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# A King's Calling

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# A KING'S CALLING.

## PART FIRST.

### I.

OLDSBURG, the queen of the north and capital of the kingdom of Lithuania,—a kingdom whose vitality and fertility are such that it has been denominated the heart of Europe,—the semi-Gothic, semi-industrial city of Oldsburg, was sinking to sleep in one of those quick changing twilights of autumn. In the streets the sound of carriages was dying away ; only the heavy cotton wagons clattered feverishly on over the cobbles. Night and day were alike to them, for the vigour of the great trade in linens and printed cottons, with which all Lithuania panted, was behind them.

But as the activity of industry and business was laid to rest, another more silent and intenser life

awoke in its stead in the intellectual part of the town ; and the Judenstrasse, where the Palace and the Faculty of Science face each other across the way, became alive with knots of students. The street had kept the poetic look of a former age by reason of the impossibility of its being widened without damage either to the palace walls of fairy lacework or to the august and splendid façade of the university buildings. Its narrowness and its air of age and mystery remained unimpaired, and students walking along it would grow thoughtful without knowing why.

On that evening, however, the hum of their voices and their more than ordinary numbers, still further increased by a strong contingent of the citizens and ladies of Oldsburg, as well as their hurry to reach the gateway of the university and an evident excitement, all proclaimed that something quite out of the way was taking place. And, in fact, it was the lecture of Fräulein Hersberg that drew them thither. It was her first appearance in the chemistry classroom since the opening of the session, and the newspapers had told their readers that she was going to make a public demonstration of the recent discovery of hers, which during the past holidays had revolu-

tionized chemistry : the liberation of a new element called thermium.

The chemistry classroom opened off the second quadrangle of that part of the university buildings allocated to the Faculty of Science. It was the largest of all, and could seat as many as eight hundred students. That day it is said to have been filled ; in any case, well before half-past seven o'clock those coming in were obliged to push their way up through the crowd to find places in the rearmost benches. On the table on which the experiments were to be made embers were glowing in brick furnaces ; a blow-pipe was muttering to itself ; some eight battery cells were permeating the atmosphere with the pungent odour of nitric acid ; and glass retorts, looking like nothing so much as women's rounded arms become transparent, stood half full of a milky liquid, which was seething away above the blue flames of spirit-lamps set beneath them. Two girls, both of them demonstrators at the Women's College and assistants to Fräulein Hersberg, threaded their way about the platform in black aprons ; one of them looked to the batteries, the other fed the glass tubes with water. At last, from the laboratory, the second assistant brought

a little mortar no bigger than her hand, which she placed at the lecturer's place. A whisper ran from the front benches up to the back, the opening of a door, and Fräulein Hersberg appeared.

The four electric pendants threw a white light which gave her face a certain pallor. She was tall and of statuesque proportions; her black hair parted in the middle showed a marble forehead; her eyes were dark, of great beauty and gentleness. Her glance ran over the amphitheatre, and the sight of so great a gathering brought a smile of satisfaction to her grave face. Then Fräulein Hersberg sat down in her chair. When she had arranged some papers, she took the mortar, and said with the simplicity of speech for which she was proverbial in all Oldsburg,—

“Here, at last, I have thermium to show you.”

By means of a pair of tongs she took from the mortar some small greenish crystals, which looked like nothing so much as tiny jujubes coloured with absinthe, four or five of them of different sizes arranged on a plate of glass. There was a solemn silence. Young fellows of eighteen held their breath, women shivered with excitement. One of the assistants reached the plate of glass to the nearest of the audience, a man with a long red

beard, who had brought with him a girl in her teens, and the new substance came for the first time into public view.

And now, from row to row fragments of thermium were passing, and Fräulein Hersberg began her lecture. She told of the origins of thermium. The quality of her voice had nothing notable otherwise than an authority of which it was difficult to explain the exact nature, since it was simply the rather sweet voice of a young woman. The famous chemist indeed had just completed her thirtieth year. It was, said she, in working with ores from the coal-fields in the south that she had first discovered traces of bismuth in the very rare form of tetradymite, containing tellurium. And it was when she was treating this salt with different acids to isolate the tellurium that she had obtained singular by-products, of which one property in especial had puzzled her : one of these little bodies falling into cold water had produced a slight bubbling like that produced by a glowing cinder.

The sympathy which she felt to exist between herself and her audience bred in her a certain familiarity in tone and speech. She knew most of the students, male and female, but the great



concourse of people that day put her out a little. And she was inclined in speaking to let her eyes rest on the unknown man with the red beard immediately before her and the delicate girl in furs whom he had brought with him. He looked like some rich Oldsburg manufacturer with a taste for science. To Fräulein Hersberg it seemed that these two people were listening more attentively than the others. Setting aside the students, the others were fashionable Oldsburg ladies and gentlemen, together with a scattering of visitors. In spite of differences in affectation or dress they had a sameness of look ; of the men you would have said that they were some of the rather second-rate nobers that frequent the steps of the Stock Exchange on a Wednesday. Some of them were yawning. Fräulein Hersberg was just telling in a few restrained phrases of her great emotion, and of what she had felt when she had at last become quite sure that the little green crystals affected the thermometer and that the new substance gave out heat !

From row to row of the amphitheatre the little crystals were coming back to her. The Oldsburg man with the red hair was the last to receive the plate of glass ; once more he examined the frag-

ments of thermium with an almost passionate attention. The fair-haired girl beside him bent over them too ; they exchanged a word, then she raised her eyes to those of Fräulein Hersberg, the great, eager, hungry eyes of a sick child. Then her father rose, and reaching across the table gave the substance into the hands of the chemist herself. She did not interrupt the sentence she had begun, though her smile thanked him. She was indeed announcing at the moment that she was going to repeat the experiment before her audience, using electricity for the occasion to accelerate the production of the green precipitate. The assistant proposed a Bunsen battery, but she asked for a little nobili one, and in perfect silence went on with the successive stages of her performance.

The audience saw her black figure move slowly to and fro. She had most beautiful hands, which flickered among the rows of tubes, fearlessly clasp- ing the burning rotundities of the mortars and neatly directing the delicate electric wires. Her words became fewer and fewer, till they were the merest laconic words of explanation to enable the audience to follow the changes which the bismuth salt was undergoing. Then finally she was silent,

and standing before the complicated apparatus for producing electrolysis, her fingers on the table, her body bent forwards towards the central glass retort, pale, nervous, and trembling, she waited for the appearance of the phenomenon. Despite her silence all her womanhood showed in her emotion. The audience saw only her heavy mass of hair fastened in a roll on her neck, her fine anxious brows, and the quiver in all her being. In the glass retort waves of something opaque bubbled and broke.

On a sudden there came a sound of clicking off; Fräulein Hersberg had stopped the current, and was standing erect again with cheeks aflame fraternizing with the whole audience as she said victoriously,—

“There. It is done.”

She was the great Hersberg again, the creative genius, the greatest scientist of her time and country. Her assistants went on taking the apparatus to pieces, filtering the liquids and purifying the residues so as to destroy in them all matter foreign to thermium. She, carried away, despite her apparent coldness, by an internal excitement, foretold the future of the new element and spoke of the various uses to which it could be

put in hospitals, factories, and laboratories. The day would come, she said, when far from being content to have it merely in crystals they would master it as an isolated force, determine its atomic values, hold it and produce it in large quantities. Would they not then possess in this substance an inextinguishable source of heat, a green coal glowing yet incombustible ?

The simple pride of the scientist, and his pure satisfaction in the task accomplished, flooded her whole being ; but at the same time she spoke of how much remained to be done. A kindly chance had led her to take this first step ; years demanded their due of work to complete the conquest. She added smiling,—

“ My discovery is at once very great and very small.”

The listener with the red beard showed his disagreement by an imperious toss of the head, and then, as if instinctively, and by a mechanical reaction, clapped his hands ; instantly the movement spread from one side of the amphitheatre to the other in a great burst of clapping, intermingled with cheers. The whole audience rose to her, and the tall figure of Fräulein Hersberg, now smiling no longer but disconcerted by this theatrical end-

ing to her demonstration, stood there, rather shyly facing the ovation, much more astonished than delighted, and only wishing for the noise to cease.

Then came the scattering of students and the spectators down the steep and narrow steps of the gangways—there was the uproar of a talking crowd. Before passing out the young fellows turned round for a last look at her whom, not without a touch of emotion, they called “the Hersberg.” She was hastily gathering up the notes of her lecture and giving some orders to her demonstrators, when the unknown man with the red beard, raising the collar of his overcoat, came up at his daughter’s request to the platform table. They bent over it together to take another look at the thermium.

“Would it be possible to feel the heat produced?” asked the father.

Fräulein Hersberg smiled and answered,—

“No, sir, these fragments are too small. Their rays are such that only a very fine thermometer would register them, or else it would need a skin of quite exceptional sensitiveness.”

And involuntarily her eyes turned to the delicate girl at once so weakly and so eagerly interested, with

her dreamy eyes and the forehead so exceptionally developed beneath her flaxen hair. She added,—

“You might try, mademoiselle ; take off your glove.”

A hand delicate and long, if a trifle angular, appeared, and into its palm the obliging chemist dropped a grain of thermium. The little Oldsbury girl flushed with pleasure.

“Oh !” said she passionately ; “I feel it burning. I feel all the energy and life of this new body. Ah ! to think that this tiny object is going to overthrow so many that are great. What a splendid achievement this is of yours, fräulein ! . . .”

Her father said no word, but made a sign. The greenish crystal was at once laid upon the plate of glass ; the girl and he went out after bowing very courteously to the chemist.

Then Clara Hersberg turned her steps towards the adjoining laboratory ; but her look fell upon her two assistants, standing stiffly in their black aprons, their arms hanging, nervousness written upon their faces. They said to her,—

“Didn’t you recognize them ?”

“Recognize whom ?”

“It was . . . it was the king and the archduchess. . . . The guards who accompany them

everywhere were awaiting them, scattered under the arches of the quadrangle. . . .”

Fräulein Hersberg opened the hot-water tap over the base of white earthenware, and very quietly, as she washed her hands,—

“Very well, what about it?” said she.

## II.

NINE had not yet struck when Clara Hersberg issued from the portals of the College of Science in the Judenstrasse and passed before the railings of the palace. There was no moon that night. Overhead fantastic gargoyles stretched their scaly necks between black buttresses, and, above that again, there rose the little forests of spires and pinnacles which stood out jaggedly from each of the four sides of the Gothic palace. But Clara was neither a poet nor a dreamer; the vague charm of the old town made small impression on this clear thinker. In the mystery of the freshening October night she did not see the dream city above her, the palace with its broidery of stone and dormer windows chiselled into the likeness of Gothic cathedrals in miniature, nor the encircled ring of thirteenth and fourteenth century churches. There were St. Gelburge with its three stories of flying buttresses; St. Wilhelm, thick-set and



primitive ; the transparent basilica of St. Wenceslas, with its dainty walls of stained glass which showed pearly at night ; lastly, there was the heavy matronly block of stonework, the Catholic cathedral, St. Wolfran, bearing the king's name, heavy as a mountain at its base, seeming to stretch its carved front like an immovable curtain at the further end of the square, till one looked higher and saw it tapering up into slender forms, soaring, from gallery to gallery, to the iron spire that shows black as ink against the darkest skies—a phantom pointer for souls.

The streets, originally sinuous and built without regard to alignment, still kept their irregularity. Gables jostled each other, tiny-paned windows peered from their covings adorned with grinning faces. There were still to be seen the belfry, which seemed to bestride the enormous rotundity of its clock ; a fountain singing as it spouted from the sculptured counterfeit of a scene from the Apocalypse, a doorway framed with stone rosettes, and a square, formerly the garden of a monastery, where clumps of greenery intermingled with arches, columns, and leprous-looking statues. And on this wise old Oldsburg rose in a gentle slope, and scaled a smiling hillside to where the houses grew

rare amongst gardens on the heights. But to the south, on the left bank of the river, the town darkened into a smoky and populous suburb, where beetling, humming factories stood like fierce hives of industry. The forest of tall chimneys on that side of the water balanced the city of spires and turrets on this.

Towards this region of smoke Clara Hersberg directed her steps. The embankment was all aglitter; the swaying, exhilarating rhythm of Lithuanian vales was to be divined in the fitful bursts of sound that came from the great cafés where string bands were playing; rich toned melody of 'cellos came from their windows; the flare of lights struck across the street to the water's edge. The five bay windows of the Opera "foyer" were aflame with light. Four other theatres standing in a row, towered above the harbour; between the acts their doors opened to let out a noisy and excited crowd. Clara, with firm, quick steps, made her way on to the central bridge.

And then everything, streets, squares, and houses, became dim, monotonous, and dull. The gutters at one moment ran steaming from a spinning factory hard by, at the next blood-red

eyes, pale, and agape with happiness. He pushed back his straw chair and came to meet her ; she gave him her hand, smiling. The sallow fellow with long black hair streaked with silver, anæmic, and worn out with dreaming, was Ismaël Kosor, the president of the Union, to whom Fräulein Hersberg was secretly betrothed. For almost a minute he gazed at her in silence, holding her gloved hands in his. A misty veil had descended upon his surroundings ; a sense of delicious repose seemed to have come upon him at the sight of Clara—repose for the infinite weariness of his whole feverish being. His tense face relaxed into an ecstasy of beatitude. She was still smiling at him, and there was something motherly in her smile. But she merely said,—

“Dear friend. . . .”

“Come,” said he with suppressed fervour, “come and join us ; you were like light coming into the room. . . .”

The four others came forward to bid their comrade welcome. There was heavy-shouldered old Heinsius, with his long white beard and look of a prophet inspired ; there was Conrad, a vehement youth whose very dreams were lit up with the red flare of revolution ; there were Johannès Karl and

Goethlied, thick-set, calculating plebeians whose principal occupation was to construct the society of the future in notebooks of figures, like the vast calculations of some titanic overseer.

Clara addressed Ismaël,—

“I have just given my lecture, the one in demonstration of my new substance. I got thermium again, and very rapidly too. . . .”

“Ah ! yes,” said Kosor with indifference. “We here have just come to some important decisions. If the duties on corn and coal are passed by the Chamber, no workman will be able to make a living this winter. And then again, foreseeing the rise in the price of coal, the masters are already speaking of docking the men’s wages. In that case there is nothing for it but a strike.”

“Poor things !” sighed Fräulein Hersberg, her face grown darker ; “you will bring further suffering on them.”

“It has to be,” said Johannès Karl. “At present wages fluctuate between the minimum to keep soul and body together and something rather less than the minimum. When they begin to fluctuate between that something rather less and something less than that again, they are mathematically bound to become unworkable.”

And he stretched across a sheet of paper upon which he had worked out the income of a workman on its present basis, and again below that his income on the basis of what he foresaw.

"Besides," struck in Conrad, "the time for action has come."

Sagacious old Heinsius spoke next.

"That may be," he said. "It is not to be expected that the strike will produce much in the way of immediate results. And yet it is good that the people should be brought to realize their power. What one generation fails to do another will accomplish. Let us not be hasty, for we work in harmony with fate itself."

But Kosor, quivering, with his eyes glowing in his wrinkled face, cried aloud,—

"We want happiness for them at once!"

The woman in Clara Hersberg led her back to the consideration of ideas at once less vehement and more practical.

"My friends," she said, "striking is all very well, but we must contrive to make the strike as little grievous as possible. Have you thought as yet of starting a fund to keep the strikers when they are off work?"

"We have the Union funds," said Goethlied.

Clara shook her head indulgently.

"Yes, our first step towards collectivity ! . . . A small amount to feed eighteen hundred men upon ! . . . You know, my friends, all that I have belongs to the Union. So that you can rely on a contribution which will about double its present capital. Then we have sympathizers among the intellectuals of Oldsburg ; we must have recourse to them."

Johannès Karl, crouching with his elbows on the table and his face close on his paper, was already jotting down figures. They were estimates of the amount necessary to support the strikers, per week, per day, and per head. Kosor said,—

"O money, ever-running social sore, fatal cause of all inequality ! When we shall have abolished it, the beneficent reign of easy fruitful work will begin. If we do not attain to it by economic redistribution, I know some one who will bring the present monetary system about their ears ! I am that man. The work of Ismaël Kosor is advancing."

Kosor was a student of chemistry, as well as Clara, and a discoverer, but he was a contemner of scholastic methods, an empiric, a diviner mingling dreams with formulæ and setting his desire in the

place of equations. One day as he was passing an electric current through a preparation of sodium, he had obtained a product which, when washed, had sparkled in tiny spangles like gold. And he had proclaimed far and near his discovery as a masterly contribution to the theory of the unity of matter. By Clara's influence he had obtained the use of a laboratory at the university of Oldsburg ; but the official scientist did not take him seriously, and as, after a few weeks, in spite of any number of electric currents, his sodium chloride still persisted in remaining common salt, notice was given him that his term of occupation at the College of Science was at an end. Then he pursued his experiments in lodgings, in great poverty but unwearied, for he was sustained by the vision that was in him.

"My work is advancing," he continued, in his dull metallic voice, setting that nascent gold of his, which he had produced once without managing ever to reproduce it, a thousand times higher than Clara's obscure thermium, with all its vast possibilities. "At this very moment," he continued, "three batteries are at work in my rooms. Tomorrow the experiment will be accomplished, and this time I am sure of the result. Besides, next

week I am going to Hausen, where the Municipal College of Chemistry has given me the use of a laboratory. I shall work on a bigger scale, and the gold produced will be measured by grams. Did you understand, do you realize the great commotion it will make: gold making its appearance each time the experiment is performed according to my formula, gold created in bulk, gold abounding, rolling on to the market, and in its onrush submerging those miserable snippets which at present are made to represent the wealth of the community? What need of a revolution? Do you realize it? Even the inherent value of these things they call coins will be lost in this enormous over-supply."

"Yes," said Clara, dazzled at the prospect, "the ruin of gold by gold, what a useful brick for the building of the society of the future! That society would rise of itself without quakings or convulsions. With the system of wages both the extremes of wealth and poverty would have perished."

She had that credulity which belongs to scientists, and which nothing really astonishes; Kosor was her hero, and she believed in his inventive genius. But Goethlied, who had built his society of tomorrow on other foundations and who required the subsistence of gold and silver in order that his



theory of the citizen as a servant of the state should come true and prove practicable, protested in favour of the former basis of exchange.

"Yes, Goethlied, yes," said Kosor gently, in those persuasive insinuating tones which won over the soul of a crowd much more than his actual words ; "and yet, my dear friend, you see quite well that we just go on marking time ; society will not let us get at it. But to do away with gold would simply be natural expropriation. On the day when I shall have killed gold by creating it, the rich will look at each other stupefied, as if the contents of their safes had suddenly turned into pebbles. The very king, unable to pay the wages of his laced flunkies—for, of course, paper money, since it will represent nothing, will go out of currency—the very king would see all his luxury and influence, and hence all his power, fall away ; that power of his which is based on the gold in his coffers, the gold on his uniforms, and in the aiguillettes of his Gentlemen of the Chamber. Let Wolfran fall and we shall have the beginning of an industrial republic ; democracy will stand organized in all its dignity."

The rest were listening in silence, with the illumination of disciples when their master speaks.

Even Clara sat rapt in contemplation of this great dream of a peaceful revolution which would secure the happiness of all without shedding a drop of blood. Then, with her mind still full of what had passed in the lecture hall, she came back to it, led by what Kosor had said.

"Speaking of the king, Ismaël, you have not heard that he was at my lecture an hour ago ; he came incognito to see my demonstration of the production of thermium ; I did not recognize him. All unknowing, I even had a few words of conversation with our great sovereign."

She was laughing. Kosor shook his head.

"No, you must have been mistaken ; he is too afraid to do that. You know that ever since the day he got a horse-shoe flung in his face, right in the centre of the town, he never goes out without his lictors to precede him and a pretorian guard to follow ; he never goes anywhere except in a shut carriage. You have made a mistake, Clara ; it was some one else, some handsome fellow with red hair, that you must have taken for him."

"Well, well, he or another, what does it matter !" said Clara. "You may well imagine that his Majesty did not dazzle me."

Then they all fell upon the king. In town he

was never called anything, they said, but by the nickname of "*Dearbread.*" What! At a time when, thanks to civilization, corn flowed in from everywhere—from America, France, and Germany—at the lowest prices, here was a protective tariff bringing famine in its train! By its imposition he favoured the agriculturists, people of little interest, mostly small proprietors owning the land they cultivated. The proof that, as a class, they were prosperous and contented lay in the fact that all the rural districts of Lithuania remained quite refractory to the collectivist theories of the Union. These were the people to whom the solicitude of the king's government went, and it was to benefit them that it ground down the great majority of the working classes.

Each of those present put in his word. Clara herself shuddered to think of the terrible inequality which set one man so high and the rest of the nation so low. Goethlied and Johannès Karl calculated the number of families that could be kept merely by the mad extravagances of the court. Kosor's pity for the lower classes of the great towns, the only lower classes he knew, came out in passionate phrases; an apostolic fervour was haloed about his weakly frame. Clara's

feeling for him was at once serious, quiet, and reverential.

When the four leaders had left the committee-room she and Kosor remained alone under the trophy of red flags.

"Are you going home alone right up there in the dark?" he said.

"To be sure, Ismaël, as usual."

"Is it not cheerless in that lonely house of yours?"

"Not cheerless, Ismaël, for the house is full of work, of thought, and of hope."

"What hope?"

"You know quite well, my friend, the hope of living with you there one day when the cause has triumphed: we shall have a right to happiness ourselves once we have given it to our brothers."

He stood silent and downcast; then, a moment after, he said huskily,—

"I fain would be the dog that keeps watch for you, the servant that obeys you, the carpet that you tread on, the fire that heats you, the very couch that your body lies on."

She took his hand firmly, as one does to quiet a child.

"You are my brother, my friend, the light of my thought ; some day you will be the companion of all my hours. . . ."

"Ah !" cried he, with his arms outstretched ;  
"I love you, Clara !"

"Hush !" said she, recoiling ; "listen . . ."

In the neighbouring dram shop drunken voices were breaking into the "*Song of Coal*" which little Conrad, the poet, had written to celebrate the new Act. It was a ballad, infinitely plaintive, through which ever and anon there broke trumpet sounds of revolt. Kosor and Clara remained silent, possessed anew by the intoxication of their philanthropy ; then they went out together. On the pavement they parted.

### III.

IN the reign of King Wenceslas, the father of Wolfran, the revolutionary genius of old Doctor Kosor had burnt full blaze. In perpetual conflict with the state, mostly in prison, flooding Lithuania with communist literature in the shape of pamphlets and leaflets, concocting all sorts of plots, arranging rebellions, taking refuge now in Germany and now in France, his whole life had been spent preaching on the simple text of general expropriation and the partition of wealth, and he had died, after deportation, in the little penitentiary colony which Lithuania possessed on an island in the Pacific.

He came of a rich stock of Oldsburg doctors, but he had deprived himself of all his possessions, only keeping a little white house, standing in the midst of a garden, in the higher part of the town. It was there that he lived when he was neither in prison nor proscribed and abroad. He

had never had, to the world's knowledge, a wife. But he had brought up little Ismaël, the son of one of his brothers ; and as he was not himself inefficient as a chemist, he had endeavoured to teach the boy the principles of that science which is adored of all revolutionaries. At ten his nephew was already performing experiments along with his uncle in the little laboratory opening on the garden.

One day a doctor resident in one of the maternity hospitals of Oldsburg spoke to Doctor Koser of a little girl who had been born there, and whose mother, an unknown person of evident refinement, had died shortly after the birth of the child, but after taking such precautions that every effort had failed to establish her identity. The revolutionary, then nearly fifty years of age, whose sensibility was growing daily more acute by reason of his apostolic manner of life, could not withstand the impulse that bade him take the orphan in. Puzzling to his friends as his action was, it was entirely natural in a being full of human kindness who had never known a woman's tenderness, to whom in the evening of his life this opportunity of becoming a father by adoption had been vouchsafed. This man

beyond his prime had his vision of an Antigone who should support his old age. He adopted the delicate infant, who was named Hersberg, after a Lithuanian village close to the Russian frontier.

Little Ismaël had just then celebrated his tenth birthday. Serious-minded even thus early, like the man who was his model in everything, he fell in with his father's undertaking. A woman was engaged to attend to the baby; the little boy looked after her doings almost fiercely, rocked the child's cradle himself, was prodigal of his care of her, and watched zealously over her first steps. In his eyes she was like a statuette of marvellous daintiness which he was always afraid of breaking.

Lithuania did not then enjoy the liberal constitution which she was destined to receive from Wolfran V. when that prince ascended the throne. National representation there was none, nor the liberty of the press; only a formidable autocracy, under which political offences were terribly punished. Whenever Doctor Kosor, having put his name to some memorial which transgressed the line of permitted virulence, had to submit to what was familiarly called, "a period of absence," grave little Ismaël went on with his



work alone in the house and saw to the little girl. After some months had passed, the master would come home, his beard grown somewhat longer, his hair somewhat whiter, haloed with the glory of martyrdom. The children of his adoption ran to meet him in the garden, and he kissed them, weeping. Ismaël was, in truth, the son of his heart ; he nourished him intellectually with the milk of human kindness mingled with science. Clara was the prettiest child one could wish to see, the most gracious, the cleverest. The doctor, in the decline of his age, was moved to find her growing daily in charm ; he saw her, as in a vision, at twenty radiant, accomplished, and beautiful. Ismaël would be thirty then ; he would have inherited the work of the doctor's hands and would establish it. And Kosor, who had now a personal knowledge of the melancholy of old men dying without descendants, yearned for a race of men born to these beautiful children, reared in the light. He married them in his dreams. In his dreams, too, he died in their arms, carrying to the grave the noble image of their youth, of their strength, and of their love.

Such was not to be the end of this patriarch.

of revolt. Clara was not eighteen. She was a splendid girl with a man's brain, in whom all the sciences roused an equal enthusiasm. She was working at the University of Oldsburg, and had chosen to go in for a fellowship in chemistry out of admiration for the two men who were guiding her life. Her charm and her sweetness were the pride of old Kosor, and Ismaël loved her with all the fire of his youth.

It was just at this time that a liberal party was formed in Lithuania, free from all connection with the revolutionaries. King Wenceslas, whom the requirements of the time could not bend, was opposed to every concession. He set even the middle classes against him. Old Kosor thought the time had come for the springing upon the world of the great conspiracy which he had been so long a-hatching. He tried to secure the support of the military; he became ubiquitous, forming branches in all the garrison towns of the kingdom; he got rifles and organized a small army of some thousand weavers, unemployed persons, and released convicts. They were to seize upon the person of the king the day the court removed to Castle Conrad, his summer residence, situated at about a mile from

the town. Ismaël was the director of the movement in the provinces. The revolutionaries, once they became masters of the king's person and of the army, would hold the reins of government too. Wenceslas would act as a hostage for reform.

But the old king maintained a police service of flawless efficiency. The conspiracy was foiled. Nothing came of it. Searches made in the house of Doctor Kosor led to his arrest, and to the arrest of Ismaël and the principal culprits. The latter were sentenced to a period of banishment. For the old man the sentence was transportation for life.

He was not to see the blossom-time of Clara or her young glory, and the works which at twenty-five years of age brought her an European celebrity. He died in the far island some years after his first setting foot upon it. Clara Hersberg, left alone in the little house among the gardens on the heights, felt her heart break in her bosom. For the first time real bitterness, a passion of hate till then unknown, rankled within her. She rose in anger against the established order of things, which theretofore she had merely criticized in assent to the opinions of others. Her re-

volutionary sentiments had been more in love than in hatred, but at the thought of that dear exile and his solitary death her mind rose in arms. But for the steadying influence of hard work which now engrossed all her energies and faculties she would have been bitterer still.

At the accession of Wolfran, Ismaël Kosor was granted a free pardon and came back to Oldsburg. He was thirty-five. Unconsciously the energetic Clara, who had worked out her life alone and unaided, was waiting for him, and expecting to find in him the support which even the most valiant woman instinctively desires. Besides, not being given to dreams, she saw in him with perfect coolness the future mate predestined by the will of her father. But the man who came back to her was no longer fully possessed of that moral armour which had given him and his philosophy so imposing an appearance : the influence of the grand old man upon him was wanting. Left to himself, dreams rather than thoughts were his impelling force ; his was no longer that fine spiritual health which is to be met in the apostles of the most diverse creeds. Physically also his strength had been undermined by the treatment undergone in exile. His existence seemed a

succession of impressions, violent and neurotic. When Clara and he embraced each other, Clara received him as one would a wounded brother.

She already held a lectureship in the University of Oldsburg ; she was at the head of the chemical laboratory ; her position was secured to her, and was, indeed, an even exceptionally good one : whereas he, a rebel to all rule, hunting phantoms even in the clear realm of science, thinking of chemistry as an art—Ismaël with his thirty-five years—was unable even to support himself. His name and record closed the doors of the laboratories in any works against him. Ascertaining which, he conveniently plumed himself on learning a manual trade, and set to work to become a shoemaker.

He was athirst for Clara ; his love for her consumed him : but she kept indefinitely postponing their union, and he submitted, having always treated her as a divinity. To him she seemed mysterious, impalpable, incomprehensible ; whereas to her he was a companion of childhood, devoid of secrecy or mystery. Concerning her, he had a lover's curiosity ; concerning him, she had none. She had control of their destiny because she felt her own well-balanced nature to be the stronger

of the two. Besides, her success and joy in her career satisfied her fully ; why should she yield to him so soon ? In the certainty of their future union, in their mutual tenderness, lay a peaceful happiness which amply satisfied the young girl ; and without herself fully realizing the reason of her unwillingness, she explained it to Ismaël as follows :—

“You know quite well that I am yours in thought ; but if I really became yours at once, our happiness would be the ruin of our work. He—our master, I mean—never allowed himself to love : he knew quite well that the sweets of love sap men’s energies, and that a shepherd of men owes himself, mind and body, to his flock. You are the son of his inheritance, Ismaël : the people are suffering ; how could you be all in all in your task if we were all in all to each other ? Look at all the leaders, the philosophers, the prophets : they put women out of their lives. You are not left alone. I love you tenderly, and shall be yours in the day of our triumph.”

“But our youth,” he groaned, “our youth which is escaping us, without our having suffered the emotion of love to gild it.”

"What does youth matter?" answered Clara, "our attachment makes mock of the ravages of time; over beauty, which we seek in one another, the years have no power but to ennoble. When you shall have raised our country anew, will you not be as a god in my eyes?"

He left the house on the heights, giving it up to the adopted daughter of old Kosor, and set up for himself in a garret of the dark Judengasse, near the palace, like a wild beast crouching in the shade, his eyes fixed on the enemy. It was from there that his revolutionary ramifications spread, making all ready for the social revolution.

By now the communism of Doctor Kosor had evolved. The simple doctrine of the division of the wealth of the community among the people had been outgrown. The appropriation of that wealth was no longer to be made in favour of individuals, but for the state itself. The notion of collectivism, with all the complicated machinery of an artificial society sprung as a whole upon the world, had come into being: a studied organization requiring statisticians and reckoners. Already revolutionaries had become bureaucrats. It was a forecast of the universal administration of the future.

The country already had a republican party, which would have put up with the present economic conditions, provided the power should fall into the hands of democracy. But this party had been exceedingly enfeebled by the accession of the young king, who, by satisfying all the desiderata of those members of the middle classes who had become liberals out of dissatisfaction with the preceding régime, had driven a wedge between them and the republican block. In the first year of his reign Wolfran had bought the loyalty of these liberals with the grant of a constitution. Three hundred representatives of the country, elected by manhood suffrage, were constituted as a Chamber of Deputies. This parliamentary representation was, however, rendered ineffective by the fact that an Upper Chamber, consisting of fifty nobles nominated by the king, framed all bills to be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies, and, in case of disagreement, had the power to dissolve that Chamber, with the consent of the Earl Marshal, the head of the government. The people's representatives, however, discussed the budget and passed laws, sometimes after amendment. The press had been set free from censorship, and political



offences were now entirely under the jurisdiction of the criminal courts. These reforms sufficed to satisfy the great majority of the middle classes, thinking people of no great cultivation, living worthily in an estate of decent mediocrity which they are more solicitous to extend than to decry. To speak, therefore, only of this eminently respectable class, Wolfran was extremely popular. But the revolutionaries had thoroughly inflamed the sunken masses of the proletariat, and had so enkindled their feelings of resentment and envy—destitution also was so terrible in their midst—that it was impossible they should love the great author of it all, enthroned in luxury, influence, and authority. At his doors the responsibility for all the evil was laid. As for the agricultural provinces of the north-west and the mountainous regions of the south-east, their quiet rustic population seemed perfectly indifferent to all politics, and scarcely to count.

It was at this point in his history that Wolfran V. began to put his system of protective tariffs into execution ; and it seemed as if from that day forward six years of effort to win over his people had been made of no effect. The country rose in indignation. The most conciliating, the

easiest going, rankled to opposition as soon as their purses were affected by the rise in prices. The press of the country was in revolt ; only *New Oldsburg*, the official newspaper, defended the principle upon which the tariff was based. Much reliance was placed on the resistance of the Chamber. It was composed for the most part of representatives of the working classes ; they were expected to use their veto. They did not fail to do so. The new custom duties were rejected by an overwhelming majority. The Upper Chamber deliberated for a day and a night. It sat in the palace itself. It was said that that night was one of continual comings and goings for the Earl Marshal between the Chamber and the king's private room. On the morrow Lithuania learnt that, in virtue of the powers given by the Constitution, the Upper Chamber had dissolved the Chamber of Deputies.

The whole kingdom was in an uproar. The mailed fist of royalty had burst through the velvet glove of a Constitution which had hidden it for six years ; it showed hard and relentless, and the nation, pampered with its illusions of liberty, reared like a restive horse. There were manifestoes, republican meetings, leading articles,

socialist pamphlets. Notwithstanding which, without any warning, before the new elections, the import duties voted by the Upper Chamber were imposed and came into effect.

During that time Ismaël Kosor was at Hausen, the great seaport of Lithuania ; bent over his batteries, he was eagerly at watch for the miraculous appearance of the gold he was expecting. Clara Hersberg, in her white apron, was handling thermium before a score of pupils in her laboratory. In spite of her thinking herself painfully affected by this blow which was wounding at once to her pride as a liberator and her pity for the worker, she was really much more deeply engrossed in her science than in her sociology. But for the two Kosors she would never have been interested in sociology at all, whereas she would have become a scientist in the face of every discouragement. When Ismaël was not there to arouse her revolutionary faith that faith grew dim. One single fact stood clear before her : the people would suffer even more. She had already promised all her savings ; she would have wished to give and give and give again. . . .

Then there came into her life, that life of such perfect uprightness, a singular event—what

she would have called a phenomenon of destiny : the most unexpected of events, and the unlikeliest to those out of which her life had hitherto been spun.

It was a November morning : four great windows of glass let in the pale daylight into the laboratory, where fifteen or twenty experiments were going on before as many young men. The experiment tables stretched along in front of the windows, and the students were working in silence when one of the boys employed about the place came up to Fräulein Hersberg and gave her the card of a person who wished to see her. Clara was in the act of pouring out an acid drop by drop into a small test-tube ; with a glance she read the card upon the table—

*Count von Thaven,*

Head Chamberlain to his Majesty.

Brought up to disdain royalty and to despise the court, she was in no degree perturbed by the visit of so high a dignitary. And it was with the greatest coolness that she answered without pausing in what she was doing,—

“Ask him to wait in my retiring room. . . .”

As head of a department in the university she had a little room where she could see visitors, and where she usually disposed of the administrative parts of her office. On entering it ten minutes later she saw the striking figure of an old man with a frock coat tightly buttoned over his chest, short gray hair brushed up on end, a thick moustache, coarse and silvered, a steely eye, and herculean neck.

"Fräulein," said he, without further preface, "his Majesty has sent me to you. He has been struck by your knowledge and ability in teaching, and he wishes Her Royal Highness the Archduchess of Oldsburg, the bent of whose great intelligence has been shaped by the most distinguished masters in the country, to benefit by those qualities. And so I am here to make you the following proposal in the name of his Majesty: That you should in future direct the scientific studies of her highness. A laboratory will be provided in the palace and furnished according to your wishes; you will also have a suite of rooms there, and you will be on the same footing as the ladies-in-waiting—that is to say, that two maids will be given you, and one footman, and a carriage put at your disposal.

As his Majesty has no intention of depriving the nation of a teacher of your attainments, you will be allowed to continue your work at the Faculty of Science, including your lectures, your experiments, and your supervision of work in the laboratories. His Majesty offers you a salary of 10,000 marks."

"But," said Clara, who had been listening with a smile, as if the whole matter were a huge practical joke, "the king . . ."

The courtier would not suffer interruption.

"The greatest liberty will be allowed you in arranging the course of study," he went on. "Nevertheless, since the delicate health of your pupil requires the greatest care, the daily number of working hours would be determined by one of the court doctors. One word more. His Majesty knows of your liberal opinions and the tie which bound you to a former enemy of the throne. He esteems your character enough, however, to invite you, in spite of all, to undertake this office of trust. Of course, you are put on your honour to allow only the woman of science to enter the palace gates. The party politician is to be left outside. Science has no concern with these matters. Her highness, whose intelligence

is most remarkable, will be your pupil in the same way as any girl student in the university."

"I thank the king," said Clara, whose face was beginning to show traces of pallor, "but . . ."

"There is still one word," continued the old man coldly : "I am forbidden by his Majesty to accept an answer from you to-day. In a week, when you have duly weighed the proposal of his Majesty, you will write to me, if you please. That is all. The matter has been made quite clear. I have the honour, *fräulein*, to bid you good-morning."

And, soldierly, he withdrew, with the impersonality of a man who speaks in the name of another. Clearly the old royalist had not spoken in his own. The apostle of liberty had not inspired him with the strange confidence which it had pleased the master to repose in her. He had delivered his message with the absolute obedience of an old courtier to the good pleasure of his young sovereign, and Clara, listening to it, had felt all his hidden resentment. But there were other reasons for the nervousness of *Fräulein Hersberg*, reasons which she did not at the time analyze. Her answer was ready. She was not of that stuff of which court ladies are made, and there would

have been too evident an abandonment of principle if she, Hersberg, the protagonist of liberty, were to go and take part in the solemn courtly comedy that was always being played across the way. . . . She had not even a thought of hesitation or calculation about it. Whence, then, this strange perturbation of spirit ?

She stayed there, utterly forgetful of the experiment she had left half performed. She remembered the lecture on thermium and the listener with the red beard, whose presence had affected her so little, even when she knew that he was the king. Then she sought to revive in her memory the image of the little archduchess. Ah ! yes, she suddenly saw them again, the long hand with bony finger-joints, the high-arched forehead, the eyes very deep-set, very blue, very gentle, and very eager. And she remembered how the young girl had cried out, as she took the little speck of thermium in the palm of her hand,—

“I seem to feel it burning me.”

So it was on that occasion that Clara had won Wolfran's esteem. “What an honour !” the socialist in her was prompted ironically to think. For one whole hour, at a few yards' distance, she had been



watched, studied, her every gesture noted, her brain and her soul had been probed, and the man who had put her through that secret examination was the incarnation of all she loathed, the keystone of the economic system she had mentally doomed to destruction. And she had found favour in his eyes! He had gone so far as to invite her permanently to the palace. He was entrusting his daughter to her care. He must, thought Clara, have a very poor opinion of the convictions of a woman like herself: he must be making light of them. And that was what wounded her pride. Was she of no weight in the Union, since she was so little feared in the other camp? "Science has no concern with such matters." The sentence must have been Wolfran's own. It was a true one.

But it was not merely a matter, as things stood, of tutoring a young princess. She must live in the palace, play fast and loose with her liberal principles, hobnob with all the courtiers, bow before the king. There was the figure of her good master who had died in horrible exile, of Ismaël persecuted; there was the image, too, of the people, with their privations and the injustice of their estate; there rose before her, too,

the great vision of future humanity living together in brotherly love, equality, and happiness. And all these ideas dwelt in her, quivered with life in her, and withheld her from all dealings whatever with the author of such distresses.

Suddenly she remembered that Kosor was due to return to Oldsburg three days later. And the thought brought with it peace, as though to withstand the royal invitation she had stood in need of an ally.

#### IV.

IN the dark splendour of the Judenstrasse, after the Gothic magnificence of the palace and the imposing beauty of the university, the alignment of the house fronts became more tortuous ; the houses huddled together, narrow and sometimes sordid. Sunken shops were to be seen with steps descending from the street, and the windows were of small panes, lit up in the evening with a smoky lamp. Pursuing your way, you come upon the pink of a butcher's stall with its quarters of meat wrapped in shrouds, and its animals gutted and gaping. The shop is a strong patch of light on the black etching of the street. To the right of the shop there is a damp passage piercing the building. That evening, after leaving her lecture-room, Fräulein Hersberg made straight towards the house in question and disappeared in the passage. She came to a dark stairway, alive with shadows cast by two guttering oil lamps. The

point of her shoe felt for each step as she mounted. Having climbed to the third landing she stopped ; her gloved hand groped at the wall and made out the outline of a door. She knocked, saying in a low voice,—

“Open ; it is I, Clara Hersberg.”

And suddenly the door did open. Kosor appeared. Behind him, an acetylene lamp of unbearable brightness silhouetted his meagre figure in black. He said, with a sort of religious ardour,—

“Ah ! it is you. Have you come so soon ?” and he grasped her hand, which he kissed through the glove. But she freed herself, smiling, and turned to look for a seat in the hovel. A long table on two trestles was covered with the dusty uppers of boots, shoes down at the heel, pieces of leather, confusion worse confounded by an accumulation of glass retorts, mortars, and electric batteries. Some white cinders were heaped upon the bare wood ; a globe of glass contained a yellowish mixture. Three chairs there were also, tottering under piles of pamphlets, newspapers, and shoes. Hurriedly Kosor cleared one of them and offered it to Clara. Dressed in a jacket of black cloth with a plain hat that suited and gained

distinction from her, she seemed a queen visiting a poor man. She asked very affectionately,—

“Well, dear friend, are you satisfied? Your experiments at Hausen . . .”

Half seated, half propped against the table, he answered only by a gesture eloquent of weariness and despair.

Clara, who knew him talkative where one of his hobbies was concerned, waited to hear about his artificial production of gold. But he never broke silence. There was no sound but the muffled gurgling of the lamp—a complicated affair which he had spent months in making for himself when he might have enjoyed better lighting in exchange for two marks spent at an ironmonger's.

Suddenly raising her eyes to his face, now pale against the light, Clara saw the glitter of two tears which rolled down into his small black beard; his eyes remained fixed and vacant, while the mouth expressed anguish unspeakable.

“O Ismaël!” she cried, “what is wrong with you? what has happened?”

She made a step towards him. But he, wide-eyed to hold back his tears, said tragically,—

“There was no result—none! The whole college was there looking on. They jeered at me.”

The man's speech was transformed into a hoarse sob, and he fell face forward on the table. Clara watched the spasmodic shaking of his frail body, at which thought was gnawing like a cancer. Then she understood his unspeakable rebuff and the crumbling away—the annihilation—of the being who had dreamt of achieving the greatest of human tasks—the economic transfiguration of the world. He thought he held all the strings in his hands, and here he was compelled in the end to confess his impotency, like the rest. He was mourning for his dream. He had staked his all upon the establishment of a reign of universal wellbeing and gentleness. The sword of disappointment had pierced his heart.

Clara, pale with pity, let her tears flow. Presently he sat up again, stirred by a reawakening of the inventor in him.

“And yet, the gold! I had seen it with my own eyes, intangible as it was, nestling in the bottom of the mortar. It had gilded my fingers when I put them into it. It glistened among the salt crystals. Shouldn't the phenomenon have repeated itself automatically each time the experiment was performed? Who knows but a day later gold might have appeared! A day? An

hour, perhaps a minute ! What do we know of the forces one is working with when one holds the poles of the current ? Yes, who can ever tell if I did not break my batteries just when triumph was in my grasp ! Perhaps the molecule of gold was in process of formation, ready to appear ! And they were there beating time for me, the dullards !

“They droned at me : ‘A week yet . . . three days more . . . one day more . . . and you must stop . . .’

“As the day drew near they treated me more and more as a poor failure of a man. And then, Clara—yes, I confess it—I was seized with the fury of destruction : I smashed it all to atoms, and now they think me mad !”

