ?"

"Oh no!" Fraulein Riedel shook her head vigorously, as though the idea that any father could have been killed in action was unheard of.

"No—it is something else. . . . I had a letter from Hamburg . . . from your relatives. . . ."

Oh, get on with it, thought I.

"You have a little brother!"

I opened my mouth and gaped. A brother! Good Lord! So that's what Elisabeth had been hinting at! . . . Wait till I catch that little——

"But you see, Renate, your mother is not very well. . . ."

Interval. Fraulein Riedel was obviously most embarrassed by the task of having to explain to a girl of twelve why her mother should not be well, seeing that babies were found under bushes or brought by the stork or sold in department

stores. I tried to relieve Fraulein Riedel by being helpful, but unfortunately only succeeded in embarrassing her all the more.

"Was it such a difficult confinement?" I asked sympathetically.

"Why, Renate! I am shocked! What do you know about these—these matters?"

"Everything," replied I, without turning a hair.

Fraulein Riedel had difficulty in finding words for such an outrageous situation. She was cold when she said:

"Well, since you seem to be very advanced for your age, I might as well tell you that your mother is dangerously ill and that you are to go home at once. I shall arrange with the Headmaster at the Gymnasium for special leave for you. You will travel alone, since there is nobody available to accompany you. Your family seems to put sufficient trust in you to make the journey alone. And you seem to be quite capable of it too."

"When shall I leave?" I was dazed by the news and chilled by Fraulein Riedel's coldness.

"You will take the early morning train. Fraulein Katie will help you to pack. Your other things will be sent after you."

"Does that mean—I am—not to return?"

"I—don't—know. I have no further instructions. This letter, signed Mary Feldt, contains nothing more than I have told you. I presume your father will be given compassionate leave if things are really bad. You'd better run along now and get your meal. You may tell the children that you have a little brother. But please—please refrain from mentioning such words as confinement!"

"Yes, ma'me."

* * *

I never saw my mother again. When I arrived in Hamburg the next evening I was met at the station by Aunt Mary. She took me in her arms without saying anything, and I did not ask any questions. I knew.

Somehow I knew. Even in the taxi all the conversation that passed between us only referred to my journey. We rode through the darkening streets of Hamburg almost in silence. But shortly before the end of the ride she said:

"You are going to stay at my place, Renate. Your father arrived this morning. He is also going to stay with me. ..."

"Father is here?"

"Yes. You see—your mother is in hospital ..."
She broke off.

"My mother is dead, isn't she?" I said dully.

"Yes, Renate. She died early this afternoon. Your father was with her."

I didn't cry. When we arrived at the Mozart Allee, and had paid the driver and gone up to the first floor where Aunt Mary lived, I still didn't cry. I couldn't. Elisabeth opened the door for us and was nice to me. She even insisted that I should have her room. She would sleep with her mother. She helped me to unpack my little suitcase and did not pester me with silly stories. She simply said:

"I've lost my father. You've lost your mother. Gosh!—when I wrote to you about that surprise I didn't think it would be such a rotten blow. I'm really most fearfully sorry for you."

My father was at the hospital to arrange all sorts of things, I was told. My baby brother was to remain there for a short while. He would be in the best of care with the Merciful Sisters of Sankt Johannes. But Aunt Mary assured me I could go and see him if I wished to. I didn't wish to. I had been thrilled with the idea of a small baby. But I had never thought my poor mother would have to die for that.

We had a silent supper, my aunt, my cousin, and myself. But none of us had any appetite. And after the meal we sat together in the drawing-room, waiting for my father to come home. I could not understand what on earth he

was doing all that time at the hospital; after all, mummy was dead. . . . It was after nine when he finally arrived, and when he entered the room I hardly recognised him. His face was greenish-white, his eyes were red, and he looked so tired, so worn-out, that my heart contracted with pity. I still couldn't cry. I pressed my arms tightly round his neck and buried my face in his tunic. He stroked my hair. Aunt Mary and Elisabeth left us alone, although there was very little we had to say to each other that they could not have heard.

Father told me that the funeral would be on Monday morning, three'days hence; that the little boy was a fine baby; that some place would have to be found for him, for father's leave would be over within a week; that I should go back to the Sonnenhaus; that Aunt Mary had promised to disperse our flat and store the furniture; that Grandfather Dressel had promised to see to it that the baby was well cared for for the duration of the War; that . . . that . . .

Father spoke almost without a pause. All these practical considerations probably helped him to forget mummy's death for a while.

One question burnt on my tongue. But I did not ask it until just before I went to bed.

"Where is Herr Gellhorn?"

My father stared at me as though he had never heard that name before. And then he said:

"Herr Gellhorn moved out several days ago. You see, your mother was ill for some time. . . . There was nobody to take care of him. . . . He has gone away . . . some place. . . ." He made a vague gesture. I sighed with relief.

"Then I need never see him again?"

"Never!" said my father. That sounded like the most sincere promise my father had ever made in his life.

Mother's funeral was vastly different from that of Grandfather Feldt. First of all the weather was lovely. A gentle, sunny September morning, with a soft warm wind and rustling leaves. In the little chapel within the cemetery the coffin was almost hidden by the mass of flowers and wreaths. There was organ music and a choir. There was Pastor Hochwart in his Slack talar speaking in consojng and almost cheerful tones about the winged soul of my golden-haired mother floating up to heaven to find a place at the feet of Jesus. My father had insisted upon mother being buried according to her faith. There was no doleful swaying to and fro, no mournful, heart-rending litany in Hebrew. It was all rather friendly, optimistic, and comforting, as though death was not the end but the beginning of all things! And while the Herr Pastor spoke about the everlasting glory of Jesus our Lord, who was waiting at the gates of heaven to receive this young soul, who had passed on to a better life in the middle of the most sacred job of womanhood, namely to give life to another human being, I kept wondering if, although I wanted to be Jewish like daddy, I could not sometimes turn to Jesus for assistance, seeing that He was so helpful and forgave practically everything. My mind altogether travelled a good deal during the long service. I closely studied Grandfather Dressel, who looked fiercer than ever, and seemed much more angry than sad. There was no Grandmother Dressel. She had died several years ago, when I was quite small. But there were relatives whom I had never seen before; relatives whom one just does not see except at funerals, which they never miss. I thought it rather mean of Gellhorn not to come. After all, mummy had looked after him well enough. He was represented by a wreath of white lilies I

Pastor Hochwart addressed me personally and called me a poor, motherless child, who, however, was being given the responsibility of being both a mother and sister to my little orphan brother. (And I hadn't even seen him 1) It

was truly moving and beautiful. We walked out into the sunlit graveyard, my father and I immediately behind the coffin as the chief mourners. Father held my hand and from time to time pressed it until it hurt. Mother's coffin was lowered. She was laid to rest in sacred ground, once more recommended to the care and love of Christ, once more referred to as the loving mother who had given her own life for the sake of a new one.

Of all the people present at that funeral my father was the only one who knew at the time that, according to Christian law, my mother had committed two deadly sins, for which the gates of heaven would be closed upon her soul: adultery and suicide.

#

There was a sort of small family conference a few days before my father was due to return to the Front. Taking part were, of course, my father, Aunt Mary, Grandfather Dressel, myself—and a newly met relative of my late mother's, Aunt Victoria Hoffmann, *nee* Dressel, who had just become a war-widow and had come to Hamburg to live with her uncle, my grandfather, and to keep house for him. She also had two little sons, Gustave and Emil. The Hoffmanns had run a large dairy farm somewhere near Lunenburg, but Aunt Victoria had sold it, and here she was, eager to play an important part in family affairs. She did not seem to mind Aunt Mary's nationality very much, nor had she more than the usual share of Anti-Semitism. But I must point out that her philanthropic instincts did not spring from philosophy or intelligence, but from sheer complacency, which of course is often much more dangerous than the most fantastic *Weltanschauung*. She was a rotund, bustling, sturdy, and narrow-minded woman. Intensely German, very patriotic, practical and efficient to a point of disaster, and mildly educated. In short, the perfect material from which to mould the perfect group-leader for the future N.S. Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women-Organisation).

The problem of the evening was: what was to happen to the children? Grandfather Dressel had protested against my presence. These were not matters to be discussed in the presence of a twelve-year-old child. But Aunt Mary, with typical English respect for the right to have a say in one's individual fate, never mind what age, had firmly declared that I should be there. This occasioned a miniature clash between the two basic ideas of England and Germany. Quiet discussion versus efficient ordering-about! Aunt Mary won as we were in her house. I was surprised that grandfather had agreed anyway to come to the "damned Briton's" house, but family interests obviously came before national interests. For the time being. And so there we were.

Aunt Mary offered to take me into her home, but she pointed out that that might be extremely disadvantageous for me in face of the fact that Elisabeth had enough to suffer from her mother's nationality. Grandfather agreed emphatically. Father agreed too, but for different reasons. I was rather sad. I would have loved to live with Aunt Mary. The idea that the Simon Feldts should look after me and my brother was instantly dismissed. They were much too old to be burdened with an adolescent girl and a small baby. That was out too. I began to be rather frightened. There was only one possibility left and the very idea made me tremble with horror. It seemed to be on everybody's lips and it was, of course, Aunt Victoria who announced brightly:

"Well, then I believe it's up to us, Uncle Heinrich. Two children or four children—it makes no difference. I know all about babies. And there is ample room in your flat."

She looked around triumphantly. Aunt Mary sat perfectly still. Father smiled awkwardly. Grandfather nodded grumpily. And I sat petrified. Live with Grandfather Dressel ! No—God, please—no !

"No!"

Everybody stared at me. Even my father seemed not quite prepared for so much straightforwardness on his daughter's part.

"Reny," he murmured.

"I won't! I won't! I just won't! Take the little baby—I—please, Aunt Mary—please take me—or, father, please send me back to the Sonnenhaus."

"No, child. I had a letter from Fraulein Riedel. . . . You can't go back there for the time being. . . . She——"

"They probably don't want her back," cried my grandfather, with excusable fury against me. "There you are, Victoria! You may know something about little babies or growing boys. But what do you know about this—this—why, that isn't a child—it's a——"

"Please, father I" said my dad to his father-in-law.

Grandfather banged the table so that Aunt Mary's tea-cups were dancing about.

"She is always like this. Only when I gave her a good time at the fair did she ever behave! Otherwise she annoys me whenever she can I"

"Now, now," intervened Aunt Victoria. She looked at me with round eyes, both bewildered and fascinated by my spirit.

"I won't go!" I said belligerently.

"You will do as we decide," said my father quietly.

"Please, Renate, don't make it more difficult for me to go back to the Front!"

"Oh, daddy, don't you see? He doesn't like me! He doesn't like you! He doesn't like Aunt Mary! . . ."

This in turn embarrassed Aunt Mary very much. She knew it was true, but she was English enough to dislike this sort of unpleasant honesty heartily.

"Who dislikes your father and your Aunt Mary?" roared my grandfather, and was as purple as a toy-balloon.

"You do! You called daddy——"

But here my father took a firm hand in this first-class

'amily row. He was rarely strict with me; this however was too much even for his long-suffering gentleness.

"Be quiet now, Renate. Your behaviour is abominable. Whatever shall I do with you?"

"Oh—I don't mind what you do with me. Nobody loves me anyhow. So . . ." The rest was drowned in tears of self-pity.

Aunt Mary said: "Don't let yourself go, child. It isn't done. And it's not a bit like the sensible, friendly girl I know. I suggest that Renate be sent to another boarding school if Mrs Hoffmann will be kind enough to look after the little boy. By the way, what is his name?"

"He will be baptized next Sunday," growled grandfather.

"Baptized!" cried I, glad to have one more ground for rowing with my grandfather. "Little Jew boys aren't baptized. They are circumcised. That's what Dr Kahlmann said."

"This little boy will be baptized," roared grandfather, "never mind what anybody said!"

"Yes, Renate. Your late mother's wish was that our little son should be brought up in her faith," explained my father. "His name will be Klaus Heinrich."

Grandfather nodded. He was satisfied that the little boy should be partly named after him.

After further discussion, where all the pros and cons were weighed carefully, it was decided that I should temporarily stay with grandfather and Aunt Victoria until a really suitable boarding school was found. And that was not very easy either. Most of the high-class girls' boarding schools were fearfully expensive, many had dosed down for the duration of the War, and what with unrest among the civilian population nobody really knew what was going to happen next. There were rumours that the War would be over soon. Other people again believed that it would last years and years. Father was of the opinion that drastic events would take place before the year was out. When the others had left, he and I had a

talk alone. He spoke to me as though he were speaking to a fully grown woman. Sensibly, pleading and quiet. I felt both honoured and ashamed. But these two things usually go together.

"Renate," he said, "I am sorry. I know all this is not very beautiful for you. In fact I admit it is all very sad. When you lay in your cradle twelve years ago I made such lovely plans for all of us, but particularly for you. I had plans for myself also. I wanted to write plays and books, build up a career as a writer—instead I had to put my pen aside and exchange it for a gun. And instead of telling my fellow-men lovely stories I had to go and shoot them. Don't you think that also is a deplorable fate? Don't you think it is bitter for me to have lost your mother? You know how much I loved her, don't you? If it hadn't been for the War ... I mean—well—things might have turned out differently. . . . But when all this is over, and if I should be alive and have the strength of mind to pick up where I left off, we can still make it a beautiful life. You will get your education, study whatever you like, and later on even perhaps help me to write. Think of it, Renate ! How wonderful it will be ! But mind, even if this War ends soon there will be a great upheaval, and things will take quite a while to sort themselves out. There will be hardship for all of us, and at first I shall have to take any job I can find to make a living. But I shall always find time to write as well. Look into the future with bright eyes, child. It won't be long now. And one day we'll set up house together—somehow—somewhere. We might even leave Hamburg. Perhaps go to Berlin. Or to a small town. . . . But whatever we do, we'll do it together. You and I."

"And little Klaus," I said.

"Oh yes—little Klaus. You see, he is so small that he doesn't play an active part in my plans yet. But you—you are growing; a few years and you will be a young lady."

"And then I too shall write ! Just like you do."

"Good !" cried my father. "Just think of it. A play by Renate and Friedrich Feldt !" There was, for a short moment, the old enthusiastic builder of castles in Spain, who had been hiding behind a mask of sadness, weariness, and melancholy.

I promised him there and then to stick it out at Grandfather Dressel's as best I could. To be nice to Aunt Victoria and to help her take care of little Klaus. To learn industriously and to be generally a good girl. Father kissed me passionately and sent me *off* to bed. I walked to the door, but before I went out I turned once more to throw my father a last kiss, and there I saw him sitting in the deep armchair quite motionlessly and with his hands before his face. I was puzzled. He had been so bright and optimistic. And now he simply looked a man in despair. But something warned me to leave him alone. I went out quickly.

And so—back I went to the old school, the old school-mates. Nothing had changed except my way to school. I had to take the tram now because grandfather's flat was not within walking distance from Ulmenweg. By the end of September I was settled at Nr. 46b Koenigs Strasse. And so was little Klaus, whom I had met at last and in whose appearance I was greatly disappointed. He was completely bald, rather red in the face (like grandfather when he had had too much beer), and looked decidedly angry. Maybe he knew what life was all about and that twenty years hence he would have to don a uniform as his father before him and fight, because the generation immediately above him felt once more that Germany was not sufficiently feared. However, little Klaus screamed a good deal and very occasionally laughed. He had extremely large, blue eyes, which were mostly fixed on the ceiling by force of lying on his back. Aunt Victoria did all the million and one things that Klaus required, and I was amazed that a baby was not merely a plaything but somebody who needed

almost constant attention, and involved any amount of work by merely being alive. I was terrified lest I might break one of his little limbs off, and therefore refused to hold him. I must confess here with honesty that I felt no maternal instincts of any description, as I had felt for instance for Hans the dog, whom they had put to sleep after I had left for the Sonnenhaus. And even at the risk of being scolded by the rest of the world—to this very day I can do nothing with small children, who simply embarrass me, whereas the rowdiest mongrel dog can melt my heart by one friendly look or one inquisitive sniff.

Grandfather, thank goodness, went to his office half an hour before I was off to school, so I only caught the tail end of his breakfast, and if I dawdled long enough not even that. I saw him again at lunch-time, when he usually read his paper, and again at supper. But at no time did he take much notice of me. He deliberately ignored me, thus punishing me for my bad behaviour. And it was successful punishment. Any noisy row is better than silent hostility. I longed for the time when grandfather and I flew at each other in healthy disagreement. I then disliked him as he disliked me, with much noise and open enmity. But this was different. And my outspoken fury against grandfather turned into quiet hate. He made a great fuss of my two cousins, Gustave and Emil, which was natural as they were boys. Gustave was a pasty-faced, meek little horror, whose pet hobby it was to pull flies apart or to put the fear of God into our neighbour's cat. He would never have attempted to annoy anything bigger than himself. (Incidentally what excellent material for a future S.A., Stormtrooper!) Emil was slightly more spirited. He looked at least like a healthy little boy and not like an underdone omelette, and he even showed faint traces of chivalry towards me. Neither of the two took much interest in Klaus; only occasionally, when unobserved Gustave would steal into the little room where Klaus lay in his cot, and make frightening noises. Once, but just

once, he went the length of pinching the baby's arm. I gave him such a smack that he nearly toppled over. But he had at least one red cheek for a change.

This incident furnished me, however, with one more piece of evidence that justice was dead in this world. Gustave told Grandfather Dressel that I had smacked his face for the mere reason that he had wanted to play with his small cousin. Grandfather looked at me contemptuously and then exclaimed: "What do you expect from a mean-minded, evil-tempered little she-devil like Renate?"

My unquenchable sense of justice ran riot. I flew at my grandfather in red-hot fury; I also flew at Gustave. But what could I do against two men of whom one was a crooked little coward and the other a bully with a grievance? Little Klaus, the origin of all this rowing and fighting, lay meanwhile on his back and gurgled with delight over nothing at all. What a world!

On Saturdays and Sundays I invariably managed to get away from the house. Grandfather never stopped me and never asked where I had been. And Aunt Victoria was much too complacent to worry greatly about my activities. And so, from the loveless and glum atmosphere of my temporary home I went to the Ullmanns', into a bright world of music, delicate furniture, love and understanding. I went to Aunt Mary, who now ran her husband's business, or what was left of it. They too had let one room, because things were rather difficult at the Mozart Alice; yet my aunt never grumbled and somehow managed extremely well. But Elisabeth saw things as they were and hated them.

"My God, if ever this damned War—I mean this glorious War—ends I'll see to it that there is never a shortage of **money around.**"

money around't"Gosh, Betty, you don't really go without anything important!"

"Perhaps not. But to have enough money is just not enough. One must have more than that. Let a room, indeed !"

"We did that!"

"And didn't you love it!" she said scornfully.

"No—but your old lady is awfully decent and doesn't interfere."

"She'd better not try."

"Supposing she did. What could you do against an old lady?"

"I'd make her life pretty uncomfortable, believe you me. I hate interfering people, never mind what age."

I marvelled. We were both thirteen years old, children, little girls who ought to play and sing and sew frocks for dolls. But there we were: myself a rebel and my cousin an opportunist. And all the coming years, crammed with events, haven't changed us. Elisabeth still hates interfering people (unless they interfere by virtue of authority) and I still rebel against almost everything.

Cousin Elisabeth was not the only one who wished that the War would end. This War whom everyone in Germany had welcomed and hailed and gone hysterical over! Everywhere—everyone—some of them hidden, some of them openly, cursed the War. During the whole of October, at the shops, at school, in the tram, I heard nothing but the word *Waff ens tills tand* (Armistice). And during the whole of that month I had hardly any news from my father. We kids were infected by the nervousness of the grown-ups. We did not really know what was going on but we sensed that terrific events were afoot. Hamburg seemed laden with high tension, until finally, during the first week in November, the storm broke loose. I shall hardly ever forget that morning at school when in the middle of our algebra lesson the door was suddenly thrown open and in came Haberkorn, our school-porter, and waved his arms and yelled:

"Orders from the Police: all children under fourteen to be taken home in special vans. The school closes. There's shooting at the harbour and it's spreading into town. They're assaulting officers in the streets. It's

re volution I The vans will be here in five minutes. All kids under fourteen. ..."

The class-room was immediately in an upheaval. Revolution! Mutiny! Shooting in the streets! Wow! We behaved like a bunch of lunatics, but we were quickly quietened down by the authoritative voice of a police officer who appeared a few minutes after Haberkorn. He greeted our teacher and said calmly and firmly:

"All right, children. Who of you live on the outskirts of Hamburg? Who lives within walking distance?"

Calmly, efficiently, and quickly he sorted us out, and only a short while afterwards we were led downstairs. The girls from the other forms were equally divided into groups according to where they lived. Outside the school building stood about a dozen vans covered with canvas. They bore huge inscriptions in white chalk:

"ATTENTION! DON'T SHOOT!
SCHOOLCHILDREN !"

We climbed in, half-dazed, half-thrilled. Elisabeth was in a different van. But Christel was with me and so was Elionor von Trestow. She was green with terror. Her father was an officer. The vans rattled off, one after the other. We could see nothing, we had no idea where we were. But we could hear. Shots rang out, there was shooting and screaming. And more shots. We were now merely terrified. So this was the famous Revolution they all talked about? Funny—everybody mentioned the word *Waffenstillstand*, meaning the standing still of the weapons, and there they went again shooting. This time they didn't shoot foreigners, but each other. Grown-ups were decidedly queer! But it most certainly did mean the end of the War! Was my father coming home? *Whizz-ouiiii!* A bullet must have missed us by inches.

"*Schweinehunde!*" exclaimed the officer in charge. "Can't they read?"

But nothing worse than a bit of shock happened to us

children. The van stopped at a quiet square not ten minutes from grandfather's house. Some of us climbed out.

"Now you kids go straight home. No loitering in the streets. And stay at home ! None of you is to go out any more to-day, understand?"

"Yes!" we yelled, and jumped off. Christel waved to me. She had to go a bit farther.

"Bye-bye, Christel, see you to-morrow at school."

"Nix to-morrow," said the policeman. "All schools are closed until further notice. You'll be notified when you can come back."

The van drove on. Everything was quiet in this part of the town. We five girls said good-bye to each other and walked off home.

Aunt Victoria was all aflutter and almost passing-out with terror. She had completely lost her bustling complacency.

"Oh dear, dear! Whatever will happen to all of us? Those Reds! Murdering and shooting decent people. Frau Thiessen of No. 36 was just here. Her husband was hurt. She said she had heard that the Kaiser was dead. But I don't believe that! And my boys aren't home yet. Oh, heaven!—oh, mercy! We'll all be murdered in our beds. And your grandfather at the General Post Office! They are sure to set that alight. Oh, if only he was home!"

At this point little Klaus began to scream, as though in protest. Revolution or no revolution, he wanted his food. Damn it all, the little fellow had a right to his food I Was not that revolution on for his sake too? To make the world a safer place for him?

Aunt Victoria was just about to run off to warm his milk for him when another interruption in her daily routine happened. But this one nearly robbed my poor aunt of whatever sense she had. It was Frau Stavenhagen, our daily char, who suddenly appeared in the hall from the kitchen. With her feet firmly rooted to the ground and her fists planted in her imaginary waistline she said with determination:

"I should like to inform you that I shall no longer call you Madam. You are plain Frau Hoffmann to me from now on. My husband is in the *Arbeiter und Soldatenrat* and there is no longer any servants and masters. I shall be here to-morrow as usual. But I am no longer Ida to you. I am Frau Stavenhagen. Good afternoon, madame."

She moved off with much dignity and noise, and slammed the door behind her. Aunt Victoria sat aghast. She was incapable of saying a single word. She would have sat there till doomsday had not Klaus reminded her that it was his dinner-time. She rose unsteadily and murmured:

"God help us all. This is the end! Frau Stavenhagen, indeed ! Mark my words—this is the end of everything."

That evening several people came in shortly after supper and there was a great deal of excitement. It reminded me vaguely of that far-off hot August day, several years ago, when everybody had been so delighted with the outbreak of War. Just as then, they all talked at the top of their voices, but grandfather succeeded in making himself heard anyway. He roared and thundered. Germany was about to sink in the dust. May God strike down those blasted, infernal Reds! Names were flying about—names that meant nothing to me at the time—Ebert, Noske, Scheidemann, Rosa Luxemburg, Liebknecht. Mehrheits Sozialisten. Arbeiter und Soldatenrat.

"Frau Stavenhagen!" I said, giggling.

"Why aren't you in bed?"

When I was about to make my exit, the front-door bell rang. Aunt Victoria ran out and came back in the company of a man, who looked wildly excited. His face seemed familiar. I must have seen him before somewhere.

"Herr Ober Post Sekretaer," he panted, "there's been terrible goings-on at the Bloom und Voss Wharves. What d'you think happened? An old friend of ours has been shot!" He took a deep breath. Then said dramatically: "Inspector Hermann Gellhorn!"

There was a moment of deadly silence. Then grand-

father brought his fist down and screamed: "Those Reds ! Those cursed, infernal Reds!"

I stood quite still. I said nothing, but looked at my grandfather with a steady gaze. He seemed to read my thoughts. None of us spoke for quite a while and then he said, strangely calm: "Go on off to bed, Renate."

I left the room and walked along the passage with gentle, noiseless steps. I opened the door to my room and stood still. I switched on the light and went over to the window to draw my curtains. Somebody some distance away shouted drunkenly:

"Long live the Reds !" Again: "Long live the Reds!"

I went slowly over to my chest of drawers to prepare my clothes for the next day. I opened the top drawer and took out a clean jumper. I chose a very old one, one I had never really liked much. It was red. Quite red.

* * *

"That'll be fifteen million, three hundred and eighty-two marks exactly," said the grocer, and pushed several paper bags over the counter. And this is not a passage from that most delightful of all books *Alice in Wonderland*—it is a sentence spoken in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three in Berlin, Germany. Nor was the grocer as mad as a hatter; he was in fact as sober as only a grocer can be on a busy morning. In those days I always went shopping with two bags: a small one for the goods and a large one for the money. And after having spent several more millions, on such things as carrots, potatoes, and postage stamps, I went home; home being a three-room flat in Wilmersdorf on the fourth floor of a large, newish block of flats.

In spite of the complete madness of those days, in spite of the dreadful difficulties that accompanied any kind of money-spending, I liked my daily shopping expeditions, because I liked the streets of Berlin. I maintain that, once upon a time, there were three kinds of Germans: just

Germans, Prussians, and Berliners. These days there are, of course, only Prussians. Although I was born and brought up in Hamburg, with such short breaks as my time at the Sonnenhaus and, later, the Augusta Heim, near Dresden, I realise to-day that, if I was ever anything besides a stateless Non-Aryan, I certainly was a Berliner. To have been a Berliner was to be the Cockney of Germany; for the typical Berliner had wit, was quick in the uptake, and heartily misunderstood and disliked in the rest of Germany. What a slow, sturdy Devonshire farmer would describe as a "slick Londoner," that the Bavarian or Saxonian would call a "Berlin Loudmouth." And here I sit and marvel at the fact that the good-natured, humorous, boisterous Berliner is now prancing about in a hideous brown uniform, complete with swastika and self-importance, with *Mein Kampf* tucked underneath his arm and Mein Fuehrer sullenly sitting on his befuddled mind !

Yes, Berlin in the spring, when it smelt of violets and gasoline. Berlin in the autumn, when a million brilliant lights were mocking the stars. Berlin in the winter, with an ample supply of sleet, mud, and first-class, sophisticated entertainment. Berlin in the summer, with hundreds of open-air cafes, hot, dusty pavements and days that never ended, for in the summer Berlin never went to bed. Berlin of the Inflation, where clever people became rich and wise people stayed poor. Berlin during the short, counted years between the stabilisation of the mark and the outbreak of acute lunacy I Berlin from 1925 to 1932 was indeed a lovable place, with all its decadence and madness; with all its unemployed and heart-breaks. A hectic town, a town to be deliriously happy and miserably unhappy in; a place of quickly changing emotions and tastes. There was nothing there of London's quaint and ancient dignity; nothing there of the gently fading elegance and coquettishness of Paris; nothing there of the sweet charm and leisurely indolence of Vienna; nothing there of the historic grandeur of Rome. And yet there was something in the

atmosphere of that particular Berlin that no other town in the whole world possessed. Nostalgia? No! You cannot be homesick for something dead. You may mourn it. And just as you would rather see a trusted and beloved friend who has turned criminal dead than decaying in jail, I'd rather know Berlin smashed and blasted from the face of the earth than rotting away in its own corrupted misery !

I was sixteen when I came to Berlin. Sixteen is the age when one is sentimental, romantic, easily impressed, and ready to fall in love. And since nature has not bestowed upon me the glorious gift of light-winged flirtation with the other sex, I simply fell in love with Berlin. And even though my years in Berlin were not just simply packed with joy and happiness, what matters? Even with people one does not fall in love because they are splendid and give one perfect bliss. Love has no reasons and no reason.

Amazing how life arranges itself! One walks or rides or stumbles along a road, knowing all the time that there must be an end to that road and asking oneself: "And then what?" And suddenly one arrives at that end and finds a turning which may lead either into the sunlit meadows of contentment or into the wilderness of distress or despair. And even if there is no turning, there might be a wall which seems unsurmountable until one finds a hidden door and the ways and means to open it.

Father must have stood before such a wall when he discarded his field-grey uniform and put on his civvies. There he was, a man young in years but aged and tired in mind, yet with indomitable spirit glowing underneath the ashes of horrific experience. No fortune, no job, no loving wife to come home to. Only an adolescent daughter and a small son. The little bit of money inherited from his father and put aside for my education was inflated and worth less than the paper it was printed on. And even with his brilliant brain and creative mind he could not find a satisfactory job immediately. He was too proud to accept charity and too artistic to place himself upon an

office stool. But his sense of duty towards me and Klaus urged him to take any job that might be going. Renate's education! Those two words were constantly on his lips. Oh, father, father, why did you worry so much about your daughter's Latin and Greek and arithmetic when she could do so little with it at a time when she donned cap and apron to open doors to strangers, and dust superfluous knick-knacks, and air a dog, and answer the telephone, and receive a pound a week for services rendered? Or did you realise perhaps that there would be evenings in London when the world was wrapped in dense fog, when she would sit in her little attic room and strain her ears to get some scraps of music floating up to her from the drawing-room below, where a handful of nice, middle-class English folk listened to the lady of the house performing on the newly acquired baby-grand? When her only consolation would be the huge, heavy case, crammed with wisdom and knowledge? Or later even, when the hideous Prussian eagle on her non-valid German passport closed in her face all doors that led to honest work? But there—my mind runs away into a future that has already become a past. . . .

It was Aunt Mary who proved to be the door in the unsurmountable wall. That shrewd Englishwoman did not, as we had all expected, return to her native England after Peace came. She hung on to her medium-sized export and import business, knowing that, from a safety-pin to a motor-car, goods would be in demand; and one fine day she found herself to be the Managing Director of a very considerable trading company. And as long as she acted on her own counsel she prospered and was a well-known figure in the Hamburg commercial world. What was more natural then than to offer her cousin Fritz a position in that business? Her husband was dead, she had no son, her family in England were well-off, and here was poor old Fritz at a loose end, and with plenty of liabilities and not a penny to his hitherto unknown name.

Two considerations prompted my father to accept her offer: his sense of duty towards us children and the wish not to hurt my aunt by refusing. But that was all. I never realised until much later how he hated and loathed that job. How supremely uninterested he was in commercial transactions. Now I know the size of the sacrifice he made for Klaus and myself. Oh, the yearning of a vivid and creative mind to get away from figures and bills and goods and the stuffy, dry atmosphere of a city office ! The bitterness and despair of a warm and temperamental heart which, by the force of circumstances, was condemned to beat for such things as Batavian coffee and French soap !

I was sent off to College, and little Klaus remained for the time being in the excellent care of Aunt Victoria, whose natural maternal instincts were much better for my small brother than the bought services of even the most excellent nanny. And funnily enough Grandfather Dressel had no objection to his little grandson remaining in his house. Klaus was very much like my late mother and not a bit like father, and perhaps even a grumpy old Ober Post Secretaer had sentimental memories of a beloved, lovely, deceased daughter.

Oh yes, Elisabeth was sent to Montreux and wrote enthusiastic letters, first in German, and later in astonishingly fluent French or English. And whereas I was meant to matriculate, and later study at one of the many German universities to take my degrees in history, literature, and languages, Elisabeth was to take her degrees in charm, conversation, and attractiveness. Riding, swimming, dancing, needlework, music, modern languages. Her mother knew that Betty would never be an asset to science but an asset in any drawing-room of any country, and at the time of hard-boiled, eton-cropped, americanised young gamins, Betty was really refreshingly feminine in all her vices and well-hidden virtues. She became exceedingly pretty as time went on, only there was already, at the age of seventeen, a hard line round her pretty mouth, and her

blue eyes had a piercing coldness when Elisabeth was "not amused." And that was pretty often. She had amazingly quickly forgotten her violent hatred against the Allies and now even boosted her English mother, who was no longer a hindrance but an asset in a Germany that licked the boots of anything and anybody foreign who smelled of *Valuta*. Germany had once more fallen from one extreme into the other and, enviably, Elisabeth had fallen along with it. And again I was a sad "between," for I had never hated our enemies enough to fall flat on my face now whenever I heard an alien tongue.

In the light of recollection, the three odd years at the Girls' College near Dresden proved a tremendous experience. The atmosphere of that first-class boarding school demanded some adaptability. True, the Sonnenhaus had already shown me what the daughters of well-to-do people could expect. But the Augusta Heim was the last word in high-class education.

I wonder if father ever realised what he did when he transplanted me from Grandfather Dressel's stingy, meanly-run household into that environment of perfect, aristocratic simplicity coupled with natural luxuriousness. I doubt it. He had probably endeavoured to afford me the very best schooling, but had overlooked that the Augusta Heim was really and truly far beyond our standard of living and outside the boundaries of his personal *Weltanschauung*. Revolution or no revolution, the place reeked with aristocracy and—more vital to the lifeline of the institute—with foreign girls, whose parents had forgotten former hostilities and offered their daughters a first-class education for a song, sung in foreign currency! And yet, the Augusta Heim had nothing in common with Elisabeth's famous "Maison Adrienne, ecole pour les jeunes filles." We were not being prepared for the gay life of the international playgrounds but for the lecture halls of the universities or the severer drawing-rooms of rural mansions! There was a constant hush over that house, and sometimes I giggled

when I thought how shocked everybody would be had I related to them the wild and quite unaristocratic rows with Grandfather Dressel.

The completely new life among the offspring of the upper-tens at first thrilled and interested me. But by and by it did something amazing to my outlook on life. Instead of turning me into the perfect young lady it enforced my pretty lively streak of rebellion, already practised on grandfather and the late and not at all lamented Herr Gellhorn. I thank the Augusta Heim for the one and only decent characteristic I believe myself to possess, for it laid the foundation stone of my violent fight against any form of snobbism. For over three years I lived intimately with the two aristocracies, that of the blue blood and that of the fat banking account, and neither of them impressed me. These girls with the resounding names or the enormous pocket-money were more than human, and very few came up to the standard of Christine Ullmann. They were flesh and blood, smiles and tears, and in later years, particularly in England, when someone alluded to a certain person as "the niece of the Duke of Whatnot," I simply asked: "Any other special marks?"

Well there I was, a bit of a cuckoo amongst a flock of peacocks and geese, and it didn't do me much harm. I also made my first acquaintance with open, unconcealed Anti-Semitism. That sort of Anti-Semitism which belongs to the *bon-ton* and had not yet become a State Philosophy or, indeed, a Law. But nevertheless I fought back. And if a momentary impression had prompted me to turn to my father's religion, the years at the Augusta Heim deepened and strengthened my loyalty to the Jewish half of my existence. Here, too, I am grateful to the Augusta Heim. It had opened up a wonderful source of strength, from which I lived and survived ten years later, when thousands of my fellow-sufferers awoke with bewilderment from the dream that they had no longer anything in common with that handful of homeless wanderers who had walked the

Desert for forty years in order to see the Promised Land. They were, indeed, worse off than their brethren of several thousand years ago, because they had no Moses to lead them away, but they had German passports, a convenience which our forefathers were lucky enough not to know. I am also grateful that I belong to this particular generation and not to the one immediately afterwards, where Anti-Semitism does not stop at nasty little remarks but manifests itself in cruel mental and physical torture.

Yes, there was a bit of actual fighting too. When once Herma von Reichenau declared that all Jews were freaks and cheats, I smacked her face, and she lost a tooth which should have come out long ago. The matter came before the Principal, and it was then and only then that I experienced the sharp bitterness of an assaulted soul. The Principal saw fit to punish me for "violent behaviour" and Herma went scot-free. That did something to me. It put me in harness, and for a time I was aggressiveness incarnate. The result was, of course, that there was general displeasure about me. I never mentioned this incident to my father for fear of hurting him. And the Principal refrained from writing home about the "rather unmanageable child, who introduced methods hitherto unknown to the College." It might have meant that my father would have taken me away from the institute and his money was as good as that of Baron von Reichenau.

In all those years, with so many girls coming and going, I made no more than three real friends, with whom I kept contact until a renewed General Madness let down the iron shutters of Nationalism, which to my mind is the root of all evil in this world. There was first of all Ilona Lankey, the daughter of the world-famous opera singer, Vilma Godor-Lankey of Budapest, and her husband, Anthony Lankey, who was something important in the English world of finance. Ilona was a fierce-looking, dark-haired little devil, of great personal charm and a quick wit. She had inherited her mother's musicality and

was to study music later on at Leipzig. Who does not know the name of that great piano virtuosa Ilona Lankey, whose concerts packed the halls from one end of Europe to the other until tragedy put an end to that brilliant career 1 A complete contrast to Ilona was Sybille Barthold, a fair, quiet, large girl, with none of Ilona's genius but with an amazing hunger for knowledge. She was easily the most brilliant scholar the College had ever sheltered, and was at the age of sixteen unshakably decided about her future. Her father was economic adviser to the young Social Democrat Government, and since that particular Government happened to be in power Sybille had, for the time being, nothing to fear from either the pupils or the teachers. In their heart of hearts most of the girls despised Sybille because, before her father had had the questionable honour of belonging to the German Government, he had been a humble worker. I liked Sybille. I admired her brains and secretly envied her her orderly and tidy mind. She knew exactly what she wanted and set already about doing it. She often asked me what I wanted to do with my life and I had to confess that I really didn't know at all.

"But you must want to do something," she urged me on.

"Well—I want to travel. I also want to help my father with his work. I want to do—romantic things."

"That's not good enough. Please, Renate, think hard. Hasn't there ever been anything you wanted to do more than anything else in the world?"

I thought hard. Then I confessed, rather embarrassed: "Oh—some time ago I wanted to write a book."

"Good !" cried Sybille.

She was tremendously interested and most enthusiastic. She wanted to know exactly what that book was to be about. Again I was embarrassed. I hadn't the foggiest idea.

"But, Renate—you must know what you want to write about? Surely you must have had some outline? ... A

story? A book on some hobby? Or simply a description of things you saw?"

I nearly cried with shame and despair.

"I don't know—really I don't know!"

"But whatever made you want to write?"

"I was angry," I confessed blushing. And then I told her about Gellhorn and my grandfather and how unhappy I had been during my childhood.

She was quiet after that, and at last nodded.

"Good! You were angry. But not angry enough. You must write that book, but don't start until you are furious. And then let go. You have a first-class style, I can see that from your essays. Develop it. And read, read, read! Anything you can lay hands on. Also rubbish. It will eventually give you the power of discrimination between good and bad stuff. Yes, Renate, there is something grand in store for us. Ilona will be on the concert platform and give the world music. You will be a famous writer and give the world literature. And I shall sit in the Government as Minister for Social Development."

"Whatever is that?"

"It doesn't exist yet," she said curtly. "But it will. It will control the equal rights of every born human being. It will do away with mean, horrid housing, hungry children, financial disorder."

I simply stared in admiration. What a girl! Not so very much older than myself and miles above me. God, how I am thinking of you now, Doctor Sybille Barthold, living under the most incredible conditions of hardship; fighting, helping, working so near that grand woman Madame Chiang Kai-chek. To you it makes no difference what nationality hungry children belong to. All the prison bars of our civilisation could not keep you from doing your noble work. But with all your brilliance and zest you could not prevent your little children being blasted and bombed from the face of this miserable globe!

The third girl I liked was Annie Seeker, from Vienna. Like myself she was half-Jewish, but had been baptized at birth and was a devout Catholic. There was tragedy in her family. Her brother, much older than she, had been shot during the riots in Hungary by a member of the Bela Kun movement, and that had driven her anyway conservative parents into a frantic hatred against any left-wing political party. Annie had neither the charm of Ilona nor the advanced brilliance of Sybille. She was simply lovable. She was ever-helpful, kind-hearted, and not very strong. Unlike Ilona and Sybille, whom I sought out and approached, she had from the moment she entered the College attached herself to me, and I took her under my wing and felt important.

The four of us got on well, although Sybille and Ilona were constantly arguing. Sybille accused Ilona of not being sufficiently earnest for this serious business of living, and Ilona teased Sybille for wishing to make the world a drab Kindergarten and universal Clearing House for all the world's troubles. Also Ilona was constantly in love with either one of the teachers or one of the awkward, pimply young men who came once a month for the College dance. Sybille had no patience with that sort of thing. She believed in *Kameradschafts-Ehe*, women's equality, platonic friendships, and a complete revision of all divorce laws. But the vivacious, talented, exceedingly pretty Ilona believed in quite different things and—as history records—stuck to her convictions.

I should have matriculated at the Augusta Heim in the spring of 1924. But much before that date something happened that put an end to my high-class schooling and shattered all the grandiose plans my father had held in store for my future.

In the winter of 1922 Aunt Mary, obviously ill-advised, had lost her head and let herself into the kind of speculation that must necessarily end in disaster. Luckily for her she had retained most of her real estate, but the business failed

and finally crashed. Elisabeth, to her disgust and horror, was taken away from Montreux. She was sent off to London to her maternal grandparents. This step reconciled her to a certain extent with the "disaster" that had befallen her. To go to England to finish her education seemed the thing that "was done," and she saw to it that the real reason for her departure from Switzerland did not leak out.

As for myself, I did not make any bones about the facts. Perhaps—subconsciously—it tickled my fancy to shock some of my schoolmates by confessing that we were now right down on the ground floor again, as it seemed to befit my particular family, and that I should probably not finish my studies but would have to go to work. My three pals were fearfully sorry. Sybille raved, and thought it a crying shame that the mere loss of money should prevent a girl from learning as long and as much as she liked; Annie was heart-broken about my leaving her, and Ilona, although she too was very upset, laughed the whole thing off and said:

"Never mind, Reny, anything that happens, happens to a good purpose. Cheer up. You're bound to do something interesting, whatever it may be."

In years to come I learnt by accident that Ilona had sent a telegram to her father in England and asked him to pay for my education. But that great financier had declined. He preferred the more impersonal charities which eventually earned him the title Sir.

I was not at all sure about the "interesting" thing I was about to do. I hadn't the slightest idea what plans my father had, and I left the Augusta Heim at the end of the long winter term and the beginning of the Easter holidays, not quite sixteen years old.

It took several months before my father could actually leave Aunt Mary. With Elisabeth safely out of the way my aunt sat down to do some serious thinking, and finally decided to live quietly on the interest of her private fortune, instead of plunging into any more adventurous business

enterprises. There were also the rents from one or two houses she owned. The one vital question remained: what was my father to do? Aunt Mary offered us a home with her and a share of whatever she had, but naturally my father wouldn't hear of such a thing. Live on a woman? No, thank you. And he bravely faced one more of those famous walls and searched for an opening. And it came quicker than he had hoped.

He had in his spare time pursued his writing activities and had produced a number of articles, some of which had been published by various intellectual monthlies and weeklies. And one morning in the late summer of 1923 father received a letter from a small, exclusive firm of publishers in Berlin offering him a position as staff writer for their left-wing weekly *Universum* and other similar publications. No salary was mentioned, for in that crazy period there was no sense in naming figures. Father discussed this offer with me at great length. He was excited, flushed with pleasure, and needed little persuasion to jump to it.

"God, Renate, now I can tell you how miserably unhappy I was in that wretched business I—Fancy anybody enjoying that sort of thing!"

"Well, father, somebody has to look after the trade, I guess."

"Most certainly, but, by Jove! not me, if I can help it." And then he frowned. "I say, God knows if I shall be able to send you to the University on whatever they're going to pay me. There is also little Klaus. He cannot stay indefinitely with your grandfather. We shall take him along with us."

"Oh dear, I know nothing about looking after little boys."

"Don't worry, my girl, we'll find somebody to look after him. And he can also go to the Kindergarten. I believe that's what children of five are supposed to do?"

My father looked rather puzzled and I laughed. He put

his arms around me and I laid my cheek against his shoulder.

"This is what we really wanted, father, isn't it? You do an interesting job and I keep house for you, and little Klaus just grows up."

"Keep house for me? Can you?" asked my father, rather surprised.

"Heavens, I am not a complete imbecile. I should be able to manage somehow."

I had, of course, not the faintest idea what housekeeping really meant. I only had vague recollections of my late mother working eternally, and of Aunt Victoria bustling about with a variety of queer implements such as pans, pots, scissors, sewing-machine, and carpet sweeper. At the Augusta Heim we had not learnt anything about the art of housekeeping. There had been the house-mother, with her large staff of silent maids, and we girls were actually waited on hand and foot. What a difference it would be between that smoothly run establishment and the sort of household I would run!

And so, from the luxury of my classy boarding school back into a life of supremely limited means. Yes, those days when I spent thirty to forty millions a day on groceries were among the poorest I knew in Germany. We had been lucky enough to find a small furnished apartment in a modern building in the Uhlandstrasse, and thus hung, so to speak, on the fringes of that almighty, all-important Kurfuerstendamm, that blazing, fashionable, cafe-studded thoroughfare of a thousand glittering memories and—later on—a thousand atrocities.

My father was immediately absorbed in his work, his first appointment being a serial on the life of the recently murdered Minister for Foreign Affairs, Rathenau. His job made him happy, but it did not feed us properly. We were constantly in arrears with the rent, the light, the gas and electric people. I turned my millions round and round, and when I had turned them round long enough

they were worth less than before! Fantastic idea. Stacks, bundles, brief-cases full of money meaning nothing. Neither my father nor I had ever shown traces of financial genius at the best of times, but this Inflation robbed us of what little we possessed in the way of money sense. I managed as best I could and tried not to bother father unnecessarily. Alongside of his story on Rathenau he was busy writing some slashing articles on that new man Hitler who had tried to start a Dictatorship in the Loewenbrau Cellar at Munich, and who intended to march on Berlin. When finally the German mark was stabilised and father had a regular income I was so completely muddled and bewildered that I simply couldn't cope with the household alone, and asked a neighbour to do my shopping for me. But at last we could afford a daily woman, who did the rougher work and also volunteered to take and fetch Klaus to and from the Kindergarten near by. All that gave me quite a lot of spare time, and I decided to learn something that would enable me one day to earn some money, for father, brilliant though he was, would probably never make enough. How wrong I was in that assumption I learned several years later.

And thus in the summer evenings, when the street below hummed with life, with the trams clanging past, cars hooting, couples walking by arm-in-arm, and the trees sending up their intoxicating perfume, I sat on our little balcony and taught myself shorthand. Indoors the typewriter (bought second-hand and never paid for) rattled away under father's swift fingers, and only when he was out to discuss his work with his editors or meeting his colleagues did I get the chance of learning to handle that invaluable instrument. There is romance on the keyboard of a typewriter (unless one writes nothing but bills and business letters), and I found out in time exactly how much romance there is in the rhythm of the rattling keys. By and by I could type fast enough to write all my letters on the typewriter, and there were plenty of them.

I have always kept up a lively correspondence from that time onwards. Letters came from my girl friends at the Augusta Heim; letters came from Aunt Mary; letters—though few and far between—came from Elisabeth, who enjoyed the summer months at Bournemouth and wrote a good deal about a young Englishman named Ted. From her description he seemed a bit of an ass, but was obviously devoted to her. Here and there even Aunt Victoria wrote a short note, invariably beginning with the sentence: "How are you? We are well." And when the Jewish festivals came round there was a letter from Poland from Grandmother Feldt, who lived now with her aged sister and never omitted to bless us in Hebrew.

Altogether it was rather a lonely life for a girl on the threshold of young womanhood. The friends that father made, and eventually brought home to our flat, were so much older and wiser than myself that they had no time for a creature that was neither a child nor a woman. Father was too deeply absorbed in his work to notice that I became restless and moody, and he was surprised when I declared one evening that I should like to look for a job. We sat together in the refreshing coolness of a dying September evening on the balcony. Father had finished his day's work for once and sat there smoking an evil-smelling cigar and gazing contentedly into the street below. A waft of music came floating up to us from the little cafe opposite, on whose terrace young people forgot, over their intimate and urgent problems, how bad the coffee was and how horrible the music.

"Ah, this is the life I dreamt about! A day filled with interesting work—a quiet evening and my girl sitting opposite me and looking—at present—extremely grave."

"Well, father, frankly, I think I am wasting God's day. I ought to do something"

Father sighed.

"Yes; you ought to be studying and preparing for your degree. My fault. I just haven't got the flair for making

enough money ever to afford the ones I love some comfort."

"Nonsense, father. Honestly, I'm not at all sure if I am the studying kind altogether. I wonder if my mind isn't too untidy to absorb a lot of knowledge. I—I—oh—well—I guess I don't know what I want," I finished miserably.

"There now, young woman. Let's have the rest of the story. Who is it?"

"Who's who?" I asked, completely at a loss.

"Well, it looks to me as though my daughter has fallen in love." Father grinned and blew a cloud into the air.

"Gracious, no! Whoever should I fall in love with? I don't know any young man worth thinking about."

"Hm," said my father. "Hm, pity. This is the time when you should sit and dream in the summer night and gaze at the stars, and press flowers between the pages of poetry volumes, and blush when a certain name is mentioned. Another three years and you should marry, that is, if you want to marry."

"Sorry, father, but those things sound rather silly—stars and pressed flowers. Love—oh—well—I have one or two ideas about love." I blushed.

Father looked at me gravely.

"I guess at one time or another somebody must have told you about the so-called facts of life. Since you have no mother, and Aunt Victoria is not a very suitable person to discuss sex in a rational and frank manner, you might be a bit confused."

