

*MY FRIEND
FROM
LIMOUSIN*

JEAN GIRAUDOUX

Translated by
LOUISE COLLIER WILLCOX

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.**

Title: My Friend from Limousin

Date of first publication: 1923

Author: Jean-Hippolyte Giraudoux (1882-1944)

Translator: Louise Collier Wilcox (1865-1929)

Date first posted: Feb. 14, 2023

Date last updated: Feb. 14, 2023

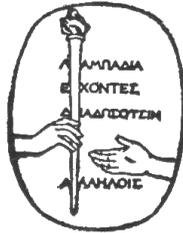
Faded Page eBook #20230219

This eBook was produced by: Delphine Lettau, Al Haines, Cindy Beyer & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

MY FRIEND FROM LIMOUSIN

By
JEAN GIRAUDOUX

Translated by
LOUIS COLLIER WILLCOX



Awarded the
BALZAC PRIZE
1922

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

MY FRIEND FROM LIMOUSIN

Copyright, 1923,
By Harper & Brothers
Printed in the U. S. A.

First Edition

MY FRIEND FROM LIMOUSIN



CHAPTER I

IT was January, 1922. Civilians had already finished using up all the war garments left them by the ordnance office; the military, their last red and black uniforms, which remained from before 1914, and their color in life was fixed henceforth. But the diplomats were still exhausting themselves, placing alternately under a sunny or a cloudy sky, at Cannes or Boulogne, Genoa or The Hague, the keystone of Europe.

I read the German papers every day, in the hope, vain thus far indeed, of finding a single kindly or just word about a Frenchman—even an international Frenchman like Jeanne d’Arc and Cachin—or a region of France, even one not yet parceled out between France and other nations, like the Basque country or Catalonia. One morning I was stopped short in my reading by a passage in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—Here it is, in the translation I made at once:

“Elizabeth of Bavaria and the Emperor wished to bathe in the Königsee and Adelaide found them some tights, somewhat moth-eaten, however. As the unclothed sovereigns approached the lake, two young people were coming out of the water, in equally dilapidated costumes—their son Rudolph with the actress Dora Winzer. Each of the women inspected the other through the holes in the stockinette, as though she were looking through a keyhole. The Emperor and the Archduke wore only drawers, and one could see that the imperial heart beat twice as fast as the princely. The young couple were dripping, with sticky shoulders where the sun, once caught, could not escape; and their limbs stretched out and elongated in the air as if still in the water. The aged couple, dreary and quite dry, with such a dryness that it seemed positively moral, hastened to enter the lake as into a water which would rejuvenate.”

There was good reason for being struck by these phrases. I knew them. I had read them myself ten years before, on a day when they were newborn and French, in a tale of which my friend Forestier, who had disappeared during the war, was the author. For the astonishing thing was not that a journalist should borrow a text which he thought forgotten. It was that his

article, barring the plagiarism, contained what I had found most impartial and uplifting, almost, since my review of the German press had begun. But it required of a Frankfurter critic, a rather uncommon soul, to claim, on the 3d of January, 1922, that it was in the fortnight after the visit of Gobineau that Nietzsche had for the first time written the word Superman and Wagner the word Parsifal, and that Elizabeth of Bavaria had planned her circus. Also the author's language seemed odd to me: he made a use of understatement and paraphrase almost new to Germany and not less original was the modesty with which he signed himself with only three initials, S. V. K., which would not allow me to build upon them any well-known name. S. V. K.—these last data accorded ill with deliberate plagiarism or theft, and that afternoon I asked at the National Library for the Review in which I had read at its birth, the novel of Forestier. I was not mistaken; the description of the bath was the same, though with something a little less stiff and artificial, a little more radiant about it—even though the first author was dead and the second living. A father and son who had quarreled met again at the baths.

“John arrived in a car with Michaela. For thirty kilometers they ran along the Vienne in terror lest they bend suddenly too much to the right or the left and fail to get in their bath before breakfast. The car was still hot when they rushed toward the locks, and the valley was soon dotted with sonorous cries which did not ascend, uttered as they were by mouths at the very edge of the river. The two bathers were just about to come out when they perceived near the banks, the father of John with Olga Armandeau; they plunged back into the water to their faces, thereby making them all the more distinct and recognizable. Then the two women coming to a decision, observed each other through the holes in their moth-eaten tights as through a keyhole; the aged couple were quite dry with a dryness that seemed positively moral; and although the eyes of Olga Armandeau became suddenly misty——”

Destiny has been playing such tricks since the very beginning of the year, that I might not for a single day, forget Forestier, giving my brother a fiancée who bore his name—a name, lost thus in mine on the eve of the marriage, its rôle of Mêne, Tekel, Upharsin then ended—making me discover in my desk a bundle of letters and manuscripts which Forestier had placed there the day of his departure; a postal card telling me that the most beautiful gardens in Andalusia were called Forestier Gardens after the Frenchman who had planned them; so I saw in this last new episode only another of destiny's tricks. Every fish line I threw out into the unknown pulled out this name. I became more attentive; I bit; I reread the only book my friend had published.

Lucky for me that I did, for a fortnight later I noticed that the plagiarisms continued in the columns of the *Frankfurter*. In one article S. V. K. stole three phrases. By chance—was it chance?—these three phrases concerned a river, a lake, waters in fine. Original enough thinker in three elements, as soon as he touched the fourth S. V. K. borrowed from Forestier: “To-day I am writing in bed, whence I see the lake—all the fountain pens in the house are broken—I have transported penful after penful of ink across the counterpane—and not a stain yet——”

“The only man who was happy—quite happy after love and who had swum the channel——”

“I know what my death will be. A locomotive will explode near me. Or perhaps (yes, this is it), a snake will get caught in the wheel of my automobile and be thrown right at my head. It will bite me. They will stretch me out in a meadow beside a river with two little red holes in my cheek ——”

In S. V. K., who was more romantic as is due to his race, each wheel threw up a snake and he died with eight red holes in his face instead of two. Despite the evident alteration of the text, I began to be a little nettled, this time. They were pillaging Forestier’s book as they must have pillaged his portfolio, the night that he fell between the lines of battle, in a no-man’s land then swarming with people. I wrote an open letter to S. V. K. that I carried to the editor of our principal weekly review. He was an octogenarian socialist, who as a quadragenarian had published Greek and Latin classics, and still kept the sniveling tone he must have had as a unigenarian. He had not known Forestier. He calmed me.

“What’s the use?” he said. “Did I bring claims against Williamowitz Moellendorf? And he nevertheless stole my best description of Penthesia: ‘A tigress who over her own skin wears a tiger’s skin.’ He did not even use my name.”

I remarked that, in the case of Forestier it was a matter of a weekly pillaging, which could not be justified on the whole by the prodigious interest of the phrase, as in the case of the tigress in a tiger’s skin.

“True,” he said. “Tigress—that was a find! But I have been the victim of less indispensable plagiarisms. In my critique of the setting of the banquet of sophists, with Rhetoric, Music, Gymnastics, and various other cousins, I introduce Public Instruction, throwing herself on the necks of all of them. Cheap little simpleton! You must admit that Bapp was not forced to borrow this as he did in the Leipzig Studies. And when L. Mueller—not W. Mueller—but L. Mueller himself, with his acolyte Lachmann, the real, only

Lachmann stole, for 'relavamen' and 'consolamen' the epithet 'monstrous forms' which I had given after Quicheret to these barbarous words (pieced out, I must avow from Priscian and St. Jerome) do you really think that Lachmann could not have done better?"

He checked me.

"Above all, my dear chap, what's the use of all these quarrels? On the contrary, is it not a good thing that the lightning-like life work of Forestier (permit me in turn to plagiarize Behrens in his praise of Firmicus Maternus) which has penetrated so many young Frenchmen like a blaze, should insinuate itself little by little into the intellectual equipment of a German writer, even if in such big fragments? Your S. V. K. has forgotten to use quotation marks; but are there any quotation marks around the fragments of your friend's body, which are (I am quoting Brunn and Hirschfeld here) now amalgamated perhaps into the body of a beautiful child or a young linden tree? Let me tell you, in conclusion that the word 'bloc,' which the entire universe attributes to Clemenceau, was first thought of by a young friend and pupil of mine, Joseph Casanova, who used it first in the *Reveil du Nord*. Joseph Casanova is now in the Reparations Office, but his word 'bloc' is the last debt he would dream of collecting."

Toward the end of the month there was a period of greater tension between France and Germany, during which intellectual and commercial barrages were thrown up again. The German customs officials took away all the new shoes from the French who were leaving Hesse, and left only birds to those who had bought cages. The unhappy fellow who was discovered in Wissembourg with pieces of gold about him was subjected to the laws against counterfeiters. The piles of art books, kept in Leipzig with much difficulty during the war, biographies brought out by cubists, supplements to the catalogues of the art of Gabun, were scattered among all sorts of perishable wares at the frontier stations. The half dozen Germans and French who had resumed—after what scruples—their correspondence of before the war, had to interrupt it again. I no longer received the *Frankfurter Gazette*. I received the *Chicago Tribune*, which I read without curiosity, for it never occurred to Mr. McCormick to borrow from André Gide; the *Correspondancia de España's* editor did not bother to slip in phrases of Marcel Proust; and in the *Westminster Gazette*, Wells rarely plagiarized Francis Viélé-Griffin.

On the 31st of January, the seventh anniversary of his death, for lack of a tomb, we nailed a tablet in his honor on the house in which Forestier had lived in the rue de Condé. We were gathered together in this street before a high, antique façade and all the gestures which a procession round a tomb

would make were interfered with by the edifice. We had to lift our heads instead of lowering them; we stood in line instead of surrounding the coffin, while in each story of the adjacent houses, windows were opened, one after the other, by lodgers desirous of hearing the *Oceano Nox* declaimed by Madeleine Roch, who was highly excited by the neighborhood of the Odéon; the lodgers who leaned out or stretched up to see the tablet, all like human gargoyles, gave some real life, however, to our funeral. Forestier's window opened one of the last, and there appeared a child with an old man; not for a second could the most near-sighted person amongst us have thought he felt a pang of recognition.

Amongst us were editors of the nationalist and monarchist papers without their staff, for in the afternoons Forestier belonged to the *Revue Critique*; and without their editors, there were the small fry of the papers of the extreme left, for in the evenings Forestier collaborated for his living with the *Lantern* and *Civic Progress*. A typesetter who remembered having seen me with him gave me a manuscript which the war had prevented from appearing and which no one had claimed. In this Forestier was describing the death of Dumas who was our best friend:

“Dumas was thirty-seven years old. Of the 5,313,000 tons of steel produced in France, Dumas' works turned out 3,800,000. If all Frenchmen had been gathered on the opposite scale of the balance, they could not have tipped it. He was the best-known Frenchman in Russia; the only one known in Afghanistan. The world over they call an electric press button, a Dumas; he invented it when he was twenty-two years old while he was still an undergraduate; also the trans-African cable is called a Dumas, because he discovered it while he was still a law student; and the model workingman's house is called a Dumas; he exhibited it when he had taken his degree in Oriental languages; Dumas steel is still made by the process he thought out during his presidency of the Molé Conference. After the word Pasteur the word Dumas has become the most purifying and consoling in the universe. His entire circle felt itself turned into authors, musicians, poets, such was his power of liberating from the weight of social conditions. The days when he was there, legions of water-colorists crowded Rive-de-Giers or Lens. Women adored him; all poverty, accidents and analogously all ugliness and eczema seen by them in the streets attached themselves in their thoughts to Dumas by some sort of happy bridge, a Dumas rainbow, that absolved them and their luxury in face of so much injustice. One morning in June he stopped his automobile at the border of a brook, plunged in and was never seen again. There was no funeral after his death, no will, no distribution of property; he had never wanted a fortune, and there remained of him only the

twenty bronzes of his hand, of which Genevieve Pratt had made the mold, and which had just been cast in his own factory. They searched for the body in the brook, then in the Seine, but there was a strong current and then a storm, and there was no hope of finding it except in the midst of the sea.”

Some days afterward, the international tension which struck the travelers at the frontier stations like a thunderbolt, lowered by several volts. Cages were returned to the impatient birds in Berlin, and the cardboard-kid to the naked feet of the French, and the Frankfurter paper to me. I opened it with anguish, little thinking, however, what was reserved for me at the very opening of the first article:

“Mueller,” said S. V. K. there, “was thirty-seven years old. He was the best-known European in Russia, the only one known in Afghanistan. . . . One morning in June he stopped his near a brooklet——”

I could not make it out.

I had made a vow to solve the riddle. Just then Providence dispensed, for my benefit, with its best agent of information about Germany. I found Zelten again.

I was called in, one day, to my picture dealer’s. When I entered the shop, instead of bringing forward the portfolio, which they hang like celestial oats to tickle the nostrils of notaries and brokers who have laid aside an hour to hunt Pillemons, he pushed me toward three drawings laid flat on a trestle, as one might push a child on a Swiss mountain toward the glass-covered table which explains the lay of the land and points out the peaks. They were three drawings which explain almost everything elevated and luminous in the environment of the soul. It is never out of place to describe a drawing by Poussin—they were three Poussins. The first was tiny, about ten centimeters by fifteen. It represented a town; its aspect brought to the lips a beautiful feminine name as the sight of a fruit brings its savor. It had twelve gates, its tower of Babel dropping in ruins at the beginning of the eighth circle; its tower of Pisa, finished, but leaning; its Odéon; its river peopled by washwomen and sailors, whose three images I could see, body, shadow and reflection. Over the bridges passed caravans. An army of riders in possession of the suburbs, were polishing their wagons in the forests which overlooked the enemies’ capital, where one could distinctly see even the cathedrals and the fonts. All this movement, this abundance of monuments and people, one felt to be but a masque of some quite tiny operation, immortal and misunderstood, accomplished that day—the death of a philosopher or the birth of a martyr. In an immense sky, a bird. The second

design had this value in it for me, that the principal person in it looked like me. No photograph had ever brought out better what remained of my face when the tide of the sun at its full had covered it. It was dated Rome; May, 1648. I was walking on the banks of the Tiber. All the glory of Rome and the spring of 1648 was spread about in four little sepia reefs—these were my nose, eyebrows, and mouth. The minutest details my face would make pressed in the snow, I saw marked upon the soul of the Poussin. In the sky the same bird was flying, a little nearer, however, and way at the back under a bush, slept two naked personages who were my daughter and my son-in-law. Narcissus and Echo, I suppose. The third design was the same hero on his death-bed, was my death—but let us get back to Zelten.

When I had asked the price of the drawings, had taken them away in exchange for a few bills, which paid not for them but for some I already had (for any art lover would think a drawing dishonored if he bought it like ordinary merchandise, instead of liberating it by a system of ransom; paying for the Nicole taken last month, in order to keep the Hubert Robert and for the Granet of last year to seize the Piranesi), I learned they had been brought from Germany by the little Count von Zelten, who had chosen them just on account of this resemblance to me and had asked that I should be informed. He also sent me word that he had another drawing, if I still liked Rembrandts, and that he would be at the Rotonda every evening about six o'clock, if I still liked the Boches. It was five o'clock.

I hastened to the rendezvous with the aid of a newly started line of autobusses, which would by the bye have been of real advantage to Zelten formerly, for its course touched successively the four *Monts de Piété*, so far apart in Paris.

At the corner of the Boulevard Raspail and the Boulevard Montparnasse, on the terrace of a café, in the midst of which among the tables, the exit of the Metro came out—I awaited Zelten. It was one of those beautiful March evenings when the sun is not suspended another hour above the horizon by labor deputies but as soon as it touched the town it splashed like an egg over the station and the Eiffel Tower. At this intersection of the Orleans lines and the Dreux lines, in this square where the only passers-by should be from Tours, Beauce, or Choisy, one found installed all that Paris had in the way of Japanese expressionists, Swedish cubists, Icelandic engravers, Turkish medalists, Hungarians and Peruvians of complementary vocations, each one embellished with a semispouse, no two painted alike or using the same color for their eyes or lips. Each one dressed in garments which would make him seem a fool in his native village, but which in this corner of the world, even to the concierge, was not in the least extravagant. Women unaccompanied

got up, now and then, to go over to the counter and light their cigars at the spirit lamp. Opposite was the rival café, in shadow when the Rotonda was in sun and sunny as soon as shadows enveloped the Rotonda; but no one ever crossed the street—except one Creole who moved with the sun and a heated pianist looking for a cool spot, or some fellow who had just quarreled with his group, denying his art and his brotherhood, changing the color of shadows or his political ideals.

On the other corner of the Boulevard was the Baty restaurant where (letting the foreigners peel from their native newspapers, cold meats on which they might have read in a mirror the editorial opinions of Bergen or Kiev), Vincent d'Indy and Berard Naudin came to nourish their souls on Borgueil and raw oysters; and in the foreground was the principal undertaker for the quarter, whom the coachmen of the funerals, numerous in this district so near the cemetery, saluted from their hearses.

I was sure before the war of meeting Zelten in this masonic triangle, at that sole hour when the drinking glasses were filled with the colors of drugstore decanters, and each table received alternating visits from dogs begging for sugar, deaf-mutes asking two sous, women asking a light, or one franc fifty for their taxis, or the unhooked Rosita, who demanded that each one of us, with eyes closed, should draw a pig with his fountain pen in her album. If you care for adventure, it would suffice to answer at the telephone the foreign voices talking unknown languages. It was on this swarm that Damalli planned to drop in contempt and vengeance and rented a room on the fifth floor, but frightened by the exit of the Metro, he turned toward the career of a parachutist and became rich and celebrated. At the table where I was seated this evening, I once had as a neighbor for some weeks a diner whose overcoat always bore evidence of boiled beef with coarse salt and whole peppers. Later we knew it was Trotsky and no one in the establishment felt the slightest surprise; for no one in this café—perhaps in this place only of the whole world—ever despaired of a neighbor, however dirty, poor, or gross, or questioned that he might some day become king or tyrant.

I was waiting for Zelten with some distress, for not only was he to help me pierce the mystery of S. V. K. but he was, of all my numerous German friends, the dearest and the first whom I was to see again. In a few minutes, when he walked toward me—his face like all facial silhouettes resembling the edge of a key—I should know what he would open and what he would shut, and whether I was obliged to believe that Germany no longer existed for me. Now, like all Frenchmen—perhaps out of fear of water—my thoughts always turned toward the continent. I was ready to make a sacrifice

of it, yet I felt that it would be difficult to live without Germany; and at times I felt, with all the threads that bound me to Berlin, Dresden and Munich clipped, disconcerted on my German side; like a dog whose right-side mustache antennæ, giving him his second sight and second hearing, had been cut. Germany is a great country, human and poetic, but the majority of modern Germans can get on perfectly well without it nowadays; but I had found no equivalent, despite researches that had taken me as far as Cincinnati and Granada. Germany is a valley, into which, from a people often without much taste and chiefs without much power of direction, open subterranean passages like the entrance to the Metro on the terrace or Rotonda and the Germans think themselves very sharp when they bury the arms stolen from the administration and the truths of their land there. But we were not amiss in Europe when we wanted to knock there. Germany is a great plain, created for invasions. For forty years France has only been able to send its semi-yearly cohort of eight scholarship students; but I had been one of them and could not renounce my conquest. It is a country in which sentimental matters are so important that it is as necessary to know their names as to know the words for beer and bread; but I really needed a race where the words “soul,” “intimacy,” “motor animal” are the first in Baedeker and in the vocabulary for coachmen. Zelten personified all this for me. I kept a memory of him which had always prevented my joining in this hatred of injustice and Germany which all the French had felt for five years—except, of course, that collector of stamps who left, during the attack of Verdun, his orange ones of the Island of Maurice and his Hawaiian Zebras to William II. When my Germany had sunk deepest, I always had a little buoy over the abyss, marking the place, and that was Zelten.

Zelten had defects, superb and showy, those with which we have decorated Germans since 1870, and we really ought to find another nation to wear them now if Germans insist upon becoming bald, rapacious, and practical. Zelten had curly, blond hair; and he sacrificed every minute of his life to chimeras. He would rush fully dressed into a reservoir to put his hand over the mouth of a spring, or to put under its good wing the beak of a sleeping swan. He was Germany. He was as little as possible like the model writers that Wilhelmstrasse has been distributing since 1914 over what they call the poetic centers of the universe, Boston, Syracuse, and Delos; in the same way that she circulates giant couples, amorous and faithful through the Rigi, Stockholm, and Havana, the sentimental capitals in order to sustain the prestige of German love and German poetry. But now that his compatriots seemed to have a distinct command for every action and every thought, quick responses seemed no longer to exist in Zelten. When for example he

became sportive, every reaction which one accomplishes naked and unthinking seemed to require from him the most clothes and greatest devotion. If he went swimming in the Rhine it must be from the bridge from which Schumann plunged; and if he took a wall on horseback it must be where Beethoven fell and got his deafness. He was of medium height, but handsome, above all by daylight which reduced him to despair, for he never could get up before five o'clock in the afternoon. But even at sunset, the women painters of the Rotonda who had to marry a Baltic baron to assure themselves of a legal father for their children, or the Russian students who had determined to marry a Frenchman, so as to be naturalized and practice medicine in France, stopped short at the sight of him. He was facile in all things, sport, eloquence, painting—everything except the madrigal and the triolet which he was obstinate in trying to translate into Rhenish poetry. I knew him in Munich, where already full of unreason, at the age when I was trying to smoke Abdullah and drink anisette, he had already exhausted morphine, cocaine, and various other of God's remedies less known, such as Mussel thorn and swab. In the neighborhood of bars he always represented himself as a private detective knowing that resin flows freest about equivocal international grafts, flattering an Algerian propagandist in order to obtain *Kif*, an adjutant of Bureau M for his tablets of hard betel. Less noxious drugs, such as *grenadine* and maple syrup which he had obtained from an American deserter, filled him by reason of their source with the same exaltation. As soon as the breath of good fortune, even the smallest good fortune, blew upon him he gained in a second an immoderate self-esteem, for he kept a logical account of all his acts, which, moreover, were instinctive, and the memory of all his good actions blossomed in the slightest heat: the year when he sacrificed to a sick workingman the determination never to make concessions or force what he believed to be his talent, even to acclimatize the triolet.

But at the first contrary wind, the slightest frost, this esteem turned into the most complete distrust of Zelten, of his very existence, for infamous memories crowded upon him. He had once secretly borrowed from a safe which was not his; and he had caressed—a little—his sister-in-law Barbara. There were opportunities for the swing of the pendulum in seven years to be amplified even to admiration and hatred (thanks to seven winters and seven summers), in order that Count Zelten should have saved two or three enemies from death, sacrificed his fortune, given his blood for a transfusion, and, on the other hand, become an alcoholic, and finally overcome Barbara's resistance. He had quarreled with his father, because when he wanted to steal from him, his father had not taken the word of his son rather than the

word of the safe; he put the same father to sleep with laudanum that he might kiss him without his knowing it—"It was so touching," he said, "he smelt like an operation patient!"

Such was the agent sent to me in this little café by Goethe or Nietzsche and some others—while a funeral procession hastened through the twilight toward the tree which is partly in the Avenue and partly in the Cemetery of Mont Parnasse, furnishing me with the means of recognizing the exact number of French men and women in the crowd on the terrace, for the French alone salute the dead in the street.

Suddenly I felt the call which forewarns suggestible people of the coming of the hypnotist. It goes without saying that Zelten had magnetic powers and had once put me to sleep. During the war, two or three times, I had believed that I felt this suction of the spirit, sometimes so vividly that it seemed to come from the opposite trench. Zelten, if I allowed myself to-day to be guided by such a message, was at this very moment taking the green tram at the Quai d'Orsay; he was changing now at the *Ecole Militaire* for the yellow tram; at this moment he was getting into the horse car, red placard of the Boulevard des Invalides; he would get down from the second car which stopped just in front of the Rotonda.

In fact, he did get down.

He stepped out backward to help out a whole boarding school of little girls, stopping to kiss the smallest and last. As he approached me, the youthfulness of his silhouette, which had helped me to recognize him, disappeared point by point from his body as my eyes rested on it. The little girls had hardly disappeared in the shadow, before his youthfulness had entirely vanished. Nearer at hand I noted that his left side had suffered; on his left side he had gray hair, wrinkles, and crowsfeet. Everything he had been able to imagine to keep youth and beauty from leaving him had gone under in eight years of war and fire. One could see at a glance that he had not been a shirker—poor Zelten. So Zelten came back—bringing a whole brood from the tram like those chickens who disappear in the country. He held out both hands, insisting that the sacrificed side should participate in the fête. If he had had a little laudanum he would have kissed me. Then he sat down, rubbing against me like a horse who finds himself in the shafts with an old comrade, forming, after so many years, the old team which had drawn so many burdens, only never hatred or lamentation. We were silent, but it was easy to know how the heart beat of one who gave all the sugar to

the first dog and a dollar to the first deaf-mute. It was just at this moment that Fate chose to send by an Alsatian in full costume. Zelten smiled.

“Oh, well,” he said, “you’ve got her this time, your Alsatia. The one I gave you was not enough?”

Seventeen years ago, in a boarding house in Munich, he had found a means of closing our disputes on the subject of Alsace-Lorraine. He arrived one morning with a picture puzzle, which was a map of Alsatia pasted on pasteboard and cut up in districts.

“We must settle this business of the Reichsland,” he said, “at least between you and me. Now here I have the same map all cut out. When I deem you worthy, you or your country, when I am seized by an impulse of friendship for you or your country, I will cede you a district. And you do likewise. What a beautiful example we shall give to Europe if in six months you have all my map and I have all yours.”

And at once he slipped into my hand, in his satisfaction over his find and in honor of the event, the district of Truetchtorsheim, lost in the very center of Alsatia, and I landed there as if from an aeroplane. There is nothing very characteristic in Baedeker about Truetchtorsheim. This cession was its only historic event. Two days later—it seems I had strangely resembled Galeazzo Sforza through an entire class—I received Rappoltsweiler and Baedeker surprised me by drawing from the cocoon of this name, slick and polished, Ribeauvillé. Then, in a spirit of justice and with his card catalogue point of view, he gave me one by one the cantons in Lorraine where they spoke French. Then one day when I particularly resembled the young Titians, I got Bernweiler, the country of Henner. He never complained that I was as avaricious as he was generous. For I pretended to be imperturbable, even on the day when one of the fat doves of the Royal Gardens who feed on children’s cakes like bears, with a ring around its neck such as the non-poisonous mushrooms wear, lit on his shoulder while we were out bicycling—and the first evening when we both heard Tristram, in tennis clothes, standing up in the standees’ space for the first act and sitting on the curve of our tennis racquets, through the second. I did not cede Baar, or Saarbrück or Brumath. I gave up only a minute frontier district south of Landau (which Clemenceau has also ceded since then) one evening when, trembling with fever and youth and homesickness for the country he had never really left, he resembled as no one before ever resembled a little German boy, good, naïve, and faithful.

So, at the end of the first term, he really had only a few towns; I had looked so much like Cæsar Borgia, old; Savonarola, young; and Baudelaire in the prime of life. He was besieged at every turn. The slightest emotion,

the faintest reflection upon me of the Renaissance or the Reformation would force him—he never knew how, to restrain himself—to give up Metz, Strassbourg, or Colmar. He tried to evade the tragic issue by slipping into my hand in derision districts that I could not introduce into my puzzle: German cities that he hated like Göttingen or Borchum.

He gave me Strassbourg before Metz, keeping to the last the military city, as a general would do instinctively respecting the orders of his Emperor. Then came a night in Heidelberg—a night of moonlight and perfume which I spent sitting near him on the stone wall of the castle—when I happened to resemble no one, no one at all, not even myself; when the stars, sacrificing to I know not what divine friendships and analogies one after the other detached themselves from the map of Heaven—and I had Metz. I need only to have played the same game with the other sixty million Germans!

“Yes,” he said, “I have fought four years to get back what I gave. True, I gave it to you only.” Then I asked him what had happened to him in the last eight years.

“I’ll tell you to-morrow,” he said. “I have a rendezvous with Genevieve Pratt, and I was not expecting you. Everything has happened to me that happens to all diabolic and romantic Germans. I have inherited a share in a factory for india rubber articles; I have quarreled with my stepmother and I have chronic inflammation of the sinus. On the other hand, I suppose fate has given you the lot of every little French bourgeois: you have been loved by a reigning princess, you have found some new relation between words and colors, you have been thrown into a deserted Cyclades and lived there with Miss Compton and Lenine. You have not changed. You might still be mistaken for Charles XII. What gift could I give you in honor of this?”

He got up and pushed back his left sleeve and showed me the traces of the French ball which had emaciated the arm. It was the first time, I believe, that I had seen the traces of a French ball cured. Some tattooing surrounded the scar like a sun.

“Try to read it,” he said. “The prisoner Belt Jones, tattooer to the King, whom I got to do this masterpiece, wished the capital letters to be Gothic and he mixed in some English lettering.”

I read quickly, for I saw Jacqueline Yourst approaching and she collects tattooed inscriptions.

“The German who possesses this skin will never hate France.”

So I learned one evening, at the Rotonda, as I paid for two drinks, that my long right mustache antennæ might grow again.

CHAPTER II

THE next day I put Zelten *au courant* of the Frankfurter mystery which, by the bye, had thickened since the day before. The issue of the morning had brought me an article by S. V. K. on the reform of the German maritime code, in which a series of phrases pretending to apply to Sassnitz and which really were a description of Wimereux were inserted. This time I was the original author.

“In the same way that parents are ecstatic over great ships and the movement in a port, the children who disdain that spectacle, dream of seeing through the keyhole the life-saving boat, and attacking it in its hangar——” Or again:

“The barks glide; the sand hushes the noise of steps, all the noises of the world are silenced for the sabots of the last walker only resound on the flagstones of the quay, and at the border of the earth and the waves——” I had published these novelties with the epigraph upon which Forestier had complimented me and which S. V. K. did not hesitate to steal:

“*Is it for me to sing the blessings of night?*” Zelten did not seem in the slightest degree surprised by the adventure.

“I have heard of S. V. K.,” he said. “He is what one might call a poetic jurist. He lives apart and consecrates himself, it appears, to a criticism of the Constitution of Weimar. There is no doubt but that he works in good faith. I am starting in two days for Munich where he lives, and you shall get some information by next week. But what do you find so extraordinary in such copying at long distance?”

Zelten, as soon as I arrived at the Rotonda, had settled me on the terrace, despite the frost, and had already changed his place three times. From each table, his glance plunged into the shadows, searching, and then he got up and moved again. At last his eyes shone. He sat down, joyous and, as the realistic novelists say, “He had to have a *Picon-Grenadine*.”

“Dear John,” he said, “I have quite a lot of confidences to give you. They will surprise you, and they are not in the least like those of seven years ago. But we have been separated by the very years when we had to give an accounting to the world and its movement. I doubt whether Newton, Archimedes, and Copernicus would have confided in their friend the same way before and after their discoveries. It is not by seeing apples fall, but Germans (one poor fat fellow—I can see him still—rebounded) that I became conscious of the forces which were pulling me and pulling

Germany. Since this matter of S. V. K. torments you, I believe it is possible to give an explanation without running to the hypothesis of bad faith—the same explanation our astronomers use to explain bad weather, or housewives to explain the appalling price of prawns. In view of this, I confess I never felt so much surprise in seeing France. The revelation of the dominance in France of small holdings, which leaves American bankers voiceless at the windows of the Cherbourg Express, I feel it, too, before the souls of the French. Each one has his own soul; conducting disputes with neighboring souls about party walls. Each has his own loyalty; his own lie, his own death. All modern machines for sowing or harvesting peoples are useless to you. No nation ever ran less risk of disappearing than yours, with its forty millions of water-tight compartments, and one must avow that no other nation will ever equal you in wisdom and poise, since each one of you, atrociously isolated from the rest, reaches the same conclusion by instinct—conclusions which are a love of peace and comfort and a duly mitigated eternity. That's the reason that all foreign families adore having a French friend as they adore having a pot of geraniums on the window sill; and the friend is surer than the geranium. But coming from a country where the soul has never been parceled out, nor lies, nor vice, nor death, I discover each one of you unreasoning creatures, with your cannon aimed to defy even the shadow of a new cloud.

“A French face is a mask against all the fluids which inundate the universe, and the more harmful or prejudicial they are—as to-day burying whole peoples—the more your complexions and secret smiles flourish. But the system has inconveniences. When the moral laws of the world do not develop parallel with the germ enclosed in each of you at his birth, you are not forewarned, and, like a fisherman after a long sleep who wakes to find flounders twenty yards long and sharks the size of mackerels, when you decide to come out of your monad, for your Rhenish wars or congresses of parasitology you find the souls of other people composed of different elements from yours and on a different scale. You were astonished on the 1st of August, 1914, to discover a network of spies in France; to learn that the Mayor of the canton of Albert de Mun had appointed as Secretary of Mobilization a man named Durand who was really named Sachsen. And that in the next apartment to the lodging of Maurros was another Durand who was Colonel Schoen. That all goes to prove that the presence of no Academician, or any great French mind, is the slightest protection against what the universe conceals—(under the name of Durand, a light enough veil)—of forces secret or unreasonable, while they recognize by a nimbus the passer-by who thinks in syllogisms; and that is what can not be said of

our Berlin Academy, of Father Hoffman or Count Clemens, who would divine, thirty miles off, a young girl in a swoon; or in our own day there is the brave Liliencron, our François Coppée almost, who falls in a trance every time a regicide passes the tollgate of the city where he is to slay—they verified it by Carnot in Lyons, Elizabeth in Geneva, and Humbert in Rome.”

Here Zelten changed his table and searched the shadows.

“This network of spies,” he went on, “is, moreover, only the most lamentable and visible of secret snares. On this terrace I could point out to you, this instant, those of some little women who have a mission to overtake—at need by intermediaries of every race and by a tour of the world—a colonel adjutant of machine guns, seated at the opposite table, and those of the headwaiters charged to watch them. The fact that a single head of a French office, with three files of law papers, a drink before dinner, and a little watering pot to keep down the dust on his floor in summer, managed to combat the work of our greatest spy (I speak of Scheuermann who felt the call to the vocation of spy suddenly before the crowd and the temples in India and was pushed into it by the overwhelming spectacle of swarming humanity) only goes to prove that it is a gross and material art. But thrown out among the two hundred strangers that surround us I suspect much more subtle snares. I see here twelve or fifteen members of the sect whose adepts, before the acts of love, pronounce a set of ritualistic words that I myself have never found out and that no woman ever has betrayed. I see three representatives of the sect of your friend Barletipoulos, the handsome Greek. He was appointed president of a sect of moon worshipers at Göteberg, the industrial town in Sweden, one night when all the miners had gone up for the event on to the roofs, near the constellations. (It was a sect of moon worshipers and not stargazers, as was pretended.) The vice-presidents of the sect were no other than Prince Oscar and the Nobel heir. Barletipoulos is subjected to an imperious protocol which regulates his gestures from hour to hour. You saw him every day for two years running, by sunlight and moonlight, and being French you never suspected anything. Those two Americans, our neighbors (I can denounce them aloud; they don’t know French; and anyway, among members of a secret society the most futile of all things is to understand when one talks) are gathering in gold by every forbidden means, in order that the directress of Christian Science in Europe may pay all her personal expenses in gold. It is an absolute law— As to that blond youth who is reading the New York *Herald* (the *Herald* is, together with the *Gaulois*, the breviary of all the administrators of sects because of its column of fashionable travel. You see therein all the marriages of the adepts and when the first Lunary wins at polo or billiards, or a little friend of

Eulenburg has a son, he receives next day twenty bouquets and twenty telegrams) he is the author of a guide to Europe that I was able to glance into for a second at the page which begins: 'Of all the cities on the continent Berlin is the one that has the greatest number of cannibals.' Don't smile. Should you go back to Germany these directions would be as necessary to you as they would be to Kim if he were to turn his footsteps thither.

“‘Two hundred souls a square kilometer and upward’ the blond youth continues in his guide— But do you remember Maghena?”

Maghena was a negro from the Cameroon who had served several days at the Rotonda, with incomparable stupidity; one evening between the roast and the dessert he disappeared forever without bringing our Beaujolais— like the Hungarian prince who went out on a pretext of overlooking the caviar and was never seen again, unless it was in London, Dieppe, or Lenox.