She was caressing his brow like a mother.

“My poor boy !” she was saying over and over again ; “poor boy !”

“Why struggle on for ever if I must for ever fail ? I am panting for the happiness of men. I am wearing myself out, soul and body, to build the city of bliss. When success fails to crown one plan I think out another. And then, when I offer my schemes to humanity, it will have none of them. I am in pain, in pain, O my Clara !”

She bent and whispered in his ear,—

“Take courage, our brethren are suffering even

more than you. Destitution is poisoning their very love. The little children are hungry and cold. Consumption is ravaging the youth. The adults know none of the delights of life. The old men are like worn-out beasts of burden whose death is longed for. There are people gorged with luxury, while the grinding labour of millions does not suffice for their very sustenance. You will be the craftsman to bring about equality and justice."

He answered,—

"My courage has failed. I have only your love. I have never loved you like this before. Humanity is far off, and has no name. My brothers? They do not know me. Whereas you, you are there; I feel your hands in mine. Clara, these arms held you at your birth. You were a wonder and a dream even before you could know me. Your whole young life, in each of its exquisite phases, lies before me like a picture. Your growth was the charm of my youth. I have loved you in every phase of your growth, for you have always been my ideal. I seem to see naked, dimpled arms when you were a baby, to see you as a little girl with brown curls, more of a mystery to me even than you are now.



I seem to see you when you were fifteen, the set of your lips and the shadow of your lashes, at a time when I grew worn in secret trying to divine your thought. At my home-coming from exile I seem to see you again. Oh, how beautiful you were with those dark coils of your hair solemnly bestowed, veils half-withdrawn above your tranquil eyes ! As for mankind, let it perish in its abjection ! There is only you, you alone, do you hear ? You have sworn to be my wife. Stay here and now ; the time has come."

"Not yet," said she almost roughly, freeing herself from his embrace as if a panic had come upon her at the thought that she had given her word. "Not yet. The cause has need of you ; I have no right to take you away from it."

He studied her a moment in silence ; then, his distrust darkening him again,—

"I ask your pardon," he said, "I was forgetting. I am only a poor wretch. . . . What have I to offer beyond my worship ? Science has lavished honours on you. To me she has not even given bread."

"And yet you were my master," said Clara kindly. "And you are a great genius, full of insight and happy inspirations."

"Ah!" exclaimed he desperately, "I am nothing, since I have not even succeeded in making you love me."

Then she protested tenderly. Yes, she did—she loved him. Was he not her only love? did he not fill all her heart? Did the future hold anything in store for her but their union? Did she not live for him? But she was wise too; she had a clear sense of their duty. What sort of part would she have played if she had agreed to become an obstacle to his mission? One day perhaps he would have cursed her for it.

And it was thus that she deluded Kosor's passion by the soothing power of her words, lulling him by the mere smooth monotony of her voice.

"There are other means of making a breach in the apathy of vested interests than upsetting the medium of currency. There is influence to be gained, power to be acquired. All is not lost. Take courage; rise, the cause is a noble one. Our comrades are loyal and will help you. What would old Heinsius think of you, or gruff, honest Goethlied, if they saw you turn coward and desert them for a woman? In your absence the committee has probably planned the strike. Since

your return you have not even got into touch again with your brothers. Listen ! It is closing time at the cotton mills. Come with me, come ; be baptized anew among the crowd ; come and see poverty."

He yielded to her, rising without a word and following. Together they found their way down the noisome staircase and out into the street. She led him townwards.

The moon was rising and bathed the town in her soft light. They crossed the Waffenplatz, which lay before the principal front of the palace. A wealth of architectural openwork covered the three buildings which surrounded the inner court. Two flights of steps with carved stone balustrades swept down to it, left and right, the first from the Chapel Royal and the second from the throne-room. A hexagonal tower with arched windows protruded from the central building—monumental railings with twisted ornamentation in wrought iron shut off the court. The square itself was deserted in the dim blue light. The statue of King Conrad rose stiffly in its midst. At the far end of the Wachturmstrasse glimmered the pale mass of the cathedral of St. Wolfran, with unassorted towers, one slender and the other squat, shining white and soft

in the moonlight, while the hard black spire behind them cut a sky of gray and pearl.

Ismaël and Clara took the Königin Allee, which led down to the embankment. It was flanked by great monumental buildings whose windows shone through the stripped branches of the plane trees set above the pavements. Those were the various ministries with their offices, reception-rooms, and archives. Their solidity and the intensity of life which the imagination pictured going on within them impressed the two passers-by with a sense of impregnability. Life, indeed, one felt everywhere in town, hurrying breathless in the day's decline. Wagons laden with spun cotton rumbled to warehouses in the suburbs, great rolls of newly-woven cloth jolted stationwards on drays. Underground, an occasionally recurring rumble spoke of the passage of trains to Hansen, bearing merchandise to the great port of Lithuania. Newspaper boys rushed through the streets shouting the evening papers with the latest Stock Exchange quotations. A crowd besieged the post offices. And overhead, along the metal wires that spread commercial activity abroad, far above the chimney tops, there was an inextricable cross-hatching of flying sentences, directions, orders, offers, quotations,

and prices on 'Change. As they drew nearer the harbour the whistles of steam tugs outward bound pierced the ear ; slowly they gathered way downstream, towing the heavy barges laden to the brim with the pillared pines of Lithuania. From the bridge they were just to be distinguished by the yellow dancing beams which their lanterns cast upon the river waves. In the manufacturing part of the town life beat even quicker ; plumes of smoke waved and swelled out of the chimney-stacks which bristled like a plantation in this district of the city : one factory succeeded another along the hard streets, and in all of them there was something like a renewed outburst of work. Through the great windows, against the workroom ceilings, the giddy rush of connecting belts caught the eye ; the keyboards of the looms moved to and fro like giant jaws grinding their prey ; and from outside was to be heard the panting of the iron monster, the hard breathing brute of a machine driven and goaded, making a last effort, under which the very foundations quivered ; while the building vomited into the street streams of smoking water, blood-red dribblets of fuchsine, or the opaque rinsings of the bleached cottons, and the filthy window panes grew dull with tepid vapour,

and appeared, as they shivered in their frames, to have broken out into a sweat of terror.

Ismaël and Clara walked on in silence. Borne in upon both of them came the idea of the gigantic life of society, that machine with its thousand multiform wheels, in which each human unit is only an infinitesimal, if necessary, fraction of the organic whole. From the factory child whose duty it is to let fall minute by minute a drop of oil on to the joint of the keyboard, up to the monarch himself, presiding over the Upper Chamber under the fixed stare of the gold caryatids in the throne-room, the whole organism was working feverishly with a cohesion and a harmony admirably simulating perfection. And based though it was on a principle fundamentally vicious, the movement of its composite wheels was so colossal in its regularity, so mad in its tireless velocity, and so tremendous in its might, that the two revolutionaries walking there felt deep down within them the conviction of their utter powerlessness to fashion another world in a complexity based upon another standard. . . . What giant even could perform that labour?

On a sudden the screaming whistle of a siren ripped the evening sky. Another shrieked in

support, and a third and a fourth, and then several together, discordant, unmeasured, like a terrific chorus of wild beasts, screaming and furious. At the same moment the door of one of the hives was thrown open to let out the swarm of labour. They were women in blue smocks all befloured with tiny flocks of cotton scattered on necks, on sleeves, on pale Lithuanian hair ; many of them still had colourless light flakes of cotton even on their eyelashes over eyes strangely aglow. Friends came out in bunches, of which some were pleurably petarding others with coarse jokes, others throwing insults, others again loudly complaining, but all turbid in a noisy, tumultuous overgush from stagnation. The midday meal being taken in the factory, they carried in their hands the little enamelled pots which had contained the morning's soup. They were shivering in the winter wind, which was already biting. Thin and ill-clad, they were hurrying towards the crêche where their infant progeny awaited them, whilst the offspring of an older growth trailed in gutters fed by filthy water off dripping eaves. At last there came the ring of the heavy steps of men. The pale workmen, almost all inebriates by habit, blighted in the hot atmosphere of the factory, mingled with the

women. They were silent, doing their best to cheat the cold in their limbs by muffling themselves about with thick woollen comforters.

The street filled. A dull murmurous droning swelled slowly louder and louder. Other factories disgorged other workers by the hundred, and the thickening crowd stretched further and further. It was a tight clustered throng growing more and more entangled, blocking its own way. The men invaded the dram shops, the women made for the pork butchers and the herbalists, which were besieged. There were shrill quarrels about credit refused. The air was heavy, with a stench of unwashed humanity, dominated by the mingled odour of smelting and sweat contributed by the mechanics. Then little by little the herd melted away. The married women, carrying reeking tins full of poor broth or cooked herbs, were now making homewards, gathering as they went clusters of ragged children sobbing and half asleep. The houses were growing full once more. One saw their windows light up one by one. It was supper-time, and the supper, taken in rooms of icy coldness, was, when it came, insufficient, ill-prepared, or damaged, and had to be eaten besides among the litter of unmade beds and slops left in



the morning rush for the factory. It was the time when folk did their best to improvise a sort of family circle ; but it was scarcely a circle of acquaintance even, being, indeed, a mere huddling, disconnected promiscuity. Men loathed their homeless home ; the iron necessity which condemned women to outside work reduced it to a primitive four-walled shelter, devoid of all attraction. The children, born weaklings into the world after an exhausting period of gestation in the mother, grew up in the street scarcely knowing their mother by sight. And in these chance gatherings each member of the family, nursing his own particular spite against the others, poured forth in complaint or insult the gall that was in him. The man of the house would often delay his home-coming and stay to drink with other men similarly placed.

"You see," said Clara simply, "you see, Ismaël. . . ."

Pity for Humanity was regaining its ascendancy over him, like a mistress who need only show herself for men to bend low before her feet. The flame of his enthusiasm was burning brighter, the vision filled his brain anew. Ah ! to refashion the cruel society that allowed such things, to pour the

abundance of life before that unhappy throng, to give dignity to these human brutes, to level down the monstrous inequalities which brought such abjection into being, to take away something from the gorged in order to give plenty to the starving !

“You see how one must love them and pity them, you who have just been speaking of leaving them to their fate.”

As Clara spoke thus they saw in the street on the now almost vacant pavement an old weaver woman whose rheumatism retarded her walk. She seemed a hundred years old ; elf locks fell over her face, and she was sighing painfully at every step. She looked as if she had been a knotter of warps, the dregs of whose strength were still being used in the factory upon some infantile job. She was going home, carrying to her hovel the refuse of some one else's food in the bottom of her tin. Ripe for death's plucking as she was, she must still be wrestling to live, for all her miserable body bespoke the strain of her day's work. That old woman condemned to so hard a lot synthesized all the wretchedness of her class. Ismaël and Clara watched her until she had vanished in the darkness, and when their eyes met both were wet with tears.

"The cause is great," sighed Kosor. "A whole life given for it would not be too much."

They spent a long time wandering about the district, walking the streets, listening to what seemed to them to be the gigantic sigh of worn-out humanity. After that, Clara, feeling that he was master of himself once more, told him, as they were returning townwards, of the visit of the king's emissary and of Wolfran's proposal. Truth to tell, in the three days that had elapsed the incident had lost much of its early appeal to her imagination. It had become something unimportant, barely remembered, and was already in a way to be relegated to the storehouse of things forgotten. At the moment it had come to her with the shock and excitement of surprise ; but the edge was off her astonishment now. It was common talk that the king did the most fantastic and unexpected things : she had been made the occasion of one of his royal whims. How could she, who attributed so little greatness to the person of the sovereign, attach any importance to his distinction of her ! Very simply she recited the words of the courtier ; and the refusal with which she intended to meet Wolfran's desire seemed to her so natural and inevitable that she actually forgot to mention it.

The two of them were at the moment in the act of crossing the bridge. Oldsburg, merged in the light of the moon, displayed herself before them, rising gently tier above tier to the gardens of the town. The roofs shone silvery. The Avenue de la Reise bent majestically upwards, and at its end the palace—transported to where it stood, you would have said, from the land of faëry—swam in a greenish vapour that made it look almost unreal. All about it the churches raised their bell turrets and steeples, while the cathedral of St. Wolfran shot up the gigantic black mass of its spire. Suddenly Kosor stopped dead, and touching his companion's arm, while the pupils of his eyes shone and the eyes themselves seemed dilated under the influence of some mental vision,—

“Clara,” said he, in a dull tone, “Clara, you must go to the palace.”

It was her turn to be puzzled now, and her smile showed she thought he spoke ironically.

“If I have any influence over you left, Clara, listen to me and accept this post. You will go to the palace. I ask it of you ; I wish it.”

“But why,” answered she, divining at last that he was in earnest, “why should I give the lie to all my past and lead this life of courtiership in the

midst of a decorated flunkeydom and among surroundings which I despise? What sort of part can I play there? I hate the king."

Kosor looked at her tenderly.

"My poor dear one, my belief is that you hate nobody; you have the gentlest and the most conciliating heart, and you are so great that even in those surroundings you will go on living your fine, simple life of a scientist. Yes, yes, do; go to the palace. I feel that the hour of action is coming. My destiny is becoming luminous and clear. You have led me into the manufacturing district, into the terrible heart of the work-a-day world: it was fate that made you lead me there at the moment you did. I have realized in a special revelation both the magnitude and the urgency of the work. Yes, it seems impossible to attack society—and yet it must be. Only, with the ideas we have been setting up in the way of the tremendous machinery of society, we are like foolish children trying to stop an express going full speed by puffing out our cheeks and blowing towards it. That's the sort of thing we have been doing until now. From now on we must act. We must storm the engines as they rush past and shut off steam. The man who has done that can use the switch as he pleases.

The time has come : I see it, I feel it, with unmistakable clearness. Blood will be shed perhaps. Nothing must stop us. For yet a little while I must give you up, Clara, my light. If I have the right to give up happiness and to sacrifice my unhappy life for our brothers I haven't the right to expose yours to danger. Exactly what will happen I don't know, but I assure you that it will be terrible and bloody, and that many will strive who shall not live to see triumph. Do you at least remain in safety, so that the torture of knowing you to be in danger may never withhold my hand from striking."

"What !" said she, in a tone of gentle reproach that was yet not without indignation, "you put me aside like a hindrance in the hour of danger ? You would have me a deserter when that hour comes ?"

"But there is something else," said Ismaël. "You will serve the Union better in the palace than in the turmoil of the city. You will be our eyes within the fortress. Think of all that goes on behind these walls which we do not know."

"But, in any case, I shall never go with double-dealing in my mind," said she sharply.

Kosor attached little weight to such scruples. He loathed royalty frantically with a morbid

hatred. As he saw things, no weapon used against it was unjustifiable ; but he knew also how minutely conscientious the scientist was by nature. He understood.

“ Without going the length of betrayal, you can enlighten us. And then what an influence you may have ! Is it not the very thing which would please your gentleness : to fight the enemy with the spiritual weapons of persuasion ? We who are outside must shout the truth into the scattering Lithuanian wind : you who will eat of the tyrant's bread, you with your suave gift of persuasion, will be able to prove it to him face to face.”

Thus conversing they had retraced their steps along the Königin Allee, and had reached the Waffenplatz. The palace courtyard, behind the huge wrought-iron pattern of its railings, lay solitary and asleep. Far within the Renaissance windows, where dainty pillarets of stone divided the leaded panes, there showed here and there glittering specks of light on distant chandeliers. A world was in movement behind that façade, and at that world's centre there was one active will, and one alone, in whose caprice lay the felicity or misery of a nation. Not a sound was to be heard, not a

shadow appeared: the enchanted castle of the fairy tales, you would have said. Nevertheless it had thirteen hundred inmates, and a single man was the *raison d'être* of them all. In the last resort this man personified the nation: he held all the threads of national action in his hands. The mystery of kingship mingled with the mystery of the dream palace. Clara had stopped in the square, and the eyes she had turned upon the palace would not remove from it.

"It is true," said she at last, "a single being might, without the necessity of social upturn or the terrors of revolution, establish the working of a universal brotherhood. That could be no less than He, for He is the state. The economic changes which equity demands could take place under any form of government. Why should not he whose hands already hold the tools of power be the architect of the state of the future?"

But Kosor could not believe it. He despised Wolfran, and his heart went out, not to a judicious alteration in the state, but to the idea of its utter overthrow and of the building up upon its ruins of a sovereign democracy. Nevertheless, such was his secret desire of seeing the woman he loved safely bestowed, that he made as if to enter into her



Utopian dream. The excitement of the agitator fevered his blood again. Since all hope of the metamorphosis of society by the supersession of the standard of currency was gone they must fall back upon methods of violence. Already a fresh plan was flickering like summer lightning across his brain. But Clara must be spared all these dark ideas. He meant her to be in a place of shelter. Besides, it was very convenient to have stationed in those high circles a patroness who could do so much for the Union. He said to her,—

“You will protect our brothers, Clara. Who knows but as things turn out you may be she who will have done best by the cause.”

Hesitating, and even more perturbed than after the visit of the old courtier, Fräulein Hersberg was still gazing at the splendours of that abode of royalty. And on a sudden the dream palace which attracted her with a strange force seemed a very city of refuge and of quiet work.

“You would have a laboratory,” Count von Thaven had declared, “entirely at your disposition, and furnished according to your own specification.”

A sort of weakness in her cried out for refuge. She saw herself sheltered from Ismaël for a time. . . .

“Ah, I do not know what to do!” said she at

last. "Can I forget that this government hunted our poor, great master to his death? Can I forget that tragic end?"

"As if there were any question of forgetting!" cried the agitator imperiously. "No, no; a thousand times no! Hold it before you always, and go, not to make terms, but to conquer."

## PART SECOND.

### I.

A CAB stopped before one of the side entrances of the palace in the Rue aux Juges. Clara Hersberg alighted from it.

"Is this the place?" she asked the cabman with astonishment, pointing to the postern with its carved and rosetted pediment that was so like the side door of a Gothic chapel.

She had always, since making up her mind to accept the offer of Wolfran, imagined herself climbing up the noble staircase of the principal court. She had thought that a little of the pomp and circumstance within would come out to greet and conduct the science she incarnated into the royal presence. But as she was going to Count von Thaven first of all, she had merely been brought to the wing of the palace occupied by the stewards and the major officials of the court.

"That's it," responded the cabman.

The elaborate knocker fell on the carved oak of the door. She entered cold and stiff, with a mask of hardness and disdain covering her fine features. Once across the threshold, she found herself under a stone porch, whose walls, though ruined by the damp, still displayed old frescoes in broad panels. The finer shades were effaced, and only the stronger colours remained—the scarlet of the cloaks, the deep indigo of the queens' robes, the gold in the crowns. And the adopted daughter of old Kosor found herself measured and found wanting by those haughty, half-seen figures, which seemed to stare the intruder out of countenance.

A lackey appeared. She asked for Count von Thaven. There followed for her, in the rear of the knee-breeched fellow who preceded her, a regular excursion through a splendour of decoration whose beauty overwhelmed her. First came two staircases of white marble with wrought-iron railings, whose scrollwork ever and anon became the frame for the emblem of Lithuanian royalty, the heraldic swan with its long neck folded. So they came to the second floor, the floor with the princely upper chambers, arched like the nave of a cathedral, and made more beautiful still by dormer

windows, little transepts carven like so many shrines and set out on the slope of the slated roof, which they variegated magnificently with their flamboyant network of interlaced Gothic.

There began for Clara the endless backward flight of suite after suite of rooms, perceived by glimpses as she crossed them in the gray glimmer of a December morning. Rooms looking on the right to the inner courtyard of the palace, rooms on the left, whose leaded panes showed the buildings of the Faculty of Science. Clara was sorry she had come at all. She called to mind her good master and all he had suffered from the people in power, and how he had paid their persecution in hatred. All the Protestant liberalism of her education rose in her mind unscathed. How was it that, submissive to Ismaël's persuasion, she had taken this step? She would have withdrawn, but it was too late; the influence of the palace had her in its toils, and was sapping her resolution.

"Will you please to take a seat, madam?" said the footman.

She was in Count von Thaven's room. Before long the Lord Chamberlain of the Household appeared. With eyelids heavy and worn, and thick, white, drooping moustache, erect and broad-

ched in his morning suit, he bowed, at once grim and courteous, to the young woman. His powerful figure stood out between the blue-gray of the globe set on his desk and the bookshelf filled with the ancient manuscripts bound in parchment, of which he was an eager collector. Clara, simple and modest in her triumphs as she was, nevertheless felt this day's introduction to be humiliating. It was like the engagement of a servant. The old courtier asked her without ceremony if she would like to be shown to her rooms. He even inquired about her luggage. But she, standing on her dignity against the hostility of her surroundings, announced,—

“I had rather see my pupil first, sir.”

He smiled.

“Her highness will send for you, *fräulein*.”

He must have perceived the movement which Clara had not been able to suppress, for he added,—

“Rest assured that her highness is in great haste to make your acquaintance, and that you will be presented to her at the earliest possible moment.”

Clara's heart was beating violently. She summoned all her coolness in order to remain unmoved ; she said also,—

"And the king, may I speak to him?"

At that question an indefinable change came over the features of the old man; there was a wild shyness, an awe, and a secrecy which gave him the expression of a priest in whose hearing some one had spoken too lightly of his deity. He was no longer ironical, nor indulgent, nor even hostile; he was mere marble. He spoke,—

"No, *fräulein*, no. His Majesty is receiving no one at present. To demand an audience is quite useless. Later on, perhaps. . . ."

These were very ordinary words, yet they impressed this woman of learning more even than the splendour of the royal mansion, more than the surrounding grandeur. There were thirteen hundred of them circling about that mysterious figure, deriving their light from that sun, and all of them stamped with the awe which put even a man of such age in real dread at the very mention of the young monarch, whose father he might well have been. Was it a subject for laughter or for admiration? Surely it must be quite out of proportion with the poor man—a mortal, frail and secretly infirm—whose word was law in Lithuania.

"I am at your service, *fräulein*," said the old courtier with a certain commanding impatience.

She allowed herself to be ushered forth again. Again she saw the pillared vestibules and the drawing-rooms. Then they passed into another wing, where the ladies-in-waiting had their lodging. Through the narrow corridors there was a going and coming of chamber-maids bearing trays of soiled china and the remains of early breakfast taken in bed. It was the morning commotion of a household—the bustle which in a great cosmopolitan hotel precedes the decorous orderliness of the day. A young woman, her blonde hair all dressed up in little curls, came out of a room in a silk embroidered blouse covered with diamonds. She pressed the count's hand as she passed him.

“Good morning, count ; how are you ?”

Busy as she seemed, the old man stopped her and introduced her,—

“Madame Czerbich, her Majesty's reader ; Fräulein Hersberg of the University of Oldsburg, tutor in chemistry to her highness the arch-duchess.”

The two women examined each other. If one of them was more curious than the other, it was the little Austrian. She was all eagerness to remain, but it was clear that her duties required her. She said amiably as she left them,—



"We shall meet again, at lunch."

"Here we are," announced the count, knocking at a door, which a young chamber-maid instantly opened. "Your rooms will be small, *fräulein*, but they communicate direct with the laboratory in the turret, and for that reason we have shifted Frau Czerbich to give you them. This girl will be at your service, along with another housemaid and a footman. This is your study, and here is the telephone; if you require anything further, ring up either myself or one of my secretaries, and the oversight will be remedied. This is to be your home for the future, and it is her highness's desire that nothing shall be left undone to give you comfort. I have been specially anxious to bring you here myself, as a proof of the esteem which their Majesties have for you. Good day, *fräulein*."

At last she was alone—"imprisoned" was her first thought. Instinctively she made for the window, which stood open between a work-table and a Gothic settle of carved oak with a chest made under the seat. The window, one of those Gothic dormers which lent variety to the roof, looked out on to the grand courtyard and dominated the Place d'Armes with the bridge at its end.

The long vistas pleased Clara. She turned to her rooms again and inspected her bedroom, whose walls were covered with an old apple-green damask delightfully faded with use. But she liked neither the canopy of the bed, nor its curtains, nor the thick carpet, nor the springiness of the chairs, nor the vagueness and indecision of the tapestried walls, nor the graceful lines of the furniture, nor the half-faded, soft voluptuousness of the tints. She would have wished the bareness of carven stone, the austerity of plain wooden chairs round an unpolished table. Stern and hard towards herself, she despised luxuries and even the comforts of common life as if they were so many offences to the destitute.

At night in the dead of winter she left her window open to the north wind, and there was a certain austere pleasure to her in letting the fine, chill flakes of Lithuanian snow blow on to her very coverlid. And when she went into the dressing-room, furnished with every refinement of the newest toilet apparatus, she recalled her little white house on the heights of the town, where she had to break the ice in the ewers on mornings of intense cold.

Her little sitting-room was even less to her

taste, with its French eighteenth-century furniture, its walls covered with chintz printed on a white ground, the gilt devices of the armchairs, the pearl-gray carpet, and the clock with its cupids of Dresden china. At home she had always kept to the parlour of old Kosor, the great tiled room on the ground floor, without a fire, furnished with its huge table and dozen of mahogany chairs. There meetings had been held to change the face of the world ; as a mere child she had seen the friends of the eternal revolutionary seated there, terrible and passionate. It still seemed to her the sanctuary of the great idea. But what a frivolity there was here ! And she sighed as she threw yet another door open.

This time her brow grew unclouded. A wall in six partitions, each of which hollowed out into an arched window, surrounded a chamber, empty, stone-paved, and cold, but vast and luminous. It was the old workroom of Wolfran, who had learned carpentry there as a child. Clara understood that this would be her laboratory, and that here she would sway an empire of which the sovereign had certainly no conception, when often, quite mistakenly, he thought he was governing his kingdom. This would be her real home. A

wooden bench had been left in it ; without even taking off her hat or gloves she sat down and grew absorbed in thought.

Her soul was sad within her. She felt a change was coming over her life. Something of herself had just died. And this dark palace, whose mysterious human light, the king, remained secret, invisible, was like nothing but a huge official department, a vast community. Oh ! the simplicity of Ismaël, who had thought that her influence as a scientist would revolutionize the maze of social cogwheels as soon as she should have laid her finger upon the mainspring of its movement. The sovereign ? He only seemed to exist virtually here. He was a principle which one might hate, but his person evaded one, and became an intangible essence. What would she be here ? A mere governess, nothing more. And what an exile for her ! Where was it now, that warm, humanitarian atmosphere that she had breathed for thirty years ?

There was a knock at the door, and it was pushed ajar ; the young chamber-maid had come in search of her to the laboratory.

"Madame de Bénouville is asking for you, fräulein."

"And who may she be?" questioned Clara wearily.

"The archduchess's governess," explained the sharp young Oldsburg girl. "Evidently she has come to conduct you, *fräulein*, into the presence of her highness. *Fräulein* may take courage; she has a good heart—a Frenchwoman. Will *fräulein* please to change her dress before going down?"

"No, thank you," said Clara. "I shall keep the dress I have on."

She was dressed in black, as usual. Her costume of cloth, plain but well cut, showed her fine figure to advantage. A dull hostility filled her mind as she retraced her steps to the drawing-room.

A little old lady with a broad, waxen face, with a black mantilla for headgear, made her three deep curtsies in a stiff, rustling silken skirt. She had fine, brown, shiny eyes, childishly youthful for her age, under thick, old-fashioned coils of hair still fair in colour. Her eyes bespoke only goodness, gentleness, and kindness. She said,—

"Ah! *Fräulein* Hersberg, dear *fräulein*, welcome. Her highness wishes to see you. She has been asking for you all morning. She can-

not wait. Be good enough to follow me quickly, very, very quickly, dear Fräulein Hersberg !”

Clara said almost sourly,—

“I am at the service of . . . her highness.”

And she thought as she went,—

“I am here to satisfy the caprice of a spoilt child. I am sure Ismaël did not see how the matter stood. This show doll, useless and idle, corrupted by flattery, and full of whims and vanity, has taken it into her head to pose as a creature of intellect and knowledge. My part here will be purely domestic. The ignorance of royalties is proverbial. This child will command me to do experiments in front of her, simply for her amusement. And that will be all. Ah ! life held something better for me than that.”

She was astonished now at having been able to quit Ismaël. Her heart swelled with tenderness. What a weak, mean bit of reckoning to refuse herself to her poor friend in order to get into this hateful society !

She walked straight on, seeing nothing. The little old lady trotted along in front. They went a story down ; the silk of the stiff dress rustled down the steps. They passed through the picture gallery, crossed the vestibule of the chapel, and

reached the royal apartments. A door left ajar by a housemaid, and a little drawing-room appeared all in yellow silk, full of a yellow light thrown by a window curtained in orange muslin. There were daffodils arranged on a flower-stand. The little old lady turned round, put her finger on her lips, and announced in a voice of awe,—

“The queen’s boudoir.”

Then followed what was known as the chamber of kings ; along frescoed walls all the statues of the dynasty stood ranged as in a church. The waxed floor mirrored them back.

“It is here,” said Madame de Bénouville, drawing aside a curtain from a doorway.

First came an antechamber aglow with tea roses, and then immediately they found themselves in what her highness called her studio. She did some pencil work there sometimes ; painting was out of the question, with the coloured glass of the two great windows grudging the light and altering its values. It was rather the dim, religious light of a chapel. The large room was crammed with art furniture ; bits of old brocade hung over the chair backs ; there were statues, busts whose crude white spotted the room, old German cupboards, the gold of a harp. A minute passed

before Clara was able to distinguish, right at the other end of the room, the movement of a white figure between the arms of an invalid chair. A hand appeared among the lace ruffles of a dressing-gown and beckoned to her. The scientist recognized in it the same delicate hand with the abnormally long finger bones of a sickly child. She went forward.

Her Royal Highness the Archduchess Wanda of Oldsburg, the heir to the throne of Lithuania, was stretched, pale, emaciated, and ailing on the couch, where her sore knee was being kept quiet. Only her head and shoulders moved a little. She sat up saying,—

“Oh! how I thank you for coming! How happy I am! If you knew, if you knew. . . .”

Clara, stiff, unmoved, and suspicious, replied,—

“It is I who owe you gratitude, *fräulein*.”

And behind her the old governess prompted,—

“Your highness. . . . One says: Your highness.”

But the archduchess, having overheard these desperate adjurations, smiled,—

“No, my dear Bénouville, please let us have no etiquette. There is only one princess here, and it is not I, who feel myself so ignorant beside a woman like *Fräulein Hersberg*.”



But Clara would not be melted ; she answered with a serious face,—

“Your highness must be very indulgent to me. I am merely a common person, and have no idea of court etiquette. I only know the formulæ of my chemistry, and nothing concerning those of ceremony. I have always lived free. . . .”

When she spoke of liberty the fire in her eyes sprang to flame ; she was seeing, in thought, the indomitable old prophet, the utter independence of the life she had led until now, and Kosor who declared all obedience a crime. Did the frail princess understand her feeling ? She replied, shaking her head gaily,—

“I shall not give you any lesson, *fräulein*, you may be sure ; I expect to be taught, I am already proud of being your student. You are giving me the first great and perfect joy of my life ; oh, I shall tell you about my life—if it does not bore you—for it has not been very lively, this poor life of mine. Has it, my good *Bénouville* ?”

The old Frenchwoman sighed deeply and added,—

“Her highness does not enjoy good health. She is more intimate with her couch than with carriages of state. A plain girl is often happier

than the child of a great king. How many pleasures are forbidden her! Her highness knows none but those derived from study. In those she has often indulged to excess. She is a woman of to-day. She knows everything."

"Now, that is the merest flattery. What will Fräulein Hersberg think of me and of the court?" . . .

Clara chose not to answer.

"I have had great masters," continued her highness, lying back again in her chair; "but not the greatest, since I have not yet had you."

"It is your highness's turn to flatter," said Clara with a forced smile. "When are our lessons to begin?"

The old governess explained,—

"Well, you see, it is like this. Her highness, who has arthritis in the knee, has just had a slight relapse. Oh! nothing serious; merely a slight swelling without gravity; but the doctors order complete rest of the whole body. In a week or two she will be able to climb the stairs to the laboratory in the tower; meanwhile, her highness would wish the lessons to take place here."

Clara repeated icily,—

"I am at her highness's commands."

This time the archduchess did not protest. She had shut her eyes. Her closed eyelids were twin globes, delicate and transparent, fringed with pale eyelashes under that extraordinary forehead, protruding, white as milk, and veined with violet. The flaxen hair lay in disorder on a cushion of pink silk. The figure stretched in its white gown seemed slim and very long, like that of the virgins of ancient Greece. A pang of anxiety showed on the old lady's face. She bent over her and could not refrain from exclaiming,—

"Are you in pain, my dear child?"

Wanda shook her head.

"Scarcely at all ; but if you were very kind, my dearest Bénouville, you would fetch me my ether."

With her mouse patter, the old lady crossed the studio, hurrying at a simple word from the object of her adoration ; Clara had remained alone beside the couch. There was a long silence. With eyes still closed, the archduchess said dully,—

"You must not treat me as an enemy, Fräulein Hersberg."

"But, your highness. . . ."

The profile on the cushion did not stir, but Clara saw a tear make its way over the thin cheek, and the young girl went on,—

“I am not deceived. Although I have been seventeen years a prisoner behind these palace walls, and often under the curtains of my bed, though I lead a life more cloistered and enclosed than the life of the severest nun, there are many things I feel and guess at and know. I know who you are, Fräulein Hersberg. You are against us. I have studied much of the history of the reign of my grandfather, and about the great revolutionary, Doctor Kosor. He, too, had the people's good at heart. He gave himself for the people. How many ways there are of performing that same sacrifice. . . . If you only knew. . . . But you think us the enemies of the poor. The king was against your coming. He was always saying to me: ‘There is an unsurmountable barrier between us and that woman.’ Nevertheless, he was your great admirer, and I begged him so. I am not a spoilt child. My father does not satisfy all my whims. Only when he has something big to refuse me, he grants things of less importance. One day that happened. He went to hear one of your chemistry lectures; yes, the king and I were

in the amphitheatre the evening of the lecture on thermium, and you did not recognize us. But it was so fine, you were so natural, so thrilling, that the king himself became a partaker in my admiration. To see you it seemed as if the serenity of science was wrapped about you like a mantle, that there was no room for hatred any more, and so he summoned you to us. I had a secret presentiment that you would come. And come you have, indeed ; but please, oh, please see in me only the submissive, the devoted, and admiring pupil. For my part I hate nobody, nobody."

Clara shivered and answered, touched more nearly than she would allow,—

"Here, I am merely a woman of science. Science is the sacred ground where we can all agree."

"Give me your hand," said Wanda.

Clara stretched out her gloved hand, which was taken and pressed long and in silence, and she heard the warm-hearted girl whisper,—

"I, too, love my people, Fräulein Hersberg."

But it was only long after that Clara came to understand the hidden meaning of that sentence. Friend Bénouville appeared with the flask of ether. The little princess of the fairy tale endeavoured

to sit up. With an instinctive gesture Clara propped her with the cushions. A soft smile shone in the sad eyes. The scientist understood that she was free to withdraw. In case she should lose her way, they gave her an escort to her suite of rooms, in the person of Wanda's principal chamber-maid.

## II.

THE charm and sensitiveness of the delicate princess were to be an added source of disquiet to Clara during those early days in the palace. Her exile and their tediousness would have found relief in a mood of real bitterness had it not been that the young girl both touched and disarmed her. Then she endeavoured to distinguish between the idea of royalty and the idea of the delicate maiden ; but that was impossible. If they succeeded in eking out her weakly life, Wanda would one day ascend the throne. How was Clara to love this future queen ? But, on the other hand, how could she resist her charm ? The hours spent in trying to resolve this dilemma were certainly not pleasant.

Apart from her touching reception by the arch-duchess everything seemed intended to wound her. There were the distance and reserve of Wolfran V., who had not even summoned her

to his presence ; those of the queen, upon whom she had not even set eyes ; the coldness of the ladies-in-waiting during the meal they took together, which made the young woman request that hers should be brought up to her own apartments. The animosity she found everywhere in the palace was crushing ; she took pleasure in it, she relished it, thus redeeming the sort of compromise to which Ismaël had persuaded her ; but her soul was not of the metal which delights in the animosity at that moment perturbing the peace of her mind, generally so rich and productive.

Her first night at the palace, as she was falling asleep under the faded fringes of the princely curtains, she seemed to see at the foot of her bed the tall figure of old Kosor, with his great ivory forehead, his silvery beard, and his blue, worn, dreamy eyes. He was sad and reproachful. Had she forgotten, he seemed to ask, the long banishments he had suffered, the pitiless war which had been waged between himself and royalty, Wenceslas's terrible reprisals, and his own final exile and death in a labour colony of the Pacific ? She, the daughter of his heart, was sleeping to-night in splendour under the kingly roof. She had eaten the king's bread and was on friendly



terms with the granddaughter of the tyrant—and what was the hour chosen for all this? The very moment when the king was depriving his people of bread and of coal. The full effect of the tariff laws was about to make itself felt; destitution was taking up its abode in the working quarters of the city. How could Clara, in the comfortable warmth of the palace stoves, forget those who suffered with cold, in houses without a fire, across the river?

“Dear friend,” she wrote next day to Ismaël, “I am suffering all the torments of exile here. What have I to do in this palace? To convert Wolfran? What a piece of irony! He scarcely seems to exist in this fairy architecture amid the world that revolves about him and lives by his Majesty without once seeing his face. My pupil, however, is a pleasant young girl, devoid of all pride, which her illness—for she is more deeply affected than is officially allowed—has without doubt conquered. I detest the crowd of maids of honour among whom I live, not so much because of the disdain with which they crushed me at our very first meal together as by reason of their ridiculous nullity and self-importance. I really frighten them, I believe. One of them even tried

to tame me, a Frau Czerbich, the queen's reader. I understood very little of her hints about equality. I am inclined to think that she affects advanced ideas. That would be exceedingly amusing. She is an Austrian and seems very flighty. There is a great display of dresses at table. One could buy shipload upon shipload of coal for the price of the jewels they wear about their necks, and our poor weavers would have enough to make a fire for their children. How is the strike getting on, friend of mine? You know that I pay part of my due in remorse by the reflection that if I enjoy princely luxury here, I am, when all is said, a mere governess with wages, and that these wages will be a little source of income to the fund of the Union. Courage, Ismaël! I adjure you not to violence, but to action. I have faith in the strike; I expect much from it. It will be the first attempt at an organization of the masses in Lithuania. One thing I understand to-day better than ever: it is only as the result of political evolution that we can obtain any measure of social evolution. But I continue to believe that a beneficent transformation of the state can take place without any great upheaval. Organize meetings, write pamphlets. We must increase the intellectual contingent in

the Union, and make converts among the professors and teachers ; among all, indeed, who have the means of moral influence. Also we must hold the army if we wish to avoid the shedding of blood. My friend, I am not happy here, to be sure, but it is quite possible that my stay here will be for my good. My point of view is growing strangely enlarged, my faith in liberty warmer, and I have never understood so well how needful you are to me, dear sustainer of my life, without whom I cannot live. I have only you in all the world, my friend ; remember that."

Just as Clara was signing this letter a note was brought her from the queen, inviting her to tea in the evening.

"Fräulein is fortunate," said her little attendant to her, who, being very much in the swim of court life, guessed what the invitation was. "There are people at Oldsburg who would give ten years of their life to be invited to tea with the queen, and who will never get the chance. Fräulein has just come, and here she is, summoned already. The queen must be pretty keen to find favour with fräulein. And for fräulein, who dislikes ceremony, it will be very pleasant, because the reception is quite informal. There aren't more than

fifteen or eighteen people there ; often people from the town, teachers like *fräulein* or artists, sometimes the wives of high dignitaries, but *they* think their Majesties too familiar and easy going. . . .”

Clara found to her surprise that she was very much pleased to have received this invitation. So her curiosity, unassuaged since her arrival at the palace, was going to be satisfied after all ; she would see Wolfran, she would take his measure, she would penetrate into his thought ! Was this not an exceptional opportunity for a person of her opinions, to be able to found her judgments upon so close an examination ? What an advantage this intimate knowledge of the sovereign would give her over her companions, and what a clear idea of the revolution she would obtain by this study, at its very heart, of the political principle upon which they had passed sentence !

When night came the archduchess commanded her presence in order to select scientific books for their work together. Madame de Bénouville said to her,—

“You are to know her Majesty ; you will see how charming she is. Dear *Fräulein* Hersberg, you will be made a conquest of, a conquest. . . .”

Clara merely smiled. And as the old lady trotted about in search of the books, the little archduchess said to the scientist,—

“You must give a great deal of your affection to dear Madame Bénouville. She came long ago from France to bring up papa, and she lavished care upon him as she does upon me now. He says that she is the largest-hearted woman that he knows.”

“I have judged her already,” said Clara; “she is a good soul.”

But the old lady was returning, laden with the best known text-books.

“Let us begin with the most elementary,” said Clara; “this one here.”

“I have read it,” said Wanda.

“Good, it will be an excellent foundation for our lessons; we shall proceed with this one.”

“I have read that one too.”

“Excellent,” said Clara in surprise. “Here is an English chemistry book; it is fairly theoretic. Can you read English, your highness?”

“Oh yes, and I have worked a great deal on that book too.”

“What am I doing here?” said the lecturer gaily. “Madame de Bénouville is right, your highness knows everything.”

"Well! How would you have me to have passed my youth, walled in as I was by illness and by . . . circumstances? When I was small I often went out with Bénouville. I used to go to the Oldsburg shops and into the arcades; sometimes people stared curiously at me in the streets. One day I was recognized; I was crossing a public garden full of children of my own age playing about, and there was a little commotion . . . half curiosity . . . half sympathy. . . ."

"I remember it happening," answered Clara, charmed in spite of herself; "they cheered you, the flowers of the garden were plucked, and your pretty highness was all covered with them. It was as beautiful as an old legend. . . ."

"It is a beautiful thing to remember for me," said the young girl, closing her eyes.

Clara watched her for a minute. There was something poetic in the worship of Lithuania for the little dream princess who embodied its future. What was the mystery about this sickly girl, the mystery that made a nation grow tender at the very sound of her name? . . . She was weakly, physically poor, unable to stand. Probably she knew not a word about politics, but if she had laid herself down across the royal threshold, the

very revolution in its frenzy to do justice, rushing abristle with pikes and guns to annihilate the power of the king, would have stopped and hung back at the sight of her. "Why?" asked Clara of herself. "What is there, then, in a young queen? . . ."

Wanda continued,—

"Since that occurrence my walks have been stopped. That which any girl in Oldsburg is free to do is forbidden me. My father interfered. He was quite right. First of all, I might have been met with anything but sympathy . . . and then there is a further reason. . . ."

"What is that?" asked Clara, without thinking.

The archduchess smiled,—

"That further reason, Fräulein Hersberg, you would not understand. . . . It has its roots in ways of thinking that are . . . most absolutely . . . royalist."

"Her highness has sought consolation in her studies," explained old Madame de Bénouville with a punctuation of little sighs. "Study is a good distraction when the heart is sore, but what is really wanting is health. . . ."

"What a mistake!" answered her highness. "My brain, at least, is not ill," she said with a sort of pride.

And, once again, Clara studied that striking thinker's forehead of hers and those strange blue eyes of a precocious child whose whole intellectual *life* had been spent between the curtains of her bed, within the confines of her palatial prison, but with all windows open to the sky of human thought.



### III.

It was nine o'clock that same evening when Madame de Bénouville came in search of Clara, to take her to the queen's after-dinner reception. After having examined the dress of the scientific lady, whose extreme simplicity was the cause of a succession of little sighs, she asked her permission to pin in her hair a little diamond aigrette, which she explained she never wore, and which would improve the scientist's appearance.

But Clara refused.

"Do pardon me," said she affectionately, pressing the old wrinkled hands in hers ; "I never wear jewels, never under any circumstances. My conscience would suffer for it. I don't do it because I wish to protest. . . . There is too much misery, do you understand ; there are too many hungry."

"I thought that your heart mourned some hidden sorrow," said the romantic and sentimental Frenchwoman.

"It has indeed a sorrow," said Clara ; "sorrow for the fearful poverty in the slums of Lithuania."

"Ah !" answered good Bénouville, with tears in her eyes. "What a touching thought, dear Fräulein Hersberg ; but if luxury were destroyed, would not poverty grow even more dreadful ?"