"Well, father, since you ask me—frankly, yes. I know all about sex—I've known for years. Betty told me when we were just over seven."

"Good heavens!"

"Yes. And what she told me had very little to do with pressing flowers and reciting poetry at the moon."

"God, I'm sorry, old girl. I never realised that that sort of thing might happen. Kids do distort things badly.

No, Renate; love is something beautiful, and even in its most primitive form of expression it is still beautiful. But mind—it's got to be love! Not merely animalic satisfying of an immediate urge! It was the divine spark that was bestowed upon the human being only which divides us from the beast. God gave us a mind, a delicate and wonderful brain to guide our instincts. And that goes for all emotions besides love: hunger, joy, pain, religion, patriotism, creative power. If we let go any of these urges without letting our intelligence guide them into proper channels then we are mere savages or infantile creatures. One of the most highly developed peoples in the world, who have become masters in the art of controlling their primitive instincts, are the English. Even in their hatred they remain rational. I found that out during the War."

"That's something I probably shall never learn!" I cried.

"Then you will be badly hurt," warned my father.

"But if somebody does something hateful and horrible and I feel my blood is up—should I not fight?"

"Fight—yes—fight by all means, but fight with your intellect and your mind. Always count twenty, and you will never be carried away by blind emotions running riot."

I was to remember this conversation many a time in later years, but my father's urgent advice did not fall on entirely fertile soil.

We got back to where we started from and father asked me what I wished to do. I confessed that I wasn't at all sure, but that I had taught myself shorthand and typing and might be able to do something with it. Father stared at me.

"Don't tell me you want to sit in an office from nine to six!"

"Not particularly. But—I'm afraid I'm no good for anything else. And I should like to buy myself some winter clothes."

"Oh, God, this damned rotten life! I'm cursed! Either I have to do a job I loathe and can look after my family, or I get at last a job I adore and then my daughter has to go at seventeen and earn her own winter clothes! It's rotten. No—no, Renate. I'll—I'll find another job."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. But you may ask your people if they know of an opening for a junior typist."

"Look here, girlie, I'll tell you something I haven't let out yet. I intend to write a book. Will you type it for me?" He was as eager as Klaus always was when I allowed him to play in the street.

"That'll be grand. I can do that in the evenings. But I want to earn."

My father was silent for a moment, then: "I say, Renate, are you awfully keen on money? I mean—do you miss it terribly?"

"Lord, no! But the snag is, one can't do much without the wretched stuff. In fact I hate money as heartily as you do. It causes so much trouble. But, father, supposing by some miracle you suddenly made a lot, what would you do?"

Father looked dreamily over the iron rails of the balcony.

"I should always go on writing, but I should not take any money for it. I should then have achieved supreme happiness: to work for the sake of the job. Artists should not really degrade their art into cold business." And he added rather ironically: "Most of them don't anyway by force of circumstances. Then, I should insist that you do exactly what you want most. Travel, buy anything you fancy, play. You haven't really played yet, Renate. I believe you War kids haven't had much of a chance. Except for a few very fortunate ones. But don't worry, girl, your playtime is coming. Wait till things look a little brighter. We'll travel and see God's own beautiful world. You might not have missed anything. You are so ridiculously young. The world lies open before you. You'll play consciously and enjoy it all the more. Miracles

have the peculiar characteristic of happening when one least expects them. So let's look forward to great and wonderful surprises 1"

And, with the promise to ask his publishers for a job for me, my father kissed me fondly, stroked my hair, and went indoors. Although he claimed to have finished his day's work, I could hear the typewriter a few minutes later, and I bet that for him, too, there was romance on its keyboard. I remained outside for a little while. It had grown almost dark now, but below a million lights were glimmering and, far from settling for the night, Berlin became livelier than at any other hour of the day. I sent a long sigh into space. Whither it went, I didn't know. And anyway—very few sighs ever reach their destination

* * *

It was as though father and I had inaugurated a pilgrimage to the capital; for by and by a number of people came to Berlin whom I had not expected to see again for many years. The first to arrive was Christel Ullmann, who entered the Berlin University and also, later on, absolved her practical year at the Charite, the famous University Hospital that has trained and created so many brilliant medical men and women. Christel came to live with some very distant relatives who had a house on the westerly outskirts of Berlin. I was overjoyed to have Christel about me. The next to follow was Sybille Barthold, brimming over with plans and ideas and immediately gathering around her a number of equally brilliant and ambitious young folk, all of them sharing her intention to change the world. Sybille refused to live with her parents in the Government Quarters round Wilhelmstrasse. She moved into furnished digs near the University. She wanted complete freedom to pursue her studies and hobbies and her parents did not interfere. Christel and Sybille became friends, and when the three of us set out together—in the summer to bathe in the overcrowded, plebeian

Wannsee; in the winter to see the shows from the galleries or to sit in one of the cheaper cafes—I always felt rather crushed and somewhat inferior. We were often joined by a crowd of young people, equally as studious and intellectual as Christel and Sybille, and the lot of them talked "shop" and amazed me with their wealth of knowledge and wisdom. As a junior typist at Block & Wedekind, Printers, Berlin N.O., I did not exactly represent the young intelligentsia of Berlin, and I am sure I don't know why they put up with anyone so dull as myself. When I once asked Sybille what I was doing in her bright and learned circle she said quietly:

"Typist or no typist, one day you'll surprise us all. You've got it in you." What "it" exactly meant I couldn't for the world of me discover. I had no talents, no vocations, no urge.

Yes—I had wanted that job so badly—and how I hated it! But I was too proud to admit that, and I stuck it with a grimness that surprised even myself. Klaus was now safely away at school and only home for the week-ends. The place was kept clean by our faithful Frau Graus. I salute Frau Graus all the way from here to her dingy, damp little basement flat in Berlin for having been one German I met personally who stood up against the Nazis when they came to destroy us. That rotund, red-faced, tough little Berlin *Hausfrau*, with her pile of grey hair and her stubby, lobster-coloured hands, would stand no nonsense, and even threw her own son out of her house in the middle of the night when he appeared in the famous brown uniform and tried to boss his father about.

The two years at Block & Wedekind taught me a good deal. Not only fast typing and speedy shorthand. It taught me exactly what it meant to be an "employee" in a large company. Nothing more impersonal and uninspiring can be imagined than the offices of a large printing works. It was a state within a State, full of little intrigues, jealousy, ambitions, gossip, and lickspittledom. Everybody had

somebody else above them and hated him or her accordingly. The only nice people were the actual workers and the advertising crowd. Just like in a State. The "middle class" of the firm, the office staff and managers, were the most unimaginative and tiresome collection of people I have ever come across.

I did not make any friends among my immediate colleagues, but, very unfortunately for myself and the young man in question, I fell in love! Yes, David—can you believe it?

The victim was a rather artistic and effeminate-looking individual from the Propaganda Department. He designed our ads., and had a love affair with the wife of one of our senior bosses. This I learnt, amazingly enough, from him. It was she who had got him the job he was doing. My innocent eighteen years revolted a little against the fact that so young and beautiful a man as Hubert Helm should make love to a woman ten years his senior. But I think I found it really all rather romantic. I did not exactly press flowers between the pages of poetry volumes, as my father had suggested, but I did keep all Hubert's discarded designs and adorned the walls of my room with them, which prompted my father to raise his eyebrows and ask where and when I had developed such singularly hideous taste in art.

Hubert took me out to the cinema several times and permitted me with a grand gesture to pay for my own seat. He obviously believed in Woman's Equality, and besides, he was actually used to being invited. Like a damned fool I thought it quite natural to pay my ticket and the cup of chocolate afterwards. It was sheer glory to be with so decorative and desirable a creature as Hubert and, altogether, the young men of that post-war, post-inflation period were anything but chivalrous. They had no need to be. Young men were rare, much sought after and greatly spoiled. So many young men between the ages of twenty-four and thirty were lying dead on the battlefields of Europe, or

were sad cripples. Those who had come home without a scratch were a weary, cynical crowd, fed-up, and too busy chasing jobs to bother about the fineries of courting boyish young maidens, who clamoured equality, cut their hair, crowded the universities and offices, and americanised themselves out of existence. And, since imitations are 'mostly lagging far behind the real thing, I must confess that my generation of young girls were rather sickening.

Sybille and Christel looked my young man over and found him wanting. They scared him out of what wits he possessed and pulled his leg about his ties, his artistic locks of auburn hair, his gait, his manner. He refused to meet them again at any of our usual haunts and insisted on visiting me at home. Unwisely I chose an evening when my father was out and Hubert, without preliminaries, there and then tried to seduce me. The whole thing was rather terrible, though in the fight of recollection really frightfully comic. He chased me round the room, finally caught me, and we both stumbled over a small table and knocked down a flower vase. And all the time I pleaded with him to leave me alone, whilst he asked me whether I was a modern young woman or a medieval maiden, and who the hell did I think I was anyhow? The knocked-down vase and the pool of water on the floor cooled him off, and the fragments of the flower vase represented the only damage done that afternoon. I remained intact—physically, that is. Mentally I had received a blow from which I did not recover quickly. Beauty, indeed! I thought scornfully, when Hubert had slunk away looking offended, and not feeling very heroic. I mopped up the water, and threw the damaged vase into the dustbin, together with my illusions about artistic-looking young men.

Christel and Sybille were not the only friends who had come to stay in Berlin. One day I read in the paper that Major von Trestow of Hamburg had been appointed Chief Assistant Commissioner of Police for the Potsdam Division,

and the Major and his family set up house in the fashionable westerly outskirts of Berlin. I sat straight down and wrote to Elionor, and received a prompt answer which included an invitation for the following Sunday.

And finally there arrived on the scene Aunt Mary, with Elisabeth. I was amazed when I saw my cousin after such a long time. She was easily the loveliest creature I had ever set eyes on. Perhaps she was not so beautiful as well-groomed. From her bobbed golden hair down to her elegant shoes that girl was the last word in attractiveness. And she knew it! She carried herself with an elegance and self-assurance that made me feel clumsy and awkward, although, thank God, I know neither self-consciousness nor do I suffer from any unhealthy inhibitions! I stood in the hall of the Eden Hotel, where my aunt had booked her rooms, and gaped. Elisabeth smiled:

"Hallo, Reny! Well, here I am and here I intend to stay."

I looked questioningly at my aunt. She nodded.

"Bessy finds Hamburg a trifle provincial after London and London not quite up-to-date, with no central heating and no open-air cafes. And besides," and here Aunt Mary's voice took on that faint hint of irony it always did when she discussed her daughter, "we English are somewhat reticent about foreigners. Maybe Bessy did not make as many friends and as quickly as she hoped."

Elisabeth blushed furiously and the subject was not dwelt upon. I wondered what my fair cousin had been up to. While we were having tea in the lounge Aunt Mary disclosed her plans. She hoped to be able to invest some capital in some smallish local business and set up house somewhere in our neighbourhood. She had sold most of her Hamburg assets and given way to Elisabeth's desire to live in Berlin.

"What will you do here?" I asked.

"Do? Don't worry. I shall do quite a lot of things. There's plenty to do in a town like Berlin," and her bright

eyes swept approvingly over the dense, fashionable crowd who were having tea in the lounge of the Eden Hotel.

"Well, it's lucky that this is Saturday afternoon, otherwise I shouldn't have had time to sit here."

"Oh, of course, Renate; you are one of the vast army of typists, aren't you?"

"Yes. And thank goodness I am not one of the even vaster army of unemployed."

"Unemployed!" scoffed Elisabeth. "Girls of our class aren't 'unemployed.' We may be doing nothing, but we are never unemployed."

"Don't be a pompous ass!" said I, and bit into a large piece of apple-tart—with cream.

And so with all these different friends about I had quite a lot of diversion from the dullness of the office. But even there, one fine day, boredom and routine were suddenly torn wide open by scandal, and to my amazement I was the *spiritus rector* of a minor revolution.

I remember myself at that particular time as a somewhat colourless girl, who did her job not quite as well as was expected of her, who pursued the usual pleasures of meeting her girl friends, bathing, doing the movies, and sitting about in cafes. With my father simply buried in his work there was not much "family life" going on at my home. I was, once again, a bit of a "between," for I hung between the strictly intellectual set of Sybille and the pleasure-seeking, fashionable set of Elionor von Trestow and Elisabeth. Those two had got together and Elisabeth, cool, aloof, elegant, opportunist from tip to toe, made herself agreeable to the von Trestows and was seen with that well-known family at all the more important events. She even managed to be taken along to the St Moritz winter sports and led a very enjoyable life. Elionor dabbled in handicrafts and made pretty things of straw, oilcloth, and silks, Elisabeth dabbled in "love," and once or twice escaped a juicy open scandal by the breadth of a hair. I enjoyed seeing the Trestows occasionally. I liked their cultured home, their

well-organised entertainments, and I had one or two lively arguments with the Major, who denounced my father's articles as being decidedly "bolshie." He also denounced the left-wing journal *Universum*, and I secretly wondered why so reactionary a man was in such an exalted position, seeing that Germany was supposed to be a Democracy.

Here I was then, hanging about Berlin, a very ordinary young woman of no particular aspirations, one of the millions that crammed the early-morning buses and tramped the city streets. And I, Renate Feldt, a sandcorn in the desert of humanity, suddenly came to life.

There was, at the time, a particularly pretty and attractive copying clerk on our staff who was engaged to a young workman and who saved all her earnings for the trousseau. This girl, Hilde Gessner, had for some time been pestered by one of our managing directors. She stood up to him like the devil! She was torn between two fears, both equally torturing: the fear of losing her job and the fear of losing her virtue, perhaps a strange feat in our "enlightened" times; nevertheless she loved her Walter and he was going to have her virginity and no other man! But our Herr Theodor Ortmann had decreed otherwise. He had made up his mind to "get" Hilde and one fine day he had her transferred from the general office into his private office. Hilde still resisted his repulsive and unmistakable advances, which in turn made Ortmann all the madder. This went on for some time, until one afternoon Hilde appeared in our office with red eyes, as green as a ghost, and trembling with excitement. There had been an ugly scene in Herr Direktor's office and then—Hilde had got the sack.

The office hummed with indignation. "Well, the dirty old man!" "Whatever will you do?" "And with work so hard to get!" "If times were different, your Walter would give him a black eye!" I sat there, typing one of those letters that make a typist's life what it is. And after I had finished the letter I took a good look at Hilde. She

looked completely shattered as she sat there—a picture of hopelessness. And suddenly I felt that good old hot fury rising up inside me, that fierce wave of rebellion that had possessed me years ago whenever I set eyes on Gellhorn. Men! Swine! Dirty rats! To take a girl's bread-and-butter out of her mouth because she wouldn't . . .

I stood up and yelled: "Silence!"

A surprised hush fell over the large room and every girl looked at me expectantly.

"Fellow-workers! Are you going to take this lying down?"

Murmurs: "What can we do?" "We can't interfere!" "Why, Feldt, you stand there looking like one of them agitators I" giggled one girl. And I felt like one. There fell from me suddenly the crust of easy-going indifference that had threatened to grow over my real self since the event of my becoming a regular worker. I felt once more like the times when Elisabeth and I had rolled on the floor for the sake of different principles, or when Herma von Reicheneau had called all the Jews freaks and cheats. I was ready to hit somebody and sought co-operation from the girls I worked with. But I found none. They were all much too scared to make a move. To risk one's job in the winter of 1926 was identical with suicide. My God, I thought rather intolerantly, what a sorry lot of puppets I. All of them on Hilde's side and not one ready to do something. I sniffed.

"Very well then, if you girls don't wish to fight for justice I will!"

"What on earth do you want us to do?" asked one of the more spirited.

"That's better! I want you to sign a petition to the Management that, if Hilde is not reinstalled into her job at once, we shall all lay down our work immediately."

Then—hell was loose! Was I crazy? Did I realise what I was saying? Yes, I was very well off with my father earning money and providing me with a living

(God, if they only knew how little he did earn!), and I could well afford to be grand. Thank you very much, nothing doing. Hilde herself was scared out of her wits. She implored me not to do anything hasty.

"Hilde Gessner, I'm surprised at you !"

"For my sake you must not——"

"Not for your sake! For the sake of the thing itself. Woman, don't you realise that this means all of us? To-day it's you, to-morrow it might be another girl."

"No such luck," murmured one young woman cynically.

"Nothing can prevent me going to give that swine a piece of my mind !"

I had talked myself into a fine fury. Perhaps it was not Hilde Gessner's virtue any longer; perhaps it was not even the principle. Perhaps I just felt like revolting against something; perhaps—as is the case so often with rebels—I mistook the urge for expressing myself for noble righteousness. I cannot analyse my true motives any more after all these years. Whatever they were, I was out of the General Office and marched along the long, carpeted corridor that led to the sacred cave of His Beastliness, the Managing Director. Or rather to the ante-room, where a pinched and dried-looking elderly female sat guard. She hardly looked up when I walked in. She drawled:

"Whatyewant?"

"I want to see Direktor Ortmann."

"Don't be silly," snapped the female. "Nobody can see him without a proper appointment."

"Then make one for me!" I demanded. She was about to hand me a form to fill in when the leather door opened and His Disgrace himself appeared. He looked me over, and asked with throaty kindness:

"And who might you be?"

"I might, one day, be the President of the United States of Europe; at present I am a very insignificant typist in your General Office."

He screwed his fat face into a smile.

"None of our typists are insignificant. Every one is important to the firm. We are all one big, happy family, aren't we, Fraulein Schumann?"

Fraulein Schumann, of course, nodded. What else could she do, poor wretch?

"In that case, could we have a nice little family party, Herr Direktor?"

"Why certainly, come in. I can give you five minutes."

He led me into his sanctum and sat down behind his huge, glass-topped desk. The typical, overfed, over-indulgent cinema-type of Managing Director.

"Well, what can I do for you?" He tapped his finger on the blotting-pad before him and that drove me mad.

"You can do nothing for me, Herr Direktor. I came to demand that Hilde Gessner be reinstalled into her old job immediately."

"You came to—what?" He looked completely dumbfounded.

"You heard!" I said rudely.

There was silence, except for that hideous tapping of his finger on the blotting-pad. Ortmann looked at me as though he were surveying a strange animal. Finally he said, without raising his voice: "Who sent you here?"

"The League for Human Rights and Common Decency."

"And who, pray, are they?"

"They don't exist. But they should."

Ortmann half closed his eyes and then said calmly: "You annoy me."

"Good! Are you going to reinstall Hilde Gessner?"

Now at last he was angry. He ceased to tap his blotting-pad and brought down his fist. He reminded me somehow of Grandfather Dressel yelling: "Those Reds—those infernal Reds!"

"Your insolence can only be surpassed by your stupidity! Don't you realise, young woman, that you also are out of a job right now?"

"You surprise me, Herr Direktor; I thought you were about to promote me! Never mind me. What about Hilde Gessner?"

"Get out of my office. And get out of this building. And take your precious Hilde with you."

"All right. But, Herr Direktor, do you happen to know a paper called the *Universum*? The paper that writes for the decent-minded people? Would not this little story look lovely on the front page?"

"Blackmail, eh?"

"No—because I demand nothing for keeping this business to myself."

"*Universum*, indeed! You insolent good-for-nothing I! Don't you know that this company is the main shareholder of the *Universum*?"

"What's that got to do with it?" I asked innocently.

"My God! Where have you been all these years? Do you believe that an editor would print anything derogatory about one of his biggest shareholders?"

"Why not?"

So much good faith in the decency in mankind bewildered the man to a point of despair. He asked hoarsely: "And what are your connections with the *Universum*, may I ask?"

"None. But my father writes articles for it."

"You mean—he did!" sneered Ortmann.

"What are you implying?" I grew cold.

"You'll find out. And now get out."

Heavens, those next few weeks! I out of a job, my father's future services suspended indefinitely. I must hand it to my father—he behaved like the gentleman he was down to the ground. Not one word of reproach. Not even a hint of regret. But, even so, I was bitter. Furiously hurt and disappointed for a variety of reasons: that a girl could be victimised because she refused to sleep with a managing director; that her fellow-workers did not raise a finger to stand by her; that a journal which

professed to fight for Freedom, Rights, and Decency turned yellow for the appeasement of one of their shareholders; that a man should lose his bread-and-butter because his daughter had had a row with a big-shot; and finally, and most horrible of all, that the cause of all the trouble, Hilde Gessner, went to bed with Ortmann after all! So much beastliness nearly broke me. Father saw my suffering and tried to cheer me up.

"You know, old girl, taking it all round, I am really rather proud of you. You might, of course, have acted much more effectively by counting twenty first and then talking more quietly, although I doubt in this case whether it would have made any difference. I want you to keep your ideals and ideas, Renate. But I don't want you to get hurt. Lose a job, fight for another, go hungry, if need be; but don't eat your heart out!"

"What would you have done in my place?"

"I should have most probably sat down and wrote a strong article on the subject of girls in general being victimised like that. Not mention any particular name. For Ortmann is in all probability by far not the only man to behave so badly. He would have read the article and never have dared to really sack the girl. Thus we would have killed several birds with one stone. Hilde Gessner would have kept her job. You would have yours and I would have mine. There now. On top of that, equally rotten men would have thought twice before doing anything similar. It always pays to use some intelligence. So let us do that right now and—instead of moping about—discuss what we can do. Somehow this business suits me, because I can at last get down seriously to my book."

"But what about our regular income?"

"Don't let that worry you. I have made quite a decent name for myself in the journalistic world. I can sell my stuff free-lance."

It sounded all quite optimistic—but what other is optimism than the refusal to recognise a desperate state

of affairs by disguising it with a coat of cheerfulness! Father wrote and wrote, and posted his articles. And about one in a dozen was accepted. I hung about the Labour Exchange day in, day out. Nothing doing! Sybille offered to start a collection for me to make up for one month's salary. I refused.

"You've done a job for every girl in this country!" flamed Sybille, "so allow at least a handful of decent-minded people to pay you a tribute."

"Oh—rot!"

"Well—I always said you have it in you."

"So that's what you meant. My capability of messing everybody's life about," I said bitterly.

"And kindly don't undo what you did by regretting it. And what's more—take these fifty marks to start with and be damned to you."

I took the money, and invested it in yet another second-hand typewriter. And while my father was working in one room, I sat in the other and answered "ads." and copied some manuscripts, which a friend of Christel had got me. It was a meagre spring. But nevertheless it was spring. Huge baskets with violets appeared at every street corner, the cafes turned out their chairs and tables, and in the evenings my friends and I met and had twenty-five Pfennigs-worth of coffee on a terrace and listened to the band, and read all the newspapers and discussed Life.

What money father made was urgently needed for Klaus, who grew out of all his things and had to have no end of new school books. Finally we fell back upon that age-old resort of the "nice people in momentary financial predicament." We let our best room. Our tenant was a taciturn, lean young man with dark eyes and black hair, who smoked about a hundred tiny cigarettes a day. At first we had no idea what he was doing for a living. During the daytime he was at home a good deal and read or wrote. But he went out invariably in the evenings and never returned until the small hours of the morning. We learnt later on

that he was a waiter at a fashionable restaurant, which opened after six o'clock. His name, by the way, was Acardia Petrovich Smonotow. He had the honour of being the first live Emigrant I ever set eyes on. What a chain he preceded! I regarded him as something rather special. But in these days, when the whole world consists of emigrants and those who dislike them, Acardia Petrovich Smonotow would easily pass in the crowd.

Ironically enough it was this foreigner who got me a job. One afternoon he appeared in the kitchen and asked me point-blank if I would like to make some money. Would I? Very well then—his friend the Grand Duke Vladimir Populenski was about to begin another of his brilliant film stories for the Eternal Motion Picture Company. He was looking for somebody to type it and put it into decent German. His former secretary had thrown herself before a train.

"Because of him?" I asked cautiously.

Acardia nodded sadly. "Yes—verra much in luf with him. He not verru much in luf with her. So—she goes and dies."

"I'll take the job."

I was pretty often very nearly on the verge of following my predecessor into sudden death, not because I was "verru much in luf with him," but because the Grand Duke was stark, staring mad. I felt much more like a wardress to a mental border-line case than a typist to a film writer. Never have I met a more erratic, hysterical, inconsistent specimen of the human race than my Duke. But with all his madness went genius, and no wonder he was under a long-term contract to one of the foremost German film companies. His German was appalling, but his ideas were unsurpassed for wit, originality, and effectiveness. He wrote the satirical, light drawing-room type of comedy, and I am delighted to know that the long and iron arm of Herr Hitler has so far not succeeded in crushing that elegant, nimble-witted writer. When I saw his name

on the screen among the credit-titles of a Hollywood-made picture I was happy. For out there in California the people are still working and playing without muzzles before their lips and chains dangling heavily from their wrists.

During the following endless summer nights of that year my father dictated to me his first full-length book, *No Hero At All*. And so from the world of glittering, highly-strung Decadence to which I was tied during the daytime, at night I moved into the world of grim realities, horrors, and heart-breaks. The almost unbelievable hardships that my father related in simple, clear language had fantastically little in common with the piquant, humorous adventures of Vladimir Populenski's imagination.

* * *

And in between my two activities Life put me on the road to David! One would think that an important person like yourself would make some dramatic entrance, be heralded by a blaring fanfare of trumpets, a sound of brass, and then—a velvet curtain parts—enter David!

But oh, how undramatic was your entrance! And how undramatic was your exit! Fantastically undramatic when I think how stirring and breath-taking was everything that lay between that entrance and that exit.

Up to here I have been sitting by the pond of memories fishing for small-fry in dull waters, with an indifferent sky above me, mostly a clouded grey and sometimes turning slightly blue. But now the waters begin to ripple, the pond seems to come to life, and my rod seems heavy. The sky is azure, a gusty wind is blowing, and I see nothing yet of the heavy, yellow-greyish clouds ascending on the horizon of my recollections. Nor am I aware as yet of the terrifying storm that lies ahead. Oh, David, will my rod of reminiscence be strong enough to draw up from the depth of that pool the heavy, overwhelming catch of memories concerning you?

* * *

Towards the autumn of 1927 my father made the acquaintance of an enthusiastic, broad-minded publisher, who fell for the idea of *No Hero At All* before he had even seen a single chapter. He offered my father a fairly decent sum down as an advance royalty, which kept the tradesmen wolves from the door and the landlord in good humour. Dr Keller also presented my father with a long and complicated-looking draft of agreement to be signed on the dotted line, and father, being a complete baby in business matters, especially when he had to look after his own rights, asked me to put this grim-looking document before my astute Grand Duke. Vladimir, always generosity and helpfulness incarnate when it came to giving advice, put his monocle into his eye and pulled a grimace.

"And who do you think, Renate Feldt" (he always called me that), "can understand such German, pray? If your father wishes to be on the safe side, he'd better get himself a legal adviser. The best people are, of course, my own solicitors, Moske & Hartmann. I shall ring them up now and warn them that you will call, yes—no?"

"Yes," said I.

Father was grateful and pleased when I told him that night what Vladimir had suggested, and he asked me to take that document along the next day and hand it over to these learned gentlemen. Dr Keller, whom we met that night at a cafe, laughed.

"Good for you, Feldt; I never thought you had any sense of business. Therefore I played fair, as your men will tell you. With any shrewd wizard I should have played havoc, believe me!"

We did believe him. Keller was a highly educated and brilliant man, and knew how to handle authors. If ever there was a fair and yet astute business man it was that publisher. His list of books included some of the *most* enlightening and fascinating political and scientific works. And for that—several years later—he was put on trial for High Treason, found guilty, and tortured to death. In

the hearts of thousands of writers and readers this man has set himself a monument for being yet another martyr to Freedom, Decency, and Progress!

The next day, when I had finished my harassing job at Populenski's, I made a detour from his palatial flat by the Lietzensee to our more humble abode in the Uhlandstrasse by way of Tauentzienstrasse, and at four o'clock on the tenth day of September in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven I ascended the staircase that led to the offices of Messrs Moske & Hartmann. I entered an elegantly furnished waiting-room, where three young women sat at their respective desks and one of them, a kindly, good-humoured creature with a perpetual twinkle in her eyes, said:

"Just wait two minutes. David and Goliath are busy solving the political situation of the Near East!"

From behind a closed door came, in fact, fragments of what seemed to be a heated argument. I distinguished such words as: Kemal Pasha—Baluchistan—Palestine. And finally the door opened and I was led into the private office of the two eminent solicitors. I must have looked both amused and baffled when I was confronted with those two. The nickname was perfect. By the window stood a tall, gigantic-looking man of no more than twenty-nine or thirty, and at the desk leaned the smallest creature I've ever set eyes on. He possessed the ugliest face imaginable, dried parchment with the map of Europe drawn upon it by the pencil of Time; small slits of green eyes; a shock of mouse-coloured hair. His hands and feet were tiny, his gestures quick and nervous. He barked at me:

"Well?"

I explained the nature of my call.

"Oh—yes—yes of course! I say, David," he addressed the tall man by the window and I let out an involuntary yelp. The little man turned his head quickly in my direction.

"Surprised, eh? Already acquainted with the idiotic

names our enlightened staff choose to bestow upon us? They call me Goliath. Fools! They think it's funny. It isn't! Why in the name of hell had I to take in a junior partner with the name of David?"

The man with the name of David came sauntering over from the window, hands in his trouser-pockets, a thin, gold-tipped cigarette between his lips. Yes, David, that was your setting! An elegantly furnished office, a bright, sunny 'afternoon, a leisurely business talk, the protective wings of an all-round brilliant business partner, a handful of eager typists keen to work for you, your car and chauffeur waiting patiently outside the building to take you to your respective amusements. David, you are easily the most tragic victim of the Great Upheaval in my immediate vicinity. Sybille, Christel, father, Keller, Frau Graus, Minister Barthold, and a host of others suffered, fought, or even died for a cause, or at least because of such a reason as the Nazi hordes saw fit to invent. But you? You had no cause and never will have. You are one of the charming, agreeable, intelligent beings who do no harm and so ardently want to be left alone. But the trouble is, that our time offers no room for neutrals who want to be left alone. The long-forgotten fact that your grandfather Hartmann married that clever, bright-eyed, witty Jewess Sarah Gutkind, the banker's daughter, broke your life in two. The famous "non-aryan" grandmother, that has become a grim and sad joke among the ever-wandering children of Israel!

I can't say for sure if I fell in love with David the minute I set eyes on him. I actually never discovered my true feelings for him until long, long after this. We met too rarely to get properly acquainted. Not that I believe for a moment that one need necessarily get acquainted to fall in love. On the contrary! But what I mean to say is, we hardly ever had an opportunity to develop any kind of relationship; we moved in too-different circles. David definitely belonged to the well-to-do bourgeoisie, who

occasionally descended into the regions of Bohemia for fun. Nor did my father and I belong to that happy-go-lucky crowd of artists, actors, and writers, and their hangers-on, who never had quite as much money as they seemed to spend and who were entertained by the Hartmanns because they were so "amusing." On the other hand, my father had not yet reached that stage of fame which opened all and every door to him later on, when *No Hero At All* swept and captured the book markets of two continents, to make him a desirable and welcome guest in the houses of the Hartmanns of this world. The Hartmanns of this world! The Hartmanns of every country in Europe, unwittingly and unwillingly the backbone of Hitler and Company. No, not you, David! You couldn't be the backbone of anybody or anything. You were simply pushed beyond frontiers and behind the barbed wires of Europe because you happened to belong nowhere and were therefore in everybody's way. And in your various cages you did not even have the fire of a conviction to warm your heart. Poor David! Don't for a moment think that I put any blame on you for your own disaster. But, alas! it is because of and for the "non-beligerents," the neutral people, the unoffending and the harmless, that the struggle has to be as bitter as it is. You were like many a small and scared country which anxiously guarded every right of their neutrality and who came, after all, running along and clung to the strong and the righteous when the Wild Beast of Destruction aggressively smashed their cherished dreams! Like them, you thought you were immune. You tried to argue it off. Oh, David, David! Yes, I know your heated and satirical reply:

"And, pray, what did it help you that you belonged to a definite side? By God, you were no 'neutral' in this fight—and yet—look at yourself. A friendly enemy alien!"

Yes, David. But I still have that fire of my conviction, you know.

But at the time when both David and I were simply German citizens we met almost exclusively on business, through business. My Grand Duke had a nasty and complicated case of plagiarism on his hands, since an enterprising, but obviously unimaginative, Hungarian colleague of his had pinched one of his best ideas bit by bit. Two film companies, a theatrical producer, three publishers, and several hundred thousand marks were involved, and Messrs Moske & Hartmann were entrusted with this important suit. And here I saw how excellent was the combination of David and Goliath. While Moske provided the knowledge, the biting, sharp, acid wit and the brains, David represented the persuasive side. Goliath fought with the whip, David with the rapier. And together they won the suit, and my talented Russian made 200,000 marks in damages. His generosity ran riot. He pushed a big bundle of banknotes into my hands and said, with one grand gesture:

"Go and buy yourself some nice little thing!"

When I counted the money I nearly passed-out. It was far more than father and I had ever spent together on a month's living.

I asked my father what on earth I should do with all this money. He said: "Take a taxi, go to town, and buy yourself the nicest clothes you can find. Just luxuries for once."

I did. But I must confess that, when the parcels arrived at our flat, I had a strong sense of guilt. I was simply not used to spend money freely and the easy-going joy of being frivolous had gone out of me. But my remorse did not last. I was jolly glad to have some really elegant clothes, for a few days later the Duke announced that he was about to throw a party to all the people connected with the law-suit. And not only did he invite his publishers, his film bosses, his legal advisers, but also the man he had sued, together with his counsel! This was a perfect display of elegant sportsmanship. He also asked several women, myself, and—with many apologies for such unconven-

tional procedure (not having been properly introduced)—my father, who accepted.

It was the first "grand do" of my life. Populenski had ordered a lavish dinner from Berlin's foremost caterers. There was enough champagne to drown the lot of us, and there was also an exquisite little dance orchestra, whose members were all coal-black. And Populenski as an instrument of fate had seated David beside me. And here David revealed himself as the perfect light conversationalist, the man who could talk for hours without saying very much, and I must confess I couldn't cope with him. If he had drawn me into some sound argument on some solid subject I might have been able to keep pace with him, but as things were, I simply nodded or shook my head, and he must have thought me fearfully dull. Like a gay bird he hopped from one branch of small talk to the next. Had I seen that particular musical comedy? Had I enjoyed Jack Hylton's Jazz Symphony Concert at the Ufa Palace? Had I met that witty and wicked poetess who wrote under the pseudonym of "Bias Phemie"? I didn't. I hadn't. Yet David was too well-bred, too much the young man about town, to give up. From the *saumon fumt* to the grapes and nuts he kept me breathless with his superficial narrative. Then, he fell silent. We sat there, sipping our excellent *mocca noir*, and said nothing. And with all the effort and courage I could muster I took a deep breath and asked him:

"What do you think of the National Socialists? Will they have a leg to stand on?"

David stared at me, blinked, cleared his throat, and instead of answering me he put a counter-question:

"Are you interested in that sort of thing?"

"Well—I know very little about politics, but it does look to me as though Germany were heading straight for some sort of inner-political upheaval."

"Does it?" asked David, surprised. "It never occurred to me. Well, well."

And again, silence. No, I definitely was no success with this particular young man. Sadness befell me. I pondered over the question of how my friends would get on with David Hartmann. Sybille would probably drown him. Christine would listen politely and be clever enough to lead the conversation gently towards some subject in which she was interested. There were only two girls I knew who would dance about lightly and elegantly on the shining parquet of conversation with a man like David: Ilona Lankey and Elisabeth. But both were exceptions. Ilona by her tremendous talent and great charm, Elisabeth by her good looks.

Presently I had another try, and plunged headlong into disaster: "Have you ever been to Russia?"

"Russia? What, Soviet Russia? Good God, no! Whoever wants to go to Russia?"

"Well, it seems to be the country of the future. I am terribly interested in Russia. You see, my father is just writing his memoirs on his life as a war-prisoner in the old, Tsarist Russia. Therefore I am frightfully keen to know what things are like there now."

"Pretty awful, I should imagine. But I'm sure I don't know," said David coolly. "I must confess I have no patience with a regime that murders off everybody who happens to be of a different opinion. I dislike fanatics."

"But the people themselves were . . ." I began feebly.

That moment our host rose and I believe I heard a faint sigh of relief from my much-tried and patient neighbour.

I sought out my father, who was talking animatedly to one of Vladimir's film bosses. I edged nearer and stood silently by the two men, who were quite absorbed in the possibilities of naturalistic and super-realistic films.

"The times of the merely entertaining, light drawing-room comedy are over," exclaimed producer Geldern; "we are heading for the strong, untarnished drama. I am most frightfully keen on that book of yours. Sounds like the sort of film I should love to make."

"You'd have to cut freely," laughed my father.

"I don't think I should," mused the man; "the people are ready for the truth about themselves and others. And more so in Germany than anywhere else. This is the one country in Europe with any progressive sort of cultural standard at all. If the Western Powers weren't such blasted, block-headed fools and wouldn't strangle us economically we'd be able to really contribute something to the everlasting values of the world. But they and their conferences!"

My father looked thoughtful.

"I wonder what that awful War has really taught the peoples of our world."

Geldern snapped his fingers.

"Not that much! If that bogus, no-good League of Nations is not strong enough to create at long last the United States of Europe then we'll have another war within ten years."

"The United States of Europe! What a dream!" sighed father.

"And, incidentally, what a film!" said the celluloid-minded Herr Geldern.

"You wrote much about that in your play *Brother Benjamin*, didn't you, father?" I said. And I saw that Geldern pricked up his ears.

"What's this?"

"Oh, nothing—a very Utopian sort of play I wrote a thousand years ago. But I think, Reny, you are not very gay. We should dance. Will you excuse us?"

I wondered why father had changed the subject. Maybe the memory of that play hurt him. He said nothing about it, but put his arm round me and led me securely and with much skill through the fox-trotting crowd. The black orchestra wailed *Tea for Two*, the rage of Berlin, and after that *I Want to be Happy*, and a host of other lovely American and English tunes, the sound of which still brings back to me the memories of a gay, colourful, if totally bankrupt,

Berlin. Only the other night a sentimental cinema organ played a pot-pourri of these almost classic dance tunes, and from the organ pipes emerged ghosts who floated through the dimness of the gilt and marble super-cinema. It was not my father whom I remembered then with poignant vividness; it needs no cinema organ to summon his spirit, for he is ever present in my mind. But a host of other people transparently glided past my mental eye. People whose names are known the world over—scientists, artists, politicians, journalists, even famous clergymen, they all lived in Germany at the time when every orchestra emphatically declared: "I can't give you anything but love, Baby!" No other form of music is more suited for bringing back certain memories than dance tunes, because they are usually short-lived and are associated with a very definite period.

And how will I ever be able to hear again that lovely slow waltz *Always* without remembering my first dance with David? I am sure it was his good manners and not his desire that prompted him to ask me for that dance. Thank goodness, even if I was not a brilliant conversationalist, I was at least a naturally graceful dancer, and thus surprised my partner. He said that much.

"Why, you dance beautifully!"

"You don't seem to credit me with much, Herr Hartmann."

He grinned.

"Well, frankly, I did not associate a girl who wants to go to Russia of all places with so much gracefulness and sense of rhythm. Sounds idiotic, though. . . ."

"Yes," I replied pleasantly.

We danced several more dances, and then had a drink at Populenski's well-stocked bar. But there David left me, with many apologies, because some young man beckoned him away. I sat on my high stool rather forlornly and sipped a scalding Kirsch Wasser, when suddenly a young woman addressed me. I had heard somebody call her

"Felix" and assumed that her name was Felicitas. A nice-looking, elegantly turned-out girl of about my own age. I remembered that she had sat next to Populenski at dinner.

"Hello there," she addressed me. "Falling in love with David?"

I was taken aback by so much bluntness, and blushed.

"Well, no—why—of course not—I mean——"

"Don't," said the young woman laconically, and ordered a drink and wriggled up on to the high stool next to mine. "Would be a pity."

"Would it? Or—are you perhaps in love with him yourself?" (Must be the alcohol, for how else would I have dared to ask such an impertinent question?)

"I used to be," confessed Felix, "until I married him. Now I am merely used to him and like him about the house. He's rather a darling."

"You—are—his—er—hm—wife?" I must have looked immensely stupid, for Felix burst out laughing.

"Don't let that worry you. I'm used to girls falling in love with David all the year round. He is a lamb. But really you want somebody much more sophisticated and serious than that boy."

"How do you know?"

"Oh—David mentioned you to me" (my heart beat a little faster and again I put that down to my unusual consumption of alcohol), "and from what he said I took it that you are fearfully serious." She raised her glass. "Cheers. Have another."

"No, thank you—I'd rather not, Frau Hartmann."

"Heavens, don't let's be formal. Call me Felix. Everybody does. You must come and visit us soon. You might like my brother Fried, he's fearfully intelligent. He stays with us. We have a little week-end house at Saarow. Care for boating? No? Well, there are plenty of other nice things."

David came back to the bar and grinned at his wife.

"Been telling Renate Feldt all my horrid characteristics?"

"Heavens, no! We never mentioned you," said the young woman, so sincerely that even I believed her. ,Marvellous how some people can lie without turning a hair ! With a playful slap on his hand she slid off the stool and made off for the adjoining room. I too left the bar and sought out my father. I asked him if it were not time to go home.

"Queer world," laughed he, "where a daughter reminds her father to break up the party instead of the other way round. You young people of to-day don't know when to enjoy yourselves. Hello—you do look fed-up. What's up?"

"Nothing, father. Just tired."

My father did not question me. But in the taxi he put his arm round my shoulder and said inconsequently:

"You must get about a little more, old girl. You are just the right age to run into a nice young bachelor. Somebody unattached and quite free."

I said nothing.

* * *

At twenty-one, in Berlin, 1927, with a father who gave me all the freedom I wanted, and moreover attached to a crowd of film and theatrical people through my job, I believe that in the eyes of my friends I seemed to be something of a freak, from the fact that the unfortunate and disastrous event of Hubert Helm had so far been the only attempt upon my maidenhood. They all in their specific way urged me on to find myself a "lover." Christine called it a "biological necessity"; Sybille saw in it the manifestation of the equality of womanhood to manhood; Elisabeth thought it absurd that I "ran around on my own"; Elionor von Trestow, looking like the impersonation of Potsdam virtue, said calmly:

"Get it over with and don't be such a prig!"

I'm sure it was all very confusing. I began to brood over my possible lack of temperament. Was there perhaps anything wrong with me? Was I cold or was I particu-

larly unattractive? It took me years of study of men and their psychology to throw a light upon my—what I took to be—shortcomings. I am not prepared to confirm religiously every word that Freud or his followers wrote, but one thing seems certain: I had a definite father-fixation and also, in my deepest subconscious mind, a holy terror of man, founded on the horrible tales that Elisabeth had told me years ago. Although I was not frightfully demonstrative in that respect, I worshipped my father, and sought his image in every man I met, which in turn made me shrink from physical contact with them. On the other hand I also saw part of the detested Gellhorn in almost every male, and my natural instincts put up the shutters. At the time I did not, of course, realise these facts and was worried.

And then David happened, and, although I never actually went further in my daydreams than being kissed by him, he was the first man of whom I was not afraid. There was nothing sinister about David which would have reminded me of Gellhorn, nor was he the fine, intellectual type that my father represented. He stood aside 'and apart from every male I had ever come in contact with. His gay, easy elegance, the slight touch of arrogance in his manner, his charm and completely self-possessed amiability captured me completely. He was such an exception from the brooding, cynical, fed-up young Methuselahs I usually met. He had just touched the fringe of the War, and taken what horrors he might have seen in his stride. He was one of the few whose life was not completely disorganised when he came home. He picked up where he left off, finished his studies, and was taken into a first-class firm as a junior partner. His family was extremely well-off and so was the family of his wife.

Yes, Felix.

The existence of Felix made him taboo for me. I still believed in the immunity of the state of Holy Matrimony in spite of Felix Hartmann's flippancy on that subject. I

took that flippancy at its face-value, as I took most things. And yet—I made myself believe that David Hartmann ceased to be a man in my eyes. I always divided the stronger sex into three categories: friends, nien, and inmarried people., I took all the ethics, morals unwritten laws and the rest of the hypocritical hullabaloo and built them round me like a wall. But behind that wall David sat on my subconscious mind and played hell with my psychological reactions. For years to come.

It was at the end of 1928 when I left my benevolent, raving mad Duke. Like so many enterprises in Germany at that time, his film company went bust, and Vladimir, who had a small fortune invested in that particular company, lost every penny of it. And of course a generous madcap like Populenski, who squandered his income lavishly, had very little ready cash to fall back on. Bills began to accumulate; tradesmen, who had licked his boots, became unpleasant, and even wrote threatening letters; women who used to ring daily were suddenly too busy even to have a cup of tea with their former benefactor. I was there all the time when the flimsy, scintillating building of his fortune fell to pieces. He had, of course, possibilities to write for other companies, but they took it out on him that he had so loyally stuck to his own film company and offered him insulting tips instead of his customary four-figure salary. Populenski was thoroughly disgusted. And, frankly, so was I. I was shown a most striking example of what money can do or undo, and it made me both thoughtful and bitter. Naturally Vladimir was in no mood to sit down and do any solid work. He was obviously not one of the much and wrongly quoted artists who can write best when "the world tumbles about their ears, when their stomachs growl and their hands are frozen with cold." All that is rubbish. It may have applied to the grim author of nineteenth-century melodrama. But you cannot live in a fast-moving, nerve-wrecking world

and write witty and brilliant dialogue and feed on hopes! Nobody can create anything but the most deadly and gruesome rubbish when every time the door-bell rings he jumps for fear of yet another creditor.

Populenski did the most sensible thing in the circumstances. He sold his most exquisite furniture, library, and other valuables, and betook himself, with all the cash he could lay hands on, to Monte Carlo. I know that this was the best way out for him, for only two years later he reappeared in Berlin with trunks full of bigger and better film stories, and was soon tied up with a large, newly founded company. But by that time I had said good-bye to being a typist. I had a better job—or rather two jobs. I was my father's right-hand girl and, on the other hand, honorary secretary to the A.E.F.L., meaning: "All Europe Friendship League."

Yes, those were the days when Dr Keller the publisher announced to my father that the third imprint of his book *No Hero At All* was sold out, and that the book was being translated into every conceivable living language. Money came along. It rolled into our banking account (!) and from there straight into the four winds, because my father, just like the Duke, simply could not accumulate a fortune. The only difference was that, while the Duke had turned his cash into champagne, flowers, jewellery, racing cars, and other luxuries, father bought a medium-sized touring car, took driving lessons, and we set off, at last, to see Europe.

That same Europe that to-day groans and moans under the jackboot of the Great Pest; that same Europe that to-day burns from one end to the other, set aflame by the destructive torch of hatred and hunger for power. That same Europe that dozed and snored smugly and innocently while a raving paranoiac spun his evil dreams about conquering the globe, and very nearly gets away with it !

To travel with father was like reading those fairy books with him years ago. We travelled a whole summer. We

went all over Germany, that lovely country of so varied a scenery 'that it could fill three or four different countries. From the green banks of the Rhine, through the quaint old medieval towns of southern Germany to the mighty and towering mountains of Bavarian Alps, we went everywhere. There was depression in some parts, prosperity in others. But let no man say that Germany was starving, corrupt, and on the verge of complete collapse just for Herr Hitler to step in and rescue her. Stuff and nonsense! Had it not been for the stubbornness of the rest of the world, and the machinations of certain Prussian Junkers and the Army, Adolf Hitler would be to-day where he belongs. Wherever that may be!

On the whole, Germany, as we saw her, was on the way to recover at last from the depression of the War and its aftermath, in spite of the fact that numerous people were out of jobs. We met numbers of contented, industrious, and kindly people. God Almighty, what has become of those friendly, toiling, decent human beings? It is the world's most sinister miracle to me that all those men and women we met and talked to should have been turned into wild beasts who hailed and applauded a handful of highwaymen when they seized power and began their shady careers by beating up harmless minorities. That the hideous swastika flag should be hoisted on all the glorious historic buildings, libraries, universities, castles, and ancient town halls ! That through the winding, cobbled, sunny lanes of the old southern German towns the Nazis should strut, spreading terror first and gaining blind obedience after I Maybe the solution lies in the persiflage of the saying: "*Grating le Russe, voila le Tartar!*"—by turning it into: "*Grating le Prusse, voild le barbar!*"

We went to Austria first of all. We had a feast of music at Salzburg and a feast of gaiety in Vienna, at night, high up on the Cobenzl, with all Vienna lying below like a sea of light, glittering and shimmering, and with the Danube winding its way down to the Hungarian plains and the

Black Sea. Vienna, city of a million laughs. Blacked-out, doomed, tortured. Its people gone mad. And Budapest, that jewel among European cities. How we enjoyed sitting on the Margaret Island and listening to a genuine Hungarian Gipsy band that really originated in the Puzsta and not in the East End of London, as do so many "original Gipsy bands" I

It was in Budapest that we met Trevor Parkins, a young American journalist and globe-trotter who was obsessed with the idea of a United Europe. Strange, but perhaps significant, that it took an American to found the All Europe Friendship League. He had organised centres in all the European capitals, including Berlin, and asked me right out if I were interested to do a job of work for this particular branch of the A.E.F.L. I was enthusiastic, but confessed that I had no idea about politics.

"Good," he cried. "We don't want politics. The league is based upon non-political, non-party foundations. Our foremost aim is the exchange of literature, science, culture, social welfare ideas. Everybody can join."

Father was keenly interested. He questioned Parkins meticulously and was never so animated before.

"A junior League of Nations," I ventured. Parkins pulled a grimace. He seemed not to be impressed by that well-meaning but totally hopeless institution.

"An answer to that lunatic of yours, Herr Adolf Hitler!" he declared. Father cocked up his ears.

"So—you too believe in that man?"

"Believe in him? No fear! But I've read *Mein Kampf* and I think the man's fanatic enough to carry out every bit of his blessed programme."

"Never!" cried my father. "Never will the German nation stand for all the nonsense he writes, for instance, about the superiority of the Aryan race. There is no such thing as a pure Aryan. But quite apart from that, the Great Powers of the West would call a halt if Hitler should ever come to power."

"The Great Powers of the West are doing everything possible to help the gentleman on his feet."