“You—you saw in Maghena a great idiot turned off by the manager. In reality, he was stolen by a group of Germans and now lives in Berlin. You remember perhaps what agitation prevailed in the Rotonda at that time, a thrill that you explained by the presence of Courteline who came there to play piquet. But Maghena alone was the cause of those passions. He was like a young ephebus in the new Athens. Maghena had been brought from the Congo by a Swiss, frankly named Schweizer, who got him out of prison where he was awaiting death as a man-tiger. He was chief of the kettle of Dibamba, that is to say, the one who presides at the human sacrifices of initiation in the district. I won't tell you whom he had killed and eaten; his victims had to be relatives close and closer of the chef and his menus conferred no originality upon him anyhow, between Gabun and Obanghi. But he was a veritable depositary of a number of hypnotic secrets, and his glance was the finest deformation of light and thought that had been seen in Berlin since Lilidny. I paid him a visit recently in a dirty little lodging at Rummelsburg, where his jailers alternately starve and stuff him according to the intensity they wish to give to their lighthouse. You, my model Frenchman, while the whole beehive was swarming because of the presence of this fetish, you attributed all the rumors and racket to the fact that Courteline had just made a grand slam in no trumps without an ace——”

He stopped. On the edge of the horizon I saw the star he had been waiting for with so much impatience. It rose, of medium size but shapely. He blushed with joy, that I had discovered him flirting with so beautiful a friend.

“It is Bellina III,” he said. “She is best seen from Rekyavik—or from Nilsen-Tilsen where one goes in a little car drawn by gray ponies.”

A great ruddy person, six feet high, arose and obliterated the star. Zelten pushed him away angrily. The giant apologized. He was a man habitually irascible, who insulted children and poured his beer into the soloist's violin. He went and sat down quite at the end, not knowing whether it was Zerlina 11, Müller 24, or Wandenburg 2,000 he had hidden, but deeply ashamed.

"Let's get back to the story of S. V. K.," went on Zelten, who read at least one of my desires in the star. "You know that at this moment even, in Berlin, Dr. Kuno Schmitt insists that not a few geniuses have become guides from a distance of friends known and unknown, using their hypnotic superiority to impose their inspiration upon them, unknowing. He even goes farther; he explains thus—without speaking of the Shakespeare affair—all contamination and plagiarism. At any rate, the man who thus projected the *romanceros* upon Corneille, Don Juan upon Molière, and Tristan upon Wagner, is not wasting time. How much to be desired it is that the light shed upon customs officials at the frontiers should be replaced by a projector of this sort. But not to go any further, and to prevent your looking upon me with pity, learn that it is I, I alone, who inspired that epigraph on the blessings of night that you accuse S. V. K. of stealing. Who can say that you are not yourself, unconsciously, the correspondent of S. V. K., at least in all that concerns the liquid elements? As for earth, air, and fire he seems to get on without us."

"Zelten," I said, "do be serious. *L'Action Française* will require a clearer explanation of the case." He deigned to turn his eyes from the star, although it was already sinking, although the twilight of its impassioned day, of only ten minutes' length, was commencing, and looked at me with troubled eyes, in which I saw no tattooing and to which I had not the same reasons for trusting that I had to his left arm.

"You will tell me that the greatest mystery in the universe is the clarity of the French spirit, as M. Prudhomme says and M. Brunetière affirms. All the syllogisms and demonstrations that miss fire over the rest of Europe continue to burst in France like Roman candles. Deviations of the trajectory of Newton 16, noted in Potsdam, are immediately corrected in Paris. But what they understand so ill here is that these conventions—settled by logic, simplicity, the acceptance of death by virtue of certain sumptuary clauses, and if you will rightly—you are the only people in the world, who, as for other treaties, elsewhere, not only respect them but really seize their necessary character. Archangels of the multiplication tables; thrones of correct civic standing; seraphim of cheese and the native vine—your six hundred deputies assail with their six hundred limitations the unhappy one who tries by means of cocaine or a view of the cubists to make a hole in the

French mask. You gain by being a tapestry country where the minimum of consciousness begins at what is happiness for other nations, which would be observed with pleasure from another star. But don't you see, you at least whom I believed to be a poet, that minds are reproduced less rapidly in France than the French are? And the reddish bat, the only cabalistic animal that you have kept from the two thousand of your Middle Ages, cannot replace, by itself, all those incubi and succubi? Also, France has become an almost purely human institution and diabolic and poetic forces are more and more banished in our interests. You have innumerable forests but at midnight, in the full of the nocturnal horror, they exercise less power over the primitive soul than a little planting of firs in Berlin at noon. You have streams and rivers which repeople themselves, it would seem, with lobsters and duck; but this hegemony of the liquid element, of which the least German brook bears witness as much as the Mekong, you may search for in vain and be assured that the Rhine from Basle to Carlsruhe will no longer run any but filtered water, pure and insipid.

“It has always been so in France, Zelten.”

“Error; triple error. When Swedenborg died it was to France that he left the direction of the spiritual forces of the planet: to a certain Le Boy des Guays, one of the inventors of the artesian well, who for fifty years held firm the demoniac pressure upon the world—especially in the state of Michigan, for which he had a preference that my study of the texts never permitted me to explain. I confess that in my desire to find somewhere in France a district where common sense had more than three dimensions, I went formerly to pay a visit to the Grand Master, his direct successor, who lived in the Le Boy des Guays house, at Saint-Amand, Mont-Rond, in Berry. I arrived full of hope, for the information I had gathered about the town and about Maître Rollet made me believe I should find in St. Armand something other than a mixture of the yellow dwarf, testamentary dispositions and the Faust waltz, which one calls a truly French atmosphere. Why, it was at Mont-Rond that witches were burned; it is in the center of the town, the place called Eldorado, that there is a confluence of the coldest river, the Marmande, and the hottest river, the Cher, in France, the confluence, if you like, of the Devil and Venus. From the day when I decided to go there, not a week passed that I did not read in the papers that Saint Armand had not chosen Le Boy des Guays lightly. In one month I had noted the crime of the Marquis of Naive, the haunted cemetery, and that always enigmatic matter of the decapitated ducks. A city without great men and without statues—excellent precaution, for the spirits hate too precise a competition! (This advantage has disappeared, for it is in the suburbs of Saint-Armand that

Carpentier is put out to pasture.) It is a city that marks the exact center of France, or rather it marks it now since you have taken back Alsatia, a city where the Druidic feasts changed without transition into Roman and then French feasts; the menhirs into sarcophagi and then into milestones. At every kilometer there is a ditch for blood. With such wealth, the black lakes of the Abbey of Noirlac, the green oaks of Verthechenail, the whole dominated by a system of ridiculous towers built after the Crimean war and called Malakoff towers, the same town in Germany would have produced at least three Hoffmanns and five Arnims. But once I entered Madame Rollet's, my last illusion vanished. Tennis, as at the English Embassy; in the garden flowers set out as at the Dutch legation, that is, in the least extra-terrestrial pattern; and a Chinese pavilion with new porcelain as in China. Inside, the first phonograph of Saint-Amond, the first electric tea kettle, the first little Bollée motor, as at the Embassy of the United States. I returned to Paris that night."

The star had sunk. . . . Half stretched out, Zelten was silent and looked like an opium smoker awaiting his second pipe. But the polestar itself would not furnish aliment for his eyes that night. He turned from the depopulated heavens and put off his confidences to the next day for, as he told me, the third sub-brigadier of the 8th squad of anti-espionage had just been sent by the manager to fill our glasses. We gained in that we were copiously served and the sub-brigadier in that he heard a lively if impromptu discussion of the Aryan influence on Mexican monuments.

"You ought to know," said Zelten to me, nevertheless, as he accompanied me home, "that I am divorced, though I still see Genevieve. She will bring you my letters in my absence, for I am starting out on a great enterprise and I believe that S. V. K. will not be a stranger to us much longer."

"You are going to Germany?"

"It is better to tell you nothing. I am going to Munich. I am starting because of a phrase which is an obsession to me. The phrase alone is all I know of my projects. I have been led toward all the important acts of my life quite simply by repeating for a year or six months beforehand some formula, dropped by chance into my mind. But the very habit of repetition ended by making me passive and the act inevitable. As a child there was nothing I was more afraid of than disobeying my grandfather, but if I repeated to myself three times running: I said, 'Oh, pshaw,' to Grandfather, I invariably committed the deed and without remorse. The act was no more than my confession. The act absolved me. Thus in my life I pronounced innocently for six months the phrase, 'I have deceived my wife,' and then for the next

six months: 'I have deceived my wife with my sister-in-law,' and these phrases put to sleep all judgment or sense of shock in me. Twenty formulas have thus lived in my throat and my thought, and I need not tell you whether they were realized or not—phrases such as: 'I have killed my Captain'; 'I smashed the Night Watch'; 'I have cut off one of Sudermann's mustaches and his beard by force'; 'I have given the quarter of my fortune to the sisters at Cassel.' You need only know that at this moment the phrase is: 'I want to die for the true Germany.' Oh, be reassured, one has to find it first!"

We had almost reached my turning. I heard the racket at my house which takes place every midnight when a lodger for whom the concière refuses to open the door beats on the double portal, like Samson, but shrieking aloud at the same time.

Is it for me to sing the blessings of night, this evening?

I found myself with Genevieve Pratt who had brought me a letter from Zelten on the bridge of the pinnacle of Marshal Joffre, bought by the Club of One Hundred and converted into a restaurant and moored by anchors to the soil of the Place de la Concorde. Bands of St. Cyr graduates were dining there. It was the *Borda* of the Marshal. It was served by three stewards, English, French and Swedish, who had all three been head stewards on real ships and who from time to time recognized some former passenger of the *Tokya-Maru*, the *Cretic* or the *Caledonia*. Genevieve was joyful to come on the pinnacle, for she detested everything iron and loved everything wooden. Never since her flirtation at Toulon had the nephew of Admiral Germinet been able to lure her aboard the iron-clad, to give her tea or opium or a reading from Tristan Corbière; he had to rent an old abandoned brig named *The Desolation*. She was much astonished to see so many people on the water. It was a boat that smelled of everything a boat does not smell of: violets, roses, strawberries and a vine twig fire. It was a boat without a rudder (demonstrated the day she swept away the three neighboring floats); but among the habitués were some real travelers whom one could recognize by their instinctive attempt to go down into a cabin and above all there were seen two sea birds who, having accompanied an old salmon to the mouth of the drain well known by all channel birds, came up again to await before the Chamber of Deputies a young salmon who was coming down. . . . Then the sun dropped and they disappeared toward the place in Paris where all sea birds go to bed. Opposite, on the Quay d'Orsay two windows were lighted where the operator kept the wires hot with telegrams to Peking, which in an hour the great sea cable would swallow. . . . The five stars of the Marshal

painted on the plates and the menus already multiplied overhead; and from the level of the Seine, one saw the mountains of Paris assume their real height, Mont-Rouge higher than Mont-Parnasse, Chaut-Mont less high than Mont-Martre. Through the kitchen spigot, wide open, the lake of Mont-Souris poured murmuring into the Seine. When the Nord-Sud line passed under the river the pinnacle trembled like a building and one heard the same noise of glass which in the center of the Indian Ocean announces a typhoon. Under the breath of earth the moon was covered with steam—impossible to pretend this evening that the earth was dead. Touched up red, whence came their words, and blue, whence came their glances, the faces of the women, according to the angle with which they wished the rays of the moon to strike them, were bent down or lifted up.

To return to the famous blessings of night. Was it not perhaps M. Forest who should sing them, he who was telling the Swedish steward that his lettuce had been watered with liquid manure and not with port; or Curnonsky, who refused to eat his calves' liver sterilized by the Flonne machine; or M. Rouff struggling at the same time with a lobster and a sneezing fit; or perhaps was it I?

The letter of Zelten helped me to explain the plagiarisms of S. V. K. by an hypothesis inconceivable yesterday and I had already found out from the steward the hours of all the express trains to Munich. I decided to start immediately to verify it, that I might not lose any chance of finding my friend Forestier living, but without memory. Never before had a man on a boat so longed to see a station.

“Dear John,” said the letter, “the formula that haunted me the other day has disappeared or rather has taken a new form. It has become: ‘I want to be King of Bavaria.’ This is sufficient information about me. As to what concerns S. V. K., his history is singular. He was picked up on the field of battle at the beginning of the war, naked and at the point of death, and after two months of unconsciousness he awoke without memory. They had to teach him to eat, to drink, to speak German, from the beginning. It was a Major Schiffel of Stralsund who took charge of him and he succeeded better than Schlegel with Germany in 1800, for S. V. K., who produces little, passes for one of the ablest dialecticians of Europe. At this moment he is checking up the constitution of Weimar. Watch that he does not copy Forestier in his annotations on the Danube regulations and the statute of lakes. . .”

Genevieve was surprised by my silence, but all the other guests, English and others, excited after all to feel under their feet the center of the world, more moving and alive in this place than at the Palais-Royal or the

Madeleine, were all more silent than they would have been at Larue's or Stefan's. We were to have a new president of the Council in a few hours. The French, friends of liberty, desired, drinking their liqueur-brandy, a tyrant who would obey them; except two or three who wanted a gentle king who would command them. I took Genevieve to a private room decorated with pictures of Delilah, Judith, and Ninon de l'Enclos. I really did not know that Ninon—she too—had done so much harm to men. However, the presence of Genevieve was reassuring. She was there, little and delicate, before her daily bitters, which gave her the courage every evening to resist life, admiring the butler as she might have done Jurien de Gravière.

I had not seen her for ten years, an epoch when her sculpture had not yet made her famous and when every three months she was newly engaged. The fiancé, according as to whether he was a professor or an engineer, began at once to rearrange the books or the lights in the fiancée's apartment—bringing in a pile of new poets or lighting up the goldfish with a blue light. According as he had the tramway, a taxi, or an auto at his disposal, he showed her Bois-Colombes, Marly, or Chartres—and he would disappear some fine day without Genevieve's ever knowing the reason why, as if his only rôle in existence had been solely to reveal to her the hobbies or the virgin lead which short-circuits respect. The writer friends of Genevieve did not even feel obliged to dedicate their works to so casual a fiancée. She, whose face changed untiringly, made no complaints and she was contented to look for a fortnight like the last one who had escaped.

We adored her. She was one of those natural forces or weaknesses which the world reluctantly produces and upon whom civilization avenges itself, overwhelming them with all the mediocre mishaps she carries in her panoply; for Genevieve was a child of adultery and an adulterous mother, divorced, unfrocked, and a good many other things besides. She defended herself against society with childish phrases which shamed those who felt at ease with their consciences: "I am an illegitimate child, but my father was a Senator. I left the convent and went straight to the Atelier Quentin and I only believe in God in summer. I am divorced, but I continue to live with my husband. I was a German through the war, but I came back twice to France by aeroplane to give birth to little stillborn babies."

On her proud days (the only days she really ever had) she talked continually of a cousin at Montbeliard who, for her part, was entirely at peace with all the priests and court houses, who was legitimate, baptized, married in church and gave birth to little living children. Genevieve was extremely beautiful, especially on the days when she resembled no earthly fiancée, but da Vinci's Slave or the angel of Mordigliani; having not only the

same three creases on the abdomen but perfect bust and features, according to the measurements of the Beaux-Arts (and how often we measured her!) and weighing on the Metro scales the exact weight of perfect health, although she was always dying. She offered not the slightest resistance to those gross atoms which determined the acts of her contemporaries—nationality, customs, snobbishness—though they pierced her; but she was an absolute barrage to the intangible. She was incapable of foreseeing an event and married a Bavarian on July 29, 1914, as she certainly would not have failed to marry an Englishman the day before the martyrdom of Jeanne d'Arc. But she could foresee everything that depended only on the elements or the soul: she could predict droughts and inundations (quite the opposite of Venizelos, who August, 1914, predicted the date when Guatemala would enter the war), but at the sight of a pushcart vender or a janitor, her X-ray glance would see under that vulgar form all that such an one had accomplished in the way of generosity, rescue or suicide, and would make him avow it by her brusqueness and menaces as one does a fellow who has swallowed a louis. She had but one desire—not to live alone, and since she had no people by birthright, since she had no father, mother, brother, or sister, she had to content herself with haphazard lodgings: those of Russian painters, bankers, or actresses of the Française. She freed herself from them as soon as she heard of some woman cousin in the country.

“Good-by, Emilio. . . . Good-by, Samov. . . . I am going to spend ten days with a cousin in Montereau.”

Because of her fragility, she was called frivolous; she was said to like tigers and dark men. Calumny! I myself lived with her at Rouen-St.-Morin, at Renaud's, at the sign of “Good Wine Needs No Sign,” where she worked alone at her sculpture; for in this she differed from other sculptors who only stopped where they were sure of finding colleagues; for sculptors in general are drawn to the country as statues to the city, as if the supreme end of sculpture were to give the world busts of other sculptors. She preferred quite simply rather damp summer resorts on account of her clay, and came back from her holidays gorged with shellfish or crippled with pain. She talked without any connection or any adjectives and in her modesty she always attributed any statement she made which she thought important (such as the good weather or the necessity for permanent armies) to the craftsmen of some related art, medalists or wood engravers.

The *Figaro* proclaimed her the greatest talent since Rodin, but what really amused her most in making her busts was to pierce the eyes with a knitting needle. *Les Feuilles* granted her the greatest genius after Borka, but what she really preferred in her full-length statues was making the buttons

on the clothes. Redon, Monet, Renoir, and Debussy all posed for her, and she was the first to imagine the impression of the ten fingers of the Demiurge, as if he, instead of Adam, on the first day of the world had molded all the painters and musicians from 1912 to 1919. But what she really liked was to model big noses with a paper-cutter and as she could not, like most French people, recognize Jews, she was always surprised on the day of her exhibitions to see in the catalogue only Bernheims, Bloch-Lavallois, and all the Valdos Heymanns. Sometimes people came to wake her up at night, as they wake the country doctor, people who were going to put on mourning the next day and had no gloves or hats ready: it was to take her to mold the death mask of some celebrity. She would get up without a word, take up her bucket and roll of plaster, and follow like a Plutonian cook.

She hated losing her companions, even animals, and when she had to pick out a dog or a cat or some birds, she always went to see the Director of the Museum (she fairly adored interviewing the directors of any administration or monument and talking to the conductor or director of the tramways), and she would adopt the one whose race was the longest lived. To-day she was going to buy a young horse, for she had reached an age (Shetland ponies live thirty-one years) when the horse might outlive her. It was in this atmosphere of Seine water, where she always felt inspired, that she told me how she had married Zelten.

“Before Zelten I had had friends, alternating in this order: first a mature man, then quite a young man; then an old man, then quite a young man. But never a man of my own age. Every eighteen months I was sure of going back to the white beard of a collector of Outamaros or Van Goyas; only to fall back, at the end of eighteen months upon extreme youth and the necessity for helping my friend prepare his bachelor’s thesis. I had to change my mode of locomotion and my gait, my gambling games, my ornaments, and a great many other things—even my language. At a pinch I even gave up poker to play *écarté*, pajamas for a Greek gown, and counting by the thousand francs for *écus*; but it was exactly that, which seemed to belong to all ages, to one’s common being, which gave me the impression of being glued, after all, to my own age and my own generation: the sea, the mountains, the bushes on the way to Deauville, in short, as the art potters would say, it was nature. It was brooks and forests—as the wood engravers would say—the Cevennes. When those old men talked to me about rain or fine weather, it always seemed to me they were talking about some *old* rain, or some *old* fine weather. And when the young ones talked about the tempests I always got an impression of baby typhoons and infant cyclones.

“Sometimes we went bathing, although quite naked, as the ironworkers say—in my own beautiful country, and the old ones always reminded me of the nudes of Rochegrosse, and the young ones of Matisse. No one of my lovers was ever a nude of one of my own painters. You can imagine with what *élan* I decided to live with Zelten. He was born the same day as I. We had only one birthday between us. I had only to see him once without clothes to feel that all the great events which childhood feels—the death of Bismarck, the death of Jules Ferry, the view of Tangiers, Dreyfus, and the Munich Exposition—we had felt them on the same day of our lives. I believe the only difference was that he was born in the morning and I in the evening. But such words—beeches, sunshine, artichokes, red clover—which when used by others gave me frightful discomfort, were calmed in me when I was with him. He never suspected this nor yet why in the country it amused me to shut my eyes and make him describe the countryside, field by field. And you, moreover, you can not be far from my age. I recognized that at once when you were speaking of night, as the color engravers would say.”

It was thus that everything connived, even Genevieve, at pointing me out as the one to sing the blessings of night that evening. The incredible hope that Zelten’s letter had brought me, urged me to it. On the opposite quay, tram No. 14 kept up its eternal chase of tram No. 20. The Eiffel Tower (our own age, by the bye; there must have been one week when we were all about the same height), its entire mass mobilized by the point of its platinum lightning rod, hoisted its light by the elevator, half-masted for the night. These two lives that we had lived—these hundreds of friends killed or dead, the illnesses, earaches, nervous troubles, head colds, suffering in bringing to birth little blind eyes, rows with our janitors—by virtue of our two glasses of *marc*, we were ready to take them up again. The moon had turned and showed us the mountains in order; showed them too, without palpitation, Mount Silver less high than Mount Radium, Mount Platinum equal to Mount Wilson and flickering on its right side the little star, which fed upon fireflies. . . . We watched it; it must have been this one that our child’s book—the same book for Genevieve and me—while admitting that it figured in the sky, revealed disdainfully that it was not much compared to the planets, but that an ordinary diligence could reach it in three years and fifteen days. . . . Yes, Forestier, it is my duty to describe the last eleven days—when one approached her with gloves on, in order to touch her at last; with smoked spectacles on, not to be dazzled; and to describe the love, already transformed into friendship, of her who left earth to accompany you in the diligence.

But here is tram No. 20, continuing its way, alas! horizontal, never suspecting that No. 14 is following, skipping all the optional stops.

Each to his own task. I, as a writer, when I think of a friend, write like him, without intention. As for Genevieve, the sculptor, who pierces me with her glance and has already guessed that I once saved three cats, and will soon guess that I saved a child, her face begins to look like mine. . . . The Swedish steward showed us the door and started us toward the obelisk. "Sing the blessings of night?" He should do it who would say to the first policeman, "The moon is up, policeman, and a thousand stars are out."

It was my turn!

On the twenty-first of March, 1922, at midnight, exact as spring but in a better humor, I landed at Landschut. Zelten had sent a certain Doctor Mueller to the station, professor of French diction in that town, to whose living the war had dealt a sad blow; for while he still had pupils, by degrees as the Franco-German reconciliation seemed further off and the day when at the Altstadt they would have a distribution of prizes, a flute solo or Horatius immolating Camillus, they brought him younger and younger pupils until this month he had none over six years old.

It had frozen. The soil of Bavaria sounded half hollow. It was the first time I had been in Germany since the war. It was all easily recognized and yet some change must have taken place by which my whole being was subjugated, without my being able to notice anything except that the sky at midnight was blacker, the stars more stationary, and freezing point one degree higher. Mueller dragged me away to a restaurant to give me Zelten's instructions. The hundred-year-old guild houses, repainted the day before, were drying and sleeping without a light, as houses and towns only sleep that have been menaced by warplanes. Mueller, who was also professor of art, struck matches and tried to point out to me, or when height permitted to make me touch, the respective work of Bavarian and Italian artists on the façades of the Residenz; and on the clock tower of St. Martin, 133 meters high, he showed a pure Sicilian motif just below the lightning rod, regretting that the match would not allow me to see it.

The Iser whimpered along between two Iserers of hard ice. The odor of the inns had changed, too; the beer was a little weaker or a little stronger; force meat balls and stewed hare were a little more liquid. Mueller kept me on the alert for several hours. They were fearing an anarchistic uprising in Munich; machine guns patrolled the highways; and I received from Zelten a false passport giving me the name of Chapdelaine and baptizing me Canadian.

The distrustful innkeeper would not leave the room, to the despair of my host, who had planned to recite the chief tirades of his French repertoire to me, in fear that his accent had been corrupted. He hardly had time while the manager was opening the front of the shop to murmur (touching tribute to France!) the stanzas of Jules Truffier about mittens. But suddenly from a height of thirty-three meters, the half-hour signal agreed upon struck with its Nüremberger hammer, between two Berlin angels.

We had to leave the town cautiously, avoiding knocking against the none-too-dry monuments, by a way that went through fenced-in gardens, where black radishes flourished under the snow, and that twisted about pigeon towers where just at this moment the first pigeon was escaping, for the sun was about to appear. Soon the whole heavens were gilded, including the last star. Seven o'clock sounded from the Trautsnitz clock—pure German this one, except for its little Swedish spire. And its little dolls had to come out rather piteously, Solomon with frost on his lifted hand and Goliath with hoar frost on his nose. We had just reached a small hillock planted with four oak trees at the crossroads of the highroad to Freysing. Two dapple-gray farm horses, like those ridden by the kettle-drummers of Charles V, were awaiting us, tied to the trees by a sailor's knot. It was an imprudence, as Mueller remarked, for it was thanks to just such knots that they had recognized and arrested some sailors who were all communists during the revolution. At this spot, where so many had been hanged during the Thirty Years' War, some kites and crows wheeled and fluttered, confusing the odor of sleep upon us with the odor of death. A young man in a dogskin coat, half hidden by one of the horses, showed me my mount, straddled his, and Mueller said good-by with a tearful phrase that one felt was pushed out of him by two or three thousand verses of Corneille and Botrel.

There was nothing very mournful or very desperate about that dawn. It was shining and correct as a dawn by Albert Dürer. And it was as welcome to us who had not slept as is night to pirates, mercenaries, and honest folk. On the plateaus and grassy slopes the wind, the new sun, and morning star—all these common property of the entire world—smelled full in our nostrils of Suabia and Franconia. Not a rabbit, not a hare, not a juniper or a walnut tree with its thrush in its fork like a signature, not a brooklet frozen or cut in the ditches of the valley that I did not know already from the Old or the New Testament. For I was in the epic of the Holy Empire, which continues to live in Germany in the mornings, while the romantic epoch only appears about midday, and at twilight in the suburbs of the towns that of the *Sturm und Drang* period awakens. I took in with the freshest air, this bath in the Middle Ages, which Bavaria gives one on waking, when only those creatures come

out who have not changed since Wallenstein: weasels, squirrels, couriers on horseback, whose horns awaken the guardians of the belfries too suddenly, stretched out fortunately at their foot and not at their tops; chambermaids who gently opened a shutter with one shoulder, to prevent the other breast from showing, and to prevent the pot of citron aloes from tumbling. A lark, a cock—but the one lark and the one cock of which one might affirm by something indefinable in their cry and their plumage, that they personified in nothing either Gaul or France. A landscape seen so many hundreds of times, tiny mound by tiny mound, in Altdorfer or Wohlgemüth, that one expects to see suddenly in the air, as in the drawings and engravings, a fat little child quite naked, or just two hands praying, or the celestial gallows.

I was not in a country but in some pillaged magic dawn, which refused to reveal anything of modern Germany. Now and then, far to the right or far to the left, the clock tower of a town appeared and the road always ended by leading us to it. The earliest riser among the children was skating on the littlest ponds. A buzzard—like a hole in the icy air—capsized suddenly and fell about ten yards. Bands of crows, separated by the highroad, delegated for the middle of it, certain heroic crows who fought till they drew blood, and let us ride over them without flying away. Our horses had straight sheaves of smoke at their nostrils, sparks on their shoes, the glitter of gold on their chests.

It was just the landscape, where, thanks to the painters, the most births of the infant Jesus, and the fewest repentances of Magdalen had taken place; the most massacres of the Innocents, and the fewest marriages at Cana; the most *Dances Macabres* and the fewest Dying Adonises, where, in the pictures, the eyebrows grow on the apostles, the hands of the Virgin become knotty, the bosoms rise up, and the skin hangs on the hags. It was Germany.

The miracle, however, seemed to work inversely in what touched my young companion. He had gauntlet gloves, in which I recognized little by little small hands; big pupils with a wearied glance; boots in which his foot suddenly appeared minute. I remembered that ever since our departure I had showed him little attentions—picked up his riding whip and hooked his cloak; near the castle Cornar, I avoided a joke. It proved to me that my body, more cunning than its master, had suspected a feminine body by him. From the moment when I called him Fräulein, he turned his head toward me, drawing down his muffler with both hands to unmask better—as children in their grimaces pull down their lips—and at the bottom of the monster gullet, I saw the face, naked and rosy, of a young girl.

“If you knew my name,” she said, laughing, “you’d be even more astonished. Don’t try to remember. I was only seven years old when you saw

me last. I am Ida Eilert.”

At the mere name of Eilert, and perhaps too because it had just struck ten, by way of an instantaneous decoration, another Germany appeared. We were near Moosburg, and the yellow diligences radiating from the post office were arriving to the sound of trumpets at the first villages. The inns emerged from their trimmed yews, and the Tyrolean servants were polishing the candlesticks and lamps in the sun; the dappled farm horses, harnessed to a derrick, dropped in front of each house with a flowery sign, a cask like an egg. By the zigzag path leading to the Gothic chapel, the men in tobacco-colored pantaloons and rough hats held by either hand a little flapper, with a red skirt, black hair twisted round her ears like shells, and a little gold chain. Above the flat horizon, cut and cut again by innumerable highroads bordered with linden trees in bud, one saw the Alps.

Terriers ran out of kennels in form of Cathedrals, barking at cages in the form of abbeys, where old canary birds from before the war and their hybrids, were singing. Near the lake in a park a sleigh stood ready for the morning drive—a sleigh with orange enameled bells. And personifying all this was Ida in masquerade. Ida! and fifteen years ago I had loved in order and in turn according to age her three elders: Trude at tennis; Elsa at the Ungerer Baths; Fredy at the midsummer fires fête—one for each element, as Zelten would have said. Elsa was the one I really preferred. Every Wednesday and Friday, days for mixed bathing, we circumnavigated, swimming the round of the countries and temperatures which is one of the attractions of the Ungerer Baths: from the thirty degrees of the Indian river, by the twenty-five degrees of the Chinese Kiosk, and nineteen degrees of the French canal, ending in the eight degrees of the Tannhäuser cave, lighted up by the bottoms of bottles alternately Apollinaris and Bordeaux; we emerged at the same temperature and in the same humor, as after a reading aloud in the family, and went to get dry in the sun, our faces protected and hidden by the Munich papers or Fridays—swell day—by *Figaro*. It was by this distinguished paper that we were recognized by Papa Eilert, scene painter of Tyrolean pieces, who often drew the swan that escorted us on our trip. His daughter, nude, surprised at his appearance, hid her head in the newspaper—not from modesty at all, but because he had a mania whenever he could for seizing her or her sisters, and pinching nose and chin together, as one does pigeons to see if they have stolen. The three sisters had flown since then, each one snapped up by a foreign German colony—the oldest married in Rio; Elsa in Milwaukee, Fredy in Trieste—and the father had only the mother left whose nose and chin he could pinch together, and the letters of each one of these inseparable sisters arrived with the stamp of a different

continent on it. Ida told me all these events, and sometimes a word of hers would awaken in me a whole new order of memories which would not otherwise have had the slightest chance of mounting to the surface, into such an abyss had they fallen; such as the story of the meringue stewpan of her mother and the perforated vise that her father gave the mechanics.

“Do you remember,” said Ida, “the day you were prompter at the charity sale of the Baroness Buchen-Stellenbach’s?”

Why, indeed, had I forgotten the baroness, daughter of Baedeker, celebrated for her seven feet of height. How had I been able to forget her, whose great idea was a sentimental Baedeker, destined for young married couples and poets? Stations, museums, hotels—everything to be described there for folk who were just to have, or had just had their wedding night. The plans and maps were sown with crosses marking the fatal city of suicidal heroes, or murdered and murderers, or the eternally ill, Werther, Adolphe, and in the new edition, Anna Karenina and Paphnuce. It happened, to everyone’s astonishment, despite the lack of romanticism in my race, that the majority of the crosses were French. We knew by heart the finest phrases of the guide: “Whatever the distraction engendered by love, one must lift one’s eyes on entering the Coliseum!” Or, in the chapter on Paris: “My husband always told me that there were two imperishable memories in his life, his marriage, and his campaign of 1870.”

Also, the baroness was devoted to everything that she thought French, as if it were the fruit or the cause of her marriage even—calling me *Söhnchen* or *Vaterchen* according to her humor, and encouraging me to find Princess Ottilia desirable in the hope that, as an effect of so illustrious an amour, after having planted a cross on my grave, the editor of the Sentimental Baedeker would feel authorized to design the same flattering mark on his map.

“To trip up the feet of a prompter,” said Ida, “that’s a rare jest. The day, nevertheless, when you are prompting *Angèle*, at the moment when the son’s wife takes the father, one heard a great cry behind the scenes, which seemed for the first time to grasp the indecency of Hartleben’s pieces and emphasized their appeal. It was I that had tripped you up. I confess it to-day.”

Thus in our life, after thirty years and in the depths of a strange province, one runs across the reason why the corner pane of one’s grandmother’s window broke the day of the fair, or why for three months every Sunday your neighbor on the landing beat a cigar box with a hammer. I do not despair that some day, in Oceanica or Mexico, other enigmas of my past may be solved. A knot always finishes by being untied, by simple distaste for being a knot. But the only thing that really worries me is the enigma of

Tornielli. That ambassador on duty, whom I saw for the first time at the distribution of prizes at the General Competition made a sign to me to come to him and slipped into my hand a hard-boiled egg.

Ida, who had dismounted to run about and get warm, in place of remounting her horse had jumped up back of me, astride, and was explaining market towns, castles, artists' colonies with arms that seemed to be mine. She made the mistake of continually coming back to Mecklenburg and of comparing every landscape and every object in Bavaria with its parallel there. In Mecklenburg the castles are copied, not from Versailles but from Chambord. In Mecklenburg, instead of painting the façades of the houses, they paint the rocks, the boundaries, and even the big stones white. If you run across a gray stone, it means that it only appeared above the Mecklenburg soil the day before.

It was midday by the clock in Freysing, ten to twelve by the Chapel of the Holy Blood in Schwerin, and in the same way that formerly I made the aquatic round of the German baths among the marble and nickel with her sister Elsa, we arrived at this new temperature, having pretty nearly covered the period of Goethe, at Germany of 1914. Driven by the Committee of Protection from sites No. 1 to No. 13, it huddled itself in sites 14 to 20, those that are out of reach of rivers and forests. Since water, light, and heat are everywhere now, on every sterile surface, among pine scrub and heath, there were crowded suburbs without towns, chimneys separated from their factories, according to the new system and grouped by twenties like a palm grove. Near every pond were arrangements for an artificial inlet and outlet of water; parallel to the road and functioning in the air were transmission wires connecting the gables of two buildings twenty decameters apart; and on the clothes of all this people, whatever the color might be, was a roughness such as one finds on the coats of young bears and wolves. But above all, at every free chink between two streets, on every façade, on the trestles round the fish market (filled with beasts that other countries disguise by preserving them, crabs, octopuses, mollusks, and tiger fish), was the alphabet of the new race—advertisements! Advertisements of foods, all provided with chemical names, as if Germany no longer knew animal and vegetable nourishment; Egoton, that had to be boiled two hours; Hygiopon preferably roasted; Rad-Io, for salads, and even cakes written Keks; beauty advertisements as frequent as and larger than the publicity we give to the Amieux Sardine, and these beauty advertisements between Freysing and Munich nearly all consecrated to the nose—"Ennoble the form of your nose," said the lettering which in France, in the name of Michelin, begs you to save the children. Red noses are cured by Ekia; snoring and snuffling

noses by Ekiol; the membranes of the nose are strengthened by Hygiena. One might take it for the catechism of a nation given over to cocaine. The words borrowed from foreign tongues were becoming suddenly bloodless. Bureau was Burö: the dear little letters were congealed in one capital letter and tea had become T, coffee K. F. All the gods and goddesses that preside over panmorphism, natural size, Cybele, Pan, and Orpheus were the only authorized guarantees for bleaches and receipts for impotence. Our huntsman from Maxim's and our wanderer with rubber heels, were replaced by Theseus nude and Apollonius of Tyana. So that long before rejoining the auto which was awaiting us at Schleissheim—to put us down at Nymphenburg, in the street of Siegfried Kleist, I had gotten the impression of a race which surpassed all others in the art of digesting metals; keeping its blood in alcohol; nourishing itself with solid equivalents for oxygen, and occupied by a mixture of chemical agents in creating (it was by way of imitating Goethe) living homunculi.

“Here we are,” said Ida. “Here's his villa. In ten minutes he'll be coming out to close the shutters. Moreover, his office looks out on the street. Look! there is his shadow.”

How like a German to show me the specter of S. V. K. first instead of himself! Behind the lowered shade, like a cinema screen, I saw only a shadow lessening itself to a dwarf, growing big like a giant, ornamenting itself with numerous arms, or just leaving on the screen such a gray, moving circle as a microscope offers. One might suppose it one of those terrible battles between a vivifying and a deadly globule, the fusion of a metal or the destruction of a tissue. At the slightest motion of S. V. K., that German specter took occasion to bewilder me, taking on three heads, getting rid of his nose, or making just one huge hand of himself. A sad matter to have to recognize one's friends by the X-ray! . . .