Clara thought her simple minded, and made no reply. She was a little nervous, too, at the thought of finding herself face to face with Wolfran, and the necessity of standing on her dignity in playing her singular part of the king's enemy in his own household weighed upon her. That which seemed easy in the presence of the charming archduchess ceased to be so in the presence of the royalty she hated. She remained silent during their long journey, wilfully omitting even to question her old companion as to whether the king would be present. Imagining that the reception would be held in the yellow boudoir, she expected a glare of gildings, of lights, of decorations, and diamonds. Great was her astonishment when Madame de Bénouville ushered her into an ordinary little library, simply furnished with a large round table covered with green felt, and with a globe upon it. Three oil lamps—two on the mantelpiece, above a cheerful blaze of logs, and one on the table—lit

up the whole woodwork pleasantly. There were half a score of persons present, sitting or standing. They were conversing in groups—women in evening dresses scarcely low necked at all, the men in dinner jackets. One lady as they entered was bending, poker in hand, to stir the fire.

"The king will soon send them about their business . . ." Clara caught her saying.

Fräulein Hersberg's eyes glanced inquisitively from figure to figure in search of Wolfran's red beard. But all she recognized was Frau Czerbich and her fair curls, and Count von Thaven, looking like an old general. There was a little movement of curiosity on the part of those present who knew whom to expect. Clara was very beautiful : paler than usual, with wide open eyes, her dark hair swelling in waves over her temples. She looked as stern in her black dress as the very idea she embodied. There was a dead silence. Three extremely important and stiff-looking ladies were sitting in the embrasure of a window. Clara had a moment's hesitation, caused by her failure to distinguish the queen. But Madame de Bénouville set her right, and leading her up to the lady who had been poking the fire, said, as she twisted the ends of her lace headgear with her fingers,—

"I have the honour to present to your Majesty our great Lithuanian chemist."

"Ah! Fräulein Hersberg," said the exuberant lady, stretching out her two hands, "I am delighted, charmed . . . I have not had a minute of my own to see you since yesterday. It was exceedingly kind of you to come to-night. It is positively impossible during the day to find time for a moment's talk."

And with an ostentatious freedom, clearly aimed at the ceremonious three seated stiffly at the window, she added laughingly,—

"It is a heavy household, you know!"

"Her Majesty does not add that she is the best housekeeper in the kingdom," Frau Czerbich put in thoughtlessly

Clara answered, very much put out,—

"For my part, I am glad to tell the mother of my pupil with what a real admiration her young mind has inspired me."

"Isn't Wanda quite delightful? Faith, she's a proof that an archduchess is not necessarily a fool!"

"Oh, who thinks that?" protested Clara.

Impulsive Gemma made an equivocal gesture, hinting malice.

"One never knows . . . our enemies, I suppose. Between ourselves, you know they do say such things."

Gemma was not forty years old. She had been an Italian princess, and into the northern court she had brought her Italian sunshine, her Italian gaiety, and her Italian joy of life. Wolfran had married her for love, and after eighteen years of marriage they still were a most vulgarly attached couple. Did they not actually say "thou" to each other on all but state occasions, to the vast scandal of the high court officials, to whom the old etiquette of the days of Wenceslas was as much a habit as their clothes? The simplicity of the queen had made her irreconcilable enemies in the very heart of the palace. She was said to be unintelligent, ill-educated, and full of vulgar common sense. She was a large brunette, decidedly stout, olive complexioned, with voluptuous eyes and bluish eyelids. The eyes had what is commonly known as a velvety look. She loved to charm people in their despite, and caressed Clara, about whose past she was perfectly informed, with her coquettish and seductive smile.

Clara had not answered.

The queen proceeded,—

"Above all, let there be no dangerous experiments in the laboratory, please, Fräulein Hersberg. I am horribly afraid of chemistry . . . all these exploding things. . . ."

"Let your Majesty rest assured! We shall fabricate no explosives," said Clara gaily.

Several of the men began to laugh, and thought it clever and frank of the revolutionary to take that plucky, humorous line.

Her playful way of hinting at her alliance with the revolutionary party pleased them. But Count Thaven fell to biting his lips, and his neck straitened under the folds of his stock. One of the three ladies, stiff as marble, declared solemnly,—

"Chemistry is a science which has made great advances."

"Thanks to the powerful intellects of such geniuses as Hersberg."

This phrase was spoken very loudly, and the speaker endeavoured to get nearer to Clara. He was a tall young man, lank and flexible, whose gray eyes had been fixed on the scientist from the moment that she had spoken of Wanda. In the simplicity of the small room those eyes seemed to see things great and invisible, to be lost in wonderful distances, to discern visions of beauty. At a

venture, Clara took him for one of those artists who were said to be frequent guests at these family gatherings. He now spoke to her.

"It is a great pleasure for me to be able to congratulate the creator of thermium."

"O sir," cried Clara, with her fine simplicity, "I have created nothing. Discoveries are a result of a long chain of experiments. We all do our part; each twists and rivets his link to the link before. I happened to rivet the last, the end of the chain."

"That is to say, you supplied the link of genius."

The surrounding conversation had languished since the arrival of Fräulein Hersberg, not being of the kind which could well be continued in her presence. A rather singular person, small, delicate limbed, frock coated, with hair turning to gray and sharp blue eyes, was standing against the bookcase speaking English with a young lord of that nation. He never took his eyes off Clara and the man addressing her.

"Dear little Czerbich," said the queen, "it would be awfully kind of you to bring me my fancy-work."

And since she felt the slight awkwardness which

the arrival of the outsider had brought into the gathering, she cried with irresistible joviality,—

“Come, gentlemen, I have a skein of wool to unwind ; which of you will stretch out his arms to me ?”

A gigantic old man, in the undress uniform of a general, with gold-embroidered collar and facings, upturned moustaches, a magnificent forehead, and white hair plastered flat at the back of his head, answered,—

“The man whom your Majesty will deign to honour by a sign.”

“Well, duke, it is easy to speak. If I choose the youngest, it will be too free ; if I take the oldest, I shall be exceedingly impolite. Come, you who are a statesman, advise me.”

Clara, who felt she had some confidence in her young companion, asked him,—

“Who is that officer ?”

“A very great personage indeed,” said the young man in a low voice ; “a person not to be joked with—the Duke von Zoffern, the Earl Marshal ; and that is the duchess you see there, in scarlet satin, sitting in front of the window, between Countess Thaven and the Countess Hermann Ringer, her Majesty’s Lady of the Robes.”



"She looks like an empress!" exclaimed Clara, with the fling of an impulsive child.

"You had no idea you were speaking so aptly, *fräulein*."

Clara was conversant enough with the political situation to know that the Earl Marshal and Prime Minister of the kingdom was a stern upholder of the principle of authority, and vehemently opposed to Wolfran. She knew that the two men were at daggers drawn, wresting the power from one another behind an outward show of strict courtesy. It was said that all the concessions granted to the liberals by the young sovereign had had to be carried, as it were, at the sword's point against the opposition of Wenceslas's former adviser. With her eyes full of inexperienced curiosity she examined the man who was so often the power behind the throne of Lithuania.

"I must seem very much out of it all to you," she explained. "I have no knowledge whatever of courtly doings, and am very much more at home among my flasks and mortars and test-tubes in my laboratory than in a drawing-room."

"I am not much of a carpet knight either," said the stranger.

Meanwhile, the little comedy begun by the queen over the skein of wool was proceeding. She seemed to take the greatest pleasure in it. Madame Czerbich had brought the tapestry frame, with its balls of coloured wool, and an armful of the same material tinted old gold.

This last Gemma took and raised in the air. Her warm, speaking countenance took on an expression of extreme malice. She soliloquized,—

“I have never discovered any great distinction in the business of a wool-winder, so that I am a good deal perplexed. Nevertheless, if I could honour any of these gentlemen . . .”

The Earl Marshal's herculean frame moved aside ; his eyes roved about the room, and at last stopped insistently on Clara's partner. Mechanically the eyes of the whole company followed his ; the young man seemed specially marked out, and appeared to be himself amused at the game. But at last the queen, with the air of a woman playing off a good joke,—

“Since you are kind enough to think it an honour, my lord duke,” said she, “to do me this little service, I cannot but fix my choice on you. Here is the stool ; do please sit down on it and be friendly enough to stretch out your two wrists.”

A little whistling sound, hoarse but barely perceptible, came from the Duchess of Zoffern, wife of the Earl Marshal, who, sitting very stiff and erect in her red dress, could not contain her hard, indignant breathing at seeing her husband in such a posture. The Marshal, half squatting in front of his sovereign, and raising great hirsute fists, looked painfully and laughably encumbered by his huge limbs. The skein of wool was drawn stiffly out ; sometimes a strand of the wool caught the hair on his wrists. Gemma went on imperturbably unwinding.

"You see, Fräulein Hersberg," she said, without once stopping her work, "the mothers work at tapestry and the daughters work at the sciences. That's progress."

"One must beware of progress," the duchess blurted out with difficulty, for her rage was all but choking her.

Neither she nor the duke liked the queen, and Gemma repaid their dislike with interest. She was not at all sorry to avenge herself for the official constraint these two solemn courtiers kept her in, in virtue of a moral influence bequeathed to them by the previous reign. The Marshal did not budge.

"Oh no ; progress has its good points," the Countess Thaven opined, paying court to her sovereign, and secretly delighted.

For Clara it was the drawing of a curtain of the little intrigues of the court. Her eyes opened curiously on a scene of such novelty to her. She answered in her turn,—

"Her highness, who wishes to be an accomplished woman, will have to know how to do tapestry also, as well as many other things which only your Majesty can teach her."

Several of the persons present divined hidden meanings in the sentence which Clara merely meant to convey amiability. The conversation turned on the education of women, on their capacities and qualities. Count von Thaven, while making all reserves with regard to princesses, who were exceptions, was of opinion that a needle or a skimmer were more in their line than a pen or a book. Her Majesty's Mistress of the Robes thought a girl ought to have some tincture of letters, history, and astronomy, which, said she, lends poetry. Madame Czerbich, to whom the queen was all indulgence, avowed herself a feminist, and even claimed political equality with men for her sisters.

"Are you an upholder of women's rights, *Fräulein Hersberg*?" she asked in her high-pitched voice.

Clara laughed, said that she did not know, since her demands were directed elsewhere. The young lord with a pronounced English accent announced that in his country such ideas would soon bring about a revolution. Madame de Bénouville thought it all very bold and upsetting. Her broad, waxen countenance, with its beautiful, sad eyes, was agitated disapprovingly upon her meagre shoulders. Amid the waving of her lace, she affirmed that in her country women had the most charming faculty of hiding under the simplest and plainest exterior a mental development sometimes exaggerated. Whereupon the mysterious person in the frock coat, who had so far said nothing, began to speak.

"The Frenchwomen are right," he declared. "The future of nations is bound up with the intellectual development of women, but it also depends upon their development as a whole. Now if they were to degenerate as women in order to become intellectuals, and if the enlightenment of their minds were to mean the sacrifice of their grace, their health, and their vocation as mothers, it would be progress in the wrong direction."

Clara bent towards her neighbour, and asked him,—

“Who is that very sensible person?”

The queen, having transformed the skein of wool into a beautiful, soft, round, golden ball, freed the Marshal, who stood up like a Hercules grown stiff with spinning. He was furiously angry, but his temper was well enough in hand for him to display a smile under his hard moustache.

“When all ladies have become scientists, our sex will have to become familiarized with little industries of this sort.”

Whereupon the old duchess, his wife, dealt a happy stroke,—

“Be consoled,” said she; “a skein of wool is less heavy than a marshal’s baton.”

The young man at Clara’s side, after hesitating a second, answered her question,—

“It is Lord Bertie, the Duke of Oldany, and an Irish prince”

“Lord Bertie!” replied Clara in surprise.

She saw a sudden nervous stiffness come over the speaker.

The newspapers had meagre knowledge of the part played at court by this puzzling foreigner, who was credibly reported, nevertheless, to be the

king's closest and most constant companion. He had no official status, but he lived at the palace, and had not thrice absented himself from Oldsburg in twice that number of years. He had about him something that was at once secret, modest, and discreet. But whenever he spoke, his steel-like eyes became authoritative, commanding, and irresistible ; his gestures were short, precise, and abrupt. A man, one felt, only to be known after a few years' acquaintance, and never to be entirely fathomed. Rumour had it that he was Wolfran's right hand. Feeling Clara's look upon him, he let his eyes rest on her in return. For a second they scrutinized one another. It seemed that in that company of society people these two higher minds, of the scientist and statesman, had mutually discerned and recognized each other's qualities, like some two noble animals meeting amongst a herd, instantly divining that in each other, from that time forth, they have something to reckon with.

And now the queen, bent over her tapestry frame, was passing the needle through the canvas. Her thick black hair, twisted helmetwise in a fashion of twenty years before, showed her profile still young despite a certain *embonpoint*. She

seemed absorbed in her tapestry, but that pre-occupation did not prevent her eyes from furtively observing her company with all the care and attention of a good hostess. She had the backgammon board brought for Madame de Bénouville who loved that game, and asked Countess Hermann Ringer to be the old lady's opponent at it. A chess-table was brought for the Earl Marshal and Count von Thaven. The two old men, who entertained a lively dislike for each other, found vent for a little of their spite in the benign animosity of the game. They were a sight to see, head to head, the one as huge as the other ; the duke majestic, with silver crowning his noble forehead and a bristling moustache ; the count, fierce visaged, with hair brushed stiffly on end, and bristling gray on his face, powerful and ungainly with his bull's neck. They frowned, calculated, and growled deep thunder. The one was the familiar master of everyday, the keeper of the king's privy purse, with a knowledge of all Wolfran's intimate secrets. The other was the pseudo Director of Lithuania, and held the first to be a mere dummy. From time to time across the room came the dry rattle of the dice which Madame de Bénouville threw with an almost pas-



sionate ardour. The queen was questioning the young Englishman about a piece only three days old at the Oldsburg opera. At ten tea was served. Clara was saying to her partner,—

“But what about the king . . . does he never attend these parties?”

The stranger answered evasively,—

“Yes . . . sometimes. . . .”

And the scientist, very much at her ease beside this young man, visibly younger than herself, whom his words showed clearly to be some wealthy connoisseur, distinguished and dreamy, gradually confided in him more and more with the frankness belonging to most scientific people.

“I do not deny I should have liked to see the king to-night; I have lived in an environment where there was small love for him. I, sir, am the adopted daughter of Doctor Kosor. That is as much as to tell you . . .”

“I knew it, *fräulein*,” interpolated the young man, and stopped.

“Well, I cannot be a royalist, you see. It is mere loyalty for me to say it right out before everybody. Besides, I am not here to play at politics. Still, I can’t help being inquisitive about certain things.”

"Yours is a very interesting case," said the young man, as if thinking aloud.

"I have been brought up on sociology and the love of humankind," Clara went on. "I have yearned for the good of the people with a great yearning."

The young man smiled sadly.

"I think, *fräulein*, that when you know the king you will recognize that his longing is not less than yours. Ah! the good of the people; in what does it consist—in what?"

"But," began Clara, "it seems to me that . . ."

She was going to come out with the ultra simple dogma of the Union, so exceedingly sure of itself and of the healing powers of levelling and equality; but a certain delicacy withheld her from being so positive in the midst of a company which held the very opposite view. She was silent. The young man continued,—

"That yearning is a great and beautiful religion with many sects. Kosor himself, the great disturber, performed his part, for, among all the tares of his sowing, only the grain has sprung up. Who knows but that the wise liberal reforms of the new reign were in part due to the inspirations of the old man's *chimeras*?"

"Do you really think so?" said Clara eagerly, her eyes filling with tears.

This tribute to old Kosor, paid as it was in such a place, in the very temple of royalty itself, was invested in her eyes with a unique grandeur which quite overcame her. She added,—

"Ah! sir, if you had known him; how noble, how great a soul! . . ."

"That is my conception of him," said the young stranger—"dominating humanity, never satisfied, insatiable. Where the run of men would just venture timidly to try a new law, there he would be calling with the roars of a lion for the dislocation of society.

"Every society requires beings of such sublime insanity; they are their necessary ferment. Without them they would be like loaves without yeast. No energy would raise the lump! All perfecting is laborious, as governments well know. To extract the simplest legislative measure from the government in power, there must be the clamour of great revolutionaries crying out for the overturn of all things."

"So you are not a royalist either?" asked Clara.

The young man smiled, and his smile relaxing his thoughtful face, let youth pierce through.

"Oh yes, I am," said he, laughing straight out ;  
"I am very much of a royalist."

At that moment the queen beckoned to him with a little familiar gesture. He hurried to her side. The tea-table was set out in front of Gemma. She said to him,—

"You are letting your neighbour die of thirst. Do give this cup of tea to Fräulein Hersberg."

The room was full of the clicking of cups and saucers. They were very fine cups of Lithuanian porcelain, almost transparent, and bearing an initial G in gold. The little spoons bore the mark of the royal swan. Madame de Bénouville had lost her game, and was visibly dejected. Count Thaven and the Earl Marshal were still playing. Occasionally their great fingers quitted the knight or the tower and strayed to the neighbouring table in search of their cups. They played in silence, each seeking to avoid the other's eye, and the hands that occasionally conveyed a cup to their lips shook visibly.

Duke Bertie, standing stiffly in his frock coat, drank his tea methodically, in sips. He came up to Clara just as the young stranger was handing her sugar and cream.

"Well, Fräulein Hersberg, what do you say

to our simplicity here, the simplicity of these little gatherings?"

His knowledge of her name amazed the scientist. But, in truth, he was bound to know it since, probably before her arrival, the queen had announced to her guests that they were to have the commoner and enemy of the household with them to-night. But the Duke of Oldany stood so high, and seemed so haughty and distant that Clara, quite forgetting her own titles to distinction, had taken it as a matter of course that he would pay no attention to her.

"I give the simplicity the respect due to it, my lord," she answered coldly.

"I thought it would please you," he said pointedly.

"And so it does, my lord."

"Glad to hear it!" said the duke.

She caught a tone of irony, and felt a dislike for him. His examination of her had not ceased; his eyes had all the symptoms of short-sightedness, and, to speak to her, he had fixed on his nose a pair of glasses of thick crystal. He went on,—

"This pleasant informality cannot always be proper in a court. You will get to know other sides of royal life, fräulein. Do not take offence

at them, they are necessary. I think you will understand them."

"I don't know," said Clara, who felt enmity swell up in her heart in the presence of this mysterious person who was reported to be the craftsman of the new protectionist tariff.

The Irishman, with a sharp gesture, let his glasses drop and said,—

"Of course you will ! It is a Hersberg's function to understand."

And, as she returned no answer, his eyes questioned her for a minute. As she continued silent, he gave no sign, and then slowly drew away from her. Clara was sipping her tea, abstractedly thinking of matters desperately painful. When the Duke of Oldany had withdrawn out of hearing, she said to her partner, as he relieved her of her cup,—

"They say he is all-powerful, politically. Is that so ?"

The young man's face had darkened.

"He is in the closest relations with his Majesty, and calls himself the king's private secretary. As a matter of fact, they are close friends ; and in royal decrees it is not possible to distinguish the duke's part of the work from the king's. I should

be inclined to think that the king is quite capable of freeing himself from those shackles and governing alone ; he has the delicate intuition coupled with the necessary authority and moral energy. But he is quite frank about acknowledging that this particular adviser is indispensable to him. In his great modesty he thinks that."

Gemma, ceaselessly working like any busy housewife, had continued the conversation on the subject of music. Music, and indeed all the arts, enthralled the warm-blooded Italian. The young lord and Countess Thaven put in their words from time to time. Duke Bertie, with that coldly-sarcastic look of his, listened to their talk about operas, composers, and concerts. Suddenly there was a silence. Individual conversations stopped. The Earl Marshal sat as if petrified with his fingers upon the bishop of the chess-board. The queen had drawn herself up as she sat, the needle with its long strand of red wool still raised in her dimpled hand. Singing low, and with a voice of charming quality, she went through the cavatine of the last opera. Imperceptibly her head swayed to the cadence of the bars, while her raised hand, with its trail of red wool, moved to the rhythm. The touching beauty of the air, chanted as it was

by a simple woman whom chance had made queen, impressed Clara deeply even on an evening of such varied and strange emotions. She said to her neighbour,—

“My pupil, the Archduchess of Oldsburg, is not like her mother ; so it must be from the king that she has her intellectuality, her gravity, and even, if you will allow me to say so, that involuntary air of majesty which one cannot really grudge her. It is innate in her, one feels, and so tempered with gracefulness.”

The young man trembled and said eagerly, almost involuntarily,—

“How true that is ; you cannot have seen her without loving her ?”

Clara wished her words unsaid.

“I have seen very little of her, but I have already realized her great charm ; besides, I have no reason whatever to stiffen myself against my sympathy for her—her highness is a mere child.”

“She is a woman,” answered the stranger mysteriously.

“I pity her the prospect of being a queen one day, and I pity her, too, a royal princess, deprived at seventeen of all the joys of her youth. How hard it does seem this trade of royalty !”



"And well I know it, fräulein!" he answered with a smile.

His answer puzzled Clara. She looked hard at her companion of the whole evening and, as he was smiling, she took heart of grace and said,—

"Sir, you have been a most obliging guide to this official society in which I should certainly have been lost. You have told me the name of every one, every one—except yourself; is it impertinent of me to ask you to complete the list?"

"But, first of all, and with equal liberty, Fräulein Hersberg, let me ask you: who did you think I was?"

"An artist," said Clara.

"Thank goodness," said the young man gaily; "princes of the blood simply love to be taken for artists. Alas! I am but a modest amateur with a taste for sculpture. Géo von Hausen is my name."

"The Prince von Hausen," repeated Clara, "the king's cousin? . . ."

Laughter was shining in his fine eyes, giving them additional charm. She was forced to simulate an embarrassment which she was far from feeling.

"I have been committing the most irreparable blunders, your highness," she replied.

But he, much diverted, reassured her.

"Not a bit," he said, "it was much better fun as it was. You were perfectly frank with me ; it was the greatest compliment you could pay me. Etiquette is often very boring ; for one evening I have escaped it with you. I have been charmed. Besides, I too felt at home with you, Fräulein Hersberg."

The queen had pushed aside her tapestry and was gathering up the scattered skeins of wool. It was her way of announcing the end of the evening and giving the signal for its breaking up. Clara, according to etiquette, was to be the first to take her leave. Madame de Bénouville came to summon her.

"Dear Fräulein Hersberg, I hope you have chattered enough with Prince von Hausen ?"

"Too much, perhaps," said Clara.

"Not enough," said the prince ; "but we shall resume it."

The old lady shook her head, regarding her complacently and with admiration. But Clara was quite pale, a mask of coldness had come over her features again ; her forehead was damp with per-

spiration. Accustomed as she was to notice everything, Madame de Bénouville inquired,—

“Do you not feel well?”

“Oh yes; but I have just remembered . . . I have read that one must kiss the queen's hand at all her receptions; shall I have to do that?”

The old lady's face puckered with amusement.

“No, no, not at all. Her Majesty has done away with all that.”

And, in fact, when Clara went up to take her leave, Gemma held out her hands and, with even greater warmth, repeated her sentence of welcome.

“Fräulein Hersberg, I am quite enchanted to have made your acquaintance. When I can snatch a minute for myself, I shall try to use it; if not to attend some of your lessons together, at least to shake hands with you in the laboratory.”

#### IV.

MORALLY Clara Hersberg was far too sane not to recover her mental balance speedily in spite of so many emotions from the outside. She ordered her life, dividing her time between the College of Science and the archduchess's lessons, and little by little regained the peace of heart so indispensable for scientific work.

Their chemistry soon made her lose sight of the princess in Wanda. On this occasion the knee of her royal highness made so rapid a recovery that the doctors could make nothing of it. Her great eagerness to be able to stand seemed to put her malady to flight. She grew able to walk again. One day, when Clara was setting up her batteries in the turret laboratory, now almost entirely furnished, there came a knock at the door, from the passage of the ladies-in-waiting.

It was the archduchess, leaning heavily on her

crutches, who had come up alone to take her by surprise. She was wearing a gray dress with a narrow linen collar, and her hair was in two braids, after the manner of the peasant women of Lithuania.

Clara cried out with astonishment,—

“What, you, your highness, all alone?”

And she rushed forward to support the weakly creature with a movement that was at once feminine and affectionate. The princess seemed to be specially grateful for it. She thanked Clara fervently for the little service, and let herself fall heavily on a wooden stool. The chemist ran off to get an armchair, and carefully settled the young girl in it.

Wanda pressed her hand, saying,—

“You are very good to me.”

“But your highness . . .”

“You will be my friend.”

“Your highness spoils me; she forgets that she will one day be a queen, while I . . .”

“You are a queen also, Fräulein Hersberg, and of a realm higher than any I can ever know.”

“His Majesty was right in saying, ‘There is a gulf fixed between us and this woman.’ It was your highness’s own self who told me of it.”

"Yes, my father did say so. But though I have sought for this gulf, I have not found it, my dear, great, great Hersberg !"

"Ah !" said Clara, for this offer of friendship delighted and tempted her, "why are you not a simple girl !"

"And yet I have the heart of a simple girl," said her highness.

And she began to weep gently. To Clara her tears were intensely moving. She had always lived far from the company of her own sex, from all womanly tenderness, in the zealous, passionate and gloomy presence of the two Kosors. She went on,—

"What would happen if, in the day when your highness is on the throne, I followed my destiny, and were to take part in some movement against it? All my past, all my affections, all my faith urge me against the idea of which your highness is the symbol. Yes, I believe that idea to be evil; I hate it, and yet, for yourself, I love you."

Without knowing it, she was in the way to become affected.

Wanda replied,—

"That's how I feel towards you too."

There was a moment's silence between them.

Mechanically Clara returned to her batteries. Before each of the six windows of the hexagonal room there was a broad table for experiments. Their wood was all new and polished. The odour of the pines lingered about them. Acid would quickly do its work upon them. Many of the instruments were still in packing-cases under the tables. Clara was fixing the wires to the cells. The archduchess took up her crutches, came up to her, and said,—

“Since I am better and have been able to come so far, shall we begin with fluorine to-day?”

The scientist agreed. If all the necessary apparatus was not there, they could send across a servant to borrow what was wanting from the university laboratory over the way. Wanda said,—

“I have learnt everything theoretically. I know nothing of the joys of experiment.”

Then began their manipulations of the instruments. The two young women slipped on aprons, and Clara performed the experiments with gestures at once easy, measured, and precise.

Both were leaning over to follow the experiment more closely. All the apparatus about them retained the archaic forms of the days of alchemy—there was the glass retort with its barbaric shape,

the alembic of cabalistic outline, in fine, the external look of sameness which the trappings of science retain while science itself is continually transforming. All these made Wanda thoughtful. Chemistry has a poetry of its own, which sets the imagination free, and invites the mind to wander.

A substance was about to appear under the eyes of the "great Hersberg." A slight crackling sound came from the glass retort. Through the arched window the eye was led across the great Waffenplatz and down the Königin Allee. Far off across the river, a few factory chimneys were pencilled on the horizon. On the left rose the spire of St. Wolfran, greenish in the pale light of the winter sky. Wanda was saying,—

"Shall I ever be queen? When I look at the cathedral, what comes into my mind is not the pompous ceremony of my coronation, but rather the burial service that will take place there one day. Very magnificent it must be, the burial of an archduchess. I see the great Gothic structure splendidly decked with white draperies, agleam with scattered tears of silver; in the centre there stands the monumental catafalque, all in white also, among the innumerable yellow wax-



imprisoned candle flames, and the great blue sinister flares of the torches ; there is the wailing of the organ, the cry of the violins from the opera orchestra, the lament of the violoncellos ; a singer from the opera chants a lugubrious psalm with which the mournful responses of the clergy intermingle."

"But that is madness, madness and mere moonshine," said Clara. And she shook the glass tube where drops of the fluorine hydrate gas were condensing. "Your highness is full of life."

"You think so? The doctors do not. Believe me, they are very much afraid that I shall not see the end of my teens !"

"The doctors are mistaken," said Clara. "You will live. Your highness must put away such thoughts. See, here is the acid, our experiment is drawing to an end. Unfortunately this solution here is not pure, there is mixed up with it some fluosilicate acid because of the silica which fluor-spar always contains."

"What a nuisance," cried Wanda, who was quick to be taken by the thousand attractions of real life ; "and I, who was thinking that we should be able to go on to the electrolysis this morning."

And she bent anew over the tube, attentively watching the slow condensation of the gas bubbles ; but it was only to continue after a time.

"If I were to die Géo would reign. . . . What do you think of him now that you know him ?"

"Of whom," said Clara.

"Of Prince Géo von Hausen. You told me of your adventure the other evening. You had a long conversation at tea, at my mother's."

"He is charming," answered Clara, abstractedly.

The tired princess had sunk back into her arm-chair again. She sighed deeply and whispered,—

"We are in love."

These are words which a woman never hears with indifference. Clara turned round to her pupil, and joy lit up her features. She said nothing as yet ; she was thinking of the prince so young, so responsive, so sensitively intelligent, and of how he had cried out in regard to the archduchess : "She is a woman !" with the ever new wonder of a youth in love. Ah ! So they were in love ? . . . And her mind pictured their idyll in all its freshness, charm, and beauty.

"Is that really true ?" said she, smiling at their

love as one sometimes smiles during whispering music. "You seem to me worthy of one another, princess."

But Wanda's face remained grave and dejected ; she leant her chin on her hand, and said in a melancholy tone,—

"We are not happy."

One felt she was on the point of tears. Clara was standing in front of her : you would have said Force standing before Weakness, and explained their mutual attraction by their contrast.

"They want to keep us from one another," the archduchess went on.

"What!" said Clara, with feelings already roused to hostility against any and everything that might interrupt the wooing of so pretty a pair of children, "for what reason? The prince is of the blood royal, of great intelligence, suitable in age to your highness."

"Oh yes," said the young girl, eager to speak of her love ; "but the king . . ."

At this moment the door opened, and Madame de Bénouville, who for an hour had been in search of her truant charge, appeared with consternation writ large upon her face, and her good eyes full of reproach.

"Oh! your highness, how could you make me so anxious?"

Wanda bent over her and took her by the shoulders, kissing her face.

"My old friend, do not be angry with me; where should I be if not with Fräulein Hersberg, and what harm should come to me in her company, unless I were to be attracted by her subversive notions and to become a socialist myself? . . . Besides, you can't deny that you love Fräulein Hersberg; you have told me as much."

Madame de Bénouville nodded her broad, kindly face and said,—

"To be sure . . . Fräulein Hersberg has too honest a soul not to be converted from her errors some day."

Clara was preparing the potassium carbonate; she smiled affectionately without answering; but the princess had to follow the old lady, taking her secret with her. And for the scientist, the interrupted story of her interrupted love remained vague, mysterious, and poetic.

## V.

ONE evening, at the end of one of her courses of lectures which were still going on at the College of Science, Clara climbed up to Kosor's room on a surprise visit and found him in his garret. He gave a cry,—

“Oh ! you have come back ! ”

She was touched to find him in such poverty while she was living in luxury. She drew him to her, kissed his forehead, and saw the white lines more frequent in his black locks.

“I am not coming back ; I have merely come ; I simply had to come. I was longing to see you.”

He was looking at her passionately without a word. His wild eyes were haggard and questioning. But, seeing her so calm and still so serene, he withdrew sadly towards the inner end of the room, murmuring,—

"Each time you come to my hovel, with your beauty, your youth, and your light, I fancy that . . ."

"What? What do you fancy?"

"Oh! nothing; but I thirst for you too much. You are my ideal, my divine ideal, ever escaping me. And yet I adore you; everything is allowed you, never shall my love be thrust upon you."

He raised his hands to his head and said, as if in spite of himself,—

"And yet I imagine that it is thus that you will come to me one day. One evening you will open my door, and you will say, 'Here I am,' and my life, which you have always disdained as a thing unworthy, will be gathered to your bosom; then, perhaps, you will understand the gift I have made you. . . ."

"Dear friend," murmured Clara, gently stroking his shoulder, "that day shall indeed come. Meanwhile, you are my beloved."

"I have no mate!" groaned he. And tragically he added, "*Væ soli!*"

"Am I not closely bound to you already? How has your work been getting on? See, I have been paid the first instalment of my salary; I have no

need of anything; I bring it you for yourself, for the strike."

His depression left him; it was as if the word electrified him.

"Oh! thanks, the idea is in progress; the weavers are beginning to refuse to work. Every day a hundred or so of them are won over. One factory has had to stop work entirely. To-morrow, representatives of the manufacturers are to go to the palace to urge Wolfran to withdraw the tariff. They say that the new duties on coal allow of no concession on their part to the demands of the strikers. The crisis is acute. Wouldn't it be curious if the masses were to obtain satisfaction through the intervention of the capitalists. It would really be better that their application should fail. The workman must learn to be absolutely self-reliant; war is what he needs."

"The masters' deputation will not see the king," said Clara.

"Why?" asked Ismaël.

But she had already gone too far and refused to be more explicit. The truth was that Wolfran had been confined to bed for several weeks, stricken down by a secret hereditary malady which ran through his family, and which he had transmitted

to his daughter. These continual abscesses in the limbs, and especially in the hip, which brought discord into the harmony and beauty of the proud divinity incorporated in the royal body, were sternly kept secret. The sovereign must be known only in perfect health — splendid, strong, and powerful. The stain was meticulously hidden, unavowed even in the court itself. And it was only the day before, in the laboratory in a fit of confidence and friendliness, that Wanda, upon Clara's complaint of not having sooner been summoned before the king, had told her all.

"Why will he refuse to receive this deputation?" asked Kosor angrily.

For the first time Clara was perturbed into a lie, the result of an awkward situation.

"He sees nobody just now. He is said to be hard at work. I have not been able to see him myself."

For it would have seemed out of the question to her to betray Wanda.

"You have not seen him yet?"

"No," answered Clara; "he is not to be seen."

"He despises you!" said the revolutionary bitterly.

Then there came a flood of questions. Was she happy? Was full justice done to her merit?



Had she not much to bear ? What did she think of the royal family ? Was there really something in the dynastic idea which could not be broken ? And Clara spoke of her laborious life divided between the two laboratories, of her heart full of the memories of Ismaël, and of the thought of the working population across the river. Certainly they treated her well in the palace, but for her the palace scarcely counted. Walled about by the dream of her heart, by her *Idea*, though the scene about her might change it could never affect the world within her. Rising early, before the dawn, she listened through the open window to the factory whistles summoning the unfortunate half-frozen weavers to their work. Her soul was over there ; and she watched the clouds of smoke blowing up from the long chimneys of the cotton factories—airy, light tufts of cotton themselves—to ascertain whether here and there work was not already at a standstill. Oh ! how she longed to see the proletariat organized, moving as one man and armed ! Sometimes, in the evening, the students leaving the College of Science struck up the glorious “Song of Coal” that their little friend Conrad had written, and she rejoiced in it as if it had been the rallying cry thrown across the town,

making all socialist hearts beat in unison. And a bitter joy it was to think that Wolfran heard it also, even in his splendid chambers, and that it must be plucking at his heart. The mysterious power of a king! . . . What an illusion! She had not felt it at all. Those people had no greatness that did not come from the nation's own majesty reflected in them.

The gracious, poetic archduchess had the charm which youth and illness together conferred upon a young being of high birth. But the queen was a mere bourgeoisie, amiable and rather coarse in the grain; the haughtiness of the great courtiers was simply ridiculous. As for Wolfran, he must be a sort of bureaucrat, surrounded by two or three important clerks, managing the country with his pen, like some great public office. How splendid alongside of that cold and excessively prosaic policy, utterly lacking in imagination, generosity, or feeling, appeared the socialist conception of the democrat sect where all was love, mutual sacrifice, and beneficent co-operation!

And the pair of them in their enthusiasm and exaltation continued till nightfall to set before themselves, in words, the king of the future state, which should be at once holy and ideal.

The deputation of Oldsburg manufacturers did, in effect, come to the palace with the object of having the laws that imposed tariff altered in some way. About three o'clock p.m., seven particularly dressed-up gentlemen were seen ascending the monumental staircase which led to the royal apartments. But they did not see Wolfran. It was the Duke of Oldany, who, as private secretary of his Majesty, received them. The interview was held behind closed doors. It lasted two hours in the small reception-room, a monastic-looking parlour with white walls, covered with trophies won by his Majesty's vessels. Slight and fragile-looking in his morning jacket, Duke Bertie listened at first with cold composure to the complaints of these great cotton spinners who had come, bundles of statistics in hand, to lay before him figures proving their imminent ruin. By the end of the interview they were all speaking at once, slinging figures about and casting declarations in his face that they would no longer risk huge capital sums without hope of profit. They complained of the strike, of the demands of the workers, in a tone which scarcely concealed their anger at meeting only a representative instead of the master himself. The phlegmatic foreigner held his peace through all their din,

and, with his silence, their recrimination grew noisier. When they were thoroughly tired, Lord Bertie rose to speak. His curious thin voice was compensated for by his cutting gestures and a glance of livid steel not to be withstood. His speech was short. Imperious and commanding in manner, he took shelter behind his Majesty. His Majesty would not intervene. The fortune of a few business men was of no importance when the general welfare of Lithuanian industry was at stake. Lithuania was full of coal. Was it not necessary to encourage the working of the coal-bearing districts to the south? No, no; never should a law with such a bearing on the national welfare be touched. Within a few years the country would be able to keep itself in coal and corn; wealth would abound, wages would rise of themselves; until then both patriotism and loyalty demanded that the great manufacturers should sacrifice something to encourage the laborious growth of a new branch of industry.

His manner was dry and hard. No man could be more phlegmatically pitiless. The raised voices were hushed; these rich trades' folk who, a moment before, had been so noisily clamorous, were checked. By what they could not quite make out. The

strange man who mastered them thus had neither much of a presence, nor was he possessed of glibness, nor, in any noted degree, of eloquence, nor had he any real claim upon their respect. He rose. They took their departure in silence.

Meanwhile, with a falling thermometer, the high price of coal was beginning to make itself tragically felt.

The cold was becoming daily more biting. It was piercing underground and into everything as if some silent cataclysm were approaching a universal congealment. For a week back, along the Oldsbury embankment, the children of the working people, blue with cold and shivering, had been coming to hang over the parapet and watch transparent polished blocks of ice floating on the surface of the river. One morning the rumour spread through the town that the water was no longer flowing. Frozen from bank to bank, corrugated and cracked with tints of alabaster and the heaped disorder of chaos, the river lay like a stiffened corpse between its sinuous banks.

Then people began to speak about the court festivities on the ice, which took place yearly at Château Conrad, outside the town.

And finally, when the water everywhere had

hardened into the likeness of steel, it was the turn of the snow. For three days snow came falling upon Oldsburg and on the surrounding country, clinging to the spires, to the gargoyles, to the dormer windows, to the stone rosettes, to the branches of the trees, edging them all with a luminous daintiness. And so the gray cotton-wool of the sky gave place to the radiant white of the landscape. Then the sun shone out, bringing a glistening transformation.

A white city of fairyland rose upon a firmament of deep blue. The basement of the clock towers of St. Gelburge, covered with the frost shining on the low relief of its carving, stood supported by flying buttresses of white wool. Along the Judenstrasse the palace repeated its enormous carvings, delicately bordered with flashing hems, and the gargoyles sprung like sparkling ermines from the black walls. And while among the carvings of its porch the cathedral held torn strips of soft and yielding snow, the spire, that dark, fantastic spire of moonless nights, mounted white and flaky into the lucid purity of the upper air.

It was on that day that the enormous gateways of the palace leading on to the Waffenplatz were thrown wide open to let out the royal procession.

There were nine carriages with snorting horses, to which the little band of the queen's fifteen pages made an escort. Troops scattered about the side streets leading to the square came forward as the row of carriages formed up and surrounded them. There was a detachment of cavalry, a detachment of cuirassiers, and one of the horse guards. The green uniforms of the first named struck a note of gravity, and the very sun, flashing splendidly on the cuirasses of the second, spoke of the glory of royalty ; the great white cloaks of the bodyguard lent a touch of theatricality to the royal progress. The carriages entered the Avenue de la Reine at full speed. A well-dressed crowd, which had been standing there under frost bediamonded trees since the morning, broke into acclamation. Curiosity was seen shining in thousands of eyes ; very palpable was the strained and feverish desire to pierce the royal mystery, to get a glimpse of the inside of the carriages, to see Wolfran, Gemma, and the archduchess.

But soldiers on horseback kept the human wave to the edge of the pavement, and the carriages defiled at full speed, hiding the princely figures. The flash of an aiguillette, the glint of a jewel set in gold, the momentary glance of a person

unrecognized met the gaze of the beholders as they passed. And that was all.

Fräulein Hersberg had been summoned to the festivities. She was in the third of the carriages along with her pupil, Madame de Bénouville, and finally that wonderful Duchess of Saventino, Prince Géo's sister, a royal princess herself, who had fallen in love with, and married below her rank, a little Italian duke. There was not a more famous beauty in all Europe. And she was as unintelligent as she was beautiful. But Wanda loved her because she was Géo's sister and had proved herself a true lover. And now the two friends, comfortably ensconced in the deep seats of the carriage, were uttering their joy like children, in exclamations about the beauty of the day. Sometimes Wanda paused in her mirth to glance gravely across at Fräulein Hersberg sitting there, dark and severely simple in her black costume. From under the black coils of Clara's hair her eyes seemed always to be looking at something beyond her immediate environment. And, indeed, terrible anxieties were besieging Clara's very soul. In the majority of spinning mills work had ceased; the workers were beginning to feel all the distress of unemployment caused by the strike, and the heart



of the socialist was heavy within her. The woman in her was in pain because of heroic measures for which her masculine intelligence had given its voice. The carriages were now about to cross the region of slums and factories on the way to Château Conrad. All her former feelings crowded upon her as they went. Besides, at Château Conrad there would be the king. And for nearly two months he had been eluding her. So that now in her a curiosity so unfavourable to him as to be almost spiteful had grown, giving her a morbid impatience to know him and give her enmity vent in his presence. Could she put on a cloak of respect and deference? Her heart swelled with indignation and beat heavily in her breast. Ah! no, she would pour out her heart before him; all the injustice she felt in the present form of government, all the wrongs that were, which shocked her, she would make them known to this evil man. What had she to fear? Who was forcing her into a base acquiescence to the tyranny of ceremony? Was she not sovereign and free?

“What are you thinking of, my friend?” asked the little princess of her affectionately.

Wanda was charming to look at. Her skater's costume of white cloth was modelled upon the

uniform of the bodyguard. A little white toque like that of the soldiers sat lightly upon the waves of her hair.

Clara answered boldly,—

“I am thinking that we are going to cross the district affected by the strike.”

And in fact they were on the point of crossing the river. The cheering had ceased : the coldness of the deserted pavements had a sinister look compared with the crowded Avenue de la Reine. Here there was no sympathy. Chance groups of weavers stopped as the procession passed. They did not raise their hats ; hatred was in the sullen eyes.

“O Lord !” said Lina de Saventino, “how stupid it is of them to go this way. It is the very district for an attack.”

“Madame,” said Clara, “you do not know the sovereign worth of the people.”

“Thank you for it,” said the pretty duchess. “What I know most clearly is that bombs are easily thrown.”

“I am not afraid of the people,” said Wanda, smiling to the scientist.

Her words were balm to Clara's nerves. The carriages were now proceeding down the principal

artery of the slum district. It was evident from the increased speed of the horses that there was some fear of a hostile demonstration. To right and left of them the horses of the cuirassiers, in close order, pranced in the raw light of a dry, frosty day, the light armour of their riders flashing in the sun ; and then behind the nine carriages came the blue company of pages astride of Lithuanian ponies with quickly trotting legs, hidden in a cloud of snow dust. And from their rear, thunder of the company of cavalry with a crackling of sparks, struck from the cobbles by horse-shoes of iron. With the royal procession a splendour passed along the mean streets.

The carriage gave a turn and they were through the gateway of the park. At the end of a long alley Château Conrad appeared. It was a square building crowned with balustrades, with a portico upheld by Doric columns of rose-coloured porphyry. It was surrounded by swelling lawns carpeted with snow. Pines of every sort and kind raised their majestic heads. The lake shone in a vaporous distance. All around, the woods glistened with frost. The wheels ran noiselessly. At last the carriage stopped before the portico.