The two men had then launched upon a heated and passionate argument, my father basing his assumptions on his belief in the world's sincere wish for co-operation and peace, Parkins defending the fact that the peoples of this world might wish for all they were worth, but would, in the end, do as they were told by the Powers that be. These arguments, of course, took place all over Europe at the time. And the argument is finished. Hell is loose, the world is falling to pieces, and so—what's the use of lingering upon the "Ifs in History"?

Parkins promised to meet us in Paris the following month. We made the sort of appointment which to-day belongs to the world of dreams. Paris, September tenth, five o'clock in the afternoon on the terrace of the Cafe de Dome. A couple of centuries seem to have passed since we shook hands with our clear-minded but idealistic American. To-day, you can't even make an appointment for the next afternoon in your own house, because that house might by then be blown to hell by the kind-hearted Herrenvolk in their efforts to save civilisation !

Before we went to France there was an interlude in Vienna. Interlude in Vienna sounds like the title of a Hollywood-created musical comedy, and, in fact, the whole business might make quite a good film story, except for the fact that Hollywood favours happy endings and life doesn't. We had come back to the Austrian capital to meet father's Vienna publisher, to whom Dr Keller had given us an introduction, and who was "frightfully keen on meeting one of his most successful authors." The golden days of our European trip took on a soft and mellow tint of blue, for we ran into David and Felix Hartmann. Had it been David without Felix, the tint might have been pink and not blue. We dined with the publisher at the Ambassador Hotel and there, bang opposite us, sat the Hartmanns, both absorbed in their respective newspapers.

I hypnotised Felix until she saw us, and when she did she waved frantically, and David got up and came over to our table. The five of us ended up on the terrace of the Opern Cafe, eating icecream and smoking like chimneys and talking pleasant nonsense. I had lost some of my idiotic self-consciousness towards David and found myself actually engaged in an animated conversation with Felix on fashions and gramophone records. David seemed surprised, and beamed.

"You've changed since I met you first, you know!"

"How am I to take that? Compliment or rebuff?"

"How little you know my husband!" twittered Felix. "He'd rather bite his tongue off than say anything unpleasant to a girl—'cept me, of course."

"Well, you were so frightfully serious and intent. Now you actually smile for no reason at all," said David.

"Don't be so modest, Davy," intervened his wife; "your presence is reason enough for any girl to smile."

"Oh, shut up! Renate doesn't strike me as the sort of girl who'd put on a smile for the benefit of any man. That smile comes from the inside."

Yes, David. That smile came from the inside. But the inside, as you call it, was brimful with a lot of muddled and stupid ideas about you. But one doesn't admit it. One babbles about being happy because of the beauty of Vienna and because of a prospective interesting job with the A.E.F.L.

"There she goes again," groaned David. "Politics!"

"On the contrary. You should both join the League."

"I never join anything," declared David firmly. "I hate nothing more than leagues, clubs, Vereine, and mass meetings. The only assembly I would like to-night is a Heurigen out in Grinzing. How about it?"

"I'm too tired. I want to go back to the hotel and get some sleep. We have a long trip ahead of us," said FeUx. The Hartmanns were on their way to the Dalmatian coast.

The publisher also declined, and my father was too much of a sport to break in. So David and I set out by ourselves* We hired a cab and drove through the summer night out of town—out to Grinding, where we sat in a Wirtshaus garden and drank the new wine and ate pork and brown bread. A small band played sentimental songs, a few youngsters then started to dance the Schuplattl and somebody yodelled. And David looked like a boy of ten. He fooled about and laughed, and told me silly stories of the times when he was a student at Heidelberg, and the happier his mood became, the sadder was I. But that's the old, old story! When you're in love with a fellow you don't want him to be so frightfully happy. It only goes to show that he's neither afraid to lose you nor in any way disturbed by your irresistible charms. He's happy because you represent no problem for him, and I'm damned if that's pleasant. Besides, I couldn't help thinking of that attractive female who possessed him for better or worse. But David, thank goodness! knew nothing of my heart-burnings. He was simply delighted.

"This is heaven. Give me Vienna for a good time. Listen, Renate, I really believe you don't know how to enjoy yourself. What makes you look so serious? Don't you like it here?"

"I love it," I said meekly. Heavens, it might have been a crowded tram, an evil-smelling tavern, an open field: anywhere I should have looked equally serious.

"D'you always look so miserable when you love something?"

"Yes. That's a special characteristic of mine. And now stop teasing me. I know I'm not frightfully jolly by nature. . . ."

"But you're frightfully nice! I like your eyes. What colour are they? Here, let me see. . . . Brown? Grey? No—hazel. That's it. Hazel. Renate, I'm blissfully aware of the fact that I'm tight. That new wine is killing me. But I'm not too tight—I do like your hazel eyes.

Hey—you haven't had more than half a glass. Come on, drink up. The night is young. So are we. Three cheers! . . ."

David planted his elbows on the chequered table-cloth and stared at me. I got so confused that I didn't know where to look. He was very different from the young solicitor I had met in Berlin. He began to say a lot of nice, foolish things and, like the idiot I am, I took every word he said for gospel truth. To my wishful thinking I conveniently added the old proverb: *In vino veritas*, and believed that David Hartmann had fallen in love with me. I was suddenly happy. And my happiness lasted twelve hours. That's a whole lot of happiness! I tried my very best to dismiss Felix from my mind. Only in the taxi back to town when David put his arms around me and drew my lips to his mouth did I faintly murmur:

"You are married."

His answer was a kiss.

Bang went my moral resources against my natural self. I simply let myself go. I was so keenly aware of the fact that I was not afraid of David. If he had ordered the taxi to drive us straight to the next third-class hotel, I wouldn't even have tried to protest. But the taxi went to my hotel, David went to his hotel, and that was that. I found my father sitting in the hall, reading a journal.

"Hello, father ! I hope you haven't waited up for me. I'm sorry I'm so late."

"I'm sorry you are so early, old girl. I hope to goodness you had a good time."

My answer was to rush past him into the lift.

The next morning my vain hopes that David might be in love with me were smashed by a small parcel, containing a box of exquisite chocolates, and a card:

"Sorry I made such an ass of myself. Hope you are not angry. But the new wine, you know.—DAVID H."

Never have I tasted more bitter chocolates! In fact they were salted by the generous flow of my tears. The

card I kept. I kept it for ten years. Then it went the way of all paper. Into salvage.

It may sound banal to quote here the first line of a popular song, but I can only say, along with the lyric writer: "The last time I saw Paris." ... It takes some courage to remember those autumn days of 1930 in Paris! Father had booked rooms in a small private hotel, from which we set out to see the city of a million delights. I feel a physical pain when I visualise the rich old trees along the Boulevards gazing down upon a victorious German Army. It makes my head reel and my eyes burn when I think of the sacrilege of Nazi boots trampling along the paths of the Luxembourg Gardens. It makes me clench my fists when I realise that the swastika is fluttering from the Eiffel Tower. It makes me shudder to think that corruption, weakness, and folly on the one side, and brute force and deadly efficiency on the other side, have turned the gayest city in the world into the most morbid place in Europe.

We kept our appointment with Trevor Parkins and he brought along a young man named Gerhard Wegner, who ran the Berlin branch of the A.E.F.L. and was to be my future "boss." This youth was only twenty-four years old. A tall, fair, grey-eyed youngster of athletic physique, the ideal nordic type, but in his heart not a bit nordic, but most cosmopolitan and an ardent despiser of any exaggerated nationalism. In fact he was in every way the very opposite to the outwardly so un-nordic Dr Goebbels of later days. Gerhard wanted to know if I could handle a typewriter, and I confessed to him that that was about all I could do. We discussed the details of my future work, which was to start on October first in Berlin. I said to my father:

"Now I too have achieved supreme happiness. A job that interests me and which I am going to do for the sake of the job and not for the sake of making a living."

"Supremely happy, eh? Well, Renate, either you're a liar or an extraordinary girl," grinned my father. And I

did the best I could do under the circumstances: I grinned back.

* * *

The winter of 1930-1931 found my father and myself suddenly in the position of the newly rich. The only excuse for belonging to this more or less detestable body of human society was that father had acquired his money by hard and concentrated brain work and not by sitting back and letting somebody else earn the money for him. We who had always marvelled at the fact of how quickly our small incomes went into the most necessary commodities now wondered what a long way a large income goes. We had spent what we thought to be a small fortune on our trip; we had bought that car; we had moved into a better and more comfortable flat; we had acquired the three landmarks of bourgeois comfort: a maid, a telephone, and a wireless. We had fitted out Klaus from top to toe, as well as ourselves, and there still was money! In fact Geldern, the producer, had bought the film rights of father's book and asked him to write another story on similar lines. And he paid a four-figure sum down without turning a hair.

"I'm as pleased as Punch that I have at last the capacity of making a living for my family and myself," said my father to Moske the solicitor, who dined with us one night. Moske & Hartmann were now father's permanent legal advisers. "But of course," he continued, "the sale of the film rights has really nothing to do with my actual work. And—fancy!—that's what makes the most."

"Naturally," snapped Goliath; "real money is never made by sweating away. If I were you, Feldt, I should invest a few thousand. Iron and steel if you take my hint."

"Why?" asked my father absent-mindedly.

"Why?" mocked Goliath. "Because iron and steel go into armaments, and those are always the best shares. You'll run straight into a boom, man."

"No, thank you. Not a penny of my money goes into weapons. Detestable business."

"Hark the pacifist!" scoffed the rude old man, and stuffed himself with veal ragout, "Aren't you a Jew?"

"Of course I'm a Jew. What's that got to do with it?"

"Well, Jews are supposed to have a natural flair for making money fast."

"And—didn't I?" asked my father, with a gentle smile.

"No. You slaved away at that typewriter of yours for years in order to make a few thousand. Man alive! that's not good enough. Let me handle your money."

"You may, with pleasure. But, as I said, no armament shares."

"Your father is a fool!" said Goliath to me, and looked thoroughly disgusted. "Shall I tell you where my money is?"

"No doubt in the hands of Krupp, I.G.-Farben and Mercedes."

"Wrong. They're safely in the hands of Vickers, Skoda, and Rolls Royce!"

"I thought you were a good German?" said I.

"I am a good solicitor and a better family man. Do you think that when Herr Hitler finally does march on Berlin I want to be put into the services of a former house-painter? No fear! I shall go off to sunny Switzerland and end my days in peace."

"Hitler! Hitler! Has the Hitler bug bitten you too? Why, the man hasn't got a chance. Certainly there are a handful of National Socialists in the Reichstag. But I stick to my conviction: Germany will never accept the doctrines of that mad fanatic."

"Germany will accept anything," said Moske. "His best and most effective bait will be his vile Anti-Semitism to catch the German fish with."

"I can believe that!" said I, suddenly grim, and remembered one or two incidents of my childhood.

My father continued to argue. My father, devout

believer in sanity, human decency, and freedom of thought and creed, was too obsessed with his personal ideals to be as far-sighted as the cynical and cool-headed Herr Moske.

But apart from these occasional and heated arguments on "Whither Germany?" neither myself nor my father took any active part in the political life of Berlin. Father was busy writing his film-story and several biographical articles for the left-wing Press. I pursued the peaceful and unpolitical job of typing letters for Gerhard Wegner. Our correspondence was far-flung. We wrote to Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Rome, Paris, and London. We arranged for the exchange of visitors from various countries, for lectures, language courses, and the like. Sybille Barthold, of course, was an enthusiastic member of the League, and had within a few months organised an international Welfare Department for proletarian children from all over Europe to come and visit Germany. Dr Christine Ullmann, on the other hand, had collected large sums from medical friends to start an international convalescent home in Switzerland in aid of tuberculous children.

One fine day, Wegner pounced on me with the news that the German Broadcasting Company had granted us a quarter of an hour to talk about the League. He begged me to get my father to make the speech and my father agreed enthusiastically. Wegner and father wrote the speech between them and I typed and re-typed it half the night, and accompanied the two to the Funkhaus, and thus got acquainted with another branch of civilisation's great achievements. What a heart-breaking shame that this miraculous technical device is poisoned and misused these days by the bawlings and the lies of certain unsavoury gentlemen!

The announcer introduced my father as "The author of that world-famous, grandiose, and enlightening book *No Hero At All*" He said: "A great pacifist and writer will speak now in the cause of peace and friendship," Little did any of us realise that somewhere, in some dark

corner, the already efficiently organised gangsters of the future Fuehrer took down in shorthand every word of father's speech, to fling it back into his face one horrible day, thus marking him down as a traitor against the "holy" mission of the German nation !

After the broadcast father gave a little party to Wegner, Sybille, Christel, and myself at a cosy little restaurant—dinner and dance and several bottles of wine. At this party Sybille tried to win me over to join the K.P.D., meaning the German Communist Party. Like many thousands of good burghers I believed Communism was identical with smashing windows, levelling everybody down to nothing at all, and killing those people whose opinions were different from one's own. But on the other hand I was still keenly interested in Russia and her undoubted progress. Sybille was furious.

"There—you see. You know nothing and therefore talk the greatest lot of rubbish. Ignorance is the root of all evil. Sit down and read something about Communism and its real aims and then tell me if you wish to join the party."

The day after the broadcast I dined with Aunt Mary and Elisabeth, who was about to finally accept a certain young man named Rudolf von Schechen to be her future husband, and who had wooed and courted my cousin for a considerable time. He came in after dinner, and impressed me as a fairly intelligent if somewhat pompous young ass. Somehow the conversation turned to the League. I asked Elisabeth to touch some of her wealthy friends for a contribution to our funds. And all the time I stared at Rudolf. He took the hint, but declined.

"Sorry, Fraulein Feldt, but I happen to have very different ideas about the youth of Germany. In fact, I am off to Bremen to-morrow to address a rally of youth at the Stadium. Our ideals are exactly opposite to yours. We call ourselves the Hitler Jugend."

I had heard of that particular organisation, on and off.

I knew something about their doctrines. Nationalism, preparedness for war, racial isolation, blood and soil worship. I sighed and shook my head. Elisabeth changed the subject and Aunt Mary looked rather relieved. I guessed that there must have been one or two quite lively arguments in this particular branch of the Feldt family about the desirability of having an admirer of Herr Hitler in our midst.

I mentioned the incident to Wegner at the office next day.

"Gerhard, what about the Hitler Youth?"

He waved his hand and sneered: "Them!"

"I don't know. I think we ought to attend one of their rallies. See what it's all about."

"They're mostly young kids. Our organisation embraces grown-ups and young people. And they have a damned sight more sense than children."

"Ah—but children are easily impressed. And they happen to be the generation to look to for peace and freedom in Europe."

We did go to one of the assemblies in the spring of 1932. It took place on the Sunday before the Easter holidays and I asked father to accompany us. Little did we realise, when we set out for the Sportspalast, how great and deep a tragedy this youth movement was to bring into our personal lives. What we heard and saw shocked us deeply. The whole show had a marked military character. Flags were waved and fanfares were blown and the kids were skilfully and efficiently guided into hatred against anything and anybody that was not of pure German and "Aryan" extraction. They responded enthusiastically. They yelled their "Sieg Heils," they raised their little arms stiffly, they glowed with the desire to go out there and then and defend their fatherland—which was, in fact, not threatened by anybody, except their beloved Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler.

We came away dazed and dismayed. Father was easily the most impressed of all of us.

"I admit, this is dreadful!" he said, when we drove

back to our flat for lunch. "In ten years' time these children will be young men and women of twenty and twenty-two. Just the ideal age to throw them into bloody battle. This must not happen! God, if only that madman does not succeed in gaining a majority of voices at the next election!"

"Now you see, father, that Hitler is a man to be reckoned with."

Father nodded, and said urgently:

"But I cannot and will not believe that the German nation can possibly be so blind, so completely void of any intelligence, as not to see that Hitler's programme means disaster all round. I've read every word of *Mein Kampf*, and it oozes hatred and vindictiveness. The hunger for power of a small, disillusioned neurotic. No—no; the Germans are a people of thinkers and workers. Too intelligent, too industrious, too sane, to put up with that sort of thing for long. It will not grow beyond these children's movements. It must not! But, by God, you All Europe Friendship League people should work like the devil to fight this Hitler Youth!"

"Did you notice the tall, blue-eyed youngster who read the new members' list?"

"Yes, Renate. Who's he?"

"At the present time my future cousin by marriage, Herr Rudolf von Schechen. But I hope Elisabeth sticks to her principle of changing her lover with the seasons. I wouldn't exactly cherish a member of the Nazi Party in our family."

"Heaven help us!" said my father, so emphatically that I had to laugh. But I really didn't feel a bit funny.

The following Saturday turned out to be one of the days never to be forgotten in all my life. Father was still out at the film studios where they made *No Hero At All* with an all-star cast. The company intended to leave the picture on the shelf until the early autumn in order to open the big winter season with this particular film. There was to be a Midnight Gala Performance for some charitable

cause, and father had put it before the executive that at least half of the proceedings should go to the funds of the A.E.F.L. The idea was applauded.

I expected my brother home for his holidays and at three o'clock set out for the Zoo station to meet him. I have already confessed that I never had any noticeable maternal instincts, but I really liked Klaus. He spent every alternate holiday with us, the others with his Grandfather Dressel, who was genuinely fond of the boy. Klaus had developed into a handsome, bright, and light youngster, with lovely clear eyes and a shock of fair, soft hair. He was slim, straight, and good at games. He was polite and well-bred, with a touch of stubbornness and a faint leaning to undue sensitiveness. He pursued the usual hobbies of his particular age and sex, such as collecting everything from stamps to rusty pen-knives, swimming, mechanics, birds'-nesting, and over-eating. Father watched carefully over the sort of toys that Klaus was given. All such things as guns, tanks, and tin soldiers were strictly taboo, although Grandfather Dressel always broke that golden rule when the boy was with him. But Klaus did not mind much when I took these things away from him, for father invariably had some lovely surprise in store for the child. This year, since we had decided that Klaus was past the age of looking for coloured Easter eggs, we had got hold of a sweet, amusing terrier puppy. We knew that Klaus was very fond of animals and looked after them well, which seemed to us a sign that he possessed a kindly and warm-hearted nature.

I noticed a subtle change in my brother the moment he stepped from the train. His hair was cut rather shorter than usual, he carried himself straighter, and he did not kiss me as he always did when I met him at the train. He extended his brown paw and shook my hand with a painfully firm grip. Altogether he behaved like the healthy, well-cared-for boy of thirteen he was. But something was missing. It did not take me long to find out what it was.

It was the usual smile in his blue eyes. Klaus looked definitely grave.

"Hello there, young man! Why, you are taller than I am, shame on you!"

"Hello, Reny."

He waved good-bye to some of his friends, who were met by their parents, and trotted after me through the barrier, down the staircase and into the street. All the time he said very little.

"Aren't you surprised that father isn't here to meet you?"

"Yes. Where is he?"

"Out at the studios where they are making his book into a film. If you are awfully good, father promised to take you down one day and show you the tricks of the trade. How's that?"

"Lovely."

"Got a surprise for you, old chap. Guess what."

"A bicycle?"

"Wrong. Have another guess."

"An air-gun?"

He was definitely disappointed when I told him that he knew very well that he would never get any sort of gun. That struck me as remarkable.

"Well, what is it then?"

"A terrier pup. Wait till you see him! We haven't christened him yet. We wanted you to choose the name."

"Oh, that's lovely! Thanks!" But Klaus was merely being polite. Obviously the idea of a small dog did not appeal to him any more. He explained: "I can't take him back to school, you know."

"Well, no. That's of course the snag. But when you come on holiday you have him entirely to yourself. Think what fun it will be to find him grown and changed every time you come home. In between we'll give him board and lodging."

When we arrived home Emma had prepared a large pot of steaming hot coffee and a fresh, still-warm apple-cake.

Klaus dug in with boyish appetite. And the puppy was much more of a success than I had feared from his reaction. Klaus sat on the floor immediately after coffee and allowed the yapping and frowning little beast to crawl all over him.

"Well, what are you going to call him?"

"Dunno. What do you suggest?"

I suggested a number of names, such as Lucky, Penny, Keeny, and Bob.

"But those are all English names," protested Klaus.

"Of course. He is an honest-to-goodness English dog, with an endless pedigree. Both parents born within the sound of Bow Bells!"

"Well, he lives in Germany, and he is going to have a German name. I think I shall call him Armin."

"That's medieval German for Hermann. Might as well call him Hermann, which I think is a singularly hideous name for such a pretty dog."

"I like medieval German," said Klaus quietly.

I unpacked his things, and then sent him to have a bath and make himself look respectable. We were to have an early dinner, since father was sure not to have had a square meal all day. When he finally arrived at about six o'clock I happened to be in the hall with the dog in my arms. I greeted him:

"Hello, father! Meet Armin!"

"Who in heaven's name is that?"

"Armin! That's the name our son has bestowed upon this innocent little son of Albion?"

"How perfectly ghastly! Well, I guess the boy's just absorbed in some tale about Armin the Cherusk king. You know what boys are. Good job he's not involved in Greek history. Just imagine that poor animal being called Agamemnon! But at present your Armin drips. Take the brute out on the balcony and for heaven's sake give me something to eat. The food at the studio canteen is abominable. Where's Klaus?"

"In his room."

Father discarded coat and hat and made straight for the little room off my bedroom, which we had turned into the most charming boy's den. I ventured into the kitchen to put the final touch to the roast lamb.

Dinner was a lively affair. Father was brimful of the studio and praised Geldern's genius. Klaus was fascinated by father's description of the technical side of making films. He thought it might be fun to become a cinema operator. Unless, of course, father would allow him to become an air-pilot.

"Pilot, eh? Air-minded are you, boy? Well, why not? If you are really keen on flying—fly you shall. Lovely job to ride the clouds carrying mail and passengers from one country to the other in the service of civilisation."

I shall never forget that sentence, and I hope, Klaus, neither will you! I happen to know that you are a pilot, but you are not riding the clouds in the service of civilisation. You sweep the skies in the service of death and destruction! The very bomb that killed half a dozen of my neighbours—that bomb, Klaus, might have been released by you. You are being hailed by your fellow-countrymen as a dare-devil flying ace! And decorated by your satanic Fuehrer for killing straight and efficiently. Was it really you, Klaus, who rolled so happily on the floor with a black-and-white terrier trying to climb your shoulder?

After the meal father wanted to know all about school. Thus had arrived the moment when my brother gave us an explanation for the hardly conceivable but undoubted change in him. The boy stood leaning against the book-shelf in the drawing-room, his hands buried in his trouser-pockets, his brightly blond hair gleaming in the light of a softly shaded occasional lamp. Father sat in his favourite arm-chair and I stood by a small table tending the coffee-machine. The perfect setting for a cosy family discussion. A painfully ironic setting for the swiftly approaching tragedy. Klaus did not waste much time. Thank God, the boy was straight and did not seek furtive back alleys!

"Father—I want to join the Hitler Youth."

"Do you?" asked my father quietly, and with genuine kindness.

"Yes—but I don't think I can."

"Good job!" said I, with determination.

"Just a moment, Renate; let me handle this."

My father was extremely calm, but I sensed the inward excitement and worry, which he made every effort to hide from us.

"Yes," began Klaus, "I can't join the Hitler Youth." And suddenly he burst out: "Because I'm not a full Aryan. Because you are a Jew!"

I was struck by the amount of despair and antagonism in Klaus's voice. But at the same time the boy had hit my tenderest spot, where I could stand no nonsense. I put down the milk-jug and was over by Klaus in a flash. I shook his shoulders hard. But my father intervened, and for the first time in all my life he spoke sharply, even angrily, to me:

"Renate, please! If you can't control yourself, I shall have to talk to Klaus alone."

"Sorry, father, but this is just beyond my self-control!"

I plumped down into a chair and lit a cigarette. It struck me then what an extremely bad pedagogue I should make were I ever to have any children of my own. I had no patience, no tolerance, no psychological understanding for young minds.

My father spoke to the boy: "Klaus, what is all this nonsense?"

"It's no nonsense, father, really. Most of the boys at our school are in the Hitler Youth movement, except the Jews and the half-Jews. And we do miss all the fun!"

"But, my dear child, surely the expression 'half-Jew' is rather silly, and doesn't apply to you. You were baptized at birth, you are a member of the Protestant Church of Germany, and you are going to be confirmed next Easter. That was your mother's wish, which I have respected, and

on which I acted with meticulous care. There's nothing half about you, dear boy."

"It's not a matter of religion," explained Klaus seriously. "It's a racial question. And, by that, I am only half-Aryan since you are a Jew."

"I see," said my father quietly. "Now tell me, how do the other Jewish and half-Jewish—as you call it—boys take it that they can't join the movement?"

"The full Jews don't care. They hate the Hitler Youth and there are plenty of hard-fisted fights going on. But the half-Jews are livid about it. Particularly Peter Clarsen. His mother is a Jewess."

"I can understand that you would like to join a youth movement. What about the Boy Scouts or the All Europe Friendship League?"

"Aw—they're no good. Eyewash ! I'm a German boy, and I don't want any international organisation. Our generation is responsible for a strong, unconquerable Germany."

Father and I exchanged a swift glance and he nodded. We were both thinking of our recent experience at the Sportspalast.

"Not all international youth movements are—as you call it in perfect German—'eyewash.' Do you really believe that the future of Europe should lie in the hands of haters and intolerant autocrats? Don't you think, my boy, it is much finer and much more worthy of a good and true Christian to believe in an all-round friendship with every nation and every race?"

"Well," said the boy miserably, "I am not so much a good Christian as a good German. All that sob-stuff about 'love thy neighbour' doesn't mean much to us!"

He turned round and drank some coffee. Father sat quite still. He stared into space. His hands on the arms of the chair were trembling ever so slightly. He was under the strain of great emotion, and no wonder. I took father's laboriously hidden distress for understandable

anger and disappointment over his only son. But I did not yet know what father was really going through. This, I believe, was his most heroic hour. I looked at my brother. Yes, this light, bright, fair youngster was the ideal representative of the young nordic type, which Herr Hitler and his satellites propagated so wildly as the only type of the human species worth bothering about. (Except of course for the swarthy, oily-skinned Italians and the not-so-nordic Japanese! Fancy anybody daring to introduce a State Philosophy based on the colour of people's hair and then linking up with the exact opposite types!)

The stillness in the room became rather unbearable. I broke it with a banal question: "More coffee, father?"

"Er—yes—thank you." Father sounded as though he were awakening from a nightmare. I refilled his cup and filled his pipe for him.

At last father addressed Klaus once more: "Your heart is set on this Hitler Youth business, I take it?"

"Yes—but it seems pretty hopeless."

"Well, Klaus, I promise you something. And you do admit that I have never broken my word? Very well then. I shall visit your Grandfather Dressel and have a personal talk with him. And then we shall see to it that you join your Hitler Youth. I am willing to hand your further education over to your maternal grandfather. Is that all right?"

I gasped. Surely this was not my clear-thinking father! Because even if he was willing to let grandfather continue Klaus's education that did not make the boy a "pure Aryan."

Klaus looked doubtful, relieved, and somewhat embarrassed. He asked permission to go out to see his friend Dieter Wichart, a school-mate who lived only across the road. My father nodded.

"Yes, Klaus, go to Dieter. But try to be home, latest, at nine."

Klaus was happy to be let off. The atmosphere was not very jolly for a boy on his first night at home. We heard him whistle self-consciously while he ran down the passage, and heard him open and close the front door. But we did not hear him scamper down the staircase as in the olden days of the Uhlandstrasse. In this house the stairs were thickly carpeted. Yes, we had passed the border-line between being mere "people" and being the "so-and-so's," the border-line being a red carpet.

My father got up from his chair and walked over to the window. It was dusky and the air was cool and sweet. Father smoked his pipe in silence, standing there, his back turned to the room, as though he were turning his back to all the world and seeking help and consolation from the rosy clouds of the spring evening. I hung miserably on the arm of my chair, not knowing what to do or say to assist this deeply hurt man. Yes—that was the fundamental difference between my father and myself: he was hurt, I was furious. I wished he'd show some healthy anger. Say something. Smash something. The sight of his square back, his dark, well-shaped back head, the silent clouds of smoke rising into the air, drove me to despair. Inconsequently I longed to talk to David. Ridiculous, since any other friend of mine would have been a much more appropriate companion in this gloomy hour than the cool, non-committal, gay lawyer. But I still longed for him. Suddenly my father said, without turning round:

"I shall fly over to Hamburg by the early morning plane. I must talk to Dressel. If he is willing I shall hand the boy over to him."

"But, father, Klaus will still not be able to join his wretched Hitler Youth. He is not a full Aryan."

And my father answered quietly:

"Yes, Renate. He is."

And now, father turned round and came back to his chair. He slumped down and looked for a moment a very weary, old man. He had looked exactly like that many

years ago when he was going back to the Front after mother's funeral.

"You are twenty-six, aren't you, Renate? I always make the mistake of looking upon you as a child. But you are a young woman. I have no right to pry into your private affairs, and for all I know you may have had a love affair or at least given yourself to some young man. I do not wish to know. But if so, you will perhaps be able to understand your late mother. And if you cannot understand, at least try not to condemn. The time might come some day, somewhere, when you too will brush aside all considerations and all the man-made laws and rules and follow your own instinct. You might be lonely—as your mother was when I was busy killing my fellow-men; you might be poor and miserable and seek consolation in the arms of a man who can afford you some of life's little luxuries and in return demand yourself. Or you might be blindly in love. When that day comes you will understand. To-day, I can only ask you to face unalterable facts with dignity and without bitterness."

I sat motionless. How long had he known?

"I knew all along. You must prepare yourself for another blow, child. When Klaus was born your mother was seized by a terrific sense of guilt and remorse. She did not die in childbirth. She managed to get hold of an overdose of a dangerous sleeping-draught. She was beyond help when I arrived. She left a letter for me in which she confessed, and begged my forgiveness. Poor Gretl—she must have gone through hell!"

"And—father—despite of knowing all this—you brought Klaus up like your own son?"

"I couldn't very well take it out on the poor child."

"But, father—for God's sake—you are only human!"

Father smiled.

"Strange that people always put the word 'only' before human. As though to be 'human' were in itself a second-rate affair. I maintain that to be really human is the highest

we can achieve on earth. We were made in the image of God. No other creature was. To be human then should mean to be perfection, or as near as possible. But I fear we are far from it!"

"Does grandfather know?" Beautiful though father's thoughts and theories were, I was impatient for practical details.

"No. Therefore I shall go to Hamburg. It might be a blow for the old gentleman."

"I wonder!"

My father leaned forward and took my hand.

"Renate, do you understand now why I hate war so desperately? I may be wrong. Everything may come under the heading 'personal destiny.' And yet—I don't believe for a moment that it was your mother's personal destiny to live and die as she did. It was that man-made, horrible War that drove me away and her to despair. There must never be again another war! Oh, God! if only the people of Europe will not allow themselves to be led into yet another bloody fight! If only that man Hitler doesn't gain a foothold in Germany! And if he does—if only the League of Nations will stop him at once! If not, even I begin to realise that we are doomed—I, who so strongly believe in sanity and good will."

"I think if Hitler ever did come to power and started his official Anti-Semitism I should do what my mother did."

"Renate!" cried my father. He jumped up from his chair and came over to me and raised my head. "Renate—never! Never must that thought enter your mind. We are not here to die before our time. We are here to live and fight in a decent, clean, sane way. Promise me, child, that you will never entertain such thoughts, whatever may happen. Suicide is a deplorable way out! Had your mother only had the courage to confess to me before the child was born—by God! there would have been no need for her to seek that inglorious solution to her problem. No, Renate—you must not say such dreadful things.

Promise—promise that, as long as there is a spark of sanity in you—never to give up."

"I promise."

Yes—and I've kept that promise, although it was not always easy for me, father. But more than that—I shall continue to keep that promise, because I have an urgent job to do. Concerning you. . . .

* * *

Taking it all round I am really one of the rather fortunate young women of Europe, for I can account for some seven hundred odd days of carefree life, happiness, and enjoyment. The high light of these two carefree and happy years was the autumn of 1932. I can only compare this period with a person about to die, but who—just before passing on—raises false hopes by displaying unexpected vitality, a treacherous liveliness, bright eyes, and flushed cheeks. This is one of Life's rottenest tricks: the intensity of one thing but foreshadowing its own direct opposite.

Father and I had spent a relatively quiet summer, with only a fortnight's holiday in the Black Forest. Klaus had gone to Hamburg to his grandfather and his Aunt Victoria, and wrote us nice little letters, describing his delight at being now a member of the Hitler Youth, and thanking us profoundly for having "wangled" it so well that he was declared a pure Aryan. The boy was not to know the whole truth until his twenty-first birthday. That much Grandfather Dressel did promise.

The early autumn found father knee-deep in putting the finishing touches to his story, *The Man Who Came Home*, for Geldern, and besides this job he was busy writing articles for the Press warning the people of Germany to pay vigilant attention to the reactionary speeches and broadcasts by right-wing politicians, and to make up their minds that Democracy was doomed in Germany should these reactionaries succeed in winning the masses over to vote for Hitler. Thus for the first time was my father

politically active. I continued my work at the League, but I was as horrified as Wegner by the large numbers of young members who left us in order to join the Hitler Youth.

Late in August of that year I had to say farewell to my friend Christine, who had received a splendid offer to work at the Children's Hospital in Barcelona. She had travelled in Spain during her Easter holidays, and met a young Spanish surgeon who not only fell in love with her, but also believed that she would make a first-class specialist for children. Naturally she jumped at the offer. Up till then Christine's life had run a smooth course, except for the tragedy of her father losing his eyesight during the War and dying several years later. So far Christine had had her fair share of work, with occasional play, and things looked definitely bright for her. But not for nothing was Christel a young woman of Europe. Europe stretched out her talons for this girl too. Need I do more than repeat the name of the town: Barcelona?

Meanwhile my friend Sybille lived a considerably more hectic life than any of us. The Communists were busy having continuous collisions and fights with members of the Nazi Party and my friend was always in the thick of it. On many an occasion did she come home in the small hours of the morning, her face scratched, her hair flying. She was living with a young, ardent Communist journalist, Gunter Cast, who later on did magnificent work of sabotage and agitating when the third Reich had finally settled into the second of its promised thousand years !

Since my father was now definitely a man of affairs he needed constant legal advice, and this brought me into more frequent contact with David. His attitude towards me had changed from playful and completely meaningless gallantry into friendship and unconcealed liking. A more hopeless attitude than the most idiotic and insincere flirtation. Once a man has confessed to a girl that she is "the only person with whom one could talk sense" the

signal is given that one should take one's heart into one's hands and deposit it safely with someone else, or leave it alone to recover as best it can.

I don't think that I really deposited my heart with Joergen Andersen, but I gave him all the romantic craving I had stored up inside me. Andersen was a young Swedish actor whom Geldern had snapped up after his first success on the Stockholm stage, before anybody else could step in, or before the boy could conceive any fancy notions about salary. I met Joergen dying. That is to say, I came out to the studio one fine day to watch the making of the best scene in father's story, *The Man Who Came Home*. I tiptoed my way through the medley of cables and props covering the studio floor and edged near the set, where action was in full swing. The scene represented the interior of a poorly furnished, East Prussian country cottage, and Andersen, a deserter, was about to die of his wounds, inflicted by flying shrapnel. He had crawled through the firing line to come home and see his wife once more. Andersen was splendid. He spoke his last words with such genuine grief, he died so simply, so convincingly, that I could not help bursting into tears, although I knew every moment of that scene, having typed father's script not once but at least a dozen times. When Geldern finally yelled "Cut!" and the large arc lamps went out, and Andersen came back to life with a large grin, I stepped on to the set and said:

"Andersen, that was magnificent!"

The rest was simple enough. We had lunch together in the studio canteen, and later, while Joergen was waiting for his next call, sat in his dressing-room smoking and talking. By the time he was needed on the set we had made an appointment for dinner.

And after that dinner at an exquisite, intimate restaurant we went off to an even more exquisite and more intimate night-club, and promptly and fatally ran into David, who was entertaining a crowd of friends. I still believe it was

that encounter with David in the cosy, softly-lit bar which drove me into the arms of the young actor who was by way of being almost everything a woman could wish for. I was aware of a keen sensation of delight to be seen with that handsome and well-known young man, and hoped with infantile foolishness that David should burst with jealousy. Of course, he didn't ! He actually winked at me from across the room, nodded, and conveyed to me the silent message: "Good for you, old girl. Glad you're human."

This hearty, hail-fellow-well-met message from the eyes of a man you love, kills! I would have loved to leave my handsome escort there and then and walk straight over to David's table and spend the rest of the evening in his company. But something held me back. Conventionality? Pride? Cowardice? I don't know. But one thing is certain, it was no display of tactics on my part. I was much too great an idiot to use my wits. And all the time I knew that I was being unfair to Joergen. He was much more than just a handsome young man or a convenient tailor's dummy. Once I had made up my mind that I was behaving like a fool, and was being rude at that, Joergen succeeded in capturing my attention completely. He had the rare gift of discussing the most serious problems and topics in a light conversational manner without being flippant. He also managed to transform the most general matters of world-wide interest into personal problems of mine, as though the entire globe were simply revolving around me, and the affairs of the day merely the necessary setting for my person. He also had a way of paying compliments with exquisite tact. What woman can resist such captivating methods? On top of that he danced well, and knew everything there is to know about choosing the right food and drink. He saw me home in the small hours of the morning and kissed my hand—and let two days go by before he rang me up. Then he followed our telephone conversation by sending

me a huge bunch of flowers. Everything was well-timed and well-aimed, and before the month was out we were lovers.

I have never learnt whether my father knew anything of our affair or not. He never questioned me, never hinted. He talked about Andersen merely in connection with his work and praised him as a first-class actor.

I was almost happy. Not quite. For although Joergen was what is generally known as a "perfect lover" I could never quite master a certain fear of him. The quick breathing, the searching hands and eager lips of an excited male put holy fear into me. Every time I emerged from his embrace I felt that I was a complete failure! The years however have taught me the great lesson. The more enlightened and sophisticated people of the world may scoff at it and try to laugh it off, and yet here lies the truth: one's heart of hearts has to be in it and, even more, one's very soul. Or as my father had once said so simply: the divine spark. With that divine spark kindling the flame of your emotions you can't go wrong. That flame purifies all and everything. It burns away one's doubts, one's fears. And even though the flame might burn itself out—what matters? Its memory will leave you sadder and wiser and ready for noble understanding and mellow maturity.

For father and myself the great event of that autumn was undoubtedly the gala performance of his film *No Hero At AIL*. That midnight show bore the stamp of a great social event, and everybody who was somebody had been offered tickets and had bought them at shameless prices. The boxes and circle were packed with boiled shirts and jewellery belonging to representatives of Berlin's political, artistic, and financial worlds. After the film my father was to deliver a speech, and the Press had generously collaborated by boosting the event as much as possible. The right-wing Press, however, took only polite notice, while the National Socialist *Angriff*, whose sales had risen to startling and dismaying heights, poisonously emphasised that "yet

another bolshevik Jew was about to present a weary and much-tried public with one more document of decadent and degenerated gutter-literature."

But the future bosses of Germany were not satisfied with just a column of vile and spiteful publicity. In the middle of the performance—in fact, in the middle of a magnificent and stirring scene when a wounded Russian and a deadly hurt German soldier share one last cigarette somewhere among the barbed wire of No-Man'S-Land—the enlightened disciples of Herr Hitler expressed their feelings of protest by throwing stink bombs and tear-gas bombs amongst the startled and alarmed audience. The National Socialists did not reason or fight cleanly for their convictions. Their mentality expressed itself in this crude method of disturbing peaceful men and women who had come to enjoy themselves and be charitable at the same time. But the rowdies were quickly disposed of, because Berlin still possessed an efficient and unbiased police force, and after a few words of apology from the manager the show was resumed.

If the public had suffered no more than an unpleasant interruption and some discomfort, my father and his friends were deeply disturbed at the manifestation of such open and undisguised revolt. Hitherto the Nazi youngsters had limited their vile activities to wrecking Communist meeting-places. They had not dared to show up openly and in public.

My father delivered an excellent speech. He improvised a short reference to the incident:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, you have just tasted a small sample of National Socialist ideology and mentality. Frankly—there is still a decidedly evil smell about the house and there are, I believe, still tears in some people's eyes. I hope—and no doubt so do you—that the evil smell and the tears remain confined to this comparatively limited space and will not spread over Germany!"

These last words were met with ear-splitting applause from all parts of the house.

My father and I walked home through a cold and starry night. He was animated and talkative. The way in which his film had been received by a large section of the public put the ugly incident temporarily in the background. The poisonous onslaught against his work and his person seemed not to touch him seriously. He saw a danger, but he did not see that it was too late to prevent it. For a moment he was justly preoccupied with his own personal affairs. He was happy, as any man would be who, after years of struggle and hard work, found himself in the midst of a great success and acknowledged by the fickle and critical public. It was exactly two years now that my father had enjoyed the ripe and sweet fruit of his labours and efforts. Two years—or some seven hundred days !

And walking under the star-studded baldachin of the night sky my father made plans. How we should go on a cruise in the spring. How he would dictate to me a new book which was ripening in his mind. Keller was so keen on it! Oh yes—Keller had mentioned how particularly charming I had looked to-night.

"And you did, you know! That dark red suits you, old girl!"

How glad he was that I was enjoying life at last. And, by Jove! how he would see to it that never again would I have to worry about anything. How glad he was that I had not married in my early twenties—"although, mind you, I should have never interfered"—but had given myself the chance to grow up and develop; for, he assured me, the next few years should be the most interesting in any girl's life.

"The years between twenty-five and thirty-five. Believe me, Reny, those are a woman's finest years."

He went on talking. And I did nothing to darken his mood. I silently wondered if he believed everything he was saying or if his bubbling over with plans and his light-winged gaiety were not perhaps meant to hide

something. I, personally, had some pretty grim forebodings, but I kept my mouth shut about them. My father was happy and he deserved every minute of this happiness. And inconsequently, and without any reason at all, I was suddenly angry with David 1 Queer.

* * *

The song was ended, the curtain came down. Sanity bowed her head and resigned. When the church bells solemnly heralded the year 1933 they also proclaimed one of the blackest tragedies that has ever befallen mankind in all its glorious and inglorious history. Adolf Hitler was elected Chancellor of the Reich.

Germany "Sieg-Heiled" herself hoarse. The foreign Press commented in carefully worded articles. The wise mourned, the stupid took no notice. The military and aristocratic rubbed their hands, the workers cocked their ears, some in doubt, some in hope, and some in disgust. The middle class smiled smugly and the intelligentsia argued. The extreme Left roared in protest and was silenced at once. And Judah wept.

Minister Barthold put a bullet through his brain, and Frau Barthold hung about outside the women's prison in the vain hope of seeing her daughter Sybille, who had been arrested and thrown into jail the day after Hitler came to power.

Christine Ullmann wired from Barcelona and asked me to come and stay with her.

Major von Trestow was entrusted with an important position in Hitler's private secret police.

Rudolf von Schechen postponed his wedding with Elisabeth for reasons he would not disclose. My cousin remained engaged to him for reasons which no sensible person can disclose.

With deadly efficiency and unerring accuracy did the Nazis set to work on their job of destroying and wiping out every organisation that could possibly stand in the

way of their aims. And even such unpolitical and completely harmless associations as artistic and theatrical clubs were raided, and mostly closed down. How then could the All Europe Friendship League hope to survive! Already in February our office was raided by a handful of brown-clad youngsters. I happened to be alone that morning, and sat at my desk typing, when suddenly the door was flung open and five raw, half-baked boys stormed in. Their leader, a pink-and-white youth of no more than twenty years, barked at me:

"This place is going to be shut down!"

"Good morning," said I politely. "And who, may I ask, is giving orders around here?"

"I am," said the youngster; "and please don't be funny!"

"I was born that way," I retorted, still extremely calm.

"Come on, boys, get to work." The others began to open drawers, tearing out files and making a general mess.

"Will you take your hands off my papers or have I to call the police?"

"We are the police I" declared the leader of the group.

"This place is a Communist rat-hole. We know all about your bloody All Europe Friendship League."

"You don't know a damned thing! This place has nothing to do with the Communists or any other party. Go away and call your little boys off the dirty work."

At this point Gerhard Wegner arrived. He stood in the door-frame and gazed dumbfoundedly at the mess in our usually so tidy office. Then he darted a quick glance at me—a quick glance at the leader—and stepped into the room.

"Morning, Gerhard. These children here are short of marbles and sand to play with. Hence the mess!"

"Will you stop being funny!" screamed the leader, now quite as red as a lobster.

"Just a moment, young man. On whose orders are you here?"

"Sturmfuhrer Jaeger. He is in charge of all cleansing actions concerning associations and clubs."

"This happens to be an international affair," said Wegner quietly.

"Yes. But we don't want any All Europe Friendship!"

"You said a mouthful," rapped out Wegner. He stepped forward and faced the young brute squarely. I must hand it to Wegner for courage considering the fact that they were five against one. Somewhat below the usual odds—usually it was ten against one. Wegner looked dangerously calm. "Either you get out of here in three seconds or I'll bust your skull in!"

The Nazi made a noise like an angry cat. He gave his boys a short sign, and in a flash the four of them were all over Gerhard. First I stood rooted to the ground with sheer horror, but then I regained my senses and lifted the receiver of the phone.

"Get me the Ueberfall-Kommando" (flying squad).

There was a short pause. Then the exchange replied:

"Sorry, no calls can be put through from this number."

"But——"

The line went dead. I banged down the receiver, and in spite of my stupefaction I marvelled at the super-organisation of the Nazis. They did think of everything. After all these years I should like to have the opportunity of yelling it all over the world: "They think of everything! Look out!" But I have no opportunity and Europe didn't look out.

I flung myself into the heap of humanity on the floor. The horrid thud of blows and the ghastly moaning of Wegner robbed me of my last vestige of a sense of proportion. I actually appealed to the leader, who stood calmly by:

"Tell them to let go—they're killing him I"

"Will you hand over the office and sign a paper that you did so of your own free will?"

"I will not!" I flashed back. But on second thoughts

I dared not risk the boy's life. What matter if I signed the filthy statement? What matter anything but to get the sorely hurt boy out of this office?

I signed and handed the paper over to the grinning leader. I was about to slap his face when I thought better of it. He ordered his gangsters to leave Gerhard alone. Wegner lay on the floor a mass of torn flesh and streaming with blood. I knelt by his side, my gorge rising. I felt like vomiting my soul out, but I pulled myself together.

"Don't stand there—do something—call an ambulance."

"We are here in order to do our duty. All organisations and institutions who work against the interest of the State must close down! Your own fault if you refused to listen to reason. All right—get him out of here. Here—I'll help you down the stairs."

"Don't touch him! I don't trust you. I'll get him out of here with the help of a human being."

I stumbled down the stairs and called a taxi. The driver came up with me. He was a stolid, imperturbable Berliner who had not been bitten by the Nazi bug. He cast one glance at the groaning Wegner and another at the five boys, who were now busy tearing up papers and smoking our office cigarettes.

"There seems to have been a spot of political persuasion!" growled the driver.

"Heil Hitler!" said one of the Nazis.

The driver answered with a suggestion that cannot be repeated. But it struck me as an excellent offer. The man was obviously not afraid. He stooped down and looked at my badly hurt friend.

"Come on, Fraulein; we'd better be off to a hospital."

"No!" rapped out the leader. "No hospital."

"Shut up!" said the driver, and as though the athletic Gerhard were a child he picked him up and carried him downstairs.

"Blasted swine! Who do they think they are?"

"The future of Germany," I answered quietly. I asked

the man to drive to Wegner's house first, while I went to call a doctor. I tore off to Albert Rosenberg, a Jewish practitioner near by. He left everything and came with me at once. The taxi-driver was still with Wegner, whom he had undressed and put to bed with the help of Gerhard's elderly housekeeper. While Rosenberg bandaged up the wounded man, I handed the driver twenty marks.

"Eight mark fifty on the clock."

"This is for decency, not for driving."

He shook his head.

"You don't pay for decency. But"—he hesitated and looked round carefully—"may I forward it to a certain fund?"

We looked at each other squarely.

I quickly thought of Sybille lying in jail, and nodded.

"Rot Front!" said the man and clenched his fist. And with this Communist greeting he tramped down the stairs.

I hope the driver of taxi IA 86-38576 is still alive, and possibly working in an armament factory outside Germany, or better still inside Germany—doing a spot of sabotage.

I must have looked pretty ghastly when I came home. Emma stared at me and rushed off into the kitchen to brew some strong coffee. And by God I needed it. After I had had two large cups of that most excellent and reviving beverage I put a call through to Parkins, who happened to be in Paris. I told him, carefully camouflaged, what had happened. He listened without interrupting. Finally he said:

"I'll take the first plane to Berlin to-morrow morning."

"No," I urged; "stay where you are."

"I'm an American citizen."

Click.

Father came home in the late afternoon tired and worried-looking, so I did not immediately assail him with a report of the morning's happenings. But he, too, had a tale to

tell. Geldern had received orders from the Ministry for Enlightenment and Propaganda that henceforth the film *No Hero At All* would not be permitted in any German cinema. The negative of the new picture *The Man Who Came Home* had already been confiscated.

"What beats me," said my father, "is the number of small things they bother about. One would imagine they had bigger matters on hand than the showing of a film ! Damn it, they must have been organised for years!"

"Yes, father." And now I told him about the All Europe Friendship League.

"My God, the vandals ! Where is this going to end?"

"End, father? It's just beginning. I have a jolly good mind to pack my things and leave this bloody¹ place."

"Renate! You are losing your sense of proportion. Germany is now desperately in need of every decent-minded person. We've got to fight this."

"Germany has chosen a raving maniac for her President. Germany is enjoying herself. They can 'Sieg-Heil' themselves until they're black in the face. I quit!"

"Renate—aren't you being unfair? What about such decent people as your taxi-driver? And our Emma? And Keller, the publisher, and a host of others?"

"Well, father, it's for you to decide. My notion is to get out of this country as fast as the next express train can carry us. The papers are full of stories of Jew-baiting and Communist-slaughtering and suicides. I have but one small hope: that the League of Nations will step in and the rest of the civilised world too. They must interfere and stop this."

"They will," said my brilliant but naive father with conviction.

The raid on our office and the beating up of Wegner (who recovered slowly and cursed himself back to health) was but a prelude to what was to happen all round during the next few weeks. Our telephone was never silent. From every possible quarter of our circle of friends came

alarming news. The radio blared out vile and sickening propaganda. The Press oozed hatred and reported glee fully the most obscene acts of sadism against innocent people. The streets were disfigured by an ever-growing mass of brown shirts. The swastika was worn by people of whom one had never thought as Nazis.