My pain was doubled, too, at surprising S. V. K. each moment bound to Germany by threads, slight but unbreakable. The postman passed and threw a bundle of tied-up papers into a box on which his name was marked. One heard his telephone ring. He had planted some young lindens; he had built a wall for his tomatoes or clematis. To know S. V. K. bound to Germany by six month subscriptions, contracts of six years, lindens demanding ten years more, tomatoes claiming the return of summer, jasmine, a clinging plant, saddened me as much as to have known him in a veritable prison. Bavarian pigeons were coming back through the snowflakes to huddle in his chimney, almost in its heat; sparrows chirped behind his shutters; S. V. K. was bound

to Germany by his animals. A servant went in with a crock of beer and some pretzels; S. V. K. was bound to Germany by his taste. . . . Suddenly the screen became white as snow. S. V. K. was about to go out. . . .

“Here he is,” said Ida. “Let’s go nearer the door.” She pushed me forward, for I lacked courage. I could almost have wished to see the giant himself come out or the dwarf, or the man with ten arms or the one hand. The door opened by double grooves (S. V. K. was bound to Germany by the system of doors and windows), and, preceded by the famous shadow, I saw a man looking at Ida and me, the unknown couple. I saw a being ornamented with all the appendages that Germany confers when one plunges into her—a face embellished with two large spectacles of sham tortoise shell, a gold tooth, a German beard cut in a point:

I saw Forestier.

CHAPTER III

OPPOSITE VILLA SIEGFRIED there was a building new in 1914 and now a hundred years old, for German houses, deprived of janitors, have a much shorter life, a much more rapid pulse than French houses and grow old much more quickly. The cosmetics which the Germans reproach us for putting on our faces, they use to cover their buildings. Constructed in the rainbow period of splendor before the war, there remained on this one now, of its former ocher-colored rice powder, the red on its arches, its orange clay, its black curtains, its violet oval windows, only the ghost of a neurasthenic sun—and some frescoes on the façades, just such as would be needed in a prehistoric cave to prove that the Magdalenians knew William II, Salomé and aviation. It was rented out furnished and I took a room on the first floor which overlooked the villa, although the hostess, supposing I wished to spy upon the exiles from Kiev and Odessa with whom the house was jammed, and believing me to belong to the police, wished to lodge me on the court where I could have seen everything, through the snow which two little Russian children in the court were catching in their hands and eating as the manna of their own country. From my lobby, anyhow, I could see the whole tribe, for they drew no curtains across their windows, snapping their fingers at spies, proving that their misfortune was typical, the same that one could study in a glass house as the Scotch philosophers study its contrary.

I must confess that my room, on the other hand, was the very illustration of bourgeois German comfort—comfort assured by a collection of wares in lizard skin, a service for eggs, the spoons of which were in Saxon lizard, an inkstand of Roumanian lizard, and there was even (though I did not recognize the color of my compatriot) an oyster service made from the hide of a French lizard. The French lizard is bright red and his tail white. Luxury was no less generously distributed by trophies offered the husband, tenor of an amateur quartet, which were scattered about the room or nailed to the walls. “To Heinrich Langen for his beautiful victory in Dessau.” “To Langen, the great, for his triumphant arrival at Ratisbon.” “To our friend, Langen, colossus of the Contra C, for his triumph at Eckmül,” for Henry Langen as a tenor had made about the same tour of Central Europe as Napoleon.

Finally, as he was an official, and on the first of the month like all his colleagues, from the teacher to the postmaster, turned his entire salary into merchandise, which would keep a fixed value, the room was fairly sown with those tin pots and pewter milk cans—of which one single example

anywhere in the world from Sumatra to Iquique would show a German boat had passed. How many German launches touched at Langen's!

It was only seven o'clock. I took the Munich train, Munich which I had abandoned fifteen years ago to take the first prize at the Competitive Examination in Paris. What dozen pieces of news would you give Napoleon if he were to return to-day? The prize was a compass which the first consul had used in Egypt, bearing the device, "My pole star is the East," and which my unranked competitor, Dupuy, is still envying me. He was known for his unreliable character, announcing to Napoleon in his thesis the death of the King of Rome, Fashoda, Sedan and Chanteclerc.

Munich lay under snow and it was night. But I recognized the city even invisible, insipid and mute, by those signs more peculiar to cities than their high street, their trucks, their Bavarian beer, and their fire companies; by the way the conductors of the tram spared their saliva in distributing tickets, or prevented the handle of the stop pull from hitting the passengers in the face; also by the mark on the platform which served to measure children (if they were taller they paid a full fare); by the fixed alternation of passengers. Each place given up by a workman was taken at this hour and on this line by the muffled-up women who were singers at the Royal Theater, by children who hoisted themselves above the standard to merit the honor of paying full fare, who were in the chorus; and two or three other passengers whom a common observer might have judged without characteristics, but the sight of whom permitted me to recognize whether they were playing "Die Meistersaenger" or "Carmen." No children to-day—tall women with high chests, that is to say, the coloraturas, and little fat men, the tenors, and an enormous hunchback, who sang Italian best; surely they must be giving the divine Mozart. At the end of the car terminus, at the point indeed where the terminus of all trams in the world should be, I got down in front of a building where they were giving "The Magic Flute."

I was not in the least bewildered at walking about this town as conqueror with a false passport. It was the city of all the world in which I had disguised myself oftenest. I had passed through its arcades as a Bernese shepherd; in its Café Royale as a vampire I had kissed a Finn; as Frederick II. I had boarded its trams and as Voltaire I had driven in its taxis; as a woman I had bought men's collars in its shops. There remained of all this polymorphism, under this snow and with all the intoxicating sense of being back again, the feeling that I could have recourse, if there were need, on demand of a waitress or hotel watchman, to even inhuman costumes and disguises. Disguised as strawberry ice I had drunk my coffee and cream there. Where would one not lift one's imagination, at evening, when reality finds one in

the morning, dressed as we were then, in black trousers piped with garnet, and slashed at the hip; in a fluted shirt with the revers embroidered with zinnias; an emerald hat of badger skin—indeed, as a perfect Bavarian. But to-day there were no longer lights high in the trees or steeples to keep the mosquitoes from the dancers and the moths from the old dominoes. At their feet I perceived barely lighted by a lantern, like a horse whose unshod foot one looks at, those triumphal arches, those marshal's columns, those temples elevated to the victory of Germany, the horses of Otto and Maximilian, a whole triumphal personnel which at this hour seemed to suffer more from shadows than from defeat. In fear of the frost, all the pagan symbols scattered about the town, the satyrs, the bulls of Hildebrandt, the nymph with three charms, were hidden by city market booths, for classic and healthy nourishment, while the chemist Liebig and the hygienist Pettenkoffer, bronze and a little shiny—what twelve pieces of good news could I announce to the professor of hygiene, Pettenkoffer?—looked like good fellows in black snow, beginning to melt. How little Munich had changed! It is true that I knew it just at the moment when I had stopped growing, my stride determined, my eyes wide open, but never before had I found statues so like—not even the Venus da Milo at the end of every passage in the Louvre. The face of Pettenkoffer fairly shone with hygiene and likeness. There were no houses more to the right or gardens smaller than I had remembered—none of that misplacing of monuments in my memory, as imperceptible or implacable as they were, the court house or St. Mary's on a glacier. But here, after fifteen years, in place of throwing me anonymous and wrapped in furs in a town buried in snow and hatred, in shining streets bordered with flat, painted palaces on which the smallest fly would have stood out in high relief under this sun, I had been from the first day jostling my name, illustrious in higher rhetoric and Lakanal's pedagogical science, against the also reputable names of Siegfried Wagner and Strauss. That was a day of June and a holiday, of course. That month there had been twenty-one holidays in Bavaria, thanks to the numerous births and deaths of the princes of Wittelsbach and archdukes of Bavaria. One could foresee that if the royal family continued to be born and to die at the same rate, working days would soon be entirely suppressed among this good people.

It was the day when Delcasse had given in his resignation and Morena had regained two tones in her voice, lost the preceding year; when they had at last found again and offered the Museum a cut-leather purse of Wagner's which Wagner himself had wasted two days vainly seeking (it contained two passes to the representation of August 8, 1875). Each edition of the Munich

News, that of seven o'clock, of eleven and of two brought the subscribers some happy account of the day, which moved them, according to their way of understanding hospitality, to reunite the sons and daughters, until there were enough there to play me a quartet, or to talk to me with tears in their eyes of the fine wines they drank in our castles in 1870. I said nothing; I drank my humiliation in silence. It was my business then to urge the restitution of Alsatia, to bring back to repentance and France—by clever articles in the *Review of Dramatic Art* of which I was the correspondent—these sixty million beings fallen between the Slavs and the Gauls, who had invented to pass the time, beer, war, ocarina and such a number of irregular verbs!

It was now nine o'clock. The only shops that were lighted up near the theaters were the opticians and the opera-glass places. All the telescopes, magnifying glasses, crystal balls, the skull of Hegel with a flag round it (immovable map, that, of Germany) offered themselves without competition to the passer-by. I went through the arcades, passages, cloisters, stopping here, or hurrying there like someone following another, and truly I was following myself of fifteen years before. My adherences to Munich were not painful just in the places where I might have expected it, and I discovered for the first time the really significant places for me of this capital. They were not, as I had imagined fifteen years ago, the Glypothèque, or the old Pinacothèque, to say nothing of the new; nor yet the house where I had seen Lenbach painting, or the theater where I had seen Hildebrandt modeling. But surging about me, as if spared from a city in ashes, was the mediæval post-office, where I received my letters at the Post-Restante window; the obelisk from which the Bavarians started with Napoleon one Thursday for Russia and where I used to start every Sunday with Martha for Schlosheim; the big shops of Tietz where, moreover, I knew no one but where I continually returned to the perfumery counter—situated just in the center and Heavens, how accessible!—returned to by a route changeless and complicated, which corresponded perhaps—so dear it is to me still—to some subterranean loadstone.

At certain corners of the street, the same mirrors in the shop fronts offered me my reflection, like a memory; it was almost the same reflection. A little porcelain object in Koeller's, that I had seen formerly in the window, was not sold yet. The hall of the Café Luitpold was quite empty, and one saw only the flat marble tables like an anonymous cemetery, and a scarred-up student, his head hardly reaching above their level, alone tried to resuscitate the place. The Tip-Top bar, of multiple memories, offered me eighteen reflections of myself, but the survivor whom I sought to complete

the hallucination obstinately refused to appear. I made the tour of cafés where formerly I was an habitué;—institutions that usually give a traveler a finer sense of immutability than the Pyramids when they see again, through steaming window panes and nearly always through tears, on a return from Tibet, the indifferent eye of the egotistical headwaiter. All in vain! Gone from the Spatenbrau the government surveyor and his especial hot-point for warming his beer which he lent me to stir my lemonade. Gone from the Franciscana, Major von Podmer and his pipe with its electric bowl. Gone, Preuss, the professor of painting, who always used waitresses for his models. Heaven knows how he profited by it when the cafés were open! All these people gone, who had nothing to do but live—gone! The table placards which used to be used to announce the birthday of each habitué were covered with advertisements inviting Bavaria to claim a navy, and colonies, for of all the German states, it is Bavaria, so far from the sea and from the principality of Reuss, which wears deepest mourning for Cameroun and Togo. I was alone in Germany! And mechanically, as on those days when the surveyor left me to hunt chamois with his rifle, which had an automatic musical sight, or the Major whose guests were to arrive at his villa in Tyrol, had gone to place at the bottom of his little transparent lake, his life-sized glass water-sprite, I went back to my lodging. It was above the Café Stephanie, and I threw a last searching glance. But Wedekind with the electrical instrument for his rheumatism was gone, and Thoma with his mechanical headband was gone. I mounted the stairs with their brass railing. It was by the knocking of wedding rings on this balustrade that the proprietor recognized the married men at night. I rang. Not only did I recognize the bell but I recognized my own ring again.

Now I was face to face with Lili, who looked at me silently, trying not so much to recognize me as to make out what new thing these fifteen years had written on my features. Her head had become smaller, her hair finer, and if I had come back at the end of sixty years, I should have found her with a doll's head. She could not decipher my new face, though she stubbornly searched for its key, as formerly when I was always laughing she used to do, in my eyes and my teeth, while now it lay in my eyelids and my lips. I looked about happily at this drawing room, where I was as much at home as in an old coat put on again, but I noticed for the first time the ebony and teakwood furniture and the Kaufmann portraits. It is difficult to be a Parisian and love Louis XV frames and Venetian costumes passionately without absorbing a knowledge of them; to like sky-blue saucers without becoming acquainted with the style of Jacob Petit; and to love egotistically, without

knowing how to be fastidious in one's delight, pearl giraffes, threads of gold and red caught in the steel tassels fastened to amethyst lions' mouths—without bibelot-mongering, in short.

It was the setting of my youth, adorning itself anew in my honor. Lili believed me intimidated, not suspecting that my heart was bursting.

“You belong to the Commission of Oversight?”

“No.”

“A commission of disarmament?”

“No.”

I had to deny being one of the Commission of the Danube and the Rhine, too. Lili could not imagine that a Frenchman could come to Germany for any other purpose than to take back the giant machine gun from the Emmenthal, or to plunge rabbits into vessels of glycerine and denounce them as poisoned; to catch carrier pigeons and inspect their wings, or to give orders about the future issue of German rivers and beer. Whereas I had come merely to see if some lodging-house keepers and their daughters were unalterable, since one can no longer count on building surveyors and majors and their following to give a little consistency to Bavarian immortality. Moreover, I felt comfortable in this room, where in the old days, we used to bid each other “*Buona notte*” or “*Dobra notche*,” according to the country of the last new lodger, and the words seemed to imply something new and to rejuvenate sleep.

Mechanically, as at every visit of an old lodger, Lili gave me the news of the guests of my day. But, being for the first time since the war in the presence of a Frenchman, in place of saying, Fräulein Schell is not married; she has some stock in an artificial pastry shop, and is interested in spiritualism; Fräulein Silz is Frau Pappe and Fräulein von Hohenriff is Frau von Hausen-Knotin; Fräulein Riedel, whom you liked so much in 1905, the year when she had that dress which was so becoming and with whom you quarreled in 1905, the year she wore her hair in a net on her temples like a comma on either side of her head, and with whom—was it the time you were in love or were quarreling?—you were surprised floating in a rowboat on the Starnberg, both asleep while a little fawn from the Rupprecht parks was licking you, Lili said to me:

“We lost the Prince Regent suddenly, the day when his thirteenth statue was set up, at the end of 1912. Then King Otto died, from having swallowed, they say, forty-one hard-boiled plover's eggs. These last years he never peeled potatoes any more, but counted the hairs of the cats' whiskers. As for King Ludwig, little by little he became as old as he looked, and the

day when he really was and looked the same age, the end came. Morena has recovered all her notes except two, and Boretti all her teeth without exception.”

And so, according to order, the Munich curtain lifted on a curtain raiser of princes and actors. Then, when I observed the same formality, when I had mentioned that Anatole France was married, Rodin embalmed, and Clemenceau seventeen years younger than Freycinct, the official barrage was broken, and the multitude of our modest friends rushed in and she talked to me about Martha.

Martha, the Sunday of my departure, dressed in a muslin with red polka dots, her ears hidden under two shells, her tongue hidden in her mouth, her eyes under her lids and brows, her nostrils closed by distress, her hands hidden in her sleeves, took her whole charming, senseless body from the Royal Gardens where she was looking for me, to the church of the Theatines, where she asked, paying ten pfennigs, that St. Anthony would find her her lost treasure. She made the mistake of not being precise enough. She found a mass book and a brooch representing an impassioned elephant, but she did not find me. Sometimes a little, lost dog, that looked like mine, passed. She would follow it until it joined its master. But I, I was already in Augsburg, intoxicated with liberty and surprised by the ticket collector in dancing in the corridor. Now and again a pair of eyeglasses would send out a ray, in which she believed she saw one of my false glances. Then tears came into those eyes hidden by their lids. But I was in the station at Ulm up in the air as high as the cathedral, pressing my face against the window pane, grimacing at ease, to the astonishment of the ticket agent who was stretching his legs on the platform. Sometimes she thought she saw me in the National Museum; she would go in, see her mistake, run through the eighty-three rooms which one has to go through successively and in order, to get out as soon as possible, and look for me. I, opposite Lauingen, where that good, old Albertus Magnus was born, I was reading with delight all the news in the Lauingen *Echo* and the dates of fairs in the surrounding country. Sometimes a young man would look like me and Martha would get all ready to be squeezed by him; he would excuse himself and take her arm. She decided to punish me with my counterpart, but suddenly slipped away. But I, without a thought, having reached indifference, by I do not know what open floodgate, was opposite Hotel Ruf in Pforzheim and was asking myself if I should not take the six o'clock train back to Munich. Sometimes when an officer with a shaved head saluted her, Martha would decide to punish me with my exact opposite and would consent to open her mouth to take an ice and say that the ice was cold, but that the cold was agreeable, not knowing

that one sense set free, all the others are freed with it. Night had come on—I was at Chalons-sur-Marne, overtaken by despair and love and wanting to die. While Martha, the beautiful, all Lieutenant von Todel's now, right in the middle of the Restaurant of the Theater was taking her first lesson in tennis with some matches and breadballs, I, in a wretched taxi on the Place de la Concorde. . . .

If Major von Podmar died during the summer season, I reflected suddenly, the glass mermaid must still be at the bottom of the lake.

When I woke up the snow was no longer falling, but a heavy wind blew, and suddenly, as if the wind had been the greatest enemy of man from birth, it made the whole invention of houses, copper casseroles, bed and double windows touching even to tears. Animals, horses, oxen, who have neither the ability nor the time to change their color in winter, frightened at being so visible in the white streets, pawing and scratching the ground, hollowed out a black standing place. As if snow had been the first friend of human beings at their birth, the passers-by crouched down where it seemed softest and caressed it.

No noise of steps—men seemed to be hung over the world by a trolley line, by their laughter or their words. An old man who must have hunted wild beasts now gone, marked with his fingers on each stone of the window the tracks of wolves and stags. Then the street sweepers, according as they liked or disliked the proprietors, made or did not make little paths between the villas.

Just opposite Siegfried had drawn his curtains and was finishing his toilet. In his pajamas he was almost exactly like Forestier; he disappeared every instant from his window and from each of these plunges into Germany he brought forth a garment which disguised him a little more. He who had worn only white underwear, enveloped himself in a mauve shirt, rose-colored underdrawers, knee caps of veronese green, arming himself for I don't know what sort of a tourney in a rainbow. In undressing our Prussian wounded, we peeled off successive layers of color under their invisible uniforms. But he—for whom formerly the two least irritating questions were those of the left bank of the Rhine and suspenders, was fastening together his undercoverings with safety-pins, chain-supports, buttoning his breast plate with a wire of silver plate which he hooked to a central chain. Then, aided by servants, whose race differs more from ours than a Celt from a Teuton, with a celluloid tooth brush, a hair brush of elastic nickel, with a mustache-holder, and a clothes brush, the handle of which was carved and made one think at every moment of a harakiri, he—who never admitted that it rained—consulted an indoor thermometer, an outdoor thermometer, and a

barometer, and tapped a horizontal instrument which might have been a seismograph. It is thus that Germans find out what the weather is like. Everything indicating snow, he at last looked at it, opened his window and, perceiving the tracks of the wolf and the stag, effaced them that they might escape huntsmen.

Ida came to take breakfast with me and bring me the news. People were still fearing some plot and Ida had an idea that Zelten was the soul of it. The unrest was not so lively—because Zelten always postponed large enterprises to the second of June, his birthday. And the coming second of June promised to be highly charged for, according to successive confidences, Zelten was to begin his book then on the Orient-Occident, to beget a son, and to have five teeth filled.

Perhaps his family would delegate someone this year from the twenty-fifth of May to the fifth of June, to watch over him, the uncle or cousin or lawyer who had prevented amongst other things two suicides, an enlistment in the Legion, and the purchase (particularly dreaded by the lawyer) of an armed cruiser, somewhat dilapidated, as it had been used as a dance hall.

At two o'clock visits began at Siegfried Kleist's. Unfortunately, they were not insignificant visits. Forestier was not bound to his new country by those slight chains—solid enough for me, which ended in the poetic disciples of Dehmel, music pupils of Reger, Viennese actresses, and a dozen or so tables in saloons—I noted around the villa the comings and goings of those who, thanks to their automobiles, their racers, and their planes, arrived soonest at the glory of his rising. Ida, who lived in the same house as Rita Sacchetti, saw the same crowd and almost the same people gather about the dancer each week. The President of the Council, the banker Zorn, the brewer Dittmann were there, the solidest people of Bavaria. It was not possible to attach heavier stones round the neck of a person to pull him in. Then came a crowd that Ida had never seen on holidays; those who put themselves about for victorious generals, the baron of Xylinder, Frau Rattel, and the Schoeneburgs. Then a little later, to revive a little hope in me, those who in my time in Munich went to French concerts, the French exposition, to Haguette, the dressmaker; and I was, above all, reassured to see Prince Henry go in.

I knew Prince Henry of Saxon-Altdorf, who lived in a neighboring street near the castle of Nymphenburg. I reached his house through a succession of French gardens, through a quincunx of statues of gods, named with French names and signed Coustou. Then a road bordered by fifteen homes belonging to overseers from Limoges or Paris who worked in the porcelain factories, the family name on the marble tablet replacing the names of streets

or women that French villas take—Villa Morin, Villa Torichon, Villa Couillard—past the children who were called Robert or Marcel, and who played marbles with a movement of the thumb which would have betrayed them among the fifteen other millions of children of the Empire. But along this avenue Greluchat (that was its name) I arrived, together with Madame de Noailles, and a hundred million Americans, at the center of what I believed to be Germany.

The Prince, who would reign in Saxe-Altdorf, after his older brother married to the sister of William but without children, was born the same month as the Emperor and had studied at the same time as he in Bonn, where they quarreled every morning for two terms in English, the teachers forcing them to be reconciled in the evening for the French drill. The middle of the day being reserved for the maternal language, they had never yet had to speak German to each other. Since then—for Destiny, which has a poor opinion of men, loves to insist and particularize—each one of the acts of William had reproduced, within a week or a year, a corresponding act of the prince, which was, in the eyes of the true Germany, the negation of it. The month when William had married his undistinguished Empress they announced the betrothal of Henry to Annette Blensen, daughter of the novelist, the beauty-queen of Schleswig, and the best swimmer of the Continent or rather of its surrounding waters. Her dresses, even her court dresses, were so planned that she could drop them, under no matter what circumstances by the river, pond, or canal, along the borders of which she might be passing, and she would disappear there like an Undine, and Roosevelt only, during his sojourn at the Imperial Court, tried to follow her, all dressed, but without success across the ponds of Potsdam and the ditches of the Spree forest. In the year when William built his Siegesallée, Henry constructed an arbor in his garden of Nymphenburg and set a sun-dial in it. For every adipose and terrestrial prince that William begot, Henry added a new Baron of Altdorf to his line, honest, candid, and who, from the moment he could fly, fell into the air as his mother did into water. There were enough of them in 1914 to make up the first squad, and since William kept all his sons intact, for them all to be mutilated or killed. It was the old Duke of Saxony, the father, who had created somewhere in the eighties the Altdorf troupe, where every rôle, even were it that of a valet, was played by a celebrated actor—as for the centenary of the author who said he would be less offended by a little actor in a great rôle than in a little one. Henry had inherited this mania for his whole house. He did not wish to see about him the rôles of life played except by Germans worthy of them and their prince. To cut the bread at table, wax the parquet floors, or draw the curtains, he

would have only simple, good people, just such as one would have chosen to celebrate the centenary of life itself. I knew now how to rejoin Forestier. The Baroness Schleissheim would introduce me a second time to the prince, and I would ask his aid in penetrating the villa.

Toward six o'clock, when the visits were over, I could get my balance. These Germans whom I had seen pass the threshold, musicians, bankers, liberal princes, without mentioning swimming princesses, were of those who for centuries had guarded the Rhinegold—if gold of the Rhine represents the simplicity, pomp, sweetness of Germany—and it was from them that I had to steal Forestier. I was the true Siegfried; I with my Canadian passport: Siegfried Chapdelaine. In the circular of the general staff for the reëducation of German wounded, suffering from amnesia, which Ida had brought me, I read that they gave them as masters only mediæval specialists. They kept them still intact, in the free cities, Stralsund, Rothenbourg, or Nuremberg. They used with them, as with German children to-day, that real or fictitious resemblance of Germany to the Holy Empire, slipping a transparency over each one of their atlases or lessons of the Middle Ages. I would have to steal Forestier not from Lerchenfeld and Theodore Wolff, but from Fugger, the Piccolimini, and Albert Dürer. I would have to steal him, not from Lili Marlberg, or Lea Bolz, but from the German women of Vischer and Cranach; for I had just read also the circular of Doctor Major Stralsund, on the type of nurse whom each amnesiac German soldier should find at his bedside as consciousness awoke. No brunettes, no laughing girls from Lorraine, wrote Major-Chief Schiffl, but the very image of the Fatherland. It is strictly prescribed that she should wear her hair in long blond plaits, if possible down to her ankles; that her bust should be high so that she could touch it with her chin, that her complexion should be snow and blood with a tiny grain of saffron, and that otherwise she should be of the perfect type of which nine photographs in the addenda reproduce the poses, proper for the glance of the wounded to rest upon on regaining consciousness; together with the standard measurements of the body, determined by the best pictures of the Middle Ages, or our finest living heroines of tragedy or opera.

Suddenly—and I could not be mistaken, for I had just looked with pleasure at the nine photographs—it seemed to me that I saw near Forestier's house the model woman of Major Schiffl. She was coming out (though I could not remember having seen her go in) by a narrow invisible door, in a sort of recess from this villa which had become like a part of my own body, as a needle might suddenly come out of your arm or your sleeve. It was indeed she, her arms filled with red roses, her chin lowered, almost touching her breast, just such as was prescribed on plate 6 to appear to our

amnesiac of two years (although she lacked the peplum and showed the addition of a coat of wildcat fur and top boots). To awaken even in me the memory of German loves and languors of an epoch somewhat anterior to my birth, she had only indeed to blow upon a rebellious lock of hair, of which the circular had told me the correct length, or to bend under her skirt that right knee, of which I knew the exact turn.

The knowledge that I had of the measurements of her body, those tresses one meter, eighty-three centimeters, eyes, five centimeters, proportionate mouth, and legs, two feet six inches, the calf equal to one-half the waist and three-tenths of the bust, conferred upon me suddenly from my post of observation an equally precise knowledge of her thoughts. I knew her to be ardent and obstinate with that forehead of fourteen centimeters, leaning against the air as against a yoke; to have fevers and passions of which I could foresee the exact temperature even to one degree; of goodness, cunning and a quite considerable love of hats, for in place of the cornflowers prescribed by that circular she was wearing a Reboux Valkyrie helmet effect. Forestier accompanied her to the gate, with his unmeasured body, which appeared beside this unalterable body to change at every step; he followed her with his eyes to the moment when she turned back before disappearing, waving her flowers (prescribed plate 9 and last), for a supreme separation. Then, as if it were his destiny on that day to efface all traces on the snow, whether of women or wild animals, he bent over to gather up some petals fallen from her bouquet, and in rising lifted toward me a face, in which it was not necessary to know either the relation of chin to ear or the ellipsis of the eye, to recognize its great honesty.

Who can say why I was irritated, not against my friend certainly, but against Major Schiffel and his kind and this Germany, which undertook to give back purity? For Forestier knew of passion all that could be learned from Mademoiselle Trapet, of the Odéon; of encounters all that Mademoiselle Beril of the Comédie Française knew; of disgust all that one could learn from Sola Astrum, a demon, dark, undulating, noisy, the exact opposite of everything prescribed by the circular; and of indifference all that could be inspired by Yvonne de Greil, who had his last letter, his last word written in French on the day when he was reported killed:

“Good-by, dear Yvonne. I have no money but accept the great love——”

Forestier did not move. He seemed like a somnambulist whom we had awakened one day with great shouts; it was winter, too, and the man had done himself no harm in the thick snow.

Bertha Augusta, dowager of Schleissheim, lived at the foot of Maximilian Street, just before the romantic stucco buildings from which monsters and queens vainly try to emerge, just beyond the Hotel of Four Seasons, whose marble front is pleased on the contrary to liberate numbers of pretty persons, Viennese or American actresses, and also a few gargoyles like the little Rosenbreits and the Countess Cohn. It was Bertha in her youth that Sacher-Masoch took for the model of his lady-in-waiting in his novel on Germany, and she had conceived in consequence for herself and the author so great an admiration that she had been impelled to inscribe herself, quite innocently, a member of all the Masochist Societies, of whose end and aim she was entirely ignorant. Her little salon was no longer open to the Allies; she received me in her salon with stained glass windows, where the signed photographs of Moltke and Bismarck seemed as faded and lamentable as the rowboats of before the war named Quand-Même or Coulmiers, in a branch of the Oise seemed suddenly out-of-date and enchanting.

I did not hesitate to go to Bertha, for I had a certain advantage over her. Avaricious, egotistical, and stubborn like the Schleissheim family, all of whose defects she had acquired by marriage, she became generous as soon as it could be proved that she brought you good luck. Salespeople, forewarned of this, had actually gotten jobs at the Court by pretending that the day after the day that the baroness had bought their first cut of veal or their notes of clearance, while trying to pass off false money on them, the number of their clients doubled or their fish refused to turn bad in the sun. And servants, who asserted that they never broke anything when she was there, might smash with impunity her Chinese porcelains or Dresden china when she was away. Her table was crowded with beggars who in return for their dinner were expected to go back to hunting grouse, their last jointed buttons on their collars broken in their haste, their socks burst, their chins hacked by shaving in the dark, who proclaimed her their fetish and about whom she hung like a trinket all evening.

I had had the luck to write her a card from Auvergne and from Saint-Nectaire, in June, 1914, in which I told her she brought me luck and there were never any worms in my cheese. She had replied that I should never risk myself on mountains over 1500 meters. Otherwise she would give me up for dead.

“Well?” she said, without answering my salutation. “Well,” I replied. “I am not dead. Your postcard of 1914 saved me.”

She had not thought of that. But was I not, after all, right? Of all the others whom she had favored, was I not really the only one to whom she had

brought good luck? All the others whom she believed she had hoisted to success, the Belgian tenor, the Commissary-General, the Baroness Wolinska—war, cancer, or feeble-mindedness had taken them to their peculiarly original tombs and the common lot of man. While as for me, owing to the formal warnings against altitude, I had during these five years passed in war, avoided attracting my enemies' attention on the summit of Sancy, engaging in personal struggles on the pass of St. Bernard, and having sailed many a sea, seeking the favor of Bertha at the right level, it might be said she had saved me. It was sufficient to add that I had inherited a few millions, escaped two torpedoings, for her to pardon me, and pardon herself for having given good luck to me and indirectly to my country.

I began to believe in her power the day when she told me that Siegfried von Kleist was looking for a French professor. She telephoned him and wanted to take me there, if I so desired, that very day, under my Canadian name. It was one of those windy, gusty afternoons, such as one has in Paris only when one sallies forth with one's queen of queens in an open car. Bertha assured me, moreover, that she always brought good luck in bad weather.

The King Otto, struck by hearing a Mandarin reply to the compliments of M. Patenôtre that the only civilized nations were France and China, they alone possessing cooking and politeness, had charged Bertha-Augusta in 1875 with founding a school of housekeeping for the elder daughters of the nobility, a school of grace for the younger daughters and thus to bring Franconia into line with its two predecessors. One knows how well the experiment succeeded, crowned by the Bayadare *soufflé*, and the courtesy to the echo, though unhappily too soon interrupted by Otto's madness. Bertha, who had had to learn by heart all the cookbooks and housekeeping books, had retained the habit of answering questions without hesitation and in phrases like those of the catechism. Through the joltings of the cab I thus obtained information about Siegfried, and its precision went back into the past as far as if it had been the real Siegfried or the real Kleist.

I asked what cities Siegfried knew in Germany. "Sassnitz, where he was cured; Munich, where he is editing his Critique of Constitutions, and Oberammergau, where he spent the summer."

I asked his plans.

"On the twenty-fifth of April, a Goethe fête in Berlin. The fourteenth of June the Erzberger case in Breslau. Yesterday by a painful coincidence they brought him in the morning some daggers and revolvers of assassins which have to be left, according to custom, a week with each member of the jury; and the afternoon they brought him an urn which contains, they say, the

heart of Goethe which they leave a few days with each intending orator. Still, does not every German live in this double atmosphere?"

I asked his age.

He is thirty-seven.

That was indeed his exact age. How did Germany guess it?

With Forestier's house it was about the same as with his clothes. Not a trace remained of the sure touch with which formerly he would pick out of a hundred antiquarian shops or three modern studios, the furniture and decorations which had been made in the sixteenth century especially for him. I found in his office, cut in whatever was of wood, and embroidered on everything that was a material, all the proverbs and remnants of German wisdom in which a visitor may be soaked: "Who talks in the morning will be silent at evening"; "He who loves his neighbor will have flowers in Spring"; "Sit on me; I am a loyal cushion of Dessauer"; "The morning hour has gold in its mouth."

I perceived hung on the wall an object common to his working room in Paris and to this room here—a neutral object, Vermeer's "Woman in a Turban." Nothing was lost, since the little Dutchman had succeeded in his little task; though it is true the picture had a copper and brass frame larger than the picture, and colored infinitely more vividly than it. What a rough tussle to traverse the retina hardened by German destiny. Then Kleist entered.

He entered even more covered with beard, rings, and trinkets than he had seemed in the distance. Germany was so cautious lest, overcome by amnesia, a second time he should lack tags of identity. But he had kept what a man gives up only when he is determined to disappear—the trick of his lip and that of his hand, which he continued to clasp and unclasp, and which he felt of as a mute but imperishable proof. His first words showed me that his tricks of thought and his pleasure in knowing the exact extent of the world's countries had not left him.

"I love Canada," he said to me in German. "Few people know that its territory is greater than that of the United States including Alaska."

Why was it that he belonged to-day to a country whose square miles were reduced by war? I withdrew my hand as quickly as I could, as if it were by that that he would recognize himself, and placed myself in shadow for fear the sight of me would agitate him too suddenly. It was a vain fear. In his eyes I was the son of a woman in Montreal; had bathed in the St. Lawrence;

rubbed myself with snow; I, heavy with all his past, his triumph as baccalaureate at Poitiers, his sister crushed at Boussac, his country Limoges, our trip in a wagonette with spotted cushions to Dampierre; his despair the day he returned to school at Lakanal and all in his white clothes sat down in the inkstand. With what gigantic frame of brass and copper could I surround myself; with what aniline dye endue my clothes to reach that brain where I saw across his ever-large iris, the first mist? He closed his eyes every now and then and bent forward, as if one of these hundred thousand possible pasts weighed upon him. He was silent as if one of these thousand probable pasts threw a shadow over his head. And this man who remembered no suffering—not even the slightest toothache of childhood—one felt that he would have to admit having known them all. Night had come. He lit a light at the bottom of an alabaster vase, on which terriers danced; he served tea in a teapot whose handle was a water-sprite's tail; he moved up an ashpan which was an imp of the mountains, and having removed three or four of the little animals or legendary heroes with which a real German excites himself every hour in the twenty-four, he ensconced himself in an armchair and said:

“Dear sir, you are losing your glove.”

He had spoken French, and I looked at my feet, glad of the lost glove that permitted me to hide my emotion. He had spoken French without an accent, a little halting at most, between the words as between words wounded and fresh healed. Moreover, my glove was quite near me on the table, and the baroness began to laugh. Kleist was merely reciting to me a piece from his lesson book. The lesson had begun, for the clock, a mixture of cuckoos, monks, and Genevieves de Brabant, had indicated the half hour.

I had let my glove fall. . . . You had torn your dress. . . . We had crowned the black ass. . . . Thus the lesson book, open at the chapter of Little Mishaps, helped us through this first interview by puerile confessions; but each avowal freed me at once from some error and covered me with pain. *I had let the squirrel out. . . . He had plucked the canary.*

Outside the wind was rising. I was thinking of the real misdeeds we had committed together: “I had torn the dress of Cricri; he had accused Sarcey of perfidy; we had the rung bell of Larroummet—” Some tiles fell from the roof. To judge by the racket outside, God himself was somewhat awkward to-day—God, who had changed the color of Forestier's uniform, who had torn off the veil of the world and destroyed innocent Russia. I had gone over to watch Siegfried's reading. The last time we had thus bent together over the same volume, assuaging our souls, it happened that the text was German and Schopenhauer. What little misfortunes women had caused me in that

day! But Kleist did not give me time to make the memory exact. We had to read the following chapter about animals, with the name of their plumage, their calls and their cries; and when the cuckoo came out again to sound the end of the lesson we knew he was cuckooing, and we knew also what the dumb deer of Genevieve would have done, had the clockmaker so desired.