The archduchess made a request,—

"Give me your arm, Clara ; the king would be angry if he saw me limping."

Friendly old Madame de Bénouville seemed a little disappointed at seeing this favour bestowed upon the socialist. They traversed the "Hall of the Muses," so called because of certain mythological statues, and all the ladies were soon assembled in the dressing-room—a great room full of mirrors—where they gave last touches to their dresses.

Four ladies-in-waiting bustled about the queen. She was in mauve satin covered with Irish lace. Her Majesty's Mistress of the Robes and the wife of the Earl Marshal in red damask set the key of ceremony. There were present also the two old sisters of King Wenceslas, the dowager princesses of Hausen, aunts of the king, of Géo, and of Lina ; a twin pair of parchment faces, inconceivably haughty, and from whose misprision the queen herself did not seem to escape. They wore dresses of black velvet adorned with silver embroidery. The Duchess of Saventino, who was in the maddest of spirits, smothered her laughter in her lace handkerchief and said to Wanda,—

"Aren't the two aunts like a pair of hearses at a funeral ?"

Presently Countess Thaven, very busy in her capacity of mistress of ceremonies, came up to the archduchess and asked her if she could be relied upon to skate. The young girl answered in a whisper that she could, her knee being almost well, and she, though still somewhat lame, a good enough skater to venture on the ice to-day. Then Clara overheard an argument hotly carried on in whispers between the queen and the wife of the Earl Marshal. Gemma was anxious and alarmed, and was refusing to allow her daughter to be exposed to a fall which might bring about further complications ; whereas the ceremonious duchess, the force of whose personality evidently managed most things about the court, seemed to insist upon the exhibition. Then Clara understood the meaning of the whole of the festivities. A precious national trinket was to be shown that day, and the ideal beauty of the future sovereign was to be displayed in order to stir the imagination of the young soldiers present, and to impress the journalists who, along with certain carefully selected guests, had been allowed entrance into the park. Futile as it looked, this amusement hid profound and exceedingly grave political intentions. It was a pageant given to the nation to uphold royal

prestige. And, indeed, the queen did appear quite different. She was splendid, imposing, and proud. Clara noticed that her magnificence resided less in herself than in the theatrical setting in which she was placed. For, besides the flash of jewels, the glitter of precious stones, the elaborate costumes, the gathering had something else which was indefinable, but which suddenly came upon Clara in spite of her notions of equality, so that all at once she realized her own low birth and felt awkward because of it. What was there about these women which made them so imposing? Most of them had neither beauty, knowledge, nor talent. And yet it was suddenly borne in upon Clara that she had seen the light of day in a hospital, and that she had been brought up from her earliest years by two rough men to the knowledge of a single science, practised in lonely laboratories.

Just then Gemma, who now stood ready, turned her steps towards the great drawing-room, all the ladies following.

The great drawing-room was still empty. It seemed the vaster for it. At the far end a balcony with a gilt railing stood, upheld by three columns. Marble caryatides bore the ornamentation of the

cornice. The three immense windows opened upon the park. Through them one was aware of the frozen lake, the pines, and away in the distance, of Oldsburg, with its towers and turrets and spires.

The queen had put off the usual freedom of her bearing. She moved slowly towards one of the windows to take a look at the lake. Slowly, too, the court ladies moved after her. Instinctively Clara took the last place. In a distant alley figures were to be seen walking ; they were those of judicial people and gentry in Oldsburg, and of officers and their wives who had procured invitations, and to whom that part of the park was reserved. In the drawing-room there was some talk about the weather.

In the panelling opposite the window there was a door whose frame was ornamented with lines of gold. It opened. A colonel of the bodyguard appeared : he was wearing the white uniform with its tunic reaching the knees, gold aiguillettes, top boots of soft leather, a sword belt with silken tassel, a narrow hilted sword, and baldric of blue lace work. A narrow toque scarcely covered his thick red hair. In front of it there shone a tiny swan in small diamonds. His red beard half covered the Cross of Commander of the White Swan.

It was Wolfran V.

He stopped and ran his eye over the glittering crowd of court ladies. They paused for a moment on the black gown of the scientist. He seemed to single her out. And then a flood of uniforms crowded in through the door at his back. First came the huge figure of the Earl Marshal, tightly buttoned in the dark green pelisse of a cavalry officer ; Prince Géo, in naval uniform ; the Duke of Oldany, small and slight, in the red tunic of the English army ; Count Saltzen, Master of the Ceremonies, as a captain of the White Guards ; the Duke Abelard Poltaw, Lord High Chamberlain, as a colonel of the Gray Hussars ; the Duke of Saventino, as an officer of the Italian army ; Count Austather, head aide-de-camp to his Majesty, as a general ; and then the six ordinary aides-de-camp on duty about the king. And there were yet to follow the king's master of the hounds and chief cupbearer, in the uniform of staff officers. All that show of red, green, gray, and white cloth, the gold of the aiguillettes, the string of orders which starred the chests of the men present, all these ribbons and silver embroideries, and these stripes, that many-coloured show of epaulettes, all these close-set faces were merely a splendid frame for



the person of the king. Tall and impressive, dignified in his gait, his head imperious and slightly thrown back, he was now coming forward towards the queen ; behind him princes and courtiers took their pace from his, and the greetings began. The mingling of the two groups was slow and rhythmical ; there was a cadence about it which almost bespoke previous rehearsal. For Clara it was the discovery of a hitherto unknown world, to which she would never belong. The mood of analysis had left her ; she merely felt. She was aware of a difference in the atmosphere, of a novelty in these people she had known. They had withdrawn to a region far removed from her, and had taken on their new environment. Their reserve, their attitude, their harmony, and their elegance were so many elements in a complete whole. The arrogance of the dowagers became positively hieratic ; the loftiness of manner of the wife of the Earl Marshal grew positively beautiful. And these men and women, with all their splendour of a class chosen and apart, were yet mere satellites gravitating around a sun—the king. He passed majestic and unfeeling, dominating without effort, without even a thought. All eyes were constantly bent upon him. At his

smile twenty persons smiled ; when he opened his mouth to speak, silence fell on the rest. He was the idol of their idolatry. Suddenly he walked right up to Clara. She trembled at his approach.

“Fräulein Hersberg, I am happy to be able to tell you at last how pleased both the queen and myself have been to have you with our daughter. Wanda has a great affection for you. I am not speaking to you now as the king to one of the great national celebrities, but merely as a father to the dignified and honourable lady who has so successfully and, let me add, with such tact and ability filled a place in the palace which circumstances made most difficult.”

He smiled, and for a second looked kindly at her. Clara's forehead lost something of its usual pale serenity ; it grew slightly ruffled under the black waves of her hair ; a feverish brilliance shone in the bright eyes raised to Wolfran. Without in the least remembering her intended defiance, she answered simply,—

“I thank your Majesty.”

He paused by her side.

“It is I who am grateful, Fräulein Hersberg. My little Wanda's life has not been a bright one.

a deep melancholy. They spoke of it as if it were disease eating out their hearts.

"I stay awake and toss about my bed at night."

"Ah! I am getting discouraged. Everything I do is a burden; every face I see vexes me. There is only one face in the world for me."

They encouraged each other.

"Let us have patience. Look at Lina."

"Oh! Lina. She is happy, she is happy!"

And the little princess withdrew ever deeper in the embrasure of the window. The blue of her eyes grew dark; her slender breast swelled up. She whispered bitterly,—

"We love each other too much, Géo."

A general movement took place in the crowd about them; they did not see it. Groups were forming. The royal pair went out by the portico with the porphyry columns; the court followed. Skating was about to begin. A voice said,—

"Your highness."

It was Clara who had remained behind, and had thought of recalling the young people to the reality of things. They smiled at her, pleased to have her know their secret. The prince said,—

"Ah! Fräulein Hersberg, they will not even give us the poor alms of leaving us alone for half

an hour for a quiet talk in the corner of the park."

"You know quite well, Géo," said her highness with uplifted finger, "that I shall only go on the ice with you at my side."

Clara was exceedingly touched. She looked at these two young beings, so intensely and fervently loving, and oppressed in their love. For the king had forbidden their marriage, and one day he would tear them apart. Her eyes filled.

"Dear princess," said she, "you are happy to-day."

The feeble young girl drew herself up with passionate impulse.

"Oh yes, I am happy," said she, looking at her prince. "Yes, I am very happy."

He bent his head, making no answer, and the three went down to the park. The entertainment was beginning.

Maids and valets were fixing skates to their masters' feet. The queen was walking carelessly on the path round the lake, which had been cleared of snow. Glowing braziers had been arranged around it, throwing out an immense heat. Above them the air was in vibration, like a swiftly mounting smoke. How many houses where human

beings were dying of cold might have been heated with this coal so wasting in the open air? A sharp wind was blowing, and the women of the party wrapped their furs tightly about them. Clara was full of bitter thoughts. Sometimes, in the garish mass of uniforms, she searched for the great white figure of the king. She distinguished him laughing with his young aides-de-camp. It was a moment of half-anxious curiosity. The time had come when the king should begin the skating along with one of the ladies present. Whom would he choose? He made no sign. The lake was like one vast crystal mirror. There was mystery and attraction in the hardened water. Who should be the first to cut the unmarked surface? Wolfran, calm in the certainty of his power, came up to the group of ladies accompanying the queen. The beauty of the Duchess of Saventino made him pause. It was thought that she would be favoured, but he passed on, made the round of the crowd of ladies-in-waiting, who grew pale as he came near; and then, careless of appearance, in all his youth and gaiety, his liteness of body and impulsive vivacity of movement, enjoying to the full the stupor which he was preparing for the court, he came up to Madame

de Bénouville, bent his tall figure towards her, and murmured some words in her ear. The old governess protested. Her face, disproportionately long for her short figure, shook decidedly under the lace of her hat. She was half amused, half indignant. But, almost by force, Wolfran put his arm round her waist and whirled her off. He waved for skates to be brought her. And a moment later the ill-assorted couple were gliding together across the fantastic plain—the white king, in his poetic uniform of a soldier of the north, and the little, black, old lady all a-tremble, whom he bent down to support. Around them the majestic pines, covered with snow, trailed their rich robes of white upon the ground. Behind them the thickets, frost embroidered, rose light and airy, to be lost in the background in a grayish vapour, marked only by the heavy black masses of the firs. At this moment the Guards' band, a wonderful company, famous in all the capitals of Europe, struck up in some clearing of the wood the first languorous measures of the national Lithuanian anthem.

It was a sort of hymn, melodious and lulling, into which the sound of the trumpets struck with a note of anguish. Its sweet melody glided over

the polished surface of the lake, broke upon the silvered branches, and grew soft against the dull cushion of snow lying all around. Some way across, the graceful, delightful, gentlemanly figure of the king was still skating, growing more and more distant, diminished, and taking with him the poor, enfeebled old lady who had been his nurse in childhood. One felt that their thoughts were lost in reminiscences of long ago, certain of which must at that moment be very present with them. They were silent, smiling at each other. The sovereign had desired to repay forty years of splendid devotion by conferring this supreme honour. On the bank ladies, princes, courtiers, and soldiers were touched with an emotion which they skilfully concealed. Only measured approval was expressed of the king's action. Clara was silent. To the sound of this dream music a strange conflict was raging in her soul. She argued desperately with herself. The king's movement of affection had touched her where she felt most deeply. She was asking herself, "How can one hate a man after a kindly impulse of that kind?"

She felt herself seized, whirled about in the storm of a new world, of that inimical world of which it had seemed to her she could never be a

part, which was absorbing her nevertheless, drawing her as the river does the streamlet. She tried to curb her impulse ; she called to mind old Kosor and his banishment, Ismaël and his imprisonment, the weavers and the hunger brought upon them, lastly, the monstrous inequality of a society based upon monarchy. Feel as she might, she was morally bound to hate Wolfran. She owed it to her conscience, to the memory of her master, to the bond which united her to the very leader and soul of the Socialistic Union. But she was moved, moved nearly to tears. Her whole heart, whose every movement till then had been governed by an indomitable will, at last knew heart-beats unpermitted. And she would have regained ascendancy over herself, she thought, if it were not for that implacable and voluptuous music, which continued to pour its intoxication upon her, and which the gorgeousness of the festivities did only too much to further.

For now the festival was proceeding with the gay yet ordered brilliance of a court. The arch-duchess had regained her almost bird-like grace of movement. She skated indefatigably, and Prince Géo was her guide through the most fantastic mazes. Their twists, their turns, their glidings



made them look like two fairy beings of northern legend, whose very element is the clear ice. Then it was the turn of the little group of pages, who executed the dance called the "Queen's Chaconne," which was accompanied by the cavalry band of fifes and hautboys. Then the Guard took its turn in performing evolutions, and in the imitations of the games of ancient Greece. In the first row of the spectators stood Wolfran, his eyes following their beautiful evolutions. He was proud of his Guard, and he showed an enthusiasm which stimulated the agile skill of these men in the pride of their youth. But it was on him, in the midst of all this grandeur, that the eyes of Clara returned to rest.

They returned to the château for refreshments. Clara Hersberg came to know the grandeur of a great court function. But it all passed before her like scenes read of in a book. They went back to town by moonlight. In the carriage Wanda asked her,—

"My dear friend, you seem almost displeased."

At these words she started. And almost unconsciously came her reply,—

"Oh no ; I have seen the king. The king was very kind to me—oh, very kind."

## PART THIRD.

### I.

THE king's day was always a very full one. He rose at seven, and breakfasted with the queen and the archduchess. This was the one hour of family conversation, and they lingered a little over the breakfast dishes and the tea-urn in Gemma's little dining-room. By half-past eight the king was opening his correspondence, running through the letters that lay heaped on his desk. Then he shut himself up in the audience chamber with Count Thaven over questions of domestic expenditure, after which he received the heads of the various departments and signed their documents. All this enormous quantity of business he transacted at such a speed that by eleven o'clock he was ready to grant audiences to those who desired them. Among royalists his patience was proverbial. The luncheon hour was a variable one

according to the number of visitors and to the length of their visit, for the king had never allowed himself the liberty to dismiss visitors, however humble, once they had been summoned to these morning receptions, without seeing them at least for a moment. The result was that since he did not wish the queen to be kept waiting for lunch at an uncertain hour, he took that meal alone. It often happened that his afternoon motor drive with Gemma, which he took before his second batch of signatures, had to be given up because of the length of his forenoon audiences.

But, on that particular morning, he had said to his aide-de-camp,—

“Fraulein Hersberg is to come to-day. She belongs to the household of the archduchess. I shall receive her first in my office; kindly give orders to that effect.”

And so it came about that Clara had scarcely arrived in the antechamber, where for an hour back a crowd had been gathering, before she was taken through to the king's private apartments. The aide-de-camp received her, drew back a curtain of a doorway, and at the end of a darkish room hung with tapestry she saw Wolfran, in the undress uniform of a Lithuanian general, writing

at a desk of oak. The prince's face brightened sympathetically. He made her sit near him, and said to her as she shook hands,—

“It gives me very great pleasure to have a talk with you, Fräulein Hersberg.”

Despite the utter lack of shyness due to the unique simplicity of her mind, Clara was manifestly uneasy. Her heart was heavy, and her eyelids flickered.

“Sir,” said she, and her voice sounded strangely, “since I saw your Majesty, ten days ago, at Schloss Konrad, and have got to know the utter dissimilarity between what you really are and the bitter caricature drawn by your Majesty's enemies, one thought has not ceased to haunt me, and it has filled my mind so entirely that almost in spite of myself, I have asked you to grant me this audience.”

Wolfran, buttoned up in his black jacket with its gold-embroidered stars, grasped the arms of his desk-chair tight. A sunbeam was playing upon the red of his thick hair, naturally rebellious to comb and brush. He was evidently anxious to please ; he smiled.

“Once again, you are very welcome,” he repeated ; “if circumstances allowed me to render

you any sort of service, it would be a great satisfaction to me."

"What I want to say is this," said Clara, her eyes bent to the ground: "I am a socialist; I am the adopted daughter of Kosor, the revolutionist; all his humanitarian feelings are alive in me; I can deny neither him nor his ideas, I owe him and them too much of what I am; may it please your Majesty to excuse my outspokenness. . . ."

"It does you honour, Fräulein Hersberg."

Clara continued in a lower tone,—

"I have always been against the idea of royalty. I do not believe . . . it did not seem right to me that one man should be entirely under another as the subject is under the king. Perhaps I was wrong. That is not the central principle of my faith; a conviction far more assured and irrefutable is at the heart of that. About it, I have no doubts whatever, and it is this. I believe in the people's right to happiness, I believe in the duty laid upon all of us to improve their lot, I believe in the obligation we are under to love and help them. My whole being is in that idea, and I know that I am not mistaken in it. Now, sir, at this moment the people are in greater suffering than ever before.

The new laws regarding the import duties on coal and corn have rendered their condition intolerable. Thirty thousand human beings are suffering from cold and hunger. Well, your Majesty is all powerful ; you have proved it. Let these taxes be abolished instead of being increased, and instantly there will follow a condition of relative prosperity ; bread will fall to half its price, and the houses of the poor will have their fires. Above all, there will follow an increase of wages at the works as a direct result of the very considerable fall in the price of coal."

Wolfran looked at her without replying. The beauty of this woman, so carried away by the enthusiasm of her claim for humanity, was perhaps making its impression ; or, perhaps, he was merely touched by the transparent clearness of that fine soul which still held the simple faith of a single-hearted revolutionary.

"Fräulein Hersberg," he said at last, "do you think that you are speaking to an enemy of the people ?"

"No, sir, but I am addressing one of the great ones of the earth, and to such the people only appears as something very far removed."

He shook his head.

"The people," said he, "if you only knew!" His eyes shone. He added, "I am not at all indifferent to their suffering." Clara felt a tremor away down in the depths of the man; she took heart of grace,—

"Then, sir, do not close your ears to the great cry that is rising towards you; leave all your policy and listen to the promptings of your heart."

He started and smote on his desk with both fists,—

"Listen to my heart? Set policy aside? So my policy is a cruel game? a tyrant's pleasure? one of the distractions of a hero? Then I am the executioner, the instrument of national torture? You, the frankest, the sincerest of the democratic opposition, you say it to my face. All the hatred of the party of revolt has just been uttered by your lips."

She grew pale; he rose. His tall figure as he approached blocked the window and shut out the light. He was rolling and crushing his beard in his hand, then after a feverish step or two,—

"*Friend* of the people! *friend* of the people! . . . not even so much as its friend, do you understand; its servant, its convict, that is what I am. Power! What is power? Is it my ambition that made me

court it, or was it not in my cradle that I found it like a crushing duty, which could not be thrown off?"

His voice swelled with excitement ; he was no longer looking at Clara, but far beyond her, beyond Oldsburg to the very farthest confines of Lithuania. His eyes must be seeing towns, rivers, mountains, plains, meadows, forests, and mines up to the roseate sea, which washes the Lithuanian coast in the boreal glow of winter nights.

"And who, after all, are these people who are flesh of my flesh? Not merely thirty thousand embittered and envious weavers, but my people as a whole, my nation, the race; twelve millions of Lithuanians, whose life as a society returns to me as the blood flows to the heart. I am the official slave of that power, of that immense duty; I cannot escape. My every moment, my every activity belongs to my people. Except by and for them I have no right to exist. Ordinary officials do their office and then are free; each of them has his public and his private capacity. I have not even any privacy; my most inward affections are dominated and ruled by the idea of my people. I am its merest instrument. And when, after much



thought and research, by a superhuman effort, I promulgate an economic law which contributes to the systematic development of the country, which has been my one thought since my enthronement, a measure calculated for its greatness and for its prosperity—when I do that, sentimental objectors wish to blot it out of existence, and say : ‘ Repeal that law, and listen only to your heart ! ’ ”

His eyes came slowly back to the pale face of Clara, listening. The anxious beauty of it raised towards him calmed the fury of his excitement and the remainder of a juvenile fervour which middle age had not quite overlaid. He sat down again and said more gently,—

“Fräulein Hersberg, I give you my word that I wish you to understand me ; you are an honest enemy. I know that the Socialist Union is tearing at me ; but I should be sorry that a woman like yourself should misapprehend me. The great Hersberg cannot be a blind partisan. Will you endeavour to understand me ? ”

“Yes, sir ; I even desire to be convinced.”

“Very well, Fräulein Hersberg. Lithuania, the care of whose fortunes has devolved upon me, is not made up merely of the thirty thousand Oldsburg weavers who are made much of by the

Union. Lithuania is to me a being endowed with moral qualities, which is to be made daily more powerful, more prosperous, and more glorious. By the side of the thirty thousand weavers, whose suffering pains me as it does yourself, there are seven millions of agriculturists, whom the importation of foreign corn is threatening to ruin. I love the agriculturists too; they are a sturdy class, and necessary, leading a life which is normal, healthy and worthy; they are the best promoters of national prosperity. Oh! I know well enough that the collectivist doctrines of the Socialistic Union set a barrier between your society and persons whose livelihood depends on small ownership of land. You will never have worse enemies than the farmers. But do you not know that by restricting the field of agricultural work, you would bring about a slump in industrial labour? And that means an increased destitution in the towns, for wages fall when the supply exceeds the demand."

"In the ideal state," interrupted Clara, "as there will be bread for all, so the number of workers will only serve to lighten the work of each individual."

Wolfran purposely took no notice of the interruption, and went on,—

"As for the coal, the crisis will be a passing one ; next year the Oldsburg people will be warming themselves over the blaze of Lithuanian coal. Pits are already being sunk in the south. Our engineers are working at fever-pitch, and there is a regular rush for allotments ! Wasn't it needful to protect the nascent industry against the overwhelming supply of foreign coal ? You tell me that the weavers are dying of cold ? The municipality was willing to supply the poor with coal. Why did the committee of the Union intervene and forbid the strikers to benefit by the city's generosity ?"

Clara blushed.

"It seemed to our brothers," she said, "that it was a kind of charity insulting to the dignity of workers."

"No," replied Wolfran, "it seemed to the Union that behind the gift, the heart of the people would feel the goodwill of the authorities, and that would have shaken its own teaching of hatred. The heroic resistance of the workman is cast up to me, but it was I who gave the workman the right to strike. I have protected that right ; let them appoint me arbiter, and they will see where my sympathies are. The Union would take care to prevent that ! I know quite well

what the Union wants: it wants to breed misery, bitterness, and envy in the soul of the people, as brewers put leaven in a vat to produce effervescence. You are a handful of agitators, who are plotting social dislocation, and for whom the masses of workers are only an army of soldiers to be disciplined. But by what right do you go about to destroy a social order with which the country is satisfied?"

Clara remained plunged in thought for the full length of a minute, and then in the sweet, slow accents of a woman inspired to disclose something of the dream of her heart, speaking very low and with a tremor of shyness in her voice, she said,—

"Each of us bears in his heart the picture of the Holy City, the city of love, which we wish to raise for men. It is a clear vision, an unspeakable glory, towards which our eyes are always being drawn. When the society of the present casts us down by the sight of its abominations, we turn back to the vision within us and see concord, peace, and beauty in justice. And we are not mad or mere visionaries; the poetry of our conceptions is based upon science; we are calculators and statisticians; everything has been looked at

from the practical point of view. Work, production, and consumption have all been equitably divided among men. We are not such odious creatures, sir, as you imagine ; we have given ourselves up to humanity to help it more quickly along the road ; we are urging it forward towards happiness, towards equality, and towards love. The time is at hand when the revolting division into rich and poor will be no longer ; where an equality in brotherhood will melt away hatred. We have our social principle : Demand from each according to his strength ; give to each according to his needs."

She held her peace, visibly moved, and awaited for the king's wrath to fall ; but he made no contradiction. Almost imperceptibly he was smiling, but there was no irony in his smile. Several times he passed his long hand across his brow, and though Clara had been silent for some minutes he still seemed to be listening with shut eyes. Then on a sudden, like some one returning from a distance, he replied with great composure,—

"Society is not an artificial organism owing its existence to the genius of some philosopher ; it is the fated resultant of millions of relativities. It is

a living being ; you wish to make an automaton of it. You are visionaries, one and all."

"Visionaries ready to lay down their life for their vision," said she.

"A private individual," he replied, "can judge you by your generosity, but the man whose work you are planning to undermine, and who is the keeper of organic order in the state, must cut straight to the root of your illusions. Well, this I affirm : Heinsius is a false prophet, just as little Conrad is a poet bereft of his senses, and Kosor is a dreamer of dreams."

Clara started in her place.

"Kosor's is a strong intellect, sir," she said, "and well stored ; and, besides, he is a great chemist."

"No, Fräulein Hersberg, no ; call him a great alchemist if you like. But yours is the balanced, disciplined, truly scientific mind. Kosor is still in search of the philosopher's stone."

Clara said proudly, but very low,—

"I am engaged to him. . . . I shall one day be his wife."

The king only said,—

"Oh ! . . ."

Well informed as he was, this last detail was new

## 11.

TIME wore on. Her interview with the king had left Clara pained and uneasy. She felt humiliated at not having been able to convince Wolfran, at letting him have the best of the argument. At other times she blamed herself for having displeased him by her extreme freedom of speech. The opinion he must have of her puzzled and disquieted her. She was sure that during that short meeting she had lost in his estimation. She even went the length of adroitly questioning the archduchess on the point. But the king had let no word escape about his interview with her. Besides, it seemed that for the time being, the princess's relations with her father were somewhat strained. Prince Géo must have made advances unwelcome to and coldly met by the king. In any case, the mother, who in secret sympathized with the notion of this love-match, and was bent on furthering it by every means in her power,

had given leave to the prince, who was an excellent sculptor, to begin a bust of Wanda. The clandestine part of the adventure was disguised under a pious pretence of a surprise present for the king. Madame de Bénouville was at first the only person in the secret. Clara, as the arch-duchess's best friend, was admitted to it later. She was even asked, when some likeness to the arch-duchess was beginning to show, to come to one of the sittings in Wanda's music-room, which the artist had chosen as a studio on account of the softness and mystery of its light.

It was late on a February afternoon. Madame de Bénouville, who was at her desk in her pupil's little drawing-room, discreetly pointed out the passage to Clara which would assure her of meeting nobody on her way there.

"They are there, poor children," said she, with the pitying sadness of the indulgent old lady she was.

The thin and distant notes of an organ struck upon Clara's ear and guided her. She opened a narrow door. The deep embrasures of its three Renaissance windows with their leaded panes made the music-room look like a chapel. The walls were hung with dark red cloth, and covered with



a collection of old-time musical instruments : deep-bellowing viols of old Lithuania, German psalteries, richly decorated Andalusian guitars, shapely lutes made in the France of the Middle Ages, violins signed by the master-makers of Florence ; two grand pianos and a harpsichord stood against the wall to the right. At the farther end shone dully the pipes of the great organ whose Gothic case occupied the whole of that wall. And there, sitting before the keyboards, all in white with her complexion of pearl, luminous even in the half-shade, was Wanda, deep in love, playing old Lithuania folk-songs for her prince. He was standing beside her, very pale, with folded arms. Both seemed to have been weeping. They recognized at once that it was Clara, and cried out together,—

“Here is Fräulein Hersberg, at last !”

“Do not stop playing, your highness,” cried Clara, glancing as she passed at the little lump of grayish clay through which features were just beginning to show. “I want to hear you too.”

“Scientific people hate music,” said the young girl, laughing.

“How can I answer ? I have scarcely ever heard any,” the scientist confessed as she climbed

the steps of the organ ; "but I shall love all music of yours, dear princess."

The prince gave Clara's hand a long pressure, signifying that she was his confidant in his sad love. A sense of satisfaction came upon Wanda at seeing the mutual understanding of those beings dear to her, and while her eyes smiled at them, her hands instinctively harmonized on the organ the tender, puerile song of the soil :

"L'ami de mon cœur est parti sur la mer,  
Etoile scintillante qui le regardes,  
Pourquoi sembles-tu pleurer ce soir?"

She had drawn out only three stops : the cor-lontano, the hautbois, and the vox humana. But the strength of the instrument, restrained as it was, gave the simple, touching melody a heroic largeness. It flowed on with majestic emotion. All the tears of the lovelorn maidens and widows that had sung it in tragic expectation were in it. And here was she who symbolized the whole nation putting into it her own sorrow. Clara felt new and strange sensations ; it was as if a door had opened into the fairy world of the imagination. Her heart beat quick ; her hands shook, and she listened with moistened eyelids.

"Oh!" said she with that naïve fervour and childlike sincerity of scientific minds, "I believe I love music!"

It flattered the prince to see her thrill so intensely.

"Wanda's music is always so moving," he whispered.

The archduchess sighed :

"I play as I suffer."

She was wearing her national costume for the sitting: the braided hair, the head-dress gold-embroidered, the slip of pleated muslin, and the corselet of black velvet. Her long, thin hands were crossed upon her knees; she looked at them in silence. The prince's cheeks flushed slightly.

The atmosphere of the curious old room was love-laden as that of a church is laden with incense. It lay heavy on Clara. The archduchess raised her dreamy, magnetic eyes to the prince, beaming with tenderness. "Ah!" said Clara, in a low voice, with a gesture of utter helplessness—"ah! how willingly I would give you happiness."

"Happiness," said the prince—and his voice betrayed suppressed anger—"it would be far from here, in privacy, in modest station, and in liberty."

"We must say no more about that, Géo," said Wanda energetically.

Doubtless the thought of giving up their rank in exchange for the right to love unhindered, had crossed both their minds. Clara had the idea besides, that Prince von Hausen as a proof of his disinterestedness, had defended such forfeiture, while the princess was against it; their love idyll lay deep in mystery. Why should the king be opposed to so beautiful and smiling a union? What plan had he conceived?

"You must be happy, come what may!" Clara allowed herself to exclaim.

"We shall not be," said Wanda in a low voice. "Mamma has only given us the time for this bust . . . and then I think there will come the end of all things."

"Wanda," said the prince, "let us have five minutes of the sitting yet, before night falls."

She took up her pose with the gracious acquiescence of a girl in love, and the prince, fired with an idea, with one movement of his thumb hollowed out the juncture of nose and brows. Instantly the idiosyncrasy of the forehead sprang out complete. Clara cried out with surprise. The archduchess rose to see. The prince was

standing in front of the stool which upheld the delicate, sombre head. His fingers were no longer working the soft clay ; they were caressing it, feeling its outlines, tracing in idea under the arching of the brows the ovals of the eyeballs. He sighed out :

“ Ah ! these eyes, these eyes, let me close them so as not to render too inadequately the life in them, the thought in them. . . .”

Then his fingers, his long artist's hands, rose a little higher, and narrowly clasped the hollows of the temples and the gentle bulge of the forehead. He seemed alone in front of the work of his hands. He was stammering out words half inaudible. Suddenly they saw him bend forward and press his lips against the brown little head, and clasp it to him, and give the effigy, as if he had just seen life pulse in it, a kiss of such ardent passion as he had never shown to his young mistress.

Wanda smothered a sob ; she leant on Clara :

“ Oh ! my dear Hersberg, whatever happens, I can never, never forget Géo ! ”

The sorrow of these two charming creatures seemed too cruel to Clara ; her energetic nature prompted her to say,—

"Resist, you must resist !"

White as wax the prince turned round upon her at that word :

"No, Fräulein Hersberg, there is no resisting the king, especially when that king is Wolfran V."

And in a more friendly tone, a tone which indeed recalled their first meeting together, but was this time marked with intense melancholy,—

"You can never know, you to whom freedom is life, what loyalty to authority means. But look now, you shall learn : there before me is the sublime of happiness. You know Wanda well enough to be able to estimate what her love means to me ; we call out to each other ; our whole souls desire each other ; and yet, we shall part. She will go to fulfil a higher destiny, and I shall never complain. The king will have ordered it so."

He expected the socialist to protest. But she remained silent. Did the word "king" at which she had so long scoffed really possess an undivined depth of meaning, to wield the destinies of millions so, and had it begun to influence herself ?

"See, that is loyalty, Fräulein Hersberg," the prince concluded.

Clara muttered indistinctly,—

"Your faith seems fine to me. . . . I cannot share it."

The little door opened shyly. It was Madame de Bénouville coming back to resume her chaperonage of the young people to whom her judicious kindness had allowed that long *tête-à-tête*. The archduchess made a courageous effort to recover herself so as not to pain the dear old lady.

"Dear friend Bénouville, do show Fräulein Hersberg the collection of Queen Bertha."

She meant the musical instruments. They had belonged to that dim-defined, charming ancestress of Wolfran's who had been so fond of art and curiosities of all sorts, and above all so fond of music. She had gathered this collection together when Château Conrad was erected towards the end of the eighteenth century. And Madame de Bénouville explained how the king, in whom there lived again a thousand of the characteristic traits of his grandmother, had brought all the musical instruments, which the damp at Château Conrad was spoiling, to Oldsburg. He was only twenty years old then, she said, and he so loved the very touch of these old things that he had shut himself up in the room with the decorators, in order to arrange them himself.

"So," said Clara, "his Majesty prized these mementoes of old days so much as that?"

The old lady smiled with pleasure at the mere chance it gave her to speak about her idol.

"He had such high and strong tastes, and he was so eager in his satisfaction of them. At fourteen I saw him pass a whole night in the turret laboratory, which was then his workroom for carpentry, in order to finish a table, one after another of whose legs were splitting as he turned them on the wheel. There he was at dawn, shivering and exhausted, in the midst of the splinters of wood. He was as pale as death, and just managed to keep back his tears as he said over and over again, "I am not even a good workman!"

Clara was listening, with her lips half open. By those same means she had come to know all the features of the king's infancy as his former governess brought them up, day by day. A child dreamy and delightful, a poet and an enthusiast as a young man, such had been his personality in the past which the socialist had now come to know. The enthusiastic youth of days gone by held her with an interest which was not all inspired by the strong-willed sovereign of to-day. How had this



lad, whose portrait she had seen, become what she knew? What had become of that ardour of his teens that showed so clearly in the visionary gleam of his eyes? How had this prince with his passionate generosity become the hard, implacable autocrat of to-day? For all Madame Bénouville's discreet reserve about that delicate period, Clara knew that at twenty years old, when he was heir to the throne and had already travelled much about Europe, he had had more than one stormy encounter with his father, King Wenceslas, and with the great Earl Marshal too, the terrible Duke von Zoffern, who was then fifty years old, and had just begun to hold office. In their interviews together the future master of Lithuania had pled desperately for liberty. Some years later he left for India. But during this interval of years things had happened which Madame de Bénouville invariably passed over in silence.

"He had all the enthusiastic notions of Queen Bertha," was all the old Frenchwoman would say.

On that evening, being in great good humour, she remembered another story. And she told of his mad show of bravery once—how, when the child was fifteen years old, on the perilous slope of the palace roof, he caught sight of slaters working

at their deadly trade, and suddenly, shocked at the thought that men in the employment of his father were risking their lives for his comfort, he gave his tutor the slip, took off his little coat, crawled up the ladder behind a workman, and paraded up and down upon the slates, saying, to the bewildered horror of the good workmen, "I am the Archduke Wolfran."

"Well, Fräulein Hersberg, what do you say to that?" asked Prince Géo.

The two young people and the old court lady, inquisitive to find out the effect of this story upon her, looked questioningly at Clara. But they saw her so deeply moved that they went no farther.

Wanda, in order to make a diversion, switched on the electric light, and Prince von Hausen, ferreting out a street organ that had its place as a curiosity in the collection, felt about for the handle of it. It was a new instrument, of Parisian make. The prince made a sly sign to Wanda. Their love-sorrow notwithstanding, they had a great undercurrent of merriment. They laughed and whispered as they bent over the little musical-box. Suddenly, after some preliminary grindings, the trumpet notes of the first bars of the French National Anthem were rolled monotonously out.

"Bénouville, dear Bénouville," cried her highness, with flashing eyes, "it's for you Géo is playing that!"

The old lady paused, at once delighted and put out. The prince, as much amused as any street urchin, worked the handle faster. The tune came out with a mad sweep. And Madame de Bénouville, somewhat excited by the puff of native air that went to her head at the sound of "The Marseillaise," sighed out,—

"Oh! the dear children! Oh! the poor children!"

Clara felt a sense of unknown well-being pouring in upon her. . . .

### III.

CLARA's gentle and facile nature was well adapted to the meditative life she led in the palace. Her ponderings became exclusively scientific. To be a chemist is to be something of a poet. A chemist's thought bears him into a world far vaster than our visible universe. There is something epic about his incessant researches after molecules and atoms ; and he is ceaselessly building, in a world of dreams and hypotheses, vast systems in which all tangible phenomena are fixed and balanced like cities raised among the clouds. At this time, also, the great Hersberg was thinking out a simplified apparatus for producing electrolysis ; she sketched out diagrams of it and explained them to a maker of scientific instruments. The problem of the isolation of thermium was not completely resolved either, and still engaged her thoughts. She worked slowly and steadily at it with the assured faith that if she did not find a solution, some one else would

complete her work. And then, when her woman's brain was tired of the abstract work and returned from it to the actual world around her, it was to come back to the tender friendship of the princess, to the almost conventual serenity that reigned in her part of the palace, and to the enveloping sense of an immense orderliness in the state. She let herself go, in a sort of warm lassitude.

Every morning the four principal newspapers of Lithuania were delivered to her. They were : *New Oldsburg*, the official organ of the government ; the *Liberal Free Press*, which, after being the representative of the opposition which Wenceslas was so stern to repress, had now taken up a position slightly in advance of Wolfran ; the *Republican Future* ; and, finally, *Union*, in which many of the students wrote, and whose guiding spirit was Ismaël. Although the situation in Oldsburg was growing more and more strained, because the interest of the intellectuals for the strikers (who were kept out by doles apparently inexhaustible) was felt to be growing too strong, Clara did no more than run her eyes over the front pages of these newspapers. You would have said that no sooner was she out of the clutches of the two Kosors than she turned naturally to the one attrac-

meanwhile, the strikers, not one of whom had made a sign, were proceeding on their slow, lounging walk. Two of the constables on bicycles were on the point of breaking in among them in search of the guilty person, when Colonel Rodolphe, lowering the broken pane, called them back and transmitted the king's command that no notice was to be taken of the accident. Snorting and quivering, the motor car had then gone on its way. Without approval or blame of the deed itself, the paper drew its conclusions regarding the hostility which it disclosed among the working classes. Wolfran V. had now been twice attacked and wounded in the district which his decrees had brought to the point of starvation. . . .

The socialist felt the blood rush to her face. The story of a child throwing a stone did not deceive her for a moment. One of the weavers must have done it; and the whole crowd as one man, resolving that the guilty should not be identified, had covered his movement by its impassivity. Clara was deeply agitated. She could not analyze the feelings crowding upon her. But indignation was uppermost. To wound, to shed blood! What, then, had become of the principle of fraternal amity which so delighted her in the

Union? She considered that Wolfran might have been killed. Her imagination figured the strong young man, whom she had seen so overflowing with health and spirits, brought back, crumpled on the floor of the black brougham. She shuddered.

At that moment, the moment of her greatest mental discomfort regarding the Union, when she was flooded with the sense of shame which comes upon those irresponsibly connected with some piece of evil-doing, the ring of her telephone bell recalled her to her study. Through the receiver she recognized the voice of Countess Hermann Ringer, her Majesty's Mistress of the Robes, inviting her, on the queen's behalf, to the informal reception of that evening.

She had felt less emotion about her first attendance and presentation than she did this evening, as she made her way through the palace to the queen's library. But to-night her emotion was not of fear; it came from a sweet gratitude of heart. The invitation from the king and queen had touched her nearly, for it was intended, as she divined, to cut her off once and for all, in her own eyes and the world's, from all suspicion of participation in, nay, from the very memory of, the assault. Truly

how pleasant a thing it was to dwell far from hatred ! She was not made for hatred. Was it not possible, without ever once denying one's social creed, to detach all hatred of the individual from one's hatred of the principle ?

She entered the little sitting-room and library, where the oil lamp shed its golden light upon the green tablecover. The newcomer's entrance remained unnoticed. All the people present were grouped in front of the fireplace and bending in absorbed contemplation of an object, the sight of which made them speak in interjections. The person who was the first to stand erect and notice Clara was the king. He was dressed as a colonel of hussars. The bold relief of the lace facings on his uniform seemed to broaden his chest ; his head was slightly thrown back, and its attitude shot forward the red beard ; a white bandage crossed his brow. He smiled without a word, and stretched out his hand to Fräulein Hersberg.

"Oh, sir !" cried she, with all the spontaneity of her impulsive nature, "it was hateful that such a thing should happen. I am indignant at it, inexpressibly indignant !"

"Tut !" said he lightly, "it is nothing to what may come yet."



The queen broke in. She held a stone of about the size of a small apple in her hand.

"Here, Fräulein Hersberg, just look ; this is the stone."

Clara took the piece of flint as the rest had done. She turned it over in her large but delicate hand ; her breath came thick ; her eyes rose and sought the wounded forehead of Wolfran : they were full of unspeakable alarm.

"It could only be a madman . . ." she muttered.

"A madman, indeed !" said an ironical voice.

And she caught the eye of the Duke of Oldany watching her curiously through the crystal of his eye-glasses. The Earl Marshal, whose herculean figure seemed by very contrast to crush the figure of the Irishman, muttered into the bristles of his moustache,—

"There are thirty thousand mad in the same way !"

Froninque, the official court painter of Oldsburg, who had been invited to the little reception, announced solemnly,—

"Your Majesty showed a great example of clemency and magnanimity when you checked the prosecution of the culprits."

Clara had indeed just expressed the very same

sentiment in simpler words, and in accents so broken that none but the king had heard her.

Wolfran replied,—

“Let them blow me up if they like. I know what the head of a state has to expect in these days. I don't hold my life at a pin's fee. But let there not be so much ado for nothing. It might have killed a sparrow. The country has questions of greater moment to decide.”

He had spoken playfully, but a calm mystery of authority was in the words. Power seemed to breathe out of him. It was for her, too, that he appeared to pronounce these careless words.

“Is your Majesty in pain from it?” she asked.

At these words, so impregnated with feminine sensibility, a look of triumph came into his eyes. For, indeed, his invitation of Clara to the reception of that particular evening was the result of a movement of political coquetry. He had taken the measure of the sentimental revolutionary, and wished to appear before her in the guise of a victim. With a little urging he would have stripped off the bandage and shown the bleeding scar of his wound, in order that from that sensitive and tender heart anger against the guilty Union might surge the quicker. Without knowing why,

he had made up his mind to the conquest of the enemy within his gates. He had explained it to Lord Bertie one day :

"We require Hersberg ; her profession of collectivism is a bad example for the educated young fellows at the university."

"We shall win her at your pleasure," his enigmatic confidant had replied.

And so it happened that on that particular evening the Duke of Oldany seemed to be probing into the hidden depths of the chemist's soul. He even came up to her, and, without a moment's interruption of the questioning in his steely glance, he began to argue with her. He was far more incisive and insistent than Wolfran. After all, the attempt of the night before, as the triumphant Union had not failed to note, was symptomatic of the general state of mind. The attack was in a way a victory for the Union. And he added,—

"What do *you* think about it, Fräulein Hersberg?"

She answered, like a soul in torment,—

"If the teaching of the Social Union was the inspiration of this assault, it must certainly have been misinterpreted, for the Union only teaches brotherhood and mutual love."

"Oh! ho!" said the duke; "so it was love for the king that you used to preach to the weavers?"

Clara remembered the insulting posters and caricatures affixed to the walls of the committee room. Nevertheless she persisted, and said,—

"We have never preached violence."

Without altogether losing the thread of a conversation which passionately interested him, the king, for politeness' sake, was compelled to make his way towards his painter. Froninque and the Duke of Zoffern were talking loudly and noisily. Both were storming against the strikers. The hairy and muscular fist of the Marshal was thumping the marble of the chimney-piece as he spoke; his jaws clenched like a bulldog's; all his old body was a-quiver with the intensity of his desire for repression. The king listened without contradiction. He also lent an ear to Lord Bertie, who, in his conversation with Clara, was saying,—

"Humanity is naturally given to hate. This is more and more the case as one goes down the social scale. You thought you were sowing the seed of equality: you have only raised envy, and a ferocious envy at that. When one wishes to do good to the working classes and to improve their lot, one must go to work in silence and not by

speeches. You can't discuss with the people; you must lead them." He added coldly: "And by so doing, one takes a more excellent way of showing one's love for them."