Shortly after the Reichstag Fire (of which Rudolf von Schöten amazingly knew before it actually happened!) Gunter Gast, Sybille's lover, turned up at our flat and implored my father to give him shelter. With grim irony my father offered him Klaus's deserted room.

"I never thought this room would shelter a Nazi first and a Communist afterwards," he said.

Gunter remained in that room, and did not even come out for his meals. Various young men called for him stayed for a while, and went off again as quietly as they had arrived. One day I nearly passed-out when I opened the front door and there stood a young man in the renowned and hated brown uniform of an A.S. man.

"I want to see Gast," he said, without much fuss.

"Who?" I asked, with all the innocence I could muster.

"Gunter Gast."

"Doesn't live here," I snapped back, and was about to bang the door in his face when the young man suddenly pulled out a large red handkerchief. He waved it into my face.

"See? Come on, let me in, little idiot. I'm a friend."

"Well, I'm damned I!" said I.

"Aren't we all?" he asked cheerfully, and pushed past me into the hall. I led him to Gunter's room and was still terrified lest this might be a trap. But I was reassured soon enough. When I opened the door and Gunter saw the visitor he yelled delightedly:

"Offenbach! God, am I glad to see you!"

"This, I am sure, represents the only Nazi uniform you'll ever be glad to see!" beamed the visitor.

I left the two alone and shook my head.

Amidst all this upheaval and madness I felt rather lonely and forlorn. Father was a bundle of nerves, although he did his best to hide his nervousness from me. Most of the time he sat in his library and typed away furiously. I did not ask him what he typed. Later I found out that it was letters abroad urging people in Europe and America to call a halt to this acute lunacy. Thus my father was not much of a companion. Sybille was still in jail; Christel, thank God, out of this mess far away in Spain. Elisabeth was hopeless. She did not care a damn about what was going on and was frequently seen with cocky and arrogant Nazi officers in Berlin's night-clubs and restaurants. I asked her once if her new boy-friends did not mind the fact that her father had been a Jew.

"I did not discuss my father's religion with them," she answered calmly, "and furthermore I have no intention of doing so. I am anyway a German and a Protestant!"

"You are a rotten little swine, and always were," I declared. "Haven't you any pride?"

"I've got some common sense, and besides I believe the new regime is the salvation of Germany," she said gravely.

"A fat lot you care about the salvation of Germany!"

"Well, you never had any trace of patriotism inside you. You really are an international Jew."

"Oh, for heaven's sake don't recite any more of Herr Hitler's *Mein Kawpf* to me. I'll be sick."

"Then we'll both be sick," said my cousin pleasantly; "only for different reasons. I am, for instance, sick and tired of your rudeness."

I left her. If only I could now muster enough perfidy and indecency to go straight to Scotland Yard and report that long-ago conversation! But would it do any good? Isn't Elisabeth a useful member of English society now, doing her "bit"? Damn her eyes!

Poor David—you took the rap! And you really were no sympathiser with the Nazis. You were nothing at all I

"Child, don't upset yourself. This is revolution, and every revolution demands its victims. It'll blow over soon enough and things will straighten themselves out. Common sense will eventually gain the upper hand. Come on, cheer up, old girl. Have a drink."

"Yes, have one," echoed Felix.

No, the Hartmanns did not understand.

Oh yes—there was Joergen Anderson, my lover. He amazed me by completely losing his nerve. He was under long-term contract with Geldern, as "nordic" as a Swedish clergyman's son could be, and had not much to worry about. If he had been indignant or angry. No—he was terrified. And it did not take me very long to find out why. He complimented me on being the sweetest thing he had ever known. So dear to his heart! But was it quite the thing for a promising young actor to carry on with a Jewish girl so openly? How about my leaving for a small town somewhere in Austria? He could then visit me now and again.

I contemplated him for a while and then very calmly slapped his face.

"I deserved that," he said honestly.

I left him quickly. I didn't feel so good.

Yes, it was a lonely spring. I racked my brains for a good idea with which to convince my father that the only way out was to leave Germany. Rumour had it that Jews would soon be thrown out of all sorts of professions. And besides, who wanted to live in a country that disregarded every law of common decency and threw civilisation back by four hundred years? I didn't.

Up to now Hitlerism had disgusted, horrified, and infuriated me. But it had not actually caused me any deadly hurt. That was still in store. But before the Nazis dealt me the bitterest, most unforgettable blow of my life, something wonderful happened. Something that made me howl with joy and gratitude.

It was shortly before that farcical and yet tragic boycott

day when all Jewish shops were marked down and closely guarded by otherwise obviously superfluous and useless brown-shirts, when my father and I sat together in our drawing-room one night, for the first time seriously contemplating the possibilities of emigration.

"Father, you are very well known in Austria, in France, in Switzerland. Your book was an international success. You will be able to work peacefully anywhere except here. We have enough money to live quietly for a year or so. By that time you will have written another book or play or film story, and with your name and connections you will get on anywhere."

"I begin to believe you are right, Renate. Although a writer is pretty well lost in a country whose language he doesn't know, I shall have a talk with your Aunt Mary to-morrow and discuss with her the possibility of emigrating to England. Her people over there are well-known business men and may be of great help to us. The only snag is, we cannot take out more than 200 marks each."

"I believe there are ways and means to transfer your money at a certain loss. Moske is sure to know."

"Oh—I quite forgot to tell you. Moske has sold his share of the business to David and gone away."

"Wise man! Where's he now?"

"In Zurich."

At that moment the door-bell rang. Father and I looked at each other and both thought of our voluntary prisoner. I strained my ears to hear what was going on. There were no tramping boots and no man's voice after Emma had opened the door. Perhaps it was Aunt Mary.

Emma knocked and peeped in.

"Frau Feldt is here," she said, and looked completely dazed.

"Well—let her in."

I rose, and called out: "Aunt Mary——" And then stood rooted to the ground, with my mouth wide open. For there in the door-frame, clad in a neat black coat and

old-fashioned black hat, with a small bag in one hand and an umbrella in the other, stood my Grandmother Feldt.

"Mother!" cried my father, and I simply gasped.

"Good evening, my dear, dear children!" said the old lady, and began to take off her hat and coat, handing them to Emma, on whose face suddenly dawned the light of comprehension. She did not know my grandmother and could not make head or tail of things.

"Emma, this is my mother," said father; "make some coffee, quickly. And take my bedding into the library. My mother will have my room."

When grandmother finally sat down in an armchair, and our wild excitement had given place to quiet inquisitiveness, the little old woman spoke.

"Why have I come all the way from Poland? Well, I want to be with my children in this dark hour of Jew persecution. I hear they have arranged for a boycott day. Very well—I shall have some shopping to do!" She smiled mischievously.

"It'll be a Saturday, mother. You don't shop on a Sabbath!"

Grandmother still smiled.

"Your grandfather would have said that this is the hand of God. If His children break the laws and keep their shops open on a Sabbath, very well then, He had to send the Nazis to close them for them! But—the Lord will forgive me if I break a rule. You must give me a list of those shops, Renate. I don't want to miss anything."

"You won't need a list, granny; you'll find out!"

The presence of grandmother during the next weeks was indeed a godsend. That energetic little woman of nearly seventy years of age bucked us up valiantly. She had amazing resources of strength and a terrific sense of humour, and the way she told off Elisabeth was balm to my wounded heart. But that young lady was not to be put off her own ideas. I believe she is the only person alive who ever defied my Grandmother Feldt. There was

a healthy, honest-to-God family row at Aunt Mary's, into which, most inopportunately, young Rudolf burst. My grandmother eyed the brown-clad youngster with undisguised disapproval. Aunt Mary presided over the tea-table, Elisabeth lounged in an armchair, my father and I occupied the settee, and grandmother stood, leaning on her stick, before Rudolf, who did not quite know what to do with his hands and feet.

"Young man, what are you doing in this house?"

"I happen to be engaged to Elisabeth."

"Are you, indeed? Well, let me correct you: you *were* engaged! There is no room for you in this family!"

Elisabeth shot up from her chair like a snake who had been trodden on. She flashed an ice-blue glance at my grandmother:

"How dare you talk to Rudolf like this, you interfering old woman!"

"Sit down and wait till I address you," thundered my grandmother.

"And don't talk like that to my mother!" said father very calmly. "Kindly remember that you are speaking to an old lady."

"She has no right——"

"Don't distress yourself," said Schechen, and then turned to grandmother.

"And pray why should there be no room in your family for me? The Schechens are a very well-known and honoured family!"

"That may be so. However, you wear the uniform of a Nazi—you are our natural enemy. Or have you forgotten that Elisabeth's late father was a Jew?"

Rudolf looked dazed. He glared first at Elisabeth, then at my grandmother, finally, for no obvious reason, at me.

"Then they were right, after all," he whispered.

"Who?" asked I.

"My immediate superiors. They warned me that

Elisabeth might be not quite Aryan. There were certain rumours. ..."

"Aryan—hocus-pocus !" said my grandmother. "I don't know what an Aryan is, nor do you, nor for that matter does your Fuehrer. But the fact remains, that Elisabeth's father was a Jew. I don't care whether the fact that she was brought up in her mother's faith means anything to you. All that matters is we don't want a Nazi in the family. Good evening, young man."

Rudolf looked at Aunt Mary and Aunt Mary said:

"I think you'd better leave, Rudolf. Aunt Rachel is right. Somehow I never really thought of all these things. I am an Englishwoman, I am not a Jewess. But I believe we'd better call the whole thing off."

Schechen frowned, and addressed Elisabeth:

"Darling, I am sorry—but under the circumstances——"

"Under the circumstances I happen to have my own money and shall leave this house at once," said my cousin,

"Don't be a fool!" I intervened.

Long after Rudolf had made his exit the row went on, Elisabeth cursed and took on greatly about her "broker happiness." Aunt Mary reasoned with her. My father gently tried to make her see what she was being spared.

"Just imagine it had come out after your marriage. You would have had to suffer no end of humiliation."

I personally was as hard as nails and did not spare the horses.

"Don't babble about happiness. All you were after was his title. Don't worry, there are plenty of uselesi Junkers running about in Germany. You'll find another one. And he won't wear the swastika either ! So stop your broken-heart act and sober up."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, Renate, you of all people I You to preach to other people I On the one hand you ogle; married man and on the other you carry on an affair with an actor. Come off your high horse and look after your own morals !"

Funny, how filthy a thing can sound when it's put like that. I looked quickly at my father. He spoke:

"Elisabeth, this is not a time to drag other people's private affairs into the open. Nor are we discussing morals. If you carried on a love affair, or even two or three, nobody would dare question you about it. This is a matter of grave importance. Besides, I think Renate knows full well what she is doing."

"I'll say she does! The dear, whitewashed little angel! She has always been the world's greatest prig and hypocrite. All she can do is preach at other people."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, Elisabeth, nobody is interested in me at the moment. Stick to the immediate point. Do you sympathise with the Nazis, or don't you?"

"I do! I am a German, I always was a German, I shall remain one. Right or wrong, my country," she said furiously.

I rose slowly and went over to her. I opened my handbag and pulled out my little notebook. I handed it over to my cousin, together with my fountain pen.

"Would you mind writing that down?"

"What for?"

"Just so—that I shall never forget it."

"With pleasure."

And amidst a tense silence Elisabeth scribbled into my book exactly the words she had spoken. I still have that little notebook containing that statement and my cousin's signature. And when the bombs are crashing down about me I feel tempted—oh, so tempted—to go down to that safe little place near Torquay where Mrs Bessy Slatterleigh is busy doing her bit for England. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise that I am not allowed to travel into that area. I might do harm. Yes—I might at that! But I have a very good idea that the harm would not be done to England!

* * *

A fortnight after that typical and shocking performance of burning all books which did not comply with Nazi

ideology, my father came home with the news that his publisher, Keller, had been arrested and the business put into the hands of a young obscure journalist, who was a complete newcomer to the delicate and difficult business of handling books. That, of course, made him the ideal Nazi publisher, because the Nazi publisher has an easy job, which demands no knowledge or skill. The State decrees what books shall be written and bought, the Propaganda Ministry provides the free publicity, and the public has to buy the mental concoctions and allow themselves to be poisoned. And the publisher sits back and enjoys himself.

Our guest, Gunter Gast, had left us quietly one night when we were all asleep, leaving a note to my father, thanking him for his hospitality and begging him not to worry.

"My way is clear. I am off to fight. Please don't inquire about me. But do try and leave this rat-hole as soon as you can."

Thus, grandmother took over Klaus's room. Nothing could induce that excellent old lady to go back to Poland until she was sure about our future. It was now more or less definitely decided that father and I should leave Germany. We had planned to go to Vienna first and seek out father's Austrian publisher, who no doubt would be of great help to us. Meanwhile Aunt Mary got in touch with her brother John, who was now the head of the parental business, since both his parents had died several years ago. Uncle John's reaction was not quite what we had expected.

"I shall be glad to be of assistance to your cousin Fritz and his daughter, should they decide to come to England. However, my connections with the world of books and films are nil and I shall not be of any use to them in that respect. From what I hear from friends and read in the Press I gather that Germany has found her man at last, and I am certain that, once the excessive enthusiasm of

young hotheads has died down, Germany will set about the business of building up again. It might all turn out for the best."

Aunt Mary made no comment on her brother's letter and quietly offered my father to make free use of her English banking account should we run out of money. Elisabeth said something about "supporting this unworthy flight from one's duty," but was quickly silenced by an unusually cold glance from her mother.

When granny had made sure that father and I had finally made up our minds to emigrate, she prepared herself to go back to her old sister, who owned a smallish house and some acres of land about twenty miles from Warsaw.

I breathed more freely. Thank goodness, father had seen the light at last! I persuaded him to let our flat furnished and give the money to an emigration fund. We should not burden ourselves unduly with possessions, and remain as mobile as possible. God only knew where we might eventually go. If Vienna proved a failure, then we would be off to London. Even that might not be our final home. The only thing I did pack up were our books. Three large tea-chests full of consolation and joy of living. Yes—there they all are—those beloved friends of mine who were to help me to keep my sanity in days to come! What divine inspiration had prompted me to send those books straight to England to John Thistlehorn's office? He must have pulled a wry face when those three huge cases arrived, together with my letter, begging him kindly to store those books and see to it that no harm should come to them.

Emma, our maid, was very much in two minds about our intention to leave. She did dislike the Nazis heartily, but she had not much time for nations other than the Germans.

"England," she said with disgust. "My brother Otto was a prisoner of war there and stayed on after the show was over. He says they haven't any central heating and

all of them sit huddled together over an open fire like tramps! He also says they eat everything half-raw, they have no real windows, but fancy pieces of glass which you push up and down, and no balconies! And he says, except for a few posh houses, they have no running hot water in their bathrooms, but gas-apparatus with gadgets on 'em that pop and explode every time you take a bath. What a place to go to!"

"Well, Emma, I think Otto exaggerated. But even if he hasn't, there's one more thing they also haven't got."

"What's that?" asked Emma suspiciously.

"Nazis."

"Haven't they?" It was clear that Emma had already reached a state of mind where a world without brown-shirts was something unheard of.

Amidst my joy at the prospect of leaving Germany I dreaded the moment when I must say "Farewell" to David. David definitely possessed everything that was good inside me. For all the thought I wasted on Joergen Anderson he might never have been born! I read his name in the papers and on posters but my heart made no comment. In spite of Elisabeth's indiscretion my father never alluded to the subject. But he did know what I felt for David. And somehow he seemed glad that I should leave Germany and the man who was not free and who, if he were, did not love me.

It is said, and I think truly, that so frail a thing as a human being can endure almost anything. Nature protects herself. When physical pain becomes unbearable we faint, and are mercifully wrapped in unconsciousness. When mental pain becomes unendurable reason leaves us, and we are wrapped in blissful oblivion. And it is also said that remembering a horrible experience is often more painful than the actual living through it, since through being numbed the human mind hardly ever grasps the size and shape of tragedy in its full measure.

Like the coward I am, I have frequently escaped the grip of too-vital memories by forcing myself into some urgent activity. But here I sit and here I shall remain until my tale is told. Maybe the fact that horrors are spreading, that misery is general, and that the world is facing now what then only a few of us were facing, gives me courage to remember. And when I wake each morning to a new dawn, and see the endless terror that the Nazis have created in this town alone, I often feel inclined to put my hand on the shoulder of a bereaved fellow human being and say:

"Thus did I suffer seven years ago by the same spirit that destroyed your home last night. I have the tragic privilege of being one of the first victims of Nazism. But my tears remained undried and my warnings unheeded."

But is there anything less consoling and more irritating in this world than the sentence, "I told you so"?

Grandmother went back in the second week of June. Father and I saw her off at the Friedrich Strasse Station, where she boarded the Paris-Berlin-Warsaw Express. Grandmother was not usually emotionally demonstrative, but this time she abandoned her restraint without shame. She clung to my father, who was so much taller than she, as though she felt that this was the last time she would ever see him. I think there is something in the belief that mothers have a sixth sense where their children are concerned.

"I wish you were out of this country," she repeated over and over again. "Renate, see to it that he doesn't change his mind. He's so impulsive ! God bless you, my children—and may He have mercy on the Jews. And," she added wistfully, "if history should choose to repeat itself—should we be the first to suffer—may He have also mercy on the rest of the world !"

Grandmother—the last I heard from you was in July of last year. Did your stout heart just cease to beat through grief, or was your frail little body mown down by German bombs when they brought death to Warsaw? Or

'have you escaped merciful death to suffer in some death-trap of a camp?

Our flat seemed empty without grandmother about. She was a most energetic and bustling old lady, and had sometimes driven Emma to despair with her untiring zest and eagerness to display her housewifely skill. She had also insisted that we should resume the Friday night ceremonies, and Emma, much impressed by the sense of tradition and the atmosphere of tranquil meditation that descended upon our household of a Sabbath, growled:

"Fancy the Nazis saying that you Jews eat little children. I'm sure they are misinformed."

"So it seems, Emma," said my father.

Our cheerful, rotund Emma, whom one could imagine singing gleefully over her washing-up and carrying laden trays and waving dusters about, was chosen by fate to herald the most sinister visitors.

It was a glorious, warm evening towards the end of June. Father and I returned home from a visit to Frau Barthold, who was sorely in need of cheerful company. There was an excellent meal waiting for us. The french-windows leading to the balcony were wide open to let in the soft, clean air. The limes were in blossom and sent up their sweet perfume. A starling had found his way on to the iron railing of the balcony and sat there in anticipation of crumbs. Everything was beautiful, much too beautiful.

We were enjoying Emma's famous lemon-creme when the bell rang. We were astonished, for at this hour of the day we hardly ever had visitors. Berlin was having its evening meal. An excellent time to find people at home.

And Emma looked definitely green when she came in. She closed the door behind her, which she had never done before when she had announced visitors.

"HerrFeldt—they're here. ..."

"Who, Emma?" father asked quietly, but I saw him change colour.

"S.S. men. Three of them."

Father and I exchanged glances. I felt the lemon-creme in my mouth and couldn't swallow.

"Ask them in."

"Father—no—no—go to the bedroom—I'll say you're out."

"What good will that do?"

Emma stood undecided and looked terrified. Then, reluctantly, she opened the door.

"They've probably come to make inquiries about Keller, or possibly Gunter Cast. Don't worry, child." But I felt father was speaking without conviction.

Only two of the three men came in. The third was left to guard the front door. We heard one of them give orders to such effect. My blood slowly began to rise. What was this? A gambling hell or a private flat? I caught an imploring glance from my father, pleading with me to keep my temper under control. Hatred must not blind my sense of justice. I must admit that the two S.S. officers in their black uniform, and with their high, peaked caps, looked impressive and behaved civilly. There was nothing of the raw louts about them that had marked the boys who had raided the A.E.F.L.

"Heil Hitler!" they both said when they came in.

"Good evening," answered my father. I simply glared at them. "What can I do for you, gentlemen?"

"Herr Friedrich Feldt? We have orders to arrest you, and warn you that it will save trouble all round if you come quietly."

"What is the charge?" I asked, and felt that now I too looked green.

"We are not at liberty to disclose that. However, one of the charges is conspiracy against the interest of the German Reich."

"I beg your pardon?" said my father, with genuine surprise.

"You heard what I said, Herr Feldt. And now will you please ask this young woman or your maid to prepare a

small suitcase for you. You may not be back for some days."

I trembled with rage. Or was it horror?

"Where are you taking my father?"

"That too we cannot disclose. Do not distress yourself, Fraulein Feldt, your father will be given a fair trial and may be able to clear himself."

"May I get in touch with my legal adviser?" asked father.

"You may not. The State will provide for and choose your defence."

"God in heaven I" I called out, "now you're as good as cleared, father. But don't worry, I shan't leave you for one instant."

"Permit me to point out to you," said the hateful man politely, "that you cannot accompany your father. For the rest, you are at liberty to do what you like—there is no charge against you—as yet."

"That's mighty generous," I scoffed. The S.S. man remained unruffled. One of those cold-blooded hounds, I decided. By Jove I almost preferred the little ruffians who had barged into our office.

"Renate darling, please keep your temper. You are making things more difficult for me."

"Sorry, father."

"We have also orders to search this flat for further evidence . . . of your anti-German activities."

My father said dully: "Go ahead and search. You'll find nothing incriminating here."

"Thank you. Hoppel, you take the room next door. I'll take the bedrooms. Pless can do the rest."

When my father rose, the officer ordered him to stay where he was.

I went to the door, and asked: "What shall I pack for you, father?"

The S.S. man answered: "Pack for about a week."

And while I packed my father's suitcase (which had

travelled all over Europe with us) the S.S. officer rummaged through the drawers and cupboards of the room. I contemplated that man. About my own age, arrogant, cold. Trained to the finger-tips. Probably for years. Blind, foolish Germany! Suddenly we heard a yelp. It came from down the passage where my bedroom and the spare room were. A few moments later the man called Pless came bursting into the bedroom, waving some things like trophies:

"Here's the evidence. A copy of the communist rag *Rote Fahne* and a torn envelope addressed to that female agitator Sybille Barthold. Found them tucked away under the wardrobe."

I cursed Emma for her occasional fits of untidiness. Those things belonged to Gunter Gast, and Emma must have failed to clean the room thoroughly enough before granny took over. I watched the S.S. officer guardedly. He looked at the things and then put them in his pocket.

My God—if they went through father's desk! Every word he had ever written was strictly anti-Nazi. The wildest ideas flashed through my mind. Supposing I dropped a burning cigarette into the top drawer? And we had also some paraffin in the house. . . . Oh, rot! That would only make things worse.

My mind was too muddled to think straight and that Saved it from cracking. I can't recollect the details of the next ten minutes. All I remember is my father's face when finally he was permitted to join me in the bedroom to get his things ready. We could not talk intimately. The S.S. men were watching us closely. My father addressed the leader:

"May I give my daughter instructions what to do, for instance about our household accounts and so forth?"

"You may—but I might as well warn you that your banking account has been sealed this afternoon. You cannot draw cheques."

My self-control was at an end.

"What is this? Daylight robbery?"

"Necessary measures to prevent attempts at bribing officials."

"I thought Nazi officials couldn't be bribed!"

"There are quite a few people still in this country who are not members of the Party."

"Fancy that now! I thought Germany had unanimously elected her Fuehrer and stood solidly behind the Movement?"

"I am not here to discuss politics with you, Fraulein Feldt," said the Nazi, at last somewhat less polite. "Are you ready, Herr Feldt?"

"Yes, yes, I am ready. May I speak to my daughter alone?"

"I am sorry. All you wish to say you must say in my presence."

"Very well then. Renate, keep your pecker up. And, whatever may happen, promise me not to stay on here alone. Go to your Aunt Mary." (He pronounced the name in the German way—Tante Maria—so as not to enlighten the Nazis that we had relatives in England.) "Or better still—go and stay with her brother Johann. Promise me that. Swear that if you don't hear from me soon you'll go to your uncle Johann! And don't let my old mother know what happened. Inform David. He will help you. And, Reny darling, don't make things difficult for me. Please remember—always count twenty before you speak. So long, baby—God bless you and keep you. And if your earthly father has to leave you for a bit, your heavenly Father will not forsake you."

"Father—father—whatever happens don't despair! And you too promise something: don't ever do what my mother did!"

"Don't you worry, old girl, I never shall. I swear!"

We clung to each other for a few seconds. And then, carrying his suitcase, flanked by two Nazis and followed by the third, my father left the flat. I dashed through the

dining-room on to the balcony. They emerged from the front door and stepped into a large black car. Father knew that I was looking out for him. He turned his face up and smiled his last smile. And then the car glided off. I stood quite still, and idiotically noticed that the little starling had also left.

* * *

My first night alone in our flat except for the company of the sympathetic but quite helpless Emma is proof of the assumption that Homo Sapiens is the toughest of all creatures. After bewilderment, fury, and muddle-headedness came fear. Stark, cold, suffocating fear. A fear so different from that which I experience now at the ghostly whistling of the bombs¹. At that time I did not go through the sensation of simple, physical fright, that is rooted in an ordinary sense of self-preservation. I suffered the mental agonies of intellectual fear, a fear based upon a certain knowledge of what they might do to my father. I never knew that there was such a difference between the fear of unknown terror and the anguish of known horrors. Even though much had not yet leaked out about the atrocities committed in concentration camps, what was known was enough to drive anybody crazy.

I still cannot forget a certain English friend of mine who, in 1938, when finally the White Paper on Nazi Terrors was published, asked me innocently: "But surely this is just our own propaganda?" This poor, benighted friend of mine had occasion to answer his own question, for he was in France.

No, I didn't go mad when I sat alone in our drawing-room and stared at the empty bookshelves, which seemed to lament: "Why didn't you go earlier?" Yes, father, why didn't we? It was your wish to leave "tidily" and arrange for our emigration! We should have run—run—in any direction. Too late now.

I did not expect to hear anything for a day or two. I occupied myself as best I could, keeping my eye on the

telephone and my ears strained for the door-bell. Emma proved a great friend in those days. She had the good sense not to go about expressing her distress about "poor Herr Feldt who never did nothing to nobody," as did Frau Graus our char, who had disposed of her entire family in protest against their brown uniforms. Life, in fact, went on with grim ordinariness. The thousand and one banalities of life had to be performed and were a blessing.

David, whom I had rung that same night, advised me to stay put and not to attempt any futile inquiries. He promised to do his best to find out where they had taken my father. But he was unsuccessful. I swallowed my pride and approached cousin Elisabeth.

"Betty, you know all the Nazi big-wigs, for heaven's sake do try to find out at least whether my father is still in Berlin or where the hell they have taken him!"

Elisabeth muttered something about the usefulness of having Nazi friends, and actually did find out that my father was being held prisoner on former business premises which had been converted into a temporary clearing station for "traitors, Jews, and other political undesirables." More she could not evolve. Aunt Mary urged me to come and stay at her flat, but I couldn't live in the same house as Elisabeth. It would have involved eternal quarrel. I also declined an offer from David and Felix Hartmann to go into their week-end house in Saarow. Their easy-going, cheerful company would have driven me mad. Also they might get involved in trouble sheltering me. And I felt, too, that my accustomed surroundings and solitude were more desirable to me than the sympathy from people who couldn't, with all the good will under the sun, understand the depth of my despair.

I wrote several desperate letters—to Moske in Zurich, to Christine in Barcelona, to father's publisher in Vienna. I got in touch with Geldern—I tried the most unlikely people. Somebody might be able to do something or at

least have a brain-wave. But nobody had. They were genuinely distressed, but either couldn't or daren't move. Only Christel answered by air-mail announcing that, the minute she could get leave, she would come to Berlin and stay with me.

"I may not be much help to you, but alone you simply must go crazy."

A week went by and nothing happened. I did not go to the Headquarters of the Secret Police for fear I might bungle things badly. Those clever rats might draw information from me which might seem harmless enough and yet might easily be twisted and turned into a rope for my father.

When the second week of this torment began I gave notice to Emma. I had nearly exhausted the ready cash in the house and did not wish to approach friends until it was absolutely necessary. For some reason I did not sell our car. Emma declared that she wouldn't move. She explained that she had saved enough money to live without doing a stroke of work for several months, and besides—who did I think she was?

"A decent German, which is amazing," said I.

July came with a heat-wave, and brought also new laws and regulations. Many of our friends had left Germany already, seeking refuge and shelter in other European lands, or even in the U.S.A. And still no word from or about my father. On the tenth of July I received a letter from Christine, announcing her arrival in Berlin on the fifteenth. Thank God, for a friend like her. I yearned for her sanity and genuine affection.

Also on the tenth, in the afternoon, Elisabeth suddenly rang me up and asked me to come to a certain cafe. I flew down the stairs and jumped into a taxi before it could stop. My cousin awaited me, sitting at a far-back table of the Cafe Horst in Halensee. I was completely dumb with excitement.

"Listen, Renatc. I happen to have heard that your

father is at X Concentration Camp. He has been there for several days."

"Can I get in touch with him?" I asked breathlessly.

"Certainly not I. You're not supposed to know!"

"Oh, Betty, for mercy's sake, ask Rudolf——"

"I don't know this from Rudolf," interrupted Betty; "I have different sources of information. Mind you, if you weren't my cousin I should never——"

"All right; it's very decent of you to go to all this trouble. But for heaven's sake ask your informant how I can get in touch with father."

"Maybe," she began hesitatingly, "maybe you'd better get in touch with her yourself."

"A woman? Who?" I gasped.

"Elionor. Her father is in charge of one of the important departments."

"Trestow!" I whispered. "My God, my school-mate's father is my father's gaoler!"

"Oh, stop the sentimentalities! Trestow is a big noise in the Party. Maybe you can find out something through Elionor. But be careful. Don't act like a fool as usual. And don't say anything incriminating on the phone."

"Thanks, Betty."

I came away from this meeting dazed. Elionor von Trestow! She had always been quite a good friend, although in later years we had drifted apart. I was also touched that Betty should have forgotten her antagonism against me and tried to find things out for me. I did not know then that her mother simply forced her to do these things.

I tried to ring Elionor immediately, but she was out. She was still out when I rang again. I actually tried her six times that evening, and each time left an urgent message for her to ring me. Nothing happened. I sat at home all evening so as not to miss her possible call. But finally I gave up hope and went to bed.

That was the night of July tenth to eleventh. Each year

that night I stay awake and hold a silent, solitary service of remembrance. Each year that night I renew my pledge to wait my chance and then take my revenge. And I shall keep that up until the job is done. Not yet have I been allowed to fulfil this promise to my father's tortured memory. The kind-hearted and reluctant gentlemen of Europe have not seen eye to eye with me. I could have gone back to Germany and killed some odd Nazi. But that's not good enough. Nor is it rational. They would simply murder me and drag into my affair a hundred innocent Jews.

But now the War is on! The world has seen the light at last! And with these two hands of mine I want to help to build bombs, tanks, planes, bullets. Nothing less. I want to stand before a microphone and speak to the Nazis and tell them that their number will be up and the day will come when they will yell for mercy. Nothing less. I want to keep vigil at night when Hitler sends his messengers of death, and help to make his work futile. I want to be in a place where I can give my time, my hands, my soul to the work of destroying the world's most evil disease. Nothing less.

But here I sit, with my hands tied by the silly accident of birth. A pitiful "between"! Burning with the desire to join in this War. Tied down by restrictions that are not even meant for me. But however bitter I might feel about restrictions, nothing, no injustice, no blunder, no muddle, no short-sightedness, can kill my greatest and most urgent emotion: hatred against Hitler and revenge for my father !

* * *

I fell asleep from sheer misery that night, earlier than usual. I slept deeply and my sleep was gratefully free of my usual nightmares. And all of a sudden I woke up, my heart racing. I was neither confused nor half-conscious. I was clearly wide-awake and I was terrified I The summer night was hot and yet—cold sweat poured down my body.

I groped for my bedside lamp. My clock showed ten minutes to five. I sat up in bed and listened to the violent thumping of my heart. Trying to master my paralysing fear. I knew it then—something had happened to my father. His spirit was all over the room, his voice tried to reach me, his hands were stretched out in helpless agony.

I jumped out of bed and left my room and raced down the passage and banged against Emma's door. The girl answered sleepily and then came out of her room.

"Fraulein Renate—whatever——"

"Emma, Emma!" I cried, beside myself. "Something dreadful has happened to my father! I know it!"

"There now, there—your nerves are all to pieces, child. Come along, get back to bed. I'll get you a hot drink. Come along—there's a good girl."

Emma dragged me along back to my bedroom. I trembled with cold and fright. She put me to bed and then made off for the kitchen to brew something for me. She almost spoon-fed me with hot chocolate, sitting on my bed.

"Emma, don't leave me to-night. Stay here, please, I'm terrified!"

"That's all right, Fraulein Renate. I'll stay here. Come on, smoke a cigarette, that'll soothe your nerves. I'm sure it's all your imagination."

"No, Emma, you'll see ... soon enough, something ghastly——"

"Now, now, drink up. That's better."

Emma stayed with me for the rest of the night. We did not sleep, but smoked and talked, but the nearness of a decent human being calmed me a little. At seven in the morning Emma got up, and insisted that I should spend the day in bed. I let her take over the reins. I was too exhausted to make any decisions. The only thing I did do was to watch my clock. I waited until it was late enough to ring Elionor.

But there was no need to ring her. Shortly before nine

o'clock a young Nazi arrived with a message addressed to myself. Emma brought it into the bedroom and remained there standing by my bed. She too seemed to know what that message contained. I have kept it and always shall keep it. It was a note from the Commandant of X Concentration Camp:

"We have to inform you that your father, Friedrich Feldt, committed suicide by hanging himself in the small hours of this morning. The funeral will be conducted and provided for by the Camp. Heil Hitler!"

Emma remained quite still after I had read out the note to her. I only saw her growing dead-white. My own reaction? I can't remember. I must have died that morning, for I felt nothing. I didn't cry. I said:

"They're lying, Emma. My father never died by his own hand. They murdered him."

"Oh—Fraulein Renate—oh—no!" Emma's horror at last broke in violent sobbing.

The banal shrilling of the telephone cut into our horrified grief. I lifted the receiver with calmness.

"Is that you, Renate? Elionor von Trestow speaking. They tell me you rang several times. What can I do for you?"

"Thank you—there is nothing you can do now. I have just received the news that my father is dead. . . . No—please don't say anything. Good-bye."

I did not wait for a reply, but simply put down the receiver. And then, still in my nightgown, I went into my father's study and opened the drawer of his desk. I found what I was looking for at once. It was a small, simple leather case, containing his Iron Cross, awarded for outstanding bravery and courage. And then with slow and deliberate care I dressed, assisted by Emma, who never left my side for a moment.

At eleven o'clock an S.S. officer escorted me into the private room of Major von Trestow. I had gone through innumerable formalities before that great man finally could

receive me. **Oh** yes, in July 1933 one could still dare to enter the Headquarters of the Political Police. And anyhow—I would have forced my way in.

The Major, now clad in the black uniform of the S.S., rose from his chair when I entered the room and ordered his subaltern out.

"Heil—hem-ye—good morning, Fraulein Feldt."

"Good morning, Major."

"You will understand that I am extremely busy and can only spare you a few moments. My daughter informed me about the distressing news concerning your father's death. He obviously lost the balance of his mind."

"I did not mention to Elionor that my father is supposed to have committed suicide, but I guess news of that sort travels fast."

The Major cleared his throat, but I continued:

"I realise that I may possibly not leave this building alive—or at least a free woman. Yet I know that my father did not die by his own hand!"

The Major smiled indulgently:

"Come, come, Fraulein Feldt. You don't seriously believe that we have the slightest interest in harming a naturally overwrought and distressed young woman of no special importance?"

"I seriously believe, Major von Trestow, that the new regime are not very fastidious as to whom they kill. I am perfectly willing to die if you will admit that my father was murdered."

"I am afraid this is rather beyond a joke," said Trestow curtly.

"I did not come here to joke, Major von Trestow, I came here to claim my father's body, and also to bring you a token of his conspiracy against the interests of the German Reich."

I opened the leather case and flung the Iron Cross down before the Major, who stared at it in silence.

"This, Major von Trestow, was bestowed upon my

father for outstanding bravery and courage at a time when you yourself said: 'As long as Germany has men like this she cannot go under!'"

"Did I say that?"

"You did. But now men like this are being murdered and imprisoned. Maybe Germany is about to go under."

"Germany is in the middle of her greatest revolution. She cannot therefore respect long-forgotten and ancient deeds of men who, in later years, proved antagonistic to and impeding the course and mission of the Third Reich."

"That mission being to lock up and ruin and kill everyone who happens to believe in the freedom of thought, speech, and creed."

"This is not a matter of thought or creed. Germany must be cleared of all elements that may hamper the growing of a clear and pure Aryan race."

"I am not aware that a woman like Sybille Barthold is anything but a pure Aryan, and yet she has been locked up for months!"

"We have no room for Bolsheviks!"

"You seem to have very little room for anything, Major von Trestow!"

"We have room for intelligent people who are willing to use their wits and gifts of speech for our own propaganda, instead of trying to hammer against the iron wall of the people's will!"

He looked at me through half-closed eyes. I didn't quite get the meaning of his words. But he soon enlightened me, to my horror.

"You are, I believe, half-Aryan?"

"I am a Jewess with a Protestant mother, if that's what you mean."

"Then, according to our racial findings, you are half-Aryan. You could perhaps, with the necessary help from influential friends, discard your wrong half and give your time and strength to a great cause,"

"That is exactly what I intend to do. I have already discarded the wrong half by declaring myself a full Jewess. And I shall give my time and my strength to a very great cause."

"Either you are very stupid or very stubborn. I have room in my department for lively people. However, you seem to have chosen your own course."

"Indeed I have! Or can you imagine me working hand-in-glove with the murderers of my father?"

He contemplated me for a moment and then:

"I must hand it to you—you have courage ! I even go so far as to say, you are foolhardy."

"I told you I am prepared to die."

"You need not be dramatic. Nobody wants you to die. In fact you are a supremely unimportant young woman, who is upset and whose nerves need mending. If I were you I should make a journey."

"Is this fatherly advice or an order from the Political Police?"

"Take it as you like."

"Thank you; it is anyway my intention to leave Germany."

"That is wise. As the father of your school-mate—can I help you in any way? After all, I am also a family man."

"Thank you, Major, I need no help. I shall find all the assistance I want abroad."

Trestow shook his head slowly and smiled rather humanly:

"You are, I take it, about to leave Germany and—wherever you may go—spread vile propaganda against our new regime. That is a silly waste of time."

"Is it a waste of time to tell the truth?"

"Most certainly. Do you for one moment seriously believe that, apart from a few international Jews and a handful of sentimentalists, the world will believe your tales, or even listen to them? Don't waste your breath

and your time! Europe and England will, like the rest of the world, make every effort to keep the friendship of Germany. The tale of Jewish persecution is as old as the Bible. Nobody is interested in it any longer. What did you do yourself when there were pogroms in Russia and Poland? Nothing, I'm sure. A pogrom is always called an "internal affair." Very well then—we want a pure Aryan race—and in the face of history the Jewish question is supremely unimportant to the world. But when the Fuehrer chooses to demand from the world what is Germany's by right—then they will stir, and not before! Take that from an old and politically schooled soldier."

"You must be wrong!" I cried with passion. "Not one decent-minded person in Europe or America will stand for what is going on here."

"You little fool! Don't you know your own history? Has the so-called decent-minded world ever taken up arms to fight for the Jews?"

I was silent. I wondered if this man was really a convinced Anti-Semite or even a true Nazi. Was he not perhaps just a good German who hoped that Hitler would lead his country back to lost glories? Could that be done by beating up minorities within the Reich? And had not Trestow said himself a few moments ago: "when the Fuehrer chooses to demand from the world what is Germany's by right"? Was then, perhaps, the entire Jew-baiting no more than a smoke-screen behind which the Nazis were preparing for more important things? And did the rest of the world see through it? I looked at Trestow squarely:

"Somehow I have a feeling that the democratic world around Germany will be intelligent enough to realise what they might be up against. But whatever purpose this ghastly persecution of my people is meant to serve—it will be the one item in your Fuehrer's programme which will ruin him."

"I am of a different opinion. It is the one item in

his programme that will be an undoubted, unquestioned, unopposed success 1"

I felt a cold shiver run down my spine. I turned and walked to the door, and when I slammed it to, I felt I had once and for all slammed my door on Germany.

* * *

The Channel is choppy, the Channel is grey, and the Channel is all round me. Above me is a ceiling of dirty cotton-wool with not a single patch of blue. And within me is apathetic stillness. Even the memory of the last four ghastly months cannot stir me into productive thoughts or reasonable plans. Back there—miles back and, thank God, invisible now—lies the coast of Europe. Back there, somewhere unknown to me but never forgotten, lies the body of my father. And also back there, buried alongside slaughtered human decency, lies my youth. Back there beat the hearts of some good friends whom I may never see again.

The smallish Channel boat is swaying gently. This is November, the month between the golden, richly coloured, melancholy loveliness of autumn and the bare sharpness of wet and cold winter days to come.

Four months since I slammed the door of Major von Trestow's office and staggered down the wide, stone stairs of the building. Four months since I came home to our flat and decided to leave at once. Four months since I fell into bed at night, exhausted, too tired to sleep, with a worried and helpful Emma watching over me. Four months since Christel arrived and took one good look at me and decided: "You are ill."

Funny how an otherwise always healthy person like myself suddenly flops down and can't get up again, and lies there, helpless and weak, without any special pain and yet unable to move. They call it "complete nervous breakdown." I call it "the lack of a will to live, without the courage to die." I believe it was a little over a fortnight

that I lay there in my bedroom in our flat, looked after by Christine and Emma, until my friend, in agreement with David, finally decided that I should be under proper medical observation. I remember to have asked her jokingly if she thought I was going mad. And I remember her reply: "People like you aren't that lucky!"

I did not like the idea of any hospital in Berlin; on the other hand, since our banking account was sealed, I lacked the finances to be able to afford a private nursing-home. And so Christel had a brain-wave. I was to go down to the International Hospital which was attached to the All European Friendship League in Switzerland. And as my left arm and leg were both sort of paralysed, Christel decided to take our car and drive me down.

I fought. What good would it be to lie about in a Swiss hospital? I'd stick it out in the flat and make for England at once. I had a craving, a yearning, to put the Channel between Germany and myself—this leaden, choppy Channel which I have been watching for the last few hours.

No, Christel was not easily put off. She began to make her plans with quiet determination. She offered first of all the flat for letting by advertising it in the Press. She had endless discussions with David, Aunt Mary, Wegner—who miraculously was not yet arrested. She thought of everything, arranged everything, handled me like a lifeless but precious article. I was by now too apathetic to object to anything. I was tired—tired.

And then one day Christel surprised me. She, the calm, quiet, meticulous planner, suddenly revised all her plans within the hour. We were not to leave within the week, we were leaving to-night. We were not, taking the ballast of many trunks, we were taking two suitcases. I was still too tired to ask her why. But somehow deep down in my heart suspicion stirred. What was all this?

Not quite three months since that mad night drive to the Dutch frontier, Christel at the wheel, myself huddled into what seemed a million rugs beside her. Emma and

Christel and Wegner carried me down into the car after dark. Everything was confusing.

Switzerland was changed into Holland. Why? I didn't even ask. Not the International Hospital in Zurich but a pleasant nursing-home near Rotterdam. Why? I didn't ask. I sensed danger all the way from our front door to the frontier.

Over there, not far off, another Channel boat is passing by. Going to Europe, I shudder. I know now that my arrest was pending and that Christel had gained knowledge of it through mysterious channels. Hence the sudden abandoning of all her plans. I keep thinking of the fatherly Major von Trestow. Had he ordered my arrest or had he helped me to get away? I don't know. I shall never find out.

White walls and friendly faces and a language whose meaning you could only guess, with some words that sounded familiarly German. Delirious dreams at nightfall and open eyes at night. Christel and a strange, round-faced elderly doctor asking me many queer questions. Aunt Mary's visit and her calm, sweet friendship and reassurance that no harm could befall me any more.

"Why don't you go home to England, Aunt Mary?"

"No mother leaves her child."

Aunt Mary—victim of a mother's sense of duty !

Christel had to go back to her work, pleading urgently that I should come to Spain as soon as Dr Vandenhoven would allow it. Spain? No, Christel. Not Spain. England. I want to go to England. . . .

And then the quiet, short strenuous walks in the pleasant garden, leaning on the nurse's arm. She spoke a little German. Why not stay in lovely, hospitable Holland? The language was easy to learn and there might be some job. Holland? No, nurse—England. I want to go to England.

A great joy when Trevor Parkins came flying over from Paris. He was going home to New York for a vacation.

God, the joy to leave Europe for a bit! Say, why don't you come to Paris in the autumn when I go back, and work for me? France? No, Trevor. Not France. I want to go to England. England. . . .

Dr Vandenhoven the psychopathologist crept into my mind. Why England? Have you ever been there as a child? No. Is it because of your Aunt Mary? No. I don't think so. Was anyone you ever loved English or in England? Yes. My father and mother were married in England. Ah, said the Doctor, and looked very knowing. Was it that really? Or was it that a divine sixth sense guided me to the future fortress that was not to fall?

The Channel is choppy, the Channel is grey. But suddenly I sit up. There out of the haze rises the coast of Britain. It is hidden by mist—unclear, like my future. I gaze ahead of me. What lies in store for me beyond those cliffs? Simply security from the long arm of Hitler's unprovoked hatred, or even more: sympathy, assistance, co-operation and help to fulfil my promise?

The ship's crew get busy. Passengers fumble for their passports, and pieces of luggage fill the deck. The engines are slowing down. The anchor is lowered. We have arrived on THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CHANNEL.

PART TWO

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CHANNEL

I DON'T know why I never kept a diary. It would have served many purposes. It might have satisfied my craving to express myself. It might have constituted an interesting document of error, because I would have had the audacity to write, after perhaps the first year in England: "I think now I know the English."

But now, exactly eight years after my arrival on this island, I confess I haven't begun to know them.

Generalising is a great mistake at the best of times, but it is a very human mistake, and I have heard the most intelligent and enlightened people utter such sentences as: "The French are charming"—"The Americans are hospitable"—"The Germans are fat." But even though generalising about the English is an impossibility, one attempt may be permitted—that the English are incomprehensible to all foreigners. If ever I meet a fellow-alien who claims: "I really know them now," I simply ask: "How long have you been here?" And in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the answer will be: "A year."

Of everything you say about the English, the opposite is also true. And I could easily imagine two people arguing until they're black in the face without ever coming to an agreement. For they will both be right and both be wrong.

The best and safest thing to do when one approaches an Englishman is to expect nothing. Neither coldness nor warm-heartedness; neither indifference nor enthusiasm. For Englishmen will always manage to surprise you. They are a contradiction in themselves.

Apart from their characteristics and their mentality, the ordinary, everyday occurrences take on a different

meaning in this country. You sit down to a meal with an Englishman, and when the main course arrives—for instance, a paper-thin slice of mutton, one potato, and vegetables out of salt water—you nod and think: Aha!—that's why the majority of the English are slim. But your theory is smashed soon enough when the sweet arrives. Usually an affair containing all the fattening ingredients you can think of: syrup, flour, fats, sugar, and—to make the whole thing worth while—thick cream on top of it. But they're still slim.

I have met and known Englishmen who would rather spend hundreds of pounds on woollen underwear, hot-water bottles, aspirin, and hotel bills (in southern climates) than build into their houses a decently working system of central heating. Yes, yes, I have argued, keep your open fires by all means, they are delightful and make for such unsurpassed laziness, but why have a north-easterly gale blowing through the landing and icicles in the bathroom? But mind, I only argued during the first twelve months.

Everything is contradictory on this island. Nowhere in Europe can one find more drably furnished sitting-rooms than those of the English middle-class. They can live and breathe in the most remarkable atmosphere of dark-brown leather-covered hideousness—because there crackles and flickers that open fire in the grate, cheering up everything, talking to you, giving eternal life. And the drabness is gone.

Many a time have I heard the statement that the ordinary Englishman is dull and has no special interest. This assumption might be justified were one to judge them from the expression on their faces when they stand at the bar of a pub and drink their four, five, six pints of beer without moving a muscle or speaking a single word. But I wouldn't mind betting that those same men, who stand there looking like a movie screen after the cinema is closed, will go home and sit down and write their letters to the editor of some important daily on a subject that we Continental people

didn't know existed. Their interests are as far flung as their Empire; as varied as the races they rule.

The Englishman takes his pleasures sadly. Yes, sir, so hedoes. I have watched these North Sea islanders at the theatre, at a meal, in the concert hall. They look grimly miserable and yet declare quite seriously: "I'm enjoying this tremendously, you know." And they do!

And have you ever crept into their language? Right into it, as I have done from necessity (and I confess I don't know it yet)? I declare that English is the most wonderful language for every and any occasion. You can talk for hours in English without saying anything; and, if needs be, you can with one short sentence say much more than in a dozen sentences of any other language. Has it ever occurred to you that the English—although they have a reputation of being cool and indifferent—exaggerate when they have nothing to say and are masters of understatement when the situation is serious?

How often have I heard such sentences as: "I hate puddings"—"I loathe musical comedies"—"I adore dogs"—"I worship my wireless"—"I detest biographies." Do they really? Certainly not. And when it comes to something or somebody they really love they simply say: "I rather like that." Or do they really only "rather like"? Can they hate? But if they can hate, does it not follow that they must also be able to love? well, I've come to the conclusion that it is much the same with the English as it is with science. The more you study—the more do you find that you know nothing.

What a nation, that needs drawbacks, kicks, and blows to become cheerfully determined, when any other nation needs success and encouragement to be able to carry on !

They are so childlike in many ways. They love to play. They have an infantile delight in games. They are masters in the art of dabbling. They invent the greatest and most revolutionising devices of science, warfare, utility. But once they've invented them they put them aside and leave

them for other nations to copy and improve upon. Is it that they are impatient? Are they, though? Have you ever seen anything quite like an English queue? The people in an English queue look positively contented, almost serene, and not a single word of anger is uttered.

Oh, well—to me they are the Chinese of the West. And if I were asked to find a suitable designation for them I should say the aptest would be: the Complacent Adventurers.