It was six o'clock, and with that cry which is called speech, that moving, stifled, guttural cry called German speech, Siegfried said good night till tomorrow.

It was agreed that after each lesson, by way of completion, that I should send Forestier an example of French composition. I was assured that the profound relation between Forestier and me could be revived only by such an apparently bromidic correspondence. Forestier's conversation, even with his best friend, never permitted abandon or confidences. But sometimes we received letters from him to which he would afterwards make no allusion, in which he would explain, for example, why, the day before in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, he had turned his face aside instead of looking at the invisible Seine in its sheath of mist, or why he had bent his ear to catch the sound of the Metro, or some other insignificant attitude which revealed him sensitive and very complex. At the telephone, moreover, he was a third Forestier, exact, dry, hard; I don't know what he was by telegram, wireless, or spirit-message. But I was assured of reaching him by writing.

I chose a little exercise which would let me talk of the brooklets of Limoges, whose humidity still bathed his brain, and I drew a little picture like those in the schoolbooks, but with his own real little town, putting in certain episodes from his own life, like that of the eel and diminishing or enlarging certain objects immeasurably, that his memory, whether shortsighted or longsighted, should have the better chance of being reached. Here is the beginning:

EXAMPLE OF FRENCH COMPOSITION:
SOLIGNAC

Solignac has a chapel and a cathedral, an ossuary, a cemetery, a brook, and a river. Baptisms are celebrated in the chapel, deaths in the cathedral, and marriages in the church or the abbey. As if the people of Solignac had different beds to be born, married, and die in. The brook is called Briance. On its right side, for it has borrowed from men the habit of not being left-handed, it has dug out the valley for a hundred thousand years, and only

been turned aside six months ago by a road constructor named Sicart. In Navy Square there is a fountain whose water rejoins the brook at about two hundred meters, through a subterranean tunnel, and when the Mayor, in washing an eel, let it slip from his hands into the conduit, it was fun to see him tearing, followed by his assistant, egged on by the Postmaster, to the hole where it was to come out.

The houses are of granite, with large cellars and big attics and the Solignac people live between an abundance of wines, good and bad, and an abundance of fruit. The chief growths are the chestnut, the poplar, and on the slopes, the cypress. The leaves of the poplar trees tremble unceasingly. The scientist who found a means for utilizing the tides, often came to listen to them and to search for a means of capturing all that sweetness and rustle. In front of the Commercial Restaurant, every evening, he would feel himself penetrated by the same emotion, which forced him to drink the same Byrrh, for if in France all the separate souls are different, all the days and drinks are alike.

CHAPTER IV

IT is always the day when the great novelist decides, after wasting two years, to begin his novel, that some school friend comes to see him, ambitious to question a novelist upon the details of his tastes and to find out if he has ever loved. Always the day when the poet who installs himself at dawn, has his inner poem sapped by the noise of wash-houses which he tries vainly to resolve into the applause of the horizon; just as it is the very day when the evil man swears to be good that his creditors, forewarned by intangible forces, send their collectors after him, till in his rage, he kills the last one. On the contrary I, who had decided on this morning without beauty to be slack and lazy, was overcome when I opened the window. The sky was blue, apart from two or three round clouds, turning like the sun. It was brilliant. There was snow—each flake separate like a grain of Indian rice, crystal shining quite on its own. All the human beings who had taken vows to do Swedish gymnastics accomplished them for the first time, without a revulsion against Sweden.

I was finishing my daily life of nudity, when a chap entered, bowed down to the earth in front of me—it was the first time I had ever been adored without a veil—and let forth the cry that two or three million Germans blush in presenting: “Meyer!”

I pretended that I was hearing the name for the first time, and he then preceded it with a correction which reduced its possessors to two or three hundred thousand.

Dr. Meyer!

Then followed explanations, revealing that the University of Munich had organized its poor or charity students into an association of guides, delegated to take strangers about Bavaria. Dr. Meyer had received an order to present himself to me and to place himself at my disposition for one of his three itineraries.

The first took in a journey to the castles of Bavaria, constructed by Louis the II—Chiemsee, to destroy in all German imaginations the haunting beauty of Versailles, Linderhof that of Trianon, and Neuschwanstein that of Carcassonne, and to expunge from all memories the French invasions of Tyrol and the Munich country. One might get from the University as special guides the descendants of ancient émigrés of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. All French bridges, tracks, and paths by which the troops of Napoleon had overflowed the Innsbruck valley were marked with

discreditable posts. One could see even—frightful relic—the track of a ball in the wall at Mittenwald.

The second itinerary, commended specially to Canadians, friends of order and religion, comprised a pilgrimage to all the points in Munich where the revolution, a French maneuver, had raged for a fortnight. The Luitpold Lyceum, where young Toller, assuredly a disciple of Lorient or Cachin, two Frenchmen, had given the order to shoot the Countess Westarp; the prison of Stadelheim on the road to which Landauer, a disciple of the Parisian by adoption, Jean Jacques Rousseau, had been beaten to death after writing a futile book on Shakespeare; the caves where two women hostages had been violated by fourteen revolutionaries with all the refinements of cruelty prescribed in the books of the Marquis de Sade, the shocking Frenchman.

The third was the most expensive—five thousand marks paid in advance, one thousand to be paid at Orgesh, a thousand at Schutzbund, and a thousand at Frauenlige. But it comprised a visit to Ludendorff, the unconquered signer of the armistice, to Rupprecht, the dethroned king still reigning; to a professor of the University who would swear to each member of the company that he had falsified the documents of the Bavarian chancellery to please Kurt Eisner; to the old French spy, the dancer, Menda Sacchi, who had witnessed the orgies of Joffre and every evening had seen the general's pinnacle listing towards the ladies' rooms . . . finally it included a visit to the president of the old Bavarians of the Foreign Legion.

In order that this historic trip might be a real excursion, they had placed each one of these personalities on a well-known site, particularly on the borders of lakes, and I had only to choose the lakes I preferred; if I so desired, by their colors. The professor lived at Schlehdorf on Lake Kochel, the bluest of the lakes, Menda Sacchi in the highest chalet of Peissemberg, above the lake of Starnberg, the Bavarian Rigi, most sensitive to the sun's rays, having risen before the dawn. This was the trip preferred by Americans, to whom special permission was given to swim from isle to isle and shoot the chamois and was the one of which Mr. Hearst had published in his hundred first newspapers of the United States, with typographical triumph, a sample of each lake opposite each portrait and each autograph. For ladies a section of feminine students was forming in three classes: naïve, forewarned, and indifferent. But already doctress Meyer, his sister, would put herself at my disposal for sisters or cousins, enlightened or otherwise; or even for me, since a trip with women might be preferred by Canadians, friends of sensibility and heart.

As I was saying good-by, Doctor Meyer, upset and confused, perhaps by his plebeian origin, pointed out to me a young duke, a student. I perceived in

one of the glass fronts of the court Zelten himself sitting near a hatter's, and trying on caps every minute, doubtless to deceive some onlooker. He pushed the matter to the point of never trying the same one twice; sometimes the thing came down to his ears and sometimes it would not cover the top of his head. From my post of vantage, it seemed that his head swelled and diminished every instant. I thought he had discovered me or was looking for me—but it was nothing. Soon he came out, bareheaded this time, as he was in the habit of going even in midwinter, and I ran to follow him.

There was not a cloud in the sky. In the sunny streets all little girls and a good many grown people followed a winding path, amusing themselves by not stepping on the virgin snow. The upper bourgeois women of Munich were coming out of the churches and everything that the capital possessed in the way of fur, from blue fox to otter or weasel, impelled the wearers toward the retreats that the living animals would have chosen, the English gardens or the banks of the Iser. At every corner of the streets, the beggars who used to drop pfennigs in the snow rejoiced in paper money, easy to find. The Bavarian people circulated in their new clothes, new gloves, new hats, stuffs and felts rough to the touch and ugly, even the most colored seeming like black remnants redyed. I had almost caught up with Zelten at the Generals' Hall. In Ludwig Street, thirty-six meters broad, without shops and bordered by palaces, he was progressing like a cog-wheel railway, passing from one sidewalk to the other, as we do at Boulevard Saint Michel to avoid the shops where we owe debts. What indeed could Zelten owe to Prince Theodore at the Royal Library, or the Florentine house of the Duke of Bavaria, our protector now dead, octogenarian friend of puns, who adored French verse, above all Victor Hugo's, because he confused the rhymes with puns? What was Zelten thinking at the foot of his loggia? Of the famous pun on the first Consul which one makes on putting a pea to one side of one's plate (*Bon-aparte*) and which the Duke, moreover, piteously ruined by saying Napoleon instead of Bonaparte? Of his success on the day when he had asked the Duke whose friend Tordek at the breakfast was disguised as a bird, his advice on the *Avis* (*avis sur l'Avis*)? Or the tears of emotion of the Duke the day we taught him the couplet:

*“Gall, amant de la reine, alla, tour magnanime
Gallamment, de l'Arène à la tour Magne, à Nîmes.”*

Which he recited, afterwards, hardly making a mistake, or at most saying “*Magnifique*” in place of “*Magnanime*” or “*Peste*” in place of “*Gall*.”

All the windows were closed to-day and for the first time I saw the other side of the shutters; on the right one a swan was painted and on the left a naked woman, doubtless some rebus on the subject of Leda. Then, following his huntsman's tracks, Zelten passed under the Gate of Victory, separated from me now by a crowd of students in autos, dressed in scarfs with rapiers, standing eight strong in each vehicle with its club banner and arriving at the meeting in taxis as our soldiers arrived at the Marne—so the special correspondent of a Paris newspaper would not have failed to say.

I found him again in the Royal Gardens. He was strolling through it with the same friendly air that he would have had in the Luxembourg—caressing the scattered stone lions for lack of dogs and children; monuments seemed less than ever justified since the snow hid the pattern of the gardens. The Iser to-day was more impetuous than ever, Bavaria having drawn a long breath during the night and given fresh impetus to its torrents. Zelten waited on the bridge, bending over the water like the little, unknown man who gave Strassbourg to the French. Then he leaned his back against the parapet, looked as long a time at the heavens, like the other little man who gave our planet to the sun, and, fixing his gaze at last at his own height, he perceived a tall, blonde girl toward whom he ran, taking her arm. I followed them.

I followed them, for the dramas played in a city play on among a limited number of people, even in a city of eight hundred thousand inhabitants. The blonde person was Kleist's nurse.

I followed them by a well-known itinerary, indicated by three stars in the amorous Baedeker of Madame von Bachen-Stettenbach as the most important in Munich: the one where Lola Montez kissed the King in the presence of the Queen, seized by an impulse of tenderness at the sight of the royal shako battered by the Chamberlain; where the tenor Pfohl in despair cut out his tongue, condemning himself to sing only vocal exercises; and where I myself—though this was not mentioned in the Guide—having mistaken the hour of a rendezvous by twenty-four hours, waited obstinately an entire day without giving in to fate and without going home. An American girl told me that it was the world's longest amorous wait in the open. It was July, and the night at any rate was brief. The guards of the royal residence relieving each other, each guard recognized me until just five o'clock, when Fritzi appeared before them, rosy and proud of being punctual. It seemed to me to-day, as if I had never gone home, as if I were still waiting, so familiar were the pediments and the scratches on the labels. But it was not a lovers' path that Zelten and his companion followed. They

were arguing with a volubility which permitted no one to believe that they were about to imitate the tenor Pfohl. They did not hear me on account of the snow, but turning round the flower beds, they saw by the traces of steps that they were followed and I was caught.

Zelten presented me joyously by my Canadian name and then mentioned his friend.

“Fräulein Eva von Schwanhofer,” he said.

I looked admiringly at Eva. Everything I knew about her, the number of decimeters she took up in space, the exact number of versts or of sea leagues that her hair knotted end to end would measure, and all the numbers placed in twos and threes over her body, I forgot suddenly. Providence, which had placed them at my disposal, had effaced them as it effaces the price of presents. I had met Eva fifteen years ago, when she was six or seven, at the painter Franz Stück’s house. Her father was his most intimate friend, and the only feminine portraits that Stück painted in those days without the addition of serpents, hydras, salamanders, and satyrs, were just those of little Eva, whose innocence only managed to change this infernal setting to armchairs, roses, and teapots. I met her on one of those days of misfortune for little girls, when she had fallen on the mosaic of Stück’s Greek villa, cut open her forehead on a pedestal of a column, and torn her dress on a Spartan bracket—a day when probably she would have been spared all disaster in an Egyptian dwelling or a Moorish chalet, but where all these Hellenic demons followed her till they drew blood. It was I who wiped off the blood, who consoled her in my modern arms, lifted her away from this antique ground and its accessories, pillowed all that hair (not yet measured) against my contemporary bosom, and comforted her with a French song. To-day I doubted the efficacy of the same remedy to brighten her face, whose hostility defied all measuring instruments. Up to the time of the war, by means of Stück’s pictures reproduced in catalogues, I had kept up with her growth and her beauty. I knew that in 1908 they had pierced her ears; I did not know it in 1910, the date when she began to wear her hair in knots over her ears. I knew in 1913 that she must have begun the tender occupation of verification of measurements, demanded by Major Schiffel, which consists in touching one’s bosom with one’s chin. In 1914, at last in the extreme right corner of the picture, the blue serpent glided in. In all the portraits she wore the same red dress. One guessed, I do not know how, that it was by her own wish and not that of the painter, and between her lynx coat and her milk-white body to-day, upheld by war and revolution, I guessed she wore a tunic red as fire. She received without responsiveness my allusions to the Villa Stück, refused me the amiable word on Quebec which since my yesterday’s

visits I had been accustomed to receiving—a disdain for Canada to which I was surprised to find myself quite sensitive. She questioned the utility of the lessons with Kleist and rejoiced audibly in the decision of the Bavarian language masters in decreeing that French should be replaced by Spanish in all the upper schools. She congratulated herself that the professors of department, from Swabia to Franconia, had approved in chorus the boycotting of the French bow, to be replaced henceforth by a new step which they had just invented and which was called the Meyer-Goya bow. I found it hard to recognize in this cross-grained person the daughter of good old Schwanhofer.

Schwanhofer, dead twelve years ago, had been the German novelist most beloved by women from 1880 to 1906, and the postal card of his hand holding a Swan's quill (called *The Swan Quill*) had beaten the sales record of the postal card of Hebbel's heart or of Beethoven's brow. Ever since his first novel—as if all the authors up to that time had done nothing but insult and calumniate them—the Bavarian women had formed themselves into a League (the Schwanhofer Woman's League) to watch over and to develop at need his marvelous and enchanting conception of the feminine demon-angel, especially the Munich demon-angel, and to assure to said demon eternal publicity. Everybody, woman or man, who might disturb him in his devotion, had been pitilessly gotten out of the way, and two twin sisters had sequestered him, in the name of the League, in the castle of Linderhof, lent by King Otto. They were virtuous, both of them, but impassioned, beautiful, modest, proud of their little faults and humble about their great qualities—of which the least was the replacing of the black keys of the piano by reddish-brown ivories—never entering chapel but swathed in veils, bathing nude, and between these two extremes imagining a complete scale: low neck for tea at the Monopteros, a disguise for dinners in the blue Grotto; one arm bare for readings at the Valleda pavilion, gilding themselves from head to foot one evening and stepping out suddenly, in the park, as the great novelist passed, from the sunshine and the gigantic gilded statues of Flora and Ninon to which they had attached themselves. Emma and Amalia de Hohenriff gave Schwanhofer daily the spectacle, hardly a falsification in this setting—of the antinomies which animate the body-souls of watersprites, Valkyries and—women, the sight of the younger corroborating better than any proof the sight of the former.

I had been authorized to approach Swan (they called him Swan, for short) for Fritz, who was on the committee of the League, had sung aloud for my glory my twenty-four hour wait, and from a tradesman I had brought Amalia a sachet of that gold powder which they consumed so rapidly at the

château. He lived in a wing of it, reputedly romantic, where the stucco walls gave in to one's fingers, but where the parquet and baseboards were of black marble, where little Eva had every opportunity to bump her head and not to fall. He had the head of a perfect husband, not exactly the head of one who will be or has been deceived by his wife, but one of those who in some anterior existence have been so abundantly deceived, by I do not know what sort of creatures, that they are protected on this earth from the annoyance by a general rule of conservation and human politeness, but who in the following existence all the seraphim and archangels will concur in making a cuckold. Since his first novel "Lilith" (the last woman probably who deceived him before her birth on this planet) to the "Suite on the Queen of Sheba" (the one who has been deceiving him for the past twelve years) and in passing by the faithful multitude of his modern heroines, he had drawn down upon the women of southern Germany a particular favor, the effect of which was felt in summer in the casinos of the Baltic and in winter from Davos to Vienna in the quality of their flirtations. Twenty times tutors of the University of Heidelberg, deceived and furious; conductors of orchestras in Salzburg, made ridiculous; or young and old people in Dantzig or Stettin, jealous of Southern perfections, had tried to bring doubt to his soul. Emma had spied in the trunk of a copyist—fortunately the day of her engagement—Diderot's *Nun*, Schopenhauer (of whom the Swan had read only the edition for young girls), and albums full of art photographs, for which a highly respected Archduchess had served as nude model, the stockings painted in by hand. She had held up, too, a microphone, gift from an anonymous sender, which repeated the ten first phrases pronounced by a pan-European heroine, who adored Swan, the day of the departure for Samoa of the friend for whom she had renounced titles and perhaps a crown:

"How beastly rain is!"

"My right eyelid winks, they are talking of me."

"I want leeks for breakfast; they are the asparagus of the poor."

"What beautiful eyes sailors have, but what a disgusting thing rain is until the sun dries it up."

Another time the fat actor Bauberger had been introduced into Linderhof unexpectedly, and he was informed that Lili Arlberg was fooling him, but he confined himself to breaking the bell glasses in the garden, which must have depreciated even more the coefficient of the masculine soul in Schwanhofers's eyes. To make him begin to have the shadow of a suspicion, it was necessary to prepare him by a series of wisely graduated humiliating experiences, the first of which was finding Theresa Rosenwald in the arms of his own brother. Nevertheless little Eva, careful of her complexion and

distrusting Amalia's gold powder as much as rice powder, grew in virtue and warmth of bosom among the painters and poets whose well determined design it was to have her make up some day for the injustice done their sex by Schwanhofer.

"My cousin Eva," said Zelten, "is the nurse who cured Kleist."

"How does that concern your friend?" asked Eva.

"It is she who christened him Siegfried," continued Zelten, "because he will never know who his mother and father were, and Kleist in memory of our greatest poet, for the ball which took life from Kleist and memory from Siegfried penetrated the same spot. The one lost his age; the other his infancy."

At this instant, I could confirm all the swelling by millimeters which rage occasions in the model body of Major Schiffel. The more so as Zelten, who lacked tact that day, began to recount his unhappy love for Eva.

"The second of June, 1915," he said, "I can avow it now, I swore to steal you and run away. You were saved only by a triolet that I had promised the Berlin *Tageblatt*, and which I could not postpone. How sweetish are your kisses!"

Zelten never could get used to saying "sweet" for "sweetish."

"You are a fool this morning, Zelten. This stranger is embarrassed by your talk."

Zelten began to laugh.

"My little Eva," he said, "I'm going to tell you a story. It was eighteen years ago and I was eighteen. You know how my grandfather brought me up. I lived stretched at length, on account of my rheumatic arthritis, and from the day of my birth to that of my cure, I never saw a young face. It was not my grandfather who desired that but my tutor, the cook, the valets, were all his own age and they kept away other children, that I might not be saddened by the sight of them. I never went out except in the park, where the statues of people who my tutor told me were young, Proserpine or Queen Louise, had heads without noses or worn with age, or to the Pavilion of the Great Elector, converted also by the municipality into a hospital for old men. So that the elements of human beauty for me were worn or washed-out eyes, voices strident or hollow, white hair, and cracking knee-joints. Swollen veins, rushes of blood to the eyes and nose, trembling hands seemed normal and official features. I would rather not tell you how I visualized the heroes of Holy Scripture and literature, or what Father Anchises was to me, or Methuselah or the mother Hecuba, since I thought the octogenarians around me were young. Then I was cured, and the evening

came when I was allowed to go to Munich. It was night and the eve of the Carnival. All the maleficent powers of Bavaria had taken on the youngest forms but, on the other hand, in the street and at the ball of the Volks theater, where my tutor officially took me, renting our dominoes at the door, all were masked. The ball began. The boxes of the barons and bankers had lowered their drawbridges right down to the parterre, thus countenancing an exchange of bodies almost nude, barely adorned with a pin or a belt which would permit one to recognize them as an Indian dancing girl or a Queen of Spades. From my cage upholstered in red plush, almost intoxicated I, to whom bodies until now had been only bones and tendons, I admired their liveness, their gambols, their skin; nobody creaked, and if I shut my eyes when one of them passed me, it gave me a delicious shiver. The whole human substance seemed suddenly new. But the faces were all masked. I could imagine less than ever a head worthy of these bodies, and youth at the crossways of its senses.

“Incapable of waiting for the stroke of midnight for the masks to fall from all the heads—unpitted and unmarked by smallpox—too timid and too far from the parterre to tear one from a woman’s face, I leaned across and drew one from the face of a tall young man in the neighboring box. I saw then—I saw—and for me it was as if in skinning a rabbit I had found the little body of a child—I saw a face eighteen years old, cheeks, eyes, lips, teeth, eighteen years old; in short, I saw the face of the man there whom you call a stranger.”

He looked at me tenderly, my face to-day masked for him by my face at that ball.

But Eva shrugged her shoulders and I pretended I had an engagement and left them.

Kleist made no allusion to my letter, but by the way in which he clasped my hand I understood that he had received it. The lesson was not so good as the day before, for he was absent-minded. The chapters on the hairdresser and the visit to the Grevin Museum did not succeed in captivating him. I thought that he was waiting for Eva, but I soon learned that it was a question of a depressing visit. He seemed to me not transformed since yesterday, but more like the last picture of him which I had preserved. At the conclusion of the evening I learned why he had discarded his spectacles and condemned himself to further nearsightedness, why he had shortened his beard and cut his hair. He wore an open shirt with a soft collar and his pumps almost entirely revealed his feet. He was kind and affectionate to the highest

degree, but entirely removed from the present moment. I remembered having experienced the same impression less forcibly and I recalled that it was at la Fourrière. Each dog in my pathway there would arise, his ear contracted to give to the sound wave the form of his name and stretched to show that he believed he recognized his own private mark. The fleece of the brown poodles was stirred by a flux and reflux of suffering, as a clump of seaweed is stirred by the real flux. Kleist's trouble was to-day like that. He displayed a long neck without a collar. On his shoulder there were two moles; I was conscious that it distressed him not to be able to display his shoulder. Instead of struggling against his idiosyncrasies, he exaggerated them and gave free rein to all those little mechanical impulses which alone might henceforth restore to him a family and a past. He was like those lost dogs who all their lives have borne the reputation of being bad and dangerous, but who now lick one's hands. I guessed that he was ready to show his tenderness and his most secret thoughts, as if it were because of his secret thought that some day he must be recognized or because of his sincerest opinion about snow and rain.

As soon as Prince Heinrich had arrived and had settled himself upon the sofa, thus concealing its scroll of

“Here snow stops and no wind blows,
I am the sofa of repose,”

Kleist threw aside textbook and grammar and refused to speak of anything except the soul of war or of Europe, shaking these words about him as a horse shakes its bells in the deep forest or in the night which it takes to be a forest.

A sick man only needs the word most nearly associated with his malady to return to it, and as I had pronounced the word German, Kleist demanded:

“Monsieur Chapdelaine, what do you think of Germany in Canada?”

I accepted a challenge which would allow me to see how Kleist stood in regard to Germany and whether I had any chance of winning him back by gradually leading him to choose between the habits and passions of the two countries, as one would have done in a novel. It would also allow me to see whether I must bring myself to tell him the truth some fine day.

According to me, the opinion held of Germany was that it was a great country, full of musicians in uniform, of soldiers in civilian's clothes, a country industrious and active, whose bar was held by anti-Semites in its dazzling hours and by Semites at all other times—a country ill disposed, or

ill prepared to fulfill for an instant the obligations imposed upon it for each moment of the next half century.

“And what do you think of France?”

“What is thought of France in Canada?”

“Yes, how does a Quebec merchant judge it?”

The merchant of Quebec thought that France is a country rich in churches and poor in baptisms, a country which through the medium of small bourgeois, too niggardly in small matters and too broad in their views, has for six years been guiding Europe with honesty and not without honor.

The Prince and Kleist began to laugh.

“And you?” Kleist asked me. “Do you reproach Germany with anything?”

“Yes: in three days the perusal of its newspapers justifies me in it.”

“Why, what now?”

“I accuse Germany of writing the word Bureau ‘Büro’ and the word Cakes ‘Keks.’ I accuse Germany of attacking the guardian of the Turennes monument with cudgels every day, or of deluging him with filth. I accuse her of writing under Trossinger’s signature that Balzac is a brute, Racine a pig, and Molière a canker. I accuse her of having the shaving brush passed over my lips at the barber’s when my beard is confined to my chin. I also accuse Germany of accusing everybody else.”

The Prince said: “We Germans accuse her of many other faults, a fact which lessens the weight of your accusations. I know you, M. Chapdelaine, I see what a *penchant* you have had for our country and what curiosity it inspires in you. I do not know whether it is slandered, but I am sure that the depth of Germany’s soul is not understood. You have before you two utterly different Germans. If I may begin with myself, so that the demonstration may be clearer, I shall begin by saying that I have belonged for twelve years to the smallest state of Germany; I know each of her artisans, every one of her farmers, and I was one day summoned to be the sovereign of them all. Siegfried, on the contrary, is the ideal German, not the son of Prussia nor the son of Bavaria, nor the son of Baden. His misfortune has at least procured for him the position of being the only real representative of a race which includes sixty million defenders. Now I assure you that if your America and France really knew our thoughts, the thoughts of two Germans who are at the two extremities of Germany, they would quickly become reassured.”

“They are reassured as regards you two,” I said, “but there are intermediary types.”

“No judge has ever been more severe in his judgments upon Germany than the German himself,” replied the Prince. “I do not know, M. Chapdelaine, in what form the Canadian writers tell the truth to Canada. I do know that, in what concerns France you will find in her immense production only one author ready to admit that the vague lands around Paris are surpassed in beauty by the Alps around Vienna and that the sonnet of Arvers possesses less varied beauties than the *Lusiades*. Perhaps this is through courtesy or because it is tactless to speak of defects. But neither Heine nor Nietzsche was polite enough to disguise from Germany her servility and her heaviness when they deemed it necessary to refer to them. If I were a writer and not a prince or if I had a name instead of a number to add to my Christian name I should not hesitate to do as they did. However, I think that that would not be right to-day.

“One can hardly accuse a country, unless it turns aside from the pathway set for it by God, or renounces its mission and its vocation, and despite depressing appearances I cannot feel that Germany has made such renunciation, either during the war or afterwards. We shall speak of this some other day, but you must realize that there is impropriety in speaking of a Germany at war and a Germany at peace. There is but one Germany. Between the German peace and the German war there is not, as there is between the French peace and the French war, a difference of nature, but a difference of degree. War transforms neither our souls nor our customs. On the day of mobilization the sergeants did not have to distribute to our soldiers, along with the knapsacks and leggings, any homicidal sentiments which were new to them or teach them to manipulate them, as had to be done in England and in France. From 1914 to 1918, German wives scarcely deceived their husbands more than before; collectors of licentious books did not increase their purchases materially nor were the literary men silent at all. To such an extent frenzy is normal in Germany and not order! To such an extent do its enormous rivers bear witness physically to its arteriosclerosis. So great is its passion and not its reason! The only wise man whom Germany has produced is her greatest man, but he is almost the only one, while in the least French village of the Mediterranean coast, in Cassis or in Carqueranne, the radiance which once caressed the brow of Goethe and which since his death has clung to each of his busts, alights each day upon the countenance of a port sergeant or a retired tax-collector.”

A spot of sunlight played upon Kleist's brow. The Prince silently watched it. He had his choice. He could think that this was the second reflection of wisdom upon a German head or he could believe that it was a signal for him to give Siegfried his cue to speak, just as in music halls a

spotlight announces the conclusion of the number. I helped in this latter interpretation by turning toward my friend. Besides, Kleist was preparing to speak and to utter his profoundest thought concerning Germany. Since the Solignac letter he felt no further need of concealing from me this thought, which he believed inspired in him by Mommsen and Treitschke, while it was really inspired by Michelet and Renan, with details of expression which he thought borrowed from Dehmel or Gottfried Keller and which were in reality taken from Toulet or Moreas. Certain hesitations which he felt at times he attributed to Luther or to Hauptmann, but they came to him as a matter of fact from Montaigne or from France.

“M. Chapdelaine,” said he, “do not be offended with me if I eliminate your country from the discussion. The United States never understood the war and took no part in it. At most they participated in another struggle which was waged, at the same time and on the same battlefields. The United States cannot conceive of any war excepting civil war. It is always themselves and their own failings which are personified by the hostile nation against which they contend in each war. They call war a moral crisis. When they were English they fought with the English; as soon as they became Americans they fought with Americans. When they were sufficiently Germanized in their manners and culture, they hurled themselves against the Germans. The first American who took a prisoner in 1917 was named Meyer and his captive bore the same name. In Germany we have never taken this family quarrel seriously. But the war between Germany and France has been genuine. To discuss the problem of responsibilities is a vain pastime: Germany is responsible, because Germany is movement and France is repose. No nation enjoys more completely what it possesses or confines itself more narrowly to this possession than does the French nation. Nor is any nation happier in the possession of good fortune than she, though this good fortune is frequently fictitious and imperfect, such as the ownership of Martinique and Pondicherry, mere wrecks of colonial empires. Such, too, is the possession of the learned Adler and of the man who foresaw the telephone, that wreck of the empire of aerial sound waves. All this is a sign of peace. On the other hand, no nation attaches its desires more firmly to what it does not possess than does Germany—which is a sign of warfare. It desires Besançon and Grenoble and claims Chopin and Franck. It christens Roger van der Wayden, Roger de la Bruyère, in an appetite for subterranean annexation which not one regular professor nor one instructor has resisted. It has annexed the Gothic cathedrals, the Dutch colonies, Algeria, and the French epics. And the unfortunate artists and neutral scholars in the outskirts of the German basin are drawn away from her like flies from a jar of cream,

only by means of Teutonic appellations which follow them henceforth in all the textbooks. Germany wanted to win the war so that the town in which Pasteur was born might become German and that year, on the day of his hundredth anniversary, Pasteur, born anew, would have been proclaimed a German.

“But what do you deduce from all this? *I* conclude from it that this time her pride and her appetite for quarrels have been bridled justly. But that is all. Germany is as alive to-day as yesterday. The word France and the word Germany are no longer and have almost never been mere geographical expressions to the world: they are moral terms. The more one of them is dismembered the more its non-temporal power, like that of the Papacy, is increased. Why, then, should we continue to consider as a mere crime against property an explosion which bears to modern life the same relation which passion bears to the heart? Germany suddenly became enamored of the universe. For fifty years the scale which served the schoolmaster for the lesson in objects, the brewer for the diameter of his casks, the manufacturer of nails for the length of his nails, was graded to the use of the universe. There was not a map of the world or of the oceans and stars in which the color reserved for Germany did not suddenly inundate all of Brazil, the Gulf Stream and some constellations. We took the earth as one captures a woman—by being constantly on hand, by leading her to music, and by taking her on parade; by adoring geraniums; by being clean and giving every one of our towns a bathing equipment; by going to Teneriffe in astronomical bands when Mars drew close to her and offering her an album of honor with Einstein’s autograph for this conjunction; by making Germans pour out coffee and cream, Wagner, and champagne in every hotel and restaurant in the entire world. What has been called our force of propaganda is none other than this. It is this love of the globe which scatters our children upon each continent, whence escape at once the aroma of sauerkraut and the voices of quartets and harmonicas; it is a physical love of the planet which urges us to love its fauna and flora more than any other nation, to have the finest menageries and herbariums and to supply Asiatic and tropical universities with glass flowers. It is this, too, which leads us to adore her in her very minerals and essences (which she feels, lavishing by preference her secret rays, her electric currents, and her ectoplasms upon our chemists and physicians). In the very midst of this nuptial century it has chanced that we have clashed against a nation who loved her no longer except with a vague Platonic love and who were shocked by our embrace, for it must be admitted that we were embracing the earth. This nation has conquered us, but you who know France, M. Chapdelaine, you would reassure and console us if

you would take it upon yourself to affirm that she is capable of becoming once more this lover of our planet. The coals of China, the insects of the Pacific, the palm trees of Brazil and the curly hair of Cambridge professors need at times to be caressed by the same breath and the same hand—and the open seas by the same prows.”

I did not have time to reply that the Occident would perhaps have preferred some affection different from the von Kluck type of love, some other tenderness than the Crown Prince brand, or time to suggest that it would perhaps have been appropriate to reserve them for the Orient first—for someone knocked at the door.

I saw five old women and an old man come in. Two of the aged women were poorly clad, one was a peasant woman of the Spree forest in native costume while the remaining two and the old man seemed in better circumstances. But all had in evidence lockets with hair, together with little crosses with medals, and each one held a photograph like an admission ticket. This was the monthly collection of relatives of those who had disappeared, who had come thinking that they had recognized some feature of their lost child in Kleist's portraits. Kleist had left his desk, so that his legs also were visible. The old women watched him from a distance, not daring to come near, seeing nothing about him which recalled their sons, but waiting for him to recognize them and trying to make themselves like what they were seven years or twenty years before. The chandelier had been completely lit up. Beneath a hundred candles I felt my friend nameless and wretched. Siegfried and Kleist had moved away from him, to give room, if through some stroke of good fortune it should be needed, to Father Strossmeyer and to Frau Oberrath Friesz, who at this moment surpassed them in grandeur. Father Strossmeyer gave up first, like the man that he was. Then the women went away. I led them back to the door. Weary they left in the snow their footprints, which were almost the footprints of a woman bearing a son.

When I left my friend, neither Siegfried nor Kleist had come back again. Their liberated shadows had left everything, even the room, even the house. They must have plunged with delight being northern shadows into the still moving scaffolding of the falling night, and withdrawn to play with the shades of spindle trees which alone were still intact or with the shades of children. Prince Heinrich, not daring even to utter the names again, tried to call Forestier by a neutral word which proved to be, “My child.” My

decision was formed. The next evening at the lesson I would reveal my secret.

But beneath my door I found the following letter written with red ink and in French:

“We have to inform you that your relations with S. V. K. by us are highly suspected. Of your immediate departure we highly the desire express. In any case we warn you highly that if you trouble S. V. K. in the calm state obtained painfully and his work by one day interrupt, he runs the risk of death, as do you, of whom we are highly the servant. Signed: Consul.”

I avenged myself provisionally upon the she consul by sending to Kleist the next day the following example of French nomenclature. Some day I shall publish this indispensable practical compliment to the Berlitz method:

Editing and Nomenclature. The Bathing Girl of Bellac.

You pretended to plunge away at sight of me. Then, reappearing, you assumed the expression of a woman who returns from great depths. With your hand you dusted away from the surface of the water a few sunny patches, as a woman dusts away from her bodice the traces of rice powder or an Undine the scales detached from her body. But you are not an Undine. You were mistaken, for I knew the depth of each hole of the Bazine. You were in the sixty-five centimeter hole, seated upon a bottom carpeted with water thistles. You were in the place where dwells the uncatchable trout of the department, but how vulnerable were you yourself! Oh crippled Naiad, you were also ignorant of the name of your river.

“It is the Bazine!” I cried to you.

“Into what river does it empty?” you replied, for you hoped in this way to obtain at least some name that you knew.

“Into the Vincou,” I cried again.

“But the Vincou?”

“Into the Gartempe.”

You are obstinate and completely naked.

“But the Gartempe?”

“Into the Vienne.”

You did not suspect your absurdity, for you think that the Vienne flows into the Rhone and into those living waters which nourish the Atlantic after having gnawed at each castle of Limousin, Poitou, and Touraine. With swelling bust and languishing eyes you cast a gleam destined for Avignon and Marseilles. I ought to have told you that Young had gone up that river

as far as Nantes. But men have always interested you more than rivers; and you, cut off short at the navel, like a siren by the black river, with the part of your body which rested upon the water as arid as a hairdresser's wax bust, were seeking to link that traveler with some Parisian current.

"Is Young the friend of Revillon?"

"No, Pitt's friend."

"Is Pitt Sacha's friend?"

"No, Mirabeau's friend."

Then, believing that Mirabeau was from the north, at that name you emerged entirely naked from the water like a Swedish bather.