Clara felt an antipathy for him and a desire to combat what he said.

"But, your grace," she cried, "it is the dignity of a people to be its own guide. We enlighten it as to its interest, but the sentiment of brotherhood which animates us forbids us to call ourselves its masters. How can there be justice in a nation where equality does not reign?"

Lord Bertie let his eye-glasses fall. He was smiling. There was a veiled mockery in his expression. He answered,—

"Equality? Why equality? There is no such thing as equality. In any case, inequality does not constitute injustice."

"You are paradoxical, my lord," said Clara, quivering.

"Not a whit, not a whit," said the duke.

At that moment the door opened noiselessly. The Irishman turned round at the rustle of a skirt; there was a slight twitching of the muscles in his usually impassive face. It was the arch-duchess. She had come to pour out tea. She

wore over her embroidered dress an apron of cream lace. The arrival of the inscrutable young lady changed the whole atmosphere of the room. She became the cynosure of all eyes.

Tea was brought. The ladies gathered round the queen. The archduchess handed the king his cup, and then performed the same office for the Earl Marshal, who shook the whole room in his haste to forestall her coming towards him. His confusion was not put on ; he seemed really pained that he, who aspired to lead the father like a child, should receive even a cup of tea from the hand of the daughter. He was on the eve of making a speech in parliament outlining the general policy of the government, and was having heated discussions regarding it with Wolfran, from which he would retire as nearly as possible foaming at the mouth. But in public, to show his utter loyalty, he would have lain down to let the prince walk over him.

When Wanda came to Lord Bertie, holding his cup with one hand and the sugar basin in the other, Clara noticed a slight frown which gave the girl's forehead a singularly hardened and even pained expression. He raised his eyes to her face as he thanked her, and Clara had difficulty in recognizing the hard, ironical man with the steely glance. He

had become grave and almost shy. They lingered for a moment together, speaking under their voices of a book which the Irishman had lent the princess. She said,—

“The refutation of socialist documents pleased me a great deal. I have never understood the collectivist state of mind so clearly. I know why you got me to read it, duke : you were afraid of some one’s influence upon me. But have no fear ; that person has never taken advantage of our friendship to urge thoughts upon me which I must not harbour. I should even have liked, with your leave, to pass the book on to her. Poor Hersberg ; I should so like to cure her.”

“It is too soon as yet,” said Lord Bertie.  
“Wait a while. Later.”

As if she divined that she was herself the subject of conversation, Clara was furtively observing the singular couple made up of the most charming of girls and the coldest of men. Without finishing his cup of tea, the duke faced the enemy once more.

“I can scarcely express, *Fraulein* Hersberg, what false shepherds these Union people of yours have been. I know that you are preparing an ideal and beatifically happy society, over which certain virtuosos are already smacking their lips in antici-

pation. But against this handful of confident idealists you must set the great human majority, whose every affection and association are bound up with the order in which they have been swaddled for centuries. For them it is the spiritual land of their fathers, the kind of life sanctified by their ancestors, full of habits centuries old, that have ceased to constrain, full of remembrance, and rich in guarantees for security. It is the past, the whole past, in a word, to which men cling so fondly ! Rest assured, if you attack all these they will be stoutly defended. The business of yesterday . . . ”

“Come, duke, leave Fräulein Hersberg in peace for a little,” interrupted the king, who had approached them unnoticed ; “ours is a little circle of intimates from which all bitterness of debate must be banished. We are friends here ; is that not so, fräulein ? ”

“Sir, if we speak only of persons and not of ideas, and if the friendship of which you speak means respect, esteem, and devotion on my part, your Majesty could not speak more truly . . . ”

“Of course,” said Wolfran gaily ; “there are no ideas present to-night, only individuals, all very much disposed to mutual sympathy.”

The duke dissimulated a smile ; he sipped at his tea and cast a look of admiring amusement at



the king. Evidently he thought him seductive and charming, able to subjugate his worst enemy by a certain strong and graceful virility peculiarly his own. The brilliant hussar's uniform and his tall stature powerfully furthered the prince's ascendancy. As he spoke, he instinctively raised his hand to his brow as if to keep the bandage in place. What woman, thought the Irishman, could fail to feel an interest in him?

And Clara, at peace with her conscience on the subtle pretext that after all the gathering was made up of people of culture, meeting merely as such, and so ceasing to represent individual opinions, unbent altogether. Her pupil sat down at her side. The queen complimented her on her dress; the aide-de-camp's eyes were fixed on her with an expression of marked pleasure and curiosity; Fronique, the artist, sketched her beautiful features in imagination.

A delightful atmosphere surrounded her; and as if still more to heighten the pleasure of the evening, Wolfran, drawing in his chair, asked her familiarly, while the whole company gathered expectantly to listen,—

“Come, *Fräulein* Hersberg, tell us something about thermium.”

## IV.

THE archduchess, her brow clouded with the frown that gave her so grave a look, and seemed to reveal a soul afflicted and tempest-stricken behind her usually calm exterior, knocked at Fräulein Hersberg's door. It was eight in the morning, and she thought she would find her friend still abed. But she got no answer. The young chambermaid, who finally came, said with a curtsy,—

“Your highness will find fräulein in the laboratory. For some days fräulein has been at work there by six o'clock in the morning.”

Wanda made her way to the laboratory by way of the outside passage. Anguish was in her soul. At sight of her, Clara, who was in the act of rinsing out a phial, and whose long white apron was all sprinkled with claret-coloured stains, cried out,—

“Oh, how kind of you to come!”

“I have come,” said the young girl, “to see whether you have slept well.”

"Oh yes, dear princess. I was tired; I had sat up rather late. . . ."

"You had sat on to read the papers?" asked Wanda.

"I have no time for reading the papers just now; for some days back, outside our lessons, I have been following out an idea which will end, I think, in the solution, once and for all, of the question about thermium."

"Really!" said the archduchess.

"Yes," continued the chemist—and the thoughts of her day-dreaming heart shone clear through her eyes—"a week or two ago, the king pointed the path of my duty. There is a sort of capriciousness, you know, about the researches of scientists like myself. We catch a glimpse of the unknown by chance in some experiment or other, and we pursue it frantically in order to get a hold of it; and then if, mostly by chance again, we do manage to seize and define it to our satisfaction, the business seems at an end, we lose our interest in it, and cast about for something else. But the king said a really great thing to me: 'You have produced a new substance which can be an immense benefit to industry and medicine, and through them to thousands of sufferers. But glorious as your

production of it is, it carries with it a heavy load of responsibilities. The production of thermium in sufficient bulk to get it into common use is expected of you. You now have no right to stand still half-way.' And the king spoke the truth. I understood that these lazy fits of my mind were blameworthy. And since then my work has been a sort of fever."

The archduchess attempted to smile.

"You are bringing into being the green coal whose advent you prophesied when first I saw you in the lecture-room. . . . Thanks to you there will be no more strikes, nor riots, nor any poverty with its hardness and envy. . . . But it is high time you gave us this green coal, this inexhaustible green coal of yours !"

But the scientist did not notice the violence of the girl's emotion. She went on,—

"I shall not live to give it ; others will come after me to finish the work ; but, in the meantime, I must make my full contribution to it ; thermium must be isolated ; I am groping and experimenting ; I am trying every possible reagent. Only this morning a globe full of acid burst between my fingers . . . just look at my blouse."

"Clara," asked her highness, "don't you fear

that in the people there lurk forces more tremendous than those inherent in inert matter? . . ."

"Look," answered the chemist, without paying attention to her question. "Do you see the residuum in the bottom of this crucible? it is thermium in crystals. Nothing can affect it. . . ."

"Clara," the young girl asked again, "have you seen nothing of Ismaël Kosor during these last days?"

Now the truth was that on the previous evening Clara Hersberg had indeed received a wild and incoherent note from the agitator, in which he spoke of possible death, of a sacred mission, and of the love that was killing him. She had read it as one listens to the importunate prayer of an insistent child, without applying herself to understanding the allusions it contained to events in the near future. Thermium and the desire to fulfil the wishes of Wolfran occupied her mind to the exclusion of all else. She explained vaguely to the princess that she had not seen Kosor for weeks, and that no sooner was her lecture over in the College of Science than she was on her way to the laboratory, where, under her supervision, her students were also occupied in the search. Ah! when the new apparatus for electrolysis should be complete. . . .

"But in that case," interrupted the archduchess with scarcely concealed impatience, "you know nothing."

"Of what?" asked the scientist.

"Look!" said the archduchess, drawing the muslin window curtains to clear a space on the turret windows.

It was a clear, light morning in March after the muddy days of thaw. The air was so transparent and everything stood out in it so clear-cut and exact, that across the white, dusty expanse of the Waffenplatz and down the gently sloping vestibule formed by the Königin Allee, the bridge was to be seen and the city thoroughfare, with its houses, its shops, its cabs, its tramways, its drays, its motor cars, and its bicycles. And farther off still, where eyesight failed and could no longer distinguish one dim object from another, a sort of black swarming, a dark wave seemed to be approaching.

"What is there out of the way?" asked Clara absently.

The archduchess with wide open eyes, fixed eagerly upon the distance, still held the curtain raised and did not answer.

Clara was filtering a solution. She knew neither impatience nor anxiety nor any secret fears. She

was all occupied in her search, all her strength passing into her work. Tense and vibrating, the archduchess continued after a long silence,—

“My dear, I have come meaning to pass the day with you.”

Clara raised her head in surprise.

“I have given orders to have my meals in your apartment,” continued Wanda; “I would not leave you alone to-day, my poor *fräulein*.”

“Why to-day?” asked the scientist.

The archduchess again raised the curtain, and as she let it fall, said simply,—

“They are coming. . . .”

And then Clara was suddenly struck by an abnormal expression on the face of her pupil which she had not remarked before. The features of the archduchess were contracted and hard. And instinctively the scientist in her turn uncovered the window panes.

A phalanx of people, so crowded as to seem heaped upon one another, covered the distant bridge from parapet to parapet; the carriages had vanished; the *Königin Allee* had suddenly emptied; and towards the vacancy that was left, like a storm-cloud slowly drawn by a vacuum, the black mass of a throng unnumbered yet orderly advanced

with a step almost majestic in its regularity. The advancing front rank reached the right embankment of the stream, the column covering the whole width of the bridge ; for the farther end of the procession the eye sought in vain ; the black sea covered the main thoroughfare across the water, and grew confused in the vague distance of the suburb. Clara's choked voice could only stammer out,—

“The weavers !”

At the same moment a sound as of thunder, which had been growling in the southern district of the town, grew nearer, swelling louder, more and more loud, and making the windows of the palace tremble. Then on to the Waffenplatz through a street close by there poured a rush of horsemen, the first of several squadrons of cavalry coming at a trot in a cloud of dust which the sun's rays gilded and the wind turned whirling. The squadron took up its station on the sides of the square. Meanwhile, the black crowd had begun to enter the Königin Allee. The faded jackets of the workmen and long blouses of the women were distinguishable. Several held a child clasped to their necks. At their head a man was walking, short and slight. Clara's two hands grasped convulsively at the



experiment table. She had recognized Kosor. The archduchess understood the terrible emotional shock it gave the scientist to be thus rudely awakened out of her workaday dream. Shut up within her laboratory walls in the mysterious lethargy of the discoverer who seems to work asleep, she had allowed the movement which was culminating in that day's demonstration to be brought into being and to gather force unnoticed. The Union had not been able to stifle the rumours of it. The papers had announced it, the police had attentively followed all the preparations for it. The cabinet had laid down rules for it, fixing the hour at which it should take place, the bounds beyond which it might not pass, and the time to be allowed it. But Clara, the soul of the Union, the ardent friend of the people, the woman who had given her all for them, and whose sole worldly possessions now were the clothes upon her back, had learnt nothing of it, absorbed as she was in the continual study of her electrolysis. What an awakening from the calm of her scientific dream !

Without a word, the archduchess went into one of the neighbouring rooms, which served for her friend's study. She saw a parcel of unopened newspapers, with their wrappers unbroken. She

brought them to the laboratory at the window of which Clara still stood in amazement. Fräulein Hersberg greeted her with the words,—

“I understand now ; I understand everything : he is bringing them to the king in all their misery and nakedness.”

“My dear friend,” said Wanda, “whatever happens, I shall stay by you.”

Clara thanked her absently, and then opened the newspaper of the Union. The leading article in it was signed by young Conrad. In passionate language the poet was celebrating the magnitude of the action about to be accomplished that day. The people, forgetful of its resentment and of the iniquity of its estate, confident, peace-loving, powerful as a flood but gentle as a spring morning, was to appear in full strength before the head of the nation. It asked not for war but for bread, for coal, and for a part in the racial patrimony. It made no request ; august and calm, it was merely signifying its desires. And its desires were the withdrawal of the murderous decrees and the repeal of the import duties. “Thirty thousand men,” cried the poet, “in silence and unarmed will be seen passing under the royal windows. All our humanity makes its appeal

to one umpire. That umpire is Wolfran V. Humanity awaits his verdict."

"Nothing!" murmured Clara under her breath, "I knew nothing!"

She rose and made her way back to the window. The procession was approaching at a well-regulated speed without a voice being raised; but the sound of the very footfalls of so many people walking in step was tremendous. When Kosor first set foot on the square the unnumbered host that covered the thoroughfare of the city still blackened it and was lost in the distant horizon. Ismaël was walking bareheaded, he was seen to raise his eyes towards the palace, and he went forward sturdily with hollow cheeks, his black locks waving on his pale brows.

Clara, straight as a statue, motionless and impassive behind her window, continued to watch him.

Then the extreme destitution of the weavers became apparent. They were wearing their working clothes, all worn and in holes. Their countenances were sickly, livid, and fierce. Pride in their numbers was transparent through all their poverty. They had the arrogant attitude of the herd which knows itself invincible. The mar-

vellous palace merely aroused their contempt ; they riddled it with ironical glances. The women were obsessed by the desire to see the king appear on one of the balconies up yonder.

Never had such a display of the poverty of the working classes been spread out before Clara's eyes.

The mob, her forgotten idol, had returned to tempt her and to make her its own. An intoxication of sympathy filled her brain. All those who were suffering, all those whose very existence in their hovels was unknown, were there clustered excruciatingly before her. Silent as they were, they were all clamouring for justice, for equality, and for joy. Clara felt herself whelmed in a burning tide of sympathy. She would have wished to be able to give everything, including herself, in order to satisfy to overflowing the popular thirst. She was herself again, after her dream. Tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

The first rows of the weavers were now close before the palace railings. Instead of executing the half turn that would have made the crowd stream away through the Rue du Beffroi, and allowed the whole procession to pass in full view of the palace, Kosor stopped where he was and

took up a stand before the gate. To the right of the central tower the guardroom remained close shut ; not one of the White Guards showed. The troops framing the square stood motionless. Sometimes through the silence came the neigh of a horse. Behind, the stream of weavers still flowed on. It was the regular current enlarging the lake. Presently the ranks of bodies began to press upon one another, but since the processionists had chosen to walk at a very slow step, it was only imperceptibly that the crowd grew wider. Little by little, it spread quietly, like the spreading overflow of some river ; it adapted itself to the shape of the square. But Kosor refused to direct the first wave to the outflow offered by the Rue du Beffroi. And there the crowd stagnated, growing momentarily more compressed and stifled.

And suddenly, before the obstinate silence of the palace and the shut mask with which it received this formidable visit, Ismaël Kosor was seized with arrogant wrath. He had thirty thousand souls at his beck, moving at a mere gesture from him, their will being his ; poor and sickly as he looked, he personified the forces of a city ; a terrible army was embodied in him ; was this contemptuous silence the only answer to his summons ?

And suddenly his voice, hollow but sonorous, rang through it. He cried,—

“The king ! we must see the king ! We will speak to the king !”

And from the depths of the crowd there was borne upwards a colossal murmur, a mutinous cry which grew and swelled, and soon rose from the entire surface of that throng of beings, wearied of keeping silence,—

“The king ! the king !”

Abruptly Clara turned from the turret window ; her feverish hand felt trembling for the button of her apron, tore it off and pulled off the sleeve. The archduchess, very calm, a little paler even than usual, asked her what she was doing. Clara answered her,—

“I am going down.”

“No, my dear friend, do not go.”

“I will go down,” said the socialist, panting.

The delicate princess grasped her firmly by both wrists.

“Your duty is to stay by me.”

“My duty,” said Clara, “is downstairs, there, in front of the palace, by the side of that man to whom my promise has plighted me more strongly even than you are pledged to the Prince von

Hausen. My duty calls me to stand with the people to whom I have been consecrated since my youth ; I am dedicated to the people, I tell you ; I have lived for the idea of leading it to happiness, and to-day at its awakening, where am I ? ”

She shivered, and continued to tear off her apron fiercely.

But the calm serenity of Wanda quelled her as she said coldly,—

“ You scent riot, and your revolutionary appetite grows keen ; you think the day has come, and you are all regret at not taking part in the turmoil of the mob ; you wish to take your place in the ranks of battle, so that if the palace is invaded and the moment for the massacre has come, it is you who may lead the rebels into these rooms of ours, which you now know so well. . . . ”

Perturbation grew on Clara's face. Her apron fell about her feet ; she stood in silent indecision, a tragic figure.

“ You must take one side or the other, my dear Hersberg,” said the archduchess, and her voice sounded strangely. “ Which of the two camps have you chosen ? There are the people, the idolized people, and here are the detested royalties.”

At that moment women's shrieks arose piercing and strident ; the chemist and the princess rushed to the window together. They saw a number of women workers, whose greater vehemence and impetuosity had made them elbow their way through the crowd of men, rush headlong at the gates, which they shook desperately while calling at the top of their voices for the king.

From him there came no answer, but below in the palace courtyard the door of the guard-house opened to let out a man in a fur coat. It was the Chief of Police. He went forward and briefly harangued the multitude. His Majesty had tolerated the demonstration on the express condition of its passing off with orderly tranquillity, the peace being kept, and the public authorities recognized. His Majesty had no intention of giving an address at the mere summons of the mob. On the proper request to that effect being made, he was willing to grant an audience to any duly accredited deputation of the weavers who might wish to lay before him the claims of the workmen, and that was all.

But it was too late. In the brute humanity before him, the desire to bend its master had been exasperated ; it refused to let go its prey. From



that time forward Kosor himself would have been powerless to stem the flood. The whole crowd assailed the railings. It was the king they wanted. They wanted him to appear there, in front of them, on the balcony of the central tower, where the queen had shown herself on the evening of the royal wedding. They had not come to speak with stones. They demanded that Wolfran should be the visible witness of their silent display. And the splendid ironwork of the railings with its dim gildings began to rock dangerously before the stress.

“Oh ! why does not the king appear ! Only let him appear and calm the crowd !” Clara was muttering.

“And what then ?” said her highness.

A bugle call ripped the air. The officer in command of the soldiers urged forward his horse and seemed to summon the rioters to disperse, but his summons was lost in the muttering of the rising storm. Along the wings of the palace a file of White Guards appeared ; and immediately there came the sound of a shot which even the horrid clamour of the mob could not smother. A light puff of smoke which seemed no greater than the smoke of a cigarette drifted into the air. It

was a revolver that had gone off "by itself," as those responsible were at pains to declare later.

Then came the charge ; and it was murderous. Later calculations made out that on that morning the square was cumbered with a crowd of some sixteen or seventeen thousand weavers. And into that mass of human flesh the horses were thrust. Standing behind the panes it was easy to hear the huge groan of panic that rose from the crowd. It tried to defend itself. Throughout its arms were brandished in the air, and in front there was the flash and crackle of revolvers. The cavalry replied with their pistols. A child who had climbed into the branches of a tree fell, his forehead covered with blood. At the windows of the government offices foot-soldiers appeared with pointed rifles.

"If only the king would appear !" Clara groaned, wringing her hands.

The archduchess drew near to her, as much with the object of escaping the sight of what was going on outside, as of comforting her friend.

"Poor Hersberg !" she murmured ; "poor dear Hersberg !"

And she imprisoned her in her arms.

Completely mistress of herself as she generally

was, the chemist had sunk into a chair. She was dry eyed now. Her voice sounded strangely,—

“Leave me, princess, leave me. I have loved, oh! yes, loved you very tenderly, but I am not on your side; I cannot be; I shall never be. I am with those who are being slain outside; it is my blood I feel flowing, my limbs that the bullets are smashing; oh! poor creatures! poor creatures! Such a miserable lot, followed by such a death! Yes, I am against the king; the king who is answerable for so many crimes. . . .”

“Poor dear Hersberg!” repeated the princess tenderly.

“He only required to make a single movement,” continued Clara; “one movement of love and of human brotherhood; they would have cheered him to the echo. The people are kind. But he would not. Oh! why? why?”

It seemed meanwhile that the firing was dying down. With an effort they staggered to the window; and, in fact, the square was getting cleared; a tide of demonstrators was flowing quickly through the Wachturmstrasse. They marched past the palace in silence; stupidly, and with fear in their eyes, they gazed at some fifteen corpses twitching in their last agony, which were

lying there with their limbs cast this way and that upon the causeway. Conspicuous were the bodies of two or three street boys and a young woman with fair hair, one side of whose weaver's apron bore a huge scattered stain of blood. And so they passed on, borne along in the deflection of the stream, hustled and uncomprehending. Clara recognized old Heinsius, whose tall figure and raised arms dominated the crowd. The wind blew about the thin hair of his white beard like flames. He must then have been recalling, after the manner of old men, that he had foreseen that which had come to pass. On the bridge, other weavers were still walking on their way to the palace, all unknowing of what had happened. But they were not even to cross the river. A second squadron of cavalry flashed along the embankment and cut the column in two, hustling back the newcomers and dispersing those who lingered in the Königin Allee. The sun was already high in the heavens. In the avenue the bayonets caught it and flashed.

Clara bent over the sill of the window, her eyes fixed on the stiffening bodies which the human flood as it passed had left on the bank ; her anxiety to spell out the features of the corpses was pitiful to see. She was seeking for Ismaël. She said,—

"I think I hear him calling me." And again she made as if to go down.

But the archduchess reminded her that the soldiers standing with fixed bayonets on the four sides of the palace would not let her pass. She fell back into a silence of despair which Wanda refrained from disturbing. By the time the square was finally cleared twelve o'clock had struck. The bodies of dead and wounded were carried away. Only a few pools of blood remained for a token. The princess came up to Clara, kissed her on the forehead, and withdrew.

A quarter of an hour later she came back triumphant.

"My friend! my friend!" she cried, "I got the Duke of Oldany himself to telephone to the central police office. Kosor is neither hurt nor arrested."

Clara bent her head upon her hands and burst into tears at last, as if the whole horrible nightmare had vanished and left no traces but on her shaken body.

At two o'clock, a ring at the telephone called her into the adjoining room. She lifted the receiver, and it whispered in her ear,—

"Fräulein, be kind enough to be in the arch-

duchess's music-room at nightfall. And pray, be as secret as you possibly can about your going."

"Who wants me?" asked Clara.

"The king," answered the instrument more discreetly than ever.

"So much the better," thought she with a flash of hatred in her look. "I shall see him; and since I can no longer stay here, and am a thousand miles away from the place in heart and mind, since I can have nothing in common with this murderer, I shall speak boldly. Ah! there shall be no more self-committal; I am one with the people, one with the dead, and he is a man who to-day, by a single gesture, could have diffused peace and happiness, and who has cast only the seeds of death."

And she sought in her chest of drawers for the photograph of Doctor Kosor, at which she had not looked for some time past. The noble countenance, majestic with its snowy beard and with its high forehead, and the fine, sad smile in its blue eyes, impressed her more than ever before. "Well," it seemed to say to her—"well, you have desired to know the great, and you have been inveigled by their lying dignity;

now you see them as they are : the enemies of the poor ! ”

She stood with the card in the palm of her hand. How truly, she felt, she belonged to the grand old man ; how truly she was the inheritor of his thought, of his generous, rebellious soul ! And a shame came upon her that she had not always faced the king with the wild pride of a revolutionary. “ What does Wolfran want of me ? ” she asked, thinking of the curious appointment for that evening.

When the time came, she went to the meeting-place with a firm step, and a still firmer resolve to give full vent to her indignation. And if the interview were a stormy one, what then ? If the king tried to excuse himself, she would plead the popular cause. The Union which she symbolized would stand up to face his power. She would say : “ They had come quiet and confident, they appealed to you as to a father, all their hope was in your goodness. And you had them dispersed with rifle shots or at the point of the bayonet ! ”

As she was passing through the vestibule that led to Wanda's apartments, she ran up against Madame de Bénouville, who asked her what she wanted with her highness. Acting upon an un-

thinking scruple, Clara answered in obedience to the telephone order :

"Her highness has asked me to see her bust by artificial light."

"I shall go with you, dear Fräulein Hersberg."

Clara explained,—

"Madame, you know how fond I am of you ! But on an evening like this, it is solitude that I am going to seek down there. . . . Meditation in darkness and silence."

"Poor, wounded heart !" sighed the old Frenchwoman ; "poor, troubled, sensitive heart !"

And the socialist went on her way along the secret corridor. When she entered it by the hidden door the music-room was in darkness. At a venture she turned on the first electric switch that fell to her hand. A single lamp lit in the distance by the organ, whose dull pipes reflected it dimly. The walls, hung with red cloth, glowed crimson by the light and then faded off into the sinister colour of a stain of blood ; by the main door they darkened to black ; the viols and the citherns seemed great giant snails scaling the walls to the cornice in regular lines. The dumb mass of pianos and harmoniums blocked the way. Clara stood for a while near a gilded harp, whose



top reflected the distant light. She tried as hard as she could to divine what the intention of the king might be. Perhaps it was her dismissal that he was coming to announce to her with such a display of mystery. Her humiliation at the thought went farther to stimulate her radical pride.

An oaken settle stood against the wall. After a long quarter of an hour spent waiting, Clara felt tired. She went over to it and sat down, and then she fell a-dreaming in a half slumber of utter weariness. The little electric globe shone like a star in the night. A tortoise-shell comb slipped down from the young woman's heavy hair : at its contact with the bench there came a shiver of strings, a singular, barely perceptible concert of more than a hundred instruments vibrating together. Slowly their quivering died. Silence fell. It reigned absolute in that room of pleasant sounds as in a church. The pale and bended countenance of the sleeping Clara seemed of wax.

Suddenly she started. Her eyes opened and she was on her feet : the great double door had half opened and a white figure stood in momentary indecision upon the threshold. Wolfran V. was there, dressed in his uniform of the White Guards,

as she had seen him first, at the festival on the ice. At sight of her standing before her settle, with her hand on its arm, in the posture of a woman who grants an audience, he bent his steps towards her, careless of gait and with his slight invariable haughtiness of manner.

"Ah! Fräulein Hersberg," he murmured, as he greeted her.

She saw his features so painfully contracted, his eyes, which seemed to pierce to her very soul, so overflowing with sorrow, that the sentences she had prepared suddenly escaped her. She stood there, dumb and inscrutable; but though she took it trembling, she took the hand which the king gave her. He said,—

"What a terrible day we have passed!"

She merely asked,—

"How many dead?"

"Seventeen."

"Ah!" sighed she, turning aside her head. Wolfran raised his arms, his lips were shaping to begin a sentence; but it did not come, and his arms fell with a heavy motion of depression and powerlessness. Then Clara unsteadily began to recite the reprimands she had prepared.

"They had come quiet and confident . . .

they were appealing to your Majesty as to their . . .”

But suddenly she felt that it was all a lie, for they had really come in hatred and filled with suspicion, like a herd turning upon their driver ; she durst not finish her sentence. Besides Wolfran had signed to her to sit down on the oaken settle and with the mingled authority and affability habitual to him.

“There will be severe reprisals,” he said : “do you wish greatly that Kosor should be spared ? I know he is dear to you, and I should be sorry to sadden you. That is the purpose of my coming to-night. Within an hour he is to be arrested in a poor lodging-house in the city where he has taken refuge. Here is the address. Johannès Karl and Conrad were already in the hands of the police some time back. Old Heinsius has doubtless been taken too, at the moment of speaking. I must make a serious example, and I will have my people lose this habit of concerted movements which are simply revolutionary spasms, and are bound to end in bloodshed. Kosor was the leader of this one. He will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law. I will not hide it from you ; it means a long term of penal servitude.

Still, between you and me. . . . Here is a pass from the Chief of Police which will allow you a last interview with your friend. I am guarantee that for an hour his liberty shall be respected. See what you can do within that time. You have a number of resources to choose from, such as the closed carriage and the train that leaves at five fifty-eight for Berlin. . . . If he escapes of course, you are alone responsible. . . .”

He smiled vaguely and continued,—

“Nevertheless, as long as he is on Lithuanian territory, measures can be taken against him. At this moment the police have formed a chain round the house where he has taken shelter ; but I repeat, he shall be a free man for one hour more.”

Clara was listening breathlessly. She said at last,—

“Your Majesty offers him exile. . . .”

“I offer him nothing, Fräulein Hersberg,” said the king, drawing himself up quickly ; “I merely want to give you leave to see him for the last time, in full knowledge, if you like, of the ingenuity of women, and of the danger of the proceeding. . . . Ismaël Kosor is a man with the most dangerous illusions. There is this difference

between your friend of the people and myself : he rejoices in the shedding of blood which to me is torture. He would be very willing to repeat to-day's attempt. But as long as things are so arranged that he can do no harm to the nation . . . well, if it gives great joy to you, to save him . . . my eyes shall be closed for an hour."

"Ah! sir," said she with her heart like to burst, and the tearful voice of a child, "from beginning to end your Majesty's conduct to-day has baffled me; I would have wished to understand in order to submit, but no, I cannot, I can find no explanation."

"In your heart you cursed me? . . ."

Clara's head bent forward in confession.

"Your heart must not curse me, Fräulein Hersberg, never; especially to-day when I have had suffering enough. When one governs a people, you see, one is like a man holding the key of mighty sluice gates. Is one to be hard upon such a man even supposing the reason of his every movement does not immediately appear? Ah! it is a trying thing to bear such responsibility. . . . I feel a tremor run through the whole of Lithuania. . . . A thousand different and contradictory desires rise towards me. . . . Every

party marches under the banners of truth and justice. But I know that truth is one and indivisible, and I lead my people into its light. I know where the way leads; I know where it leads, by the thunder of God!"

He was pale, tense in every limb, a spasmodic movement shook him, and, standing alone in that half-light, white as marble, his stature seemed to Clara greater than the stature of a man. In a flash the essential meaning of royalty was revealed to her. She had seen the king.

And he continued to stand there before her lost in thought. His eyes, bent upon vacancy, were doubtless still filled with a vision of the crowd—not merely of that human ant-heap which had swarmed across the town for a moment that morning, but of the multitude of his people with all its variety of personal passions, of personal needs, of personal sorrows, and its vehement general thirst for joy.

"Ah!" sighed Clara, broken, "can one know where the truth is to be found?"

Wolfran returned to the affairs of the moment. He drew out his watch.

"Fräulein Hersberg, you have only fifty-two minutes left."

She started, and looked up at him. He was smiling affectionately at her, and her heart was filled with comfort.

"I thank your Majesty," she stammered out.

On this occasion he took both her hands and held them for a second in his.

"I wished to give you a tangible proof of my esteem," said he.

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The image of Ismaël was still distant and confused in Clara's mind when her carriage, which she was using for the first time, reached the fugitive's hiding-place in the narrow street close by the harbour wharfs. The scene in the music-room had left too vivid a remembrance in her mind to be forgotten. The figure of Wolfran was incessantly before her, in his white embroidered tunic with the decorations, so divinely imperious, so impressive in his self-reliance and certitude, in face of the people's agony: "I know my way!" Truly he rose before the eyes of her soul like a strong and steady light, a powerful beacon shining by night upon the sea. But she was on her way to Ismaël, who claimed her thought; it was Ismaël she must save. And she repeated to herself: "What a tenderness in this reputed

tyrant, what a consideration, to brave all the influences about him, in order to spare the man I love ! ”

The carriage drew up in front of a tall, dark house where lighted windows appeared on every floor.

At the moment of its stopping, although the narrow street had an instant before appeared absolutely empty, four police agents in plain clothes surrounded the young woman, roughly barring her entrance to the lodging-house. But she showed them the pass from the Chief of Police. They examined it long and curiously. At last they allowed her to enter. One stair up, a great, stout woman asked what was her will, and showed her to the room where the fugitive was hidden. She opened the door. Ismaël Kosor, his arms folded across his narrow chest, was awaiting his arrest. At the sight of Clara, he cried aloud,—

“ You, is it you ? ”

“ My poor friend ! ” she cried, seized with pity ;  
“ my poor friend ! ”

The comrade of her childhood, the brother who had made her early years beautiful with his strong tenderness, the silent and passionate man whose



love now touched her youth to a golden glory, like a great and distant star whose beneficent warmth is felt by a world, stood there before her eyes, poor, outlawed, hunted to his lair like a beast. Cities were driving him forth, the hand of the law lay heavy upon him, society spewed him out of its mouth, he was become one of the vanquished ; his morning's prowesses had ended in a massacre, and inky blood still stained his disordered garments. The shame of defeat and of the world's blame was upon him. Clara pressed him to her heart, weeping.

"You shall not be taken," she murmured ; "I have come to save you."

"How can you do that ? the house is surrounded, flight is not to be thought of."

"Come," said she, "come with me ; I have obtained . . ."

"What ?" he broke in upon her, his eyes hollow and staring and limbs a-tremble, "we are to fly together ? You will ? You have come to take me ?"

And as if suddenly struck with madness, with a laugh of supreme happiness which transfigured the fierce agitator into an apparition of utter beatitude :

"We are going together?" he asked. "You are to be mine, at last. You love me enough for that? Where are you taking me? No, I have no need to know it; be it to the world's end or the midst of the boundless desert, what is it to me? . . . After all I am a man. Ah! how we shall love each other!"

In this appeal to her, Clara felt such a compelling force that, in sudden terror, she threw herself backwards as if a precipice had yawned at her feet. No, no, that was not what she wanted! The unhappy Kosor's illusion irritated, but failed to touch her; she was not long in setting him to rights with a sort of secret pleasure, foreign to her usual kindness of heart.

"What are you dreaming of? Can I leave Oldsburg? I tell you they have granted me the favour of a last interview with you, and that your arrest shall be delayed for an hour. During the time granted us, I shall take you to the station in my carriage, you will take the train for Berlin, and to-morrow you will be in safety, far from Lithuania."

He looked at her stupidly and said,—

"Alone? . . . What is the use?"

"If you were to stay here half an hour longer,

it would mean a dungeon to-morrow, and irons, and long imprisonment. The government seems determined to take the strongest measures, my friend, my poor, poor friend ! ”

“The government ! ” he said, “I despise it ; as for the king, he is a mere murderer. Ah ! if you had been with me to see our brothers falling under the bullets of his Guards ! Women struck down with a bullet in the throat, who could not die. . . . I saw it, I tell you ! And yet, what had they done ? Called out for Wolfran, called desperately in their distress ! Oh ! the fine king with his easy victory ! But his hour shall come, I swear it ! ”

Clara turned white as death.

“Certain things are necessary,” she said quietly, “hard, if you will, but necessary for those whose duty it is to keep order.”

“Order ? ” sneered Kosor, “there is no true order but in justice and equality ; you should know that ! ”

She answered more sharply,—

“Come along, it is time we were gone. I know that strict orders have been given, and that for this one hour you shall not be touched.”

He asked from whom Clara had obtained this

permission. She answered from the king himself. Then he struck obstinately and refused to profit by it.

"Besides, I have no care for anything left. When I saw you, a fit of madness came upon me. It seemed to me that the night of Calm, so long awaited, was to come after the terrible day I had gone through. I did not know what I was saying. Now I care for nothing."

"Oh ! come," begged Clara. "Time is passing. A few minutes more and it may be too late."

"What can I do over yonder ?"

"You can work, you can study, you can still seek after Truth."

"Truth ! but I have found it."

"Alas !" thought Clara, "it seems to be a common possession !"

And she turned her head aside. Then it was that the meanness of the cheaply furnished room, with all the hideousness of its hangings in red serge, struck her. The luxury of the palace had gradually educated her sense. It pained her to hear the passionate words of Ismaël in those wretched surroundings. She bent towards him again.

"I am almost rich now ; you shall lack nothing,

you shall leave your boot-making and return to the noble work of our good master."

"The work of one's hands is the most noble of all," said the revolutionary proudly. Clara felt called upon to explain.

"Right gladly would I have followed you, but in that case what resources should we have? The poor place I fill in the palace is sufficient for all our needs. I am remaining to give you the word when it is time to return."

Then he resigned himself and followed her out through the door. They groped together down the darkened stair. Clara feared the street and the possibility of happenings which Wolfran might not have sufficiently foreseen. But orders had been carefully given; not a police officer did they perceive. Breathlessly she pushed Ismaël into the brougham and called out the name of the station for Germany to the driver. The carriage went off at full speed. Both its inmates were silent, one motionless as an automaton, the other burning with a strange fever. When the flares appeared which always light up the station at night, Ismaël clasped Clara to him desperately in the darkened carriage. He spoke only the words,—

"Shall I see you again?"

"Of course," said she, freeing herself from him.

She ran to take his ticket. The whistle of an engine sounded. They clasped hands in silence. A stream of travellers was passing. Kosor joined them. Yet a moment Clara was able to distinguish his head with the black locks, too large for his narrow shoulders ; then she lost sight of the fugitive : he had reached the line.

An impression of relief and of freedom from something undefined came over Clara. She tried to explain it to herself by whispering : " At last he is safe ! "

As she went out through the entrance of the station, a sound of dull thunder told her that the train was starting. Her lightness of spirit increased twofold, a mysterious lightness which she was deluded enough to attribute to the service she had done her brother. Thereupon she dismissed her carriage, wishing to return to the palace on foot.

The town was still feeling the consequences of the morning's disturbance. All the shops were shut, as if it were a feast-day evening, but here and there trees had been robbed of their branches, and the streets remained deserted. From time to

time a patrol of Horse Guards appeared, their white cloaks flapping in the night wind. They came up at a hard gallop, with a great beating of hoofs, raising clouds of dust and striking showers of sparks from the cobbles; they rode straight in front of them. After they had disappeared the distant ring of iron upon stone still broke the silence.

Clara was in great perplexity of mind. She saw how powerless she was to pass any judgment upon what the king had done. She could neither approve nor condemn. And yet what would have followed if that mob, with its excitement due fully as much to the power of alcohol as to revolutionary passion, had been given its own way? There was no manner of doubt about it. It would have meant the invasion of the palace, an insurrection, the failure of the powers that were, yes, and afterwards! . . . Were the Union after all so ready to improvise an organized state on the spur of the moment?

But, as she walked, she came to the Rue du Beffroi. The effect of the fusillade had been felt even there, and she caught sight of a large blood-stain upon the ground, of a woman's hair-comb, and of white fragments of bleeding flesh like

remains in a slaughter-house. And her heart swelling with pity plunged her into even deeper uncertainties. Had not they counted human lives too cheap? . . .

At last, at the street's end, the royal palace rose with its spires, its arches, its pinnacles, its Gothic dormers, and its ironwork. That sovereign beauty towered above the horrors of life. Peace came over the young woman. Wolfran was there. She was to know . . .



## PART FOURTH.

### I.

“**W**ELL, Fräulein Hersberg, is that a bomb meant for me that you are concocting?”

Clara, white-aproned, started back from her shaking together of a black powder before the central window of the laboratory. Hearing a knock at the door, she had thought it was her pupil. But at the sound of the voice behind her she turned, and saw the king and the Duke of Oldany, come, both of them, on a surprise visit, and dressed in indoor clothes. Wolfran, even in those, retained an unconscious look of majesty. The duke looked cold in his tightly-buttoned tweeds.

“Ah, your Majesty has come to stop me,” said the chemist, laughing; “he has reason enough.”

It was on the day following the famous sitting of the Lithuanian Parliament, in which the government, being attacked by a republican deputy on

the subject of the massacres of the Waffenplatz, had put up the Earl Marshal to defend its policy. The Duke of Zoffern had, in fact, replied in a memorable speech dealing with general policy, through which there sounded unmistakable echoes of the previous régime. Without circumlocution or reticence the old giant had given the rein to his uncompromising conservatism in his denunciation of the socialist peril and the guilty connivance with which the intellectuals encouraged it. It was a bolt from the blue of liberal government. There was no gainsaying it, he had entirely forgotten to depict monarchy in the discreet, reserved, and modern manner which kings of to-day deem well to adopt. The words that escaped from under his fierce moustache had implied nothing but over-riding and repression. After his speech the situation was as follows: He had gone far further than Wolfran V., with his poetic love of liberty and national dignity, had intended; he had even misinterpreted the political intentions of Lord Bertie, whose idea it had been to invent a vast socialist plot which would have given opportunity for prosecution even among the intellectuals, as the unavowed inspirers of the said plot, and so to check their zeal. At the palace that same evening

a secret and stormy conference had taken place between the three individuals who were the masters of the destinies of Lithuania. Wolfran had spoken with a young man's fire. He and the veteran statesman had fallen out. It was a most serious dissension. The one party to it, foaming at the mouth with anger, and all but choked by his respect and awed restraint before his king, impressively declaimed his theory of absolute right ; while the other, analytically minded, and feeling the yoke of the old man's influence heavy on his shoulders, replied with words of biting cruelty. At one in the morning the Duke of Zoffern cast his resignation at his sovereign's feet. And Wolfran would have accepted it, so tired was he of the doctrine and authority of the Earl Marshal, but a third actor had at this point taken up his cue after figuring on the stage in silence. He had until that moment played the part of an interested but humble secretary. It was Lord Bertie, the Duke of Oldany. The moment of his intervention had arrived. He affected to take the old man's threat as the effect of an ill-tempered whim. At heart he was thoroughly alarmed. He had felt even better than Wolfran what a king might accomplish with

so powerful a weapon, and what prestige a modernized monarchy would long continue to derive from that ancient and splendid pillar which, for over a quarter of a century, had upheld the throne. In the glaring novelty of the constitutional movement the Earl Marshal was the rich and noble relic of an ancient architecture, giving style to the whole building. Bertie told him as much, straight out.

"We cannot get on without you, duke ; you symbolize tradition."

Wolfran understood, and rejected the challenge of his all but insupportable old censor. Disagreement vanished. The idea of the plot remained, clear and distinct. They would go so far as to prosecute teachers in government schools who held socialist opinions, and inquiries to that end should be instituted at once.

It was on the morning of that epoch-making night from which Wolfran's whole future policy was indeed to take its direction that he came, smiling and gay, to Clara's laboratory with a piquant French jocularité of which Madame de Bénouville, in her young and attractive days, had taught him the secret.

"Come, Fräulein Hersberg," asked Lord Bertie, "why should you be arrested ? Let us be quite

"Tut, tut," said Wolfran, "you will see that it will come to me as it has come to others . . ."

"That's an idea that should not be encouraged," observed the duke ; "it is too depressing."

"I assure you, though, it does not lack piquancy ; it puts you into quite a special frame of mind. First of all it becomes a habit, and men love things that have become habits. One goes out on a fine day and has a moment to enjoy the beauty of life, and then one says : 'Perhaps it will be at the turn of the street, at the corner of this square, at the end of that avenue.' And one waits. One feels in anticipation the mystery of death, the lightning stroke, the splendour of becoming nothing in the prime of one's vitality. It is a theatrical transformation-scene which does not wait for beauty. I can't express to you the sort of passive serenity which such a prospect gives one."

And in truth, since the attempt in the city, what had then been a threatening latency seemed to have taken shape. It obsessed the imagination of all ; the council of ministers had expressed the desire that the king should double his escort, and once more the idea of an armoured motor car had come into people's minds. But Wolfran made

light of so much zeal and such precautions. He used to say that the moment when vigilance happens to nod is the moment chosen by stubborn fate, and that moment, he said, is inevitable. And so he let things take their course, being quite sincerely unaffected by anxiety. His only care was the agony of it which haunted the two women who worshipped him—the queen and the archduchess.

“Ah ! if it were not for the anxiety of my wife and daughter ! I assure you that for myself . . .”