My will, my fate, my stars, or God Himself, then sent me off to live amongst these living question-marks, to bring to their hospitable shores my anguish, my misery, my yearning for revenge. A dangerous feat to undertake! For if you are not fashioned to let this English enigma soothe and heal your mind you might easily lie down and die. And if you cannot wait for them to warm up to you like their chilly rooms before their symbolic fires—turn back from the white cliffs of Dover and stay away. But if you can survive this passive assault upon your Continental mentality and all your habits and ideas—then you will in good time—no—not be one of them, but at least pass in the crowd. And that is the highest one can achieve in England.

* * *

Although my little registration-book describes me as a so-called C Alien, Refugee from Nazi oppression (meaning Enemy Alien, but harmless), my peace-time status was first of all: "Foreign Visitor who must not stay in the United Kingdom longer than one year and must not accept any work, paid or unpaid." From this I climbed to Foreign Resident. But that was quite a long time after. There seems to be a wide gap now between a Foreign Resident and an Alien. Much as I suffer from the fact that I cannot partake in this war, which I believe is as much my war as it is the war of any Dutchman or Belgian, I curiously do not suffer from the famous "Alien-Inferiority-Complex,"

a widespread disease amongst my unfortunate fellow-refugees. As little as I ever felt inferior when a Nazi looked down his nose on the mere Jewess. Oh yes, I feel my lack of wisdom, of knowledge, of talents, and perhaps even of any particular charms, strongly enough, but to be a German Jewess is a destiny, or perhaps an accident. So how can I feel inferior or, on the other hand, proud about it? Proud I am only perhaps of the by-word "refugee," as it is a sign of being opposed to Hitlerism and to a country that has sunk so low as the country of my birth. I like us refugees to be called the *avantgarde* of Democracy.

The house into which I came straight from my sick-bed, a result of the blow that my own country had dealt me, was the house of Aunt Mary's brother John and his family. His invitation was worded:

"... My sister Mary is very anxious that you should be taken care of after your long illness. So please regard our house as yours for any period you may choose."

How unfair I must have been against my relatives I can only realise now, when I begin to understand how strange, foreign, and incomprehensible my fate must have seemed to the Thistlehorns. I ask myself squarely: "If the same happened in Peru, in Russia, in Spain, what exactly would the victims of that revolution mean to you? I should perhaps have done no more or even less for them than the Thistlehorns did for me. They opened their house, they gave me food and warmth. But could I justly ask for real understanding? Was it not for these settled, well-off, dispassionate Britishers completely beyond comprehension that anything really horrible and world-shaking was happening in Germany? My father had been murdered. But surely this was a specific case? A hideous, entirely individual tragedy? Maybe he had been a Bolshevik. Maybe he had tried to obstruct the course of a nation. Germany had chosen her way unanimously, Every revolution demanded its victims, and it was truly sad and

touching that a relative, if a far-off one, should be directly involved. But for the rest?

I well remember the long winter evenings by the large fire in their drawing-room in Holland Park Crescent, with John and Elsie Thistlehorn and some of their friends sitting in the deep, cosy arm-chairs and sipping tea or whisky according to taste, and with myself standing by the mantelpiece, talking, arguing, trying so hard to make them understand. How bored they must have been, how secretly fed-up with this temperamental, compassionate, obviously high-strung intruder into their easy-going, unproblematic lives! Their two sons were still at school at the time. To-day one of them is a night-fighter pilot. The other one remained on the beaches of Dunkirk.

Do you know now what I meant, Elsie Thistlehorn, when I almost screamed: "That man Hitler is up to no good! He'll one day plunge the whole of Europe into misery"?—to which you invariably replied:

"Nonsense, child; this is a sad, but entirely internal affair."

I was keenly looking forward to Aunt Mary's promised Christmas visit. She came, and came alone. Elisabeth had an invitation from the von Trestows to accompany them to the winter sports in the Allgaeu. How I hated Elisabeth for still remaining friendly with the man who had in all probability been directly or indirectly responsible for my father's death, and who for all I knew had ordered my arrest! (I still wonder if Elionor had got wind of it and warned Christel in time.)

When Aunt Mary did join us at last I realised how thoroughly Continental she had become now that I could compare her with "really" English people. John teased his sister a good deal when she, too, began persistently and urgently to warn them that Hitler would establish himself in Germany if the Western Powers did not get together and call a halt.

John shrugged: "Let the fellow establish himself!

The Germans wanted him, they've got him. I admit his methods in dealing with his antagonists are somewhat violent, but then, the Hun has never had any sense of proportion, at the best of times. For the rest, they're rather likeable chaps. And after all, the Versailles Treaty was a bit of a blunder all round."

And Elsie added: "There are, no doubt, many very fine Germans. One can't blame a whole nation for the mistakes of a few."

Can't one, Elsie? And do you, John, still call them likeable chaps now that they have taken your eldest boy, and blasted your office and your warehouses wide open, probably mistaking them for important military objectives? No, John; the Huns aren't a bit likeable. Only you make the grave mistake of disliking those who are sheltering in this country instead of those who remained at home in order to smash you up. You don't like your niece Renate much these days. What did you say the other day when I asked for your support to get me a War job: "After all, old girl, a German is a German!"

I took long walks with Aunt Mary through the wintry Kensington Gardens, with its bare trees and its snow-capped Peter Pan statue. I urged her to come back and live in England.

"Aunt Mary, we could set up house together and work for other refugees."

"I'd love to, Renate. But I am a mother and nothing in the world will induce Betty to leave Germany."

"Then leave her there to——" But I did not finish that sentence. I had never been a mother and dared not try to influence my aunt.

"You know how fond I am of you, Renate, don't you, and how dearly I love England? But as long as I can I must stay with my daughter. Once she is married I can resume my own life."

"Is she still running around with that fellow Schechen?" I asked coldly.

"Yes. This boy is still determined to marry Betty. But it means that he'll have to quit his position in the Party. And he is torn between his love for the girl and his duty towards his Fuehrer. And for the first time Betty seems to have her heart in it. I thought in the beginning that this was just one more of her whims. But she really seems to love the boy."

"My God, what a tragedy all round !"

"Yes, Renate. All round," answered Aunt Mary.

And then we changed the subject. David Hartmann was well, and sent his best love and good wishes. He could do nothing to have father's account unsealed. On the contrary, all our money was now confiscated. The flat had been taken over as well. Emma had gone back home to the Rhineland to her people. Sybille Barthold had been transferred to a woman's labour camp. And Wegner——

"My God, hasn't he got out?"

"No, poor devil; he left it too late. They got him, and he's in a concentration camp."

"How is Producer Geldern? Have you heard anything about him?"

"Oh yes. He has joined the Party, officially, so as to be able to carry on. He wears the swastika badge and belongs to the Ministry of Enlightenment film department."

"God!" I breathed, and quickly recollected his conversation with my father about future films.

Aunt Mary wanted to know about my plans for the future. How long did I intend to stay with her people? Any chance for a job? Had I got any cash left?

I told her that I should look for work immediately after New Year and try to get a labour permit. "Yes, thank you, I still have some money." I had sold our car at Rotterdam and Christel had provided me with funds. Aunt Mary offered at once that I should draw from her English banking account.

"I am not a rich woman, but there's enough to see you through the worst."

"Thanks, Aunt Mary; you're a brick, as you English call it. I rather prefer to stand on my own feet. I shall get myself a furnished room. You see, my father's London publishers must still have a few pounds royalties from his book, *No Hero At AIL*"

My heart bled when Aunt Mary finally got ready to return to Germany. I stood on the platform of Victoria Station almost sick with a multitude of emotions. I asked myself straitly if I felt a longing to return to the country of my origin. And I answered: no—rather be dead.

Immediately after New Year I visited Messrs Powell & Kay, my father's publishers. With what English I had at my disposal, and God knows it was little enough in spite of six years' studying it at school, I described my situation to these two kindly and obviously well-meaning gentlemen. And I asked them right out if there were any chance of my getting a job with them, or through them. They were most sympathetic, but also afraid that there was no opening of any kind for me, and besides they doubted if I should be granted a labour permit. On the other hand, there was quite a few pounds in royalties from my father's book, and if I could prove that I was really his sole heiress I could expect their cheque. I referred them to my father's German legal adviser, David Hartmann, and after having declined their kind offer to have tea with them I departed.

On my way back to Holland Park I couldn't help smiling rather grimly when I thought of my father's leaving an "heiress."

Two months passed before my status as the legally "entitled legatee of my father's estate" was proven. My position thus established, I received a cheque for some sixty pounds (less agent's fee—the agent being an obscure middleman whose name I did not even know and who sat rather comfortably between the author and the publisher),

and, with this sum behind me, I left the Thistlehorns', with their best wishes, and assuring me that they would be happy if I would feel free to come in for dinner or tea at any time. I found a small furnished room, complete with gas-ring, penny-in-the-slot heater, damp bedding, a constantly occupied bathroom on the next landing, and an aspidistra in the entrance hall. All this was situated in the neighbourhood of Baker Street Station and on the wrong side of Regent's Park. But the room cost only one guinea weekly, including breakfast; and that suited me.

A job of work was now the most important thing, in order to ensure the bare necessities of life, without which greater and more important issues could not be tackled. These issues were, in my special case, to convince the English of the Hitler menace, and at the same time to fight it. What an idealistic, short-sighted, and stupid fool I was ! There I stood in springtime London, with the buds bursting in the spacious parks, with hazy blue skies above me, and friendly but quite indifferent people around me. I thought I could make myself heard, and would actually in due time be given an important job in the common fight against Nazidom!

I had to thank Christel's practical cool-headedness for the possession of my typewriter, which she had had sense enough to dump into the car, knowing that the order for my arrest was already signed. On that typewriter I wrote letters, letters enough to choke the letter-boxes of all England—letters to the editors of the important papers; letters to famous M.P.s; letters to well-known philanthropists—urging them to do something about Hitler, to get England to stop that lunacy across the Channel. And stacks of answers arrived. Everybody sympathised with me. One or two left-wing papers asked me to write short articles on the atrocities in Germany. For the rest: everybody was sorry, nothing could be done, for this was an entirely internal affair. One famous man's typist must have had a bout of acute disgust with the Nazis on her

subconscious mind, for she erroneously typed "infernal" instead of "internal."

I was confounded ! But I was not quite defeated. I continued my letter-writing and, although it hurt, I wrote those articles for the Press, describing the wrecking of the A.E.F.L. office, Wegner's beating up, and my father's arrest. I felt that even the most delicate personal feelings must be sacrificed in the face of the big issues that were at stake. One of the two articles appeared; the other was returned, with many thanks, but with the explanation that this was, after all, not quite in line with the paper's policy.

About three weeks after my article appeared I received a strong letter from Elisabeth (via Austria), who asked me urgently to stop spreading hideous propaganda against Germany. She and Aunt Mary had been questioned by the police as to their relationship with me and it was only thanks to her good connections that nothing had happened to them so far.

I remember well the evening when I received that letter. It was a glorious, typically English summer evening, with a gentle cool wind and a rosy sky. I stood by my open window and gazed down into the narrow street where a few children were playing some ball game. There was music coming from a nearby wireless: otherwise everything was curiously still. I compared the picture below my window with a Berlin street on a summer's evening, and into my bitterness against Germany stole something like nostalgia for Berlin. But the letter in my hand soon wiped away all sentimentality. The swine ! Had they not done enough damage to my family by killing my father? Must they now pester a fine woman like Aunt Mary? Elisabeth and her connections ! I felt sick. So sick that I flung a coat over my shoulders and left the house and set off for the park, to breathe some good, clean, free English air.

It is said that it is better to have loved and lost than

never to have loved at all. I wonder if the same saying applies to other experiences, for instance that of financial security. For two years I had been lucky enough to live a completely care-free life with all the luxuries of modern living—a comfortable home, a car, a servant, good clothes, good food, and plenty of interests. Money had been with me long enough to lure me into a certain sense of safety, but not long enough to rock me into complete indolence, that state of sloth that renders people helpless in the event of sudden disaster. It might have been better never to have known any luxury at all than to have had such a comparatively short glimpse at it, but, on the other hand, perhaps it was more satisfactory to have had and lost than never to have had at all. I suppose this is a very individual matter. I am thankful to say that, when things began to look somewhat grim, I did not immediately sink into the depth of despair. I was determined not to let financial worries get me down, although by the end of the summer of 1934 my sixty-odd pounds had dwindled almost to nothing, and I had to move into a yet cheaper room. Apart from father's royalties I had earned a few pounds by writing articles, but the fees were very small, and out of them the translator had to be paid. The interest in my depressing narrative about Hitlerism in Germany began to fail. Moreover, well-known journalists covered the German story completely and their moderate descriptions of what was going on in Germany did nothing towards rousing the British public to any open display of anger.

Meanwhile more refugees trickled into England and were allowed to stay on the condition that they accepted no work, paid or unpaid. But they were still only relatively few and were soon absorbed in the millions of London. I met only a few isolated ones more or less by accident.

Yes, it was a lonely business, living in London with insufficient funds, hardly any friends, and a scanty knowledge of the language. But I must not let my mind dwell

upon the endless evenings in my little bed-sitting-room in Paddington, on the long solitary walks in the park, or the lonesome scrappy meals at one of the Corner Houses. Loneliness can, however, be a friend at times. It gave me plenty of opportunity to dream and make plans, and I often escaped into the world of imagination, thus getting little dust on my shoes.

I hated the idea of making use of Aunt Mary's offer of financial help. I knew how small her English income was, and it was always possible that the Nazis would not stop at warning her but might take stronger measures, and recommend her for deportation to her motherland. Then she would have to live on her money, for she would hate to ask her brother John for help. No—what was hers must remain intact.

Once more I went to see my father's publishers, and once more Mr Kay assured me of his sympathy, but he still could see no way of helping me.

"You see, Miss Feldt, the only work for which a labour permit would be granted to you would have to be of the kind that no English person could undertake. Can you think of anything very special you could do?"

No—I couldn't. Again I cursed my lack of talents, my insufficient knowledge, the complete absence of any kind of genius in my blood. I smiled rather grimly when I suddenly remembered my father's speech that night when we walked through the icy streets of Berlin: "At last, my girl, you are having a decent time. . . . I shall see to it that you will never have anything to worry about. . . . Your whole life lies before you. . . . Geldern is awfully keen on my story *The Man Who Came Back*"

I sat up abruptly and bent forward.

"Mr Kay, my father's book was a big success, wasn't it?"

"Undoubtedly. And we mourn the loss of so brilliant a writer. A great pity that he never wrote a second book for us."

"He did!" I said quickly.

Mr Kay raised his eyebrows, and I explained. I told him about the story and how it had been started as a film and was not permitted to be continued.

"But it is not written in book-form. The story itself sounds interesting enough."

"I remember almost every word of the dialogue. I've typed it dozens of times. Mr Kay, all I need is an English collaborator. I shall deliver a fine book to you."

"But, Miss Feldt—the story has to be knit together. Can you write?" he asked dubiously.

"I needn't even be able to write. The story is written. The dialogue is there. All I must have is an Englishman who can adapt the story into first-class English."

I sat tense while Kay kept biting his under lip. After awhile he said:

"I'll talk this over with Mr Powell. There might also be publicity value in——" He broke off, and blushed. I also coloured slightly. We shook hands amiably, and I departed with his promise to let me know in a short time. Should they see a possibility to follow up this suggestion of mine, no doubt there could be ways and means to provide me with some funds.

I walked home in good spirits. I was optimistic. When I arrived at my room I asked the landlady to permit me to sit in the drawing-room and listen to the wireless.

"Classical music," she said, with a disgusted sniff.

"I should like to tune-in to Germany."

"Do, dearie!" she said complacently.

This was the day of the Nuremberg Party rally. I wanted to hear every word that Hitler spoke. I did hear every word and I could not help tears coming to my eyes. They were misinterpreted by my kindly Mrs Ralston.

"You shouldn't torture yourself, dearie. You should take things easy and try to forget."

"No, Mrs Ralston. I don't want to forget. That's why I listen."

September faded into October and yet I had not heard from Kay. I began to sell certain valuables and also pawned my fur coat, which was foolish with winter round the corner. I asked Mrs Ralston if she had a cheaper room in her house: she had. It was a basement room and somewhat dreary, and not very dry, but it cost no more than ten-and-sixpence including an early cup of tea, to which my kind-hearted landlady added a couple of sandwiches. At this point I should like to advise single people with very limited means always to move into lodging-houses which are run by working-class women. Not only do they know how to keep a place clean, but they also have hearts, and warm ones at that, where the snobbish middle-class landlady has a muscle that beats only to the tune of what you can afford to pay. And—this is really important—see that the landlady has a sense of humour. What hard working, down-to-earth Cockney woman hasn't?

There was still no possibility of my getting a regular job. Although my permit to stay in England had been prolonged for another year, the stipulation about the labour permit held good.

One could argue about the wisdom of this labour-permit business, and Mrs Ralston and I did. Curiously, I defended the British point of view, pointing out how many unemployed there were amongst their own people.

"Ah," exclaimed Mrs Ralston, with much vigour, "but suppose you 'ad a job and made money. What 'appens? You spend more. See? And supposing all them other referdgies 'ad jobs too. They'd spend more. See? So—what 'appens is this. Instead of them 'anging about on charity they spend and give libour. And besides—why let them there pore devils in and then forbid them to make a honest living? Sounds silly, don't it?"

I still marvel at the fact that I ever learnt any other English apart from that which Mrs Ralston taught me. However she had common sense, and I saw her point. Mrs Ralston was also one of the very few people who saw

further ahead than many of her more learned compatriots.

"That there fellow 'Tler is up to no good. Mind you, dearie, my hubby was smashed up in the last war. Well, I shouldn't wonder if them blasted Jerries ["Pardon me, but you are different from the real ones, ain't you?"—"Thank you, Mrs Ralston!"] just goose-stepped theirselves into another bloody war. Fancy those blighters killin' your pore dad merely for believing different from what they does. A rum world, ain't it?"

Yes, Mrs Ralston. But how rum the world really is you and I found out later on.

While I watched a gentle autumn turn into an early winter, with apprehensive thoughts about my pawned fur coat, and waited for Messrs Powell & Kay to make up their minds, two things happened which stirred me into joyous excitement. I had lately grown somewhat lethargic. Was it the calm and soothing atmosphere of England taking hold of me too? Was it that I felt somewhat defeated? Or was it just my loneliness and lack of friends? I can't remember. I only realised how dull I had been lately when these two events took place.

The first was the arrival of a letter stamped Prague. I thought it might be from Parkins, of whom I hadn't heard for ages. His enthusiasm for bringing the European youth into contact with each other had somewhat died down in the face of all the Fascistic movements that lured the young people of Europe away from international friendship. But the letter was not from Parkins. It was from Sybille Barthold.

Sybille was free !

She had got hold of my address in a round-about way via Moske, with whom I exchanged rare letters. She had managed to escape from the labour camp with the help of three fellow-Communists, who had been able to bribe the guards with thousands of marks.

"Yes, Renate, you can do everything in Germany with

money. They need money urgently, every penny they can lay hands on for their infernal armaments. Oh, Renate, my personal adventures are supremely unimportant in the face of the dreadful fact that Germany is out to fight the Devil himself when she is ready. I learnt through certain channels that Hitler will reintroduce conscription as soon as possible. God!—much as I hate war, and all it stands for—if only the rest of Europe is awake to the fact that a mighty foe will arise one day to start the bloodiest war that history has ever seen! I wonder if my ideas about the democracies of this world are all wrong. Let's fervently hope so."

She went on to tell me that she was busy working underground in Czechoslovakia getting fellow-Socialists and Communists out of Germany. Reading her account I felt thoroughly and utterly ashamed. Here I sat in an English bed-sitting-room waiting to do something worth while, and what did I do? Nothing! Could I not do exactly what Sybille did? Work underground against the hated Nazis instead of living a half-bourgeois, half-bohemian existence in the safe lap of England?

I was so full of remorse and fury that I sat straight down and asked Sybille if I couldn't somehow join her in Prague, or at least do something similar in London. While I waited impatiently for her reply the second event happened. This time it did not bear the stamp of grimness. It was a gay and glorious surprise, full of light-winged happiness, when one night I read in the evening paper that the famous Continental pianist Miss Ilona Lankey, daughter of the well-known financier Sir Anthony Lankey, was coming to London after many years to give a series of concerts.

I ran downstairs to the next telephone booth and with flying fingers searched the Directory for the Lankey number. There it was.

A grave masculine voice answered the phone, and in my unsuspecting naivete" I asked if I were talking to Sir Anthony. No, I was talking to his majesty the butler.

I then asked for Lady Lankey. I smiled when I heard the faint Hungarian accent in her voice. I apologised for intruding and introduced myself. Was Ilona already in London and did she stay with her parents?

"But how charming! A school friend of Ilona. But of course she stays with us. She is out—such bad luck. But no—perhaps not! It will be a wonderful surprise for her. You come to lunch to-morrow if you are not already booked up."

No, I certainly wasn't. (Lyons Corner House wouldn't mind, I thought.)

"That is splendid. Very well then. I shall not tell her. She will be so thrilled. She mentioned you often to us. And also your poor father. Yes—I am glad you rang."

I had been in London one year and this was the first time I had been entertained in really big style in one of Mayfair's most delightful houses. From the solemn butler to the enormous tiled fireplace in the drawing-room everything was completely and utterly high-class English. This was the England of the books one read on the Continent. The England of the plays one saw in Berlin and Vienna.

This was the house of the huge, well-stocked library the sanctuary of tremendous culture and good taste. Every picture was exquisite, every vase, every ash-tray a piece of art. Strange that the bulk of a nation can live in hideous "three-piece-suite" rooms and a few selected ones have such outstanding homes!

I found Lady Lankey an elegant, highly strung woman of about fifty, with dyed hair, carnation-red finger-nails, exquisite clothes, and the most entrancing smile. You saw in her immediately the one-time great opera singer. She smoked chains of tiny cigarettes and her long, lovely hands were never still.

Sir Anthony did not come home for lunch. The urgent business of adding more money to their wealth kept him in the City.

When Ilona herself finally entered the drawing-room, where Lady Lankey and I had cocktails, I was amazed. Among a million people I should have recognised the bird-like, fragile creature of the Augusta Heim days. There was still the flickering fire in her dark eyes, only it seemed to me, on closer scrutiny, the mischief had gone out of them and given way to a gentler quality. Her black curls were now fashioned into an elaborate coiffure, and she no longer hopped but walked gracefully.

"RenateFeldt!"

It was natural to enjoy a reunion with an old and well-liked school-mate of happier days, but I was bewildered at the depth of delight that quivered in her voice when she saw me. Surely she must have met thousands of interesting and charming people! How strange that she should almost sob with happiness at seeing me!

At lunch we were joined by Ilona's impresario, a tall, elegant Pole named Max Mankiewicz, and it was soon apparent that this man was devoted to my friend. The meal itself was rather overwhelming for one now accustomed to scrambled eggs and coffee. There were several wines, and French brandy afterwards, and since I, at the best of times, cannot drink much more than a small sherry I must have been unusually lively! I think I talked fourteen to the dozen, riding, of course, my hobby-horse: fight Hitler! I found in this circle, however, if not full understanding, at least the most intelligent sympathy. Artists like Lady Lankey and her daughter must needs hate dictatorship of any kind and despise the glorification of one single nation or race. Art knows no frontiers, and it is gratifying to realise that now, while the bombs from Germany are falling on this country, its people retain their enthusiasm for international art and don't stretch their disgust with the Germans to include Beethoven or Mozart.

After luncheon, Ilona and I retired to her own room, which was a breath-taking affair of light wood and creamy

silks and velvets, with many lovely old prints, and rare flowers everywhere.

I slumped into an arm-chair, completely defeated by such an unusually heavy meal, and Ilona sat down on a small footstool near the fire, which she raked silently for awhile before she spoke.

"Renate—I am so glad to see you. You bring back to me a time when I was really happy."

"Yes—the Augusta Heim years certainly rate among the happiest of my life too. But surely—you——"

She smiled rather sadly and sighed.

"Ilona, what's wrong? Or am I too inquisitive?"

"No—no—you're not. Naturally you're interested. You always were in my funny affairs."

"All right then—let's do what we did in the olden days in the dormitory."

"No; I don't think you'd understand. You were always such a straight, principled brute!"

"Was I? Lord! Sounds ghastly. But damn it—I'm not a prig! Go on, let's have it."

"Oh, well—I'm miserable."

"I guessed that much," I replied somewhat dryly; "but I don't see why. Heavens ! if I had your talent and your success I should tear the world apart."

"Yes, I think you would. You're one of those creatures who would be married to their art—for better or worse, with no possible rival ever to tear you apart ! I guess I'm ungrateful really. I do have my music to compensate me for other shortcomings."

"I should put it the other way round. It sounds more cheerful: you have to pay a little for your blessings I There are a great many people in this world who are paying all the time without the blessings."

"Quite so. But I—oh, you'll laugh at me I "

"Of course I won't ! I never laugh at other people unless they try to be pompous."

"Very well then. I am ridden by the greatest curse

that the Devil ever invented for women. I love a married man."

I was completely silent, for I was both dazed and relieved.

"You see, Renate," she continued, "now you haven't a word to say. But I shall tell you more. I am not even willing to give him up. I shall fight. And it will be a tough fight, for *she* clings—clings! But I am willing to stake everything on the one and only real happiness I have ever known."

"Is it—is it the man who lunched with us?"

"Max? Good heavens, no! Dear Max! He is my conscience. He is my purse. He is my lawyer, doctor, nurse, and agent. He brings me hot drinks into damp hotel rooms after a strenuous concert. He fights for every extra pound I can make and hates everybody around me—including, of course, Charles. No, Renate, it's not as simple as all that. I wish it were Max. We can always be together without anyone minding. He belongs to my work. But Charles is a big and important man in Paris and has a big and important job, and an even bigger and more important Palais, over which his docile Lucille presides like a marble goddess clad in velvet. Max? My God, if ever I could travel to London with Charles like that, and sit at my father's table with him! A dream, my dear."

I lit a fresh cigarette and asked: "Does he love you?"

"He says he worships me. He steals hours from his work to be with me. Stolen hours with one eye on the clock!"

"Well, Ilona, if he does love you, why doesn't he make a clean break with his wife or else leave you alone?"

Ilona looked at me curiously.

"You *would* say that. A clean break. Typically Renate Feldtl You always hated compromises. But altogether I am delighted to find you so—so——"

"Broad-minded?" I helped out.

"More than that—understanding and sympathetic."

"I must impress people rather poorly. Did you expect me to shower abuses on to your exquisite coiffure? Don't be silly. After all—I am in love with a married man too. The only snag is, he does not love me a bit! So—you see where your advantage lies."

"You—what?"

"Yes, I know. Sounds queer from straitlaced little Reny. He is still in Berlin and will probably stay there."

"A Nazi?"

"Can you imagine my loving a Nazi?"

"Well, he might have loved you first and become a Nazi afterwards."

"That sounds pretty grim, thank you!" And we both laughed at her involuntary joke. "No, David will never be a Nazi. He is a charming young man with a good legal practice, and a very delightful young wife who claims not to be interested in him."

"Ah," flashed Ilona, "they all do! None of them are ever interested in their husbands, and claim companionship and mutual freedom—until another woman appears on the horizon. Then see them suddenly rise up like snakes in the grass ready to sting, and sting hard! Wives! They are a unique species. You should hear Madame Lucille on the desirability of complete honesty between man and wife. Three times she has agreed to divorce him and three times she fell conveniently ill and Charles could not possibly leave her. Every time he fell for it, too!"

"It seems to me, Ilona, your Charles lacks something."

"I'll say he does. All men do. You know what they lack? Moral courage. And they are so greedy, on top of that. They want a representative wife and a smoothly run home for their official existence, and a loving and adoring woman for their private lives."

"And with all that—you still love him?" I smiled.

"Wouldn't you?"

"I guess so. I cannot judge. I have very little experience in matters of love. But I do think that if David

were here in London with his wife and that he also loved me 'as your Charles loves you, I should not have the strength to fight her."

"Then you don't love him!"

"Yes, *I* do. Oh, I could fight for him. I could fight him out of some—some misery—for instance a concentration camp. I could fight for his life if he were ill. But I think I could never fight a wife. You can. You, if you think you will eventually win—fight ! Fight for all you're worth. There is so little happiness in this blasted world!"

Naturally I went to all Ilona's concerts. The houses were packed every time and Ilona was in splendid form. The public roared and yelled and cheered, and I wondered why the English were denounced the world over as unmusical and not capable of open enthusiasm. I begin to believe that it is the Englishmen's fault that the rest of the world accuses them of so many lacks and credits them with so few traits of grandness. They are too modest. Or is it that they are desperately arrogant? No—don't let's go into that again!

In spite of the fact that Ilona had become a good deal wiser and a little sadder since our schooldays, her presence in London was a lovely interlude, and when she left for Paris ("to face the music without harmony" as she called her triangle affair) I felt a keen sense of loss. Lady Lankey asked me to keep in touch with her. She thought I was a little lonely and should meet some people. I actually spent Christmas Day at her house, after having been all by myself the previous night, Christmas Eve, a date which German grown-ups and children alike look to as the most beautiful night in the whole year. It had been the Christian day of remembrance and rejoicing, and it had also been a typically German festival of family life with exchanges of tokens of love. And while I sat in my basement room, eating something out of a tin, I resolved never to let the twenty-fourth of December touch my heart again. I was no Christian, nor did I feel a German any longer. But

with all my grim determination to wipe out everything that might stir sentimental memories, I felt damnably lonely. *Silent Night—Holy Night*, the most wonderful song in the German language, had become mockery. There they were hailing their new messiah, a nasty-looking man with a shrieking voice—and with that very action turned their backs upon their Saviour. I wondered if in any German's heart doubts arose when he stood under his Christmas tree, and if he realised that he were crucifying Christ over again every day !

The end of that year also marked the end of my apathy. Before New Year's Eve I received a letter from Messrs Kay & Powell to the effect that we should meet on the second of January to discuss my suggestion, which, in principle, they agreed to accept. They also thought they had found the suitable adapter for me. I was naturally overjoyed, and for the rest of the day thought gratefully and intensely of my father, who even from his grave provided for me. And with what money I might make I was resolved to go to Prague and join Sybille. Much as I wished to remain in England, I began to realise that I should never be able to work effectively against the Nazis from this peace-minded island.

It was Sybille herself who dispersed my ambitious dreams. I had a letter from her on New Year's Day thanking me for my offer of help, but turning it down flatly.

"I know you've got guts and moral courage, but this job demands more and far different things. You are much too honest and too impulsive and haven't the necessary toughness. You've got to tackle greedy, hard-boiled Nazis with skill and with your wits about you. And, thank God for it, you blissfully lack these amenities ! I can almost visualise you smacking a brown-shirt's face without much hesitation when he names his price for saving another man's life. No, Reny dear. You have different qualities—you are a good and honest enough fighter, but all the time a

better soldier than a diplomat. You have an excellent brain but you live by your emotions. Stay where you are, and use your pen and your passion and your powers of honest speech and try to rouse every Britisher you can get hold of."

I sat down and swore. I took my fountain pen and there and then wrote a furious letter to my good friend Sybille, who dared to doubt my ability to do exactly what she did. I was no diplomat? I'd show her! And then my pen stopped almost by itself, and I laughed. Yes, Sybille, you are right. If I were a diplomat I shouldn't sit here and blaze away at you. Rouse every Briton I could get hold of? Sybille dear, how little you know! You can't rouse a Briton by just talking at him. And you don't get hold of them.

I revised my tone considerably and told Sybille that if she could think of anything specific I might do, would she please let me know at once. I gave her a fairly humorous pen-picture of London, mentioned Ilona and her parental Mayfair palace, and told her about Messrs Kay & Powell. And I ended with the hope that some time, somewhere, we might meet again.

Kay, Powell and myself sat together on the second of January and discussed at great length the character and possibilities of the novel *The Man Who Came Back*. We were not quite alone, for there sat, in a far-away corner of the room, a little middle-aged man, whose name I had understood to be either Bray or Gray. Mr Powell as well as Mr Kay addressed him on several occasions: didn't he agree?—wasn't that good?—would it not be the best? And invariably the gentleman nodded. I took him to be either their publicity agent (in which case he seemed somewhat too vague) or one of their technical staff (in which case they wouldn't really ask his opinion on matters of literary importance). I was finally enlightened—the man was my self-appointed agent. He had dealt with my father's former book as the middleman between Keller in

Berlin and Messrs Kay & Powell in London. For the life of me I couldn't see what he was doing there! But Mr Kay informed me that it was customary in England to have an agent and Mr Bray—or Gray—had also succeeded in finding the right man for our adaptation. I was amazed that such big men as Powell and Kay needed such a mousy little creature to find them what they needed. Shortly before we finished our interview I asked who they had selected to translate the story. It was a Mr Theodore Wright, and Powell thought "it might be a good idea if I got to know him personally."

"But of course, I must meet him personally. How else can we collaborate?"

This was the moment for which Mr Bray—or Gray—had waited.

"I thought you might put the story down in German, as it were, and send it along to me. I should then forward it to Wright."

"That's no way to collaborate!" I exclaimed. "We must get together and discuss the thing."

"We have discussed everything," answered the agent cheerfully. "You go ahead with the German version. I'll do the rest."

"I refuse!" I looked from Kay to Powell and back. They both smiled but seemed quite uninterested. The matter was now in the hands of the agent. "Where is this Mr Wright? I shall get in touch with him myself."

"I'm afraid that's not done! But if you insist I shall arrange for a luncheon meeting for the three of us."

I was just about to mention that he, Mr Gray—or Bray, was quite superfluous, when I remembered to count twenty.

The matter of payment was not discussed. Powell informed me that he would forward the contract to Mr Wright and in due course send him a cheque, and after that gentleman's fee had been deducted I should have a nice little sum to go on with.

This time I only counted five and then burst out:

"What does Mr Bray deduct 10 per cent, for?"

"Mr Gray is your agent, Miss Feldt. He handled your father over here, and since this story is your late father's he is entitled to his 10 per cent."

"I see," said I—and didn't.

However much I disliked this Mr Gray for insinuating himself between my publishers and myself without having done a stroke of work, I was somewhat appeased by his finding Theodore Wright. A more delightful and intelligent man I had never met, and I was therefore reconciled with the fact that he was to take the lion's share of our royalties. Neither he nor I took much notice of "our agent" at that first meeting. Wright had been all over Europe in his time and we shared many views and likings. I was looking forward to our work together, and he suggested that we should spend a whole evening at his flat or mine (I quickly said *his*), to go right into the matter. When we did meet at his place in Chelsea it was a black day. It was the day when the Saar had voted herself back into the German Reich. Wright was as disgusted as I was.

"Of course the whole thing was a set-up! That fellow gets away with too much!" he cried angrily.

"This is nothing. He'll get away with more than that. You ought to read *Mein Kampf*, unabridged German version, Wright; you'll see that he means business."

"The blighter ought to be tried by the League of Nations for disturbing the peace. Any poor beggar who accosts his neighbour in the street goes to jail, yet this rat kills and molests thousands of harmless people and is being hailed. Phew!"

"It certainly does my heart good to hear an Englishman talk like that."

"Well—let's try to forget about him right now and go to work. I say, you know, your father was a fine writer. I—I am mighty proud to do this. ..." And he nearly choked, and blushed furiously.

I came home from this first meeting elated and delighted.

I lit my gas-fire, made some strong coffee, put my bedside lamp on the table, and began to work. Now and then I had to dig deep into my memory for a certain sequence or the name of a person. But it all came back to me by and by, and I felt my father's presence and inspiration urging me on—helping. A great, warm wave of wistful happiness swept me, and it occurs to me only now that never for one moment did I remember the man who had actually portrayed the hero of this story—Joergen Andersen. What had Ilona said? The artist is married to his art. . . . But, damn it, I was no artist. I only tried to sew a garment together which my father had woven and cut out.

At five-to-nine Mrs Ralston called me for the news. It contained a lot about this plebiscite and how the people of the Saar were delirious with joy to be back with their fatherland.

"I'll bet yer they'll find out a thing or two!" said Mrs Ralston. And when it was said that hundreds of arrests had already taken place and people had fled over the frontiers into France, she cried fiercely: "That there raving lunatic will one day meet an unsavoury end, mark my words I 'Ere's the postman knocking. Bet you it's nothing but bills and no cheques for either of us. Never mind, dearie—keep grinning, that's what I always says."

With this bit of philosophy she lurched out of the room, only to return a few seconds later with a bundle of letters. I had one from Christel and one of the rare communications from Moske. I read ChristePs letter first. She told me about her work at the hospital and how Philipp (her surgeon) was working for a professorship. They would get married as soon as he was settled at the University. That, however, would take over two years. Meantime they lived together and worked together and were happy. And what about me? Why didn't I come to Spain?

I felt guilty. I still owed Christel some money and made up my mind to return it immediately. Kay & Powell had sent their cheque.

And then came a moment I never forget. It seemed to mark the end of something, yet it only marked a beginning. The news was finished by now and I heard the announcer's voice:

"... they will start their programme with Tchaikovski's *1812 Symphony*"

"Lovely," said I, and tore open Moske's letter. The impressive opening bars of the symphony will for ever be connected for me with one sentence, that stuck out of Moske's letter as though written in red ink;

"... and so poor old David is in jail!"

Through a haze I heard two things at once: the symphony and Mrs Ralston's sympathetic voice: "'Ere, dearie, whatever is the matter? You look upset."

"They have arrested a friend of mine."

"Well, I never! Whatever for?"_r

"He is a well-known solicitor in Berlin and tried to help a Jewish friend to get some money out of the country. He was denounced and arrested. David—David in jail!"

"Well, I never! 'Ave another cup of tea, dearie, and cheer up. If 'e's a solcetair 'e'll find ways and means to get hisself out!"

"The matter is complicated, writes my friend, by the fact that they have discovered that David had a Jewish grandmother."

"What's that got to do with it?" marvelled Mrs Ralston. "Lots of people have Jewish grandmothers and don't go to jail. Well, I daresay they're downright wicked. That's what they are!"

And to the accompaniment of Tchaikovski's stirring music I read on:

"Like the light-hearted fool he is he thought he was immune. Now they have got the boy. Well, blast him, it serves him right. Why didn't he leave Germany like any decent-minded person on 30th January 1933? Anyway, all that is needed is hard cash. His own money is, of

course, confiscated. That's how those b——s feed their Party funds! And Felix, so my informant tells me, proves a failure. She's scared stiff. Silly little idiot! Never liked the gal. The old Hartmans have lost their heads completely and dare not move. Paralysed with terror! And, openly, nothing can be done. But under cover hard cash will get him out. I am willing to put down 1000 marks. More I can't do. Got my family to think of. But another 2000 will do the trick. Then the boy would be assisted to the Austrian or Czech frontier. We must find somebody who'll cough up 2000 M. or £100. Sterling is favoured by those swine. And the next step is to inform somebody at the Austrian or Czech frontier. ..."

I covered my face. Two thousand marks or one hundred pounds! My head whirled. David—oh, David! you've got to come out. David, the laughing boy, fleeing out of Germany with the help of bribed officials and other people's money. David behind bars! I was on the verge of going mad. From the wireless came the stirring fortissimo of the last movement. That great medley of national anthems with the maddening bells ringing. . . . *Allans! enfants de la Patrie.* . . the Russian anthem . . . war . . . bells. . . I sat up. My God! why does not Europe march on this hell across the Channel! Now, now, before it's too late!

I staggered from the room with the sound of those anthems ringing in my ears and raced down to my own room. And then came the relieving tears.

* * *

What I should have never done for myself I dared to do for David. Anxiety on behalf of another human being and the—no doubt—egotistical urge to help opens in a person hitherto unknown resources of vitality, strength, and even audacity. I actually succeeded in making Kay & Powell hand over the sum of a hundred and fifty pounds to our grizzly Mr Gray as advance royalties for the book

The Man Who Came Home; I also persuaded Wright to agree to wait for his share until the book should begin to sell. I cabled the necessary hundred pounds off to Moske and sent a letter-telegram to Sybille urging her to get David safely across the frontier. Finally, with an odd thirty pounds over (Gray had deducted his commission at the source), I went to Cook's and booked my passage to the Continent. A round-about way from London to Vienna via Basle! But I could not risk crossing the German frontier at any point. The clerk at Cook's tried to argue me into flying. "Madam, you will save so much time." Yes, yes—but I was considerably better off for time than for money.

Sybille wired back that I should keep calm. She had already the wheels turning for David's getting safely into Austria. The Czech frontiers were at present too heavily guarded and one had to be careful. Hence Vienna! Moske also sent a telegram, reassuring me that things were moving and that David would, with luck, be in Vienna during the first week in March.

I had all my papers ready—including my re-enter permit from the British authorities. I had a large proportion of father's book delivered to Wright to go ahead with; I had written to Ilona in Paris to await me at the Gare St-Lazare and spend with me the one hour between my arrival and my departure from the Gare de l'Est. It was exactly forty-eight hours before I was due to leave London that the afternoon mail brought a large, official-looking envelope on which was die-stamped the name and address of the sender: The German Embassy, Carlton House Terrace, W.

I didn't feel so good when I finally stopped twisting the letter between my hands and proceeded to open it. It contained a very short note signed by the Ambassador himself:

"Madam, the German Government have decided to expatriate you as from 1st January 1935, since you are considered a political undesirable. We must ask you to

forward to us without delay your German passport or any other documents you may hold identifying you as a German subject. Heil Hitler."

My first reaction was delight. Thank God, I was rid of my German nationality. But then I realised that I was now without a valid document with which to travel. I pondered if I could risk using the passport in spite of its invalidity, but decided against that. Those efficient devils might have got wind of my intention to go abroad and might have notified the frontier guards. On the other hand, I had made up my mind to go to Vienna. I rang Wright for his advice. He congratulated me profusely on being stateless.

"Go to the Home Office at once and ask for an International Travel Paper. Though what the blazes you want to run off to Vienna for beats me. Let the bloke come to London. However, that's your very personal affair! Ah—love's young dream! No, old girl, don't say anything—between you and me—although I think you're stark staring mad—I'd do exactly the same. Bless you!"

I know I was being mad, but I did so want to be there when David arrived. I had vague and muddled ideas that he might need me. I also knew that he would not have the necessary funds to come to England, for by now you had to prove that you had sufficient means to keep you going before you were allowed in by that usually very kind but heartily feared personage: H.M. Officer of Immigration!

I spent the short time at my disposal racing from place to place—Home Office, Foreign Office, Bow Street Police, French Consulate and again the Home Office, to obtain the documents necessary for a person who has been declared stateless by his or her Government. And during my hurried walks along Whitehall I pondered over what a lot of trouble it involved to make a journey if one was unlucky enough to have been born a German of Jewish faith. I mused that when God made the world He certainly did not

bother about creating so many frontiers. That stupidity, as so many others, was left for mankind to invent.

While the English authorities were mostly kind and helpful, the "charming" French made a hell of a fuss before they granted me the permission to travel through their country in a train. How anxious they were lest this German-born refugee should leave the train and commit a vicious act of sabotage on their soil! I wish to goodness they had been somewhat more cautious about the real trouble-makers who came across the Rhine "on business" without being troubled and who later on made the excellent Fifth Column!

But one day I actually did sit in that train which bore me away from Calais and raced down to Switzerland and Austria—and David. Yes, I was on the way to David. What a pilgrimage this hurried journey started! The pilgrimage to David's heart. I never slept a wink all the way from Paris to Basle. I repeated the same questions in my mind over and over again: "Where was David?" "Had they succeeded?" "What if they hadn't?" Sometimes my heart stood still with terror that everything might have fallen through.

At dinner—side by side with important and slightly bored-looking international travellers—I could not help smiling rather wistfully at the thought of how I had always craved to make long journeys and how different the aim of this trip was compared with those of my travel-fever dreams.

At six o'clock in the morning I stepped off the train at Basle to stretch my limbs and have a cup of coffee at the station buffet. It was March the second, the day after the formal occupation of the Saar by the Germans. The early morning paper editions were out and there were large headlines: "Die Saar ist deutsch!" (The Saar is German.) "And I am no longer!" was my main reaction.

Another twelve hours' journey brought me to a cold

Vienna, where torrents of rain came splashing down from the night sky. When I emerged from the station and crossed over to my little hotel I remembered a very different Vienna of not so long ago, where David and I had drunk new wine and eaten pork and black bread.

"You are young. ... I am tight. ... I like your eyes, they're hazel."

"Shut up," I said to myself, and entered the lobby of the little private hotel which I had named to Sybille as my Vienna address. A letter from her awaited me at the reception desk, giving the jubilant news that the three thousand marks had done the trick and that David was out of jail and on his way. By car, on foot, or by bicycle, any way he could. I marvelled at the brilliant organisation these fanatical Anti-Hitlerites had in operation and how they risked their freedom, nay their very lives, to help another human being out of the brown hell. The bribe never went to any one of these silent underground heroes. It went to the Nazi officials in the camps, in the prisons, and at the frontiers. The real saviours worked for no other reward but the knowledge that they had snatched one more life from under the nose of the German secret police.

Sybille was sorry that she could not hop over to Vienna. But it was too dangerous for her to move out of Czechoslovakia just yet. She did not trust the Austrians implicitly. There were, according to her information, too many secret admirers of the Nazi system in Austria. I could hardly believe that. The people I talked to during those two torturous days before David's arrival seemed to hate Hitler and all he stood for ardently, and made no bones about it. It makes me shudder to think that, later on, the atrocities and sadistic excesses which took place in "gay Vienna" were almost unrivalled when Hitler finally marched in and performed the Anschluss.

It was the evening of March the fourth, the date Sybille had indicated as the most likely one for David to arrive. I had had coffee somewhere near my hotel and had come

back and sat in the lounge, when the swing door, which I incessantly watched, moved, and a tiny, ugly creature wrapped in a huge travelling ulster, and with a cloth cap on his head, entered, screwed up his neck and let his beady eyes roam the room. Finally he shot towards my table and snapped:

"Well, you blasted, romantic little idiot, here we both are, and wait for the world's greatest nuisance to put in an appearance."

"Goliath!" I jumped up and squeezed his hand. "Grand of you to come."

"Grand nothing! You probably curse me for butting in. However, I always believed in getting my money's worth. I don't spit out a thousand marks and then let everybody else have the fun. Well, where's the blighter?"

"Hasn't arrived yet."

"Never was punctual, little brute. Never mind. Here, waiter, bring me a double whisky. Neat. Make it two. You, young woman, look as though you were about to pass-out any moment now. Nice of you to be so concerned about your late father's solicitor." He grinned, and I grinned back.

"Well, if there's another room in this ancient shack I'll take it. Usually stay at the Bristol. Might as well be economical now. What's doing in London? And why did your father not invest his money with Vickers as I told him? You'd be in clover now. I hear they pay about——Hello!—looks like the prodigal partner. Here, steady—I loathe blubbering females. ..."

David stood undecided near the swing door and looked nervously about him. He hadn't spotted us yet, as we were at the far end of the hall.

He looked a little tired and pale, but unharmed, and he had somehow managed to be decently dressed in a grey suit and mackintosh, with a soft grey felt hat. And how had he managed to be shaved? And why do I notice all these idiotic details? He's seen us and he grins, and he

comes striding towards our table and blurts out: "Well, here I am!"

"So we see," said Moske dryly.

I managed a half-choked "Hello, David. . . ."

"Renate—my word, it's good to see you! Both of you."

"Don't exaggerate, David," said Goliath, with a hideous grimace. "Anyway, what'll you have?"

"A bath," said David surprisingly.

* * *

We talked right through our evening meal, which we took at a small Bulgarian restaurant off the beaten track; we talked afterwards in the little bar of our hotel; we talked, sometimes singly but mostly in chorus; later on upstairs in my room until after one in the morning. At that time Moske yawned with much noise and decided to hit the hay; but David and I ordered more coffee and went on talking until far past three. My days in Holland—his arrest—my journey to England—his sitting in jail—my successful interview with Powell & Kay—his waiting for somebody to make a move—my work with Wright—his flight out of jail with the help of bribed warders and several more bribed Party members—my journey to Vienna—his journey to Vienna. . . HOW different were the journeys. But the aim was the same. Pity, David, it did not remain that way. . . .

And there in that ugly, cold little hotel bedroom, drinking excellent coffee and smoking innumerable cigarettes, in the hours between night and day, under the fantastic circumstances the barrier that had always towered between us seemed to break down at last. It was so much easier to be free and unself-conscious with a David in need of help and sympathy than with a David of wealth and no problems. That might sound strange, for it is said that men when they are helpless and on the ground floor are disgruntled and angry and arrogant, because they hate

sympathy and assistance from a female. But perhaps that only applies to a female they're in love with. This was a David who was much nearer to me than the elegant, easy-going young solicitor of former days. I was so elated, so happy to have been part of the complicated machinery that worked for his release, and like the fool I still was then I seriously believed this sort of thing might suddenly strike a flame in David's heart for me. I mistook his joy to be free for joy to be with me. I misjudged the warmth with which he thanked me for my help, taking it for a feeling different from that of simple gratitude. I did, in fact, what every woman in love does, and always will do—I misinterpreted everything he said or did by the medium of wishful thinking!

And what didn't I do to that harmless, gentle kiss he pressed on my forehead when he left my room in the small hours of the morning. I twisted it into a passionate declaration of love. And that he did leave my room at all—well—that, of course, was his chivalry! Thank God for my wealth of imagination.

Moske only stayed until after lunch the next day. We had that meal at an old-fashioned little beer-house. Goliath wanted to know David's plans, and I hung on David's words, for I hoped that he would express the wish to come to England. Oh, I knew all the difficulties, but I also knew that I would move heaven and earth to overcome them somehow. I would even approach Sir Anthony Lankey, whom I had met several times at his home and whom I had found a vague, taciturn man, but nevertheless a man of a thousand connections.

But David declared right out that he would like to stay in Vienna.

"I know the language, and I also remember the names of one or two chaps who might help. Golly, I must get some sort of news to my old people at home, and most of all to Felix. Must be careful though—I don't want the gal to get into trouble. There'll be quite a bit of a

hullabaloo when they find out this bird has flown! But, thank God, my parents know nothing about it and will be completely at their ease when the questioning starts. And Felix—well, she'll know what to say, I bet."

Oh yes—there was Felix. David was free in one way. But not in all ways.

"She hasn't shown any overwhelming eagerness to get you out," said Moske quite calmly. "That girl married you only for richer and better and in health. She conveniently left out the other halves of the marriage oath."

David laughed.