CHAPTER V

THAT night I dreamed. The moment that I had told Kleist that he was a Frenchman Eva proved me a German. To avoid scandal Kleist took my name and I took his. The aspect of the world was modified for each of us to such a point that we had to separate; for one, the earth was swelling and for the other, it was decreasing. On a road which he told me became constantly straighter and better paved, Kleist called out that the air was becoming more transparent, that they were soldering his reason with hinges and his passions with articulations; that the insects seemed smaller and thinner to him; that the song of the birds which he had understood heretofore had become a mere rustling in his ears and whenever a crow croaked he demanded a translation: in fact, that he felt an indomitable desire for absinthe and economy. He called me a very common name, "Boche," and hurried on to Paris that he might at last hear *Mignon* and *The Huguenots*. The human beings in his environment had smaller and smaller feet and held less and less firmly to the earth. The buildings, plants, and animals wore conventionalized sheathing which protected them from too brutal a look; the Louis XV oaks threw their shade over the Henry II St. Germain dogs; and if anyone died on his path, he saluted profoundly, granting pardon to Death when it jostled him.

I was on a hill which threatened at every minute to overthrow me like the turning wheel of the Magic City; I saw yoked together and clinging to the tree of Adam himself, all the contrasts which heretofore I had found separated: the pine to the palm, the phonograph to the nightingale, the Spree to the Blue River; and among men and animals I could distinguish only their instrument of fecundation or destruction, the gigantic trumpet of the mosquito, the formidable pistils of the zinnias, the H aspirate of my compatriots. At times I was enraged and it was because the Zugspitze, the highest German mountain, was only 2,963 meters high; at others, I was enraptured, because Louis II of Bavaria had pressed Wagner to his breast so that his decorations automatically clung to Wagner's breast—then I took a tender blonde into my arms, and weeping, made her my own. Then the hill suddenly threw me off. I should have clung to the tree, in this emergency, but I woke up with neuralgia and prickings in my feet, which in the dream would doubtless have turned into a desire to marry Trieste or to play the lute on the Lorelei rock. And so the daily life began again with little vexations and the lizard breakfast service.

Not a single time in the following week did I see Kleist alone. His tale had become a legend and visitors abounded. Pilgrimages to authors who have produced nothing and to painters without canvases was not an isolated fact in Germany. There are hardly any works left in this country—there are only authors. All those Berliners, like silhouettes or thin gilding, who once created life and heavy volumes have disappeared like the thin-flanked women, whom no one ever loved, but who gave ten children to Prussia. All those bourgeois are gone whose lives were confined to the avenues of their restaurants and the way to their offices, but who nevertheless wrote thirty dramas and *Paradise Regained*. No more even of those Philistine novelists, inferior to their work whatever it was, like Father Schwanhofer. The German novelists produce a minimum of novels; the poets and tragedians, mere ghosts of verse and suspicions of tragedy. But all dream of having the most astonishing lives of romancers and poets, profiting by the century which lends itself to that sort of thing, and thanks to war, to revolutions, victories, and defeats, they accumulate metamorphoses in place of volumes, and change continents oftener than Goethe changed his stage settings. So it comes about that the biographies of German artists nowadays are infinitely more captivating than their works, when these are not lacking altogether.

Just as their country puts on its visiting card “First Empire of the World,” they write on theirs the word “Author” or “Composer,” without dreaming what inner obligations such words exact, and finding for themselves and their kind the exhausting labor of music, literature, or painting too slow, they turn to more rapid agents, such as cocaine, the traffic in savage beasts, and plots. In the front of every bookshop one can count twenty biographies to one work, and the public exacts this. All Germany rushes out in the morning toward new proper names, which have sprung up over night; they replace delightedly the great proper names of former times, of Russia, France, and America, by individual names, Joffre, Tanery or Grane, and they insist upon knowing of these persons their place of birth, their travels, and the names of those who loved them. It was already habitual in the schools to ask the pupils how they imagined the life of Siegfried Kleist before his wound, and, had he not forbidden it, a volume of these biographies would have been published in which twice he was a son of Liebknecht, twice Kleist himself, and an infinite number of times a descendant of Goethe or Werther.

I was, therefore, only half surprised one day when Eva took me by surprise in my own room and demanded who I was. I was beginning to ask myself who Eva was. All I had found out up to this moment was that she was beautiful and in most matters very different from her sisters, the other

feminine beings occupied chiefly in this impossible century in fighting off the intemperance of the seasons, their own lubricity, and the high cost of taxis. I also knew that to the naked eye the sight of Eva was not a little like the life of a chrysanthemum, in the cinematograph; and particularly she resembled the chrysanthemum of the Bourla species. Her hair ruffled up and smoothed down again without other reason it seemed—as in the cinema—than because the time had come for doing so. Her hands played without stopping a little comedy of stamens, and every glance of her eyes in her face—that face at the very depths of the cinema screen—showed an episode in that struggle of youth with a force (in the slow films even more than the fast ones), which so nearly resembles perishing and death. Perfume about her was hardly perceptible and only suggested as in pictured flowers. Sometimes as you see an invisible or rigid part of the Bourla chrysanthemum suddenly expand and flower, one corner of Eva would flower for me quite unexpectedly. Seeing my admiration, she stuck out her tongue at me.

“Who *are* you?” she said. “What is your biography? Which are your continents?”

That game played in France which consists in naming all the departments you know is played in Germany with continents. They have even invented new ones to complicate the game—Mitropa, Gaelica.

Who I was? Well, I was someone who knew only America, Asia, and (is it not asking to become a continent?) Ireland. But I was one who knew every living blonde woman with green eyes in the neighborhood of Seattle, Trebizonde, and Dublin. As for the friend of that wife of the Swedish consul in Cork (whose eyes were green only one year and that fortunately the year of my sojourn there) he was not, as had been claimed, O’Sullivan Dolywood: it was I. The fellow who quarreled with Betty Scheff, who undertook to make him sit on the side of her black eye (for her eyes were different colors) he was not as was published Oscar Eric of Sumiprast: it was I. And the one who had a son by Rosina Raverina (a son of whom one never knew if his eyes were his mother’s or not, for he lived only a day) that was not Dante di Brangenetti: it was I. And he who carried Nenetza Benga in a big paper was not Alcibiades Mevrondis: it was I. And, to tell the truth, I was also the one to whom the greatest Haitian poet had dedicated his best poem, which began with the line, since become so illustrious:

“The joyous titlark sounds the reveille!”

“Haiti,” said Eva, who was listening to me patiently, though she would have preferred a more ordered biography, with dates—“One of my cousins,

Otto von Mueller, fell out of a boat between Haiti and Havana and was eaten by a shark. What are you laughing at?”

It was impolite to laugh, but after all who was more in his rights midway between Port-au-Prince and Cuba—the shark or Mueller? It was an enterprising but imprudent family, for the younger brother died, too, in a more equal battle, at Brégy, Seine-et-Marne, where no very important matter called him—between Varedes and Dammartin. One might reproach me in the same way to-day and ask me what I was looking for midway—if I guessed right—between the hatred and sympathy of Eva. We had come nearer and Eva had taken my hands tenderly and looked me hard in the eyes.

“You have your father’s forehead,” I said.

“Leave my father’s forehead alone. If you want to know more and complete the circular of Major Schiffel which Ida gave you, I have the hips of my aunt Schadow and of Cranach’s Magdalen, the teeth of my grandfather Curlus and of the Adam Kraft’s mermaid, and the bosom of my great-grandmother Dorothea, and that’s the equivalent, be it understood, of Penthesilia’s. But you—who are you?”

I was no longer afraid of women. My fear of them came formerly from the fact that I thought them rare and perishable. But since the war, I knew it to be the infinitely more fragile body of man that has the magnets that attract deadly shot, iron and steel. Of all the friends of youth for whom I had such mortal fears, first to touch, then feel, then strangle, not one but would answer a call. Hardly have their cohorts (to use a poetic word beloved by senators when they dispute the vote of women), hardly have their cohorts furnished me with a single young tubercular, or by the aid of a third great wave imposed the most derisory tax. I was sure of dying before Eva. That had rid me of all scruples.

“Your name?” she repeated.

I declared that my name was Chapdelaine or more exactly, Chapedlaine.

“Dear John,” she said, “let us play a frank game. Zeltel reminded me that I knew you formerly. I found your initials on an old letter you had written my father; I found your name in the university catalogue, and I obtained from the rector your matriculation paper. Here it is!”

She held out to me, in fact, my registration card of 1906, upon which I had written that I was born in Limoges, lived in the Ile-de-France, had studied in Berry (for in foreign lands I am always prouder of my provinces than of the departments). The rest of the card was empty. To the indiscreet questions which German universities put in the name of the *Rector Magnificus*, upon puberty, its manifestations, one’s vices, etc. I had refused

to answer, hating to compromise, among others, Anjou, Vivarais, and Saintonge. I congratulated myself on not having committed this indiscretion, of which Eva would certainly have taken advantage.

“Answer,” said Eva, “and let go of me. There is danger——”

She spoke like a charged battery and, indeed, if I were to believe Ida, Eva had sufficiently highly charged cables—that of the consul, of Thulé and the Schützcorps.

“What are you doing with Siegfried Kleist? What plots have you against him?”

Feeling assured that, twenty good years after they had buried me in my little cemetery at the bottom of a coffin equal for the sake of regularity to the longest coffin of my ancestors, Eva would still live, a Bourla chrysanthemum in decline, her rage made no impression upon me. Moreover, I adore scenes between young men and women, especially when they burst out in Germany. They correspond to what in Scotland is the silence of two fiancés in a cavern; in the United States to the adoption by two lovers of a young badger or a mocking bird; in short, to all the romantic thrills of the soul, and on the Indian Ocean, where from sheer laziness one does not move, and where one allows scenes to be made by the elements themselves, they correspond to the typhoon or fierce lightning. In Thuringia and Suabia, they are consummated by more contentions, whips, velvet pouches, and kisses to enemies than anywhere else in the world. Catching Eva’s hands, with a gesture which I had not revealed to the *Rector Magnifico* in my matriculation paper, unbending her knees by a method learned since I left the university, I confined my peril to her teeth and lips by a practice, well known in Picardy and denominated “kiss.” Assured that this Amazon would still nourish her Adam Kraft hips and her Penthesilia breast with bilberry wine and croquettes long after they should have planted on my tomb the trees casually indicated to my friends as my favorites—the little catalpa, the laurel, the cork tree and the non-weeping willow—I embraced her. And perhaps thus I confessed that I was not Chapdelaine. But it was the end of the scene. It was what would correspond in Scotland to the call for the chaperon, Miss Draper, at golf; in the United States to the bite of the little badger; and in the Indian Ocean to a calm sea without waves, but laid in furrows like a field—calm above ten thousand Chinamen drowned in an instant. Eva had not drawn back.

“I don’t know whether I hate all French men,” said Eva, bringing to perfection a classic example of extenuation. “I hate France. Every night I make my little cousins recite the prayer against France which our league sends out.”

“Recite it,” I said. “One may win indulgence at any hour.”

She recited: “ ‘Holy Mary, mother of God, deliver the world from the horrible race of the French. You, who are full of Grace, to whom the Savior listens, make of all the places where they pretend to venerate you, Lourdes and the others, places of catastrophe and ruin. You, who never interceded for the assassins, the Medes, or the shameful Carthaginians, ask Christ, the Avenger, to spread pitch and sulphur over them. Pray for us, poor sinners, who are going to take up arms and chase the negroes from the Rhine, the Annamites from the Neckar, the Moroccans from the Moselle, and as at the marvelous Sicilian Vespers, massacre the French in their red pantaloons, beat with nettles the French women plastered with paint, and disperse their progeny with those of the Serbians and the shameful Roumanians. Plead with St. Catherine to burn down their dwellings; to St. Barbara to explode all their mines. May the hundred thousand oxen delivered them by us spread a pest among their cattle. May the hundred thousand cars delivered by us become like black chargers in their trains. Amen.’ There! There is not a well-born child in Bavaria who does not recite this invocation on her little bedside mat, while the moon rises behind the window panes.”

She stopped to think.

“What do the little French children say at that hour?”

“They say a prayer, too. Would you like to hear it?”

I recited: “ ‘Saint Gabriel, we give you back the sword which vanquished little Hindenburg. Saint Michael, we give you back the buckler which overthrew little Ludendorff. Saint Raphael, we return your helmet, against which the helmet of little William was broken. And when the time comes to pardon all the little Germans who destroyed 789,000 of our houses, grant us a little sign and let it be a little Bavarian child offering of its own accord, ten little pfennigs to France, and when the time comes to pardon all the little Germans who deported our sisters, cut down our cherry and apple trees, and devastated 3,337,000 hectares of ours, grant us a little sign and let it be a little Hessian girl refusing to say her homicidal prayer at night; for, Archangels, in giving us the victory you have taken from us the right to hate.’ ”

“Let us talk frankly, Eva. Sit down, since we have said our *benedicite*. Where did you see Siegfried for the first time?”

This time she answered me. Her dress slipped down and showed her shoulder. What did the archangels mean by this sign? “At Sassnitz, in the hospital. In the room set apart for soldiers wounded in the head and unconscious, prisoners and allies. They put me there because I knew

something of languages and I translated their cries. It was frightful. One would think all Europe was there. At the end of the week I understood the nationality of their cries and the rattling in their throats. I saw Siegfried arrive the 4th of March, 1915. That date is on his military record, at the place of his birth.”

“And the nationality of Siegfried’s cries? How did you recognize them?”

“What do you mean?”

“I know where Siegfried was picked up. It was in a wood where a foreign legion and a half German, half Austrian regiment were fighting. All the nations of the world, or nearly all, and even neutrals, left their wounded on that field. How did you recognize that Siegfried was German?”

“Before he swooned, he cried, ‘Wasser.’ ”

“They teach all the French and English troops, before an assault in the east to say, ‘Mohammed is his prophet,’ and in the west, ‘Vater mit kindern’ or ‘Wasser.’ ”

Believing herself enraged by the discussion, but still intent upon struggle, Eva approached me with such menace that her nose touched mine. That is a declaration of love in certain Malay islands. But I hesitated to utter this frivolous reflection aloud. I confined myself to an expression of enmity analogous to the first. I did not inflict upon Eva the rubbing of ears, which in Bechuanaland engages two people to live together on the products of their hunt; nor yet that of chin and forehead which in Dibamba in High Ogone, a place known by Zelten, signifies that you will eat the same man and that you are authorized to inscribe on the living victim and on your favorite part, a number reserving your share. But, catching her two arms in the iron vise of Berry, as my matriculation card would have said, I gave her the kiss of Louveciennes.

“Do you know,” she said when she could speak, still leaning against me, “what formula the young German girls recite and copy nine times and send out to nine friends?”

I looked at her without a word. I had had enough of the assaults of hatred. But she recited:

“ ‘O Germany, we vow each one of us to bear five children to avenge you. The first will take vengeance on Poland, which is an insult and a derision to all Europe. The four others will take vengeance on the French, who take away all value from life. They confiscated in Alsatia the goods of General Scheuch, former minister of war. Thanks to the value of their franc, they pillage our shops. Too cowardly themselves to violate our women, they give them to negroes. They show up their wounds like a Spanish beggar to

excite pity and get alms. But, Germany, your hour is approaching little by little. Already Bolivia has recalled its German veterinary mission! the zoological station at Naples has recalled its German director; already the New York aviaries have asked for officials from Hagenbeck, and the Argentine acclaims our botanists. Germany, the empire that you once exercised over the flora and fauna of the world will soon be given back to you. May the day of the Sicilian vespers come as Dr. Grober invokes it, and you will find each one of us holding out a dagger to our brothers. Massacre in one day what you have hated for five years, and the royalty of your souls will be given back to you, to become fruitful in poetry and music.’ ”

Eva, delivered, handed me out the text. After the words “Spanish beggar” an annotation indicated that one should avoid this metaphor in all Spanish countries, and replace it by Shylock demanding his pound of flesh (this to be avoided in Central Europe and Zionist circles).

Since antiphonal chants had begun again, I did not want to fall behind and prepared my epode.

“This is what the students at home say.” I was not inventing either. It was the discourse of the German *agregée* degree at the distribution of prizes at Brive:

“‘We have to-day at Brive the first distribution of prizes where the colored robes are more numerous than the black ones. You, Marie Desmoulins, who have taken the prize for German composition and you, Denise Laurent, who have taken the prize for translation, a graver mission lies before you than that reserved for the Italian and English laureates. You know, my children, the world has two buffers, Germany which softens shocks on the side of instinct, physical life, chaos, as my course before Easter proved to you, and France, which softens them on theoretic, sensitive, and logical side of life. You have, then, Marie Desmoulins——’ ”

I could not go on, for there was a knock at the door and two men came in.

They had evidently been a long time behind the door. My staircase was steep and neither was out of breath. They turned their eyes from Eva, whose hair, another sign from the archangels or another reminder of the Bourla chrysanthemum, was coming down. They looked like two husbands come to surprise their only wife. I knew the younger one by sight, a former friend of Zelten’s and a great spiritualist; and I had followed in the university the courses in which the elder declared erroneous all the doctrines about war of European political economists. The natural contingents of copper, brass, and steel were scattered, according to him, in the body of a nation, like the fat

upon which a sick man ultimately lives, and the spirit of war only declares itself when the supersaturation of warlike metal was reached.

“Monsieur,” said Professor Schmeck, “we know the object of your inquiry in Munich. You have, it seems, some reason for believing that Siegfried Kleist is not a German?”

I pretended not to understand.

“Sir,” said Professor Schmeck, “I am Professor Schmeck; my friend is Captain Baron de Greidlinger; with Fräulein von Schwanhofer you see before you, reconstructed here, the perfect trio used by your fashionable novelists of the Second Empire, when they wanted to describe Germany. By a singular chance, a trio composed of our ancestors went formerly as a delegation to the Minister of the Bavarian police to obtain the liberation of Lola Montez. The fact that to-day we are all three presidents of clubs of revenge and associations of hate, suffices to prove that Germany has changed. It is proper, therefore, for your welfare as much as for ours, that you give us an explanation. We are ready to listen to your claims if you will tell us what you know of Siegfried.”

I knew nothing.

“Sir,” replied Professor Schmeck, “you are inflicting on Miss Eva a great sorrow. Everything that would attach one to a son, attaches her to Siegfried. It was she who taught him the words for ‘glass,’ ‘dog,’ and ‘cat,’ she who taught him to write and I remember with what energy her pupil applied himself. The first fountain pen lasted only one hour. Admit that a man who is just coming to life would rather call a woman Eva, than Amelia or Ursula. But since 1914 we are no longer concerned with sons, and I understand that this argument would hardly touch you. The second may touch you more nearly. Whatever the nationality of Siegfried may be, Hungarian, French, or Portuguese, Germany needs him. Other nations have often reproached us with our passion for the transfusion of souls, of blood, the artificial creation of bodies or human intelligences. Reassure yourself. We have transfused no foreign fluid into your friend. Since his wound healed over, the cycle of his blood has remained perfect. But our great master Bentram, the author of almost all the additions to our constitutions, having had the good luck to see Siegfried at Sassnitz, pointed him out to us as early as 1915 as a counselor destined, by reason of his logic and his intuition, to be unprecedented in Germany, to make a critical study of the projects of our statesmen. It is the principle of German education that each German should specialize—each German knows only his specialty; for the rest he relies on the Government—and it has been easy to develop Siegfried into a model counselor of State. You have arrived at a moment when his services are just about to become

indispensable. What we most lack, as you know, is not the creative spirit (for in comparison with the French we create in the proportion that a polygamous husband does compared with a monogamous one), but it is the critical mind and up to now Siegfried has seen into the scandalous consequences of thirty-one of our paragraphs.

“Admitting that he is a Frenchman, would you not be rendering a signal service to France, since by this fact the Constitution of Weimar will gain certain French principles and turning points? You are struggling to impose your language upon conferences? Why, then, should you withdraw from our German conference the sole representative, I can assure you, of your spirit? What price would Germany not pay to have at your Court of Finance an assistant above suspicion, who would incline that illustrious body to adapt itself unconsciously to the great sentiments of Germany; or in your State Council, that admirable institution which has just decreed that all the proceedings held since 1858 in the Bois de Boulogne have been wrong (since the wife of one of its members has merited the utmost punishment for not muzzling her dog). We are here to ask you to postpone your revelations until the day when Germany shall be rebuilt and Europe appeased.”

Professor Schmeck was silent. I bowed.

“Monsieur the professor,” I replied. “I will reflect. Moreover, M. von Greidlinger will inform you of my intentions, since he is the ablest mind-reader in Germany and you have brought him here in that capacity. What have you read in my mind, M. von Greidlinger?”

Greidlinger, mute as a microphone, trembled and turned his eyes away as if he had been caught reading over my shoulder. If he really read my thoughts, he saw me fishing with little Forestier, two years younger than I, and telling him a story of a fisherman who caught such a big trout that as he threw it up in the air it hit a partridge, by which the fisherman was so stupefied that he sat down on a hare and killed it. The greatest critical spirit of Weimar believed it all. That was all there was to read in me, together with a desire to see this comic interlude end. Greidlinger mentioned this to Schmeck and both said good-by.

Eva sat down, exhausted. The verbosity of Schmeck had helped me. That mechanical fashion of making a man without a country into the most nationally conscious of Germans suddenly shocked her. I went and sat down by her. I slipped my arm round her waist, thus drawing together the two floating planks of the raft which bore our friend over such a menacing sea. The stove roared and the sun dying on the Austerlitz crown of the tenor Langen gave her again for a moment the memory of what peace had been and what peace would one day be. She took my hand. But the tourney for

which living people had set the example in the room continued in its inanimate objects, and the alternating chants began again in the silence. Knocking the Hamburg correspondence which Schmeck must have left there with an elbow, it fell open at our feet and leaning over we read a hymn of hate:

“France,” said a certain Otto Ernst Schmidt, “I would desire the end of the world if you could die of it. To every country I wish the ill that is ours. May another race come down from another planet; may it bring America a monetary unit, worth 600 dollars; may beings of monstrous sex ravage France. As during the war it was not the cannon that were worst but the ‘cooties,’ so, during peace, it is not the English who are insupportable but the French. France is the meanest, the most cruel country on earth; among whose people the sense of right is extinguished forever. It is the people most sunk in vice—that of the Marquis de Sade, that of Chouderlos de Laclos, general of the Revolution, the colleague of their M. Foch. The morale of France is the rouge pot. As in no other civilized country can one find so many dirty, ill-washed people as in France, so nowhere else can one find such hypocrisy. A layer of paint over manure is the insignia of France. For every black Frenchman who has sullied our soil, let ten thousand pale Frenchmen perish. And this song is the song of hatred among a million.”

“Well, Eva?”

“Wasn’t it just about your song and that of your professors after 1870?”

“After 1870 my instructor forced me to draw with Faber’s pencils and disliked the Conté pencils. My professor at school made me read Immerman and Kotzebue in place of Dante and Shakespeare. My natural history master at the university cut up the animals in the aquarium in quarters, following the method of Giessen, instead of in halves, following the method of Gaston Bonnier. The most marked influence upon me from 1870 is that I was nourished upon Kotzebue, and that I cut tadpoles in quarters.”

“And now?”

“Since our dialogue is continued among these books, let us read the first hymn we find in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, as we open it by chance.”

Without turning over the leaves to find the hymn of the brothers Tharaud, or the Doumic hymn, or the song of Madelon, this page opened in the *Review*.

“I do not want to die before I have seen Europe happy. Without seeing a reappearance of that paper whose editor I do not know, the *International Echo of Happy Nations*, with its illustrated supplement of happy beasts and plants and its three hundred subscribers. Without having before my lips

together the two words Russia and happiness, which now an invincible force separates. I do not want to die until all the mothers whose sons have been killed are dead. That day a great step toward the world's happiness will be made. I, who never before wished to give up tennis despite my palpitations, to go to the Baths despite my liver and my rheumatism, I now wish to keep myself intact for that day; to patch up the cracks between Royat, Neris, and Vichy, in that triangle of health in Auvergne, which will enlarge little by little, as the happy hour approaches, to Marienbad, to Constanza, and finally to the Crimea. To be happy—I say it for those who are not over twenty-five years old and do not know what it means—it would be not to hear people at the frontiers multiplying the contents of their purse by the hundred and by the thousand like a nation of children. It would be to see good humor on the faces of the ten stewards of the Orient-Express, and the forty stewards with whom one makes the tour of the world, and the old smile, the torch of souls made for service, with which they used to carry my rug and my valise. It would be not to have the feeling, at the sight of a repatriated from the starving districts, that one had snatched a meal from a child. Then the day, when I shall have seen the world robust again, grappling together with two links of a chain the words Russia and happiness, I shall be ready to die. What a day—the day of my death! They will read to me from the *Echo* (or the *Figaro*, or the *Matin*, for I shall not have to choose my paper according to politics but according to optimism) those terrible accidents which indicate that the century is a happy one: that a revolver went off of its own accord in Loiret, that a poet broke his leg in Berlin, and a typhoon killed a million Chinamen. O world! how little we knew that the shipwreck of the *Titanic* was a message of happy peace!”

When Providence has brought to your room so beautiful a creature as Eva, she cannot escape without a ransom. Hardly had the door closed upon Fräulein von Schwanhofer when it opened to Genevieve Pratt. I always had the feeling that Genevieve, alone of all my women friends, would die before me. You can imagine my welcome. She was no more astonished to see me in Munich than to find herself there. Life seemed to her too strange an adventure to marvel over details. It seemed quite natural to her to meet on my threshold the most beautiful woman of South Germany, with ill-adjusted braids and so like a Bourla chrysanthemum that you might have mistaken her for one. But she insisted on telling me that this person had a nail in her right shoe. Blasé as to human affairs, her eye was the eye of a lynx when it turned upon the human body and, looking at people who seemed to me not

in the least different, she noticed limps, leanings, and the pangs, intolerable to her, of corns, chilblains, ruptures.

“Well,” I said, “and the Bernardo Rothschilds?”

“Not yet,” she replied sadly.

For Genevieve, who had no desires, had wanted always to be invited to the Bernardo Rothschilds'. I never knew why. It was not a wish whose realization was impossible. All that is necessary is for the Bernardo Rothschilds to have the slightest suspicion that their invitation would be accepted. I had always planned on the first occasion to tell them of Genevieve's wish. But destiny removed them from my path, and sowed it with the other members of the family, the Edmunds, the Alexanders, and now I saw the end of Genevieve Pratt approaching. I might have foreseen it in Paris, for all the goods of life come to me a year or an hour too late.

To begin at the beginning: my certificate of studies accomplished came to me and I headed the list, because of some word about France which the jury thought felicitous, and my grandfather had been dead three months—he who had prepared me himself, who had, by continual precepts on honesty, orthography, glory, and our four rivers, so impressed this word upon me that it burst out spontaneously at the sight of the first inspector and the chemist of Ecueille! I shall feel eternal remorse. It would have been so easy to ask a dispensation, to be received a year sooner, and thus allow my grandfather to give his last counsels with greater confidence than he could to a grandson without a diploma. Health came to me, but it was after she was dead, who had sought it in me by nights of watching. Riches came to me suddenly, months after the death of the guardian who had shared with me for ten years the 2,300 francs of his pension. Everything that he had said, laughingly, that he would get from my future millions, jumped at my eyes from the shop fronts: the bifocal spectacles, the bath robe of sham chamois-skin, his valise of sham pigskin—for he never imagined that money could ever bring into his life real chamois and real pigskin—and in every hat store, among the silver initials pinned on velvet like a decoration for the dead, the two initials that he never had the necessary two francs to buy, call out to me; and they were, too, the easiest initials of all to find: A and B.

That is why, at the sight of Genevieve, I vowed I would go and find (despite the certainty of success) the Bernardo de Rothschilds, across their sunny gardens; that is to say, of course, sunny where they ought to be in shade, and shady where they ought to be in sun.

In the meantime, I could show Ludendorff to Genevieve, and she accepted my invitation to go next day with Kleist on the third Meyer jaunt.

The auto came to take us under a bright sun. The snow was melted. In the absence of leaves on the deciduous trees, spring shone upon the laurels, cedars, and the bark. Dr. Meyer had unfortunately taken along a Mr. Grane, the commissary formerly charged with gathering up the complaints of the Cameroun against the French mandate. He was an American from Salt Lake City, who had complained that France did not use enough moss in the adornment of its old churches and manors. Moreover, holding a share in the enterprise promoted by the prohibition manufacturers of grape-juice, he could not pardon the great proprietors of Burgundy and the Bourdelais for having declined his philanthropic offers both financial and divine and refused to manufacture for the great restaurants, in place of their noxious liquids, a syrup of Pontet-Canet and a syrup of Hospice-de-Beaune.

As soon as we left the city, Dr. Meyer stopped and pointed out with his finger the two goblet-like towers of the cathedral.

“Here you may admire the persistence of German work,” recited Dr. Meyer. “No Frenchmen have ever been able to finish the spires of their cathedrals; witness Notre Dame, Beauvais. The only unfinished cathedral in Germany is Strassbourg, and that is because it was in French hands for two hundred years.”

We had taken the feudal route, guessing our Germany by its animals: the royal districts by their deer and peacocks; the petty nobility, by its pheasants and wild boars; and finally by their starved crows and terriers the colonies of painters, who announced themselves, moreover, ten kilometers ahead by the spots they made, when opening their tubes of paint, on rocks, milestones, and bars. Over the rapid waterfalls cables hung from the bridges, that the bathers, carried away by the current, might catch themselves back before being thrown into the sluices and mills. Before us a bright sun outlined the mountains. At each keen vibration of light, Genevieve put on a little more rouge, as painters have to heighten the color of their people when the landscape becomes more vivid.

Each one of our visits was decorated with a name: the first was called Hermanschlacht, the second Sedan, and the third Lake Mazurin. Hermanschlacht was spoiled, as the president of the old Bavarians of the Foreign Legion lacked the simplest self-possession. His daughter was brought to bed of a child. In the neighboring room she gave out such clamorous screams, that he, quite pale, tried to compare them to the screams he had heard young Fliegenschuh give when he was condemned near Figuig to be eaten by jackals. The accounts that he gave us in Latin—why Latin?—of the Sadic fury of Captain Gourau, the *tremesis capitatis* of Lieutenant Lyautey, were confused and troubled by his desire to know whether it was a

boy or a girl. It was a girl; and she gave out a little bleat which recalled to him vividly, it appeared, the last moans of the legionary Müller of Stuttgart, condemned to be eaten by ants. Finally, we said good-by after some recriminations against the *mentem mortiferem* of Commander Archinard, and also against the *stupidum caput* of Dr. Strockner, the pan-Germanist (according to whom only remarkable intellectual inferiority could bring Germans into the Legion), after a parade in front of the portraits of his pretended executioners (I recognized, without doubt because of the facility with which one comes at their photographs, all the colonels attached to the Presidents of the Republic), and the heads of the league against the Legion whom our host saluted following the French military method, or the German after a few objections from Mr. Grane, who was no longer hostile to foreign regiments since he had found that the officers' mess at Figuié was well covered, in default of moss, with clematis and jasmine. After this we said good-by.

The mother and child were sleeping; the grandfather brightened up in the sudden silence comparable to the lovely siestas of Sidi-Bel-Abbas. It was the first time I had heard anyone born in the most prolific country of Europe and I was deeply moved.

Then came the lakes. According to whether the clouds were whitish gray, or whitish white, the water became blue or China ink. On the borders, the castles built by Louis II to imitate Versailles, renouncing the fulfillment of their mission in the building, attained it almost to-day, in their reflections. Little girls in costume, the first rose at their lips, waved at us at every turn, winter flowers in their right hand and summer flowers in their left. The painters, hunting landscapes, had given way to the hunters of echoes. Before each convex mountain, a Berliner off on his Easter holiday was leading the choir of his children, hoisted on stones of different height that their mouths might be level, in a hymn of vengeance; or, to rest them a little, in one of those funny questions to which the echo answers only the last syllable. But it was such a good echo; it took up the phrase from the beginning.

Then came the Austrian frontier, above which hovered the first eagle on our way, hesitating between the two new republics. The Austrian customs officials had gone over to the Bavarian office to drink beer. The frescoed houses gave way to chalets. We were now in the cantons where the poachers cut off the head of a killed comrade and undress him, that he may not be recognized. A trickling syrup of Tyrolean history flowed through the memory of Mr. Grane. But behind us I heard Genevieve questioning Kleist. She was hearing about his life and that he had entirely forgotten his first thirty years.

“You have great luck,” she said to him.

Her eyelids dropped for a second over sad eyes, but in a moment two bright eyes reappeared, at least twice as ignorant as those of Forestier.

The visit to Lake Mazuriens began without solemnity because of Mr. Grane, who was overcome by seeing a lake entirely covered with verdure.

“Never, never,” he cried to Ludendorff as soon as he saw him, “would Mr. Hearst permit Bavaria, under the French mandate, thus to jeopardize her most long-lived plants!”

It fell to me to be his interpreter, as he did not understand German.

Ludendorff was in Hohenschangau for one month. All the swans and the chamois that peopled the landscape in the time of tourists had been gathered together in his garden. He arrived from a parade of children of retired German officials, drawn from the provinces ceded to Versailles and now reunited—like the swan and the chamois, formerly scattered throughout the immensity of Germany, now gathered in a colony on the border of the Alpine lake.

It was the first time the children had marched on the ground and not on the snow; and they had heard the sound of their march step, and their little faces brightened.

The general received us standing in a room which looked out over the lake and the villas, assembled too, it seemed from Saxony and the Baltic; villas of the Crown Prince, of Prince Eitel-Fredrich and old Moltke. The furnishings were notable only for two little canteens, those that received so much from the Polish, Belgian, and Ardennes castles: like two little infant coffins, which every general carries with him in his train during his conquests and exiles, less wise and less prudent certainly than the lightest minded of Chinamen. He waited, his glance veiled by the shade over his eyes. Mr. Grane prevented our getting in a word. I was there merely to translate him.

“General,” he cried, “in your person I salute Germany. Germany is beaten, well beaten, but thanks to you, she is still unvanquished.”

I was a faithless interpreter, for I confined myself to saluting our host.

“General,” continued Mr. Grane, “we are here to speak the truth—as between Ludendorff and Grane. I myself am frank and loyal. I get my candor from my Grandfather Grane, a dentist of Salt Lake City; he is the one who had erased from all the American grammars that ignoble French

expression, 'as great a liar as a tooth puller.' General, I want to ask you, do you really like the Emperor?"

I translated according to my own method that Mr. Grane thought the lake ravishing and Ludendorff replied mentioning its depth and its beauty at sunset. Mr. Grane fairly trembled with impatience for the answer, which came to him in this form:

"The General has the friendliest feeling for the Emperor, but is for his own part, a republican."

"Hurrah," cried Mr. Grane enthusiastically. "What a joy it is when the generals of emperors are republicans, and those of republicans, monarchists, like Castelnau. They make the best generals."

Ludendorff seemed surprised that his opinion of the sunset should be received with such acclaim. "General," continued Mr. Grane, "I adore loyalty. I get mine from my great-grandmother who had Greek blood. It was she who made the saying 'loyal as a Greek' popular in Salt Lake City. She had come from the Carpathian mountains to embark at Hamburg, earning her living by showing a bear—I tell you this quite frankly—a bear that died at Buda-Pest in giving birth to a young bear. We suspect the Serbians of having poisoned him. My poor ancestress had a difficult journey for the muzzle of the bear was too big for its offspring. It was veritable punishment for both of them, to speak candidly, to adjust it by strings to the collar. Now I want to ask you, General, what do you think of the Black Shame? I have in my pocket a beautiful medallion distributed by your League to warn your virgins, representing Germany nude, chained to a gigantic phallus, and wearing a negro helmet. General, what do you think of the Black Shame?"

This time I translated in part.

"Every foreign occupation," replied Ludendorff, with a phonographic voice from which his thought was quite absent, "black or white, is a shame to the country occupied."

But in his distraction, in place of saying "white," he said "green."

I turned to Mr. Grane, who was taking it down in shorthand.

"Mr. Grane, the General says, you understand better than I, since you are an American, the madness of the French. It is a people who push the hobby of equality to the point of delirium. They did not know they were insulting Germany in relieving our hussars from death and our white cuirassiers by the negroes. The black regiments are in great demand in French cities. As for me, Ludendorff, who am also frank and loyal, I must avow that the black occupation has given us in four years eleven times less mongrels than the Togo exposition in the summer of 1906."

“Three last little questions of the General,” said Mr. Grane. “First, what is his opinion of France? Then I want to ask him if it is true that he did everything and Hindenburg, nothing; and if he really did leave Emperor William two or three days without any news, during the battle?”