And he laughed a fine laugh of health and peace and life which cast defiance at death. But a cold blade had pierced to Clara's very heart. The vision of the assault to be, stood out before her eyes in all the crude colours of butchery and carnage which she was too well informed not to believe possible. One day one of her laboratory attendants, working under her supervision in the lecture-room, had, by some carelessness or other, blown off his arm with an explosive. And then came before her eyes again the horrid gashing of the torn flesh. Then the thought of Wolfran came to her—Wolfran full of health and strength and in all the beauty of his prime. The severe measures that were going to be taken were bound

to awake much intense resentment. And she said not a single word. The whiteness of her working dress hid the pallor of her face. Lord Bertie, with an evident desire to please, cried out,—

“But all that does not take us much further in deciding whether we are to arrest Fräulein Hersberg.”

“Do you think, my lord, that I am a danger to the established order of things?”

“When a person of your worth expresses an opinion, fräulein, she is always a danger to her adversaries.”

“I am a socialist,” said she, smiling again.

“So it appears,” said the duke, the expression of whose mouth showed all the irony and scepticism so dominant in him.

“I am still Doctor Kosor’s daughter at heart.”

“We know it.”

“I am engaged to the agitator who is in exile threatened with arrest.”

“That, again, we have ascertained.”

“I have fostered the strike with my money.” She spoke it out proudly, urged to frankness by a strange need and hunger for it.

“We had no doubt that a woman of your generous heart and instincts would act so.”

Slowly she passed her hand across her forehead.

"And I know all about the Union—names, rules, and intended measures . . ."

"Yes, I know ; and we shall take care not to question you."

And then she added, her fine eyes filling with tears,—

"The house that I inherited from my adopted father is full of his letters, of the letters of the man who loves me, and of his friends."

Bertie answered,—

"There shall be no search made in it."

And all this while the king was thinking :  
"Why is she confessing as she does . . . why?"

Nevertheless, this single conversation had stirred Clara too deeply for words, and in the extremity of her emotion this woman of thirty, with her balanced mind, who had inquired into the most difficult problems of physical and social life, who had given the world a new substance, and whose brain was big with a project which might give it a gigantic industry—this woman felt all the utter emotional bewilderment of a child. She could no longer conceal what was in her heart, and she laid it all before them in phrases that revealed the instancy of her pain.



"It is your goodness makes you say that you wish to see a friend in me. Ah! how I wish that were possible. Everything attracts me here: the moral worth of the people, the evident value set upon me, the charm of my pupil, and the sympathetic interest of your Majesty—everything, everything! I could wish not to be an enemy; but never can these gentle influences prevail against my faith, never, never!"

She was rigid with emotion. The eyes of the two men expressed their admiration of her tragic beauty. The hair fell heavy across her temples, and the rich curve of its black coils descended to the light arch of her eyebrows. She was seated on a low chair. Behind her the glass retorts, the alembics, and the test-tubes formed a mysterious background to her figure. In no other scene could her greatness as a scientist and her weakness as a woman have been so well displayed. She was overwhelmed and desperate; but she stood erect to declaim the creed which rose to her lips and would not be denied.

"I believe in the reign of human bliss; I believe in the coming of equality among men; I believe in the abolition of poverty. I have seen the city of justice and of love, that city of which each of

us bears the glorious image in his heart, like a globe of crystal. Its plans are drawn, its diagrams are ready, the conception is perfect: only the execution remains. How could I, with my eyes still full of such a vision, deny a future so glorious and so dear, and become of those who uphold the past with its sorrows, iniquities, and hatreds? I cannot, I cannot!"

Both the men present were seized by a vivid sense of compassion at the sight of the splendid young woman before them, whose life had been passed in the study of the exacter sciences, and who was now harrowed by cruel doubt. Its effects were only too visible. The less easily moved of the two was indubitably the Irishman, and even he had a tone of compassion in his voice as he answered,—

"No one asks you to sacrifice your convictions, Fräulein Hersberg; you are far too true not to be believed. Only try to understand us. In any case, though you should remain an enemy to the end of time, you would always retain our deep respect."

But Wolfran answered in a singular voice,—

"It is impossible to have seen the city of the future and to deny it; but is it equally impossible to have dreamt and to awake?"

"Then the awakening must be terrible," said Clara.

"The waking is to life," said Wolfran.

This visit, to whose hidden purpose Clara was only later to obtain the clue, was destined to be the final breaking of the ice between the socialist and the foreign lord. He had come, he said, impelled by his curiosity to see her at work, handling fire and air, making and unmaking substances. Everything, chemistry included, interested him. He would have liked to have a smattering of everything ; and the exact sciences above all were relief from the uncertain science of politics. He was not an artist, he said. And those words are always accompanied, in those who speak them, by an intended scorn for art.

Clara thought of her delightful Prince von Hausen, so subtle, so clever, with ever ready fancies, touching, as it were, playfully on the deepest thoughts, on all philosophies, on all phases of opinion, and on all the arts. Young, graceful-minded poet, amateur of talent, hero of the tenderest and saddest of romances, he was all these, and yet he remained crushed under the mysterious ascendancy of this narrow-chested slip of a man, whom nature had seemed to paint in flat tints, and

who appeared everywhere with power. Clara had already compared these two diametrically opposite beings in her own mind, and had already more than one anxious reflection about them. And it was with a start that she heard the duke ask her, as he was examining a piece of thermium,—

“And what do you make of your pupil? Does her highness take to chemistry?”

She answered that the archduchess had a mind of quite extraordinary quickness, which often anticipated the slow methods of demonstration.

“Her highness is possessed of a great variety of faculties,” said the duke, “and the strong mind which makes her capable of severe study has robbed her of none of her delicate femininity. There cannot be a more perfect young lady in all Lithuania—in her many qualities of heart and mind, I mean.”

The generally ironical person had spoken these words gravely, and Clara seemed to discern in them the tingling of a secret emotion.

“I love her dearly,” she said.

Bertie said no more, but rolled a little green pearl of thermium between his fingers as if in order to feel its mysterious temperature the better. Clara put out a gas stove, upon which water had

been boiling and singing in a globe of glass. The silence that followed was a long one. It was Wolfran who, coming nearer the young woman, took back the conversation to the point where this fresh subject had branched off.

"When thoughts of that sort come over you again, *fräulein*, come and see me. Yes, that's it. Come some morning after my official work. Often on Mondays there is not much doing in the Admiralty, and I have fewer papers to sign. Come some Monday on the chance, and we can have an interesting interchange of ideas. There is no need to apply for an audience. I shall tell Colonel Rodolphe about it ; but, I beg of you, not a word of this to the Zofferns."

She thanked him. The Irishman said,—

"I am happy, very happy, to have been in the laboratory of *Fräulein Hersberg* and seen thermium at close quarters. It is extremely interesting."

"He is not sincere," thought Clara ; "that wasn't the object of his coming. Why, then ? . . ."

But she had too little of a woman's instinct to be able to decipher the whole of the politician's intentions.

After the departure of the two exalted personages she found that her inclination for work had

gone. She extinguished her fires, threw off her apron, and returned to her room. A letter was brought her ; it came from Kosor, and began thus :—

“In exile, by the clemency of that generous cad of a Wolfran. . . .”

## II.

AT the end of April Prince Géo, who, after the completion of his bust of the archduchess, had gone into retirement at Hausen, suddenly returned to Oldsburg. Clara got to know it through her maid, who had it through the chamber-maid of the Countess Thaven. But even without such definite information she could have guessed it from the reddened eyes of her pupil, in whom the return of the prince always tapped the source of tears. On that morning Wanda came tearfully in and threw herself into her friend's arms.

"It is all over," she cried ; "all over !" And to Clara's questioning she explained amid sobs that Prince von Hausen had been summoned to the palace by the king, and was about to depart on a diplomatic mission to the Pacific. The government was nominating him as the head of a naval commission for the inspection of the Lithuanian colonies in Oceania, and for the investigation

of naval matters in Japan. The object, doubtless, was to prepare the ground for a treaty of commerce between the two countries, perhaps also to establish regular communication by a line of steamers between Japan and the Lithuanian islands ; but the main purpose was to break the last link between two hearts so thoroughly united.

"It is all over," she repeated. "I shall never see him again. . . ."

"You will, of course you will, my poor dear little princess ; the cruise will not go on for ever."

"It will not go on for ever, and Géo will come back, but by then I shall no longer be free to see him."

Then Clara realized that in certain matters an archduchess is not her own spokeswoman, and that this distinguished young girl, despite her exceptional mental endowment, despite her strong moral qualities and the passionate tenderness of her heart, would be bestowed on some man or other, very much as high orders are bestowed, in such manner as public interest might determine. She was a mere slave. She was being torn from the man she loved to be offered elsewhere, but to whom ?

"Ah, Clara," said she, and it was pitiful to hear



her speak of her sorrow, "it would be nothing to lose Géo if I had only the right to keep his remembrance alive."

"I understand it all, my poor darling," said the indignant socialist. "You are to be bought and sold ; the gift of you will seal some political bargain ; you will be married against your will to some one whom you despise. That is where individual systems of government lead us."

"I am far from despising the man they mean me to marry," said Wanda, "but I can only love

"If the man chosen for you is a good man and learns to know your highness, he will be no party to the bargain, unless he is in love with you."

"I do not know if he loves me ; I do not know if he has any love at all beyond the love of power. I have not guessed the riddle of the sphinx. No one knows. But I esteem him, although I have not a shade of sympathy for him."

"Who is it, then ?" asked Clara at last.

And the archduchess, with the shy hesitancy which the name, connected, as it was, in her mind with her own enforced sacrifice, always awakened in her, uttered the words : "Lord Bertie."

On the following Monday, when she judged that the hour of his official interviews must have gone by, Clara suspended her work in order to visit the king. The king's favourite aide-de-camp, Colonel Rodolphe, smiled at the sight of her ; the faded blue eyes in his great clean-shaven face exchanged an understanding look with hers as he opened the door of the king's office.

Wolfran, in the undress uniform of a general, had a cigarette between his lips and a match-box of wrought gold in his fingers, ready to light it with. At the sight of his visitor he threw the box and cigarette on his desk and came to meet her.

"It is really good of you not to have forgotten the appointment, Fräulein Hersberg," he said to her.

"There are appointments that do one too much honour, sir, for one to forget them," answered the socialist.

"Oh ! oh !" said the king with a kindly laugh ; "here you are quite taking the bent of our court etiquette !"

For a moment their faces lit up together. Clara, despite the familiarity of his greeting, had still that slight sense of awkwardness which had troubled her at her first audience, when Wolfran was still

the unknown king. It even affected her voice a little : an incomprehensible nervousness.

"Ah ! sir," said she at last, "that does not mean that I came here merely to recite polite formulæ ; besides, I have a guess that you dislike them. Your modern soul is in search of simplicity, of truth, and all these out-of-date trappings in which monarchy is still decked are irksome to you. Indeed, when you are kind enough to converse with me, the words 'your Majesty' will scarcely come to my lips, for all the moral authority I feel in you."

Wolfran's indulgent humour was such that he was visibly amused at hearing the revolutionary express herself so frankly. It never occurred to him to take offence. But he said,—

"Fräulein Hersberg, I have too great a respect for your intellectual powers, and too much confidence in yourself, not to be absolutely sincere with you. I should not be telling the truth if I professed to have any absurd worship of the outward forms of respect necessary to royal power. I should not be telling the truth either, if I pretended to be a strong upholder of etiquette. I am a mere man, sometimes a man of many woes : I cannot ape divinity. But though the individual

scarcely counts in it, the office I hold is a very great one—great enough to appear invested in every splendour that can be devised. You may well believe me a man of moderate tastes. I would very willingly administer the affairs of the kingdom in one of those quiet little houses which are the homes of the many able people who live about St. Marie's Convent. But if a king were to live in that style to-day, you must realize that royalty would be very near its end."

He felt that he was being listened to with a certain patient attention which leads a man on to talk. He continued, therefore, with entire frankness,—

"Between ourselves, I can be quite frank in uttering this truth: the less the value of the individual, the more the office must be clothed in majesty. In the age when emperors did glorious feats of arms at the head of their armies, they could, if they had chosen, have administered the country from one of their farms. But now-a-days it's mostly office work that engages us. We should have no sort of air in the eyes of our subjects if we were not distinguished by the architectural grandeur of a palace, the luxury of a court, rich clothing, the brilliant display of our companies of guards, and even the exclusive kind

of language people use to us, and in which we are addressed as something greater than ourselves, an impalpable something which covers us like a shining garment, and which they call by the august name of: Our Majesty. . . .”

“But,” objected Clara, struck by this explanation, “is it not deceiving the people to make use of an illusory system in order to govern it better?”

“The illusion of it is only apparent. The reality of royal power is an awful force quite worthy of this worship. The homage paid to a king rises higher than the individual—to the very throne of royalty itself.”

Clara said thoughtfully,—

“It seems to me . . . I thought it was more in accord with the principle of royalty that honour should be paid to the worth of the man himself. I mean to say . . . so many ideas have been passing before my mind, and with such authority, that what I am trying to express just now is rather an obscure feeling than a settled opinion . . . but, in short, I quite well conceived of ceremony and etiquette as a recognition of individual power, an act of faith, in the personal merit of your Majesty.”

“An idiot king would receive the same honour,” said Wolfran.

"That is just what sets me up against the whole system," the socialist concluded.

The king smiled and let three words escape him,—

"Once I too . . ."

He was silent, and the silence lasted for some moments. Clara was wondering what this singular past so meticulously covered with a veil which none about him would raise, what this gap in the memories of Madame de Bénouville might be, this period of the prince's life regarding which the old governess, so garrulous about all the rest, let a sigh take the place of narrative. The stage of Wolfran's life between his twentieth and twenty-fifth year was still a mystery. Was it satisfactory to explain such reticence merely by the supposition of political differences between him and old King Wenceslas? And Clara looked questioningly at this man of subtle sensibilities, sensitive to the finger tips, and mentally so active, whose frame of mind often corresponded so strangely with her own. She pictured him young, twenty years old. . . . To-day his clear and dreamy eyes seemed still to contain something of those days of his youth. . . .

"It sometimes happens," he continued, "that

I find myself forgetful of the strict observance of these practices, but I have a watchful Cerberus in old Zoffern. He calls me to order. You laugh at him? But he is right, all the same."

"But human dignity. . . ."

"Fräulein Hersberg," said Wolfran, "I beg of you, for truth's sake and for the honour of that well-balanced woman's brain of yours, to have done with that socialist phraseology, which is really very harmful. Kings impress the imagination of the vulgar by the splendour of their clothing, the lacing of the uniforms about them, the embroideries and diamonds of the ladies-in-waiting, and all the pomp and circumstance in which they take care to appear. You, on the other hand, show yourselves to the crowd clothed in a magnificence of words, in a sonorous emptiness of phrase and the meretricious deception of formulæ. You get intoxicated by them, and that is much worse. How can you, exact-minded scientist that you are, let yourself be carried away by so flimsy an eloquence?"

Clara did not answer. Her lowered eyes wandered at random from object to object—from a Persian rug in front of a couch to an old sculptured stool, and from it again to a bead of red

sealing-wax which had fallen like a drop of blood upon a bearskin beside the king's desk.

"For," continued Wolfran, "when you undertake some chemical affair in your laboratory you obey laws slowly worked out by constant experiment ; you take a substance and treat it with the suitable re-agents ; you work according to the truth, and with the certainty that long practice of your science has given to chemists. You have no chimerical or impotent theories there. But when you have puffed up the vulgar throng with the leaven of words, will you have changed it ? What will you make of it ? Justice, Dignity, Equality, Liberty are so many fine abstractions whose essence should enter discreetly into the actions of all leaders of men. But when it comes to guiding a herd of men—a noble herd if you will, an entirely superior sort of herd, but still a herd—mere abstractions lose their meaning : they become so many mottoes embroidered upon streamers flying in the wind—that is all. Only one theory is found to hold : pitilessly to enforce the accomplishment of every duty. That is the whole solution. When each citizen fulfils his task, the rights of society are safe. There is only one word which does not mislead, which does not carry men out of them-



selves, and which is a true power, and that is 'duty.' It is by that alone that a government can be strong."

Clara was listening feverishly. These words sounded pleasantly in her ears. And yet a spasm of her social beliefs made her cry out in the words of the old-time sociologist,—

"But happiness, what of it?—the human happiness that we yearn for, that we are preparing, that we are ready to die for?"

"Fraulein Hersberg," said the king, "there is a marvellous law according to which happiness is simply the natural fruit of duty done. There is a motto which will not carry away the people, and which you should declaim to them, since you wish to make them happy! You have been proposing to lead them to felicity, by another road, the road of their rights. . . . I think it is a long one. . . ."

"Duty is often no more than pain," objected Clara.

"Listen," continued Wolfran, "I am going to tell you a legend, almost a sacred legend. There was once an archduchess, and she was as beautiful as the day. . . ."

He was endeavouring to smile, but the tears rose to his eyes and gave the lie to the quizzical

attitude he was trying to maintain. He went on,—

“She was beloved by a young prince, upon whom nature had heaped the most delightful gifts of mind and heart, and she cherished him, even more perhaps than he loved her. Their fondness for one another had all the tenderness, the heroism, and the purity that have rendered immortal the most poetic loves of the past. They lived only for one another. But the archduchess bore about with her in a great degree the destinies of her country. It did not seem good that she should be joined to her prince. The highest and most peremptory reasons forbade it.”

“Ah ! what reasons ?” cried Clara, who was brimming with anxiety, and whose whole nature, even supposing her to have obtained an understanding never so complete of the royalist system, forbade her to agree with the part of it relating to political marriages.

And the father, whose trembling voice had sunk to the merest whisper, continued in his anguish,—

“Over that part of the legend there hangs a veil, and only for those who by their rank, their birth, or simply their merit are fitted to be the confidants of princes, has that veil been lifted.

The archduchess was the daughter of a king for whom sages had foretold an early death ; she herself enjoyed life on a precarious tenure ; she was but a young girl in her teens, and it was even doubted whether she could attain to the full bloom of youth."

His emotion made him pause ; then he proceeded with an effort,—

"And the heir to the throne was the princess's young lover, born of the royal stock. Yet all the charm, the talent, and all the cleverness which were his and made him the most delightful of princes, could only have made him the worst of kings. His light, cloudy ideas were those of an artificer with his head full of dreams, and his excessive softness of heart made it impossible for him to apply the dictates of justice. With the helm in his hands the kingdom would have been in continual danger of shipwreck. And so with the happiness of these two children was bound up the misfortune of a nation. The king knew it ; but he loved his daughter so dearly that for many days he stood irresolute before he could make up his mind to break the bond that entwined them."

Clara, as she watched the man divert his mind

from its sorrow by an artful choice of words, felt the cruel suffering that underlay them so clearly that it required all her restraint to prevent her woman's heart from overflowing in broken phrases of consolation. How gladly she would have told him . . . Ah! what had she to tell? . . .

Meanwhile he pursued,—

“The prosperity of a nation makes strange demands. It required Prince Charming to be debarred from the throne. And to that end it was necessary that during her short life the arch-duchess should have the time to give birth to the child of another husband. She was married, therefore, to the wisest man in the kingdom, to the man best fitted profitably to carry on a regency and most able to promote peace in the disturbed state; and though she had no love for him, the princess showed all the gentleness and docility of her brave spirit in her acceptance of him as a husband. She was never unhappy.”

“Ah! how does your Majesty know that?” cried Clara, with a shudder.

“I know,” answered the king, “that every cross brings its crown. One can suffer and be happy. The young queen of whom we are thinking may not during the course of her weakly life grasp the

happiness she yearned for. She will have another and a sterner happiness based on the general good, and that will suffice to fill her soul."

At that moment the Earl Marshal was ushered into the king's room. He was ready for the sitting of parliament which was presently to begin, booted to the thighs, his powerful body gripped by the fine cloth of his white tunic, his heavy full-dress sword by his side, a-sparkle with decorations.

"I am ready for you, Zoffern," said the king in a friendly tone.

The Marshal did not utter a word. His herculean figure erect against the panelling, his plumed hat at the end of his right arm, his left hand resting on his sword hilt, proud, imposing, and venerable, he stood there, with his silver hair and the stiffness of a young soldier, confronting his chief.

"You will excuse me, Fräulein Hersberg," said Wolfran, "the Marshal requires me. . . ."

He rose, and Clara took her leave. The emotions that had shaken her were so strong that she remained, as it were, in a lethargy. And yet, as she passed in front of the old Colossus, bediamonded and covered with silver, gold, and silk, who embodied so thoroughly, in his alliance of pride and

almost religious awe, the theatrical but necessary rôle of the aristocracy, a revelation of what it all meant flashed upon her. Wolfran himself gained in dignity from being the idol of such a worshipper.

He gave her his hand without ceremony. "You will ponder a little, will you not, over what has passed between us to-day?"

Clara raised her beautiful, pained face to his. From that moment he felt that the woman's mind was his own.

### III.

AND a curious sort of intimacy sprang up between the prince and the socialist. Clara's mind did not yield without a struggle. Strangely enough, of the two Kosors it was the memory of the dead man which rose most impressively before her. Ismaël appeared to her now merely as the clumsy, inefficient scientist, the envious demagogue, the importunate lover. But the immortal figure of the old prophet, so pure and gentle, continually hung over the young woman, so that any unfaithfulness to it seemed odious to her. The last photograph of the father of Lithuanian socialism, showing his fine forehead and snowy beard, with the inspired smile upon his face, was now to be seen on the desk of her study, in the very heart of the royal palace. There was no hatred of royalty anywhere within the kingdom at that moment, which he had not set alight; there was no disturbance whose real originator he had not

been, there was no revolutionary principle but of his launching ; but all human kindness pervaded those noble features. And the eyes of his effigy never lighted upon Clara but she felt the tender sadness of his reproach to the very depth of her being.

Then, feeling that she was sliding hopelessly down the slope of royalism, she tried to recover, to regain a foothold, a place where she could rest in peace. She came back to the feverish literature of the Union as a person anæmic turns to nourishing meat. Her library contained the petitions, pamphlets, satires, and books with which Doctor Kosor for a period of fifteen years had inundated Lithuania : she set to work to read them.

Meanwhile the conspiracy in which Lord Bertie was so strong a believer was giving plenty of work to the police. Strict search was being made everywhere in the houses of alleged socialists, in the wretched homes of the late strikers, who had long since taken up work in the mills, in students' lodgings, in the houses of their teachers, and even at the residences of certain society ladies.

But if thick-headed, quiet commercial people derived a coarse satisfaction from such strong measures, the liberal and even the loyalist sec-



tions of intellectuals were often indignant. The memory of the riot in March was beginning to grow dim ; the government, it was thought, was going too far. Some hundred people had been arrested. The Socialist Union, deprived of its leaders, was stricken to the heart. A great trial was in preparation. Correspondence had everywhere been seized. But, dose herself with revolutionary intoxicants as she might, Clara could not raise herself to the point of excitement, and the steps taken by the police left her quite cold. Not a word did she read but sounded exaggerated and easily refutable by the clear, rather sceptical, and cold reasoning of Wolfran. When she did not go to see him, the remembrance of him came to her, invisibly subjugating her thought to his, refuting it, and bringing it daily more under his sway. Then she had recourse to one particular volume of special virulence, written against the power of royalty. She thought it might provide her with weapons against the intellectual thralldom in which she was enwrapped. It had appeared twenty years previously, and had been suppressed at the accession of Wolfran V., here withdrawn from circulation, and pitilessly confiscated even when found in private hands as the result of any raid by the

police. Its title was "Serfdom, or a Treatise on the Conditions of Peoples under Monarchical Government." The initiated had taken a special delight in the little volume ever since its suppression. Clara, thanks to much devoted trickery, had managed to preserve Doctor Kosor's own copy, in spite of the frequent searches operated by the police at the house on the heights. The shame incurred by obedience to a monarch was enthusiastically depicted in its every chapter. Infuriated condemnation, disparagement, and vituperation could no further go. Clara did not open the book with indifference. It was the favourite catechism of the man of whom she thought as a father. The publication of the pamphlet had been a deep joy to him. Its authorship even had frequently been attributed to him, though he himself really knew nothing of its anonymous writer, to whom his heart went out as to the son of his idea. What memories were wafted up to her from these yellowing pages! Clara thought she still saw the old man's ivory fingers upon them. With much fingering, certain places in the book had taken on the tone of ancient parchment, and a faded odour of the agitator's wooden pipe rose gently from them.

And now Clara re-read the little book to find a thousand exaggerations, which until now she had not detected. But she was a woman, and the vehement impressions that assailed her at the mere material contact of its leaves worked upon her more than any argument. Do as she might, it was to the Union that she belonged. There is no escaping the religion by which a man's soul has been formed. And she had the liveliest conviction that hers was still that same religion of humanity, whose patriarch old Kosor had been.

At this time it might quite well have happened that Clara, in sentimental revolt against the idea of kingship, might in some desperate struggle have broken through the net of Wolfran's influence, if he had been suffered to carry further his policy of mere intellectual persuasion. But circumstances snatched them both out of the area of merely speculative conversation, and in so doing managed to invest the friendship of this strangely assorted pair with an entirely new character.

One morning Madame de Bénouville made a surprise visit to Clara's laboratory. Her manner was more confidential than ever, and her faded eyelids were mysteriously lowered as she handed Clara a note: "From the king," as she announced.

It was not a sealed letter ; the note consisted merely of the following words, hastily scribbled on a card. "DEAR FRÄULEIN HERSBERG,—If Wanda asks whether she may have a last, sad meeting with the Duke of Hausen in your rooms, do not scruple to give opportunity for it even unknown to me. After all, it will be entirely unofficial. I shall shut my eyes to it. I would assuage the pain of their parting, if I could. Perhaps you can.—WOLFRAN."

"This is how things stand," explained the old lady, very mysteriously. "Prince Géo is to join the fleet to-morrow morning. He dined last night with their Majesties, along with the First Lord of the Admiralty and several high officials. The formal farewells have been said. It seems that our poor dear one proved stronger than was expected, and betrayed nothing of what was nearest her heart. But last night all her sorrow revived. She cannot believe that they are to be parted for ever at such a formal interview. She is in unspeakable anguish. The truth is I can scarcely recognize our child of yesterday : her heart has changed ; one would think a fever had laid hold of her. She says over and over again : 'I will see him once more ; I have the right—I have not told

him all. And then I want to have been held in his arms ; yes, I want that—to be in his arms a moment as if I were his wife.’ And I can scarcely recognize her eyes, so dark they are and sad.

“Well, then, she thought out an expedient a little ago, and it was that she should meet the prince in your rooms, whither she might summon him. She confided in me, who, God knows, am more utterly distressed than she is herself. But I knew you well enough to be in some doubt whether you would consent to play this secret and difficult part. I know his Majesty too, whose heart has shaped itself, I make bold to say, under my very eyes. I went to see him. I was sure of his decision ; and I was sure also, thanks to his consent, of getting your conscience out of a painful dilemma.”

“All that I can, I will do for her highness,” said Clara, moved exceedingly ; “if she desires my rooms she is free of them. What is my mode of action to be ?”

The old lady explained that Prince Géo, who was occupying the little Hausen Palace near Oldsburg, would come in his motor car at a summons through the telephone. He would come as though on a visit to Clara. It would happen to

be the hour of the archduchess's lesson, and so the two poor children would have a few fleeting instants together—before the end.

Clara was struck with secret admiration at the French instinct for love affairs which enabled the strict old lady, hesitating and doubtful in all else, and, in this case, scarcely recovered from the malady of a stricken heart, to devise so clear-headed a plan, and to go about the business of putting it into execution with such decision. But was not the furthering of such a love scene the very thing to excite the imagination of the romantically minded old Parisian?

The laboratory in the tower was chosen as the place of assignation. The three women chose it by a common instinct as the most dignified and innocent background for such a scene—a place whose very lack of intimacy went far to compensate for what mystery and suspicion might attach to their innocent scheming.

Clara began by awaiting the prince. She was to seem unprepared for his coming. She therefore kept on her working apron. The thought of the two sorrows which she was about to witness weighed upon her. Her usual composure had forsaken her: she actually broke a test-tube full

of acid over her overall, and the utter lack of interest she felt in the experiment she had begun made her determine to lay her work aside. Besides, it was not long before the door was flung open, and somebody came in, without even a knock. It was the prince, eager, panting, and pale, who, having only half understood the summons received, had come in an utter distraction, almost amounting to madness. His motor had been driven at a scandalous pace.

Drops of perspiration stood upon his handsome white forehead. He clasped Clara's hands, and asked breathlessly,—

"Well! well! tell me what has happened?" A gleam of hope shot through his fear-clouded eyes.

Clara explained the whole situation in a word :

"*She* wanted to see you again."

The love swelling in the young man's heart was the most touching thing in the world. He said to Clara,—

"Ah! Fräulein Hersberg, what a fate to have known such a girl only to lose her!"

She answered distractedly,—

"I pity your highness—oh! I pity you."

He sank upon the nearest stool and hid his

face for a moment ; the heaviness of his breathing shook his whole body. The sight of him filled Clara with pity, but she lacked the knack of binding certain wounds upon which a less exceptional woman would have been able to lay some balm.

"Be strong," said she, with all the sympathy in her heart reaching out to the young prince. "Life still holds much in store for you ; your highness has your mission in this world and must accomplish it."

"I have no strength left," he answered, sighing ; "I have no life. Wanda was strength and life to me."

She looked at him, so prostrate, unhinged, without vigour, downcast and conquered by this storm of love at twenty-five. And in one of those clear flashes which one sometimes has, she saw also the present state of Lithuania—its division into political parties, its enthusiasm for the latest sociological nostrums, its perturbation, its troubled yearnings, its uncertainty ; she saw it divided between its fondness for the past, and its thirst for renewal ; she saw it, in a word, afflicted with all the symptoms which in most nations presage revolution. And terror came upon her at the thought that, without warning, this dreamy, self-indulgent



sentimentalist and impressionable dilettante might have to turn statesman and determine the lot of that moving, changeable throng—that he might have to guide it, and even perhaps to curb its ardour. She shuddered. And the causes of Wolfran's severity became suddenly luminous. Let Prince Géo go on working at these pretty statues of his. . . .

"To have loved her ten years," he went on repeating, "to have waited for her, to have called out to her, to have held her in my heart." And addressing himself more distinctly to Clara: "Fräulein Hersberg, you can never know how we loved each other!"

She felt her eyes moisten. But at that moment they caught the sound of approaching footsteps and were silent. A glass globe full of water began to sing over the gas flame of its burner; a ray of April sunlight shot through the windows of the turret, and struck flashes of ruby and emerald from two bottles of salts that had strayed somehow among the glass retorts. Half a dozen battery-cells standing on the table diffused a sourness through the atmosphere of the room.

At last the Archduchess of Oldsburg appeared.

To Clara's astonishment she was in the grandest of all her dresses, one heavily laden with embroidery, whose weight defined those long delicate limbs of hers, the members of a classical virgin. Slowly she came. The foamy pallor of her hair looked like the purest light. Her features spelt only the fullness of joy. Her eyes were fixed upon her prince. She came to him radiant as for her wedding ; and doubtless it was an illusion of some such glad pageantry that she wished to play off upon herself. Her eyes expressed a singular and almost solemn gravity, but the lips were smiling, and said tenderly,—

“Géo !”

They came together ; their hands clasped ; they gazed at each other without a word.

“Yes, look at me,” said Wanda at last, and her voice was strange. “Bear away my image with you, bear it in your heart, let it be a part of yourself. For myself I only know . . .”

But the stoical effort had been too much for her ; her snowy neck bent under it and her forehead fell heavily forward on the young man's bosom as she sighed in a half sob,—

“Take me in your arms ; take me and press me to your heart, so that I may die.”

But as soon as she felt Géo's young arms encircling and clasping her body, she drew herself up and freed herself from him, and noticing that Clara had left them alone, she called her.

"Come," she said to her, weeping, "come, Clara, you have always been the confidante of our love."

And her quivering as of a frightened dove brought the prince back to his senses ; his desolation returned to him, and he collapsed again upon the low seat, hiding his face in his hands, and he said,—

"No, I cannot go, I cannot ; I will not now. I consented yesterday, for I did not know how much you loved me ; but to-day I know, and I will stay for you."

On a sudden the blood rose like a flame to the girl's face. She called out sharply,—

"Clara !"

And when the chemist, strangely encased in her white linen with its splash of acid, came back to them, Wanda addressed her imperiously,—

"Géo is going to stay. We love each other too much. Are we not right in giving ourselves up to each other, in spite of all they tell us ? Is not every living thing, no matter in what circum-

stances, its own master? . . . What are political considerations beside a love like ours? Is it not true, Clara, there is only one duty for me, and that is to follow Géo? Oh! my dear friend, help us; hide us—take us away from here. I do not want to be a queen! I do not want to be a queen!”

She fell sobbing into the prince's arms. He was pale and distraught. Anguish enwrapped him. He muttered,—

“I cannot go, I had sooner die.”

It was pity to see them clung to each other in pain and desperation, impelled by a simulacrum of energy, feigning to strive, but vanquished beforehand. An instinct had urged them to ask help from the freethinker, from the woman who in days gone by had stood so openly for individual liberty. But Clara, torn with doubts and grieved to the heart as she was by the scene, dared no longer sing the pæan of liberty. The dreadful comedy which was being enacted before her seemed to her to be in a higher sphere to which she had no right of access. Here before her eyes were two children deep in love with each other; but their love had so large a scope of influence, such vast issues depended on their coming together, that a sacred horror came over her at the idea of

giving them to each other. Besides, what could she have done? Was there not that serene will that kept them apart? How could she thwart its mysterious counsels?

She drew near to them, but knew not what to answer; and when they saw her standing by them they implored her anew.

"The sacrifice demanded of us is beyond our strengths; in the sight of heaven our souls are married; they cannot separate us. Oh! it is too cruel, too cruel; yes, it is too cruel."

Then Clara was obsessed by an idea which soon took complete possession of her. The two young people barely noticed her withdrawal to the adjoining room, which was her study. They gave no real heed to her absence. The tensest excitement possessed them, and they conversed only in the language pertaining to their madness. Wanda, suddenly become hard and passionate, had taken hold of the delicate, well-shaped head of her prince, and she was kissing his hair and saying,—

"And why should you not be king? I know no mind subtler and greater than yours. Isn't it just such an intellect as yours that will save the country by divining its necessities and satisfying them?"

He answered,—

“No, no ; let your father say what he will, I have no desire for the throne. But now we are nothing but two human beings in love. Let them leave us alone, suppose even we had to live by my work, and only by that.”

Wanda was admiring him in silence ; then in sudden ecstasy her changing eyes took on their former excessive tenderness,—

“How great you seem to me, my Géo . . . I would have you the master of the world. . . .”

And they smiled like children, forgetting for a moment, as they looked at each other, the sorrow of their parting. They had no care now for Clara, nor for the king, nor for Lithuania. They had passed into that beatific phase of love where all things have passed away, and where two living creatures are alone together in a universal paradise.

Suddenly, without their knowing the manner of his coming, the king was there before them, and Clara behind him, whiter than the white linen of her apron.

Wolfran was short of breath with his rapid race through the palace : it was just before the hour for his granting of audiences, and he was wearing

the hussars' pelisse, which he put on for certain of the more important of them. He was neither angry nor yet weakened by sympathy. When Clara's ring at the telephone had made him start at his desk, it was only with a physical surprise, for he had mentally foreseen that she would call him if the farewells of the young couple were to become unduly prolonged. And now he had come without either astonishment or anger, armed with an authority somewhat cold and almost automatic.

But at sight of him Wanda threw herself fiercely into the arms of her prince, clasping him by the shoulders and saying through her tears,—

“We are pledged to one another. They cannot separate us. It is too cruel.”

A little way off Clara stood impassive, without a movement and without a sigh.

Wolfran's look went slowly from one of the poor young lovers to the other, and finally settled upon the Prince von Hausen, who stood silent and trembling.

“Géo,” said he to him, in an affectionate voice, “I love and esteem you. I see in you a young artist of considerable intelligence, and I have so great a confidence in you that I am going to open

my heart. I have undertaken a great work in Lithuania, and that work, which I have begun with the help of an associate, the doctors and my people and yourself know well that I shall never finish. I desire my associate to finish it. And to accomplish that he must reign. You understand me, Géo ?”

The young prince, pale and with clenched teeth, made no answer.

“Between the dreamer and the man of action there is a gulf fixed, which none has ever been able to cross, Géo. It is the man of action who will obtain Wanda’s hand.”

The archduchess’s hands had fallen from the prince’s shoulders. Nothing of the bold and combative lover was left in her. The heavy, irresistible will of authority had fallen upon them, crushing their love and stunning them with its weight. And Clara, won over also by the magnetism of royalty and subdued to its power, was watching them, noting and observing. . . .

“Cousin,” the king went on, “I appeal to your loyalty to make an end as soon as possible of this impossible situation. Wanda is in pain, don’t you see ? Lend her some of that strength which is yours. Let your example imbue her with it.”



Then turning to the archduchess,—

“I shall not repeat all I have already said to you, Wanda ; you know how you are to help me in my work.”

There was a long pause, during which none of the four persons present even stirred. To Clara it appeared eternal. It was Wanda who broke the silence. Her long, thin body drew erect. She stretched out her hand to the Prince von Hausen, saying to him,—

“Good-bye, Géo.”

He seized it and pressed it against his contracted lips ; something brutal and fierce passed over his face, great tears rolled down his cheeks. By the time he had slowly crossed the laboratory and reached the door, a drop of blood was seen to stain the blue-veined hand of the archduchess. But her eyes were closed and she noticed nothing ; she was listening. The steps of the young man were still to be heard receding along the passage, and she listened with shut eyes. At last the sound died away. The water had stopped bubbling over the gas jet. Far down on the Waffenplatz a street boy was whistling the tune of the tender Lithuanian song,—

“L'ami de mon cœur est parti sur la mer.”

#### IV.

NEXT day Wanda took to her bed. In her pupil's absence Clara had plenty of time to herself. She read the papers eagerly, following the progressive decline of the Union. The searches made at Ismaël's place of abode, where possession had been taken of his correspondence by the police, had brought to light all the secrets of the society. The framework of the imaginary plot was clearly discernible. And, in truth, since Clara's going to the palace Kosor had become more violent than ever, and had been the means of leading his associates on to a steep slope of revolution. Compromising letters had been exchanged: phrases occurred in them about the necessity of militant action. A professor of Oldsburg University was imprisoned, along with Heinsius, Conrad, Johannès Karl, and Goethlied. Several foremen among the weavers were arrested, besides certain artists, a couple of students, and even some schoolboys.

These last, however, were set free as the inquiry proceeded. Some two score of the accused were committed for trial. The Upper Chamber, constituted as a high court, was to be under the presidency of the Earl Marshal. Oldany had shown his wonted ability in discovering among the diverse, scattered, and uncertain fervours of the adherents of the Union a network of ideas directed against the stability of the state. Failing some such discovery, these dreamers must pass through the police courts as mere political delinquents, and Lithuania would not experience the exciting shiver which a past possibility of revolution sends up the spines of all good citizens once the thrust has been ably parried by other means. Besides, educated and well-to-do people might keep their sympathy for the amiable Utopists unimpaired.

Sometimes, on learning of those arrests, Clara shuddered like a tamed lioness remembering the desert behind the bars of her cage. Then she would make her way straight to the man who now solved her problems of conscience—the man who one day, sure of his clear-sightedness, of the path he was taking, and of his strength to pursue it, had said, “I know where I am going.”

“But, Fräulein Hersberg,” he would say to her

patiently, "why will you insist on judging a government as if it were a private person? You ought to consider that as a king I work upon moral principles which as a private person I should reject. . . . That is why kingcraft is so difficult. One starts by being a natural-minded young fellow with an aristocratic education and generous notions, and from that one has to become an entirely exceptional being—to feel as if one were not born of a woman, to act as if one never had an idea before one was twenty. Ah! what a curious change it is, and what a subject for a psychologist to study. . . . I shall tell you all about it some day. . . . As for myself, I owe a great deal to the Duke of Oldany. He proved a great moral healer. There's a born statesman for you! . . . For such anomalies exist too. I wish to teach you to think less hardly of the government's action . . ."

And then Clara would take the submissive and meditative attitude of a listening admirer. Her grave and noble countenance shone contentment; her quiet hands clasped her knee; her black dress movelessly moulded her figure. And the king would proceed,—

"Humanity is not at all what the humanitarians call it; you are poets, and you portray it as a

beautiful field of blossoms. In reality vice crawls through the lump, passions ferment in it, and disorder seems its natural state of being. You must agree that, generally speaking, men are liars, haters, bloodthirsty, wildly ambitious, envious, robbers, and murderers. High souls like yours can scarcely conceive what iniquitous, sneaking, and criminal designs the common human mind is capable of devising, and what evil instincts the nation has to satisfy its desires. And when one looks fairly at the wickedness of human wishes, at their violence, and at the secret power which is at their call, at the pent-up spring within each individual, one is amazed that, taking it overhead, a certain relative order does reign in human societies. It is an exceedingly remarkable phenomenon. It shows the social instinct in the animal, an instinct which happily goes far to balance the ferocity of his egoism. Whereas you would say that all the fervour of the human heart tends to a general confusion, and that in all logic one should see men in accordance with their instincts—murdering, robbing, and destroying each other, burning each other's houses, executing continual vengeance, appropriating everything they covet in the possession of others—what one really observes is the very

opposite ; and, without loving one another overmuch, men seem to live, to get on well enough together in cities and in the nation as a whole. In the crowd evil energies are repressed, the forces of destruction do not find elbow-room, there is a great peace. And the whole cause of this well-being is a tiny and excessively fragile faculty which apparently counts for little in the individual, and which can only be really measured in a collective mass of people—to wit, the natural instinct of sociability guarded and encouraged by the laws. But let this delicate human attachment once come undone, let the charm be for a moment broken, and you will see men turn murderously upon one another. That is the story of all revolutions. And even in peaceful times the head of a state, who is responsible for the necessary maintenance of this order, can scarcely think without terror of all the rumbling menace underlying the tranquil surface of the humanity he governs. He is conscious also that at the slightest friction the silken thread of sociability may snap clean through, and hideous powers be loosened ; and so it is his duty to foresee it and take measures against it, to endeavour by every means in his power to avoid it. Yes, I maintain that all means are justifiable

to avoid social upheaval. One must choose the lesser of two evils. Any injustice is preferable to the cessation of the slightly deceptive, but most fruitful, calm which is the very condition of humanity's development. You speak of arbitrary arrest and of the punishment of people for merely holding certain opinions. But the socialist doctrines of the Union were just about to upset the already not over-stable equilibrium of society ; and if at such a time the human animal had ceased to feel the bit in his mouth, all would have been lost. It meant a riot of hatred. We had to act as we did, Fräulein Hersberg."

Often the objections to his arguments occurred to her long afterwards, when she was in her own rooms again ; then, recovering herself, she would write him austere, philosophical letters, which he received gladly, and even felt a pleasure in refuting in writing, since they could not meet daily. It was an especial pleasure to him to guide this exceptional woman in the way of what he thought was the truth, and to feel his intellectual ascendancy over her mind. He joyed in the inexpressible triumph of its subjugation. Throughout his day, whether he was hearing the reports of his secretary of state and appending signatures, whether

he was in discussion with old Zoffern, or reviewing his troops, or in his motor car beside the queen, his mind was always full of Clara. The remembrance of her dwelt in him without unsettling him. It was like one's mental vision of some cold, stiff Gothic figure of a cathedral saint with its spiritualized femininity, charming the senses and lulling them to sleep.

Clara's complicity with him, and the help which she had rendered him in finally separating Prince von Hausen from Wanda, had brought a gentler familiarity into their interviews. They had been witnesses together of the family drama, and she had played the part of a friend. Géo gone, Wolfran had thrown off all royal self-control, and clasping his daughter in his arms, had wept openly before the socialist. And since then she had no longer been merely an intelligent adversary whom one loves to persuade—she had penetrated into Wolfran's heart of hearts.