"Don't blame Felix for getting the wind up, with her husband suddenly in prison and also in possession of a hitherto harmless Jewish grandmother. When things quieten down she'll probably do everything to join me here."

There was a March wind blowing and I grew cold, and I must have looked a bit of a wet blanket, for Moske shouted at me:

"And you, young lady, get back to your island quickly. You've done your bit of girl-guiding and now beat it. Go home and sit down and finish your splendid job, which you were uncommonly lucky to get, and see that you marry an honest-to-goodness Englishman, which will give you both a decent husband and a nationality you needn't be ashamed of."

"I'll do my best," I said, and was furious because I felt tears rising to my eyes.

David and I saw Moske off at the station. He was impatient to get home to his family and his cosy house. He walked up and down the platform like an angry gnome. Something annoyed him. When the train eventually steamed into the station, and Moske had found his compartment with much cursing and swearing, and stood by the open window, he scowled down:

"Young David, I wonder which of the two of you is the greater idiot, this hot-headed female who gets herself

into debt and travels across half Europe to meet you here, or you who don't seem to realise why she did it, blast you. Well, thank God, the train's moving and I go back to my sane old woman, who has the vilest temper under the sun but a lot of common sense. Good-bye and good luck, and don't stand there looking like a couple of whipped dogs. And you, Renate Feldt—go home. Meaning England!"

We did remain standing there, the two of us, until the train was out of sight. And then David suddenly put his hand under my chin and raised my head:

"What did he mean? Why did you do it?"

"Why—did I—well—to help an old friend—a fellow-refugee."

I turned abruptly and walked from the platform. But David caught up with me just before I passed through the barrier to surrender my platform ticket.

"Why did you?"

"I told you I"

"Because—you love me?"

"Please, David, leave me alone."

"Answer me, Renate—please do!"

"Don't worry me, David."

"You are worrying me."

"Would you two love-birds mind finishing your game outside the station? You're holding up the traffic!" said an elderly station official with a mock frown. I thrust the ticket into his palm and ran.

* * *

I had never known how homely and comfortable the sight of a miserably furnished basement room in Paddington can be, when you know it's home to you. There was safety in my little room, security in those odd pieces of old, ramshackle furniture, and comfort in my warm-hearted, common-sense, earthy Mrs Ralston, with her wireless and her eternal tea. She welcomed me back as

though I were a long-lost sister who had escaped grave dangers (maybe I had and didn't know), and in her delight to see me unharmed and all in one piece she dropped more aitches than usual. With the shrewdness and the healthy instinct of the ordinary, unpampered human being she sensed that my journey had not been a hundred per cent, successful.

"Well, dearie," she said, "'ere you are back and 'ere you oughter stay put. Gallivanting abaht in them foreign parts only gives you a 'eadache. Nah your boy's safe—that's all what matters. And you sit right dahn and finish orf that there tale. And one day you'll meet a nice local boy, and I bet yer you'll make a pretty good wife for someone."

It was curious how the cynical old Moske and the straight and simple Mrs Ralston gave me exactly the same advice.

Downstairs in my weatherbeaten, brown leather-cum-velvet armchair, by the bluish flame of the gas-heater and the dim light of my bedside lamp, I had a serious talk with myself, in which the questions recurred:

"Renate, why did you go to Vienna? Didn't you expect something for yourself? Were you just the helpful fellow-emigrant or were you a romantic idiot with fancy notions? Didn't you make this serious, vital, universal problem of Hitler's persecution of a people a means by which to fulfil a cherished dream? Didn't, in fact, this arrest of David come in handy? Wasn't the idea really to prove to the man you love that you were ready and willing to do that and more for him? Haven't you a greater job to do than to hanker after a married man? Is this the way to set about avenging your father's murder? You are not very great, Renate Feldt I"

I buried my face in my hands and moaned back: "I have never pretended to be great. Sybille is great—Christel is great in her way—but I'm not great. I'm in love, and what woman is great when she's in love? I felt sadly in need

of somebody to talk to, and since there was none I sat down and poured my heart out to Sybille. Unconsciously I must have hoped that she would answer coldly, scathingly, reproving me and urging me on. But when, only three days after, her reply came, I was surprised.

"I read your self-destructive letter several times, child, and I am distressed about your unhappiness. You bemoan the fact that you are not doing the same, for instance, as I am doing now. Or that you have no vocation like your friend Christine and that you follow your natural instinct of helping the man you love. We are not all alike, Renate dear, we couldn't be. If we were—Hitler would be right. A uniformed mass of humanity marching along dully—all the same route. No; we may have the common aim to destroy that very idea, but we must do it each in our individual way. You have performed a great feat by getting those publishers to print your father's fine story in English. You have been instrumental in helping one more innocent human being out of Germany. And—last not least—you are hating. Hating good and hard and honestly. And you can only hate like that because you can also love like that! Your job is not to heal sick children, or to agitate the workers, or to play the piano like your friend Ilona. But just the same you are, what we all are, a young woman of Europe, who will, in her own way, remain faithful to the idea. Carry on as you are doing now. Work with your brains, work with your heart, and go on loving your David until another man, a free man, crosses your path. But self-reproaches are neither justified nor helpful. I shall finish my letter with our common battle-cry: Young woman of Europe—use your abilities. That means: be what you are a hundred per cent."

And so I settled down again to the job at hand. I tried to forget David, but he always managed to creep back into my mind by writing sweet and long letters. He repeated his gratitude in every one of them:

"I find no words to express what I feel. I had always crowds of people around me whom I called friends. But now I know for the first time the meaning of the word. I think I took your help and your coming here to meet me much too much for granted. Only now do I realise what you did for me. I have got in touch with several people here and hope for some job in the near future. And then I shall repay every penny of my debt to you. Up to that time I can only say, 'Renate, you are great.'"

No, David dear, we—that is I and myself—have just decided that I'm not!

What with all my advance royalties spent, and debts to repay, I was in a bit of a financial mess, as usual. This state of affairs is like a frock I can't get rid off and put on over and over again because somehow it seems to fit me better than all my other ones. It was my collaborator and good friend, Theodore Wright, who helped me out by getting me odd jobs of typing and translating. With my expatriation I had automatically become a foreign resident and was now entitled to do work, paid and unpaid! But I was not very well suited for a job in an office, since I lacked the knowledge of English shorthand, and my English, anyhow, was not really good enough. The little jobs I did do paid for my bare necessities, but did not pay my debt of nearly ninety pounds to Wright. He did not worry me, but I felt unhappy about it.

Powell & Kay had decided that the book should be an early autumn publication, and both Wright and I worked hard to get it ready by the end of May, to give the publishers ample time for their preparations.

It had hardly ever occurred to me that I led a lonely and unsociable life and that, after eighteen months in England, I hardly knew any English people apart from those I worked with, and the Lankeys. Mrs Ralston and Wright between them had taught me the language, which I now spoke with partly an Oxford and partly a Cockney flavour. When I was not working or reading or writing letters at night, I

strolled through the park or went to a movie, and it was during a film that the lonesomeness of the life I did lead was brought home to me. On one particularly wet summer night I happened to see a film on whose credit titles I read: "Story and dialogue by Vladimir Populenski." I realised then that my old boss was in Hollywood and I rejoiced. Even without having read his name on the screen I would have recognised the Populenski touch in that film. It was a crazy, haywire, light-winged comedy packed with witticisms and sarcasm. I laughed a lot and I also cried a lot in that Harrow Road cinema. I laughed at Populenski's mad ideas and cried at the memory of those happy, hard-working days in Berlin. His party—David the conversationalist—my father and Geldern. Gone—gone were those days, wiped out—strangled. Where were all those gay, care-free people of that evening? Emigrated? Dead? Or worse—turned Nazi? A terrific sense of loneliness overwhelmed me in the middle of a hilariously funny scene, and if anybody had seen me weeping unrestrainedly, while the rest of the audience rocked with laughter, they must have thought me very, very mad.

The bright lights of my existence were the letters from my friends, especially those from Christel. She worked hard and enjoyed it tremendously. She would not hear of my repaying the money I owed her and thought that I had done right to spend every penny I could lay hands on for David.

"I should do the same for Philippe if need be. In fact I would cheerfully commit daylight robbery. Sometimes I wonder if our menfolk are half as hardy and ready for sacrifice as we females of this blessed age. I do wish you and I could get together and yarn a whole night through."

Well, Christel—we are doing that these days. But we did not get together for a holiday. You came away because again bombs drove you out of your home, as they did in your childhood days. This time not bombs on Essen,

but bombs on Barcelona. Bombs—bombs—bombs. . . . And here they are again. Can't you ever get away from bombs, old girl? Perhaps you should go to a South Sea island, but who knows whether in our crazy days the headlines will not one day announce: "Bombs on Hawaii"?

In the beginning of June, Wright and I celebrated in a Soho restaurant, over an excellent meal and a bottle of wine, the completion of our job. He was very pleased with it.

"Mind, if we are lucky we may sell the film rights of the English version. After all, it was intended as a picture."

"What a life-saver that would be I" I sighed, thinking of my financial state.

"Well, little Gray has to get busy on it."

"Will he again have to muscle-in?"

Wright grinned.

"Didn't you read your contract?"

"I never do read things like that."

"Well, you'd better start. It says that he is entitled to handle the film, theatrical and mechanical rights. And—by the way—that I get half of what you get, seeing that I did the English version."

"That's only fair. But Grizzlybear—well, I'm damned I"

"You dislike him?" Wright's eyes twinkled. Obviously there was not much love lost between him and his agent.

"I dislike all people who do nothing and make money out of it."

"Good heavens, then you must dislike a large section of the population of our world."

"Well, our world is not exartly.an ideal place, to live in,"

"I find it at times somewhat tedious, but, taking it by and large, rather amusing. It's only chaps like Musso and Hitler and the like who spoil the fun. Those brutes are so damnably intent !They have no sense of humour. And God help any nation who is ruled by men without a sense of humour!"

"And God help all the other nations, too. Theodore, will there be another war?"

"Hope not. Rotten business. And the next war will be bloodier than any other. Because the civilian population will be in the front line. Although," he mused, "there is a certain amount of consolation in the thought that not only the flower of the male youth will be killed and afterwards the country will be full of mourning women."

"There is little consolation for me in the thought that innocent women and children should be blasted out of existence."

"No—if it can be prevented."

"It could be if the Western Powers would either warn Germany or let her have it."

"That would turn the Democracies into aggressors. That's quite against their principles."

"Are they going to wait until the other fellow knocks them cold first?"

"They might have to. Don't forget, Renate—we only live a few score years—but history will record for centuries to come. And they must not say: England became an unprovoked aggressor."

"Why not?"

"That, my dear, I cannot say!" answered Wright, with a smile. I wondered how serious he was. One never knew with these Englishmen.

While the book was being set up and printed, and our publishers worked out a good scheme for publicity, I had little to do and, consequently, very little cash. Wright had retired into his country cottage to adapt an Austrian play. In July Vilma Lankey wrote inviting me down to their country house in Bucks, and I wrote back thanking her very much, but regretting that I was unable to come since work kept me in London. I didn't like to tell her that I hadn't the fare to Twelvetrees and back. I asked her if I might come another week-end when work was not so plentiful. She answered by return of post, and with her fine sense of reality and her great tact she added:

"Let me know in good time which week-end will suit you. Since my husband comes down every Friday by car you can come along with him, thus saving yourself a tedious and hot train journey. He could take you back on Monday."

I longed for a change, but I let several weeks go by before I eventually wrote to Lady Lankey. And one fine hot Friday afternoon in August Sir Anthony's chauffeur caused a small sensation in our mean little Paddington street by driving up in a huge black Daimler and carrying out my small suitcase and opening the car door for me and saying audibly:

"Straight ahead, Sir Anthony?"

The Daimler, the liveried chauffeur, and the invisible "Sir" much impressed my immediate neighbours. These dear people who lived all their lives in squalid uniformness beamed through their front bay-windows without a trace of envy or class-consciousness. They like their aristocracy and their big-wigs as much as they like their blazing kitchen fires, their Sunday joint, and their Saturday-night movies; and as little as any one of these hard-working women would ever dream of sharing the life of a Garbo, whom they adored on the screen, did they think of wanting a slice of Sir Anthony Lankey's luxurious existence.

I enjoyed the three days at Twelvetreets as much as anyone would in my position. I fell in love with the English countryside, which was just as lovely as Aunt Mary had described it to me almost twenty years ago. And with a pang I realised how sad it is for a girl to know that she can remember something that had happened so long as twenty years ago.

If I had hoped for a more intimate acquaintanceship with Sir Anthony I was mistaken. He was more taciturn, more vague, than ever before, and when I tried one night to draw him into a political discussion he gestured impatiently:

"Who wants to be reminded of politics on an evening like this! Look through that window over there, Miss

Feldt, and tell me if that beautiful view is not much more important than all the goings-on in Germany."

"Yes, Sir Anthony, it is. But if you want to preserve it you must remember the goings-on in Germany. They are arming, Sir Anthony, arming at top speed. And when the Germans are arming—well!"

"You are one of those grim youngsters," he said, with a smile, "who think too much of the capabilities of the other fellow. They can't do a thing to England. And should the need arise, we'll be ready. Meanwhile I think Hitler has no quarrel with England."

"But I think England should have a quarrel with Hitler," intervened Lady Lankey. "Those barbarians ought to be stopped."

"My dear Vilma, how can we? It is an entirely—what shall I say——"

"Internal affair?" I asked helpfully.

"Exactly," said Sir Anthony, much relieved that the right word had been found. "And now let's listen to the nine-o'clock news."

"I thought you did not wish to be reminded of politics," laughed Lady Lankey, and switched on the wireless.

"Certainly not. I want to hear the sports bulletin."

* * *

I believe that I broke my own record in "fluctuating finances" by being in quick succession extremely hard-up, quite well-off, and then completely on the rocks all within the relatively short period of one year.

Into my basement room—into the lower ground floor of my financial situation—one day fluttered the gilt-winged butterfly called "quick money." But like all butterflies it was shortlived, and alas! I am no collector who could pin the thing down and preserve it under glass.

Our grizzly Mr Gray had in his quiet but persistent manner succeeded in selling the film rights of my father's story once again, this time to a new, intellectually-minded

English company. The book itself was published to 'schedule and was well received by the Press. All this occurred in the autumn of 1935, what time Signor Mussolini felt himself threatened by the Ethiopians and decided to forestall any possible danger from that source by dropping civilised messages in the form of poison-gas bombs on the more or less defenceless population of Abyssinia. It was also the time when Hitler rubbed his hands because his brother-Fascist seemed to be fully occupied, and Berlin cast longing glances towards Mussolini-protected Austria.

Mrs Ralston and myself listened a lot to the wireless in those days, hearing the pros and cons about sanctions against the aggressor, and even more about the Dying Old Lady of Geneva. We looked at each other and thought much the same thoughts in different languages.

Maybe it is shameful to admit that, although one already felt the world racing towards a state of collective insecurity, I managed to forget, or rather suppress, all thoughts of the troubled waters of Europe for a time when Gray informed me that the film rights of our book were sold. The small but first-class company could of course not offer fantastic Hollywood prices, but they were prepared to pay us fifteen hundred pounds. Personally I did not care who bought the story and what they paid for it. The book as a book was my main concern, but I felt triumphant that what had been "forbidden" in Germany was to be started afresh in England. And I was more than pleased to be able to pay my debts and move from the shady side of this life's fortune over on to the sunny side. Wright did not bother much one way or the other. It meant seven hundred and fifty pounds for him and that was good enough. He was already deeply absorbed in his new job. After all the usual deductions, and paying my debts, I found myself in the possession of some five hundred pounds. I deposited these at a bank and went to the West End and had a gargantuan meal. Over dinner I figured out that five hundred pounds was equal to ten

thousand Reichsmarks; that my father would have had to write some two hundred articles to make that sum; that I would have had to work for four years and two months for Populenski to earn that much, and that I could live at the rate I was living now for nearly five years—if I were that sort of person. But I am not.

I sat straight down and wrote the exciting news to David, to Christel (including a cheque for fifty pounds), and to Sybille, and asked her if she could do with a sum of money for needy cases of refugees. And would she please not be offended or cynical about my offering money, since she had refused my actual help, and please not look down her nose at the "capitalist" who generously waved a cheque into the face of some wretched fellow-refugee.

Her reply came by return of post. Would I please send the money at once!

"You cannot imagine the misery of some of the people who come out of Germany, mostly with just the clothes they wear and not a penny to their name. And don't talk such utter rot about being a capitalist I. Anybody who does an honest job of work (and I consider literary work to be that, at least) is entitled to decent payment. And for God's sake sit down and read some literature about the ideas of Communism and don't consider us all as wild beasts who loathe everybody who possesses a few pounds I. On the contrary—we want the whole world to be paid adequately and decently for their work, whatever they may do, and only to do away with a group of useless good-for-nothing males and females who hold on to the money they never bothered to make, who artificially force up the prices of the world's markets by holding back production of some vital commodities. But enough of this lecture on economics! Loosen up whatever you can spare (but first get that coat of yours out of pawn, you idiot I), and if you feel like it, be frivolous, and come down to Prague for the Christmas holidays. You will probably go to Vienna first...."

I digested that letter carefully. I felt my blood tingling with excitement. Go to Prague and meet Sybille ! Go to Vienna and meet David! And not with only a few carefully counted pound notes, but a decent supply of cash! I felt reckless, frivolous, healthy, wealthy, and unwise !

"Go on with you!" said Mrs Ralston. "Why, there's plenty of lovely places to spend Christmas in in England. Go to Torquay or Bournemouth. Mind you, them big hotels have lovely dances and suchlike. Tscherslovakja! Well, I never I But I betyer it's that boy-lawyer in Vienna you're craving to see, eh?"

"I betyer," said I.

Lady Lankey informed me on the telephone that Ilona was to give two concerts in Vienna and several more in Budapest between now and New Year.

"I think she's booked for Vienna for the twenty-seventh of December. How lovely for you both!"

I was supremely happy in anticipation. David, Sybille, Ilona! If only Christel would join us too. What a reunion! There were, then, after all, things that even Hitler could not lay his cold hands on. Friendships and deep affections. Father—your daughter is recklessly happy. It's the way you wanted it! And it was such a short respite. I was so wise to take fortune's offerings—grasp them with both hands.

But before I left for the Continent there was the delicate and embarrassing job of giving Mrs Ralston notice. She took it with cheerful understanding and without a trace of offence.

"Sure you'll move into something brighter, dearie ! Why, I'd get rid of this rotten old house to-morrow if I could. But I ain't that lucky. It's them mortgages. Don't you worry, girlie. You find yourself a nice cosy little furnished flat, with a kitchenette and your own bathroom; but see to it that it's got a decent bed. The bed wasn't bad, though, was it?"

"No, Mrs Ralston, it was in fact very, very good. And

so were you! And if I should ever want to—may I come back and stay with you?"

"Do, dearie, by all means! I'd even chuck somebody else out for yer, dearie. Never had a nicer girl in the 'ousel. Talk abaht foreigners being narsty. Not harf they ain't! You come back here any old time. And mind, drop in fer tea once in awhile and tell us all abaht it!"

I parted from this grand woman with tears in my eyes. But there proved to be little need for all that sorrow. I was quickly enough back at her house. Meantime I found myself a charming little service flat not far from Lord's, and at last could relieve Uncle John Thistlehorn of my bookcases. The unpacking of these I postponed until after my return. I was terrified of the emotional strain, because the cases contained several "of my father's original manuscripts.

I arrived in Vienna on the twenty-second of December. This time it did not rain, but there was crisp, hard, gleaming snow, an icy wind, and a cold white moon. David was, of course, at the station, and I very nearly fell right into his arms, but checked myself and simply shook hands with him.

"Hey!—hey!—is that the way to greet your most devoted friend?"

He drew me into his arms and pressed me against his wet overcoat, and I felt that all the world with all her grim affairs was for the moment supremely unimportant, and that all that mattered were this wet overcoat and the two strong arms around me. David, my God, David, I loved you so very, very much!

The world around you may be blasted wide open—feelings may change and other people may push themselves between yourself and the past. But there are moments which one simply cannot and will not forget. Such a moment was our first dinner at the hotel, with you, David, sitting opposite me, beaming and bubbling over with

excitement at my good fortune. You seemed a little thinner, your eyes seemed somewhat larger, and I even spotted three grey hairs at your right temple. Your hands also moved about restlessly—you were altogether a little fidgety and nervy, David, not the composed, gay, cool customer of old. David, were you in trouble? Didn't you have that job you always wrote about? Were you, for the first time in your life, short of cash and too stupidly proud to admit it? What mattered, David; I had enough for both of us.

Oh, the fool I was! I know now that nothing is less likely to make a man love you than to offer him help. You don't give the fellow a chance to develop any possible genuine feeling for you by forcing him into eternal gratitude. No, Renate Feldt, you weren't terribly clever about David! You should have made him feel that it was you who needed help from a strong, silent man. But you infernal young woman of Europe who were brought up to be so independent of help—so used to face troubles and coping with them—you have forgotten how to play the helpless little woman. Because the young men of Europe weren't very strong and silent men. It took a grimy, overtired, grinning Yank, covered with bits of debris and with his hands bleeding, who burst into my life with as much vigour as the bombs that fell, to teach me a lesson in that respect. . . .

Yes, Tim, you are slowly creeping into my story. Although creeping is not exactly the right verb to use where you are concerned.

Meantime—it was not you, Tim—it was David. It was the winter of five years ago—and bombs were only falling on the Abyssinians and not yet on us. And David did not ask me: "What's eating you, girlie? Anything I can mend?" He, for his part, poured out his heart to me. And it was not in a shelter in Paddington—but in a cafe in Vienna, with an uncommonly decent little orchestra playing Strauss waltzes.

Yes, David had had several jobs—which was more than good luck in an impoverished and down-and-out Vienna. He had been in succession an accountant with a big firm, something in the legal department of another, and lastly sales manager for a small trading company. In the first case, after he had got the muddled books of the company into shape they had dispensed with his services; in the second case the firm had become insolvent, and the third job—well, he simply couldn't cope with it.

"So you're on the rocks!" I ventured.

"Not quite—but very nearly." He smiled a little wearily and my heart went out to him.

"No possibility of getting any of your money out of Germany?"

"Heavens, no I I'm lucky they didn't lock up my entire family. But since one or two pretty big pots were involved in that bribing business they hushed the whole thing up."

"And—and—what about your wife?" I fiddled with my cake on my plate until it looked an unsavoury mess.

"Felix?" He puffed a thick cloud into the air. "Well, thank goodness, she's all right. She doesn't write to me directly. She writes via Moske. That dear old scoundrel has actually invited me to come and stay with him. But that won't do. I must find something. I mean——"

I put my hand on his and said reassuringly:

"Don't worry, David, something will turn up. I wish you could come to England. . . . What with old Musso 'busy in East Africa, Hitler might put the screws on this country."

"Not a hope!" laughed David. "But mind, I have a possibility of starting something quite good. A man called Franz Paechter has bought a firm that was about to go under—something combining a chartered accountant and legal advice bureau for smaller firms who haven't got their own accountants and lawyers. He'd take me in as a partner for the legal side. I am actually looking into Austrian law these days. Care to meet the fellow?"

"Why not? What's the snag?"

"No real snag—only he wants a partner with some cash."

The orchestra played the overture of the *Fledermaus*, and I asked:

"How much?"

"Never mind that now. Let's forget the whole thing, shall we? Just for to-night. This music makes me itch to dance. How about it?"

If David wanted to dance—so of course did I. Trust David to know exactly the right place to go to ! And trust Vienna to have it! It was something between a restaurant, a smallish night-club, and a beer-house, with very good drinks and an excellent dance band. Those were the days of the "music that went round and round and came out here," to which tune somebody had written even more idiotic German lyrics than the original English ones. But it was fun. I danced with more self-assurance than years ago at Populenski's party. I told David about our Duke in Hollywood.

"That's exactly where the old boy belongs ! Good old Vladimir. Gosh—those were the days!"

"Hankering after the past?"

"A little."

Pity, I thought, that he was not as blissfully happy as I was right now. But women have a knack of putting their hearts between themselves and world affairs. And men just can't do that. I danced on in silence. David asked gently:

"Also hankering after the past?"

"No, hankering after a future — some sort of a future. ..."

"Oh, that'll come. That mess will blow over one day and we'll all start afresh."

"Would you ever go back to Germany?"

He hesitated. Then:

"I can't imagine it right now. I'm too fed-up with

those fanatical swine. But who knows, when the regime changes—maybe. . . ."

"David, never! This generation and the next are spoilt."

"Let's forget it, shall we?"

We danced nearly every dance and between them we had drinks and smoked.

"I love this, Renate—and so do you," said David softly.

"Do I look that miserable?" I chaffed him.

"On the contrary. Why? Do you usually look miserable when you love something?"

"You asked me that question before—a thousand years ago on the Cobenzl. Remember?"

"Oh yes—that night when I made such a fool of myself."

"Because you were being nice and charming? Is that so foolish?"

"No—no—it isn't that. But to you one must be nice in a different way, not just fool about and tell you silly things."

"But I love silly things."

"I don't believe that. You are so damned superior—so—how shall I say?—somehow so absolutely devoid of any sort of silliness."

"So that's what Europe has made of me? A grim, down-to-earth old maid."

"Old maid? Never ! Or—are you?" He bent forward.

"No—not quite—if that's what you mean."

"Were you happy?"

"In a way. But not supremely."

"Is one ever?"

"One could be."

As a matter of fact I think I was happy that night in that restaurant, and later, when David and I walked through the icy night arm-in-arm. He saw me to my hotel, he came up to my room and had a last cigarette there. We both had had quite a few drinks and the atmosphere was

rather electric. And naturally when David kissed me the room expanded and the walls became transparent and I caught a glimpse of heaven. And still with his arms about me I said thoughtfully:

"To-morrow we must get tickets for Ilona's concert."

"What makes you think of that all of a sudden?" laughed David.

"I don't know—perhaps I was thinking of Lucille."

"And who, may I ask, is Lucille?"

"That's the wife of Charles."

"Now really, darling—what *are* you thinking about?"

"Mainly you, David."

"And I said you couldn't be silly !" he said, smiling. He held my face with both his hands and then bent down and kissed me very, very gently.

And went away.

* * *

After the sweet, gay days in Vienna with David—with all the heavens and hells that a woman in love has necessarily to go through—with Ilona's concert and the delightful dinner we had with her and her shadow, Max, at her hotel—with a New Year's Eve party at a rowdy place first and in an intimate bar afterwards—with the voluble Franz Paechter and his plans, and my agreeing to put up the money for the firm of Paechter & Hartmann—with my farewell from the man I adored—with all these things, which all held a quality of positive joy or intense emotional strain—Sybille and Prague put me very much back to earth.

There she was—tall, broad, with her square, determined face, her strong, warm voice, her simple clothes and her lack of make-up, her clear brow and beautiful large eyes, and her grim tales ! I felt rather crushed at the idea of having enjoyed myself so vastly when I sat opposite Dr Sybille Barthold, Communist, Realist, Fighter. How different were my talks with Sybille from the light-hearted conversation with David. How different even were our

laughs. For, whereas David and I had laughed gaily at jollities, Sybille and I laughed somewhat grimly at a world which seemed blind—oh, so blind—to what was really brewing in Europe.

Nor did Sybille spare me. She took me along to the squalid, miserable abodes where refugees sat huddled together in tiny rooms and lived from hand to mouth—if they were lucky. My basement room at Mrs Ralston's had indeed been a palace compared to some of the places where people of culture, education, and position tried to live. The relief committees did what they could, but the stream of refugees grew daily. It was so much easier to go into the C.S.R. than to London. One could walk over the so-called green frontier. But one could not walk across the Channel.

"Surprised?" asked Sybille, when we sat in her little room, which she shared with a friend, a gentle, quiet girl from Southern Germany, who too had been locked up, and had fled. Her offence had been a love affair with an Aryan. "Well, you can see worse—in Vienna, in Paris, in Budapest—in every European city except London. The richest and biggest town in all Europe does not know yet what it means to shelter thousands and thousands of refugees. But their time will come too—and they'll take it. The show is just only beginning!"

"By the way, are refugees allowed into Russia?" I asked, "A very selected few. Moscow has to be extremely careful about whom they let in. They cannot afford to have a single person who is not wholeheartedly on their side. It's different in a democratic country where then are several sides anyway."

"Do you then believe in a clash between Russia and Germany? I mean apart from the mud they throw at each other over the wireless."

"I do. Some day the clash will have to come. What they're ready."

"Who?"

"Both."

Again—much impressed by the suffering of my fellow-emigrants and also by the relief work that was being done—I asked Sybille if there was nothing I could do.

"You stay where you are. That money of yours did several good jobs. God ! I wish I could get some people into England. That's one thing you ought to try over there. Find people in London to employ some of our refugees. There are more brilliant people starving right here than anybody can imagine. But don't venture to come here and starve too. We've got our hands full! Go back to London and make some more money and send it along to us. Here you probably couldn't earn a penny."

"What do you live on?"

"Party funds."

"Couldn't I perhaps write articles for the Press?"

Sybille answered with brutal frankness that some of the finest writers of Germany were sitting in Prague trying to make a living.

In spite of all the grimness it was good to be with Sybille. After my friendly but complacent English friends, who didn't see the danger, after an easy-going David, who did not suffer from it very much, Sybille impersonated to me the very sentence "Fight Hitler." And all her friends I met impressed me much the same way. Their articles in the Press were more than well-informed. They were positively oracles, and everything they warned Europe about has come true up to now. One man—a famous journalist at one time, now making a sparse living out of writing for a weekly journal—even predicted the bombs on London ! This peace-minded man urged England to arm, arm, arm. But I'm sure his articles never crossed the Channel.

Something warned me not to tell Sybille that I had agreed to put up the capital for David's new venture; but one night I blurted it out, knowing full well what to expect. And I got it hot and cold.

"You idiot!" roared Sybille. "I felt all along you would confess to something mad! It's written all over you. But I didn't expect it would be anything quite so crazy."

I stammered something to the effect that she was all for my helping fellow-refugees.

"It's one thing to help a man out of jail and Germany and quite another to throw hard-earned money into the hands of a boy who proves that he is incapable of looking after himself. I admit—not everybody is able to fend for himself—one must always try to be tolerant, and even thankful for the fact that the world is made up of different people with different qualities. Some people are just not born to face troubles with fortitude. Especially those who were brought up to depend upon others from the day their nurses pushed the famous silver spoon into their mouths. But David Hartmann is no longer in "grave danger. He is simply taking advantage of your feelings for him. And he can't hold down any job."

"But is it not better to help a man back on his feet instead of blaming him for possible shortcomings and making him dependent on eternal charity?"

"Certainly. But you have no business to go about financing new firms. Leave that to experienced and professional men. Why didn't Hartmann himself find such a man? Because those men have probably gone into the matter thoroughly and did not find it worth while to invest money in that particular business. Not that I have much patience with the so-called business expert. But that's neither here nor there. And why, pray, does not Mrs Felix Hartmann try to smuggle some of her valuable jewellery out of Germany? We'll gladly help her to do it! That would keep her husband going, and several other poor wretches as" well. But what's the use of arguing! You're in love, my girl. And I wish to goodness the object of your affection were somebody else. Oh, David's all right in his way—charming, lovable, and all that. But I want a man for you who does not allow

you to put your miserable few pounds into his hands to play about with—a man who comes home with a wage packet and asks you for a change what you need!"

I returned to London in a pensive mood. My mind was a whirlpool filled to the brim with the various and conflicting impressions I had gathered. On my return to my new little flat I found a letter from David awaiting me:

"You don't know, Renate, what this means to me. One day I'll repay my huge debt—not just the money, that's understood, but the whole thing. You helped me into freedom, you put me on my feet. I'll never forget it. The day will come when I shall be able to do something for you."

Yes, the day did come. Unfortunately it came too late. And the saddest thing is, that was nobody's fault.

Anyone would have thought that with a labour permit and a certain amount of intelligence and much willingness it would have been child's play to find a job of work in that vast beehive called London, where everybody was busy doing something and so many people wanted something done. But to my own amazement I simply couldn't find a job. My office routine experiences from the German office days were no good on account of my English shorthand, which I had begun to learn, but could not master quickly enough for even a junior clerk's position. I tried several things but without result and studied with meticulous care the advertisement columns of the daily Press. The only vacancies were in domestic service. I just skipped those in the arrogant and erroneous assumption that I was meant for "something better." I had still enough cash to carry on in spite of having made myself a partner in the firm of Paechter & Hartmann to the tune of two hundred pounds. The next royalty accounts from the publishers were not due until April and, anyway, we would have had to sell some three thousand copies to cover our advance royalties.

But spring was in the air and London began to burst into buds, and the world smelled good and the sun warmed one already—and Herr Hitler sent his Reichswehr into the Rhineland. Good, I thought—now the Western Powers will have had enough of that enterprising gentleman and do something about him. I rang Theodore Wright, bursting with excitement to discuss this new coup in detail. Wright met me that night at an old pub in town and we thrashed out the affair until there was not one word left unsaid. We were both convinced that the bubble would burst and awaited eagerly the next news, probably already containing an item about a French ultimatum to Germany. But, of course, there was no ultimatum. In fact there was nothing but a yelling Hitler, who roared into the microphone his renewed pledge of peace in Europe, and the Germans behind him did some more "sieg-heiling," and the rest of the world sank back with a sigh of relief that now Hitler had all he wanted and would stop waking a blissfully slumbering Europe up at an untimely hour !

I was furious. The Saar first, conscription next, and now this; quite apart from the much-discussed "internal" affairs. The world looked on silently and, I shouldn't wonder, some even approvingly. My uncle, John Thistlehorn, for instance, said:

"Damn it, the Rhineland is German—let's do away with the mistakes of Versailles and give those blighters a fair chance."

Well spoken, Uncle John! But it doesn't do to give the wolf a fair chance. He won't stop at killing the beasts in his own regions. His appetite is amazing ! And he'll soon prowl around your own meadows and gorge on your grazing sheep. Probably because they looked threateningly aggressive.

My efforts to find a job were at last rewarded, and it was Sir Anthony Lankey who got me an introduction to a firm of export and import merchants in the City. They needed a typist who could write and read German fluently, and,

by God, that was one thing I could do. I started at three pounds ten shillings a week on the first of April, and was quite happy to have a regular income, instead of sitting around stealing God's day doing nothing. I had to translate and answer letters from Vienna, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, which were mostly written in German, and one day several letters were laid upon my desk which came directly from Germany, and some of them were signed: "Heil Hitler." I felt an immediate wave of anger rise up inside me that a London City man should be thus greeted in a business letter. I remarked about it to a colleague over lunch one day and he grinned:

"If that's their way to sign their letters—so what?"

"Damn it, we don't sign business letters 'God save the King.' Patriotism and whatever the bloody Germans think it is may be all very fine in its proper place."

"Oh, if it makes them happy we'll have to lump it."

"An Englishman doesn't have to lump anything," I said.

"Nice of you to rate us so highly—but this sort of thing doesn't harm anybody—s'long as they meet our bills."

Meantime I counted twenty—even forty—and nearly choked over my steak-and-kidney pudding.

My job lasted some three months, and then I fired myself. It was all the fault of Herr Cohen, whom I had never set eyes on in my life. Herr Cohen was one of our German representatives and one day a Nazi firm complained to us about the affront of sending them a Jewish representative. Pinned to the letter I found a note from our Export Manager to reply that the man would be changed for somebody else. That was as much as I could swallow.

Arthur Jarvis Haynes, our Export Manager, happened to be a kind, understanding middle-aged man, with whom one could converse freely without being given to understand that he, after all, was one of the bosses. So I decided to have a personal word with him. I marched into his office just before lunch and found him in the company of

M. Leon Couno, an elderly man with pince-nez and small beard, one of our big Belgian customers who came flitting across the Channel every now and then like a benevolent moth. Haynes asked cheerfully:

"Hello, little Feldt—what's the matter with you? You look a bit grim. Come, let's have the worst. Our friend here won't mind."

"*Pas du tout!*" M. Couno assured us.

Well I let go—and ended my tirade on the impudence of the Nazis with the request to be permitted to answer them in my own style. Haynes put his finger-tips together and laughed gently.

"Now, now, Miss Feldt. I can imagine that your blood is up every time you see a Nazi signature under a letter, but, my dear girl, I'm afraid we can't afford to be rude to a good customer just because he happens to have a bee in his bonnet."

"But they can afford to dictate to a house like Oldstead & Gribbons as to whom they shall send as a representative! Well I'm——"

"I shouldn't let that worry you too much, little Feldt. Write them that we shall exchange our Mr Cohen for another good man as soon as we can make the change."

"Mr Haynes, you're not serious!" I cried.

"Well, we know how overbearing and pompous these damnable Nazis are. So why bother about them. Just let them have it their own way and forget it. Cohen is a first-class man. We'll put him in charge of the Belgian business. I am sure our friend M. Couno has no racial prejudices." Haynes laughed booming.

"*Non—pas du tout! Les juifs Us sont des merchands exquisits!*"

Thanks, M. Couno, but it makes no difference to me. I took a deep breath:

"Mr Haynes, if you for instance had any genuine racial prejudices, which I know you haven't, I could possibly understand it if you chose not to employ a Jew. But just

to let the Nazis have it their own way, thus victimising a perfectly good man who knows his market inside out——"

"Cohen will not be victimised! On the contrary. He'll be jolly glad to get rid of his German field of activities. Actually asked me some time ago to find him something else. Now you be a good girl and do as I tell you."

"I am sorry, Mr Haynes, under the circumstances you'll have to find another girl to write that letter for you. I herewith give notice."

"*Ma chere Mademoiselle!*" cried a very distressed M. Couno.

Haynes shook his head.

"Don't be a fool, child. This is a good job and might lead to something better. You are doing very well——"

"No."

"You might one day be put in charge of the entire German and Austrian market!"

"Sorry, Mr Haynes. I don't even want it. I am sick and tired of having to deal with Nazis anyway. I can't see those words 'Heil Hitler' any more! My mind is made up."

"I am very distressed, my dear, but I can do no more to try to make you see that you are being foolish."

"Mr Haynes, let me say this: when I came to England almost three years ago, after the Nazis had killed my father, I swore that I should one day revenge him. I haven't had the chance. I lack many qualities which I should need to set about this business in seriousness. But the least I can do is to stick to my principle—never to bow before a Nazi whether directly or indirectly. To let them have it their own rotten way is one thing I can never lend a hand to, even as the unimportant instrument of somebody else's will. This is perhaps a trivial matter, but the Nazis have been permitted to have it their own way in big matters, too, without anyone stopping them. One day they'll have it so much their own way that they won't stop at dictating to a firm like Oldstead & Gribbons but will start dictating

to the firm of England and the Empire! That must not happen."

"My dear, dear girl, you are exaggerating! Look here, let's all go to lunch together. It's surprising what a decent meal can do to one's decisions."

Haynes was that sort of man. He'd as soon throw conventions overboard and lunch with his typist as he would put the firm's interest before his own.

Much as it hurt me to part with this good friend, I stuck to my convictions. The three of us sat together at Pools' (our friend M. Couno had joined us) and discussed the matter further. But I remained firm. Probably, driven by my immense urge to oppose the Nazis, I made a molehill into a mountain. In fact I helped neither myself nor Herr Cohen, nor did I hurt the Nazis. But you don't have convictions for the sake of hurting or helping anybody. You just have them and that's that, M. Couno was somewhat impressed. He said:

"I do understand your point exactly, Mademoiselle Feldt. If you should venture out to Belgium one day, look me up. You have my address, yes, no?"

"Well, well," grinned Haynes, "I'm surprised at you, Couno! At your age too!"

The little man looked disturbed.

"I hope Mademoiselle Feldt does not misunderstand. You do not think nastily of me, *hein?*"

"Pas du tout!"

Pas du tout was right. When I did call on M. Couno for help, much later, it was not for frivolous reasons. It was when Hitler saw fit once more to grab another slice of civilisation with greedy but unhampered hands.

Well, Herr Cohen—I don't know you—but thanks for being such a damned fool by keeping that job in Germany! It cooked my goose as well as yours. But maybe you have an old mother in Germany who cannot emigrate and you don't want to leave her there alone. Who knows, Herr Cohen? But you will now forcibly be transferred to

Belgium. You are very lucky. M. Couno is a charming man. And Brussels is safe. . . .

* * *

Out of a job but not on the rocks. I still had capital to nibble and I spent a leisurely few weeks looking for other work. But summer in London, as in every big city, is a bad time for finding a job even if you are a native and have years of experience. I loved my little flat high up on the sixth floor of a large block, for it had, what no other flat below had, a balcony. I had flowers in boxes there and a deck-chair. Inside, the room was cosy and personal and gay, with all the four walls lined with books and little odds and ends I had acquired. The summer evenings on that balcony were dangerous for my mood, for I felt pangs of nostalgia for the days when my father had been alive and I had kept house for him in the Uhlandstrasse. One night I actually cried with pain. It was a glorious summer evening. I lay long in my deck-chair and, with the help of a dictionary, was working my way through Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* when I suddenly heard the tapping of a typewriter. I closed my eyes and listened, and I visualised myself back in the days of unpaid bills and father's eternal typing indoors, while I dreamed the time away on that other little balcony. I knew that next door lived a journalist, a man with one wooden leg, a relic from the war, who had moved in recently and worked most evenings. In time the tapping ceased, the french-windows were opened, and I heard the pips before the nine-o'clock news. The smooth voice of the announcer flowed past my ear. But suddenly I sat up and grew cold: "There has been street fighting in Barcelona and at different places all over Spain ..."

Christel.

" . . . but the Spanish Government seems to be in control of the situation."

It sounded not too bad—did it? The Government was

in control of the situation until Messrs Hitler and Mussolini chose to support the rebels and send their efficient soldiers into Spain. Dictators spring up like mushrooms. Italy—Germany—Spain—who next? And in their wake they bring nothing but tears and death and destruction. I wondered what my father, the ardent pacifist, would have said to all this. Would he have advocated appeasement or would he have used his pen to urge the rest of the world to take up arms in good time and do away with the maniacs? It is not easy to remain a pacifist in a world where a small band of gangsters shoot and murder their way to power. Pacifism is based on reason, but with armed gangsters one does not reason, one either locks them up or shoots them on sight, if they are dangerous.

I went indoors for cigarettes and paused at the section of my bookshelves which sheltered father's scripts, which in an enlightened moment I had packed along with the books and sent ahead to England. I began to look through some of them and smiled sadly at father repeatedly urging the world not even to think about another war. I dug deeper into the bundle of scripts and came upon an old, old manuscript, a play called *Brother Benjamin*. I skimmed over the pages, but was fascinated enough to begin at the beginning, and finally settled down to read right through that play. It was the story of a young pacifist who was forced to fight a war he didn't believe in and in the course of the play decided to leave the worldly world altogether and become a monk.

No, father—this is not in the spirit for these days. Even you would grasp that! Nor is it the time for artificially pepped-up patriotism and for convincing young men to put on a uniform cheerfully and fight another "jolly old war." But it is the time to set one's face and quietly, without bands or flags, take a gun and commence a short, quick fight against a menace that is about to threaten your very life. There is nothing about the "glory of the fatherland"; there is only the glory of free speech and free

thinking and all that is decent in this world. Your play should be the other way round. A young man of God—a monk—should return into the world to take up arms to fight Hitler ! For it is in the spirit of God we fight the Devil.

I became so possessed with the idea that I sat straight down and outlined the idea, as I should want it written, that same night. I scribbled away until dawn broke, and early in the morning I dashed a telegram off to Christel to come to England, should things become too hot in Barcelona.

Christel wrote by air-mail that she would stick it out as long as possible. Doctors were needed urgently. Philippe had laid down his surgical instruments and taken up arms to fight as a Republican against the Insurgents. There was my figure again. Not a monk but a physician I A man exchanging one holy task for another. —For what else is a doctor but an apprentice in the workshop of God?

This letter strengthened my conviction that I should turn yet another one of my father's stories into a book. But I decided not to tell Powell & Kay until I was completely satisfied that my version was beyond criticism. It proved a difficult job. But I stuck to it with fanatic determination. I forgot about seeking a job. I forgot about that small balance at the bank which became smaller and smaller. I forgot about the seasons changing outside my window. Lacking genius and creative power, I had to plod my way through this job bit by bit, reading, learning, and studying other people's technique. When my typewriter rattled away I sometimes thought of what Sybille had said to me many years ago:

"One day you will be angry. Then sit down and write."

Well it was not exactly like that. I did not just let off steam in a flow of well-chosen words, nor did Pegasus use his wings to fan the fire of my creative power. I hadn't any. Once again I picked my way through the lanes of my father's thoughts.

The only person I discussed this idea with was Theodore Wright, but he was in no mood to think of any adaptations. That excellent man was off to Spain to offer his services to the Government.

"You go ahead—when we've cleaned up the mess down there I'll be back and do the translation. And I'll be able to give you one or two very realistic hints, I'll be bound! Meanwhile, keep your pecker up, old girl. And if those brutes have some more royalties for us, and you should be in a hole, use my share and pay me back when you can. So long. See you later!"

Well, there he went off to fight for his convictions; but he didn't see me later. When he returned, tired, worn, hurt, and disgusted, he could not see me or anybody else. He went to St Dunstan's and studied Braille. . . .

In the winter of that year Dr Philppe Orez fell in the battle for his country, having been killed by one of his own compatriots. I sat petrified when I read Christel's short heart-breaking letter. One more young woman a victim **of this thrice-cursed Europe!**

of this thrice-cursed Europe!" I am afraid I am not much good as a doctor just now but I must carry on as long as possible, for medical help is needed badly. I work mechanically, for all sense seems to have gone out of life for me. I wish we could be together. I am sorely in need of a friend!"

The Western Powers decided upon Non-intervention and Herr Hitler poured his deadly efficient men and his more efficient weapons into Spain, and the Spanish refugees streamed across the frontier into France seeking shelter. Refugee ships sailed the seas and disgorged deadly tired women and wide-eyed children. Refugees! Acardia Petrovich, what a chain you preceded I

I was notified by a relief committee one day that a young woman named Dr Christine Ullmann had arrived in England on one of the refugee ships, and would I be prepared to take over responsibility for her? She had named me as her friend.

In all my anguish for the suffering that girl had gone through I was delighted to have her back. I went down to Kent straight away, where a number of these unfortunate homeless people were sheltering until they could be divided and distributed to various other countries.

I hardly recognised my friend when we finally met. Always slim, she was now a mere shadow of a girl, and when I flung my arms around her it was like embracing an overgrown child. There was such misery in her eyes that for the first time in my life I didn't know what to say. One's own misfortune might loosen one's tongue if one is given to speaking, but a dear friend's unhappiness strikes one dumb.

I took Christel home to my little flat, and by and by the soothing atmosphere of England, the crackling fire in the grate, good food, and plenty of sleep brought Christel back to life. She unfroze, and could at last cry, and after the relieving tears came the natural desire to speak, and Christel told me all about it. What I had seen, horror-stricken, on the screens in the news reels she had seen in reality. And when I think of her tales of demoralisation, hopelessness, and terror that the bombs, the crashed houses, the wounded and dead brought in their wake, I silently salute this town of London, that takes each blow with growing defiance and instead of demoralising rises to unprecedented heights of good conduct and first-class morale. How sad that one cannot go out there into the night and report for duty. . . .

I asked Christel if Franco would win that struggle.

"There's a fifty-fifty chance. He gets first-class supplies from Germany and Italy. And our side, although we have a large International Brigade fighting, is hopelessly out-organised. The most stout-hearted hero hasn't got a chance against military super-efficiency. Bravery, defiance, and faith cannot beat tanks and planes, and never will."

That's right, Christel. We've heard more of that since.

With myself Hearing the usual state of bankruptcy and

Christel on the rocks too, we had to put our heads together and do some serious thinking. The remarkable situation arose that Dr Christine Ullmann, specialist for children's diseases and child psychologist, holder of many diplomas and an old hand at practical physiology, would have to study all over again or switch over to another profession. The new study would be a long and costly affair, and there was a very long waiting list of applicants who wished to benefit from the stipends that certain charitable organisations set aside for their studies. To work as a nurse at a hospital involved a labour permit, which Christel had not got and was not likely to obtain. There remained then the alternative: switchover. But to what?

"Strange," I said, "I thought only people with no qualifications had difficulties in finding work."

"The snag is I have no other abilities. I can't even handle a typewriter."

"A typewriter! Are you mad? You're a first-rate doctor, and that's the profession you are going to stay in!"

"That's finished for the time being. I can't afford the study in the first place, and neither can I risk not getting a job even if I go back to the ABC of anatomy. No, Renate. Let's be sensible."

"Oh, damn, who wants to be sensible all the time? Christel, it's queer how all your experiences have left you unchanged. You are still calm, sensible, practical and all that."

"Experience doesn't change the fundamental characteristics of a human being. Exhibit A: Miss Renate Feldt. Still impulsive, unpractical, but very, very nice!"

The most important thing of course was to find another place to live in. This flat was too small for two and too expensive for one. So I gave notice to the landlord for March first and settled down once more to studying the vacancies in the papers. Christel did not study them. She went out a great deal and found her way about London

as though she had been living there for years, and one late afternoon came home and announced quietly:

"Got a job."

"You what?"

"I got a job. The permit will be applied for by my future employers."

"For heaven's sake, what have you been up to?"

"I went to a domestic agency and got myself engaged as a nurse to two small children. Pay isn't too bad and I am only there as a day-nurse. So we can still have our evenings together after my little charges are safely in bed."

"Christel, you haven't! A children's nursemaid I Are you crazy, you with your diplomas and your skill! Well, I'm——"

"Renate, do be sensible for a change, and don't be a damned snob. You never were, so don't start now."

"That's got nothing to do with snobbishness. It's waste. It's like—like—using a RollsRoyce for a delivery van!"

"Why not? But now's Kutup" and give me some tea. I have got quite used to this tea business."

"I think you get used to anything quickly. And what about your English? It's pretty scrappy."

"That doesn't matter. Those children are supposed to learn German."

"Whatever for?" I marvelled.

"That I don't know. But let us hope it is because their parents want them to read Goethe one day."

"Well, Christel—with you as a nanny, I shall now find myself something equally practical. The clerical jobs are hopeless. They're full up. I suppose I had better revise the way I'm reading the ads. and turn to the domestic column, and perhaps with luck find myself a job as house-parlourmaid. And thus armed with duster and nappies we shall march the road towards Victory over Hitlerism. Three cheers! What did Sybille write was our battle-cry? 'Young Woman of Europe—use your abilities! Sieg-Heil!'"