The general seemed to have understood the word France, so I asked him if he had formerly traveled in France; if he was going to remain in Bavaria, and all the other questions, in short, which one puts to a person recovering from a long illness. He was grateful for my modest curiosity. He rewarded me by telling me the best way to return, the exact bend of the declivities, and where the worst stone-beds were. Mr. Grane jerked at my coat insistently and demanded the translation. He wanted to know if the general had seen a great many of the eleven million dead, caused by the war. This time I managed that my translation should hit him hard. I wanted to join Genevieve, whom I saw putting a pacifying touch to things in the room: adjusting the padlocks of the cantines, setting straight the pictures (in which the goats were at a difficult angle), and wiping off the glass of the portraits of Bismarck, de Moltke, de Roon, which Ludendorff kept about him like mirrors (I did not know what he thought of Ludendorff), diminishing or increasing, and I heard her answering Kleist, who asked her if she got on well with her Bavarian husband: “We get along very well except that he would use the word ‘*distingué*.’”

“Mr. Grane, the general said, do not deceive yourself. Hundreds of thousands of Germans at the bottom of their hearts envy and admire France because she did not blow too hard, as did the other nations, upon the Castle of War. She kept her army—that is to say, that part of a nation most easily roused at the approach of the superb colors of war; she is dressed daily in magnificent lightnings, hardly foreseen at the peace from the 5th to the 14th of July, and is surrounded by mysterious fracasés in the midst of a gloomy mob, lacking all genius. She keeps a glorious army—that is to say, her immortal element which will arise from all torments and mutilations, with a shining face and a body intact. What do we think of France? We envy her. She alone of all Europe keeps the immutable and colored glacier which fills the round of the days with sun and anniversaries, and whence flow all force and faith.”

But already in the courtyard Dr. Meyer was sounding his trumpet. It was a trumpet, he had explained to me, used only for two purposes, to announce the end of a visit for the Meyer tourists or to proclaim the return of William II. Although Dr. Meyer blew with vigor there was every reason to believe that he blew for our benefit, and Ludendorff who, from every point of view preferred this interpretation, made a sign that the interview was at an end.

He called me back just as I reached the threshold of the door.

“I can perfectly French and English,” he said in English. “Why did you not answer Mr. Grane as to the dead in the war? Only midwives see men born. All others see them die.”

That evening, for Kleist now claimed his daily lesson, the French exercise was a dialogue of the dead in which Chateaubriand, Scudery, Saint-Simon and some others tried perfidiously to provoke metaphors in the language of Bertrand de Born, the greatest of our Limousin poets who in all his poems used only one metaphor: “Always calm at the depths of the soul, even when the surface is agitated, like the sea.”

“To what may our shadowy existence be likened?” asked Chateaubriand.

“Yes,” said Saint-Simon, “would one not say to a reflection, a murmur—how the devil do you say that in Limousin?”

But Bertrand was wary and replied only with limpid words.

CHAPTER VI

KLEIST was in Berlin for the first time. He was overwhelmed. This city gave the lie absolutely to everything that his teachers had told him about Germany. Not only did he discover there none of those graces which in Europe distinguish future or former capitals and lend them a clearly feminine grace, but also, nourished in the Middle Ages, he was accustomed to see in the primitive plan and in the very situation of every city worthy of that name a response to vital necessities or to those divine questions about mystic and terrestrial love, or form and substance, which architects asked each other from the year 1000 to the year 1500. Now it seemed impossible to claim that Berlin was a geometrical or providential place, that it was between wheat and potatoes, or spices and brandies, or Protestant statuary and colored engravings; and to the soul which never questions Rothenburg or Würzburg in vain, Berlin gives no response.

No divine thought having presided at her foundation, Berlin is a haunted city. At first sight she seems by her flat land, her banality, and her new plaster to be safeguarded from those exorcisms which weigh upon London and New York. She has no river—only a river-canal, where they had infinite difficulty in towing up a naturalized sperm whale that they wanted to display for fifteen pfennigs to the junior members of the Naval League, and in its interior they later arranged a submarine room. Everywhere is that clayey soil which permits of no tunneling, which isolates each corpse in its air-tight compartment and which allows rain water no other means of disappearing than that possessed by beer and wine, namely by summer heat or thirst; everywhere an architecture of universal expositions, places not greatly frequented by the intelligent. A city which seems gangrened and almost as completely ravaged as a city at the front, simply because the flower beds along the avenues have been neglected. But, denuded of caverns and rivers, of the depths of the earth and of water, of ruins and cathedrals, the purveyors of witchcraft take refuge in modern hiding-places, in the telephone booths, in acoustical tubes and trolleys, and ascribe a criminal virtue to instruments which in other countries serve to order rice à la Milanese, or to announce to a friend in another ward that the weather is fine in yours. There is not a Berlin drawing room which does not seem arranged for assassinations, for some indefinable reason, on account of the position of the mirrors, and by the way they reflect mirrors by mirrors. A frenzied hotel life prevails, with the waiter in a dress-coat awakening you in the morning without a smile, as if for your execution. A city in love with gold, which it procures by means

of philosophers' stones, electricity, and distillation of the air, but which in its customs no less resembles the towns of Alaska where the gold itself is sought, where disturbers of the peace and thieves are arrested and sentenced as quickly as cowboys, and, where instead of ruining a man or a society by degrees, as is ordinarily done, they are despoiled by women or bankers in an hour's time, as in the American films. It is the only city, moreover, which seems to employ methods exactly adapted to the world, where directors, generals, and bankers assemble in one of those small hotel bedrooms and, hampered by the bed, put to the vote two or three theories and the next day try out the one selected on Germany and the universe. Kleist slept in Room 28, where they decided on the fall of the mark. Eva was in Room 41, where they agreed upon doubling the width of the roads and of the German canals. Mine was 111, where it had just been decreed that dyes should be injected into the trees of the state forests in order to obtain colored woods.

By means of forty years of tyranny over the world, all those batteries of will, audacity, and self-sufficiency in a capital constituted by the stock exchange, advertising and tourists' agencies, and the general on duty, were recharged for decades of service. A prodigious resemblance in types made events seem prodigiously alike: the artist, the prima-donna, the country squire, the plain-clothes man are made in a series by an extra rapid god and the symbolic aspect of individuals stamps upon each adventure an appearance at once unreal and definitive which, I have been assured, resembles that of desolation. There is not a single meeting in the tramway, nor any sudden liaison which you do not feel that you have experienced a thousand times before. Passions whose climax bursts forth at any hour of the day, with suicide at meal times; since there is no five o'clock pastry shop as in France nor any afternoon tea as in England to delay such a sequel. There is such a daily departure for reality and fortune in each family that one would say that it is like the departure of a fishing fleet, or that Berlin offers all the accidents of life in a port. The son goes forth joyously from his mother's dwelling at dawn, and by evening he has enlisted in the Legion, after having loved, suffered, and killed. In short, it is a life of ephemeræ, the biggest ephemeræ of the globe, more ephemeral still since the day is regulated, not by the calendar and its saints and the probable state of the weather, but by the rate of exchange announced by the newspaper. By rubbing his eyes at dawn each Berliner doubles or diminishes his plans or his illusions threefold or fivefold and with his skull close-shaven and swallowing his *café-au-lait* like a hectoplasm, he rushes forth to the most rapacious and most extensive European undertakings since the time of

Augustus Cæsar. Kleist returned every evening full of horror and admiration.

“These are people who change original sin every day,” he said.

He thought that the shame of defeat must have been experienced especially in Berlin. Nothing of the sort: no permanent posters in honor of the Cameroun, as at Dachau, a village of open-air painters; no manifestations to demand again the Van Eycks and the head of the Hottentot king, as at Tölz, the city of good milk; no chapel erected in memory of the cathedral of Strassbourg, as at Grainau, the city of syrens and the lair of paganism. All those who had taken to heart the plebiscite of Upper Silesia had, by their very passion, believed themselves naturalized Upper Silesians and had gone over there. Through pride or through calculation all Berlin seemed to think that patriotism is an out-of-date sentiment (a theory voted on in Room 29 of the Adlon), that frontiers do not exist (axiom accepted in 261 of the Esplanade). Germany having suppressed her frontiers, it only remained to secure, with the aid of England (Hotel Kaiserhof 12), a concession that France and Poland should suppress theirs, thereby insuring victory to the right party!

With the exception of the Emperor and the Crown Prince I met in Berlin every one whom I had known there fifteen years ago. Although in Munich all my Bavarian friends were dead, even the sculptors, writers, and conductors of orchestras like Stück, Hildebrandt, Wedekind, Ruederer, and Mottl, chance had allied me here with those who were to survive both war and revolution; I even saw Germans, whom formerly it would have been necessary to go to New York or Paris to meet. The composers and architects scattered in foreign lands; those who had only half understood the war had come back to seek an explanation for it in their own country, and were still staying on there, varying their explanations every week. Certain ones thought that the Germanic billow was to surge towards the universe from another source. Others through filial piety wished to see and honor the conquered body of their country. For my part, beneath that Nordic sun which modified my shadow, I amused myself by believing, as I used to do at the time of my first trip, that it was the shade of Hoffman who was escorting me in his city. Under the lindens along the Leipzigerstrasse, on the favorite itinerary which led him to the only basement which Berlin had been able to obtain, I went to what would have been his telephone, his post office, his automatic bar, with full confidence in meeting him. I went to what would have been his breviary: to the advertising and personal columns of the daily papers, destiny's typewriters in the Berlin district; for in Berlin every one considers the column of notices a personal letter from an unknown, and

scorns a regular correspondence in favor of this means of communication. The page of offers and demands, like a crowded street in which each passer-by places himself at your mercy, makes one disdain to follow or observe events in the real street. I inserted the appeals which fifteen years before had brought me the visit of the poet Larsen and the sculptor Einward. Both were dead, and besides they were not even residents of Berlin, but in response to the two lines couched in the same terms as before the son of Larsen and the cousin of Einward appeared. For Berlin, rather than restore to us twenty years later our friends grown old and changed in appearance, brings into being in the next generation sons or cousins, the very counterparts of their forbears, and thus gives us a perfect illusion of the past by rejuvenating our circle of associates. Thus it offered me Inge Walden.

Eva and I had those quarrels about the comparative perversity of the German or French customs, which result more seriously for the *Echo de Paris* and the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* and I wanted to show Kleist what Berlin virtue really was. We had our choice. It was the week of the German Friendship Guild and its newspaper on all the public stands invited all the perverts of the town to the masked ball at 89 Jacobstrasse. The celebrated Peer Lotti in a duet, with the no less beloved Fred Barré were to give a reading there of the last wills of twenty homosexuals in which generosity shone forth, and compare them, to the shame of normal spirits, with twenty bourgeois wills. But the room was already filled and gratified by the prospectus: "Elizabeth Blieferth, dentist, special prices for friends of both sexes." "Typewriters here, special prices to Germans of the antique spirit." We were about to satisfy ourselves at bars where one seeks the possible mothers of Mondagores, when I remembered a word which Zelten had confided to me. Through him it was possible to penetrate to the Art-Friends, Friends of Nude Dances, to the Women-Art-Friends, Friends of Music played by Nude Instrumentalists, Art-Enemies, enemies of all that is not a bizarre moving picture, to Friends of Asiatic Phenomena, and Friends of Oriental Phenomena. Indeed, at the first word at the rear of a court there opened up to us a circus of yellow marble and ebony which somewhat resembled the tomb of Napoleon, with the difference that the Victories were Berlinese and undressed. The arena was lighted by a ceiling of luminous slabs like our metro ceilings, although more transparent, with the difference that a band of naked women whose feet and forms were indistinctly seen circulated there for the delectation of the spectators. Captain Baron von Leyde of the Guard, who was retired on half pay, was to repeat his lecture on nakedness in this arena and was to display his dear Celly, the Baroness, unveiled. He was already on the platform, with two naked women crouching

at his feet, one bearing an enormous fountain pen and the other a typewriter, modern symbols of Clio and Euterpe. As another muse was evoked in the lull, an observing eye could count two feet less on the floor. Suddenly I felt the presence of Lotte Walden.

I had not seen Lotte Walden for fifteen years. I had been presented to her by an advertisement (the best and most correct method of introduction in Berlin), in which I sought hosts of distinction and culture for a young French student. The newspaper had arranged matters so that I received that very evening an envelope with such an elaborate coat of arms that I went at once to greet the sender. It was a young Israelite from Charlottenburg, named Walden, desperately anxious to penetrate into the inner circle of Berlin's bourgeoisie, which he was unable to do, despite the ingenuity of his procedure. Therefore, not counting further on human intermediaries, he had joined the Acclimatization Society of the Zoölogical Garden and tamed that variety of animal dear to the collector whose invitation he desired. To win Baurath von Berger he raised Japanese mice, as the former did. The dining room was decorated in its circumference by a metallic sheath with the swelling outline of a bust supporter, in which the mice continued to run until their death in the direction in which Walden had placed them for the first time. In their rush they galloped and climbed over the mice which had been set in the opposite direction at their birth. But the Baurath when solicited had refused to lend his male. In order to win George von Goltz, Walden had next attempted in his drawing room the crossing of a gyska stag and a hydropote. In vain, however, for all the young specimens acquired at the expenditure of much gold, such as zebras, deer, and antelopes, had succumbed to all the maladies of young dogs, and Walden was obliged to limit himself to the only animals which succeed in Berlin apartments: namely tadpoles and reptiles.

But since no serpent urged State Councillor Balin, the great specialists in boas, to eat the apple which would make a meeting with Walden desirable to him, the latter had had recourse to the beasts of heraldry, and conceived the idea of publishing the escutcheons of Prussian coats of arms. It was then that he decorated his envelopes with armorial bearings so that Lotte, his young Christian wife, could cut a dash among the nobility, among whom each family entertained her once, on the day when Walden brought the first print from the coat of arms, cutting her forever from that evening as soon as the colors, the chimera, or the ermine were dry. I adored Lotte. Sweet to the conqueror of 1907, tender to the vanquished of 1870, she had but one hobby: to attach herself not only by her lively feelings and vivacious appetite, but by some actual bond, belt, or chain, to the one she loved. It was

that epoch when the Prince of Monaco, desirous of avoiding a Franco-Germanic war, had taken the preventive means of presenting the settings of Gunsbourg and Xavier Leroux at the Berlin opera. Every evening we took part in this pacific enterprise, terminating on the stage by the innumerable assassinations of the Wagnerian opera. Lotte pointed out with her finger—as she did not have to be polite to them any more—the duchesses and countesses who had already entertained her; with her chin those who would some day entertain her (she was now at the von Granests', the coats of arms being published alphabetically, the Blandorfs were of the past, the Sagans would come on next year); and with her tongue the wives forever unapproachable of the breeders of red squirrels and zebras.

The Emperor, unless indeed it was the head mechanic, had noticed my friend, and a spot light, an imperial glance of the eye, had encircled her as well as my right arm and leg. Then, emerging from our row with difficulty, at the very moment when Theodora was perishing, for Lotte had just succeeded in tying her white shoe to one of my shoe laces, or during the suicide of a ballet dancer one of her tresses to my cravat, we would reach Charlottenburg by way of the Thiergarten in an old chariot which the moon was pleased to distinguish as William II had distinguished Lotte, but with more constancy, enlarging the silver circle little by little to take in the young Greek villas under their yews and elders. Reaching the Sassanian edifice with its Louis XVIII door, which represented the dwelling of Walden, and while the moon through the Egyptian window lit up in the aquarium of my room the double tadpole of which she would be amorous that night, she had, moreover, by a nocturnal whimsey, to bind our arms and shoulders with the young boa which slept on the straw mat and rubbed its stomach against it like the sole of a shoe. One had to believe that Lotte loved me, if loving is to attach oneself in a fortnight by every fiber to an unknown man, and the day he leaves to hang on by hands, arms, and all that God has given to man with which to cling and fasten oneself to the earth. But she refused to believe herself loved, until the day when, having almost forgotten her, I wrote her from Paris to tell her about the races at Longchamps. I have never known why this letter appeared to her to be a declaration of passion. My dissertations on the Moulin de la Marche, my distrust of the black jacket and gold cap, my allusions to Harpocrates, brought her suddenly to tears of love and regret. But as no bond could attach me at that distance she sent me, as if it were a lasso, the arms of all her friends passing through Paris, and awaited weeping the announcement of my suicide. She believed I was exiling myself for her sake on the day when I no longer answered her and departed for continents where rats of the dining room lived in greater liberty amongst

males, where the tadpoles of my chamber flew big as vampires, and where the hydropotes of the salon, invisible, left in the reeds a minute moving trace which enlarged soon, for the tiger was after them.

Now Captain von Leyde was finishing his second demonstration with his wife and proving that one's glance before a group of naked women wanders everywhere for the first seven minutes, only to fix itself implacably and definitely on the bosom (one only saw on the luminous tiles four naked feet now), when I perceived Lotte Walden. It was Lotte not as I had left her, but as on the day, a fortnight earlier, when I had met her. She was seated at one of the supper tables, and there were hardly sufficient waiters to serve her with her roasts, pheasants, and pancakes. On her corsage of close-fitting velvet, I saw the platinum pin that I had formerly given the first Lotte, and never has a swallowed pin, reappearing after five years in the right knee or between two ribs, caused a briefer or a keener pain.

"That is little Inge Walden," said the headwaiter to me. "She has been coming here since 1916 and I have seen her eat her supper since she was ten years old." She is certainly the German who has eaten most between 1914 and the armistice.

Why had little Inge been coming to beauty dances ever since she was ten years old? Had her mother, after exhausting the coats of arms to the very last initials, and after the dinner at the von Zyppaus', begun the alphabet again in a gayer and more stable world?

As the captain dismissed with a gesture the shorthand muse, little Inge tore off her dress, left it on the chair with her bag, as suicides do, and in tights that recalled the latest thing in swimming, her legs hardly moving and the work confined almost entirely to the arms, she offered a charming body to the Friends of Art: a body upon which the eyes of amateurs were condemned to wander longer than the regulation seven minutes—for there was no bust.

And so the past in Berlin came back to me. Thus that city gives back of our past only new jetsam, and imprints never quite dry. So many events accumulate for every family, thanks to its multiplying members, all seeking excitement and wealth in the hundred thousand daily announcements, or in the German colonies all over the world, that excitement has become the normal element in life, and this taste for unique and legendary existences planted in a bourgeois and poetic soil has designated Germany, after a thousand years on the Rhine and the Spree, to take up the heritage of the Oriental empires. All the poetry, which England finds no more at home, even by planting her universities and schools of poetry along rivers which feel

tidal waves and by directing the play of souls by tides, the eddy of Life disperses all over Germany.

It is the empire of Haroun al Raschid with its seven Mannesman brothers and its ninety-three intellectuals, brutal and learned; the same prodigious inequality of castes distributed among the marshals, princes, merchants, slaves—the same prodigious equality as soon as it is a questioning of equipment in poetry, tears, feeling, music, and restaurants—the same scorn of death, the brutality of all those who in Occidental countries are trained to gentleness—porters, coachmen, and managers of restaurants—the same innumerable nervous diseases; the same impotence to conceive of a forbidden vice; the same ardor in embellishing one's tales with lies; the same love of buildings in rotunda form; and—supreme proof—though it would appear ridiculous to imagine the Thousand and One Nights with Edward VII, Grèvy, or the King of Italy for sultan, nobody would be astonished to hear that a German prince made his wife the Archduchess tell him a new tale every evening, assisted by the whole court in gala array, orchestras playing, nude women dancing, the lions of Hagenbeck roaring in the park, a thousand electric lights turning night blue or red—and if she did not, he would kill her.

I had not been put *au courant* of any of the projects of the Consul by note, but I had been singled out for the League for Hatred of the French; and every morning I received an anonymous letter revealing some shameful deed, cut from the French papers of the day: “The Bessarabo women had killed their father and husband.” “Master Schang of Colmar (showing what the influence of France can be upon an innocent country confided to her care) has just violated the Schang daughter.” “In one single hotel in Paris the acting policeman arrested thirty pandars.” “The portraits in the Salon of the National Society (the denouncer wrote, The Nationalist Salon!) have never been so banal: empty portraits of empty people.” I may add that the ten Germans affiliated with the League for Hatred of the French sent me also an anonymous letter, antedated, mentioning a deed that did us honor: “The Cambodian dancers at the Colonial exposition of Marseilles say that Le Lavandou is their second country.” “The boat of Douarnenez saved more than two hundred lives this winter.” “A Frenchman, after an interval of fourteen years, is again champion in the 110 meter heat.”

The head of the police to whom I went to complain of the theft of my valises unfortunately did not belong to this group. He insisted that all the

French were kleptomaniacs and that this people spent its time stealing from itself. I need only look in the glass to obtain a confession.

Instead of taking place in the soul of Kleist, the combat continued outside of him between Eva and me. For Forestier it was from the beginning again my Alsatian dispute with Zelten; only Eva preferred, every time that Zelten ceded me a German district to cede a little of herself, and Forestier remained intact between us. I was now looking only for a means to get my friend back to France by surprise and to keep him beyond the frontiers as good policemen do the spies. But I knew the menaces of the Consul were not vain and also I was acquiring a strange taste for keeping a part of myself German, and prolonging this communion with an enemy full of hatred. Kleist, moreover, rarely came home contented from his political meetings. Some detail always shocked him; the deputy who was right would spit on the floor; the loyal deputy was the one who was wrong. He went from group to group, council to council, powerless to give a rational and realistic turn to the debates. It all recalled that theatrical sea, where the manager could find only one child to slip under the carpet and keep it moving. I was impatiently awaiting the Goethe celebration.

In order not to give a political aspect to the manifestation, it was in Potsdam on the banks of the Havel that the discourses were to be read. The enclosure was set in the center of a public park as its inner significance in every phrase of the poet. In the gardens of Frederick II the good ladies of Potsdam walked, all painted with violet, carmine, and yellow among the yews, catalpas, and sycamore trees. The taxis without rubber tires, for which you paid twenty-two and a half times what the meter registered, stood at the foot of the obelisks, for the monuments in April furnished more shade than the trees; spied upon from the tombs by the taxis whose meters multiply by one hundred and eight.

The secret agents, assisted by their wives, were helping the terriers to climb the eleven terraces. A red cavalry man escaped from a pyramid veiled by poplars with budding leaves and disappeared again in a double colonnade. In front of the orange hothouse the specialists, who in 1903 had installed the Chinese instruments in bronze casting, stolen from the observatory at Peking, were taking them down to send back to China—the only thing gained during the war. The whole show was such a spectacle of old Berlin that each street seemed to be one of those model streets of the cinema city at Los Angeles, and you got the feeling that you would turn from the first corner into a Hindoo or a Spanish street. Instead you turned upon a gentleman in a frock coat occupied in measuring the temple of

friendship—as if, he too, robbed of all real friendliness, must by virtue of the treaty of Versailles, return it.

Although these places were more alive than at my last visit, they no longer told me what I expected and I discovered the reason. It was because they were made mute by force. It was because all the French words had been erased from the frames or torn from the walls. The labels on the Watteaus had been taken away, that the visitor might attribute them to Troschel or Achenbach. The hands of all the clocks were set at half-past six, so as to hide the word Paris on the face, and the same word had been scratched off the enamel of the little clock, condemned eternally to mark the hour of twenty minutes past two, the hour of Frederick's death.

It was not a real centenary, for Goethe only died in 1832, and one felt it. Those hundred years, at the end of which the moral rights of an author spread in divine benefactions over a nation, had not yet expired. The nonagenarian ghost came back, not by the natural play of relations between men and ghosts and at the end of that minute which is a century in Limbo, but by mere politeness. Why could they not have waited ten years, the final ten seconds?

Those who might have rendered homage to Goethe were not there, the student clubs having menaced with death the greater number of Austrian writers, Schnitzler or Herman Bahr. For lack of these ten seconds, the representatives of future Germany, still unbearded schoolboys trying to get their first poems or first article inserted in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, were not there either. But I saw there all those who were to die before the ten seconds had run out, founders and destroyers of modern Germany. Two centenarians who might have met Goethe, for they came from Weimar, and might have troubled with their infant wails a conversation with Eckermann, were there—silent to-day, isolated in the front row, between that black room which rose and sat down again with the force of a tide and the memory and statue of Goethe, inert but appeasing, like the fender between the ship and the quay. They called the roll. As nobody could appear masked before Goethe, most of the great writers and actors with showy pseudonyms answered to their own names of Aaron or Rosenwald. All had awaited this hour, as if it were to bring repose or succor to Germany. Everyone expected each orator to draw from the example of Goethe a solution for his personal pain. The most superstitious were ready to follow the precept which the initials of Goethe's chief works would give if mixed together in a phrase. For the first time, the heads of the Catholic party, though undecided about the existence of God, rabbis though incredulous, generals though skeptical as to the worth of the empire, believed unreservedly. But because of those

ten seconds, Goethe evaded them. He ruled from such a height that they dared not speak to him except by intermediaries, who were his heroes, Wilhelm Meister or Götz; or by intermediaries at second-hand who were his critics. Helen, Faust, Homunculus, whose centenary it actually was, were paraded about in phrases like statues gilded to escape dryness, so the ceremony instead of being addressed to him who consoles and sympathizes, seemed offered to an idol who could, at will, make it rain or snow. Goethe was evading them. He evaded the National-Liberals and gave them no solution for Upper Silicia; the Center, and offered no cismontane aid. He was evading the Social-Democrats, the murderers and the murdered. Like all writers whom one speaks of as worldly, like Shakespeare and Cervantes, he would give no help in a crisis, where the name only of Molière, Voltaire, or Hugo can avenge the conquered and give a counsel as precise as the street and number of an address; and when they observed the long silence which Americans invented to keep the anniversary of the precise minute when Christ was born, or of the victory of an American balloon in the airplane races, it was not only Germany that was silent but Goethe. A nation so bewildered and unhappy should not have to celebrate, as its savior, a model of happiness and wisdom; a nation in love with death and with extremes should not look to one who was all life and moderation. For it is Germany's fate to create for the expression of German life and thought only mediocre minds, and to give its geniuses to the world. Goethe evaded all the German parties, who had come to this platform to make him talk as if by a turntable, and were overwhelmed to see that exhausted Germany no longer rendered up at command, as happy Germany had done, its most beautiful hectoplasm.

I compared without any jealousy this hypnotic experience with the Molière centenary which we celebrated in January. The month of Molière had come—the first in the year, changing and sparkling every instant, like a gift of Shakespeare's in his colleague's honor. At noon the snow had melted except on northerly window sills; then came sun; then came frost, and the mercury in the thermometer went up and down as fast as the oil in the indicator tube of an automobile. There came a whole succession of striking murders, showy vendettas. These were Dante's contribution: a woman called Guillaumin, in Lyons, had seen two husbands and six lovers assassinated in six months. Briand had snapped back upon his ministry, from Cannes, like a rubber band. Pope Benedict had been killed on the eve of surrendering to Trotsky. There came a month of respite and almost agreement with Germany—Goethe's gift: a collector of gnus, doubtless one of those whose wife had been rude to Lotte once, bequeathed his ten finest specimens to the Paris Museum. . . .

In the hall at Claridge's, foreign delegates were explaining why they loved Molière to the Guitrys, to the Penezas deputy, to the whole diplomatic and consular staff, and to illustrious actresses whose famous faces they were sure they knew but did not dare to call by name, for they were calling each other Ripiapia and Kiddy-rag. The Esthonian delegate was devoted to Molière because in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* he avenged Esthonia upon her vulgar tyrants. The delegate from White Russia was equally devoted because every verse of *The Misanthrope* is radiantly clear, if you imagine that the downright rascal whom Alceste is arraigning is none other than Lenine himself. A pale delegate who coughed—he was in truth the delegate from the land of real invalids—praised Molière for having discredited sham remedies, sham doctors, and sham invalids. The Dutch delegate was grateful to Molière for having furnished to Holland the only weapon that ever availed against her two enemies, Spain and hypocrisy, namely, *Tartuffe*. Finally, Don Garcia of Navarre, the magnificent lover and the *Malade Imaginaire* were held by every delegate from Asia or America to avenge his own country and his own honor. So that all my compatriots were amazed to discover that Molière was a greater liberator for the universe than Vercingetorix for Gaul, and were horrified to find the most frightful vices discoverable to-day in those comedies that long habit and the acting of the *Comédie Française* had made them insensible to; many of them, after that, would not undertake *Mélicerte* without apprehension. It was warm. Everyone was fanning himself with a menu that bore Molière's portrait on the front corner and underneath the portrait the name of the guest, who viewed himself, so to speak, when unobserved, as in a flattering mirror. The Danish delegate, the Polish, the Central American, were grateful to Molière for having given to their countries the Danish Molière, the Polish Molière, and the Guatemalan Molière; while a delegate from Central Europe was explaining that the earliest translations of Molière, ever since the seventeenth century, had been those into Polish, Czechish, Serbian, and Roumanian, and that it was the Central Europe of to-day, in short the Little Entente, which had two centuries ago acclaimed Poquelin over the heads of all Europe which were then discoverable. So says Scripture.

I had on my right hand a blonde actress, so pretty that she thought, since I was next her, I must have arranged the banquet and the seating; she could not talk to anyone without touching him. She touched me every time she spoke, snatching back her hand when I began to speak. To answer the man on my left she stretched across me and touched him, disdainful of the saltcellars and cruets that all the delegates around hurriedly passed up. The Bohemian band took their places and announced on a placard, to make an

official opening, the only one of their dances that bore the name of a French masterpiece, *The Cid Campeador*. This title stirred my neighbor, for it recalled to her a big bay horse on which she had lost the profits of her first benefit. But it was quite different when she recognized in the piece the favorite dance of one of her old lovers. "The first," she said, but she called everything the first and had just said this was the first time she had ever eaten rice. It happened that one of the foreign delegates, Señor de Caldear, who was perhaps his cousin, was certainly called by his name. To her disappointment, the Señor Marqués de Caldear was unfortunately prevented from pronouncing his discourse by hay fever, which kept him sneezing incessantly—this was Lope de Vega's contribution—and he was not particularly good-looking, and picked his teeth with a toothpick for which nothing could be said except that it was gold, and sometimes, when he thought a few of the three hundred faces were turned elsewhere, he picked his teeth with his whole hand, which was also entirely gold and jewels. But the loveliest actress in Paris—the first, she would have said—never turned her eyes away, not because she liked looking at him, but for the pleasure with which she relished saying his name aloud and adding epithets: "Caldear has just spilled his champagne glass over Worms Baretta," "That swine Caldear is going to swallow his ear-cleaner." Between this living name and the first violin, she slowly stretched out her hand in front as though to answer a ghost, and to touch it, and the tears in each of her blue eyes rolled from the upper lid to the lower lid, which caught and reabsorbed them. For the tears were too well trained to run down her lovely, softly flushed cheeks.

Then when *The Cid Campeador* was over, the Bohemian band played *Morte la Vie*, and now it was my turn to be swayed as she had been, for *Morte la Vie* was the first tango I ever heard, under its right name of *Vivante la Muerta* in the land of tangos, and furthermore, I had just seen on Señor de Caldear's right a famous linguist called Forestier. He whose every book described the ruin and atrophy of words came up there suddenly to bring to me intact the name of my friend, disdaining apparent contradiction. I turned so pale that the pretty actress examined me, and touched my face, as if it had spoken to her, and found therein the symptoms of the first disease she had ever had, which she called, in a diction which had attained its final evolution, *hallocose*. Never will the linguist Forestier guess with what amazement the *Comédie Française* learned about his discoveries from me: how among savage peoples men's words are forbidden to women, who had to invent the language of gestures to get even with them; how two little children bred up in confinement and silence called to each other in a Phrygian language and named bread *Becos*. Ventura, Dussane, and the ladies

near them began using *Becos* to ask the head waiter for their bread and cake, and indeed he understood them. Molière, instead of sage counsel, was dispensing life and goodness on bullheads and consuls (as they might have been called in Phrygia), and when Forestier rose, to see that great fair Frenchman making none of the too human gestures which he might have acquired from his foreign lady friends provoked, by some unaccountable reaction, in my neighbor a frantic admiration for Molière. When Forestier pointed at the poet's bust a finger which he had never stuck into his ear, she cried, "Hurrah for Alceste!" She cried, "Hurrah for BÉjart!" when he read his communication on the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and the geographical area of sonants, showing at the dentals a double row of teeth that had never gnawed his nails, and beating time for the gutturals with a left hand that had never rubbed his Achilles tendon. This had such an effect that fat Caldear, suddenly disregarding his *semi-fistula* in the eye and his moth-eaten scalp, began to clap, his two thin arms ending in exquisite forefingers, each with a still more exquisite fingernail; and this set my neighbor to weeping, for the gestures seemed those of the real Caldear hidden behind the sham.

Molière was present and spoke to me.

Kleist decided that to rest after Berlin we should go for a few weeks to Sassnitz.

Sassnitz is not really attractive, least of all in early May. The Baltic was about as cold as the Chinese grotto at the Ungerer baths and the flock of twelve beauties that are sent out to bathe annually in seas and lakes, before the season opens, in front of the casino of every bathing resort to secure a fresh stock of postcards, came up on shore with twenty-four red legs. They were the principal interest at our hotel. There, in their clothes, they rehearsed the tableaux which they had to present in the waves, according to their contract with the managers at Binz, Rügen, or Swinemünde. With them was a physician, a certain Dr. Wolff, a very dirty heart specialist, who was finishing a study of the palpitations of the female heart in the water. He followed the forty-eight ventricles and auricles into the water, wearing a waterproof and trying not to touch it, lifting his arms as though yielding to it. Back on land and quit of aquatic hearts, he turned his glances in the direction of other hearts, those of Eva and Genevieve, who had rejoined us. We used to get up with the sun, and then we saw the ladies quite nude, for at that hour they worked for the three-cent postcards. Each was arrayed in a cloak that she threw aside without false modesty as soon as her lover the sea by a frown or a wrinkle required it; without needing any suggestion, at

certain aspects and certain sudden movements of the waves or the leaves they recognized that the time had come for the colored postcards, or for the sentimental ones, and hurried toward the liveliest wave or shore, frightening the gulls, which then bore up heavenward, in the form of a dove, the symbol of the immaculate Holy Ghost, their cries like those of an old crow or a duck.

We lived opposite the Casino, which had been once a hospital and in which Kleist had regained consciousness; I was sure every morning to find his footsteps marking the sand around it, for reasons unknown, whether he wanted to look in through the cracks in the scaffolding, or whether he was hot upon a trail invisible to me, which led him always to the Baltic with its non-human language. In the afternoon we gathered on the terrace. The weather was fine. Sometimes a red boat passed one entirely blue and for a moment obliterated it. It was sweet to see a color absorb another color without consequent modification. The swallows who liked their insects salted, fluttered over the sea. The little semaphore house, as affected and whitened as the man who in bullfights stands erect in the midst of the arena, and whom the bull never touches, was waiting serenely for storms. Not a shutter quivered. Dr. Wolff, who had attended most of the German statesmen, Erzberger, Rathenau, Wirth, gave us their blood pressure, and admitted that, by some inconceivable law of chance, assassinations had so far followed the order of death already fixed by cardiac weakness. Then evening came. From the neighboring peninsula came the first blue ray of a lighthouse—from Scandinavia came an immense white brightness. Having laid aside the scaly tails they put on for the sunset postcards, the twelve Naiads at last in peace were dressing for the evening, and Dr. Wolff, contemptuous of everything that wants a heart, like the sea and the moon, bent toward our conversations an ear curved like a stethoscope, and rested a satisfied hand upon the belly of a dirty dog, as he might have rested it on a good electric motor.

Since Genevieve had been with us, the fair Eva seemed embarrassed in the presence of nature, though indeed when she went to the deaconesses' school at Spandau she had learned what fifteen attitudes it was suitable for a young German lady of noble birth to assume in relation to the fifteen principal nations. While Genevieve, who was perfectly comfortable in this novel landscape and among these people, whose language she did not know, still met every emotion and every living being at an advantage, making her weight tell, like a boxer, on the other hand Eva, in order to come into relation with the smallest epicea or sea-cockchafer, had completely to change her soul if not her costume. She was always in the setting of Kleist,

where she should be, but managed it, like the Naiads, by dressing up. She tried to withdraw this landscape and this sea from the simplicity with which Genevieve flooded it, by raising immense phantoms from breakfast time on. She pointed out, over the seas, the road that Sigurd had come by; she took us to the spring where prisoners were sacrificed to Hertha among the beech trees; on foggy days she tried to envelop us in specters which she distributed like waterproofs—to Genevieve, Geneviève de Brabant, to me, Hagen, to Dr. Wolff, Mimir; but it only needed Genevieve's going fishing or playing croquet for the island to be purified suddenly of all it contained in the way of history, geography, and legendary miasma, and for her to give us the same sense of repose that was enjoyed by the young girls of Candia the day after the feast of the Minotaur. Even when they went bicycling the contrast was continued, with Genevieve's normal machine and Eva's polymultiple. So with their souls.