As the day for the trial in the High Court of the forty adherents of the Union drew near, there was a certain amount of excitement among the manufactories. *Union*, the socialist organ, bereft of its editor and principal contributors, had ceased to appear. But anonymous posters continued to



be placarded upon the walls every morning, full of coarse threats against the judges, the ministers, the Earl Marshal, and even the king himself. One day a bomb burst in the Place d'Armes before the Palace of Deputies. No one was hurt ; only a few windows were broken. An infernal machine was also found one evening in the main thoroughfare of the working district, lying damp and harmless in the gutter. It was thought to have been clumsily placed in the way of the royal motor car during the afternoon, and it was surmised that the catcher of a tramway car had pushed it aside. At court incidents like these revived the sense of dangers continually incurred by Wolfran. The idea of impending assault obsessed all imaginations. Every time the motor of the royal car panted and shook under the doorway, bearing away the sovereign with a growl of menace, anxiety clenched all hearts in a grip of lead. Was it not to death he was going ?

And Clara watched for his return.

She said to him one day,—

“Your Majesty should refrain from taking these outings, at least for some weeks.”

“Why, on earth ?” asked he, quite sincerely astonished.

She spoke to him of the peril with which some wretched madmen were environing his life.

"I am afraid for your Majesty," she murmured.

He smiled, thanked her, and looked hard at her. She was really perturbed, and her fine eyes were big with anxiety. And the concern of this commoner was grateful to him.

On another occasion she went so far as to say to him,—

"I understand it now ; there are certain cases in which repressive measures are urgent and necessary."

"Ah !" cried the triumphant Wolfran, "so you have got that length, and believe in order !"

And Lord Bertie, who was present, added,—

"It is not we who are making you say it, Fräulein Hersberg, remember !"

Bertie was rejoicing in secret over the return of the wanderer ; but it was in his own way, without astonishment, or excitement, or haste—as if it were something of which he had all along been perfectly sure. He knew that he himself had no merit in it. Only, with his untiring sense of practicality, he was doing his best to win over the archduchess's best friend altogether; and, thanks to his discretion, he was succeeding.

The wishes of all in Lithuania who had reason to be content with the régime for the time being were fulfilled, for the severity of the judges was great. The trial of the forty socialists lasted thirteen days. The whole country, to its most distant provinces, was agog with excitement, and followed it eagerly in all its stages. Von Zoffern's speech and his manner of directing proceedings, the brilliant ability of his examination of witnesses, made the trial an unforgettable one. Verily he was taking vengeance for a menaced dynasty, and, morally speaking, he extirpated its enemies. Young Conrad, for his subversive poetizings, got two years of confinement. Heinsius's moderation caused his acquittal. But the two thick-set calculators of the party, Goethlied and Johannès Karl, whose lives had been spent in calculations and statistics, and who, being merely guilty of having written down their dream in terms of arithmetic, seemed to be acquitted beforehand by the other-worldliness of their figuring, were the greatest sufferers. Their correspondence had been seized at Kosor's in the Judengasse, along with a newly prepared estimate which had been printed and circulated among the strikers as an encouragement to looting some days before Ismaël's public

demonstration. This circumstance gave the two unhappy statisticians the honour of having taken the principal part in the conspiracy, and of paying for Kosor's share in it even more than for their own. They were condemned to ten years' seclusion in a fortress. Those of the better class of professional men who were implicated were for the most part to suffer merely a year's imprisonment.

Clara was the first to hear the sentence. She learned its tenor from the king's own lips : he knew with what anxiety she was awaiting the verdict. It was nine o'clock, and she was coming back from her lecture, when Colonel Rodolphe came to tell her that his Majesty desired to speak to her for a moment. She was preparing at these words to go to the king, but the aide-de-camp stopped her. It was not his Majesty's intention to disturb her at this late hour ; he begged Fräulein Hersberg to receive him where she was.

And, in effect, a few minutes later the king did knock at Clara's door. She had scarcely had the time to take off her hat and gloves. She said to him,—

“How good of you, sir !”

“Dear Fräulein Hersberg,” answered he, “there is no goodness in my having allowed myself an hour

of happy liberty and pleasant conversation. I feared you might be painfully affected by the decision of the High Court. And I wished to give it you myself, with all the respect which I hold for your friendliness towards me as well as for your philosophical opinions." And then he added, caught up again into one of those impulses of light gaiety which brought back his youth, "My brain is worn out by such a day. And by coming to speak with you I have escaped the consultation which the Duke of Oldany and the Duke of Zoffern have been engaged in ever since dinner. That is all. You are not angry with me?"

She opened her fine, clear eyes, the eyes of a girl of sixteen, which age, without ever subtracting from their freshness, had slightly shaded with black. It was as if in this adult woman the brain alone, but not the soul, had ripened.

And replying to her look,—

"Your friends," said the king, "have been cruelly punished."

"Ah!" said she anxiously, "tell me."

He told her of the sentences of Conrad, and especially of Goethlied and Johannès Karl.

At first she was prostrated. These ten years of seclusion in a fortress seemed to her horrible. It

was all she could do to withhold her tears. She said at last,—

“They were both common folk, and utterly gentle ; they were goodness itself. One was an Oldsburg man, and the other came from the provinces by the sea. They were of an arithmetical turn, and used their gifts to further collectivist notions. They had no thought but to assure each human being of that which, according to their calculations, was the necessary minimum for the sustenance and pleasure of life. If only your Majesty had known them ! . . .”

“I did know them,” answered Wolfran.

“Oh ! When ?”

His gesture was vague.

“Once . . .”

She did not venture to go further, and asked,—

“And old Heinsius ?”

“I requested that he should be spared,” said the king. “His age made him at once too in-offensive and too venerable for exemplary punishment. I remembered Doctor Kosor and his dreary death in exile. And then also . . . I remembered some one who had been rather intimate with these two old men. It was a young prince that I remember, and he was fervent and idealistic.

Socialistic theories had intoxicated him. Your father spoke to him one day without an idea of his real station, seeing in him merely a follower more responsive than the rest."

The soft unpretentious glow of a china lamp, surmounted by a green cardboard shade, lit up the scientist's room, and in the full light of it on her desk there appeared in triumph the thoughtful portrait of the father of the Union. Some pine-wood shelving, with the odour of resin still hanging about, had been set up, and the many-coloured library of the revolutionaries, ever lovers of conspicuous bindings, stood ranged upon them with the method of a scientist.

And Wolfran, stretching out his arm, took the old man's photograph on Clara's desk. He held it in the palm of his hand, looking at it in silence. The eyes of the old apostle of freedom seemed to return the gaze of the king bent over him. After a pause Wolfran said sadly,—

"Poor Doctor Kosor !"

Clara, rigid with emotion, dared not understand. She was pale and trembling ; she clasped her beautiful hands, and murmured in a low voice full of fervour,—

"Oh ! the Union was beautiful ! How could

one but love it? It was the pure religion of human kindness ; every one of our brothers was ready to sacrifice all for humanity. Their yearning was unique and magnificent ; they desired happiness for men."

But Wolfran, casting down the photograph, drew himself up.

"No," he said, "no. The Union was not a beautiful thing ; only the truth is beautiful, and the Union's was a doctrine of error. Happiness is not to be found in material equality where the Union located it, and their religion was one of envy, and strife, and hatred. . . ."

"And yet I love it still," Clara confessed.

"You must forget it," said Wolfran.

She was trying not to break out, endeavouring implicitly to obey. Wolfran had never yet shown his power over her as he had that night in coming to see her, less as a friend than as a master. At his visit she felt an ill-defined pleasure, which was, nevertheless, such as to make her momentarily afraid lest the end of such visits should have come. Unconsciously she did her utmost to keep him by her, and to prolong for an indefinite period a series of speeches which gnawed at her heart and filled her with delicious pain.



"Only order is to be cherished, Fräulein Hersberg," answered the king.

Then she cast a desperate glance at her soul's father, whose portrait seemed to her in that tragic hour to be calling her to remembrance of him, to be beseeching her, and instinctively her hand laid hold of the little "Serfdom" book, which had its place close to her desk, as the dearly cherished relic of her former faith. But Wolfran, whose attention had suddenly been drawn by this movement, asked quickly,—

"What book is that?"

She was too proud not to vaunt herself, even under present circumstances, of a thing morally so precious, and though she vividly recalled the pitiless suppression which the volume had required to survive, she said,—

"Sir, it is the most intimate relic of my master's I have left to me. He admired this work intensely, and used to call it his breviary. How he used to read it. . . . Just look. . . ."

She opened the book and fingered its leaves. She showed him the yellow stains of the finger-marks that added to its value. Then she bent over it and pressed it to her lips, and shutting her eyes, she said,—

"I think I see him sitting in his wicker chair, smoke rising from the bowl of his pipe, which he used to hold by two fingers of that eloquent, clever hand of his. The other hand held the book as he made his comments on it aloud. Something of the charm and intellectuality of these evenings still lingers among its leaves. . . ."

Wolfran's features had hardened, his eyes were riveted to the cheap black cloth binding of the little volume, on which the title stood out in red letters : "Serfdom, or a Treatise of the Condition of Peoples under Monarchy."

Clara continued,—

"To myself it has been a source of strength and of austere joy."

The king reached forth his hand. Clara, all unsuspectingly, gave him the little volume, and he in his turn ran his fingers sharply and nervously through the worn leaves.

Then suddenly he said,—

"This book is not to be read, Fräulein Hersberg."

She started and sighed heavily, but made him no answer.

"It is not to be read, because you will find in it neither the serenity nor the coolness which

philosophical works demand. It was written in a feverish delirium. It is the relic of a fit of madness," and he passed the book nervously from one hand to the other, crushing it, ill-treating it, shaming it. Sometimes he seemed to hesitate, crumpling the cover with his two thumbs. "And how do you know that he who wrote it in days gone by would not have every line of it erased—would not net in, if he could, every evil thought of it, so that it might not go propagating itself in the minds of others? He would have it so; he would . . ."

The panting and torment of the man as Clara watched him was terrible to see; then suddenly he grew calm again, and said almost affectionately,—

"Look here, Fräulein Hersberg, are you willing that we, as two friends met here to-night, should perform a duty? The possession of this book is illegal; I cannot leave it in your hands, and it is far better that to-night . . ."

And standing tensely, he seized the open book and twisted it in sunder with a sudden motion. Clara smothered a cry. Then she saw a man beyond himself, plucking the leaves apart, tearing them wantonly, crushing them, and throwing them into the fire in shapeless handfuls.

Not a word came to her lips. Her breast rose and fell spasmodically under her hurrying breath. Her wide open eyes were fixed on the fire, which at first, disdaining the mass of paper, merely licked at it, but soon bit into it and devoured it slowly like a gorged monster. After which, when this relic of a great life vanished—was altogether consumed—two silent tears which she could not restrain formed on her eyelids and rolled down her cheek. The king was looking at her then. This eloquent witness of sorrow restrained, cruel but sweet, the submission to him of such a woman, affected him deeply. Seeking to excuse himself, he said,—

“I had the right to do it.”

He must then have appeared to her as something greater than truth itself, the lighthouse of spiritual safety, all-powerful, a secure soul, whose assurance was only made deeper by the fact that in his time he too had wandered in error. For she acquiesced without a murmur. She bowed her head. And the great Hersberg, finally conquered, her heart swelling with suppressed sobs, surpassed in grandeur all that the thought of Wolfran had ever been able to imagine, for she replied,—

“Yes, sir, your Majesty had the right.”

## PART FIFTH.

### I.

CLARA was handed a letter. On the envelope she recognized Ismaël's hand. Yet the post-mark was that of Oldsburg. She opened the letter and her countenance clouded with anxiety : a blank sheet was all it contained. But she remembered that formerly a device had been adopted by them, both as chemists and as persons suspected by the police. She went to the laboratory and held the sheet over the flame of a burner. A pallid yellow writing grew out of the paper. And Clara managed, half by reading, half by guesswork, to make out the following missive,—

“My dear, I must see you again. Come this evening to the cathedral at sunset. You will find me at the third side chapel, on the right hand side. Grant me that bliss.”

Clara was overcome. She fell heavily on to the nearest seat.

"He has come back!" she thought—"come back! . . ."

And the thought of it raised such a commotion in her soul that she could not discern the sentiment so moving it. Only one thing she saw clearly: the costly, hardly-gained calm which she had enjoyed for some weeks, ever since that evening on which she had given over her former independence of mind into the hands of him who was now its master, all that she was to lose. Free till that morning, answerable only to herself for her thoughts, she was calmly absorbing the new faith. Yes, she thought it right now that a nation should be governed, that one individual should be answerable for its destinies, that social betterment should come about without convulsions, in accordance with wise evolutionary laws, and even that an aristocracy should exist as the soil from which beauty, art, and the higher thought should spring. Sentiment, which is a woman's logic, and upon which her former faith had been founded, became, by the easiest of transitions, the foundation of her faith of to-day. And just when she had happily come into harbour from the distant voyage between

the two opposed creeds, and when she was lying there in uttermost calm and well-being, here was she confronted by the witness of her past, the man who claimed also to have a hold upon her soul.

He was returning. And what had she to tell him? Was she to prostrate him by the confession of her desertion? Such a course meant their estrangement once and for all, and the tearing away from him of the hope he had of her and by which the outcast lived.

Perhaps he was coming to claim her. She being pledged to him, he had every right to do so. She shuddered, covering her face with both hands. . . . And yet it never occurred to her not to answer his call. Making her plans for the day in her usual methodical way, she settled them instinctively with a view to going out in the evening. The afternoon passed in experiments performed in the laboratory with the archduchess.

As the sun was setting she left the palace. She skirted its railings to reach the Rue du Beffroi, and the cathedral of St. Wolfran appeared at the farther end of the street, rosy-gray, a massive front blocked out as a whole and relieved by its detail, consisting in its immense paradise of tiny saints carved into the pierced stone which covered the

façade from top to bottom. They stood ranked in battalions, superposed in semicircles in the arch of every doorway, ranged in every niche, scattered upon every clock-turret, erect upon every pinnacle. On the left the Gothic, and on the right the Renaissance, tower, both gigantic, sprang aloft into the white evening sky. It was the end of a day in May; a heavy, damp mist hung on the Oldsburg streets still lit by sunlight of dusty gold. Clara crossed the cathedral close, with its tangle of carriages and motor cars, went in under the darkened arch of one of the side doorways, passed the threshold, and immediately was in another world.

In the spacious nave of the cathedral, along the transept with its slim straight pillars, in the chair-crowded aisles, there reigned silence, coolness, and solitude. Not a human being was moving in that holy place, where twilight seemed eternal. The stained glass of the windows full of dark crimsons, of deep blues, of warm ochres, and of blackish violet poured in, to glow dim upon the flagstones. But above the giant structure of the organ the rose-window fronting the sun, as he sank dying behind the distant hills, was aflame with light.

In the freezing cold under the stone roof where



even her dulled step awakened echoes in the midst of the thousand repetitions of the worshipping bend of the arches, Clara thought for the first time with awed emotion of the God whose very name the two Kosors had never pronounced to her. Something of His majesty entered into her, and without well discerning why, she would fain have thrown herself on her knees before Him.

Great flags of the size of tombstones paved the place. Clara looked at them as she walked with bent head strangely burdened. She turned to the right. The side chapels piercing the walls with cavities made vague by darkness and of doubtful extent by the glimmer of their windows, gave a more mysterious sense of vastness to the great cathedral. Clara counted up to the third, and made her way into it, as into a house of fear and bondage. Its iron gate was open. An old and blackened picture between silver candlesticks adorned the empty altar. Clara searched its every corner with a sinking heart. But she was the first to get to the spot assigned. Then she leant up against the ashlar worn with age, and waited, gazing out into the depths of the nave with eyes now accustomed to the darkness.

Gradually her gaze was drawn upwards, seeking

to pierce the heights of the vault. She followed the stiff upspring of the pillars, whose branches, like those of trees in a forest, rose from their trunks into the dim assemblage of arches in the height. And the inverted hull, up to which so many prayers had risen, seemed to her, in the dimness of its shadows, so extraordinarily distant that it gave the impression of an inaccessible firmament of stone.

Meanwhile, the sound of approaching footsteps rang through the church, and a priest passed before the gate. Then came an old woman, and behind her silence fell again. An instant later a man drew near, and as he stopped on the threshold of the chapel, Clara, in order to escape notice, assumed the attitude of prayer. He came in. She veiled her face. All at once she felt the breath of the stranger upon her cheek, and a murmur was in her ear,—

“Here I am ; I have come back.”

She looked up, and quite failed to recognize Ismaël in the fellow she saw before her. Long bearded he was and wan, far older, emaciated, and miserably dressed. But when once they had looked each other in the eyes, all Clara's feelings to the contrary, the feelings which made the

agitator's return so unwelcome to her, were whelmed in one instinctive glow of pitying sympathy for him in his utter sadness.

"You see," said he, "I have returned in spite of all."

And she answered, taking his hand in hers,—

"Oh, my poor, poor friend!"

She got it into her head that they were being watched, and she took him by a side door out into a dark lane which wound between the cathedral apse and the palace of the archbishop. There not a soul was to be seen. Steep streets went down from it to the riverside. Kosor was all submission. Night had fallen, and the two walked side by side through the silence that lay upon that part of the town.

It was strange, but this dreamer of a discredited dream, this man of action with tied hands, this broken agitator, had not suffered diminution in defeat; rather, indeed, he seemed to have grown out of the ashes of his party. In these dark days of misfortune a fire glowed in him which the sunshine of the days of his leadership had made dim. Now that all the other sources of light about him had been extinguished, this flame burned higher, and seemed to be devouring the frail body

of the dreamer, giving forth a spiritual heat which was not to be gainsaid.

"You thought I was cast down and discouraged," said he to Clara, pressing her gloved fingers. "Never believe it. Are the ills of humanity relieved? I should say not. Is its thirst after happiness quenched? I should say not. Have the extremes of wealth and destitution been abolished? Again, I should say not. Well, then, what right have I to be discouraged? Discouragement is the sort of rest in which the weak indulge. I belong to humanity. I know that I hold the key to its bliss; and I mean to open wide the gates that lead to it."

These words, "the extremes of wealth and destitution," which were the kernel of the revolutionary doctrine, and from which all the demands of the socialists were logically deduced, rang like a thunder-clap through Clara's brain. They were the fundamental expression of the faith in which she had grown up. Once more there flashed before her eyes a vision of the sordid misery of the workmen, and simultaneously with it came another vision of the glittering trickle of diamonds on the shoulders of the ladies-in-waiting at the festivities on the ice. What had Wolfran done,

after all, with all his worship of order, in furtherance of social equity ?

"Have a care," she admonished his rival ; "suppose you were caught . . . look at Goethlied and Johannès Karl ; be prudent."

"Prudent !" he repeated with magnificent scorn ; and he went on to explain that, having been lodged, sheltered, and concealed for several days back in the house of a friend she knew, a teacher of mathematics in the Royal College of Oldsburg, he ran few risks, venturing out only at night, and meeting no one. For the moment his work consisted entirely of meditation and study : he was casting about for means to reorganize a collectivist society, and he was also occupied with his preparations for that which must be done.

"And what is that ?" asked Clara.

He made no reply, but his white teeth gleamed cruelly as he smiled.

And then immediately he said,—

"But what of yourself ? Have your sufferings not been unbearable ? Oh, how sorry I was for you ! And yet I applauded my own wisdom in getting you into a place of safety during these hours of disturbance, which even I did not foresee would be so stormy as they turned out to be.

What anguish it would have been for me to know that you as well as our brothers and myself were being hunted by the authorities from hiding-place to hiding-place. But now tell me, have you had no annoyances, or humiliations, or pains to undergo?"

Clara's reply came coldly,—

"They have been kindness itself to me."

He continued, nothing abashed,—

"Well, so much the better. For you must go on living in that den for a time. That must be, my Clara, and you must continue to centre all your energies upon your scientific work."

He was not the fervent, commanding, passionate person she had come to meet. He seemed to be making no more claims upon her. He had resumed his sweet brotherliness and seemed mantled in serenity. The restraint of his speech drew her nearer to him. She liked him the better for his mastery over himself. It seemed to add something sacred to his greatness. He continued,—

"Be my sympathetic well-wisher, sustain me with your smile and your affection. My work is to begin anew; and I have new strength. Two years shall not elapse before we have given the world an example of a society based on humane love and brotherly kindness; and then ours shall be an

experiment beneficial to other nations as well as to ourselves. They will imitate it. And so human beatitude shall spread from land to land. I love you now as I have never loved you, Clara, but I am a man living beyond life and outside myself ; I belong entirely to humanity."

He sighed ; then reverting to the tone in which he had been used to speak to her when she was quite a tiny girl, and he a youth full of wonder and admiration,—

"The sight of you has made me stronger. I feel it. I simply had to see you again, Clara. You are my fatherland ; it was from you that I was in exile. My work could have been done abroad, almost all of it ; but you were not there, and that is why I have returned. Now that I have seen you—now that my mind has been bathed in your gentleness—I shall work more clearly and consequently."

"What are these plans of yours ?" asked she again. A certain damp coldness of the air on their faces gave warning of their proximity to the embankment. Dreading its lights and crowd, they went back by the way they had come. The narrow street climbed steeply. At its top there appeared, at an angle, the cathedral of stone, with its giant

buttresses leaping at once from base to roof, and the rose-window of the transept irised with lights from within.

"I have held to Goethlied's plans," said Ismaël, under his voice. "They are good, and I am proceeding upon them. But the active part of our programme I am about to change. There is one man who stands in the way of the furtherance of our work of love : emboldened by his first success, he will strengthen his prohibition. He is the one obstacle, the everlasting barrier, against which our effort will break helplessly. The line to be taken is clear. That man must be removed. How, ~~exactly~~, is at present beyond me, but . . ."

"Which man?" asked Clara, and her voice grew hard.

"Do you not know him?" growled Ismaël. "The man who, in cold blood, bade his soldiers shoot down the starving who had come to him to ask for fires and bread—the man who is sowing discord throughout the land, who is depriving me of liberty, who casts the noblest lovers of humanity into fetters, who has stamped out, as one stamps down an ant-heap, the society of the noblest minds, the tenderest hearts, the most generous beings that have ever met. It is he, of course, the self-satisfied



ruler, who by his coarse authority has bent twelve million freemen into slaves. . . .”

He could not see her face at that moment, and it was that which saved her. He awaited her reply—a cry of surprise, of emotion, of womanly weakness at the notion of a murder; but she never opened her lips. Still, he felt called upon to argue out his idea and endeavour to make it acceptable to her.

“For long I held the doctrine that the greatest consideration was to be shown for every individual life. But over in Germany, in solitary meditation, I have remodelled a number of my ideas, and a new morality has grown out of them. I have come to see things more simply and directly. I see the truth now through an atmosphere of perfect lucidity. Individual existence is nothing . . . only societies count. You have only to look at these remarkable insects, the bees, to see that, or at any other animals which live in communities. Human history teaches it to us also, and with the lapse of time we are coming to understand how infinitesimally small the regard is which we owe to individuals in a race. To destroy an individual who lies athwart the interest of the community is more than allowable: it is a Duty. Killing is not at all what a certain philosophy . . .”

"If you were to commit murder," said Clara in smothered tones, "all would be over between us. I should loathe you, and the very sight of you would be hateful to me."

"Ah! Clara," sighed he, with resignation, "I knew well enough that your feelings would cry out against it at first. But reflect upon it, I beg of you, as I have been reflecting myself, and you will see that you are bound to come to the same conclusion as I."

With a terrible effort she said,—

"My mind, at least, is not diseased, and it is made up once and for all; I had sooner we never met again than that you should have such criminal thoughts . . . suppose even it meant that we were obliged to sever relations here and now."

They stood still, scrutinizing one another. The light of a neighbouring shop window was reflected in lightning flashes from their eyes, but their features remained in deep shadow. Kosor regained possession of Clara's hand without seeing the tense anger that was hardening her beautiful face.

"Listen to me, my dearest. I love you as no man has ever loved a woman, but I am in the grip of a power so great—ever so imperiously commanding—that I am no longer my own master. No, not

even to hold you for ever in my arms, were it granted me at this moment, could I decline the duty which has been laid upon me. You understand ; not even if you promised me that you yourself should be all mine . . . and to-night . . . even if at this moment you . . .” and his breath came quick and hoarse, like the panting of some steed reined short in at a gulf’s mouth. The chill of his frozen hands struck through the leather of her glove.

And he muttered, turning his head aside,—

“Oh ! but to lose you . . . and that for the sake of our worst enemy !”

She understood that she had lost her hold upon the man ; that his friendship for her, his remembrance, and even his desire of her, were all merged in the single thought that obsessed him. Then, for a moment, she lost her head. Wolfran was condemned. But whence came that mad longing in her to save him, to make a rampart for him of her body, as a mother would for her son ? Yes, her instinct amounted to that : let them take the very substance of her being to enwrap, and guard, and preserve that unique life ! She perfectly realized that her vague impulse to self-sacrifice was the strongest which until then had flustered the calm

of her soul, and without taking the least pity on Ismaël for the torture he was enduring before her eyes, she said to him,—

“You are dishonouring the Union. I shall never be yours. It is far better that we should never meet again.”

He was panting, with hands joined like a child's, and she heard him imploring her,—

“O Clara ! O Clara ! ”

She thought she caught signs of weeping in the short, hard catches of his breath, and it rejoiced her that it should be so, for at that moment her soul abhorred him.

“It cannot be true . . .” he was saying over and over again, “it cannot be true. To have loved you so and to be so rejected ! Your beautiful, clear mind will return to me. You will understand that this one death is needful, or else they have changed you . . .”

She was about to part from him ; but she made a last attempt. Her hands rested a moment on the conspirator's shoulder, and she said, in a low voice,—

“I would not have you a criminal, my friend. . . .”

He remonstrated.

"How is it you do not see that the love that fills me is as vast in compass as the whole of human kind? My happiness and my passions are no longer involved. But the city of the future shall be built . . ."

"Ah!" said Clara, making as if to leave him, "I have come out to-night to see a madman."

He made up on her, clinging desperately on to her garments.

"Leave me," said she to him.

"Do you no longer love the people? . . ."

"I cannot love a murderer," answered the young woman, and her strong hand unclasped his fingers one by one as they tore at the cloth of her sleeve.

Then these two tragic shadows parted. The man remained standing where he was, thunderstruck, under the towering cathedral, while the woman hastened, shuddering, towards its portal. And even as she was pushing the door of the tambour where the noises from without grew muffled, a sigh reached her, the groan of a superhuman pain, the last raucous breath of one in the pangs of moral death,—

"Clara! . . . Clara!"

She pushed her way into the church to escape

the unhappy wretch. Bright lights were shining in the gilded chapel of the Virgin in the apse where vespers was proceeding ; the arches of the choir stood silhouetted against that background of intense light ; the quiet, pure music of a psalm rose on the small, long-drawn notes of a harmonium . . .

## II.

WHEN the due period of her young sorrow had elapsed the archduchess had to appear again at the queen's evening receptions, where the Duke of Oldany commenced his courtship. Indeed, with regard to that, no further scene took place between her and her father. There was a tacit understanding between the three persons. Géo being disposed of, the Irish prince had no rival as the official aspirant to Wanda's hand. These were matters long foreknown, and settled, as it seemed, by a silent fatality.

Clara had now become one of the most intimate frequenters of those evening gatherings, where she was treated with quite as much friendship as the little Czerbich woman, and with more respect. Her conversion brought the royalist party a recruit whose importance was such that it could not but be hailed with gladness. Of course it was the discreetest of conversions, untrumpeted and un-

sung by either of the parties concerned. The royal family, however, now distinguished its relations with the scientist by the shade of affection which its graciousness had heretofore lacked. As for Clara, she was more herself with them, and that was all. Besides, it was the rarest thing for politics to be spoken of at Gemma's. The great Hersberg would, if the occasion had presented, have warmly defended the Utopian generosity of the Union. But she would have done it intellectually, after the manner of poor Prince Géo, the eclectic dilettante. The strong machinery of monarchy working before her eyes, with the regularity, intensity, and power of all efficient mechanical apparatus, had Clara's dumb acquiescence.

The estrangement between herself and Kosor left her free, and gave her scope for new ideas. But then what a terror of anxiety was hers from that time forward! When Wolfran came to the little gatherings with that full appetite of his for what amusement was going, with that lightness and gaiety which misled one as to his real gravity of spirit, she looked at him in silence and thought of the danger lurking in the shadow behind him. Would it be bomb, bullet, or dagger? She burned with anxiety to say to him,—



"Sir, take more heed to yourself." But had she not said it often, and had he not always laughed at her for her pains? She always thought, "I am seeing him perhaps for the last time." And her friendship for him grew tenderer, more anxious, and more delightful. "There is nothing so beautiful in the world as friendship," she thought to herself.

And since, without knowing of Kosor's regicidal designs, all the persons present were a prey to a similar anxiety, it often happened that such attemptings of monarch's lives were the subject of conversation. Then there would be a ringing in Clara's ears, her heart would beat thick. She would keep silent, listening eagerly to the words which gave the visions of her brain a cruel consistency. As for the king, he merely laughed and joked about the whole thing. She said one day,—

"It is no jesting matter, sir, your Majesty's life is gravely threatened."

"I agree with Fräulein Hersberg," cried the queen. "One may be as brave as one likes, but I do think, Wolfran, that you are far too foolhardy in facing the prospect of so horrible a death and of the unhappiness of those who love you."

These words disturbed Clara exceedingly. The

king answered that he could never make up his mind to avoid a possible danger at the cost of a whole life of imprisonment within doors. But Clara, who had her eyes fixed on him with the smile of a woman half asleep, was listening to the sound of the word "Wolfran" echoed in her heart. That name appeared in all the newspapers of Europe, stood in high relief upon the coins, was carved upon buildings and blazoned upon proclamations ; it filled the country, it was in every one's mouth whether in love or anger, and now she was hearing it for the first time pronounced at home by an anxious wife to the man and not to the king. He was no longer "his Majesty," the august personality, the symbol of power, almost an allegory. He was Wolfran, a soul greatly knowing in all human misery, sensitive to all the delicate emotions of the heart, a prey to all violence. . . . And the queen had spoken of all who loved him. . . . Who did love him ? The people. But the queen had not thought of the people ; she had meant a small group gathered around him, not even the court, not even all his intimates, a few persons only ; those who, if that noble body which high thought imbued were brought back one day to the palace white as marble and crimsoned with

blood, would be plunged into sorrow unfathomable ; she meant herself, the archduchess, his dear, motherly Bénouville, and whom besides ? Who loved Wolfran ? “ I do,” thought Clara, “ I who am in the widest, finest, and purest sense his friend. No one has ever understood him like me. Out of the intellectual friendship which had grown up between us he has brought a union of thought, and it has so turned out that I have evolved even as he did himself ; our minds are twin minds ; no one has come so near him as I. Ah ! this friendship does indeed set me amongst those whose souls would mourn in ashes at his loss. He is my sun. What if he were to disappear . . . to disappear ! . . .”

And with her eyes fixed upon him, with the simplicity of a child and the passionate fervour of a woman, she said, before the half score of persons present, without for a moment dissembling her mystical tenderness,—

“ Yes, your Majesty does not think enough of those who love him. . . .”

On the other hand Clara was unable quite to forget the thirty years of generous brotherliness during which Kosor and she had had everything in common, when their thoughts, their affections,

their possessions, and their dreams had been as of one person. They owed themselves altogether to one another. A woman may once have loved, and may allow the image of him whom she no longer loves to fade entirely out of her mind, but a sister can never uproot the memories left in her soul by the man whose childhood has been mingled with hers. The brotherly ascendancy is in such a case too strong for the traces of it ever to be effaced. Clara had been far too deeply involved in her sisterhood to Ismaël for her preoccupation to cease so abruptly. She knew that he remained to all intents and purposes a prisoner in the professor's house, venturing out only after nightfall or not at all, but she knew also that he had his little following of admirers—young men, students, writers, republicans, or journalists, who met in secret to adore him. His exile and the condemnation hanging over him, as well as the risk he ran in thus triumphing in Oldsburg, were bound, taken along with the name of Kosor, to raise him in the eyes of his adherents. She could have no doubt that, surrounded as he was by these youths over whom his riper age was beginning to lend him a certain authority, he was teaching his doctrine to them. And Clara was constantly questioning her-

self regarding the plans they might have made and the notions fostered in these revolutionary discussions. A pamphlet which appeared about this time shed some light upon the object of her surmises. Clara could not but attribute its authority to the man whose unhinged reasonings were keeping her in such an agony of anxiety. With that easy tendency of the sociologists to write upon any and every subject, this producer of gold and reformer of society, this equalitarian philosopher, now began the study of what he had denominated to Clara as "The Social Insects." He returned to the notion upon which he had touched one evening in the shade of the cathedral. The collectivism which suited ants seemed to him pre-eminently adaptable to the case of men. And such a lyrical ardour, such a force of conviction were spent on the work, that despite the special state of mind it denoted, it did not leave the reader unmoved. The book had a considerable success. The better sort of public bought it eagerly. But Clara, knowing the murderous doctrine which had been deduced from the facts set forth in the little book, knowing as she did the conclusions which the author drew from his doctrine of individual nullity, felt a sort of rage within her at its freakish success.

Sometimes she said to herself: "It would only need one imprudent act for him to get arrested. Of course he would suffer, but no more than Goethlied and Karl, who were all gentleness—and once he was got rid of, the life of a man would be safe. . . ." But she durst not let her mind dwell wholly on such thoughts.

The summer months came at last. Politically speaking, there was a dead calm. The ebullitions which the reform of the tariff had caused in all the parties in the state had died down of itself. Commerce had resumed its normal activity after a momentary stoppage caused by the strikes. The harvests promised well. The price of bread would have fallen by winter. Lord Bertie was now frequent in his absences from court. No one seemed to know the object of his journeys. But then he was the discreetest, most silent of persons, a sort of phantom. As one scarcely remarked that he had disappeared, so his return never caused the slightest surprise. Oldsburg was becoming hot and noisy, and the king began to long for his annual sojourn at Château Conrad.

It was a much diminished household that made the journey, for the summer residence was a model of dainty compression. The queen took with her

her Mistress of the Robes, Madame Czerbich, and the Countess von Thaven. The Zofferns stayed on at Oldsburg, nominally because of the last session of the chambers, but in truth because the extreme simplicity of court life in the country was fraught with cruel shocks to their tenderest sensibilities. Madame de Bénouville was in attendance upon the archduchess, and that was all. But one day, with the familiarity which Gemma had adopted as her distinguishing quality, the queen fingered the black cloth of Clara's dress and said,—

“That's very hot stuff to wear in the country, Fräulein Hersberg; you must order a lighter dress than that for Château Conrad.”

And in answer to the young woman's astonishment,—

“Of course, we are taking you with us. You look anæmic; the king was saying so only yesterday; and the change will do you no end of good. You have not been officially invited? Faith, I thought it was an understood thing that you should be there. . . . Wanda can't get on without you nowadays, and it is the king's delight to have discussions with his downright political opponent.”

And so Clara left with the rest for Château Conrad, and life there seemed to her life in an

enchanted castle. For the first time she was really enjoying, really and selfishly enjoying the ease, sweetness, and intoxication of life. So many bitter thoughts, narrow principles, and pictures of poverty had surrounded her childhood and youth ; so cold and material an environment of laboratories, garrets, cafés, and libraries had constrained the scientist's already none too spontaneous imagination, that the poetic vision of this white palace, built in the most beautiful garden in the world, wholly transported her. She tasted the full delights of summer in a rare coolness among shaded lawns or by the blue lake where the larches, firs, and silvery poplars were mirrored. She got to know the freshness and grace of mornings in the park when nature awakened. At midday the burning mirror of the lake shot back a thousand suns. In the distance beyond the thick clumps of oaks appeared Oldsburg, atingle with light ; the slate roofs flamed, the spires and clock towers and cupolas were white as blinding chalk, and the cathedral spire shot up, oxydized' and gleaming amid the scintillation of the town. It was then that the desire came upon one for the soft comfort of the groves, the humid shade, the velvet of the moss, and the cool floor of pine needles. But in



the evening it was a joy to saunter on the gold of the gravel walks with their borders of geraniums ; the clumps of trees seemed lighter and less thick ; a blue mist made them look vaguer and sadder, and the castle, with its columns and balusters and its Greek portico, stood in a rosy glow, deceptive as to distance.

Sometimes a young princess would cross the lawns with her trailing dress and that sad and graceful gait which is that of the noble ladies of old tapestries. She was a queen to be, and her forehead was bowed with thought and her heart heavy with grief. Or else it would be a tired-looking soldier in undress, who would seat himself with a book in the shade of the great trees. There he would read or dream, his eye fixed upon visions of his own ; and he was a king in being, careworn, wilful, and a poet. . . . Then Clara, in whom the intimacy of their sojourn together was encouraging a certain familiarity, would come to join him. He would ask her to sit near him, and there would follow long talks, in which the destinies of a people would be settled, or else delightful silences in which they breathed in the peaceful joy of their surroundings.

Within the castle the queen was closeted with

Count Thaven. It was her whim to practise economy, and she caused accounts of the royal household to be laid before her ; she required that for the evening meal the household should be content with the vegetables produced in the garden. They all had supper together at their Majesties' table, and when the weather was very hot Wolfran asked laughingly that the table should be set outside, for all the world like any middle-class householder in Lithuania. On the terrace the heat of the air was oppressive. The servants lit great lamps with opaque globes. And Lord Bertie then sat watching the mad flight of the moths rushing and striking against the glass. The good queen was proud of her simplicity, and would say with the utmost gravity,—

“Well, Fräulein Hersberg, you see and can judge us, and you are witness that not a weaver of the city will have supped to-night more cheaply than we have.”

But a sort of sensuality was filtering into Clara's usual gravity ; she scarcely tasted the dishes set before her ; she drank deep breaths of the country air ; the evening languor sank into her spirit ; her nature was lulled into a half sleep. If the king spoke to her she started like one awakening

out of a deep slumber. The chatter round the lamps was vague and frivolous. Bertie and Wanda, seated together, had nothing to say to each other. Long after the meal was finished the company lingered on.

One evening a delicate slip of a moon rose in a sky of crystalline clearness over the tip of a dark cedar. The archduchess, shaking her dress of plain linen, left the table, and went to lean upon the balustrade of the terrace, whence the dark leaves were to be seen shivering to silver in the breeze. Clara joined her at a sign. The young girl's eyes seemed strangely tragic that evening; they were defiant, shadowy, and hard. She said to Clara,—

"I have a fancy. I want to walk out with you in the moonlight."

Clara remembered having seen those same eyes and having heard that voice once before on the morning when Wanda had been torn for ever from the arms of poor Prince von Hausen. An excitement hitherto unknown inclined the scientist to a tender sense of pity. She answered affectionately,—

"As you wish, dear princess."

"Yes," said Wanda again, and her tone was a command, "but we shall not be alone."

And she called out,—

"Bertie. . . ."

There was a general movement of surprise, for it was the first time that the princess had so familiarly addressed the duke.

The latter rose in his place.

"Bertie," said she, "come along with us ; I want us three to take a poetic walk together."

The bitter singularity of her tone seemed to lash the Irish prince. A momentary frown contracted his forehead. Wolfran, sitting at the table and smoking, turned slowly round to watch the curiously assorted trio slowly recede.

At first not one of the three spoke at all. The archduchess walked straight before her between the Irishman and the scientist. She hung her head, and she had that mask-like countenance of her less happy days which made one doubt of her youth. On every side of them the park stretched away under the light of the moon ; the melancholy voices of the birds and insects of the night came to their ears. Presently the young girl raised her head and said,—

"Listen : can you hear the song of a nightingale ? I should like to go where a nightingale is singing."

"The nightingales have stopped singing in these days," said Lord Bertie.

Wanda smiled ironically, and concluded,—

“I should have guessed that. But let us go by the path round the lake.”

It was a very narrow one, and they were obliged to walk in single file. The archduchess went ahead, and as Clara followed she heard her humming cruelly in the silence, for the greater mortification of the duke, the old folk-song, at once so poignant and so sweet,—

“L'ami de mon cœur est parti sur la mer,  
Étoile scintillante qui le regardes,  
Pourquoi sembles-tu pleurer ce soir ? ”

It was clear that the mysterious night and magnificence of warm nature, which even at that late hour was only half asleep, were working in secret upon the nervous susceptibilities of the child. A yearning was in her to live her dream fully ; and Géo's embrace had returned to her mind ; she was suffering. To the left the quiet water of the lake glistened like shot silk under the moon ; to the right, thick clumps of rhododendrons bore their large bunches of pale flowers, and from the grass of the hillside, newly mown that morning, the night air came laden with sweets.

They were passing a place where the path climbed a little eminence overhanging the water ;

narrow it became and narrower, and the murk of the night made the way almost dangerous.

"Take care, your highness!" said Lord Bertie in his authoritative way.

Wanda turned round with a malicious smile on her lips,—

"Well, suppose, after all! . . ."

They had reached the top of the ascent. Far below them the water was lapping among a tangle of water plants, and the archduchess was playfully stirring the broken earth and gravel where the path crumbled into the depth. The duke was watching her with a singular look on his face.

"Yes," she went on, making the danger of her amusement even more theatrically evident, "suppose even that the insignificant thing that I am should disappear down this cleft to-night, where would be the harm?"

Clara clasped her firmly by the arm, horror-struck by the vision. The duke still stood silently watching her. Wanda stood high above the silvery water, elf-like in her pallor and slimness. Her delicately moulded head shone in the moonlight; her well-developed forehead seemed of fine marble, and to-night it looked broader than usual, while her eyes had the fresh brilliancy of two gems. Her

long hand was extended towards the lake in an almost heroic gesture. And the inscrutable person standing beside her without a word knew that shortly he would have the right to clasp that wild head between his hands, the right of a master over that young life. If Clara on her side had until then breathed only the air of chemical laboratories, he on his had never lived but in the great laboratory of politics, where all his energies had been concentrated. And now this most exquisite and delicate girl was plighted to him, and he saw her shuddering and pained in the moonlight, between death and the thrill of nature on a summer's night. . . .

"Wanda," said he, in a voice which none had known him to use, "you have no enemies here; why do you speak like that?"

"Ah!" said she, resuming her customary gentleness, "you must pardon me, but I have so little desire for life . . ."

"Do you think," added he in low tones, "that you lack value for one who has some right upon your soul?"

She in her turn looked upon him in amazement. Upon his features she descried an emotion utterly unexpected. Was it possible that the man who sat

coldly in his office creating famine and abundance, commanding volleys to be fired, putting his sentences in the mouths of judges, inflicting the pains of imprisonment or death, was it possible that he could sometimes be moved ?

The duke turned towards Clara,—

“Fräulein Hersberg,” said he, “she loves you tenderly, do tell her that she has no enemy here to-night.”

“I know well enough that I have no enemy,” sighed Wanda with joined hands and seeming to be all weighed down with heaviness, “but I am so afraid of life !”

Clara and the foreigner exchanged glances ; both were full of pity for the poor child so sacrificed ; they understood one another. But the compassion in Clara's tender, feeling heart went out somewhat also to the unfathomed person to whom happiness only showed itself as a mirage. It was impossible to remain unmoved before a girl like Wanda ; and there he stood knowing that she would one day be his, but that she would prefer to die.

“My dear princess,” said the noble Fräulein Hersberg, with the ingenuity of a woman upon whom sentiment has laid its hold, “the Prince



of Oldany wishes me to tell you that you have in him a friend, your best, loyalist, most faithful friend, the friend most deserving of your confidence."

"My trust you have, Bertie," replied Wanda, smiling sadly to the prince. "But you must take me as I am with all my faults; you are bound to think of me as a child, to disdain me a little, and perhaps to be irritated . . ."

He shook his head without answering. But he enfolded her in a look persistent and sad. At last she held out her hand to him, sighing.

"My poor Bertie!" said she.

\* \* \* \* \*

Clara was the sole witness of this joyless engagement, joyless indeed and hopeless, but not without its grandeur. The two exceptional beings who were promising to belong to one another without love's jurisdiction were united in high aspiration; they had in common a pure, austere desire for a people's well-being. In the folds of her wedding-dress the delicate young woman would bring the duke a nation. On that solemn night Lithuania was betrothing herself to the able statesman, who was to be her guide.

They returned late and in unbroken silence;

words spoken would have seemed too paltry to give expression to what lay locked in their bosoms. But the archduchess had resumed her gentleness and had entered into peace. Her heart had found its future avocation and had made submission. Peace and order reigned in her soul.