And after that bitter little speech I inconsequently burst into tears.

* * *

Mrs Ralston shook me warmly by the hand.

"Well, dearie, how sad—I mean actually how nice—but of course you know what I mean! Nice to see you, but sad to think you want to come back. And this friend of yours wants to move in, too? Well, I never! From Spain? Poor dear! Now let me think. . . ."

When Mrs Ralston wanted to think it meant tea. So the three of us sat down in her cosy kitchen and drank her excellent tea, and ate hot toast with butter and treacle, and discussed the question of the room.

"'Ere—I got it! Nah then—I puts ole Mr 'Ymes into the basement and Ernie can move into the attic with his brother. That gives us two rooms on the same floor with the bathroom next door. Remember, dearie?"

"But don't rob Ernest of his room!"

"'E won't mind. Anythink to oblige a lady, that's Ernie all over. And I tell you what, dearie, remember that large cupboard in the front room? I'll have a nice little cooker installed there. Gives yer a decent meal and saves yer goin' orf to resterants! Well—that's settled then. 'Ave another cup of tea! Nah then, what do you think you can afford to pay?"

Christel and I looked at each other and thought the same. Thank God for people like Mrs Ralston. And Frau Graus and Emma and the taxi-driver who refused to take a large tip for carrying Wegner home. Those are the people who live like heroes—always in the front lines of life's battle. Those are the people who give us food, clothes, cleanliness, and warmth. The aristocracy of the side-street.

We moved in on a windy, sunny March day, and between us made those two rooms cosy and comfortable. Thank goodness, they were fair-sized, and there was enough room for my books. They would hide most of the ghastly brown wallpaper, for Ernie had been busy putting up rows and

rows of shelves. And what Christel had salvaged from her wrecked home in Barcelona did wonders with her room. A lovely shawl over the divan, a few etchings on the wall, some cushions flung about, a few rugs on the floor. Mrs Ralston was invited for coffee at our place this time, when we were ready, and she stood gasping:

"Well I'm bothered! I never knew I had such lovely rooms! 'Ere, Ernie, be a good boy and run round to the Pig and Whistle and get us a bottle of Scotch. This is an occasion to celebrate!"

When I had reached page two hundred of my father's story I had also reached the stage where the bank manager politely informed me that I was overdrawn by ten shillings and fourpence. That called for speedy action. With ChristeFs shining example, who rushed off at eight in the morning and came home dead tired at seven at night, I finally decided to try my skill as a domestic servant, the one branch of actual employment that was wide open for foreigners. But I too wanted a day-job only, because I had made up my mind to stick to my *Brother Benjamin* until the last word was written and copied, and I could triumphantly lay the ready German version before my publishers, Messrs Powell & Kay. I also made an outline of the story in English, for that my knowledge of the language was good enough, which would save them the tedious job of plodding their way through some five hundred pages of German writing. And if Wright was not back, then another translator would have to be found. With these aims in mind the prospect of becoming a member of the vast army of "domestic refugees" seemed somewhat brighter. And one fine morning I set out to offer my services as "Young woman as daily housemaid wanted, sleep out; wages 25 shillings; call mornings—SIA Holland House, Oriel Crescent, W."

After a lengthy journey and much searching I was finally confronted with a large, imposing house in the neighbourhood of Notting-Hill Gate. Not far from

Uncle John's house. And why haven't I heard anything from Aunt Mary or Elisabeth for weeks? Wonder what that dear girl would say if she saw me now?

An old woman opened the door, sized me up, and said without further preliminaries:

"Have you come for the job?"

I said that I had, wondering what it was about me that made this old lady immediately recognise me as a prospective housemaid. Maybe the very idea of going in for domestic service had already shaped my manner accordingly. . . . She seemed to be the housekeeper, for she bade me come in and wait. I stood in a large hall, furnished with some huge mahogany odds and ends and a cat. The cat took no notice of me but washed himself with disgusting absorption. Self-reliant, independent brute 1 You couldn't be a dog—a cheerful little busybody who would sniff at me and bark his approval and hand me a paw. No, this was not the house of a noisy terrier or a comic dachshund or a stately Alsatian. This was the house of the silent cat stalking about noiselessly and taking no notice.

Miss Marlowe saw me in her drawing-room. She was very old and very deaf, which gave our conversation some liveliness.

"Who are you?" she screamed.

I gave her all the details she wanted to know and was amazed at the character of her questions. She was not quite so interested in my experience as a housemaid but in matters which had to my mind no immediate connection with my future tasks of dusting rooms and sweeping carpets or the stairs. Was I engaged to be married? Did I frequent the movies? Had I any relatives in England and why hadn't I stayed in Germany? Was I given to colds? And had I any political opinions?

It was more as though I were being interviewed by the Press as the co-author of *Brother Benjamin* than examined for my capabilities as housemaid. Nevertheless Miss

Marlowe engaged me. I was to start on Monday next, and report at eight o'clock to Miss Wilson the house-keeper.

ChristePs reaction to my news was similar to mine when she had told me about her job.

"You've got that book to do/' she protested.

"And live, in the meantime, on scrambled hopes or mashed illusions?"

"Well, Reny, there's worse than honest-to-goodness work! Meanwhile let's hope that your David's business will begin to pay and he can return your invested money."

"Oh yes—David. . . . His letters don't sound too hopeful. Christel, I wish to heaven he could come to England. How cheerfully would I dust and scrub and clean the house of Miss Marlowe!"

"What could he do here?" asked Christel.

"Yes—what?"

Typically it occurred to neither of us that just like ourselves David might do an "honest-to-goodness" job. It was left to a horrible war to discover that professors, doctors, lawyers, and scientists could drive lorries or be waiters or work on farms. War is a queer transformer. It brings the best out in some people and the worst in others.

* * *

With honesty I cannot even pretend to have been deliriously happy in my job as housemaid to Miss Marlowe, yet I was not desperately unhappy, because I had several things which helped me to keep my sense of proportion and, what is much more important, which prevented my getting possessed by the "servant-mentality" which, alas, many of my unfortunate sister-refugees have acquired. My life was not—as happens so often under these extraordinary circumstances—wrapped round "my lady's bad temper" or "the eternal dusting" or "those stairs!" Nor was I of the opinion that polishing very fine old silver, or ironing exquisite Jinen, or even lighting a fire, compared

so unfavourably with adding up indifferent sums or typing monotonous business letters, or any other job of the "black-coated" variety.

ChristePs attitude towards life in general and her smashed one in particular made me silent any time I wanted to let off steam. She had not forgotten the past, but she managed to put up with the present, which was more than I sometimes could, for my tense was definitely the future, and only God knows what made me believe in a future for my generation¹ But it may have had something to do with that *Brother Benjamin*, and even more with David. His letters, eagerly waited for and always answered immediately, sounded none too wonderful but not quite depressed.

"The atmosphere here," he wrote, "is a queer mixture of gaiety and depression. And believe me, to keep a business going in this impoverished town is no easy job. Paechter is a hard worker and I like the chap well enough, and the only tiffs we have are about Hitler, whom he rather admires and with whom, in his opinion, Austria could do very well. I told him I preferred Schuschnigg. Amazing how many people really admire that fellow Hitler. But on the whole here in Austria they loathe the idea of National Socialism and would never stand for its rigid doctrines."

I did not like the sound of that letter. Franz Paechter openly admitting that he admired Hitler in a country that was supposed to lock up all Nazi sympathisers?

I wrote a long letter to David urging him to sell his share in the business to Paechter and in the meantime I should set the stone rolling for his immigration into England. If he could recover the two hundred pounds capital we had invested it meant that he might at least be granted a temporary visitor's permit, and with that achieved we could see what to do. But David would not hear of it. The business was just about to show results and besides—why run away from nothing at all? Because an otherwise likeable chap admired Hitler?

"Dearest girl, if everybody in Europe were to sell out his business share because his partner admired Hitler then half of Europe's business men would have to retire."

Had Hitler really so many secret admirers in Europe? And if so, for what? For his manifold crimes or for his hypocritical assurances of peace? For the mystical air with which he surrounded himself by his abstemious living and his unnatural lack of human desires? Was there enough deep-rooted Anti-Semitism in Europe to admire Hitler for persecuting the Jews? And if so, why did he not shoot them mercifully instead of slowly torturing them to death or chasing them across the frontiers into countries who also didn't want them? Did these "admirers" realise what Hitlerism meant? Apart from his perhaps convenient Anti-Semitism? Or had the world sunk so low that they sanctioned his sadistic excesses towards his antagonists?

These thoughts drove me each night to my typewriter, or made me pace up and down the room, firing questions at Christel, who could no more answer them than I could myself. But I also read the book to her as it went on, and Christel was as good a listener as she had always been. And—as in our childhood days—she had the same calm common sense as when she had reminded me, twenty years ago, that one could not run away without a ration card, and interrupted me when I had muddled things up or made somebody say something that that particular person would have never said. For no other person has to be more objective than an author, except perhaps the judge. And, by God, where the theme was Hitler I simply couldn't be objective!

It had taken me the best part of eighteen months to rewrite that story, and in the early winter of that year I began to lament about Wright's absence.

"He's got an important job to do," argued Christel. "But I cannot for die world of me see why you should depend on somebody else. Your English is all right. Sit

down and translate the thing yourself. And have it edited afterwards by an Englishman."

I pondered over this suggestion all night and, in fact, all day—much to the annoyance of Miss Wilson, who found me somewhat absent-minded. And when I came home that night I announced to Christel:

"You're right. I'll do it. But it'll take ages."

"Never mind that. That story won't go stale."

"Meaning, that Herr Hitler will continue unchallenged for years and years?"

"Unless God gives him a cold and lets him die," said Christel quietly.

But God didn't give Hitler a cold nor did the world give him a piece of its mind. Instead they gave him Austria.

Before the shameful farce of Heir Schuschnigg's visit to Berchtesgaden, in February of the new year, something happened that once again brought the tragedy of Europe home to me most poignantly. It was the memorable return of my collaborator and friend Theodore Wright, late of the International Brigade in Spain. I returned home from my job one night and found a letter from St Dunstan's. They requested me to visit one of their patients, Mr Theodore Wright. St Dunstan's 1 That meant only one thing!

Yes, Wright had lost the sight of both his eyes during his gallant and voluntary fight for freedom. My visit to St Dunstan's held a strange quality of unreality, for I went to meet a friend who could not see me. And it eliminated such commonplace phrases as "Good to see you!" or "How nice you look!" from the other fellow. When his nurse announced me to him he stretched out both his hands, which I grasped quickly.

"Good of you to come!" he said. "But don't try to say anything that might choke you. And when you've finished being embarrassed tell me how you are."

I told him everything I could think about, tried to be

commonplace and ordinary, but every word very nearly did choke me. I tried to put myself into the position of this man, who had always enjoyed life so vastly, reading, seeing plays and films, travelling. His sight lost—wrapped in darkness! Never to be able to see a sunrise or the cool moon or an animal at play or a beautiful woman! With the fine sensitiveness of the blind, Theodore sensed what I went through. He stretched out his hand.

"Come, come, Renate—I know I am in a rotten spot. I realise there will be moments when I shall despair and curse the very heavens above me. But those moments will pass, as every moment of despair passes. Nature will compensate me somehow. There is still music, you know, and there are friends, and there are books which can be read to me. Tell you what, old girl—you put away your duster and broom and come to me as soon as I am out of here, and type my stuff. I'll go on with my job. Think, Renate, how lucky I still am not to be dependent on my eyesight as a translator and adapter! Think if I had been a painter or a diamond-cutter or a tailor I But you'll help me, won't you? I'll do the translating of that story of yours—it's exactly the thing I feel like. Rouse the world to fight Hitler. Thank the Lord, I can still do that! And I was not put into a concentration camp somewhere and tortured to death. I am really extremely lucky!"

"My God!" I cried, "what a generation we are who are already deliriously happy when things are not as bad as we expect them!"

"Yes—queer, isn't it!"

We talked about various things, but shortly before I left Wright asked me:

"By the way, Renate, when I'm out and can go home I shall need somebody to look after me. You know a great many refugees—perhaps even medically trained people who wouldn't mind doing occasional delicate jobs for me—I shall be a bit awkward in the beginning. . . . And preferably a German refugee with whom I can converse

in German and keep up with my knowledge of that language. Do you think there is such a person?"

"I know there is. My goodness, Theodore, I've got the very person for you. She is actually a children's specialist and child's psychologist"

"That suits me. I shall be a bit of a child at times, and as for the psychological part of it, I think I can do with that too."

"She had no possibility to study over again. And, besides, she lived in Barcelona. Theodore, she is the very person for you! She came here after her man was killed fighting Franco."

"Gosh! Renate, that woman sounds ideal!" He was quite eager. "Do you think she would do it?"

"I know she will! She's nurse to two kids now. You must only apply for her labour permit. But I think it's as good as granted."

His Majesty's Under-Secretary of State however regretted not to be able to grant Dr Christine Ullmann another permit than the one she held already as a children's nurse. Mr Wright was duly informed that there were plenty of trained English nurses to fill the post and for his German language exercises he would have to engage a teacher qualified as such.

I have seen many an angry man in my time but never anybody quite as furious as Wright. He shouted the house down and banged the table in rage. He promised to appeal against this decision to the Home Secretary and if need be go as far as the Prime Minister. He dictated to me letters to the *New Statesman and Nation*, *The Daily Herald*, and other papers. He telephoned to influential friends. In fact he got so excited about this business, and made himself such a nuisance, that the powers that be finally granted Christel the permit, probably only to get rid of this angry Britisher.

And thus Christel had a job which I knew she would love. A man was engaged for the rough jobs, such as lighting the fires and doing the scrubbing, and—as Wright put it—

the roughest job of all, wake him in the morning and help him into his bath. And at nine Christel went to him. It came about that I spent most of my evenings with those two, reading, discussing current affairs, and putting on gramophone records. In January, Wright felt well enough to start on the translation of my book, and he suggested that I should quit my "fiddling about Miss Marlowe's." But that I couldn't afford. I had to make a living. Wright fumed some more.

"Look here—we're in on this fifty-fifty anyway. So I'll provide you with whatever you need each week and you do my correspondence for me. And meantime let's forget this wretched money business and go to work." And so I gave notice to Miss Marlowe, who was sorry to see me go:

"Miss Wilson was extremely satisfied with your work, Feldt," she said.

Much as I appreciated that lady's judgment of my housewifely skill, it was supremely unimportant to me in the face of the fact that at last I could once more do something worth while. And Wright kept me pretty busy from eleven in the morning until the late afternoon. During those hours he insisted that Christel should retire into her own room and study, and keep abreast with her medical profession.

"The day will come, young woman, when the labour-permit business will become irrelevant, when they will need your skill and knowledge to tend the bombed kids of London," he said grimly.

"Do you mean then, that . . . ?"

"Oh, I know—it'll take time for us over here to see the light. But war cannot be averted indefinitely. Hitler will lie low for some time now. I bet he's up to some dirty business in the near future. And this time neither France nor Britain will stand for it!"

The beginning of 1938 found me then in an interesting job, once more earning decent money from a decent

employer, and it looked as though my little boat were to sail in pretty smooth waters. Wright had suggested that we should inform Powell & Kay of this new job we were doing, and those two gentlemen seemed keen enough to get a look at the story. But we kept it to ourselves and promised to let them have the book in its final polished English version. We even did not mind foregoing the usual advance royalties.

"This has got to be just about perfect before anybody reads a word of it. By Jove, old girl, this isn't just a book—it's a message!"

Christel and I between us had got ourselves a wireless set on the hire-purchase system.

In the year 1938 then we could listen to all and sundry, for we were still foreigners and not aliens. And as soon as the news came over the air that Schuschnigg had been to Berchtesgaden I tore out of the house, took a taxi to Theodore's house, and burst in on him and Christel, who were listening to a gramophone recording of *The Rosenkavalier*.

"Heard the six-o'clock news?" I panted.

"No—what's up?"

I told them, and both Christel and Wright got greatly excited. I asked Wright's permission to dash off a telegram by 'phone to David to leave Austria at once.

"By all means, dear girl, but where will he go?"

"We must get him into England."

"Hopeless, my dear. You ought to know that by now. He's got to have an employer and God knows what! I'd gladly guarantee, but that won't wash. Haven't got a bean over and above my little income. And I'm not very popular with the H.O., either. Know anybody with the necessary influence?"

No, I didn't. The only man with influence I did know was Sir Anthony Lankey, and he was fed-up with me since the incident of my leaving Oldstead & Gribbons. Oldstead & Gribbons. . . .

"Wait a minute, Theodore—I've got it! Yes, sir! I've got it!"

"Now look here—first of all see how David reacts. Maybe he's got plans already in case things get worse. After all, the man's of age!" protested Christel.

David's reaction to my telegram nearly knocked me over. He wrote me a long letter, saying:

"It is sweet of you, child, to be so concerned about me. But there is no danger of this going any further. Seyss-Inquart is Minister of the Interior and the Nazis who were locked up are freed. That is all. Hitler will go no further than that."

"That boy's stark staring mad!" I cried, when I had read the letter to Wright.

"He does seem to take things pretty lightly," he mused; "but you know very often a man in a burning house doesn't know that the flames are already leaping out of the roof. The onlooker sees much more. Let's sit down and compose a detailed and sensible letter to the boy. But first we must know what we can suggest as an alternative. Any chance of his going into Czechoslovakia?"

"There might be. But, Theodore, I want him here. I want him so badly ! I had so very few hours with him altogether. And the last two years I have just been feeding on his letters."

"You love that boy very much, don't you?"

"Yes, I do. I fell in love with him over six years ago and I have loved him ever since. Oh, it hasn't been an intimate relationship—I haven't even ever had the opportunity to try and develop our friendship into anything lasting. We are always miles and miles apart. And when we are together I cannot get rid of the idea that he's a married man.

"Sounds like something of a complicated love affair," smiled Wright. "Couldn't you find somebody either free or at least reachable by Tube or bus?"

"Love doesn't work that way."

"No, it doesn't. However, it may be a consoling thought that the obstacles in your love for David arise from such things as distance or the fact that he is married. It would be much more tragic if there were obstacles of a different kind—with the object of your love in the very room and yet unreachable."

I looked curiously at Wright and then a light dawned. Could it be that he had fallen in love with Christel? And was too shy to admit it because he thought it was unfair to tie a girl to a blind man? And what did Christel feel? Had she forgotten Philippe or had she not: was she still able to make another man happy? However I did not breathe a word to her about this. These things are so delicate, so frail, that a clumsy touch might do infinite harm.

The March winds began to blow over Europe and brought with them for me a very personal and very sad event. I had a letter from Elisabeth announcing that Aunt Mary was down with pneumonia and that the doctors had little hope to pull her through. I could hardly grasp the fact that I might be about to lose my one and only dearly loved relative before the telegram announcing her death arrived. I hadn't seen Aunt Mary for a long time, but we had kept in touch constantly and neither the distance nor the time that parted us ever diminished for a moment my affection for her. I rang John Thistlehorn and told him how sorry I was, and then I sat down and wrote a stiff cold letter of condolence to cousin Elisabeth, whom I now erased from my life. Aunt Mary had been the only tie between her and myself and now that my aunt was gone nothing was left but the accidental and loose family connection. I even intended never to write to her and hoped never to have to speak to her again. But fate decreed otherwise—or shall we say Herr Hitler? Those two mighty and erratic personages can in these days almost be identified as one and the same. At least for us Continental refugees.

The German Reichswehr tramped into Austria and I tramped about in London from one committee to the next to get a permit for David Hartmann, at present hiding in Vienna, to enter this country. I filled out miles of questionnaires. I answered millions of verbal questions. I made innumerable telephone calls, and wired myself penniless.

With the Anschluss performed—unhindered—uncontested—unopposed—with the soul of Vienna pledged to the Devil, and the light-hearted gaiety of Austria trampled to death by Nazi boots, the honourable Herr Franz Paechter had advised his partner David Hartmann to remove himself from his desk. Your invested two hundred pounds? A shrug—a frown—and then a malicious smile. Very sad, but that money could not possibly be restored to him. And besides, dear Hartmann—after all—a fugitive from a German prison—you ought to be glad to be a free man so far: it would be better not to make yourself a nuisance!

Well done, Herr Paechter! Exactly in the spirit of your Fuehrer. Whataijxxbberry and blackmail in the vast and varied programme of Nazidom? A small matter! We ought to kiss your hand for not having killed your partner on the spot! Mighty generous of you, you rat! (With due apologies to those not quite savoury but otherwise inoffensive animals who have lent themselves so often for important research work.)

David wrote me a long, long letter. He was hiding in the flat of a friend, a kind and violent anti-Hitler doctor, who had treated him occasionally during slight illnesses. But David also knew that his time in Austria was up. He simply had to get away. Refugees were already streaming over the frontiers into Czechoslovakia, but even David, the laughing boy of no political knowledge or interest whatsoever, did not fancy the idea of that country.

"Who knows what's going to happen there one of these days? Even though I am certain that the Western Powers would fight if Hitler dared to mess about with Czecho-

Slovakia, I don't cherish the idea of being first of all confronted with more brown-shirts. I've seen about enough of them. Vienna has gone mad. Hideously mad. No, Reny, there's nothing left of our Vienna and the Cobenzl and the new wine and the dancing at a little intimate night-club. Already the Jews are being hunted out of their homes and treated like criminals. I'm sick of it, Reny. Please try to get me into England. Oh, my God, what would I do without you?"

This letter naturally tore at my heart-strings and drove me frantic. I forgot for a bit all about my important work with Wright and dashed about London like somebody robbed of her reason. If they caught David after his escape—there was no knowing what they wouldn't do to him; I had ghastly visions of Dachau, nightmares about Gestapo men beating him up.

Christel shook her head: "You"look terrible! Something's got to be done about that boy or you'll go crazy. Don't you know anybody who would get him here?"

I sat in my chair, my fists pressed tightly against my temples as though to squeeze out a good idea. But it was an accident that gave me the clue. Christel had turned on the wireless and tuned-in to Paris to listen to an important broadcast speech by M. Daladier. That gentleman spoke and spoke, and I didn't understand very much, for my French was too rusty. But something in his voice struck a note within my memory. And suddenly, to Christel's amazement, I jumped up and yelled:

"I've got it! I've got it !Christel, how good is your French?"

"Pretty fluent!"

"Put a hat on. We've got some telephoning to do."

"To a Frenchman?"

"To a Belgian."

"Where does he live?"

"Where quite a few Belgians live. In Brussels."

On the way to Theodore Wright's house, the nearest

telephone I could think of, I explained to Christel. Wright was not in bed yet and actually glad we came.

"That sounds reasonable. Maybe your M. Couno will help."

Christel wrote down carefully in good French everything I told her, so as not to have to waste precious minutes; and exactly one hour after our arrival she talked to M. Couno, who was luckily at home. From the expression on her face I could see that Couno was willing to do all he could. She repeated carefully David's name and address and all the necessary data, and finally said:

"Will you say hello to Renate Feldt?"

He obviously wanted to, for Christel handed me the receiver. I was too mixed up to get out one decent word in French and Couno's English, not very good at the best of times, was non-existent over the telephone. But we did understand each other, and when I finally asked: "Are you sure I have not asked too much?" he answered exactly what I had expected:

"Pas du tout! Mademoiselle Renate—pas du tout!"

* * *

A happiness that is wedged between two periods of anxiety, or even grief, is doubly intense, but it also holds a quality of cruelty in its unsteady and spasmodic character.

I wonder if there will ever again be an era when a man or woman can look back or even forward to a smooth, long period of quiet contentment, the steady pattern of which is only broken by personal and natural patches of acute joy or pain.

The personal things in life seem to lose their meaning more and more; values are changing with a rapidity with which even the fleeting thought can hardly keep pace. People are grateful for being permitted to suffer slightly less than the next fellow, as Wright, for instance, compared his blindness favourably with other men's fate of being slowly tortured to death.

In these hours of recollection it seems fantastic to me

that I should have been so overjoyed at the thought that the man I loved should have been able to flee once more out of a country and live on a kind man's charity, instead of being thrown into a concentration camp and slain by the Gestapo. I praised fate for being kind to David, extraordinarily kind in comparison with other people's tragic destiny, who had no helping hand stretched across a continent to drag them away from obvious disaster. A grim and horrible world in which men can only think in terms of punishment, where the barbed wire of one concentration camp is being favourably compared with the bars of another prison! Where a decent, harmless human being sighs with relief: "After all—I'm glad this isn't Dachau!"

Dachau and Buchenwald have become the standard by which all other suffering is measured. And for the women of Europe the same applies. Either their menfolk are voluntarily facing death or involuntarily facing some sort of ghastly humiliation. We want to—nay, we must—reconquer a world in which one may freely say: "My man has got a cold"—without being reminded that another man is being beaten to death.

Measured then by the destiny of thousands, I was quite happy during the spring and summer of 1938. Happy of course only where my very personal life was concerned, with David safely in Brussels after much anxiety on my part and many adventures on his. But underneath my happiness I mourned Austria, along with every other European who had been to that charming and highly cultured country. The death of Vienna was equal to the death of a lively, care-free sister who had long been impoverished, but who carried on with a smile and a song.

Sybille's comment on the Anschluss was short, but made me shiver:

"Now that Austria is gone we here in Prague are prepared for the worst. One need only have listened to Hitler's last broadcast and his hinting at the *millions of Germans living and suffering in Sudetenland/ But actually, grim as it

sounds, if he were to go for C.S.R. it might at last clear the atmosphere, for we trust the French to stand by their pledge."

The summer was a lovely one! I knew David was safely just across the Channel, and he wrote to me frequently and in tones of highest praise for his benefactor, M. Couno, who had actually achieved the impossible—namely, obtained a *carte de travail* for David and found him some job in his own business. A man like Leon Couno is a man in a million, and if anyone deserved a decent break from Heaven it was he. And, measuring it once more by the standards of our epoch, he did get his reward. For instead of having to live on in Belgium, and be exposed to humiliation and misery, he succeeded in fleeing to England, and is permitted to fight for his own country's liberation against his own countrymen. This too seems to me a formidable stroke of good luck. M. Couno, already having fought in the last war, is now doing an important job—not in the lime-light but in the Belgian Red Cross. He has exchanged his villa in Brussels for a modest furnished room in Bloomsbury, and lives on a very small income. Yes—he who giveth charity shall have to receive charity later on!

David's letter also contained between the lines something besides gratitude and relief. Into his messages to me had crept a tone of tenderness, gentle hints of homesickness for my company, and the repeated question: "Shall we ever be together?" I, in turn, consoled him that everything was being done to obtain a permit for him to come to London and that I was happy, so happy, to know him safe and in a job. Neither of us however wrote the words: "I love you !"—and it is strange to reflect that two people omit the same thing for quite different reasons.

Wright and I finished *Brother Benjamin* in June, and handed the manuscript to our publishers. They wrote to us that they would read the book immediately and let us know their decision in due course. Having skimmed over some of the dialogue they thought it rather strong in parts.

However they would not like to form a definite opinion until they had read it right through.

"You could moderate your dialogue here and there," suggested Christel meekly.

But Wright and I in chorus answered: "Not a word of it!"

During the hot and blue-skied days of July and early August Wright occasionally hired a car, and as I still held my international driving licence, from the days of my father's first success, I drove the three of us, Christel, Theodore, and myself, through the country. I knew that Wright did this mostly for our sake, for he could no longer enjoy the glories of the English countryside. But he was eager to show us the beauties of his motherland and he invariably had worked out a lovely trip before we started.

I had seen very, very little of the English country up to then. But during that summer, "driving along the roads south, west, and north, I began to realise why England had brought forth so many great poets. A landscape like England's must inspire the creative mind to poetry. The hazy hills in the distance, the meadows looking like tidy parks well cared for by an invisible gardener, the cottages, so low sometimes that one had to bend to walk in, the ancient inns from whose every corner history whispers to you, the stately homes and glorious cathedrals, all that makes one wish to fill pages and pages with quiet, gentle words.

I mourned the fact that I couldn't write, but one night at a small inn I jotted down a few lines which I have well hidden and never shown to a soul, for I know I am no poet. That little piece began:

Don't fall in love with England—Foreigner I
That gentle maiden with her earnest smile
Will look at you with a mysterious gaze
From green and gold and slightly misty eyes,
And hospitably open all her doors
To let the tired European rest—
But shut her heart against your timid woes.
Don't fall in love with England—Foreigner I

Little heed did I pay to my own modest verse, for in these hours of blackout-on-earth and no goodwill from mankind I do not yearn for the gay and spectacular cities of Europe, nor for the varied and sometimes breath-taking beauty of the European countryside. It is the winding, quiet lanes of England that I long for. The walks in cobbled streets of small English towns. The gay Sunday-morning atmosphere of an old English pub. The gleaming of a wet roof in the distance when one descends from a hill. The red earth of Devon and the blue seas that kiss the coasts of Cornwall.

Dangerous and futile dreams of a "Friendly" Enemy Alien!

* * *

That autumn my fifth year in England was to come to a close, and that meant that I could hand in my application for naturalisation. I had to find five vouchers and it did not take me long to get them together. There was, of course, first of all Theodore Wright. The others were my uncle, John Thistlehorn, Lady Lankey, Kay & Powell, and finally Miss Marlowe, who answered my request by return of post, adding that she had found me to be "honest, willing, and loyal."

I got the necessary forms together, and one night with the help of Theodore I composed a fine letter, requesting the Secretary of State to consider my naturalisation favourably. I shall not forget that night quickly, for it was not only my birthday but also the day of Hitler's broadcast from the Sports Palast in Berlin, when he howled and bellowed in customary fashion, this time to the effect that the Sudetenland would have to be handed over to Germany—or else!

Well—it wasn't "or else." It was a mournful, horrible day in September when my grim, jocular prophecy came true: Hitler had stepped beyond dictating to a firm like Oldstead & Gribbons and now dictated to England and France I And Chamberlain went to Munich—and Sudeten-

land went to Hell, and our hearts went out to the thousands and tens of thousands of unhappy people who were to join the vast army of the condemned. For days my mind was so filled with the latest triumph of evil over reason that I forgot all else. Yes, I even forgot to post my application to the Home Office. I laid it in a drawer to pick it up again when my mind would be clearer, and then I forgot it altogether. It still lies there, alongside of my invalid German passport. Two nationalities—one lost and one not yet acquired. And once more I sat between two things.

Early in October, Kay & Powell asked Wright and me to their office.

"Aha," said Theodore, "now for the advance royalties. We can both do with some cash, eh, Renate?"

"Ask me that at any time!"

When we arrived at our publishers', and had exchanged the usual preliminaries about the weather and the once more averted war, Mr Powell began a speech which I am not likely to forget in a hurry.

"Yes—the war. That brings me to the point. Now there is no doubt whatsoever that this book is a masterpiece in its way. Brilliantly constructed, exquisitely translated, and with splendid dialogue in parts."

"Come on, Powell," laughed Wright; "if a publisher starts off by praising something so highly I smell a rat. What's the snag?"

"Frankly, Wright, this book is, to all intents and purposes, a fine piece of art. But unfortunately nothing but violent war propaganda. And we have just gratefully averted that war!"

"Gratefully, eh? Hm. Matter of taste. However! What is your alternative?"

"First of all to take out the personal insults against Hitler, who is, after all, head of a sovereign state."

I had said nothing up to there, but now I just uttered one word:

"Never!"

"Quite so," confirmed Wright, "never!"

"But, old man, you must modify at least some of the dialogue."

"Sorry, can't be done."

"In that case ..." Mr Powell shrugged.

"In that case you will permit us, of course, to take the book to another publisher's."

"If you like, yes. Pity, of course, because you two are a very good team."

"You forget a third person," I said, "namely, my father, who I know would never consent to alter this book."

"But your father was an ardent pacifist you told me!"

"So he was. But the world has changed. No—my father was not a weathercock or an opportunist. I know that too well, for this very story in its original version was turned down before. Only for different reasons. That is the strange fate of *Brother Benjamin* always to be on the wrong side of public opinion. But then most great ideas and ideals are on the wrong side of public opinion! I am sorry, Mr Powell, my decision not to alter one word of this book is quite unshakable."

We parted from our publishers with genuine good wishes. Both Powell and Kay, we knew, were not happy with the state of affairs, but they were business men and had to consider the mood of the masses.

"Looks as though we'd done a fine job for the sake of the job! As my father would say: a state of supreme happiness. Well, Theodore, where do we go from here?"

"Where do you think?"

I knew where he wanted to go. I gave him my arm and led him across to the "Old Queen's Arms." We both felt very much in need of a drink.

"I'd better get the *Standard*" said I, over my third Scotch.

"What for? Haven't you had enough news lately?"

"News? Hal I'm going to study the ads. again. And this time I shall even be able to say: "Yes, ma'm, I was a

parlourmaid to Miss Marlowe of Kensington. Certainly, madam, I can brush a carpet very well indeed!"

"You're tight!" grinned Theodore.

"So are you!"

"Yes—a little. But quite happy. And reckless—so reckless that I'd almost dare to tell Christel——" He stopped.

"Tell her," I urged.

"Nope! It wouldn't be fair. Say, Renate—I've never had the courage to touch her face—and I never dared to ask. But—what does she really look like?"

"Well—she is taller than I am and very slim. She's got grey eyes rather wide apart and nicely shaped brows, and a straight nose with two freckles on it, and a very nice, gentle mouth with good teeth, and her hair is something between ash-blonde and light brown."

"Yes? She sounds lovely."

"She isn't what you would call a classic beauty but she is really very lovely. And very lonely. Theodore, why don't you use your common sense and——"

"I'm using it. Come on, let's go."

"Life is a nice, quiet, uncomplicated affair," said I with ~~disgust~~ * *

Between then and my new job as a house-parlourmaid at the Petersons', St John's Wood, which was to start on December first, I had a very unpleasant surprise.

It was several days after that ghastly, unforgettable tenth of November, when the "people's anger" in Germany was suddenly roused once more and "spontaneously" brought down upon the heads of Judah. That day when all civilisation should have bowed her head in shame. When the synagogues were smashed or burnt and the Jews were literally beaten to death or thrown out of windows, or tortured in many other indescribable ways. When sadism reigned and thousands and thousands of helpless creatures ran for their lives—across the frontiers.

When they stormed the consulates of the Democratic Powers. When the gates of the decent-minded countries were opened to vast numbers of refugees.

I had been with Christel and Theodore most of the day and they had argued themselves hoarse against my decision to take another domestic job. But I proved to them that any other job was closed to me by virtue of vast unemployment, and that a job in a household was better than to tramp the streets of London without result. Wright was bitter that he was not wealthy enough to support me. But I told him that I shouldn't accept it even then. I knew that he had to economise, for his income was irregular these days and his helplessness cost him quite a lot of money.

I had been to a domestic agency and found a job almost at once, in a household with four grown-up people, a cook, and, once a week, a char for the roughest jobs. But this time I had to "live in." Mrs Peterson seemed a kind enough woman, Mr Peterson was a quiet, non-committal man, and their two children were both grown-up and in business. I was shown my future room, high up in the attic, but decent in size and clean, and quietly furnished. Next door to my room was an empty sort of box-room, which I detected immediately, and I asked Mrs Peterson if she had any objections to my bringing along my books.

"Do, by all means. I am glad you like reading. There is a little shelf in the box-room, my son can fix that for you."

"As a matter of fact, madam, I have some thousand books. May I store them in the box-room?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"They belonged to my father."

Mrs Peterson eyed me as though I had gone mad, but she nodded in unmistakable bewilderment and finally said:

"Well, well. I've had all sorts of queer housemaids in my time, but never one with a thousand books!"

"I can believe that, madam—but then, we live in queer times."

"Yes—don't we?"

On the whole I liked the atmosphere of the house. It was not as gloomy as that of Miss Marlowe and not as unimaginatively furnished as that of Uncle John. Jean and Harald Peterson, aged twenty and twenty-one, had some very good pictures and books in their rooms, I discovered later, and Mr Peterson seemed to be a connoisseur in old china. He had a very good collection in his study. Mrs Peterson sang—not very well, but with an agreeable natural gift for singing and—what is more—with the joy of it. I was not a bit scared of the house of Peterson. But Mrs Ralston burst into tears.

"There she goes again. But surely Miss Christel won't stay here all by herself? 'Ere—why don't she move in with that pore blind gentleman? People talk? What of it? 'Oo cares? Not that I wants ter lose yer both. But she will be that lonesome!"

Wright jumped at Mrs Ralston's idea when I told him about her suggestion. And Christel accepted his offer at once. I knew how dependent Wright was on her presence and how fond she had grown of him. Maybe this complete nearness would loosen his tongue. But Mrs Ralston had done more than voice a good suggestion. She had saved Christel's life. And mine was saved by the necessity of moving out in order to live with the Petersons. Mrs Ralston's comfortable, old, ramshackle, but warmhearted and hospitable house is but a heap of rubble. Naked iron girders stretch their arms accusingly skyward. Bits and pieces of hideous wallpaper peep through the dust-heap. Our old bathtub lies on its side as though in a dead faint. Pathetically exposed to the winds is the empty cold grate in the one wall that didn't quite tumble down. And in my former basement room, where I had worked so many hours, lies a large piece of a German bomb.

But Mrs Ralston and her two boys are alive. Very much alive! Ernie is a R.E. out in the Near East and Freddy has come home from Dunkirk. Mrs Ralston

herself is working in a factory. Making bombs. She couldn't be anywhere else I. She is the sort of woman who will always be where she is needed most. And where she can work hard.

"Send a bomb dahn my chimney they did, did they? Well I'll see to it that they are being replaced!"

But long before the Germans sent their bombs to London they sent something else over. None other than my dear and beloved cousin Elisabeth !

The Nazis had at last discovered that my cousin was not quite as "Aryan" as she made out to be. Or maybe they had known all along and did not touch her because her mother was English. But now that Aunt Mary was dead and Elisabeth could not hide any longer behind her mother's convenient nationality they had given her to understand that she was no longer wanted. Her knight errant, Rudolf von Schechen, had been sent to Vienna to organise more efficiently the blind and excessive massacres performed by the Austrian Nazis. Yes, they had to call in the kind-hearted German murderers to stop the sadistic outrages that took place in "cultured Austria !"

Uncle John Thistlehorn and his wife opened their house once more to a refugee from Germany, but Elisabeth was a more agreeable visitor than I had been. She did not make speeches, she did not relate atrocities. She came and smiled and conquered everybody's heart, for she could be truly charming if she smelled an advantage.

And one day, while I was busy packing my bookcases, she descended upon me and was very, very glad to see me.

"Why?" I asked, "without stopping my task.

Elisabeth sat down, crossed her very nice legs, lit a cigarette, and said gently:

"You might as well bury the battle-axe and be sociable."

"However did the Immigration Officer make the mistake of letting you in? Or have you come on the famous *domestic permit'?"

"I have a proper visa. Got it straight from the Embassy in Berlin. I have my connections."

"Oh yes—quite so. Your famous connections!" I said, with scorn.

"They do come in handy at times, Renate. I know very well you hate and loathe everything about me and all I represent, but you must admit that your ideals and principles haven't got you anywhere. I hear you even contemplate taking a domestic job."

"So I shall. And I'd much rather scrub the floors of a decent English house than be seen in the streets with you—or your connections!"

"Very noble, very fine. But wouldn't you prefer an intelligent job where you can use your capabilities?"

"Don't ask such idiotic questions. Of course I would. However, I cannot get one. And now that you have made your bow, and proved to me that you are even more detestable than I remembered you, go home and leave me alone."

"Very well, if that's your attitude—do as you please. By the way, John and Elsie convey their kindest regards and would you come out to tea next Sunday?"

"No, thank you !"

"Must you affront everybody? If you don't like me—all well and good, but don't offend the Thistlehorns. After all, they gave you hospitality and were jolly decent all round."

"Yes, that is true. Oh, very well. But for heaven's sake try to be invited out that Sunday. I'd like to remain civil and keep my temper."

Elisabeth smiled widely.

"You know, Reny, with all your rudeness and stupid notions I can't help being rather fond of you. You are fundamentally tremendously decent, but I wish you'd get wise to yourself and exercise a little more cleverness all round. The Thistlehorns admire you rather, but I know they're terrified lest you start preaching at them again.

People don't want to hear about their mistakes all the time. Make yourself agreeable and shut up."

I contemplated her thoughtfully. Oh no—Elisabeth was not a stupid blonde, as the saying goes. She was a very, very clever girl. She never did or said anything that was not carefully weighed or could possibly antagonise a person that happened to be at an advantage.

"Well, Reny, your silence might mean several things. However, let's for heaven's sake not make a show of our age-old differences and just quietly disagree with each other. I used to call you a prig—well, maybe you aren't one. Maybe your convictions are earnest. But so are mine. Your one aim in life is to suffer with whatever minority happens to be persecuted. Yes, it is! Mine is to enjoy life along with those who happen to run the show."

"You are at least honest, which is more than I expected from you. But I wonder if you would be quite as honest if we did not happen to be alone."

"Certainly not! But then you forget that you happen to be one of those rare birds who like the truth—whatever that may mean. Most people thoroughly dislike it, because it is not always pleasant. And now I shall no longer annoy you by my presence. Ronny is waiting downstairs in the car."

"I don't know who Ronny is, but whoever he is—don't let him wait any longer, by any means."

"If you decide to come on Sunday you'll meet Ronny. He happens to be a rather nice-looking chap whom I met on the boat. He fell head first and has already proposed."

"Congratulations!" I said calmly.

"Premature, my dear. No—I shall never marry him, of course. He's nice, but a bit of an ass. Not at all my wavelength. But he is convenient for running me about in his car."

"If you expect me to make another speech about how disgusting you are—skip it. I'm busy. But I cannot

help hoping that the day will come when somebody or something scares you out of your glittering shell. Something that will make you show your colours and present you to the astonished world as exactly what you are: a low, no-good little beast."

But, as is so often the case in life, when the moment came—I didn't enjoy it. I couldn't gloat over Elisabeth who sat huddled under the staircase of her house, shivering with terror, pressing her hands against her ears, trembling at every ghastly whizz that came with the falling bomb. A frightened, terrified creature, paralysed into speechlessness. Until one day she couldn't stand it any longer and made off for the safer Torquay. . . .

I did go along to the Thistlehorn's that next Sunday, and I also met Ronald Slatterleigh. It took a girl like Elisabeth to label Ronny as a "silly^ass." He was nothing of the sort. All he was, indeed, was that quiet, shy, reticent typical sort of Englishman, brought up in the traditional manner, complete with Harrow and Cambridge education and safe from the minor worries of this life by virtue of his father's banking account. That well-bred, quietly dressed kind of young man one meets in their hundreds all over England, neither pompously conventional nor artificially revolutionary. Just a nice Englishman. That he was completely infatuated with my good-looking cousin was amusingly obvious. He hardly ever addressed her all afternoon for fear of giving away his feelings, and blushed violently every time the name "Betty" was uttered. Poor old Ronny! There are several thousand charming, decent, honest girls in this country, both English and foreign, and you had to pick my cousin Elizabeth. She treated him in such an offhand manner that I had to pull myself together very hard not to make some tactless remark. But how her manner changed when the conversation suddenly turned to the possibility of war 1 It was John Thistlehorn who became unwittingly and unwillingly the matchmaker between Betty and poor Ronald Slatterleigh.

"Well, Slatterleigh, good job you're back home. If war really comes, which I fervently hope will be avoided, you'd be in a nasty spot sitting in a German internment camp."

I saw Elisabeth go a shade paler. But her voice was quite level when she asked:

"Do countries also intern women of enemy nationality?"

"Yes, I think so," said Elsie.

And I enlarged upon it:

"They'll have a bit of a business in this country to sort out the genuine refugees from the scum that came floating over from Germany as Nazi spies."

Elisabeth smiled widely and said:

"Let's forget all about a hideous war. There are so many much more pleasant topics—aren't there, Ronny dear?"

"And besides, Bessy darling, you'll have nothing to worry about. A girl with your looks will soon enough find a nice Englishman to marry her. And that will solve that problem!" laughed Uncle John.

Ronny beat this time all his records in blushing. I said nothing. I only prayed that Ronald Slatterleigh might be enlightened by a benevolent guide in the spirit world on what he was letting himself in for. But I might as well say here and now that Ronny had no such luck. The engagement between Miss Bessy Field (11) and Mr Ronald Francis Edward Slatterleigh was announced at Christmas. The last Christmas of Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards mankind.

* * *

My position at the Petersons' brought home to me what the life of a domestic servant really is. At Miss Marlowe's I had been able to keep strict hours, for I left every night at seven sharp. Miss Marlowe wanted it that way. And when the heavy front door of her house had closed behind me I returned to my own life, my home, my hobbies, and my work. It was very different now.

Apart from the fact that the Peterson family kept very late hours, and I had often to serve them drinks or tea long after the nine-o'clock news, my duties started earlier and my jobs were more varied and more strenuous. Also cook was different from Miss Wilson, who was taciturn and kept the strict social line between her and myself. That is to say she was my superior, and I was her housemaid, and one doesn't converse with housemaids. Miss Marlowe could afford to do so, if she chose to, for old ladies are somewhat eccentric. But Miss Wilson was not at all eccentric.

Mrs Lisson, the Peterson cook, was a talkative woman who liked a little chat now and then, and unfortunately the little chat consisted mostly of criticising our employers. "She" was mean, "he" was dotty, "that girl" was loose, and "that boy" had no manners. And if I silently agreed that the Peterson family, like all human beings, had their faults and shortcomings I could not bring myself to discussing them with Mrs Lisson, who in turn labelled me as a "stiff." She also detested my hankering after some privacy at night, when I fled to my attic room and read or wrote letters or mended my clothes.

"You are not sociable," she complained. "Why don't you come downstairs and have some tea and a nice little chat?"

"It's very kind of you, Mrs Lisson, but I have some writing to do."

"Well maybe my company isn't good enough for you, miss," she replied stiffly.

"Nonsense, Mrs Lisson; I love talking to people, as you know—but really I must write to my—hm——"

I knew that would appease and even thrill Mrs Lisson. She had a craving for romance of any kind, and the thought that I might sit up there composing a passionate love-letter to my "best boy" was the only excuse for not sitting in the kitchen with her and discussing the Petersons.

"Oh, well—go on and write to him. Pity he is so far

away 1 You must sometimes feel very homesick for a bit of cuddling. It's natural."

The word "cuddling" in connection with David made me feel very self-conscious and I fled.

That little room upstairs was not too bad after I had rearranged it. I spent many long evenings there in well-earned solitude. Sometimes when the Petersons had visitors and I had been told that "that was all, thank you, Renate," I could hear Mrs Peterson sing Schubert's or Schumann's *Lieder*, and I did get a bit sentimental, remembering the concerts I had heard in Berlin. I had also brought along the wireless, which Christel had generously left me without demanding her share of money back. It proved a great friend in those long winter evenings. (Good old Hugo—not quite paid for but peacefully sitting in Theodore Wright's box-room—doomed to silence, since I, an Enemy Alien, am not permitted to have you any longer. I might tamper with you, Hugo, and flash secret messages to the Nazis whom I like so well.)

With all the work I had to do in the daytime, and the hours in my room which were crammed with reading and writing and mending, with my free afternoons in the company of Wright and Christel, or a nice jolly chat with Mrs Ralston, time seemed to run through my hands like water. Time, precious time I I often had the feeling that I was missing something terribly important, and then again there were moments when I thought everything was unimportant and of no value at all. I slowly, very slowly, acquired the "domestic mentality." I fought against it like a tiger-cat, read more and more, spent free evenings at lectures, listened to music. But the broom and the duster and the vacuum-cleaner, and all the other vital weapons of war against dirt, followed me into my dreams. A newspaper was no longer just a means for information but something I had to put beside my master's breakfast dishes. A fire no longer just flickered and crackled and

warmed—but became a thing with a will of its own when it didn't want to draw or had to be fed. Every article in the house took on a different meaning. Even a bunch of flowers lost its quality of beauty and joy-of-living. It turned into a charge to be looked after. The only duty that I really enjoyed was looking after Bobby, the terrier. In time he ceased to be a mere dog and became a pal. He was rather old—fifteen, I believe—his food had to be mashed up, and his eyes were dim. He walked slowly and obediently and made me feel very sad sometimes, because he reminded me of the evanescence of all living things. He often sat with me upstairs and we talked to each other, which was a good thing. For a domestic servant, unless she cherishes gossiping with her colleagues, is condemned to the life of a Trappist monk.

Both Christel and Wright urged me to give up that job and advertise for something else. But I knew it was useless. After the November pogrom in Germany there had been an enormous influx of refugees into England. And these people, who had no chance of getting used to their surroundings slowly, of learning the language properly by meeting English people only (as I had been lucky enough to do over five years ago, when there were very few Germans in the country), of acclimatising peacefully and with some security, had roused some suspicion and dislike for all refugees in the masses of the nation. They were a bewildered, unfortunate lot, who had perhaps lived in their own homes but in constant fear and terror of the Gestapo. And thus, on the one hand, they couldn't grasp the fact that they no longer possessed a home of their own, and on the other hand that they were free people who were permitted to live but not to make a living. They had time on their hands and little money in their pockets. They had the free English air to breathe but nothing to occupy them. They stuck together, speaking German all the time, and therefore making themselves conspicuous in shops, restaurants, and elsewhere. Most of them were

beyond the age at which a new language comes easily. Many of them still had relatives in Germany and beleaguered the committees to get those people out. The women switched over from being mistress in their own homes to being servants in other people's houses. The men, not quite as adaptable, felt superfluous, and developed inferiority complexes. In fact they presented the whole tragic example of an uprooted community who had been hated and despised in one country and were now tolerated in another. They impersonated the *J'accuse* of the twentieth century and yet, measuring it again by the modern standard of existence, they were lucky compared with others. But with unemployment figures high, and England facing grave problems, with tension in the air and everybody nervous, the foreign refugees were not exactly destined to make the people feel much better. And although thousands had put their names down for service should England go to war, we were unfortunately not trained for some useful job but had to live on charity or domestic work.

And so I stayed at the Petersons', and many of my sister-refugees, whom I met now in larger numbers than before, envied me my good position. Snow came and melted. David wrote that he was making good at Couno's and had got a rise.

"I'll soon be able to repay my debts to you," he wrote in one letter. "I wish I could come over to England and be with you. But I must be glad to have this job and be able to stay here, thanks to grand old Couno."