I felt the affection of Kleist wavering between the two women, and his own surprise that the experience was rather painful; for he never suspected that, because each was so much the daughter of her own land, he was really hesitating between the countries. He wondered why all the great imaginative figures born under other climes, Tristan, Parsifal, and all the Norman gods, had come to live in Germany a more definitive life, more official and more effective than that of the greatest Germans; and why all the living and real great men rushed into France or aspired thither, as to a refuge or a sanction, desirous often to offer their souls as human to this country which has been said to lack a national soul—whether it were Tourguenieff, d'Annunzio, Börne, or Heine. Was it fair to call Germany veracious and France artificial, when every movement of the spirit attached the latter to human beings of her own caliber and coupled up the other with giants and specters? Whence came the speed with which any German profiteer who set up a shaft beside a spring could create over night a legend of a water sprite that Baedeker would confirm in his next edition? All the spirits and the elements that personify the intangible, are domesticated in a few hours between the Rhine and the Elbe. Whence comes the sudden and unalterable friendship which, in the first restaurant encountered after leaving the *Gare de l'Est*, will bind together a great Czech or English exile and the waiter from Berry who takes his order?

Genevieve was always settled in the precise spot where the bay, or the varnished floor of the casino, would have secreted her like a pearl; Eva in that where the municipality would have erected a fountain or a statue. Two or three times I heard Eva call animals to her on the pretext that her dress was their color and that they were brethren. "Come," she said, "I have your

fur." But the white hounds fled from her white frocks and the canaries from her yellow frocks and welcomed Genevieve in apple green.

The instinct which revealed to Genevieve what unknown persons might hold within them of heroism and of suffering, would check her also before bicycles which had been in a deadly accident, and before houses rife in drama trivial or comfortable. In this way she took me to drink coffee every day at the Weissbergers'—at first Frau Weissberger blushed at our coming precisely at the time of day when the light showed up the shabbiness of her chalet and her first wrinkles. Fanny Weissberger, in the days when she was Fräulein Horn of Hamburg and a millionaire thought little of her fortune, tried her best to escape it, and, after twenty years and two divorces arrived, by way of a baron who collected and a general who wrote, at a little poet whom she had wanted all along, modest, famous, and without spectacles. In the same way her uncles the Friedlanders had gained the Catholic faith by two stages, the first atheism, the second Protestantism. But now she was forty-five and had lost her money. All that at this age constitutes the poetry of life—the auto with two chauffeurs in buckskin, the dinners by little riversides, the journeys with good trunks—all these had fled, and she had only a poet now. It was like those who should love a perfume so well that they set out for Lebanon to breathe the very essence of it, and find there only the wood from which it comes, barely odorous if you rub it with your nose. She lamented the realism of life on a divan, huddled under a shabby rug, shapeless as only clothes can be shapeless, while in the next room, disregarding the call of her lips (for in misfortune she had caught the trick of hissing like a snake), disregarding the cries of the first little half brother and the piano of the second little half sister, and using ink which was taken away from him three times a day to write up the household accounts, Weissberger, laying to the general account of his country his personal mischance in marriage, still composed the only beautiful poems that vanquished Germany has brought forth. Sometimes when she heard her husband reading an epode half aloud, or an antistrophe in an undertone, she would have a paroxysm of hatred for the middle class and for poetry, which is their expression, and with her stockings down about her ankles would drink off a big glass of white wine before the cook.

It was between these two persecuted persons that Kleist could judge of Genevieve. While Eva, as soon as the Weissbergers' doormat was passed, spoke only in allusions to the heroes whom Weissberger had created, the great baker of Garmisch, the smith of Kochel, declaiming the odes at the top of her lungs and the epodes in falsetto, Genevieve observed that every verse of the husband's was associated with a wrinkle of the wife's, that to read a

strophe of the former set quivering the crow's-feet in the latter's face, and confined herself to finding out that the Weissberger boy loved drawing and modeling. She gave him lessons; and in a house supersaturated with poets, only painters and sculptors were talked about. When Weissberger, a little astonished, got so far as to become confidential about his work, Genevieve turned him out, and arranged his desk in an attic, whence he was not allowed to emerge till he had thrice wound a hunting horn. To give Fanny more confidence, she went regularly to meet the Trelleborg boat, and since she knew everybody in Europe, it was rarely that she failed to fetch back a celebrity. Then Weissberger was extracted from his attic and presented as a peer.

She used each visit for a little house cleaning, in some single part of the big house. She cleaned the kitchen the day she brought up Anatole France, on his way home from Sweden with the Nobel prize. The day it was Rappaport on his way to the courts in Moscow, it was the children's room. When Einstein was going to Copenhagen, she washed the pantry floor, brought back Einstein, and as Lola Levy's sister had told her he could juggle with strings, she tied his hands, like those of the strong man who breaks chains at a fair, and he freed himself, and taught the rest the way to attain at least this sort of liberty, and some card tricks, and how to take off your waistcoat without touching your undershirt. The attic was needed for photography: Weissberger had to carry his work into the writing room at the casino. When she had no luck in fishing for men of importance, Genevieve with the same authority brought back someone unknown: a Swiss carrying a case—they never knew whether he was a violinist or a tennis champion: and a handsome Swede found in a bathing suit on the shore, whom I had already seen in the same costume at Abbazia and Deauville and who must have traveled exclusively by swimming. One fine day when the boat was late she brought back Weissberger from the casino, managed the party, cleaned the drying room and the outside of the shutters in his honor, forced the Weissberger woman to kiss him in public, and we knew later that from this sham hug love made a fresh start.

Below is the forty-third French exercise, the only one that I had not the courage to send to Forestier after it was written. The title was *Memory: A Limousin recalls to his friend who has forgotten everything, their recollections of childhood. Plants, insects, little animals.*

“Speak, still speak,” said the man without a memory, said Forestier. “What were we doing at this hour just ten years ago?”

“The 22d of May, 1912,” I answered, “we were in a village near Paris. We had chosen the inn for a marble slab engraved with an incomprehensible device. You know it by heart. Butterflies kiss flowers; flowers kiss butterflies. A volley of shots was heard from time to time; the guests of the President were out hunting. Sometimes there was a single gun-shot: a musician invited for the first time, was trying his first shot.”

“Tell me all that with proper names,” said Forestier. “I love proper names——”

I translate then: “We were at Marly-le-Roi, at Martin’s inn. Sphinxes kiss the roses, moths the periwinkles. Some shots—they were M. Chéron’s Maunoury’s . . . a lone shot, M. Erick Satie’s.”

“And eleven years ago?”

“The 22d of May, 1911, we went to visit the Arduran Ladoucets, to eat mushrooms and rabbit. We went on motor cycles, for you can motor cycle. You carried your trumpet, for you know how to play the trumpet. We stopped in every forest to gather mushrooms, for you can tell all the non-poisonous mushrooms.”

“And then?”

“You had in your pocket Vol. I of Vauvenargnes. Vol. II was in the saddlebag in the puncture outfit, for you did not know how to mend a tire. When we reached the Marne we went fishing. I was a great help to you, for you hated to touch the worms. At nightfall we attacked the crayfish, and at every sound you warned me, for you were afraid of keepers.”

“And then?”

“The 22d of May, 1891, you were living with your aunt Eynard, in the Limousin. She is still living. She is the only member of your family still living. She will give you the stories of your youth that have become classic, for instance the genius for drawing that you had between the ages of three and four. You went bird’s-nesting. You have a good bit to your account in France. You broke a goodish lot of bull-finches’ and blackbirds’ eggs in your pockets, for you never were willing to put them in your mouth climbing down the young elms. You fell into a pool once and it was hard to save you.”

“Who saved me?”

“One of our companions called Durand and a dog called Miraut—the most anonymous rescuers that could be found in France. Another time, on the scaffolding of a steeple, a plank turned under you and you would have been killed had not a workman caught you by the ears. The ears held. We kept the name of this rescuer, a Piedmontese ill-adapted to any anonymity, for he was called Garibouticelli.”

“Whom did we see?”

“We saw the mayor precisely at two o’clock. He could just barely read, he was on the side of Greek, and he offered us sweet Montbazillac wine, for the sweet is the best. At three we saw the rhetoric master from Limoges, who was for the suppression of the classics, who offered us dry Montbazillac wine, for the dry is the best. All these antinomies of formidable extent, God and Nothing, royalty and republic, cubism and classicism, light wine and alcohol, our little town abounded in, illimitably. Then we set out for Brantôme by the country road, a road bordered by hedgerows, that came into a county road bordered by cherry trees, and that again into the national highway bordered by poplars or elms. The whole road of our civilization! At six o’clock we arrived alive at Brantôme; the city lies sweating and surrounded by moats; at seven o’clock, when rheumatism had caught us, we went home by a road where every valley had its little sawmill sounding like breathing through the night.”

“And then?”

“Then night came. The fountain jet in the square settled down. The conductor could be heard, before closing his house, whistling up his dog with the house key. We went to bed in beds with two sheets, we fell asleep to the cry of frogs and crickets who were trying in vain to fashion a proper name for their marsh or their field. Then our dreams began, for you dreamed a great deal, but I can not inform you about them, except to tell that you often saw a steep hill down which coasted young girls and tigers. It was the end. The crickets were still. It was oblivion.”

“And then?”

One day I found a piece of news stuck up on the casino door that drove us from the Baltic: “Revolution Munich. Count Dr. Artist Painter von Zelten has taken power.” For in Germany it takes at least half a telegram to give the middle-class titles of a revolutionary.

CHAPTER VII

THE dawn was breaking as the automobile, hired in Berlin and authorized to pass through the revolutionary lines, set us down in Munich. Citizen Siegfried Kleist had been invited to become a member of the new Senate. The police, dressed in their old uniforms, followed us as soon as we entered the city and gave us a little alarm, but they were only angry because our lamps were still lit and we had to pay them twenty-four marks, the first tax certainly that the dictator Zelten had collected. They did not ask for our papers, the ex-police assuring only the surveillance of inanimate objects, carriages, automobiles, flower pots—handing over to the new police that of human beings. One heard now and again a timid shot, for war and revolt are daughters of the hunt which is forbidden in every country before the rising of the sun.

A last arrest by police who informed me of a tear in my coat—still the ex-police—and I was at home. Had I conceived a doubt about the revolution, the least glance thrown toward the glass shop fronts of my Russian Israelites would have settled it. They were all up and dressed and grouped—I could not yet make out how—like huntsmen or game, and telephone and wireless apparatus were erected in the corners where the postman could only penetrate yesterday with his postman's card in his hand. The women who had heretofore been stretched on pallets, covered with rags, were up, half naked, with low necks for the festivity and jewels appeared on their throats, their breasts, their foreheads, and even on their ankles like the tattooing newly pricked on Papuans the day of the Great Day. The murmur of harmonicas, music boxes, and trills had ceased: it was the only peculiarity borrowed from Germany by the tribe. These people who got their information of the world heretofore by dialogue, letters in cipher, or thumb prints, were snatching newspapers, and one felt indeed that the paper had printed all the cabalistic words which the oral tradition had brought them the day before. Combinations that I had not guessed, which should never have taken place except at night, were bared to the day. The pimpled blonde of the fourth floor was in the first floor left; the hatter, in the cell opposite his own, was bathing for the first time in the flood of the rising sun, from which he turned away with disgust as if it had been real water. The women drew the curtains, and pulled up the window blinds, as in taxis before complete and rapid unions. The windows, incredible thing, were opened and the air of the revolution received the right to blow in. Sometimes a sensational bit of news, like a happy stroke of the goose-game, made everyone move on a

room or two. Children who had had orders, heretofore, not to know each other, took up the games which they had been playing with difficulty in the cupboards, in the open court and under all eyes. Behind their shutters, the four spies looked like overwhelmed savants who had studied the habits of microbes under the microscope for twenty years and saw them suddenly full human size, marrying and fighting. For the first time, perfumes violent and heavy burst out—perfumes such as should exude from the bodies of Christians who die in the odor of sanctity, but which here announced a sudden thrill of life. The agitation in the house, moreover, had a meaning. It was toward my neighbor in the adjoining room that all these women were coming: women draped in colored garments, the colors that the spotlight throws on naked women with the flags of their nation in café concerts. The flag of this nation was vivid red, vivid yellow, vivid gold, a rainbow vividness, on a ground of saffron, purple, and death.

One heard an aeroplane pass. Everyone disappeared. Visible only were the hatter and a few men who insulted the governmental plane from the windows as cocks do buzzards. They cried out in Hebrew that Heaven was Jehovah's; and in German that it was neither Wirth's nor Ebert's. One could distinctly see an observer, on board the plane, writing on a card. "Mark me," cried the hatter. "I am Lievené Lieven. I have the two most beautiful names of the last revolution!"

At nine o'clock Eva brought me the news. It was on his birthday that Zelten had proclaimed his dictatorship. No one was very certain of the spirit of the movement; for in Suabia they had arrested all the Jews, and in Haidhausen three meetings of seminarists were celebrating the nomination of a new nuncio. The second Bavarian republic, on the other hand, had a dispute with the Vatican, and for the same reason as the first; its agents had requisitioned the automobile of the Papal embassy on account of its red color. Zelten, according to information, seemed to me to have compromised with all his tastes and hatreds, for what he detested above all things were electrical engineers and open-air painters, and yet there was no news of any of them being hanged or more delicately electrocuted as he had formerly hoped. The first of June, the adjutant of Zelten, Captain Kessler, corrupting the guardian of Bavaria—a bronze statue whose giant dimensions they learn by heart in the schools, as they do the more minute dimensions of the fair Eva in the hospitals—had lodged in its chest of from twelve to twenty-one meters and in its legs of eight to ten meters, a hundred revolutionaries armed with bombs. They roasted there all day, for the thermometer was at 32° and the statue overheated, but at eight o'clock, like the Greeks coming out of their horse, they moved on the barracks and took the town hall. There had

been one killed, and as always happens Destiny chose ill, for it turned out to be an unhappy soldier who was to have gone free that evening, been baptized the next day, married the following evening, and have had a child within a week.

Ida brought me a revolver and begged me to try it, for it smelled of rust. I had only to aim at the ceiling. All the noises in the city were neither fights nor shootings, but merely the bourgeois trying their pistols in their gardens.

In Jehovah's heaven another warplane passed; this time it belonged to Zelten's government. It threw out proclamations toward which the people in the houses stretched their arms as toward manna; but they disappeared in the air like rare editions; those of the last revolution were now worth three dollars. Ida had read them. The matter in them concerned the stupidity with which Germany, after imitating all the other nations, had forged the idea of a gigantic Germany in the midst of which she lived the hypocritical life of a crab in its shell, on the treasure of the electrical forces of Bavaria. The object of the revolution was to dislodge the crab and to divide equally the electrical power in Bavaria, so many hectowatts a head.

In the neighboring room the voice of Lievené Lieven was quarreling with a childish voice.

"What we need," cried Lieven, "is that the calumny should cease and the honor of Eisner be cleared. What is it they reproach him with, Brentano and Lerchenfeld? With having spent 5,000 marks on his trip to Switzerland? I have made the calculation over and over with all the tables of exchange; I counted it all up myself—no baths; seats in second-class carriage to and from Landau, and the Swiss tariff. I counted the three dinners given to Albert Thomas and Ambrose Got at seven Swiss francs each. I counted the two changes of horse at ten francs and I make it 5,230 marks. That is 230 marks that the Bavarian Government owes his poor heirs."

"Shut up, shut up," said the child's voice. "What is Zelten doing?"

"What do you think he's doing? He's waiting for Kleist; he's waiting for Thomas Mann; he's waiting for a letter from Gorki and one from Anatole France. Dictators always collect autographs and then disappear. At any rate, he has found mine in his morning mail, in which I demand those 230 marks. At bottom—and you know it, he's nothing but a German, and what he's waiting for is Goethe, and for the real Kleist. But France is the only country where the dead take command and reign. He wants only Bavarians in Bavaria. It's as if he were to want only Germans in Germany. To whom does Germany belong if not to us? That beautiful burg Berlin—whose is it if not ours? Whose is the village of Frankfort? Whose the district of Leipzig?

Mine! Yours! Ours! Let Zelten find a boat, a bark, a theater where we are not the masters. At Reinhardt's the other evening at 'The Merchant of Venice,' there was not a Christian among all the forty-three actors to insult Shylock. Let Zelten cite a single beautiful book, or show me a beautiful picture, made in the last thirty years by any but us. Who is Schnitzler? Who is Cassirer? Who is Rathenau? Who is Liebermann? The beak of the German Eagle is *our* nose."

"Shut up. You talk like a national liberal. They will hear us."

"Who will hear us, my Queen? The Canadian? I laugh a hundred per cent at Canada. At America. A ticket there costs three hundred dollars. Let the Germans rush over there and clean shoes, and sell syrup and offer their backs to the American Legion. I can go from here to the very heart of Germany for ten pfennigs. The little Kieterfeld went to Canada and they stole his gold tooth which he was carrying in his pencil case. Germany is unleavened bread that nourishes my soul. Look at our house, my Queen. Look at these crazy people! All this new life which we do not yet share is already functioning in us! Let Zelten keep out of our way; if he wants to keep his temper—let him keep out of the race! See, there's your Kleist going to the council. I'll tell him who I am!"

Kleist in fact was starting, locking his door, carrying on his arm a wrap, going as sadly to the Supreme Council as the candidate goes to his cabinet in the Beaux-Arts to draw his Venus waves or his agricultural furrows. He turned around to look at the man who was calling out Lievené Lieven, made a sign that that was not his name, and went on. He had his knapsack and three days' provisions just as on the evening when he started for the French front.

"Excuse me," said a childish voice behind me suddenly. "I did not know you were at home. You are here as little as possible, it seems to me."

On the queen of Lievené Lieven, on her sunny skin, my eyes placed Kleist's little gray spot, which melted in so much brilliancy. The queen was twenty years old and she was dressed like a Parisian at eight o'clock in the evening. I had before me the exact opposite of Eva. In the place of the ciphers on each limb and each feature of the perfect German, there was marked clear and readable for every one on this girl, her value for good and for evil. Her arms knew how to hug better than those of Lizette Friedlander herself. For kissing, her mouth came only second to the Queen of Sheba's. Her brain stood first in devotion, and teasing since the little Shylock girl. There was not the shadow of a vein or an artery on her skin—the loveliest

skin since Jacqueline May's, and it seemed evident that all the arteries and veins of her heart spread out over that skin as did Judith's. She was bareheaded, and her hair undulated in waves the size of a little finger, the most presumptuous hair since Mary Garden's. Never did a body more thoroughly disavow all meanness and lies, and draw down upon itself the sweet analysis of the Song of Solomon. But all this did not exclude in the same being the whims and lies of the soul.

She looked with disgust at the objects in lizard skin. "The old serpent is changing its skin to-day," she said. "Into the waste basket!" Such was Lili David, a creature from the hell I adore, who belongs, as Lievené Lieven would say, to the devil and not to Wirth. Her pupils were all the people in the drawings of Rembrandt blended and confused, with the little lamp of the synagogue still shining; her little independent hands of a woman who prays with hands apart, her smile touched by such purple thoughts—everything indicated a creature for whom death is the least of punishments and blessedness the first little reward. One always sees such an one on the day when one needs someone to sew on buttons or pack one's valise. At any other time I would have been glad to hang for some weeks on the pendulum which swings between life and eternity, stopping only at the celestial Jerusalem; but to-day was a day of revolution and I was in a hurry. Her ears were vivid red and minute, and there were three holes pierced in each lobe. I could not but ask myself how they staunched the blood the day they pierced them. Her legs were the friendliest and faithfulest after those of my own land.

"You are French," she said. "I have come to ask a service of you."

Lovely naïveté that united the word "French" with "ask a service!" Lili David reminded me of the gentleman with a blue mustache who came up to my table from the end of the empty salon of the Orient-Express and said, "Will you play cards with me? I am a Greek." One could see that Lili did not know my uncle was a millionaire, who let me go with only one meal a day for two years for lack of thirty-six francs a month—nor St. Beuve who gave his janitor ten sous for a New Year's present; or that director at the Polytechnic who always rolled up his taxi fare in a piece of paper without a tip and then disappeared before the driver had time to unwrap and count it. One evening he had the mischance to have the wrong key with him.

"I am going to be arrested," continued Lili David. "We had prepared a new movement which has been annulled by your friend Zelten. The Zeltenians, that is if they are not Kleistians, or reactionaries hiding behind Dachau, will get me. I shall escape again, but one loses a lot of things in prison and all one's papers. Do help me to save these few I prize: they are

three letters written to my great-grandmother by Heinrich Heine. What a fuss the new Seidl or the new Egelhofer would make of them! My old man, Lievené Lieven, would sell them. Will you take them?"

I took the letters. Until breakfast time Lili kept finding pretexts to come back. She had forgotten in one time what women usually take a year to leave with their friend—her handkerchief, her lorgnette, a little ear trumpet and the smelling salts for her heart; for there was not one of her senses which was not either too dull or too tense, and did not demand all the time a stimulant or an anodyne. She pretended not to use any of these annexes in my presence; leaving me the illusion that I could set the same rhythm for her eyes, her lungs and the waves of sound. Then, when everything had been found, she came back and overwhelmed me with gifts, and with a little manner of restitution as if I had left these things with her; a traveling trunk in engraved lacquer, some wax candles—all eminently practical utensils that a revolution might indeed only partially respect. Then, my mission as a chest fulfilled, she came back to destroy the lizard-skin objects.

"The revolution ought at least to be worth that much," she said. I grabbed them out of her hands. I had to force open her hands to get them. How much less soft is the lizard skin than the skin of Lili David!

Unluckily it was I who was arrested that night and taken to the Café Luitpold. My policeman must have belonged to the ex-police for, while he spoke to me very gently, he turned my baggage inside out.

One asks oneself how the dictatorship of Zelten could have lasted four days, since all the heads of the Bavarian party unanimously disapproved his program, the first paragraph of which recommended an alliance with France and combined all the Lerchenfeld troops on the third of June in the immutable citadel of Dachau, the city of painters, whence escaped now upon Munich as much blood as formerly paint. All the secret societies of which he had talked to me in Paris and of which he was a member, paralyzed the machine for a few hours each: the sub-chief of the governmental recruiting was of those who recognize their own members by a glance; the third postal engineer of those who recognize each other by the word *Alraune*; the fourth chief of a battalion of the guard, of those who know they are brothers by the forefinger.

At the Luitpold, where the cloak room was used for the prisoners and where they made me give up my hat and coat for a ticket, I was released in the compartment of the revolutionaries of the last revolution, who from Austria, Switzerland, and Italy had dropped down upon the suburbs of

Munich in autos, planes, and motor boats. There were there, Axelrode who claimed diplomatic immunity; the insane Doctor Lipp, who, master of transports for one hour in 1918, profited by it to declare a war on Switzerland and Württemberg which he thought more and more disastrous and which he made haste to end. By help of that confusion which makes the director of an insane asylum question for a minute at the announcement of a war or a commotion, whether the rules of good sense remain the same, he had escaped from the asylum with a comrade from his cell, a big brewer, mildly mad; and he tried to excite him by telling him the misdeeds of Germany, who had allowed the Roumanians of Temesvar to be massacred by the Hungarians, the Russian Bulgarians by the Bulgarian Bulgarians, and the Armenians by the Turks, who had ruined France and not paid for it.

The guards, picked out by their colleagues as the gentlest—to avoid the massacres of 1918—brought mufflers to those who were coughing and took Dr. Lipp to smoke his cigarette in the lavatory, after having verified his marginal notes as at the general concourse. The noise of cannon gave one something to think about, for it was not possible to explain it as Ida did the revolver shots, the practicing of the bourgeois on their ceilings or terraces. I had been there an hour in the smoking room and was beginning to regret the compartment for non-smoking revolutionaries when a guard brought me the following note from one of the prisoners:

“Dear Henry: I am near you at the end, on the right. Write me three letters. What is culture and what is civilization? Did you not pass the examination of the port of Hamburg once? Do you know that I love you? Your Fanny.”

I thought the guard had made a mistake. But getting up I saw at the end Lili David, who was throwing me kisses with a fervor which surprised me until I saw through her trick. She wanted her three letters or their copies. The overseers, who would have confiscated any manuscript, would perhaps let us correspond. So I copied out the first letter:

“My Angel, my Light:

“You put too much faith in the little Spontini. Each one of these days is consecrated to lies which are preparing a day of more ample lies. If he told you he was born number 9 rue des Petits-Champs, he will tell you tomorrow that he is the son of Mademoiselle George, who lived in this house, and that Napoleon was his father.

“My angel, I respond to your demands as to a child. Culture? Civilization? They put these questions to me the day when I appeared before the principal magistrates of quays, warehouses, and lighthouses, when I aspired to the position of overseer of the port of Hamburg. I obtained mark O, but nevertheless I feel I must give you the same answer. Culture is the superstition of culture. The cultivated countries are to the others what real mushrooms are to cultivated ones. In place of following the lessons and the instincts of nature and the soil which furnishes them with oranges and potatoes, men forge a model and believe with the firmness of iron in didacticism (this last phrase closed the free ports to me as the bonded warehouse keeper was a former professor in the upper schools). They imitate, turn and turn about, those rare nations, who by chance ‘gifts,’ perseverance, or wisdom, have given some new form to human worth—Greece, France, or England. This brings down upon their heads various opposed virtues which they invoke according to the occasion. This does not make liars of them, nor yet hypocrites, but men convinced successively or even at the same time of the supremacy of right, force, weakness, the benefits of overpopulation or of sterility. (This closed to me the Chamber of Commerce, whose president had no child.) Hence it comes that they are both cruel and sentimental; that they constantly invoke treaties and then break them. (This last word, I do not know why, lost me the favor of the great sluice-keeper of the Elbe.)

“Finally, in the last stage, having imitated everybody in the world, they undertake to imitate themselves, or rather to imitate the image of a nation forged by a people of pedants and megalomaniac princes. Tyre and Rome were countries of culture, but Germany will surpass them by a hundred cubits as soon as she has made a gallery of idols of her own stature, has built up a mythology by borrowing, and the son of Meyer is personally allied to a Siegfried or a Hagen. (At this point I was forbidden the boats themselves, as the director of the navigating personnel was called Meyer.) As for civilization, it is the result of a perfect *entente* among a people, a climate, and those currents of moral and material wealth which disappear and appear again in the course of the centuries, in the neighborhood of the warm seas. It is that state of modesty which urges civilized man to live parallel to nature (which also prevents his meeting that pitiless creature face to face), to attribute a just evaluation to human power, of which the cathedrals and pyramids mark the greatest bulk, and to put the least possible price upon life, and to face its contrary, death, with a certain deference and to salute it always—on the other hand, by reason of this gentle mistrust of death, to complicate it as little as possible by other than human exigencies; to

recognize certain qualities simply as dull, and yet to exercise without injuring others, those qualities which would be in demand if life were really fair, agreeable, and eternal—such as courage, activity, adequate parsimony, and kindness (here, I really think, the harbor of the Seine was opened to me). France is at present the most civilized country. Frenchmen have refused false missions, upon which Germany precipitated itself because they went with a uniform—to be a god, to be a worldling, to be a demon; and when one of those semi-divine rays of light with which we are blessed once every two hundred years falls, he fails to use it to clear up the human spirit. His language and his reasoning permit only human truths. (Here I think they raised the bridge of Rouen for me.) By this skepticism one may explain all contrasts: that the Frenchman is the only one who knows how to cook and that he is sober; that he is violent in combat and without malice; that he hates strangers and is the only friend of negroes, pariahs, and feeble races. (Here for me the bridge of Grenelle opened.) Such is peaceable France, who will exterminate all those who come to worry her dressmakers, philosophers, and kitchens.

“Do I know that you love me? I am writing you from the Café Boulevard St. Michel, my angel. The waiters feed my reverie with large crocks of grenadine and cherry brandy. I should only have to stretch out and tear up a board of the parquet floor to find a spring which gave its name to the café and which rolls down to the river without ever seeing the day. I should only have to get up, and stand on my bench, and cut a hole in the awning to see the polar star watching over the establishment. It is dark; one hardly suspects the surrounding houses. Only above the city are the lighted rooms of those who love in Paris; remorse overwhelms me for the evil I have falsely uttered in my lifetime. I have said civilian clothes were frightful in color; this evening I think that a bishop in gala robes with his men from Biarritz with their red pantaloons and some of those blue-garbed wine-dressers putting sulphur on the vines. . . .”

Here my letter was interrupted—I had to stop it. I added just one phrase in which I did not withdraw any of the ill said by me of lizards and their skin. The guard looked over the writing, showed it to Controller Hofmann, who looked at me and at Lili throwing me a last kiss, and let it pass, not without having the manuscript copied by little Kramer, former typist of the cruel Egelhofer.

Lili, by return post, to coax her second letter from me, wrote:

“Dear little Henry:

“What do you think of summer? What do you think of de Musset? What are the cousins Schombach doing?”

I replied:

“My Angel, my Light:

“Believe in summer. Do me the justice to admit that I have never missed a single opportunity, fugitive though it might be, to speak of spring and summer. The day is not far off when I shall resist only winter. But the beautiful summer of last year seems mournful to me in comparison with this rainy summer. Then I was in an inn which was no other than that of the Petit-Morin and the Oeuf-Dur. That soft wind which the French call the false Mistral, and the Germans the real Tramontana, turned up the petticoats of the lilacs already rid of all flowers and ambition, for that year, and for the rest of the year green as grass. Nevertheless it was the usual summer: at the slightest sign of dryness, anguish covered the faces of the market gardeners, and at the slightest sign of rain that of the farmers. In the fields the painters installed themselves, backs to the sun, turning with it, as if they were taking daguerreotypes. To the abbés driving in victorias, God spoke by the voice of the little waterfalls, the silence of the lakes, and by the flying cuckoos. . . . You would turn around laughing when a woman passed perfumed with lilac. But I came out of the river to lie naked on the banks till noon, to put on my cloak in the afternoon, and in the evening I went in evening dress to play the little horses at St. Germain. This is the tale of every man’s holiday who is not in love—also the history of costume through the ages and the history of humanity.

“But I did not know you, then, my little friend. Yet my senses were sharper than ever. I saw the smoke that the peonies make when they open. I saw the lower beak of the birds as they sang. . . . But I did not know you then. It was for another that the elms rang six times under the beak of the woodpeckers, that the wild geese (as the French call them) and the tame swans (as the Germans call them) called eleven times above the diligence. I did not know you then. Evening came. The jasmine which, by dint of a long day’s effort, had reached my window at twilight, gave way as I opened it and inundated me with perfume, pollen, and stamens. But I did not know you then. Never did pollen fall on a more sterile rock, even in a south sea isle. At last I was freed from the hostess’s Manx cat, that we had to caress in turn at the table; from the manager’s three-legged goat, which I had to feed with cigarettes; night sent me intact wild birds which did not depend upon the hotel but upon insects whole and varnished, and a lusty grand duke had

the ‘hallali’ for me in the depths of the forest. . . . But I did not know you then. I was writing automatically on I do not know what work, which continued to grow like the fingernails on a dead body. Then I put out the light and leaned on my elbows at the window. Every pond, every basin seemed exhausted—seemed to be resting after having carried an innumerable fleet all day; and the moon, already old, distributed to everyone a young portrait of herself. Never had a creature between 1-m 65 and 2 asked less of nature and of night, and never had nature and night offered more. They did not know that for me, ever since the day in mid-July when I felt that you lived but that I did not know you, the image of desolation could not be given by denuded trees, a sky ravaged by wind and rime—but that the image came to me with blossoms below and stars above. I saw from my window only the more tufted forest, rounder hills, fatter night birds, the vision of a desolation of desolations. With a look slower and harder than their own I fixed the stars—and, as I did not know you then, there was not one of them that did not wink at me. Farewell, my angel.

“P. S. The two Mussets are two poets and the Schombachs two idiots.”

After precisely the time it took little Kramer to copy this six times, I had an answer from Lili:

“Little Henry: How is it you break glass so easily? Tell me if my kisses please you. You say nothing of my legs.”

I replied:

“Fanny, my hand trembles. Not only because I am writing to you, or because of that thrill of a lover trying to draw treasures from his paper. Sometimes in this body which is yours there arise gestures which belong to my ancestors, and they possess me for a time. You know how steady my hand is; you have seen me juggle with a knife. But once or twice a month I feel my fingers numb; I hesitate to pick up a glass, force myself, and break it! I am seized not by remorse but with tenderness for my father. How often have I seen him seized by the same infernal shiver, so that he would spill his red wine on the table cloth and his beer on his clothes. Sometimes, too, I stammer for twenty seconds—at least once a year. That is all that is left me of the stammering of my ancestor. For the sake of my little nephews, I occupy myself composing a repertory of these reflex actions which are our coat of arms and our customs. So if they scratch their ring finger with their thumbnail suddenly; if whenever anyone says ‘cat’ their thought by an invincible urge, supplies the suffixes ‘nip’ or ‘gut’; if they enjoy pinching

their fingers with clothespins, it is because their old uncle Heinrich Heine is alive in them again for a moment.

“Here is my firm hand, Fanny, and my trembling lips. What a queer planet you live in! You never appear to my thought as does a ship on this round globe, masts and sails first. But first of all I see your bare foot and then your ankle. Here is your face at last, Fanny. Gone again—already!”

As there was no reference to kisses I had to invent a postscript. My imagination served me ill. “However, you did not break anything,” Lili told me later. “P. S. Your kisses are simply wonderful.”

The three letters were saved. The saving went even further than Lili desired, for Kramer continued making copies by tens. In this café, turned into a prison, the letters of Heinrich Heine were reproduced with the swiftness of ephemera or like loaves of Cana.

The prisoners passed them about, so thrilled by so great a love that one of them begged Hofmann to order that I should no longer be separated from my beloved—my very life. The guard himself pleaded our cause and gained it: despite the protestations of Lievené Lieven, he conducted me to an empty room, yesterday still a private dining room, and returning with Lili, he shut us in together.

“Kiss your fill,” he said. “To-morrow you may be dead. If you are afraid of dying, make the most. . . .”

Lili, it seemed to me, was more afraid than I.

It was late at night and we were both asleep when Lievené Lieven forced the lock and came to join us. It was the first time I had seen him near at hand. He was so ill gotten up that when he talked the buttons on his shirt and waistcoat wobbled and when he sneezed two dropped off. On account of the fear which had made him join us, he felt authorized to take liberties which I would have borne better from Lili. He tried to kiss my forehead, took hold of my free hand and tried to read the lines in it. A corrosive having made his hands undecipherable in infancy, he could get no personal information on his life and confined himself to welding it to that of a being whose lines proclaimed him lucky. My lines were good. He then tried to become my dearest friend, for I had not the hand of a man who would lose a true friend. And, like all timid people with those who are less fearful, he tried to confide in me; told of his condemnation at Kiev and his ten hangings:

“It is a real Scheherazade story, Henry! Every Monday and Friday for a month, two notables would come and take me out to the field of death. The Russians are harder than the Germans. From the first day, Lili had obtained

grace from a Captain von der Galt, of 9 Litauer St., Berlin. (One ought to keep the addresses of those who save one's life; they ought to help one afterward to support it). Lili, hearing from von der Galt that she was to be hanged, stuck out her tongue at him. Von der Galt began to laugh. 'Go along!' he cried. 'You have given as much as a woman can give by hanging.' (Alluding to you know what). But I in vain held out to him my manacled hands. But fortunately the field of death was quite a distance from the town. My guides to the gallows were sometimes schoolmasters, sometimes small employers whom it was easy to draw into discussions, and whom the weakest argument left without a reply, so they brought me back again as a matter of conscience. I could see quickly enough who their god was—the Czar, Trotsky, or the workingman, electricity or their first-aid case, and how it was easiest to flatter them.

"The day of the schoolmaster Belanov, 333 Alexander Prospect, I proved to him that death cannot give birth to life, therefore to a good example or a better Russia and he brought me back. The day of the two cabinet makers, 11 Pochina Alley, I proved that one gallows too many is a table, a bed, and four chairs too few and they brought me back. Moreover, they were all much more interested in feeling and making me feel that my life was in their hands than they were in killing me. When they were well bred I flattered them and tried to disgust them a hundred per cent with me. 'Ah, little father,' I would say to them, 'I know that my toes and my ears belong to you and that my hands may become a goblet for your vodka.' Then they would be disgusted and bring me back. One day, they were pointing out a deaf-mute and laughing and I escaped just at the stake. The last mile I always screamed as if they were slaughtering me."