Some days later the Oldsburg papers began to speak of the official betrothal of the archduchess and the Duke of Oldany. The country at large gave the news a varied reception. People were astonished by the choice of a prince not of the blood royal; his age quelled enthusiasm, his face had no charm for women. Nevertheless, his part at court, until then obscure, derived a certain official status from the election made of him. It was true that the power of his secret counsels did not openly appear, but something of his worth did.

Little by little rumour fixed approximately upon the date of the marriage; it was announced for the autumn. Preparations for it began on every hand. In the southern provinces girls embroidered sheets of silk, the manufactories made tapestries for the nuptial chamber, the Oldsburg ladies made cushions brodered with pearls and precious stones, the thick-fingered women in the coast-ward provinces made hundreds of yards of lace as fine as

spiders' webs; there was much work in jewellery, of mother-of-pearl, and gold, much carving in wood and bronze and stone, much weaving of tissues of a thousand colours, much beating of heavy silver-plate. Enamels were collected from India, woods from Lebanon, furs from Asia, carpets from Persia, marbles from Italy, perfumes from Spain, silks and velvets from England, old furniture from Germany, pictures from France. More than a hundred women set to work upon the marriage dress. Each town of Lithuania sent a plate of gold engraved with its arms. And the most famous of Lithuanian composers composed a mass. All over Europe portraits of the young princess were published. She was shown as a skater, as a Lithuanian peasant with her hair in braids, as a student of chemistry photographed in her laboratory, as a little girl at all her ages from infancy upwards; there were pictures of the interior of her rooms, of the lines of her hand, of the patterns embroidered on her linen, and even of her nuptial couch. And while a whole society was working and growing enthusiastic and excited and using its productive power for her, the melancholy girl, whom tyrant emotions had stretched again upon her couch in her room at Château Conrad,

kept her eyes fixed on the calendar and counted the days in hopeless resignation.

When the time came of an evening when the king loved to meet Clara on the bench, far down in the park, under the shadow of four larches, he would ask her,—

“ Well, have you spent the day with her ? How do you think she is ? ”

And she, seeing so much sorrow in his fatherly heart, so sensitive and tender, always replied,—

“ She is at peace, I think. No woman could go more placidly to meet her fate.”

One day Wolfran added,—

“ After all, I am not giving her to a monster. I wanted specially to say that to you, so that you may not think ill of me. The Duke of Oldany is the man I esteem most in the world. His extraordinary intellect makes him the leading thinker of the time, and his conscience works as powerfully as his brain. No doubt you question whether he has the tenderness of heart which goes to make a woman happy ? To be sure, the man is born to govern. Almost in spite of myself I am often forced to allow him to exercise his marvellous faculties as a dictator. And such a man must always remain in ignorance of the

puerilities of love; but he will not ignore its power and its duties. Perhaps he will cherish Wanda without telling her of it, but he always will cherish her as the one beautiful thing in that frightfully austere life of his."

And resuming his confidences of a previous evening, with the perfect trust which he reposed in Clara, he continued in a lower tone,—

"I love the Duke of Oldany as a disciple loves his master. It was he who made a king of me; after me, it is he who will be king himself; that is only just. . . ."

Then, before Clara, trembling with surprise, in the close intimacy of the twilight and with that frankness which comes so easily to a man in the presence of a woman he trusts, he disclosed the secret of his youth.

When he was twenty he had been attracted to the moving and generous theories current among the socialists of the Union. He had been the dreamy, idealistic young prince, and the mysterious follower, who under another name had gone so often to listen to Doctor Kosor in the smoky room down in the slums of the city, had been no other than himself. He had sworn that the monarchy should come to an end; he would have let it die

with him, disdainfully, by refusing to reign at his father's death. He would have brought his people the gift of liberty without more ado, after having employed the fugitive moments of his short reign to endow them with communism by the violent method of general expropriation.

"But what then," asked Clara, to whom the possibility of a socialist Wolfran had often occurred only to be scornfully rejected, "what then of the 'Serfdom' volume?"

"The 'Serfdom' book?" said Wolfran, smiling. "When I tore it in pieces that day without a protest from you, dear Fräulein Hersberg—it was brutal of me, I know, and I have often regretted it, because it must have pained you deeply—I told you that day that I had the right to do what I did. . . . And that was true. I wrote that book when I was twenty. . . ."

He paused for a moment and added,—

"No one knows it in the world but Bertie and yourself."

The dying of a perfect day was flooding the park with light. The scents of balm and resin filled the air with a peculiar sweetness. The pine trunks glowed red in the low shafts of the sunlight. But on the place where they were sitting

the four great larches cast premature shadows, dim and almost religious. They felt themselves in a strange country, full of silence and far from men. Clara closed her eyes. She knew not what physical influence had descended upon her, nor what it was that so filled her with the uttermost content. Tears shone as they rolled slowly from under her closed eyelids; and with her usual lucidity she tried to give utterance to her emotion,—

“Sir, the glimpse you let me have of your youth has affected me most deeply. So you too, you also have loved poor humanity like myself.”

“I love it still,” answered the king gravely.

She drank in his words with submission and delight. But she was now eager to know more, to know the whole tale of Wolfran's development. He being her light, and she following him as her guiding star, was he not morally bound to show himself completely to her?

Then in his joy at swaying her so visibly he related the critical phase which had shaken his youth. He told the story from the day when, escaping all observation, he had gone to one of the communist clubs with which Oldsburg was then full, until that other day when the most unexpected

of events had restored to him and finally imposed upon him the duties of his station.

“On the evening when I went to hear him, the doctor, as he spoke, rested his eyes on me. I could have wished that he should recognize me in the midst of the thrilled audience, in order that the discovery of a king’s son among his followers should add to his triumph. But he suspected nothing, and merely smiled at me as the most devoted of his pupils. He had to push his way through the crowd after leaving the improvised platform, and to do so he leant upon my shoulder with a friendly word. That he should do so filled me with pride, although a moment before he had made an attack on my father, which was both unjust and cruel.”

Clara listened breathlessly.

He had now come to the dénouement of his adventure. The police had traced him. Reports had been brought before the old king, and the violent scenes, which every one of the courtiers of that time still held in remembrance, were the direct outcome. He had struggled desperately, nevertheless, despite the crushing weight of royal authority. And by these outbursts directed against the power of monarchy, by the rebellion



of the young revolutionary imprisoned in a palace, the mysterious book had seen the light.

"My life, nevertheless, was becoming unbearable; and when my father spoke of sending me to India, I accepted at once. There I gathered sufficient material to ballast my mind. And it was there that I met with a nobleman younger than myself, who seemed worthy of my trust. To him I was able to disclose the perturbation in which my mind was then wallowing. He was to bring the deliverance from that. I had then no notion of what a king really is. He taught me. I was quick to perceive what an added source of strength his positive brain would bring to mine. I was twenty-four years old, but he was a hundred, a thousand, as old as Wisdom itself. He was the Truth; my contribution was life. We became partners. I have not given over my dreams, but he has made plans of them and has brought them within the range of practicality. I am all feeling, he is all knowledge. For twenty years now we have been working together. He will carry my work to completion."

Under the arches of a deep alley, opening just before them, they saw good little Madame de Bénouville trotting along. The pale, broad face

of the little old lady was all lit up with the greenish light of the place. And Wolfran turned to Clara,—

“See, Fräulein Hersberg, what a trustworthy friend you must be. I have been telling you things to-night which that dear old lady has never known.”

### III.

ON this first day of October, being the eve of the marriage of the archduchess, the thirty churches of Oldsburg have been thundering out their chimes in unison from six o'clock in the morning onwards. The great bell of the Cathedral of St. Wolfran tolling in its majestic tower gave a sonorous lead ; then the concert began. St. Gelburge flung out its brazen voice full to the wind, uttering its single note in double beats, impressively. St. Wenceslas, whose belfry rose over the three stories of superposed flying buttresses, rang out its melancholy chimes. From certain distant parishes came the rustic and delightful sound of the angelus heard at dawn in the country. Other churches with older bells had only a feeble and cracked voice to contribute, which was whelmed in the immense generality of vibration. All these airy bells, swung madly in honour of the national festivity, formed, in spite of their lack of unison, a splendid clang-

orous harmony which rang deep down into the listener's soul. And the whole excited population of the town vibrated nervously along with the breeze, with the shivering tops of the trees, with the pinnacles of the buildings, with the glass of the churches, of house windows, and of the table furnishings in the cupboards.

Indeed, the whole town, whither from all over Lithuania people had come for the wedding festivities, was in a fever. The Lithuanian flag bearing the royal swan flaunted from every window, from all the houses, and along every street. The balconies were decorated with draperies; tapestries hung the walls; symbolic flowers embellished the house fronts; a fine golden gravel brought from northern beaches covered the streets; trees were planted along the pavements; triumphal arches rose at every square; festoons of many-coloured lamps hung ready over every highway.

Little by little, animation grew in the streets; a confused hum rose from them. The people walked along with light hearts and springy footsteps; provincial folk crowded instinctively to the palace, which hid from their eyes "the most beautiful princess in the world." And the weather was fine, warm, and sunny. The town fairly

bubbled with enjoyment, and it was supposed that the leaded windows of the archduchess's rooms hid from the crowd a radiant damsel, all in clothes of gold and silver, awaiting the splendour of the morrow as her apotheosis.

But Wanda, in a white woollen dressing-gown, lay stretched upon her couch, by the doctor's orders, and was weeping with short spasmodic sobs, holding Clara, who scarcely left her now, by the hand.

"Oh! my dear Clara," she was saying, "I am frightened, frightened of to-morrow, frightened of Bertie, frightened of life."

"For my part," her friend replied, "I foresee for you the stern happiness of great minds. The Prince of Oldany brings you his genius, his admiration for yourself, and his noble conscience. You are far too able a person yourself for your union with a man of so powerful a mind to be fruitless of great things."

"Yes," answered the girl sadly, slipping off and on her childish finger the massive gold engagement ring, "yes, Bertie is a great genius. . . ."

"He will give you a share in his work; a queen you shall be in the truest sense of the word. What are these little scientific experiments which I

have taught you beside the living mass which you will now have to experiment with. I produce a speck of thermium in the bottom of a mortar ; the outcome of your political work will be human happiness."

"Yes, Clara, we may perhaps do something to increase the happiness of Lithuania."

"A queen," said Clara dreamily, "to be a queen, that means to wield real power. As for me, my fate has been merely to dream dreams, and to think out insubstantial plans ; so many of them there have been, and so tired I am of working for ever in the air ! But then I had no power. A queen has."

"Ah !" sighed the archduchess, scarcely containing her tears, "I fear to think at all, lest I think overmuch of Géo. . . ."

Silence fell between them. The door of what was called the archduchess studio opened and a swarm of dressmakers entered, marshalled by Madame de Bénouville. They were bringing the wedding dress to be fitted. The dress was of brocade, laden with silver thread like a dress in a fairy tale. It hung heavily on the frail shoulders of the princess, who stood like some priestess in an ancient rite and let them work their will. The

queen arrived bustling. She had a good, sensible, middle-class taste. She made them unpick here and sew up again; she made them shift the position of a gauze scarf, and smoothed the dress over her thin hips with her hand. Wanda asked her in a low voice,—

“Has Bertie come back?”

Madame de Bénouville announced that he had that moment returned from his journey.

“I want him to come,” said the princess.

The Duke of Oldany was with the king, awaiting the summons of his fiancée.

“But,” objected the queen, “I fear he may not care one way or other about your dress, my dear child. . . .”

“Bertie is careless about nothing. This dress I am to wear is not a dress of my choice, but the appropriate dress. I am not a bride but the exhibition of an idea. It is the idea that is being decked out. And I desire Bertie’s approval.”

He was sent for. Clara felt that those two minds were already at one. Wanda already belonged to the duke, and was at the hest of his commanding, reasoning will. At his entry, his quick gray glance flashed straight to the princess, who was standing in the middle of the room, like

one of those mediæval statues which they clothed tawdry and fine on feast days. A look of mystery invested her slender figure. Her waxen brow now seemed a mere foundation for the heavy crown of Lithuania. The depth of her blue eyes seemed bottomless. Her glance met the duke's, and they smiled at each other like a couple a long time married whose souls have become one. The waiting-women retired, Madame de Bénouville following. The queen was absorbed in scrutiny of a piece of lace.

"That will do very well," said the duke, coldly critical of the beautiful vision before him.

"Well, how are things going in the south?" inquired the archduchess.

By "the south" she meant the mines where the working of the coal-fields had been given over to certain trades union societies. It was an experiment on the lines suggested by the Socialist Union. And the experimenter was the very man who had destroyed that Union. While the Union was dying in obscurity after so much fruitless agitation, its enemy, the statesman and oppressor, was by his genius fertilizing the vacant dreams of the revolutionaries.

"Work is beginning," said the duke; "a fresh seam has been brought to light."



"When we go, I shall go down into the pits," announced Wanda. . . .

And Clara withdrew respectfully, as if they had uttered words of love. . . .

The palace was like nothing so much as a hive gone mad. A regular swarm of dressmakers and milliners was invading the wing occupied by the ladies-in-waiting; chamber-maids, in their black-and-white uniform and caps of little coloured lace, fled to right and to left like bewildered swallows. The high officials of the court were all agog to organize the evening reception in the town hall, and the ceremony of the following day. Secretaries of the household, military attachés, Count Albert Saltzen, the Master of Ceremonies, hastened through the corridors and antechambers, together with the chief steward of the castle, the Master of the Horse and the High Chamberlain. Between the office of Count Thaven and that of the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Zoffern, there were perpetual comings and goings; some disagreement had arisen between the two old courtiers upon the particular trumpet-call which was to greet the wedding procession on the morrow. The general in command of the Oldsburg garrison was raging at an aide-de-camp who

had failed instantly to obtain him an audience with the king. There was a continual ringing and criss-crossing of telephone calls ; everybody seemed to be in search of the Duke of Oldany, who was even above the high officials, the heads of the household and of the Guard, the all-powerful major-domo, and even that old expert in ceremony, the Duke of Zoffern, in his capacity of organizer of this royal pageant.

A regular army of upholsterers was nailing up flags and decorations in the huge hall where the sovereigns were to receive the delegation of the Order of the White Swan. At every door a white guardsman stood sentinel. In a turning staircase, which climbed to the very top of the palace, two of the queen's little pages, all dressed in blue, were playing at marbles.

Out of the midst of all this bustle Clara returned to her rooms deeply immersed in thought. She was thinking about this strange marriage of two human beings who had become morally one in a desire for humanity every whit as powerful as the most thrilling physical desire. She was thinking of another marriage which might have taken place, and the thought of the poor and charming prince in exile filled her mind ; she was think-

ing, too, of Wolfran, whose heart as a father was secretly bleeding, thinking of the motherhood which was required of poor, weakly Wanda, in order to insure that the Irishman should have the regency, thinking above all of the terrible duty weighing upon, but not crushing down, these royalties so brave to bear their burdens.

On her desk a letter lay awaiting her in an envelope addressed in a disguised hand. She shuddered as she opened it and recognized that here was another of Ismaël's secret missives. This one said: "My Clara, if you have not quite forgotten our attachment of thirty years, come to see me for the last time. It is the last favour asked of you by him whose one regret for this life is the loss of you. . . ."

"What!" said Clara to herself, still shaken by the shock she had received, "is he going to die? . . ." And she saw him in her mind's eye, ill and dying in the wretched room, whose address he gave her, alone and without help, without any one to nurse him or care for him, perhaps even dying of the blow she had dealt him at their parting.

And with that she forgot all about the continual spasms of anxiety in the midst of which he had been making her live for five months past; she

forgot the terrible menace hanging over the king because of him, and the peril lurking in the shadows which followed her night and day. Again her tenderness of heart became her only counsellor. She dressed in haste, ordered her carriage, had herself driven to the cathedral, first entered, and then issued forth again by a side door, making her way down the Erzbischofstrasse until she came at last to the evil-smelling place where Ismaël Kosor lay in hiding.

She had long since become accustomed to these sordid lodgings of his, but for the moment she had got somewhat out of the habit of them, and only felt the greater pity for him who out of such miserable poverty flung out towards her a cry of despair. How deeply affected she was as she climbed the unknown stair! And as she went up, she repeated to herself: "Ismaël is dying, Ismaël is dying . . ." In what condition was she about to find him? Lying thin and feverish on a hard bed, perhaps even disfigured by illness? Was he alive even?

She knocked. The door opened. There before Clara, panting with intense life, his black and gray locks surrounding his wilful forehead, stood Ismaël Kosor.

"Ah!" he cried in a choked voice, "you have come. I knew quite well you would come!"

"Are you ill?" she asked him anxiously. "You must be ill."

"How kind you are, Clara," said he, gazing at her passionately.

"What is wrong? You are not ill then? Why did you make me come? You spoke of seeing me for the last time and of having done with life."

"I told no lie, Clara," said he, turning away his head.

He took her by the hand and made her sit on a straw chair beside his truckle bed, and knelt before her.

"Listen; listen to me, Clara, my light. If at this time to-morrow I had ceased to be, would you not have some regret, the regret of having spurned me so long, of having refused till the end what I have asked you ever since I began to love, the one joy in all my terrible life that I have ever yearned for—your love, yourself? Clara, to die to me is as nothing; but to think that you will never have been my wife!"

A convulsion of sorrow laid hold upon him. Then a glow of hope lit up his mad eyes, fixed upon Clara.

"But what am I saying? . . . You have come, therefore you still love me. Tell me that I am under no illusion. To-night I must have the last delight of your love, of your embrace. I must have it. . . ."

She asked him dryly,—

"What is this talk of dying to-morrow?"

He paused long in hesitation, stood erect, and said in an exceedingly low voice,—

"To-morrow my very life is at stake, and in a game that I am bound to lose, Clara."

"What are you going to do to-morrow?"

He embraced her with the gentleness with which he had been used to hold her when she was quite a little girl—his clasp was a caress—and Clara, too full of anxiety even to think of extricating herself, heard him whisper,—

"Be strong, my love; try to withstand your natural feeling; forget that you are a woman, you who throughout the country are named by only one name, 'The Hersberg.' Does not that alone indicate the masculinity of your mind and the strength of your thinking brain? Strip yourself of every prejudice, and be resigned to the act which is to herald the dawn of liberty. Wolfran must die."

She drew herself back with the ferocity of a lioness in defence, repeating after him,—

“Wolfran must die ! . . . Wolfran must die ! You have made up your mind to murder him to-morrow, and you have summoned me to-night for a reward in anticipation. . . .”

“My dear, you know quite well that I wish no evil ; you must not misjudge me. This man is a criminal. By his death humanity will leap into bliss at a bound ; it is the accomplishment of a great duty that I have undertaken. I know that I am doomed along with him ; but that matters nothing. My deed will bear fruit after me. . . .”

Clara had recoiled to the farther side of the room. Her bosom rose and fell under her hurrying breath. Her face was all contracted, terrible to see. Only one word could she articulate.

“Wretch !” she cried.

He on his part laboured to convince her, bidding her remember their old master under persecution, his cruel death in exile, the destitution in the city, the reprisals which had been the only response to the demonstration in March. And finally, returning to his scientific hobby, he discoursed of bees and ants, and of collectivity, the one real existing unity in creation. But Clara had no ears

for his persuasions. White and inscrutable, her vision was occupied with an imaginary scene projected in space before her. She was trembling in every limb. A cold sweat stood damply upon her hands and forehead. There was a long pause. She came quite close up to Ismaël.

"Ismaël," said she, in a voice of soft humility, "for my sake you will not do this thing you speak of. You will not do it because of your love for me. No good can ever come of a crime. You have no right to lay a finger on Wolfran or to hurt his life."

Then his look searched her. His eyes flashed suspicion.

"They have changed you up yonder," he growled; "you are no longer yourself. A year ago you would have urged me to it."

She cried out in protestation,—

"Never! And our good master would have laid his curse on you had he known that you were planning a murder."

Their glances crossed defiantly. But once again Clara grew gentle. She took Ismaël's hand and clasped it in hers.

"I beg of you. . . . Remember the day when I was brought to your home. I was a poor little



foundling, a masterless little object, the most miserable of creatures. You took pity on me, he and you. Ah! how you wrapped me in kindness! Well I remember it. No, I have never been an orphan; I have been the most petted, the most fondled, the most beloved among children. Be sure I forget nothing of that, Ismaël; all that I am I owe to our father and to you. But if you were to refuse what I ask of you to-night, it would be as if you were crushing all the good that you have done me, and my very heart besides. Oh, look upon me praying you, imploring you! Ismaël, do not commit this murder."

He repeated, gazing fiercely into her eyes,—

"They have changed you up there. Why are you so concerned for the life of this man?"

She stammered,—

"Perhaps if you knew him, you also would be changed. . . ."

"If I knew him?" he sneered back. "Do I not know him? By their deeds ye shall know them. I have weighed every one of Wolfran's deeds, and it is by them I judge him. So there can be no mistake; he is an evildoer."

She repeated, with a sort of fervent obstinacy,—

"He is not what you think. . . ."

Ismaël said nothing. He was watching Clara in silence. It was a cold scrutiny. He analyzed her features, observed the enlarged pupils of her eyes, noted every symptom of her emotion. It was a new woman who stood before him : panting, feverish, transfigured by a secret horror convulsing the statuesque calm of her face, made even more beautiful by the burning fervour that shook her. Never had he seen her as he saw her now. A thought went through him like a javelin. His face took on a livid pallor. Twice or thrice he endeavoured to speak, but his throat felt tightened. Then he came up to Clara and seized her by the wrists, and with his eyes peering into hers, he said indistinctly,—

“ You love him ? ”

She, in her turn, returned his gaze unanswering, stunned and thunderstruck as though she saw him not. Then, suddenly,—

“ No, no,” she said, “ that’s sheer madness ; I love you. . . . ”

But at the same time a smile of perfect happiness and joy relaxed her features, and completely belied the indignation of her words and voice. She repeated,—

“ I love Wolfran ? What an idea, Ismaël.

Love him? Love him?" And she seemed to find pleasure in the repetition of the word, as if she were slowly exhausting its perfume, tasting all its savour.

Meanwhile, Ismaël went on in a low growl,—

"You love him; I feel it. . . . Ah! how you defended him a while ago. You who are so cold and full of reasons when you are discussing our poor love, how you were transported, how you were moved when this man came into the question! . . . He has conquered you; tell me, tell me, he has conquered you. How did he go about it?"

She, with wide open eyes, stood motionless, as if dazzled by a sudden light. Her two hands rose in a gesture of protesting ignorance.

"What am I to answer? I have never ceased to be yours in thought. It is yours I am. He—he—he is . . . how can I tell you what he is? . . . He is a being apart, a will. No one can know. . . . Not even you! . . ."

A long shudder traversed her frame. She repeated in terror,—

"He must not die, Ismaël!"

He turned his head aside, choking back a sob.

"Ah!" said he, in a tone of the deepest dejection, "they have taken even my Clara from me!"

Clara, on her part, was thinking in a sort of dream,—

“Why does he suffer so? Can what he says be true? What is love? Can it have been love, all that hidden bliss?”

Joy unspeakable had descended upon her. Suddenly through it she caught a glimpse of Ismaël's pain. He had gone to lean upon the rail of the iron bedstead, his hands clasping his forehead. His narrow chest rose and fell with his quick breath. She went towards him, filled with pity. She touched him on the shoulder. He started back, and she heard him complain aloud in these words,—

“I had nothing left in the world but you, and they have managed to take you from me. He had every luxury, every pleasure, and every satisfaction—he was gorged with them; and yet he could not do without my one joy also.”

“My dear, these sayings of yours are madness!”

“I am perfectly sane. He took possession of your mind first. What have you done for the Union since you went to the palace? Have you saved us and defended us as you promised? A woman like yourself carries all before her when she speaks. If you had pleased, we should be

triumphing to-day. But all your cleverness bent before the commonplaces of that narrow-minded man. He got round you with sounding talk; he was handsome, and he shone with gold, and he wished to attract you. And it is to that you have come—you, the great, the free Hersberg, to submit to that man's rule over the country, to bear his yoke!"

The Kosor that stood before her was a man turned fierce, a hater, and angry. Rage and hate convulsed him. His fists were clenched, and he was shivering with rage. The conviction came upon her that all striving with him would be useless, and that, once and for all, sentence had been passed upon Wolfran. Anguish gripped her at the thought. She would have desired to be able to give her life, to put herself in Wolfran's place, to die in his stead. Suddenly she had an inspiration: "He says that I love him. To love is to give oneself up entirely. One can give oneself; many are the ways of sacrifices."

For a second more she hung back, hesitating. Then she sidled up close to Ismaël; her voice and attitude became a caress, persuasion itself. She murmured,—

"Listen, Ismaël; let us have an end of this

rambling talk. You suspect me? For whom do you take me? Look here, shall we leave Oldsburg together? Humanity can be redeemed without you. Until now you have spoilt your life without furthering the cause. Let us go together; I shall love you; we shall be happy together and never part again."

He looked at her coldly and cruelly, with crossed arms, gasping with rage.

"False woman, wayward like the rest, you are trying to tempt me basely. You love him so much that in order to save him you are offering yourself to me, whom you hate. Ah! Clara, Clara, it has all become clear for me. You have never loved me, and it is to-day you would be mine . . . I who had always set you so high!"

She approached him with open arms. He flung her away from him.

"Away from here!"

"My poor, dear Ismaël!"

"Away, back to your king!"

"You are driving me away!" cried she.

At the door he grasped her by the wrists, to say to her,—

"He shall die, be sure!"

The indefinable, curious look she flung him as

she left him for ever perplexed him. He had half a mind to recall her. Besides, the regret of having mortally offended her was seething within him already.

"Clara!" he cried, in a weak voice.

But it was too late; she had reached the street. With the first breath of the keen air of that autumn evening, she shut her eyes. For a moment she stood still, filled full to intoxication of an infinite happiness. And, once again, she repeated, "Is it true, then, that I love him?"

And the voice which answered "Yes" within her was so triumphant, so ecstatic, so sweet, so magnificently assured, that Clara forgot even the precarious situation in which things at the moment stood.

She walked she knew not whither, finding her way only by some vague animal instinct, never for a moment thinking even of the carriage she had left before the cathedral porch, to throw the curiosity of the servants off the track. She made her way blindly through a labyrinth of evil-smelling streets, close to the harbour. Little by little, as she grew alive to what was passing about her, she distinguished the unaccustomed bustle which was beginning to make itself felt. The malodorous

houses opened their doors to let out their in-dwellers, that lowest class of the population, seen to emerge from their hovels only on feast days or days of mourning. All were hurrying, making at a half-run in the same direction. A little farther on, when she came to the city streets with their half-shut shops, there was the same animation, the same racing along, but of a different crowd. And when, finally, she got into the fashionable quarter of the town, the carriage gateways of the great town mansions swung on their hinges to let through women fashionably dressed, escorted by their husbands or fathers, all hurrying too, finishing the buttoning of their gloves on the pavement. The square and open spaces were filling ; shouts of joy broke through the happy murmur of the innumerable parading crowd. It was very impressive. Clara knew it was the march of the whole city towards the king. This throng was coming an hour beforehand to line the route which the royal family would follow in order to go that evening to the town hall. They would catch at least a lightning glimpse of their sovereigns, and that was enough to make them throng to the places of their passage.

And Clara, also borne along by an enthusiasm



of a very different poignancy, was making in the direction of the holder of this mysterious prestige.

"That powerful, meretricious prestige," she was thinking—"that prestige which, one would say, draws the crowd to him, captivates the masses—that influence I also have felt. I have undergone it, revolutionary as I am, knowing as I did the evil of the social inequality of which he is the keystone. I have given myself over to the intoxication of that idolatry ; and when I trembled in his presence, it was because instead of hating his glory, I loved it as I loved everything coming from him."

Then she set herself to recall those interviews in which royalist arguments were no sooner enunciated by Wolfran than they dazzled her so that her mind could no longer find any objection to set against them. No, she had never been convinced ; but he had subjugated her as every man enslaves the woman who loves him. Her mind had never yielded ; but her heart had been docile to love the task-master.

"And yet I am not ashamed," she said triumphantly. "Suppose even his philosophy has deceived me ! He was worthy of an absolute love !"

Then like a flash came across her the remembrance of Ismaël's threat : "He shall die, be sure !"

Her powerlessness was torment to her. What could she do ? How was she to disarm this man who in his own words had already taken leave of life, whom human speech was powerless to persuade ? Ah, how gladly she would have chained him, pinioned him, and rendered him helpless ! . . .

She had come within sight of the royal palace ; the view of its façade sent a cold shiver through her. And she thought, "His life is in my hand ; if I keep silence, he will die. . . . What is my duty ? . . ."

She entered the palace like a wounded animal taking refuge in its lair. Her mind craved for the solitude of her room. If she had been questioned she would have answered, "I am going to my own room." But no sooner had she set foot on the staircase of the Judengasse than the thought of Ismaël vanished from her mind—disappeared, like a drawing rubbed out. The figure of Wolfran rose more vividly than ever before her eyes. And walking lightly, as in a dream, she bent her steps towards the royal apartments.

In the vestibule the king's chief valet said to her,—

"His Majesty will not be able to receive Fräulein Hersberg. His Majesty will regret it very much, I am certain. . . ."

She smiled at the unfortunate man, so utterly out of touch with reality, so unsuspecting of the truth; and she persisted,—

"Yes, yes, of course; but his Majesty must receive me."

The discreet person protested with a gesture of which she took no notice; she passed him by. At that moment Colonel Rodolphe was just coming out of his office, which was next to that of the king. To him with frenzied energy she repeated, "His Majesty must receive me."

Even the aide-de-camp, so meticulous in etiquette, was struck dumb by the scientist's visible discomposure. He ventured to ask her nothing. Only when he saw the young woman turn towards the antechamber of the king, he said,—

"His Majesty is dining alone to-night, while the queen and her highness are dressing for the reception at the town hall."

She stopped short, and turned back towards the hall which led to the king's private dining-room. The second footman was coming out of it. She stopped him.

"Wilfred," she said for the third time, "I must see his Majesty."

"Ah, Fräulein Hersberg, how unfortunate just now! But I shall tell his Majesty; perhaps after supper. . . ."

Then Clara did a thing in defiance of all rules. She went straight to the door and lifted the curtain over it. Wolfran was sitting in front of a table set with extreme simplicity. A dish of plain boiled vegetables steamed before him. Two footmen were in waiting. He raised his eyes, and caught sight of the tragic figure of a woman, so distraught as to be scarcely recognizable, who had entered with such boldness as if on an impulse of madness, and he started with surprise. Clara, suddenly brought back to reality by his presence, stammered,—

"I have come . . . I had to see your Majesty at once, at once. . . ."

He was not slow to understand that something sensational was happening, but he knew not what it might be; and at first he was touched to see the pangs of anxiety on the face of the calm Hersberg. He wished to know what was wrong, and dismissing the footmen, he questioned her. She was trembling a little, the expression of her

eyes was altered, and she began between her heart-beats,—

“Sire, I pray your Majesty to pardon me. . . .”

A certain shyness seemed to close her lips. Then the king, speaking to her kindly and familiarly, asked her whether she had dined, and as she motioned she had not, wished her to take the place opposite him.

“We shall be able to speak better if you do,” he said.

She obeyed without a word. She was thinking, “I do not love him, I do not love him at all. Why should I sacrifice my dearest friend? . . .”

And, at the very moment when Wolfran was striving to analyze her singular expression whose secret he wished to fathom, she was delivered of part of her secret.

“Your Majesty is in great danger.”

Doubtless he had expected something quite different, for he made a movement of relief; his face lighted up, and he said,—

“It is very kind of you to be so solicitous on my behalf, dear Fräulein Hersberg; but I am sure that you are wrong in your surmise, and alarmed about imaginary dangers.”

Never had he seen her looking so beautiful ; the hidden fire which had urged her thither gave her a superabundance of life ; the slight heaving of her bosom, and her emotion, laid bare the sensitiveness of this woman of science, who was apparently so impassive. He was happy to have her before him at table in this friendly intimacy of theirs. For he, too, had for her a very special feeling which came very near to the romantic. Besides, to see her so preoccupied about him was gratifying. And as he regarded her with admiration he perceived that her features were all decomposed, and that her whole body was shaken by a nervous tremor ; pallor had come upon her face, and she muttered,—

“To-morrow . . . they will attempt your Majesty’s life.”

“Indeed !” he said, his incredulity vanishing before the anxiety of this distracted woman. “So there is some truth in it ?”

“It is not only true,” she went on in a dull voice, “it is inevitable unless. . . .”

Wolfran saw perspiration beading her brow. For some moments he remained in thought ; then suddenly, in consideration of what Clara was enduring, a revelation came to him. It came so

suddenly and cruelly that by a reflex action his fist was brought down to the table.

"Of course, I understand, I know everything. It is he, it is Kosor ; am I not right ?"

Without a word she covered her face with both hands, trembling. In one of these swift glimpses, which occasionally come to the human brain, she saw the whole of her life in a flash—from the day when a nurse from the city hospital had laid her, bound up in swaddling-clothes, in little Ismaël's arms, till the present moment, when, alone with the king, she was implicitly denouncing the brother and friend the unhappy dreamer had been to her. Oh, in how many hours of kindness, with what utter faith, with what adoration, he had devoted himself to her !

She had shared his bread, his knowledge, his long hours of work, his ideas. He had borne her in his arms, had admired, tended, and loved her. He had awaited her with a mystic fidelity, had borne without complaint all the delays which she had imposed upon their union ; he would have cringed before her like a dog ; and now, after thirty years, this night she had betrayed him. Her self-contempt at that moment was such that she had not the heart to move a finger.

Wolfran too must surely be despising her. At that very moment she was in his eyes a thing to be loathed, for all her saving of him, for he abominated whatever was abject. And at the thought her hands fell heavily on her lap, and she raised her face to the king with a miserable look of shame and despair. Her eyes were the eyes of one who has lost the esteem of a person she prizes; and when they met the look of Wolfran, it was met with tears.

For a long time they remained in silence. For Clara they were burning moments. She was offering up the suffering of her heart to him she loved, for whom she would have died, and who must now have divined it. . . .

At last she spoke, and on her face, all upset as it was, there was a sad and affectionate smile.

"Let your Majesty only swear to me that you will not leave the palace to-morrow; that is essential; I beg it of you."

"But, Fräulein Hersberg," said the king, "to-morrow I am not my own, I am my people's. I must appear, and they must see me. I must play the part which they expect of me. . . . What would you have? Kosor will be put out of



harm's way. I could have wished that he should be disturbed no further, but you will confess that it is he himself that has not permitted that."

"Kosor?" Clara tried to say convulsively; "Kosor is in exile. . . ."

"No, Fräulein Hersberg," replied the prince, "he is not in exile, he has been in Oldsburg for five months now; he lived first with one of your friends, a professor in the college, and he is now hiding himself in the Farberstrasse, near the harbour. Did you really think that I was not informed about his way of life, about his incomings and outgoings? He had stopped writing to you, and you had stopped going to see him. He seemed to have retired to his den, to have become harmless; I wished him to be left alone, for I could not forget that he was your friend, and I assure you that was a very effective protection for him. But now I realize, much too well from your excitement, how . . . grave his designs are, to omit defending myself against this enemy. Whether I die or live is a secondary matter; you know well enough how little it matters to me. But from now on a duel has begun between this man and myself, which, whatever way I take

it, holds me, interests me, absorbs me. I will conquer him at the last ! ”

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And now the morning had come. In her studio the princess, dressed up like a splendid doll for exhibition, was standing in the midst of a regular regiment of maids. On the delicate frame of her body they had hung the dress, heavy with its silver thread. The placing of the veil was their care now. Two women held the cloud of lace, the gift of northern damsels, and Wanda was being asked to bend forward, when she smiled weakly at her attendants, saying to them,—

“ I am rather tired.”

Madame de Bénouville ran up at that, bidding them all stand back, and took her darling by the hand to conduct her to the little sitting-room adjoining. And when the delicate doll-like figure walked forward, the folds of the robe opened and the train spread out into a shimmering flood of silvery material. For the first time the blonde princess with the mysterious brows appeared with the full prestige of her royalty, and the old governess thrilled with emotion before her.

“ Oh ! my child ! ” she sighed. More willingly still would she have fallen on her knees and said :

"Oh! my queen!" But Wanda, who always laughed at these enthusiasms of hers, said,—

"I am older than you are, my dear old friend Bénouville; see how calm I am."

"It is your future happiness makes you so, my child."

"I think so," said Wanda serenely. And after a moment,—

"But where is Clara? I have been waiting for her all morning. Why has she not come?"

The good Bénouville sighed, lifted her eyes to heaven, and did not answer.

"She must have feared to intrude; it would be well to have her called."

The old lady was looking obstinately through the window at the carved dormers of a neighbouring roof and a trophy of flags fluttering in the wind.

"Fräulein Hersberg begs to be excused, your highness; she has undergone a great sorrow, and cannot take part in the festivities. She came to me at dawn, this morning, and I was to tell you from her . . . Oh! it is a very sad story, your highness, for no one can suspect what a depth of nobility there was in her. A person . . . a member of the Social Union, whom she loved

exceedingly, is seriously compromised. Give her many of your thoughts, my dear child. . . . The culprit was to be arrested last night. . . .”

“Oh! the poor Hersberg!” cried Wanda, rising; “the poor Hersberg! I must see her!”

“Alas! my child, Fräulein Hersberg left early this morning. You are to think how galling the bustle of these festivities was bound to be to her in her sorrow. How could she stay? . . . She begs you to pardon her.”

“What? She is gone. Without even kissing me good-bye before she went! But who is this culprit you speak of? Oh! you know quite well! She told you what she hid from me. It was Ismaël Kosor that she was engaged to, was it not? And she told me nothing! But I would have pleaded with the king. Bertie would have pardoned. Poor, poor Clara!”

“She begs your highness never to forget her,” said the old lady in a low voice.

\* \* \* \* \*

She had sought refuge in the little white house built among the gardens on the heights of the town. She had come back to it more miserably even than on that first day when the two Kosors had received her in it. And without opening

window or shutter she had stayed in the doctor's library, where the books, impregnated so many years ago with tobacco smoke, still gave out the odour of the philosophical patriarch's short pipe.

But at midday, when the thunder of the bells burst out anew and announced to the people that the archduchess and the foreigner were wed together, she could refrain herself no longer, but slipped into the garden and hurried along the deserted lane, egged on by the tumult within her.

At her feet there gleamed an Oldsburg vibrating, chiming, and flooded with sunlight. In the sea of roofs she distinguished all the church naves with their towers, their pinnacles and spires, and in the midst of all, like some magnificent ship, the cathedral, whence all these joyous sounds were fleeing through the air. Other late comers than herself were also hastening to the show. She joined them, and pushing into the crowd was lost in it, drowned in it, wishing for no separate existence again, wishing only to be unseen, undefined, but at least to see.

Troops lined the cathedral square, and the crowd had been pushed back towards the adjacent streets. The sun flared down upon the cuirasses, the aiguillettes, the helmets the gold lace, the

curb chains at the horses' mouths and their shining cruppers.

"May I not have been dreaming?" thought Clara. "Did I really speak? Is Ismaël shut up? Will he not appear?" And it seemed to her that her reason was going, and that the common folk about her, who were bustling, pushing her hither and thither, were noticing her derangement, and had their eyes upon her.

Suddenly the crowd heaved a great sigh; the enormous doors were thrown open; the warm glitter of candles appeared far in dark depths of the cathedral. A row of carriages drew up before the great porch. Trumpets blared, mingling with the dying chords of the organ. And still the sigh of the crowd went on, an endless sigh still growing, reaching the nearer streets and spreading thence over the whole town.

The detachment of cavalry went off first to the sound of an old-time trumpet call, and immediately after it, surrounded by a double file of White Guards, the archduchess's carriage began to roll over the fine gravel of the square. Wanda appeared robust and lively; she smiled to the people, raising her veil the better to caress the crowd with her look, to include its every member

as it stood aligned there to watch her pass, and also with a touching desire to let herself be seen, to show herself, to win the silent love of those myriad eyes, spying her every motion. Duke Bertie saluted coldly, and the crowd applauded him out of affection for Wanda.

Then Wolfran passed, dressed as a colonel of the Guard, with the white swan topping his helmet, as he had appeared to Clara on that first day. Perhaps he might distinguish her among the crowd. A heaviness as of death weighed upon her. He was stroking his red beard which the sun shot with gold. Opposite him in the carriage sat his aide-de-camp and the Earl Marshal. She looked at him once more. The carriage drew slowly off; she followed it with her eyes. At the corner of the Wachturmstrasse it vanished. To Clara it seemed that an icy wind was now blowing across the square.

The queen and her ladies-in-waiting, the Hausen princesses, the Duchess of Laventino, the wives of the high officials, the ladies-in-waiting, the wives of the ambassadors, the ministers, the chamberlains, the president of the Chamber, and the representatives of the deputies passed next, followed by the queen's pages and the generals. And then more

petitioners who get themselves admitted by influence to his Majesty. Wolfran was struck by that attitude of hers, and his heart filled with pity. He came forward to Clara.

"Ah!" said he, "what a way to leave us!"

She waved her hand deprecatingly to signify that her departure had been necessary, that it needs must be, and that Wolfran knew it. But he would not be put off,—

"It was the greatest sorrow to us, Fräulein Hersberg."

"I ask your Majesty's pardon, but it was not without regret on my own part either that I left."

And at once, to indicate that their former intimacy could never be resumed, and that she had come on a simple, very definite errand,—

"I am going to ask," she said, "a favour of your Majesty."

"Considering what I owe you," said he to her, visibly impressed, "what we all owe you, there is no need for you to ask favours, Fräulein Hersberg. You are a friend, a friend deeply honoured and very dear to us, who merely requires to express her wishes for me to be only too happy to fulfil them."

She answered awkwardly,—



"It is for Ismaël Kosor."

"Ah!" cried the king, his face changing suddenly, "so it's for him?"

He checked himself immediately.

"You know that I wish all your desires to be realized whatever they may be. But you will not think ill of me for hesitating when I know that this one concerns the unfortunate person who makes so bad a use of the favours you obtain for him. What! we take every precaution in order that he may be judged merely on facts relating to the March demonstration, and here he comes shouting out in the open court about his intention to kill me, claiming to be judged on his full guilt and not a whit less, absolutely set upon deserving that most terrible punishment of penal servitude for life, and cynically demanding his right to display, as a production in the case, the weapon he had chosen to end me with."

"Sir, Kosor is perhaps a fanatic. The soul of revolutionaries is an abyss in which they often lose themselves. You must pardon him. . . ."

"I have forgiven him; has he not got his punishment? What does he want more?"

She smiled sadly, and, in the voice of a creature whom life has broken, she said,—

"He wants his wife to be allowed to follow him in his unending imprisonment, over yonder. . . ."

"His wife? So Kosor is married?"

"Since yesterday, sir."

"And this wife of his wants to follow him to the Pacific! But does she know what a hell it is over there, and that no one ever returns; it is impossible . . . it can't be done . . . the lowest of females would refuse . . . she must be told. . . ."

"She knows," said Clara.

"Well, who is this woman? Is she mad, or is she sublime? is she . . ."

"It is myself," said Clara quietly.

Wolfran's hand fell in a gesture of utter despondency. His countenance expressed the poignancy of his pain; not a word could he find to express his thought. For that thought comprehended the whole of Clara's splendid life, her greatness, her nobility, her genius; and then it swept off to the islet lost in immensity, where such beauty, such intelligence, such knowledge, and even a future so full of good augury for the new substance which this woman had given to the world, were all to be buried. And he remembered also the delight of the friendship which he had enjoyed with the incomparable Hersberg.

"Let not your Majesty pity me," answered Clara with her usual simplicity. "Your Majesty said one day to me : one can suffer and be happy. Happiness is the natural fruit of duty accomplished. I have seen great examples of that here in the palace, and Ismaël Kosor was so unhappy. . . ."

He looked at her long and steadily, and his eyes filled with tears. He rose and went over to her.

"I understand," said he. "I understand. You are paying the price of my safety."

She answered with the tranquillity which had been hers in those high days of her triumph in the lecture-room,—

"I love Kosor."

And with that she left him. He heard her step grow fainter along the corridors ; and he remained standing where he was, overwhelmed, and with a mind heavy with sorrow ; and his heart was full of sudden ruin, as he murmured,—

"What a queen she would have made !"





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