I smiled wistfully when I read that letter. Would we ever be together? Would the pound notes I saved week by week one day pay my fare over the Channel to go and see David? Living as I did, my longing for the man I loved sometimes became intolerable. I saw time slip by and take with her my young womanhood, the joys of which I hardly knew. Europe and her agonies had thrust herself between David and myself, and the fact that he was married had become a trifling obstacle compared with

those that circumstances put in our way. But I did cling to my hope of reunion. It kept me alive.

There was to be another reunion in early spring, one I had hardly hoped for any more. That tragic March when Hitler broke yet another pledge, Czechoslovakia saw to it that some of her most endangered free-thinking people were saved from the clutches of the Gestapo. Not all of them. Many a grand man and woman are still suffering hell and feeding on the hopes that one day they will be liberated. But among the fortunate ones who did come over in one of the hurriedly leaving 'planes was Sybille Barthold. I shudder to think what would have happened to that notorious anti-Hitlerite if the henchmen of Germany had got hold of her! And, accidentally at the same time, Ilona Lankey came over from Paris to give a broadcast in London.

There we were then, the four of us together, four young women of Europe, of whom only one had so far been spared the misery of our inglorious times. Ilona was the last to feel the blow and hers was the grimmest. What she could not achieve in life—namely, a complete unification with her Charles—she did achieve by kind interrogation of Herr Hitler's army. Charles and Ilona committed suicide together at a Paris hotel room on June 14th. When Paris died.

Reunions can be boisterous or sentimental, embarrassing or relieving. But the atmosphere in Christel's room in Wright's house where the four of us sat together held its own unique quality. We were neither brimming over with gaiety nor did we revel in sentimental memories. We were curiously still—in spite of the fact that we talked all the time. There were also four men present—but only in our conversation. Philippe the Spanish hero; Charles the French big business man; David, escaped twice and now enjoying a period of freedom which was to end so soon. And finally Gunter Cast, whom Sybille had hardly ever mentioned in her letters.

"Where is he, what's he doing?"

Sybille smiled quietly:

"Gunter is very, very busy. He is radio star, a journalist, an armament worker, and several other things. And all in the Cause of Freedom. Where is he? Somewhere in Germany—or perhaps at this moment outside Germany. I never know—I never ask. But I do know that he will never give up the Cause. Never!"

"He is really grand!" I said somewhat thoughtfully. Sybille put her hand over mine.

"Never mind, Renate—your David may not be very grand, but you love him, and that's that."

"Yes," said I.

We had so much to say to one another—too much, in fact. We only skimmed all the topics that should have been thrashed out in detail. But with four different fates so packed with events or hopes or grief hardly any period of time could be long enough to absorb them all. We knew almost everything about each other's past and present—but what of the future?

"Yes, what of it?" asked I.

"Is there such a thing?" Christel put in vaguely.

"My God, yes!" cried Sybille. "All this mess is making for a future. This war against Hitler simply cannot be put off indefinitely. One day the Western Powers will have to realise that talk and more talk cannot save mankind! And then our time will come. Then we can at least all of us put on the uniforms of whatever country we are sheltering in and grab a gun and go to it!"

Well, Sybille, so far you are the only one to be allowed to do something useful. How wise you were to sail out East, and how brave you were to be ready to face perils and hardships unknown by offering your services to China. And how wise were the Chinese to accept your offer!

Ilona, when she learnt what I was doing, immediately drew out her cheque-book and offered me a fantastic sum of money to live on.

"No, old girl—thanks all the same."

"Don't be proud!" she urged.

"I'm not a bit proud, really not. Pride among friends is silly, and if I were incapable of earning a living, believe me, I should take your money without the slightest hesitation. But somehow it is not in accordance with my ideas that one should live on the money which somebody else has earned. I cannot fight this idea with one hand and do exactly the same thing with the other."

"But really, Reny—damn it—we are all the same—why should you do a rotten job simply because you haven't a chance!"

"It isn't all that rotten. And thousands are doing it. Women much older than myself. I am doing it more or less voluntarily, because my qualifications are nil. I wonder if I should do it as happily if I were forced into it."

"Oh no, you wouldn't!" laughed Sybille. "You'd kick up a fine row I"

"Yes—I believe so. I hate any kind of force. Heavens ! I daren't even think of what I should have gone through had I stayed in Germany. Jews mustn't do this or must do that. I'd have been imprisoned a hundred times over. Or just simply died."

"Yes, there is nothing quite so humiliating as unjust discrimination. Now they make certain Jews work in Germany in certain jobs. But only in those. They call them 'economically valuable Jews.' Would you stand for it?" asked Christel.

"Who, me?" I retorted. "Not on your life. If I'm good enough to do anything at all I'm doing the thing I'm qualified for! I couldn't be an outcast some of the time and 'useful' the rest of the time! I'd kick like a mule."

"Let's hope then, old girl, that you'll never be in a position where somebody tells you to lump it or leave it ! What would you do?"

"Yell the house down. I guess that's my father inside me."

"Oh no, it isn't," said Christel, with a smile, "it's much more your Grandfather Dressel inside you! He'd yell too. Your father never yelled. He would have quietly sat down and stated his case to somebody intelligent."

"Thanks for reminding me of my dear grandpapa. But I see what you mean, Christel. Well, thank God, I escaped in time from that thrice-cursed Vaterland of mine. Because what good would it have done there to sit down quietly and state one's case? And who is intelligent in Germany?"

"Quite a few people," answered Sybille calmly.

I flew at her: "None of them! They ought to be razed from the face of the earth. The whole unholy bunch."

"Including, for instance, Gunter?"

"No—no—not Gunter. But how many Gunters are there?"

"Thousands!" said Sybille, with emphasis.

"Then why don't they get themselves organised and shoot that lunatic?"

"They need outside help."

"Then they'll have to wait till they are black in their faces," said Ilona. "France hates the idea of war. I live there—I know."

"It'll have to come sooner or later," said Sybille.

I asked furiously: "Why doesn't your man Stalin make a move?"

"He will, don't you worry," answered Sybille quietly, but with the fire of conviction burning in her eyes.

That conversation is alive to me this night as though it had taken place yesterday. Every word of it. Particularly the bit about discrimination. No, I didn't yell the house down, nor did I die when slowly but steadily one restriction after the other was imposed upon us—us who are itching to join in this fight against the Nazis. This fight, which is so much our fight too! I did what Christel said my father would have done: I wrote letters and stated my case. OUR CASE! To intelligent people. And I

got sympathetic and intelligent replies. But nothing has happened so far. Nothing. Outside, the blackout is broken by the blaze of fires and the flares from the German planes. Outside, a thousand busy hands are helping, tending the wounded, giving comfort. Outside, vigilant people are marching the pavement to prevent more fires. Outside, high up in the skies, our fighters risk their lives to protect this island. Outside, the ambulances clang past. Outside, dotted all over England, are the factories working, working away at keeping pace with the needs of the nation. Outside. . . .

Ilona went back to Paris; Christel remained at her job, giving help and hope and happiness to Wright; I went on with my job, and Sybille got busy with welfare work at the Czech committee for refugees. The Czechs recognised her quietly as one of themselves, having lived amongst them for so long and being known as such an excellent, reliable worker. But somehow I sensed that Sybille was waiting for something. She never said so, but when we spent our free hours together I often caught her staring into space, looking as though she were listening to some call. Was it a sign of life from Gunter she was waiting for? Or was it something even greater for a woman like her? I found out late that summer. We were together that night when the pact between Moscow and Berlin was revealed over the wireless. We sat in my little room at the Peterson house and I was glad we were alone when the announcement came. I should have hated anybody to laugh at Sybille, the Communist, whose entire building of faith and hope and ideals would now crash to pieces. But strangely enough it didn't! She sat quite still, her large eyes fixed on the wireless, her lips tightly drawn together and her hands folded. I saw her knuckles going deadly white. And I dared not say a word. She spoke first.

"Never!" she said with horrible calm. "Never I Men might sign pacts, men might shake hands with their deadly

enemies, men might even betray a Cause. But the idea cannot die and shall not die. The people themselves will not betray each other. Never! There must be something behind this—something you or I cannot grasp! I don't believe it—I simply don't believe it."

"But it's true. It's authentic," I ventured vaguely.

"The facts might be true, the facts might be authentic, but behind those facts is a reason. Something terrific."

I must confess I couldn't see it that way. I was simply dazed. I didn't know whether to laugh or to burst in tears. Ribbentrop in Moscow shaking hands with Stalin. The world was standing on its head! But Hitler had made many pacts in his time and broken all of them! Did the great man Stalin not realise that?

"He must," said Sybille. "He must, and I am certain he does."

"Could it be that he wants to give Hitler a dose of his own medicine and break that ludicrous pact when he's ready to march?"

"God—I hope so."

Sybille Barthold left by boat for Shanghai on the twenty-ninth of August. She had arranged things with a speed unknown to me. I knew what drove her away. She never admitted it, but this Russo-German pact had shaken her up violently. And yet she kept faith in her ideas. She did not sit down and wail and mourn the loss of a Utopia. She rolled up her sleeves and went to work in one country that has been bleeding for years and years under the assaults of a vicious neighbour. Her farewell was short and unsentimental. She shook me by the hand and said:

"I'm sick of Europe, Renate—heartily sick of it. But that does not mean that I am sick of everything else. I am going East. Bless you, child. And whatever may happen, don't despair. Do what I told you years ago. Sit down and write a book. No—not your father's books—your own. You ought to be almost angry enough now!"

And so—one young woman of Europe turned her back on this tragic continent.

* * *

Among the days which are in my memories labelled "red-letter days of emotional strain" the third of September 1939 stands out with amazing intensity. From the moment when I served the Sunday breakfast to the Petersons until late that night my mind was a whirlpool of emotions and counter-emotions.

It was Mr Peterson who told me to call cook up from the kitchen.

"She might want to listen to the wireless. The Prime Minister has an announcement to make."

It is not without humour I reflect upon the fact that Mrs Lisson, who had on many an occasion voiced her liking for the German people as such, immediately became the most belligerent member of the Peterson household as soon as Mr Chamberlain's voice faded away. And it is also rather grimly amusing that she heaped her disgust with the Germans upon my head and became, in time, the motor and driving force for Mrs Peterson's giving me notice.

But she made off for her kitchen to prepare the Sunday joint quickly after the first turbulent and muddled moments of general reactions—with an "All clear" announcing to us the fact that the imaginary raiders had passed. I must confess that when I heard the first siren, knowing the Germans and the Nazi efficiency, I was quite prepared for a mass raid on London there and then. I still shudder—although there is a pretty violent attack going on right now—to think what might have happened to London on that third of September 1939 had Hitler seen fit to "catch the bus" instead of—gratefully for us—missing it.

I remained in the morning-room for some time performing my duties, and it so happened that the Peterson family drew me into the general debate that went on about this

war. Harald of course would be called up fairly soon, and Jean hoped that in good time she too would have an opportunity to make herself useful. At this point I asked Mrs Peterson for permission to go out the next day.

"I wish to put my name down at all the recruiting centres for women, at the War Office, and other places for National Service. I am just itching to get into a British uniform."

"Are you really prepared to fight against your own country?" asked Mr Peterson rather incredulously.

"I have no own country any longer, sir, I have only a deadly enemy called Germany."

"But surely," cried Jean, "for the very horrible fact that one man killed your father, Renate, you cannot hate an entire nation."

"I hate them for looking on and approving of it. Wouldn't you, Miss Jean?"

"Oh—I don't know. Daddy, if any mad fellow were to do you in, do you think I should hate all England?"

Naturally and understandingly Mr Peterson disliked to enlarge upon this point!

"Renate looks positively elated over this old war," laughed Harald.

"So I am," I said.

"But war is detestable and horrible and sad!" cried Mrs Peterson.

"Yes, madam, it is. But this is not just a war where two nations squabble over some silly bit of territory or for the sake of more power in industry or on the seas. This war is—or should be—a holy crusade against evil and barbarism. And there can only be two sides in this war. Those for and those against Hitler! I happen to be against Hitler, although by accident of birth I am put down as a German subject, which in fact I have ceased to be several years ago by expatriation. I was not born or brought up in England, but I made my home here; I have found sanctuary and shelter in this country—and this

country is the one that can claim my services. I go further—I don't only consider it my duty to fight in this war, but my right!"

"That makes us all Allies together!" said Jean Peterson, and spontaneously, and with a kindness and understanding unusual for so young a girl, she suddenly shook my hand.

Harald grinned widely and said: "Wait till they stick you into a uniform, Renate! You might be my superior officer one day. Wow!"

Those were the happy hours when I still had the illusion that I was in this fight on the right side of it, but not outside of it as a pitiful between—neither locked up as an enemy of the State nor acknowledged as an ally. I spent that afternoon, which was my day off, walking in the park, because I knew that Theodore was resting after lunch. It was a hazy, sunlit day with the barrage balloons gleaming like small, floating silver elephants high up in the sky. The park was crowded with walkers, most of them discussing the war and the first "alert," which had, thank goodness, meant nothing. And all of a sudden it occurred to me that now, with England at war, David and I would hardly have a chance of seeing each other for God knows how long! It struck me as remarkable that only now, many hours after the announcement, I should think of David. This was one occasion when my feminine heart had not pushed itself between world-affairs and me! This war came first. It was something I had waited for for exactly six years. Yes, I had also waited for David for many years, yet—so negative a wish-fulfilment as a declared war had preference to so positive a matter as the reunion with the man I loved.

When it was time to visit Wright and Christel I found that neither of them had rested, but waited for me to arrive. They were, naturally, as excited as I was, and we had a long and lively debate. With the next batch of news came the announcement of one item, which in its content was harmless enough but in its form gave me a slight shock.

It was given over the air that "all aliens of enemy nationality would have to register and should look out for details in the Press."

"You girls have nothing to worry about. They'll pretty quickly sort out the Germans from the refugees and give you some sort of document classifying you as Allies."

"Yes," said Christel. "And I shall go to-morrow morning and put my name and qualifications down. They'll need doctors, I guess."

"Not by any chance running out on me?" asked Theodore, with a smile.

"No, my dear, not a bit of it. But you do agree that the war comes first, whatever happens?"

"Yes, Christel. I heartily agree."

"By the way, Wright—how about offering *Brother Benjamin* once more to Kay & Powell? This time they can have no objections."

It was exactly five days after the declaration of the war, with news about a horrible, lightning campaign in Poland, but no visible changes in our island, when Mrs Peterson gave me notice. I felt that she was greatly embarrassed and very reluctant, and I made things somewhat easier for her by saying:

"As a matter of fact, madam, I do want to do war-work, anyway. So I too believe it's the best all round."

"Please, Renate, don't think it's anything personal—but there is a war between your people and mine."

"No, there isn't, Mrs Peterson; for England has no quarrel with the Jews. However—I understand."

That was a lie. I did not understand. I had made it so plain to the Petersons that I was positively and desperately on their side! And yet—they simply couldn't grasp the fact that there were two kinds of Germans: accidental ones and real ones. I am still surprised that I didn't "yell the house down" or fly into an uncontrolled rage. I simply sat in my room that night, shaking my head, wondering whether I or my otherwise so sound Peterson family had

gone mad, or whether this was all Mrs Lisson's fault. She may have threatened to lay down her job if that "German" stayed on. And a good and loyal cook was more difficult to replace than a house-parlourmaid.

Once more I packed those bookcases; once more Carter Paterson came jogging along and heaved those heavy chests upon their van; once more I moved. But I did not go back to Mrs Ralston. This time Theodore insisted that I should stay in his house. And I gladly accepted his invitation. In those days it was good to be near trusted friends and not alone.

I had been exactly nine months with the Petersons and had saved a few pounds for that journey to Belgium. They came in handy now, for it did not look to me as though I should get a job quickly. Wright had a couple of spare rooms, of which one was occupied by Christel, and the other one I took temporarily. I was convinced that sooner or later I should go into National Service and possibly out of London.

I am still in London. I am not doing any National Service.

Yes, it was splendid to be with Theodore and Christel. The blackout frightened the life out of me, for I am completely night-blind, and once or twice when I had to go out I found myself creeping along the walls, terrified and awkward. A ghostly sensation these first black nights of London. The flashes of the people's torches held an uncanny quality. The sound of their voices and feet, the noises of the traffic, seemed intensified.

Wright smiled: "I'll come in handy for you people these days. I am used to a blackout and find my way about splendidly."

It was early in December when Ilona Lankey came to London on a short visit from France. She brought the sad news that her faithful shadow Max had fallen during an air battle. He had enlisted in the Polish Air Force as soon as war broke out.

"I shall feel very helpless without my Max."

"Aren't you going to stay in England?"

"No. I belong much more to France. And in these times I wouldn't wish to leave Charles."

She told me how lucky I was to live in England and not in France, where aliens were being thrown into internment camps, regardless of the fact whether they were violent anti-Nazis or not. She had had several urgent pleas from friends to do something on their behalf and had failed to do a thing.

"But this is ridiculous!" I cried. "Don't they know that they have a whole army of splendid fighters amongst them, ready to take up arms against Hitler immediately?"

She shrugged.

"I tried to tell several people exactly that, but they hate the refugees even more than the genuine Nazis, who receive every consideration and comfort if captured and imprisoned, whereas the wretched immigrants are thrown into foul and rotten camps. It is a sad world in which we live, Renate. And the saddest of all is—it will never change!"

"Oh, don't say that, for heaven's sake don't! If ever a war was destined to change the world, surely it must be this one!"

Several days after this I appeared before the Aliens Tribunal which was to decide under what category of alien I was to be put. I had to bring letters from English people who had known me for some time and I opened my drawer and took out the five vouching letters which I had once wanted for my naturalisation. I stood quite still for a while and pondered. I had neglected that business—had I not, I should most probably be British to-day, which would make things a lot easier. But then—did I really want "things easier"? Did I not in reality belong to that vast crowd, now about to be sorted out, that army of homeless people who almost without exception waited to do their share in this war? As cousin Elisabeth had put

it: "Your one aim in life is to belong to a suffering minority!" It was not my aim—but it seemed to be my destiny, and one should carry one's destiny with grace and pride!

It was with such thoughts that I faced my judge. The judge, like many English judges, had a sense of humour and a kind smile. He skimmed over my letters, pushed his spectacles right up his forehead and murmured:

"Feldt—Feldt—familiar. Anything to do with that writer—eh—hm—what——"

"Fritz Feldt, the author of *No Hero At All?*" I asked.

"Quite so—yes—hm!"

"My father, sir."

"Ah—excellent. Hm! Where is he?"

"He was murdered by the Nazis, sir."

"Oh—I say, I am sorry—hm!—naturally you are a C. Alien. No doubt. You couldn't possibly like the—hm!—er—Nazis?"

"I have the one desire—to fight them!"

"Quite so. The opportunity will come, no doubt. Thank you, Miss Feldt—hm!—thank you very much. Next case."

ChristePs lot was not quite as easy. She was an "Aryan" German and had not been here as long as I had. She was questioned much more closely, but in the end was also labelled "Refugee from Nazi Oppression," which technically she was not, theoretically however she was. I reflect how difficult it must have been to sort us all out. There we were, some seventy odd thousand, stating our case, answering questions. But my trust in the knowledge of humankind and the ability to size a man up possessed by an English judge makes me believe that they knew exactly who could be trusted to run around free and who couldn't.

Now I was stamped trustworthy. Now I could go about offering my services to the country. My devastating night-blindness made it impossible for me to join any A.R.P. service with a clear conscience. For although I am a good

driver I could not risk making a thorough mess of an ambulance at night. And so I put my name down for any and every kind of service. I succeeded finally in getting into canteen service at one of our local stations. But that lasted only a very short time. As soon as the first notices appeared in the Press urging the country not to let "Aliens" run around loose I was sacked, along with several other foreign people.

Maybe I would have despaired, or protested violently against what seemed to be a shortsighted and unkind policy, had not an event taken place that made everything else seem unimportant. This event was so fantastic in its quixotism that I still marvel how it could possibly have happened.

My friend M. Couno, driven by the desire to reunite David and me, actually succeeded, by means still unknown to me, in obtaining for David a faked Belgian passport. He packed him off and sent him to England on "urgent business," and I can visualise his great grin when David actually took off. It was all meant as a great surprise for me, and a surprise it was when I was one morning notified by the authorities that "a German prisoner, at present at X. Prison, had arrived in this country on false pretences and named me as his friend." I nearly passed-out!

A lovely position for a "friendly enemy alien"! And I hadn't the faintest idea who the prisoner could be. I raced down to the place to which I was summoned and faced three solemn-looking gentlemen.

"Yes, gentlemen, what can I do for you?"

"Are you Miss Renate Feldt?"

I confirmed this.

"Now please tell us all you know about a man called David Hartmann.

I just let out one yell: "David!"

"Then you do know him? Very good. Tell us the details."

It was a breathless narrative. His imprisonment and

flight from Germany, his escape out of Austria, and finally his job in Belgium.

"Is he a Nazi sympathiser?"

"David? Good Lord, no! But how on earth did he get here?"

One of the men told me, and I couldn't restrain my laughter. But the men looked stern and disapproving and, by God, I couldn't blame them. The audacity of coming into a belligerent country as an enemy with a faked passport ! A marvel he hadn't been shot on sight. But David was very much alive. I was permitted to see him—under escort—in his cell at X. Prison, and this time there was no need to remind me that one should greet one's dearest friend in the proper way. I hung on his neck and laughed and cried, and stopped making any bones about my feelings. And he too was happy, so happy to see me!

"Now, Renate darling, you've got to get me out once more, and I hope for the last time," he grinned.

"I bet you anything I'll have you out of here within a week!"

When the allotted time was up I kissed David and said in despair:

"David—David—will you ever manage to stay a free man for more than a couple of years at a stretch?"

He grinned.

"Once I'm out of here I'm going to stick to you, and you look out that I don't get myself into jug again! Reny, when you asked me many many years ago if I had been to Russia, and was I interested in National Socialism, I never dreamed that one day you'd be all I . . ."

"Bye-bye, David. See you soon!"

On my way home I tried to sort out my feelings. They were a dreadful mixture of delight and worry. How on earth did one set about getting this madcap out of prison? Sir Anthony? Theodore? Our publishers? And this brought the natural connection with my father's book

No Hero At All and the judge of the tribunal who had been so kind. Both Wright and Christel were every bit as dumbfounded on hearing who the mysterious German prisoner was. And Christel cried:

"At last? My God—what a goal to have reached after all these years of waiting!"

"Goal is right," I said grimly, and discussed with them the possibilities of getting David out. They agreed that the judge was undoubtedly the best person. So, once again I sat down and composed a very fine letter.

* * *

And then you were free, David—and you were mine. That grand fellow Wright threw his doors open for you as he had done for myself, and gave you hospitality and friendship. There we both were in my lovely, cosy room together at last, with no frontiers between us any longer except one—your marriage licence. That frontier I crossed without a visa.

I was a very happy woman when you drew me into our first embrace, David. I had no fear of you—I was supremely, gloriously unself-conscious. But when the dawn came, when I saw your sleeping face upon the pillow—so calm, so undisturbed, so safe—I sometimes frowned. Oh, David—David—I don't blame you—nor can I blame myself—it happened—IT. Like transparent shadows the vision of Gunter Gast and Philippe Orez glided through the dim greyness of the early morning. And also the vision of my father—and of Theodore, who was wrapped in eternal night ! You, too, were a victim of Europe, David—but a passive victim and therefore all the more helpless. My pity for you is boundless, David—boundless and tender and mixed with womanly delight in your love for me, if love it really was, and not just a great and deep gratitude. . . .

With the bright light of day these ghosts lost their substance.

Meanwhile, outside, the war dragged along. But for Wright and myself it brought in its wake a success. Messrs Kay & Powell asked us if we were still prepared to let them handle *Brother Benjamin*. The times, they argued, were now propitious for a book like that.

And for the first time Theodore and I had a pretty lively argument. I took the view that now we could sell that book to anybody and let Kay & Powell go to wherever publishers go to when their time is up. But I was shouted down by my three friends, and finally agreed, admitting that Kay & Powell had been very good and successful in the past. And so it was proved once more that Art knows no nationalities, for even though I was not permitted to wash dishes or serve soldiers in a canteen, because of my former German nationality, nobody objected to my being published. And I reflected that with a hint here and there, or a case stated with enough emphasis and power of conviction, an author might do infinitely more harm to a country than a dish-washer! However.

They paid us a generous advance and life could have been a completely happy affair—for there was David—there was my comfortable home—there was money to go on with. Oh, treacherous happiness!—always walking in with a glowing smile, only to walk out again, swiftly, relentlessly, leaving nothing behind but the memory of you!

Yes, the time drew nearer when Hitler broke yet one more pledge, when the little countries beyond the Channel suddenly awoke from their pleasant dream of neutrality and non-belligerency! When peaceful citizens were ruthlessly bombed and maimed, when traitors had their Day, and, hopelessly outnumbered, brave armies faced a formidable and merciless enemy. The time when Panic came to Britain—panic and anxiety—lest there were also traitors amongst us, the silent army of homeless Europeans. At first meek voices suggested that we should be more closely scrutinised. But when Holland and Belgium fell,

and Hitler stood across the Channel menacing this island, the panic became gigantic, and loud cries were heard: "Round 'em up!" "Intern the lot of 'em!"

Some gallant journals and papers protested and stated our case. Some brave and enlightened men and women rose and fought for us. But the wheels were already set in motion and there began one day the rounding up of Herr Hitler's most passionate enemies and England's most natural and devoted allies!

They went with the stereotyped luggage of the modern refugee: a suitcase and, in lucky cases, a blanket. They went—some bewildered, others indignant, others again resigned—into imprisonment once more. Many of them had tasted the horrors of the German concentration camps and they smiled: "After all—this is not too bad. It won't be Dachau!" No, it certainly was not Dachau, or any other of the German organised hells. But it was humiliation all right. Humiliation for the men and tears for the women. There were possibly good reasons for this treatment—but we were not told them.

"Well—my number is up again!" said David. "But, thank God, I can go to a British internment camp. Supposing I had stayed on in Brussels! I am damned lucky."

"Nice world," commented Theodore, "where a man is so happy about being locked up! This business is too ridiculous for words. Upon my soul, I'm going to write several juicy letters to the Press!"

"So will I!" I raved. "The time has come now to do some nice, loud yelling!"

"Grandfather Dressel," said Christel with a smile. "But I feel exactly the same. Wonder when we women are due?"

"They won't take you girls!" cried Wright.

"Why not? It would only be fair. Damn it, we might be every bit as dangerous as our menfolk," I retorted.

"Dangerous—you! My God, you've been preaching

for years to stop that lunatic Hitler and now you might be locked up as an enemy! Heavens, this is fantastic! I'm going nuts!" Wright was working himself into a fine rage.

"You'd better stay sane. We can do with a few like you!" laughed David. "To get us released again."

"Well there's one loyal young lady they won't intern," I said with disgust, "my dear cousin Elisabeth, better known now as Mrs Bessy Slatterleigh! British by marriage, ladies and gentlemen. Therefore quite, quite safe!"

"By Jove! Look here, Christel—this is a ridiculous way to do it—but our friends can hear every word of it: do marry me!"

"Thanks, Theodore, you are very sweet—but I don't think I shall. I am terribly fond of you as you know. But to marry you in order to remain free would be a rotten show, and quite against everything I believe in."

"Well spoken, old girl," I said; "but Theodore loves you. He only forgot to mention that little fact."

"Look here," started Wright, blushing.

"Oh, well, as you said, we are all friends together. Don't be an ass, Christel. Marry the man and be happy—for a change!"

"I am happy—very much so—but please give me time to think this over. Somehow to marry now and sit snugly would make me feel as though I were deserting a cause."

"Rubbish, Christel ! I'd marry to-night if there were anybody who would propose!" I said with a laugh.

"Yes," argued Christel, "but if you married David to-morrow you wouldn't appear to be biding behind a British passport. For David still has his German nationality."

"And a wife," I added quietly. David had said nothing at all. Somehow I understood Christel's motives. Apart from the fact that she felt like "deserting a Cause" she would not want to make Wright feel that she was marrying

him for convenience. I admired her for her decision. And so, I am sure, did Theodore.

In the middle of the night David suddenly said:

"Renate—if I were free—I mean—unmarried—would you marry me?"

"You are not free," was my reply.

The next day he was even less free, for they came for him very early in the morning. Three policemen in mufti! And I went upstairs to pack his suitcase. This reminded me of another occasion when I had gone to pack a suitcase. But this time there was no terror, no paralysing fear in my heart over what might happen to the man for whom I packed. In our times of queer standards it is indeed a lucky thing to be arrested by the English police instead of the Gestapo! Nothing would happen to David—not a hair on his head would be harmed. He only lost his freedom—nothing else. To lose that is just an item on the life agenda of a European!

He came into the room when I was just closing his case.

"Well, Renate—here I go again. It was a short respite but a happy one. Thanks for everything, my dear, dear girl—and let's hope that this will blow over quickly."

"Yes, David—maybe this is just a short, precautionary measure—they'll sort you out quickly and find out who's loyal. Don't worry—Theodore and I will try our best."

"Renate, I wonder if I shall ever succeed in being anything to you besides a worry."

"But you are, David—you have been so much to me in these last few months. You have shown me a slice of life I never even knew existed—the life of an ordinary woman living with an ordinary man, having small, simple duties and deep, natural joys. What more can I ask, having had all that? It was a lot, considering what is going on in Europe. . . . Who knows if France can hold out now . . . and what will happen to the thousands and thousands of our people over there if she doesn't."

David held me close to his heart. He was already dressed for leaving and once again I was pressed against his overcoat. But that overcoat no longer meant the whole world for me. His arms about me still felt good and comforting—yet looking over his shoulder I seemed to see a grim moving picture of people killing and people dying, and other people being tortured and others simply locked up—an endless chain of suffering humanity. This vision was stronger than the actual experience of having to let my man go into imprisonment once more. This life has no mercy on a woman's heart—makes personal suffering look small and immaterial and only a tiny particle of the general misery of mankind. Well, David—here I hold you now to give you up again, and once more I shall struggle to get you back into freedom. It has become a habit almost—like a dream that recurs ever so often and from which one always struggles to wake up.

We went downstairs together. The three policemen were chatting amiably with Christel and Wright.

"Where do you take him?" (I had asked that question before—many many years ago.)

"To the station, miss. From there onwards—we don't know."

"My God!" I said.

"Don't worry, miss—there's nothing against your friend. The whole thing is more or less a precautionary measure."

"Why? Do you think our men will help Hitler should he venture an invasion on this island?"

"Never know! Supposing a blasted parachutist did come down and landed at your front door? What would you do?" he addressed Christel.

"If he were hurt I should first tend him and then hand him over to the next soldier or policeman I could get hold of."

"And I," said I, "should kill him right out!"

"Now—now," said the officer playfully. But I gave

him such a black look that he said no more. David shook hands with Christel and Wright and kissed me.

"Good-bye, darling."

"Good-bye, darling—good-bye."

Yes, David. Good-bye.

* * *

No room for personal grief—no time for personal tears, for there is so much to cry about! The senile old man of France has finally subjected his country to basest shame and the brown hordes of Hitler are trampling about in Paris.

And Ilona is dead.

She did not die in order to escape being murdered. She had really nothing to fear. But she had loved France, and especially Paris, too much to face a life in which the swastika flag was hoisted on the Eiffel Tower. And her lover had gone along with her. I heard it all from Lady Lankey herself. Her voice—so lovely and melodious—was thick with tears and her gay laugh had vanished.

A hot, glaring sun beat down on this island fortress that stands alone now to face the Mad Dog of Europe. To think that a whole continent consists of two camps only: the tortured and the torturers. No other shades, unless one counts the traitors as a third category.

Christel had persuaded Wright to evacuate along with several other blind friends of his from London. This was no place for a man who cannot move swiftly in case his house should be set alight or bombed. He submitted, but he could not argue her into going with him. Although I backed him up, Christel would not hear of it. Her place was in London, for she believed that the isolated bombing attacks on Britain would be intensified. And perhaps, one day, the authorities would forget her wretched nationality and let her do her share. She had applied for permission to look after evacuated children, but had been refused flatly.

"This is grotesque I" fumed Theodore.

I said with understandable bitterness: "Let's be grateful we are not in France. We'd both by now be handed over to the Gestapo!"

Wright lent us enough furniture to go into a small, comfortable ground-floor flat, and here we both still are, quietly, uselessly watching the Battle of Britain without being able to do a single stroke of work ! And like Christel and myself there sit in this large, brave town thousands of women whose life consists of waiting for mail from their menfolk who are interned and of hoping that one day, soon, we might be called to fight in this war, which is our war. I have asked John Thistlehorn for help. Could he not find me a job or work to do? Anything, everything I should take.

But he shrugged: "Sorry, dear girl—one can't be careful enough. After all—you are a German."

"How dare you call me a German!" I flew at him. But I did not say any more. What was the use. Elsie mourned the loss of her boy who had not come home from Dunkirk. The other son is a night-fighter.

"You grumble about your menfolk sitting behind barbed wire nice and safe! Look at our men!" she said dully.

"Your men know what they are suffering for! They happen to defend their motherland. And suffering is only bearable if it has a reason. But suffering for no reason at all is the most senseless kind of torture."

"What do your people suffer? They are fed well, they have roofs over their heads, they are in no danger."

"Elsie, there is such a thing as mental suffering apart from physical hardships. Can't you imagine the state of mind of most of these deeply loyal people, some of whom have directly and horribly suffered through Hitler and are now yearning to take their revenge! And beyond that—they are looked upon as enemies by the only friends they ever had!"

"Yes, yes—I can understand that. But still——"

"But still" indicates invariably the closing of an argument.

The Battle of Britain has been raging for weeks now. And after the first incredible bewilderment and horror we got used to it, as human beings get used to almost anything. We set our clocks by the "Alerts"—we have arranged our lives around the raids. We can joke while the sinister drone of the enemy planes might mean that one of us may be dead or—worse—maimed the next minute. We sleep long in the mornings—oh, we are the lucky ones without work!—and wake at night. Civilisation and progress in science and technique have thrown us back centuries. The candle has come into its own again—men sleep in cages and emerge in the dawn to greet a new day.

One cannot venture out far these nights—from the Alert onwards life begins at home. Christel and I, thank God, have many interests. Christel has her music, I have my books. Neither of us has a wireless. We miss Hugo. He, at least, told us the news and gave us free concerts. Hugo—the object of continuous arguments between Christel and myself. Because she wanted Beethoven and I wanted Priestley! Now the argument is finished, and when the nine-o'clock news comes, we skip into the neighbouring flat to Miss Lloyd and listen in. If there are important talks in German, the old lady calls one of us to translate them for her. And we do so, and she laughs at our grim faces.

"You Germans have no sense of humour!" she says. "Why, you take everything that horrible man says seriously."

Crash—bang I

"Well they are a bit of a nuisance, aren't they?" she would say at such an explosion, and continue to knit. She is rather marvellous, but to us somewhat uncanny in her calm.

With every new blow this town gets more determined and more grimly cheerful. It's amazing! How dare that evil, nasty paranoiac over in Germany think that he can crush a nation like this! A nation that brings forth men like the magistrate Mr Bliss. To have met a man like Bliss makes one feel good.

It had been one of those nights when the noise never ceased. The bombs were dropping like hailstones and this time our district was singled out for punishment. Neither Christel nor I could sleep, so we sat together in our little drawing-room, doing some sort of needlework and discussing a news item we had heard that evening: Flieger-Leutnant Klaus Dressel had been awarded the Ritterkreuz for bravery.

"I should like to know what he feels when he pulls the ——Look out!" I yelled, and we both went flat on our faces.

Two more hideous whizzings kept us down flat. Then the plane droned off. We rose, telling each other that we looked green.

"That was near!" said Christel, and looked so disgusted that I couldn't help laughing. But I stopped laughing quickly enough, for already we heard the familiar clanging of the approaching ambulances. There was much commotion outside in our street, and suddenly there was a heavy knock at our front door.

"Blackout all right?" I asked anxiously. An alien with an all-wrong blackout is doomed! I ran into the hall and opened the door. And before me I saw an apparition that made me feel faint. Somebody with the white tin hat of the rescue worker, whose face was unrecognisable with dirt and grime, covered with dust and debris.

"Can I bring a couple of people in? Slightly injured but suffering from shock. Need the ambulances for the heavy cases."

"Certainly—do—my friend is a doctor."

"Doctor, eh? Splendid." Christel had appeared.

"You a doctor? Very well, you can come out and give us a hand."

"She can't come out into the street," I said quietly.

"Oh—all right—never mind. We'll bring the people in."

He walked away, and reappeared a few moments later with two women with slight cuts, but badly shaken up. Christel took them into her own room, where she kept her instruments and first-aid kit, and attended to them.

I asked: "Anything else we can do?"

"You may—later. What a night ! They hit the block round the corner—and the people are trapped in the shelter. Blasted swine! The Huns I mean. And we're hopelessly understaffed to-night. Wish that doctor friend of yours could come over."

"I tell you she can't—it's two in the morning!"

"Oh—bashful, eh?" he cried with scorn.

"No!—aliens !" I cried back.

He grinned an apology.

"Oh—I thought you were yellow! Sorry. Didn't mean to be rude."

"Forget it. And by the way, you're not from this side of the Hudson either!"

"Dead right."

"Then what do you do out there?"

"Oh, never mind that now. Tell you later. Ah, there's Doc! The girls all right?"

"Yes—they are resting now. Renate, make some very strong coffee," she ordered me quietly, and to Tim she said: "I'll get my bag and come with you in a moment."

"That's the spirit! And you—Renate, is it?—you make lots of very strong coffee. That's a good girl. Or are you coming out too?"

"No I I have a curfew on!"

"The law-abiding revolutionary—written all over you!" grinned the American.

"I'm neither the one thing nor the other. But I am

not going to risk going to jail for assault and battery. For if anyone out there dared to remind me that I am German—Fd kill them !"

"Hush!—there's enough killing going on already."

They went out together, and I walked into the kitchen and got the percolator ready. Our two guests slept with exhaustion in Christel's bed. ! did not wake them.

By five the worst was over and Christel returned with Tim Hunter, the American rescue worker, for their coffee. I had laid the table and cut sandwiches and felt happy that at least I could do something. And although they both almost dropped with fatigue they did not want any sleep. They drank several cups of steaming coffee and ate the whole lot of sandwiches, and I had to cut some more. That American had had a scanty wash, and under the grime and dirt lived a pleasant face with kirid grey eyes, several wrinkles, and a generous mouth with large, white teeth. His hair was almost grey. He smoked in between sandwiches.

When the "All Clear" went he rose and stretched.

"Now for a few hours' rest and then a spot of work. I'll be on duty again at night. May I drop in if I feel like a cup of decent coffee?"

"Oh, please do. It makes me almost feel like a person on duty, too," I said.

"You take this business awfully to heart, don't you, Renate?" he asked, without a trace of mockery in his voice.

"Yes."

"Then why don't you do what your friend did? Break the law and come out and lend a hand. Nobody will ask you for your passport."

"No. I've nevver had talent for sneaking. Not even into doing something useful."

"You can volunteer for fire-watching," he suggested. "They'll extend your curfew for your days on duty."

"No," I almost shouted. "No. I cannot face being a

suspect half the time and a friend the rest of the week. I'm sick of being a—a—compromise . . . a—between!"

"We'll talk about that another time/" answered the American. "Thanks awfully, and thanks to you, Dr Ullmann; you've been grand."

"Good night, Hunter."

"Good night. Doc. Good night—Renate."

"So long!"

He went.

Christel, though terrified of bombs, went out to help several times more. One night, in great excitement, she gave her orders in such bad English that somebody denounced her. She was to appear before the police court for "being out without a permit after curfew hours." Both Tim Hunter and I went along with her. My heart was filled with black despair on the way to the station. But when we emerged I cried—with delight.

Christel pleaded guilty. She stated her case and Tim Hunter bore witness to her statement. So did I. Mr Bliss looked at Christel quietly.

"You have, no doubt, done a fine job, Dr Ullmann. But you have broken the law and I must fine you twenty shillings."

I kept my tongue tightly pressed between my lips and counted twenty with speed. Then I took a deep breath. But that was all. For my sedate and calm friend Christel amazed me into speechlessness. She pulled three pound notes out of her bag and laid them before the magistrate.

"I said one pound, Dr Ullmann," said the magistrate.

"I heard you, sir; but here is one pound for last night, one pound for to-night, and one pound for to-morrow night. For as long as there is suffering and wounded humanity at my front door I shall go out and do my duty."

The magistrate stared at Christel, and so did I. And Tim Hunter grinned as only an overjoyed American can grin. The constable raised his eyebrows.

"Young woman," said the magistrate, "I have no power

to deal with the Alien restrictions. If I had I should lift that curfew and allow you to work any time you chose to. Let it be a lesson to you and don't let it happen again. I mean, of course, don't be caught by some busybody who recognises your foreign accent! Carry on, young woman." And with a glare at the considerably crushed constable he said: "Case dismissed!"

The three of us emerged into the bright October morning like kids who had been awarded special prizes. Tim said that this called for a drink and we agreed. And suddenly I felt my eyes get stupidly hot and wet and I said:

"Turn back, Herr Hitler! If you think you can beat this nation you're crazy. And do you know why not? Because they're got what you miserably lack—a glorious sense of humour!"

* * *

Tim Hunter seems to like my coffee. He comes in even if he isn't on night-duty. He lives very near. One can talk to Tim. He is the sort of man to whom one may even say silly things without feeling completely idiotic.

The other day he popped in soon after lunch. The sun was shining and he said it would be nice to go for a walk.

"You can do with some fresh air, young lady. You look a bit wan."

We went round to Regent's Park, where the leaves lay thickly on the ground and people sat in deck-chairs and enjoyed the warm autumn sunshine. We followed their example and sat down and smoked. An Alert sounded, but we didn't take any notice. Day Alerts had lost their horror for us.

"You are about early to-day, Tim. Lost your job?"

"No—I am my own boss. That is to say, I can choose my own working hours. I write for a New York paper. I finished a long article about these raids this morning and have given myself the day off."

"Oh, you are writingcup the raids! A nice stunt for your people across the ocean!" I said somewhat scornfully.

"No," he answered quietly; "I don't write stunts. I write for the *National Medical Journal*. And I do this night-work for research reasons mainly."

"Sorry to have been tactless."

"Never mind. But somebody seems to have trodden pretty hard on your self-respect! Otherwise you wouldn't be so bitter. Come on, Renate—what's eating you?"

"One or two things."

"Is it the internment of your boy-friend you told me about? Or do these bombs get on your nerves? Anything I can mend? After all, I am a rescue worker. ..."

"Doing some more research work, eh?" I smiled.

"Yes—my main hobby-horse is the psychological reaction of people towards disaster. But that's talking shop."

"Well, Tim, I am facing a queer situation. I heard this morning that David has joined the Pioneer Corps and is getting his freedom back. He'll be here in a few days and—oh, it's fantastic! But I am certain that I don't love him any more. Can you imagine, Tim—for eight years I have loved him—lived for the thought of getting him near me. And now that he is actually going to be free, and even doing a useful job in this war, I feel like a motor tyre with a large cut in it. Flat."

Tim smiled at a tree.

"Are you sure, Renate, that you have ever loved him?"

"Of course I did—many years ago in Berlin I fell in love with him. And since 1934 I have done very little besides trying to get David near me. I fought him out of a German jail, I helped him out of Austria, I got him over to Belgium, I got him freed from a British prison, I worked for his release from internment . . . and now ..."

"And now you're exhausted. Tell me, Renate, have you ever been terribly, terribly hungry and when you finally got something to eat put before you, you couldn't swallow it any more? Well, you spent your energies in achieving something and when it was achieved you were

too tired to enjoy it any longer. In the struggle to reach your aim—in fighting all those obstacles—you have actually lost sight of the aim itself. A common occurrence."

"And a sad one."

"Not quite so sad. Because with your continuous fight for David's freedom you unconsciously did something else—something much more vitally important than it actually appeared to be on the surface. Every time you snatched that boy away from the Nazis—every time you put one over on Hitler—you got one step nearer to avenging your father. Your subconscious urge was to save a life from the claws of Hitlerism—because there had been one precious life you couldn't save."

"And, even if that theory is right, I still haven't avenged my father!"

"You have told me a lot about your father and I have read his book. I wonder if he—were he alive to-day—would wish you to avenge him? He would want you to fight barbarism and evil and everything that Nazidom preaches and practices. But he would never consent to your making this a personal case of revenge. Too many—too gigantic—issues are at stake. Revenge must not be taken for one beloved human being, but for the whole of tortured mankind. Yes—revenge must come. Not for nothing have I been at Dunkirk. Nor in the International Brigade in Spain. I am all for revenge. I have had no personal loss as yet—the only man near to me who died was a smug, self-sufficient, good-for-nothing bore called Professor Timothy Hunter, the fashionable psychologist of Park Avenue. One day that gentleman betook himself to Spain for fun. He died there. Let him rest in peace."

"Tim," I said, "Tim—you do remind me of my father."

"How sad," said Tim, with a light smile, "for the fashionable psychologist from Park Avenue would now say—'And thus, Miss Pelit, Tim Hunter is taboo for you.'"

"That fashionable psychologist is dead!" said I.

And there came the "All Clear" and we went home for tea.

* * *

When David came on short leave before joining his unit I envied him his khaki. He looked nice, but much more serious and less boyish than I remembered Him. I was glad to see him, really very glad. But when we faced each other I was quite sure that I did not love him any more; and he knew it too.

We talked over coffee about his internment, about the raids, about the war. We talked about anything and everything except ourselves. But finally that vital question could not be put off any longer. David said:

"I have a piece of news that I hoped would make you very happy. I learnt from Moske that Felix has divorced me in Germany on the ground that I am not a full Aryan."

"She didn't!" I exclaimed. All I felt was disgust and contempt for Felix, sorrow for David. And nothing for myself. When you reach the stage in your connection with a man where you feel nothing for yourself any more, then you can be sure that love is dead. For love is the supreme form of egoism.

"Renate, this is the queerest slice of life I've ever been asked to swallow—but I feel without your telling me—that—you care no longer."

"Of course I care ... but ..."

"You don't love me any more."

"No, David; I don't. The road to your heart was so terribly long and difficult that now, when I have reached the end of it, I am too tired."

"I understand. But you could still care enough to marry me?"

"No, David. It wouldn't be fair on either of us. You should marry a young, gay, cheerful creature."

"I did that once."

"And it was right for you. I am a good companion in troubled times, but not a gay one for a young soldier on

leave. Much gaiety has gone out of me. Because—my war is not only one year old—it has already lasted seven years!"

"But—I may always come and see you, Renate, mayn't I?"

"I'd be furious if you didn't. You see—we don't part with a quarrel—we are not angry with each other."

"And that makes it all the sadder," said David earnestly.

"Yes, David—doesn't it?"

* * *

Last night's blitz was devastating. The full measure of its results is not yet known. But there was a full moon—that light in the sky has now become a deadly enemy. It lightens the protecting darkness and exposes us to the murderers in the clouds. Klaus Dressel, were you decorated to-day by your Fuehrer? You must have taken heavy toll! Why can't you be shot down and bale out in this very street, so I could shake you up and make you see that you sold your soul to the Devil that spring evening when you pleaded with my father to be allowed to join the Hitler Youth! Thank God that our mother is dead. The mental agony she would have to suffer with two children—each one in a different camp—fighting and hating and ready to kill each other!

It was such hell out there that Tim made Christel and me go into an underground shelter beneath a large block of flats near by. It was a weird experience to see a mass of tired humanity huddled together on benches and on the floors. But most of them were lucky—they could sleep. Christel took charge of two nervy, wide-awake children. I sat there talking to an old man.

The "All Clear" went at about six o'clock; and slowly mankind emerged from their cages, and stretched and sniffed the fresh young morning air. No sound is more jubilantly cheerful than the sound of the "All Clear" for those who are allowed to live. It holds a triumphant note.

It calls you back to a life given to you over again. Christel was so tired that she simply stumbled home and went straight to bed. But I was wide-awake, and when Tim turned up—grey, dirty, but also wide-awake—to take me for a morning walk in the park, I gladly went along with him. We walked all the way to Primrose Hill. The gun on the hill was quiet now after a night's heavy job. And so were we. Until we reached the top.

Then Tim said: "God—what a glorious morning!"

"Yes; but look—in the east—the sky is red! And it isn't from the rising sun!"

"No—I know. There's smoke too. Renate, look away from that smoke and look to your left. See that tree? And that bird up there on the topmost branch? A good sight, isn't it? And take a deep breath of this gorgeous clean air. Renate, there are many things that even Hitler can't destroy—the real things he cannot touch! A dawn—a rosy cloud—a singing bird—the freshness of the moist grass—the wind—joy of being alive, and of another person also being alive. . . . Renate, there is so much to preserve—to protect!"

"Is there?" I asked dully.

"Of course there is." His tone was very gentle. I looked at him and found an overwhelming amount of kindness in his eyes.

"Yes, Tim, you are right. There is so much to do and I do so want to help doing it. Tim, do you think the day will come when mankind will regain their sense of decency? Will they ever learn from these horrors? Why are people so blind—so stupid! God gave them a wonderful world—see what they make of it! A smouldering mess! God gave them the riches of the earth! What do they make of them? Guns, planes, poison-gas! God gave them a mind! What do they do with it? God gave them many lovely lands—they put up the barriers and sit behind them and wait to fire the first shot! ¹ Never will this world—this glorious world—be a fit place to live in until the

frontiers fall. Until steel and iron are turned into ploughs. Until the markets are controlled by decent men and women and not by greedy, selfish groups. Until the prisons are being used to convert criminals and not to hold innocent men, who are guilty of no other crime than being born. Until each man and woman can pray to the God of their creed without being persecuted for it. Oh, Tim, Tim—there is so much to do. . . ."

"And you can help," he said quietly.

"No—I can't."

"Oh yes, you can. Why crave a job that is denied to you by silly rules and regulations? Why wait to perform some little task that anybody else can do? Why riot go home and do the job that knows no nationality nor any restrictions? The job of telling the world the very things you said just now to me. You have up to now completed and edited your father's works. Sit down and do a job of your own."

"Yes—yes—Tim. And I think I am now angry enough!" He put his arm around my shoulder and we walked downhill. The sun had risen. A new day had begun. Another day towards fulfilling a gigantic task.