Thus in the morning I was awakened by a terrible racket, one hand in Lili's hands and the other pressed between the hands of Lievené Lieven. Protected by the noise of the typewriter, several prisoners had plotted. They had disarmed the guards and were now trying to get out through the cloak room. The auxiliary squad had driven them back, shooting into the air. But behind the barricade of the usher's platform there was only the poor fool of a Doctor Lipp, shooting real shot upon these hideous people whose misdeeds had been told him by the doctor.

"Ah, egoists!" he cried. "You had the Armenians massacred!" He reloaded his gun.

"Ah, you turbulent creatures! You had the Roumanians of Temesvar massacred!" He fired; then jumped up on the platform.

"Ah, you lazy creatures! You will not pay the French!" Then he fell forward and I saw nothing more.

At nine o'clock, an officer with pomade on his head came to take Lieven, who pretended to believe that I had saved his life, so that he might get my Paris address; he left us trying to think how to disgust his guard. By ten o'clock it was my turn. The news, according to my guard, was not good. They said Zelten was killed. The truth was, the ammunition shop had telephoned the police immediately when a student had bought a revolver. But a revolver is not the characteristic sign of the assassination of statesmen: it is the roll and bar of chocolate found in their pocket. During a revolution news from the baker's is much more precious than that of the gunsmith. Zelten was whole and safe. He read my name in the list of prisoners and it was he who called me up. He was lodged in the Royal Palace. To get there one had to cover a terrestrial journey comparable to the watery one I had followed with Elsa at the Ungerer Baths, by a series of passages with stained glass windows, the shell grotto, the monkey room, and the papier-mâché stairway. Then, after the four salons with the sixty Niebelungen panels painted by Schnorr von Carolsfeld, the apothecary's court, the Hercules room, the white room, I reached at last the gold salon, the throne room where I found Zelten all alone, the collar of his coat turned up, for he had not slept and was cold.

Where had the happy time flown, when I found him after the suite of caverns, quite naked out in the sun? He had propped up a photograph of his mother against the back of the throne. Two young girls dressed as black pages—the only thing among the six million Bavarians that he could dress up—were bringing telegrams for which the boy demanded signed receipts. The tights of these ladies added to the general resemblance to the Baths. Then the expressman brought in a registered package himself. Zelten was called to the telephone, but it was a mistake: they wanted the Café Stephanie. All these matters were a part of royalty and the concierge office. When the new king saw me he came forward and took my hands.

“The operation has been successful,” he said, “but the patient will die. I shall have to choose within a few hours one of the four subterranean passages from here. I absolutely refuse to see the Schnorr von Carolsfeld pictures again. The first passage will let me out in a hollow elm of the English gardens. They've had the devil of a time to keep it hollow, for Mr. Grane, that American journalist, is using the revolution to fill up with cement all the hollow trees which sound empty. The second passage is relatively modern. It opens in the Belt Line station at one of the locomotive cleaning pits. A special car is hitched to the locomotive. The third lets out at the Starnberg Lake. The fourth can't be used; it lets out on a field where the

hay was cut yesterday. What would the peasants think if they saw the head of the dictator emerge, drawn out by the heels by a guard? I think I'll take a fifth, which lets out on the Metro Vavin, in the middle of the Rotonda."

I told him he was looking well and asked if he had eaten anything. This question would perhaps have suited an appendix patient better than a tyrant; but he was as glad to find anyone to whom to confide his complications with royalty as the mistress of a house on her summer vacation who sees, down on the shore, a sister soul capable of understanding her complications with her maid.

"Dear John," he said, "you are in for the best picture of all, the abdication. Every abdication, even if it be only of the lowest calling, lends to the one who abdicates a dignity comparable to that of consecration. Just think of a schoolmaster who abdicates, or a baker! Would you like me to abdicate in your favor? That would go well in cafés. The misfortune is that I have the people with me and I am going to desert them. You need not believe that the opium fiends, the morphine fiends, the cocaine fiends are the only active agents of my insurrection. All the great nations, leaving out France perhaps, like to be governed and reigned over by those who do not share their cares. Ever since the god of poetry and romance has agitated sixty million men, as in Germany at the moment, they have given themselves body and soul to the gasoline merchants. As soon as a nation becomes wildly practical, like the Americans, they elect the most misty and ignorant of idealists ever known in the universe to lead their steps. With you wisdom is kept up by the body of functionaries. From the road mender to the President of the Republic, from the lowest to the highest salary, four million Frenchmen have been reared in a school of moderation and liberty, and the examiners and registrars of the voters are veritable priests of wisdom. Supplied with four million Brahmins, a country is safe. All the excesses are committed outside the official body, which in Germany is the most unintelligent and dominating. . . ."

They brought him in a batch of telegrams.

"Read them," he said to me. "They may entertain you a minute."

I read them:

"Paris, Rotonda. Best wishes to the new tyrant. Raise the crown that Madeleine and Claire may salute the royal brow."—"Calcutta, Tagore refuses honorary quæstormastership of the new Bavarian Senate."—"Moscow. We order Zelten to release Doctor Lipp with comrade. Case of refusal, will burn each hour an original drawing of Poussin which Zelten is supposed to love."—"Berlin. Governmental forces now two

kilometers from Munich. Only one town, Niuttenwald, city of lute-players, gone over to Zelten.”—“New York. Tailor Thomasini respectfully recalls small debt of his Excellency, Zelten.”

Doctor Krumper, senator of the opposition, was announced.

“Where did you put him?” asked Zelten.

“He is in the Grotto Court near the Perseus Well.”

“When I ring, bring him by way of the St. George room, the Hercules room, the mother-of-pearl room and the white room.”—“You can’t imagine, John, how I have exhausted myself over the plan of the palace. All the labyrinths that a king knows by the very instinct of royalty, I only got to know in the inside of this palace. None of the politicians want to be seen by the others and they all want to get to me. I am the hostess obliged to receive at once all the guests that have quarreled with each other.”

They announced Siegfried von Kleist.

“He has declared himself against me,” said Zelten. “He is humiliated, it seems, that the tragedy of absolute power should hold debate in so infantine a soul as mine. . . . I don’t want him to meet Mueller, who is in the Papal Chamber. . . . Show Ambassador Mueller in the third room of Charlotte by way of the gallery of the Little Saints. Take Dr. Krumper back to the Niebelungen Salon by way of the green room and spiral staircase.”

But visitors were multiplying—sinister sign! They announced M. von Salem, head of the Tyrolean party. Zelten had to consult his house plan and got angry.

“Throw him into the Treasury,” he said. “All these people come with a revolver in their fists. Let them all come in together—all except the Capuchin Stobben, whom you are to discharge into the garden by the Wappengang.—You, John, stay with me.”

Salem arrived first, for, being familiar with the palace, he found a sixteenth-century passage from the Treasury to the Barbarossa salon. Mueller, Krumper, and Kleist came together with the Capuchin, whom they must have shifted wrong at some turn; they all arrived walking on the tips of their toes for fear of slipping on the waxed floors, as guards and priests walk when they come to wake up a condemned prisoner.

Kleist wished to speak, but M. von Salem begged him to give him the first turn.

“Very well,” said Kleist. “Let M. de Salem speak in our name.”

“Not at all,” said von Salem, “I insist upon speaking first for myself. I wish to protest against having been kept waiting in the treasury room, which

is reserved for foreign ministers. Since the year 1341, the Salems have entered directly by the Wittelsbach Fountain. If I had to wait at all, it should have been in the garnet room. But I fear Count Zelten knows as little of the customs of the palace as he does of the avenues of the German heart.”

Zelten had gone to take the photograph of his mother off the cushions of the throne and put it back in his pocket.

“And then?” he said.

There was no other chair or seat in the room and one could not lean one’s elbows on the mantel, for it was eight feet high. I was dropping with fatigue. Kleist came forward.

“On the part of the Senate and the Chamber, of which I am the mandatory, I wish to ask Zelten how much longer he intends to keep up this joke.”

“Mandatory of what?” asked Zelten.

“Of a country which you have lost the right to call yours—Germany.”

“Gentlemen,” said Zelten, “in one hour I shall have left the palace. But it is not you who are driving me out, nor yet Germany: I persist in believing that all true Germans are on the side of peace, love of the arts, and fraternity. What is driving me out are these two intercepted telegrams for Berlin. The first comes from America and is addressed to Wirth. I will read it to you: ‘If Zelten holds Munich, we annul our petroleum contract.’ The second comes from London and is addressed to Stinnes: ‘If Zelten holds Munich, we annul our Volga contract and will push up the mark.’ On the other hand, I have intercepted no telegrams saying, ‘If Zelten is king German musicians refuse to compose and play.’ ‘If Zelten is president, German philosophers incapable of thinking and decorators will strike.’ ‘If Zelten is first consul, young German girls will deny their German youth and the German spring refuse to produce myrtles and narcissus.’ But I don’t insist. Let the Volga and the gasoline flow into the Perseus well and the Wittelsbach fountain. I have walked through absolute power as one walks through the ghosts in hell. I have exercised it only over myself. For four days I have worked like a slave with the two little qualities I knew to be mine, disinterestedness and candor, which suddenly became royal. . . . I am leaving without having slept here—without knowing what the sleep of royalty is. But I want to advise you, gentlemen, for your further affairs, when you choose a mandatory for Germany, choose a German. Mr. Kleist is *not* German.”

Kleist paled. The transfusion of blood had set in.

“M. de Kleist is a foreigner. An old soldier asked to speak to me yesterday. He had seen Kleist brought wounded into the hospital and heard

his moans. He did not moan in German. His identity tag, which was designedly lost, bore a cipher which corresponded to no German form. By means of what amnesia your friends Rathenau, Harden, and Scheidemann got into Germany it does not become me to tell you, nor the Yiddish cries they gave when they were little. Good-by, gentlemen.”

I wanted to run after Kleist, whom the others were leading away, but I must have had, besides my fatigue, the museum sickness, in this antique palace. Exhausted, I fell over on to Zelten. He caught me in his arms, looked for a place to stretch me out, and then hoisted me up on the throne.

“Rest a while, John dear,” he said.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN I woke up Zelten had disappeared. The doors were closed and there were no visible locks. Some radical socialist, some future competitor at the elections, had shut me up alone with a throne; as farseeing wives shut up their husbands unperceiving with some negress, that they may divorce them in their own good time. The telephone, the microphone, the reflector had all disappeared. The old gilded room had suppressed or reabsorbed its new significance, and there was under the portrait of Benedicta, wife of Louis the Severe, only a call plate of which I pressed both buttons, that of the Chamberlain of the door that I might get out, and that of the Chamberlainess of the Tercean, as I wanted to see one, once in a lifetime. But only one of the two pages came, her tights in her hand and hastily fastening the snappers of her red and green dress. The bath of tyranny and of good taste was ended. By obscure passages and back stairways, which ran alongside the rooms with their names of colors and fairies, where we could get along thanks to portholes; in the track of the flunkies, places which the tradition of chamberlains and lackeys had baptized too; the back hall of the Spider, the Court of Cats and the landing of the navy of Charles, we pierced through the palace in the parts not protected by mother-of-pearl and onyx and the furniture gilding of the Munich pre-Raphaelites, an unhonored lair. Through the portholes we occasionally caught glimpses, in the salon of the Great Casimir and the papal court, of groups of Bavarians searching for Zelten, whom the Wittelsbach family, the old Atalanta, were hurrying up or slowing up over the slippery parquet floors and across the mosaics. We met no one except the concierge, with his gold lace cap, a cap which he raised, knowing by experience that for several years those who went out by the servants' stairs, had a much better chance of being princes than those who entered by the stairway of honor.

I spent the day hunting for Kleist, who had not reappeared at Nymphenburg. Ida believed that Eva de Schwanhofer had taken him to her villa in Oberammergau. It seemed, moreover, impossible to go anywhere else, for all means of transportation were requisitioned either by the counter-revolutionists or for the service of the Passion Play. The next day at two o'clock I was set down in Oberammergau. The play was beginning and I had difficulty in escaping it. The archers of God were going back toward the ticket window of Calvary. My curiosity aided them not at all, for I had been here in 1905, for the general rehearsal which precedes the play by five years.

The Passion Play must be the only dramatic work which could stand such an interval.

Having arrived by the way of the mountain with some bands of Tyroleans (whom people in the canton hated because their walking sticks with iron points tore up the roads), I had the luck to be neighbor to the nuncio who had given the signal for applause at the punishment of Judas, and of a Mrs. Barfield from Birmingham, who was going to buy the ass ridden by Jesus on his entrance into Jerusalem, and take it back to Birmingham and then to cure it of its homesickness, poor Zionist, kill it with candies and real Scotch thistles. The conversation with the nuncio was unrewarding; he told me the biblical names of the heroes who raised the curtain, Gad, Achitophel, and Achan. It was less so with Mrs. Barfield, who had lived in the village three months, and knew Jesus, Veronica, and the apostles only by their peasant names. Thanks to her, I can state that Strossmeyer (Pontius Pilate) really did wash his hands in a bottle of water from the river Jordan, given by Mrs. Barfield; that Father Wolff pricked himself in carrying the crown of thorns and was bleeding; that Zwang held the thirty pieces of silver badly and would surely lose them; and I obtained for good my German translation of the Bible when the man whom she called Anton Lang having sighed upon the cross, gave up his last breath; the woman whom she called Maria Lang, his mother, really fell over with grief; Melchior Breetsamer, the disciple with the golden hair, upheld Paula Rendl, the girl who was to embark one day with the holy Marys, Bertha Veit and Liesl Ohlmüller; then suddenly in the midst of the cries and the tempests, when Meyer, simple Meyer, from the top of the heavens called his son Miller to his right hand and surrounded himself by the seraphim Zurck, Meyer, and Zwinck, and, with his right hand caressing his white beard, he made a slight sign of intelligence to the nuncio, he thundered; and Julius Freysing and Kurt Eberlein began a big racket with their hundred and thirty demons.

The holy tribe of Ammergau had not escaped intact from the war. The mobilized had to have their hair cut, for the first time in their lives, despite the protests of the Burgomaster; on their bare arms were their vaccination marks for typhoid, cholera, and tetanus, till it seemed as if the Amalekites had ravished the region. At the doors of the city, some jolly fellows armed with bows and arrows kept guard; for the neighboring miners of Peissenberg threatened to interrupt the performance of the spectacle by force, which was prejudicial to the price of provisions, and an American was trying, despite all prohibitions, to take a moving picture of the play from a window. As soon as the sun struck a window pane, all the bows were leveled at it. They

spoke the language of the nuncio, and I learned from them that the Schwanhofers lived outside the town, between the houses of Sadok and St. Peter. To get there I had to cross canals of running water on a fallen oak tree, put aside the hawthorns, and part all the plants that furnished the play with its crown, its cross, and its flowers. An eagle soared above a lamb, rejected for the pascal lamb. Spring and the mountain, overcome by so many visits, offered a profusion of things to finish the Passion Play and the struggle between good and evil for ever. There were waterfalls furnishing enough volts to electrocute Judas finally, lakes, deep enough to drown all hell, and, for the eternal joy of the seraphim and archangels, a tame chamois followed me.

Forestier was seated on the terrace and a young man near him was turning over the papers. He was resting his head on his hands, and exposed it to the rays of the sun, as one exposes some part of oneself to the X-ray. At every sound, every murmur of the cascade, he listened, with the change of expression of those who fancy their names called. His reader was giving him the last news of each nation, and he was listening religiously, as if he still hoped he might guess his own country by the number of workmen out of a job, by fires, and duels among statesmen; he was covering the map of Europe like a divining rod. So few of the countries seemed desirable.

“And Italy?” he asked.

“The brave Gaspari has concluded a treaty with the Bolsheviki. The Fascisti are marching on Rome. The crops are bad. D’Annunzio has hurt his head and a disease called *Carico* is spread through the coal mines.”

“And Hungary?”

“The officials of the ceded provinces who are living in trains have obtained a number of second-class carriages. That is the only good news. The crops are bad. An illness called *Charnin* is spreading along Lake Balaton.”

“And Russia?”

“They have discovered five thousand bodies under the snow in a fork of the hills, where the prospectors were hoping to find oil. Two Americans of the Red Cross brought back photographs of some little children who had eaten their own father.”

“And the Baltic countries?”

He seemed unable to ask about England, France, and America. I felt that he concealed some apprehension or rather some preference, and I was glad of it, for the only news from France this morning was ridiculous: two elephants belonging to a traveling circus had prevented a collision in the

Tulle station, for, lacking engines, they had harnessed them to an ill-placed switch. I decided to go forward, resolved to speak to-day, and to cure this sole mortal who was suffering in a town officially dedicated to suffering. At least I thought so. . . . But he rushed toward me, with the impulse of one who was to give news rather than receive it.

“My poor friend,” he said, “Genevieve is dying. They had to operate this morning. They have given up hope. Eva is with her. Come.”

Genevieve did not die easily. Her bed was somewhat short and she was annoyed by the mountain, which sloped perpendicularly in front of her. She preferred to meet death with bended knees and closed eyes. Not humiliated and yet repentant that she was a natural daughter, full of admiration for everything that represented law and order, she was trying to give a more regular end to her life than its beginning had been.

“Is that what is done?” she asked me when I wanted to give her three pillows instead of two, or read her a new book. The thought of a death conformable to established custom frightened her less. All the legitimate and law-abiding people who came and went about her bed—not rebellious, non-polygamous, with open and definite callings—softened her sufferings. The curé of Oberammergau came to see her; then the pastor, and finally the rabbi. She regretted having to choose a religion at a moment when three offered themselves so amiably, as one regrets a triple invitation for one evening. She decided finally to be buried according to the rite that would permit the presence and co-operation of the other two. At bottom, she would like to have been in good standing with the Mohammedan and Buddhistic religions, too. She asked me for information about Buddha quite as if he had been a civil service employee: if he were pitiless; if he were beautiful. She tormented herself over the sad and uncertain case of Forestier, so that one evening I was led to tell her who he was. She was very happy over it. Not that she would have felt any less sympathy for him if he had been born in some foreign town, but to be a Hungarian, Bulgarian, or Lithuanian did not seem to her in such perfect conformity with a regular life and the civil code, as to be French.

“Try to have him registered in Belleville,” she said. “Everything will be easy for him. The day of my marriage, the mayor of Belleville did not read out loud either my birth certificate or my age.”

It was agreed that Kleist should accompany us to France as soon as she was able to travel. She made him promise. Since Zelden’s revelation, I had

received no letter from the consul, no visit from Schmeck, and Eva was resigned.

“Dear Kleist,” said Genevieve, “it is not very lucky to see the very first Frenchwoman you have met die thus without reason. If you had reasoned like the Englishman who saw the red-headed woman in Boulogne—what a reputation you would have given us! . . . See, John. I was right. Everything which is not made of wood brings me bad luck. If they had only had a wooden operating table, and wooden pincers, and wooden surgical knives! But operations are like trips to Algeria. One imagines one is going to be able to choose one’s boat, one’s seat, and the week for departure, and one is thrown without warning into some subway of determinism. I never could be like other people; I always went back to France to bear my children and here I am dying in Germany. But speaking of Frenchwomen, Kleist, I assure you they are very strong and there are so many more widows than widowers in France.”

“Don’t keep on talking of death, Genevieve.”

“Why?”

“It is not done.”

Then she insisted no further.

In place of seeing all her life in a second, as other dying people do, she saw it minutely—impinging even on the life of her mother and the time when she did not yet exist. “I was there at my birth—I was at the election of Felix Faure—I was at the exposition in 1900,” she said as I came in; for her memory crystallized only around official dates. She hardly spoke at all of her art, but her hands moved, caressing or molding, and we felt her memory as a sculptor was completing and illustrating the rest. They were hands that had touched a great deal of the universe and of clay; hands a little worn, slender, that would fold into friends’ hands as into a case; they had little useless veins for the blood.

She did not have much fever; the illness took her in assaults that routed the doctors, swelling up her arms suddenly, drawing a strange band round her forehead. One might have supposed that new ways of killing were being tried out on her. One morning when she was remembering the King of Spain’s trip to Paris, she felt her legs turn suddenly cold and the cold mounting. But even that was too little for a creature destroyed by life, excesses, and thoughtlessness. Peritonitis declared itself, then double pneumonia, and I don’t know what else, and then illness used its most vulgar weapons to triumph over this poor child.

“You must not talk so much,” we repeated.

“But it is because I never thought so much before, my friends. What a queer tale life is! Perhaps a week from now, no one will ever again be able to say ‘I’ of me, of this body, of these eyes; and yet I do not renounce a single one of my tastes: I still prefer yellow to all other colors. I always feel that blue or red is plotting about me, trying to soften me or get the better of my weakness. Nothing doing! To my last moment I shall continue to detest stale cakes, crêpe-de-chine, and Aubusson carpets of the Empire period. Heavens! How disagreeable they are to the feet! As for animals and people, on the other hand, I have no prejudices. Not one. Heaven knows I never could even hate monkeys or animals with viscous tongues, like the ant-eating tamandua and rats. It would not bother me if a hundred came in my room right now. And even that poor Bouguereau, or that hypocrite Kessler, or Lantelme—and that big blond that I remember—still that’s another story _____”

The door opened. It was not the tamandua nor the rats nor a procession of human beings, deputy actresses, whose pretensions set her teeth on edge; it was not, alas! the Bernardo Rothschilds. It was the doctor with the morphine. He wanted to quiet her.

“I will be quiet. But that big blond—I have to come back to him in spite of everything. He was a brute who thought everybody else was a brute, and he only cared for people for that quality and would disappear the moment he doubted their brutality. What things I did to put off that day! With his eyes on me, I was brutal to my birds, my glassware, myself. As soon as I was alone I tried to make up again by kissing and caressing these poor objects and this poor woman. But that does not interest you, Kleist. I have some plans for you. Shall we pretend to be blind and paralytic? I have nothing ahead of me now. Only a little past. No one attains death without a dowry. I want to leave you that which may provide for your thirty-six years and two or three commissions. I want you to live in my house at Solignac. You will inherit it from me: from me, myself. In this paper I have set down two or three of my hobbies that I do not want to have perish, and I have no little nephews to whom they would naturally fall, as Heine said in his third letter. I want you to be in Paris for the Colonial Exposition in 1924. As for that of the applied arts, I scorn it. Applied arts are one of the great mistakes of the French. And every time you hear the word ‘premise’ I want you. . . .”

She spent that evening separating what should perish with her from what she might plant in the new past of Kleist. Then, when the official chromo of her life was finished, when the Allied troops had marched under the Arc de Triomphe, and when there remained in her only her weakness, her errors, her bad habits, she was silent; she moaned all one night, suddenly looked

like death, for the first time in her life she resembled her future, not her past fiancé, and so died.

It was midnight. All the French people were sleeping—including the million mothers whose sons had been taken from them by the war; including the four romantic pupils in the dormitories of the Legion of Honor grouped for supervision around the teacher who was snoring under her muslin bed canopy. The moon for so lovely a night had come to terms with the usual paraffine lamp. Hardly any future trumpeter was practicing in the luminous gardens on a silver trumpet. Everything was asleep between the Rhine, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pyrenees—including the new general councilors and the new champions at tennis, for it was the day after a Sunday given over to elections and sports; including Monet, Bergson, Foch——

In a proportion unfavorable to pajamas and favorable to cambric nightgowns the eight hundred thousand officials were all asleep—glory and sweetness of the State! The even temperature of night penetrated a million shutters hermetically sealed, and five or six open windows of the people most enamored of equality and inimical to air. An ill-adjusted clock struck faintly at times, trying to regain its equilibrium. To the customs officer and the poet who remained awake, out of respect for the Republic and the firmament, and received the homicidal blows of night standing, nature, the hypocrite, pretended to offer herself as a mortal but dedicated to this polite offer a minimum of effort, a broken fragment, a crack in the silo—the little bit which seems to satisfy customs officials and poets who brood at midnight on the idea of immortal Nature. Everything slept—including the actors and actresses still in their make-up in the last train from Bois-Colombes; including the three hundred thousand janitors, the living consciousness of the houses, who slept, though with sudden starts; including the Laing Canal for the locks were closed; including, in the great cemeteries bared to the moon, Pasteur, Debussy, and Rodin— Everything slept.

Except me. I was watching Forestier asleep in the carriage which was taking us back to the Limousin country. Before the first incline of the Central Massif the locomotive whistled. I had turned off the gas and drawn the curtains. I was keeping my friend in the dark until I could tell him his name and at the same time show him his department of the Haute-Vienne shining, for I had decided to tell him everything to-day. He slept like all Frenchmen. I heard him dreaming sometimes in his foreign language, and I bent over and answered him in mine, drawing up France over him as I might a coverlet. What remained of Siegfried in him was taking in long breaths of

this new mountain air. It was what remained of Kleist in him that kept those hard eyelids down over his eyes, which the death of Genevieve had softened. Then they called out the name of the first Limousin station and suddenly that department which I had left when I was two years old and which I believed I had forgotten received me again as its child. My father had spent all his youth here; all the proper names that they had spoken with love and respect at my home were in the almanacs, the annuals, the country papers here. And never did names hold for me more yearning or sense of adventure than those that were called out by the guards, and that I saw fastened to the sides of the stations, like precious packages left by me at the checking office, among the trees and the flocks whose race my heart knew through my young father. For, as if suddenly in the silence, at the stopping of the train, one were to call out the names of those one had loved and desired they called out Argenton, St. Sebastien, Agerable. From the south of Chateauroux on, all the little towns, whose fair days and holidays I knew only from my father, came out from their settled reserve by order of the civil governor for so fine a meeting and Eygurande, from its first Thursday in the month, Saint-Sebastien from the third Tuesday, La Soutterraïne, from the second Friday and the 28th of February of leap year came out to salute me at the station. Gargillesse, Crozant, not one of these towns but I knew the exact day and which season brought in the migration of heifers, turkeys, and chickens. At Sagnat I saw in the pond the largest quantity of water my father had ever seen, for he did not know the sea. At Razé, where my father saw M. Grèvy, there was a dark, mysterious station and for the first time in my mind a carriage of solitude was attached to the presidential train. All the bells of all the stations rang without stopping; in reading or pronouncing the names I had pressed an electric button that I did not know how to stop and it brought back from little boroughs and communes all the people connected with them, to my memory; at Monterolles, it was father Arouet de St. Sauveur, the atheist, who begot his children in January that they might be born in September, but whose wife always had belated and prolonged deliveries. At Bressines it was the road mender, father Benoche, who had saved a colonel in the Crimea, a general in Mexico, and whose life was ruined he said, because he still wanted to save a marshal. At Breuilh-au-fa, the place where they catch salmon with nets, it was M. Claretie, who had taken my father fishing the day when he was just one meter high, and had stretched him out beside the fish to measure them. There was Droux, where foxes who ate bayberries under the juniper frightened my father when he went back to school, and the dogs were baying the little great-grandnephews of those very foxes. At Ambezac, where the wolf had followed his horse, I saw leaning out, two red and green discs, a wolf with varicolored eyes.

I was entering the most legendary country for me, except that of Gulliver, yet where the men were of my size and a railway train passed. Everything which served to prove that Chateaubriand's itinerary in America was false, proved the youth of my father true. There was just room between Fursac and Blond for the race course of the Lecointes. I guessed the names of trees and plants unknown to me, buckwheat, wild cherry, juniper, and each one seemed sown or planted in the exact place assigned to it by my father's words. And though each village showed me a new grouping, it was no new country over which I scattered these names, so worn for me. Each one sowed its district with a distinct fauna and humanity. Le Breuil, where the Lacotes, newly come from Bourbonnais, quarreled with the Sillacs, who served chicken with the head on and with the liver, and where a tame lynx lived at my cousin Petit's. Rançon was the place where at the mayor's there was a stuffed lyre-bird and where the deputy to whom my father gave his first vote always pretended that he believed my father had voted for his adversary. For me, Rançon was the first synonym of beauty and injustice. There was Fromental, with its tortoise, where the new-rich family of Frommenthal bought up all the family mansions, and where my father saw a tight-rope walker fall from the tight-rope and kill himself—my first picture of death. Not one of these towns, sunny for him and moonlit for me, but the name connected itself thus with someone or the hopes or deceptions of life as I had imagined them for the first time when I was eight years old. Occasionally, some stations, like Larsac or Le Raynou had never been mentioned by him and in that zone the air and the soil lacked savor. But suddenly we arrived at St. Sulpice-Laurier, the junction, for the three university towns, where he used to sleep on a bench, on his journey to examinations; and where that very morning I saw a dozen collegians, waiting at the intersection of Bourges, Clermont and Poitiers, toward which each one of them would turn at dawn according to his prowess in mathematics or his weakness in Latin, and whom some preceptor prevented from sleeping on each other, because of his habit of preventing their copying each other.

I was struck, at the stops, more than by the noise of perpetual running waters and the odors of new essences, by the accent of my native land: that Limousin accent in the black night, that southern accent that my father fell back on in moments of surprise or emotion. I heard it again in the voices of the station masters and guards and the instructor, and I got the impression of being in a surprised, emotional province. The weight on my heart of ancestral air became heavier. I had that feeling of modesty in the presence of the elements and the people which one feels only in the country of one's

fathers; where neither the monuments nor the families seem to have been created specially for your visit, as in Chambord or the Luynes; and where the world is not so much a setting of one's own life as an unalterable and somewhat humiliating substructure for it, with its Romanesque churches and holy water that has not been changed since your baptism; where its oaks in your lifetime have increased by thirty circles amounting to two millimeters and the dynasty of Chausson-Bouillat.

The power of living ten centuries which one feels in Touraine, between Cléry and Montbazou, was here, hardly more than the hope of a robust old age; the guarantee of immortality given by Provence was no more, between Montagnac and Ambazac than the surety of a beautiful death. By degrees, as I was approaching the town of my birth, to take rank as a simple pawn in the great game played between death and the nine chief families my little interval of eternity and liberty seemed to shrink more and more. How clear my dignity as a man seemed to me to-day, halfway to Magnac-Laval, where the unknown line of my little cousins slept, and halfway to Dorat, where the sisters-in-law of my sisters-in-law lived.

For the first time in my life I had reached the point where the printed page of my life coincided with the transparent tracing above it and every expected name appeared infallibly— Hello! there is Droux; Pierre-Buffière cannot be far—to be near that person who had no longer either his father's youth or his own— What! Folles and Bersac have disappeared? No, there they are!—giving me, more even than the sign of a successful experiment, my only true estimate—just there is Bellac!—of our human state.

Suddenly the train jerked, giving the slight jolt which transmits to the passenger's body the engineer's surprise at the sight of a sheep on the track or the dead bicyclist at a grade crossing. At our left the sun was rising and a horizontal ray pierced the compartment. At the stations one heard the beginning or the end of the cock's crow or, when the stop was clever, its entire chant. From Forestier's overcoat—from those garments which an hour later would seem a stranger's leavings—a letter glided out. It was the last letter of Kleist to the Prince of Saxe-Altdorf.

“My friend,” it said, “good-by. It is not because you offended me by preferring Hoffman to Tieck. It is not because I doubt the story of your journey to Sicily and that rose tree whose roots wrap the heart of Platen. It is not because I am angry with your nephew, Ernest, for having reproached France with its clarity of thought and its unpoetic army. Nor yet do I think bitterly of those daily, terrible disputes. It is not that I am running away from one who believes life created from order rather than chaos; from one who esteems Sanscrit more useful to historians than Greek, and effort instead of

intuition the sole proof of existence. It is only because I am no longer a German. . . .

“It is six o’clock in the morning and I am writing from Oberammergau, at the Schwanhofer window, toward which the echo sends back one’s words six times and one’s thoughts, twelve times. I see all the animals coming out of the night, big and pure; the oxen that slept standing take up the life of oxen by merely opening their eyes, covered with dew like plants; the sleek cats watch the smooth shrewmice. On the other hand, I see the miner Sadock wash his face, dirtied by sleep, stretch his arms heavy with rest, and recall his wits, detached by dreams, to read his Munich *Gazette*. The Mueller bank has failed. The tenor Knoté is better. Beer has gone down two pfennigs. These three bits of news soften the passage from the Oberammergau of dreamland to the Oberammergau of reality. Life can be taken up again. The Passion continues. . . .

“So I am going to disappear. This evening at six o’clock my train will have passed the frontier and Siegfried Kleist will have lived. I return you the two names intact—in the same way that, as a pupil, I had to return to the treasurer of the school my Latin and Greek books with no new stains on them. All my papers, permits to go about during the riots, residence permits during the revolutions, medals of identity for the rationing of indigenous provisions, free entrance card to the art galleries and all the Germanic museums, special rebates for gas and electricity—I have cleared my purse of them all at once. Hereafter, I shall pay double to see Cranach and Dürer, triple to get warm in Munich, quadruple to buy Schiller’s works—I have lost Germany. The Rhine, the Danube, the Elbe, and the Oder, all the rivers which I learned by heart so recently in order, like a child—I have lost them. Some of them I had not time to see, while they were still the rivers to which I owed my being. Sixty million mortals and all their ancestors fled from me the other day, and I was left alone; as a fox slipping into an assembly of birds stands alone as soon as the birds take flight. The big eagle of the Empire has flown. Here I stand abandoned by the birds, Wagner, Nietzsche, Goethe. Zelten took from me my second past, whose memory may become as bitter to me as the nothingness of the first.

“But I feel that he told me the truth. I feel that I was a foreign element in Germany; to-day I account thus for all my discomfort, all the pain provoked in me by her, and which should perhaps have pointed out to me my own people: that difficulty I always had in rolling the verb to the end of the sentence; my mania for never believing the newspapers; my desire not to have my hair shaved and to exact a proof for all affirmations; and a precise statute for the relation of states to the Empire and the senses to the heart. Do

you remember I reproached your dynasty with not having regulated the question of the property of the clergy in Saxony since 1113? You should have guessed that day that I was no German. Since the other day, I realize still better the sacred delirium of your country, in whose dance I joined ceremonially. I realize its terrible resonance when I used to read you little well-composed discourses; I realize its overwhelming determinism which I had thought a political phenomenon fleeting as a trip on the Rhine or on the sea; in short, I believed all these things to be a consequence of the war; whereas its sole cause will appear in Germany again like muscles after flaying. Poor great nation, which is now only visible flesh, lungs, and digestion, without any smooth skin! All I ask to-day is that they give me back a country that at least I can caress.

“I have notified the authorities. There will be no scandal. They are going to find me drowned in the Starnberg. Mueller and Salem saw me sink before their eyes. They stretched their hands out to me for a last time, with a strength indeed which would have saved twenty drowned men. Krumper watched me leaving with that air at once disdainful and jealous of a soldier who sees his wounded comrade leaving the front. All the soundings and searchings in the lake availed nothing. As soon as I reappear in the Adriatic or the Lake of Annecy or the Balaton you will be notified by Eva. Adieu—two real birds have just flown up near me on the terrace—the landrail and the Bavarian pheasant have left me.”

Everything was awake in France now. The sun shone on the country of clear ideas. A cavalry man of the unpoetical army had captured a fox cub, and was showing it across the rails to the traveling relatives, who did not hesitate to rouse the children in their cots for so fine a sight. The reddish side cars, inherited from the American army, ran along the roads like parasites. Everyone was awake, at Valençay, at Buzançais, and in the country of cheeses, Roquefort and Levroux, they were already eating them quite green as they drank their white wine. Everyone was opening his eyes, including the six hundred thousand candidates for the academic palms and the Medal of Epidemics; including the archers of the Oise, stretching their mahogany bows before their wives in curl papers and without lovers; including the indifferent ones on the Bridge of Yonne, already leaning over the water with their lines drawing in from the golden waters roaches like perch; including Monet, Bergson, and Foch.

It is the hour when the painters and huntsmen return from the grounds to Lepinat's inn reeking of blood and color. They are waxing with varnish the

shoes of Robinson's horses. At Louang-Prabang, at Cayenne and Brazzaville, the young and old officials were telling each other that it must be extraordinarily fine weather to-day at Bayeux, Perigord or at Gap. Already those French people who believe most in God were leaving the cathedrals after the second mass, so happy at the ending of the sermon, and the magpies were attacking the screech owls who ventured forth on this beautiful Sunday. It was the first Sunday of the month and all accepted with gratitude this day of profound peace in the midst of seven days of problematical peace. To-day nothing menaces homes or families and it is unnecessary, merely for practice, that the firemen gather around their engine and the Durand girls around their mother. Memories of battles arise in visitors.

Everyone is awake, including those whom one expected the least, Pasteur, Renan, Debussy. And the sluices beat their waters on the canoes of the boatman at Nogent, who baptizes and rebaptizes his boats with the names of our most faithful allies. The names never have time to dry. The alarm clocks that my father placed for me in every station are silent, useless. No one is asleep now in France.

Except Forestier, near me. But the time has come. Not a valley, not a hill for an hour past which he would not have rejoiced to caress. I am going to strike him on the shoulder with my hand gloved, like that of the ticket collector, and while he is looking for his ticket I will hand him his ticket for thirty years, his photograph as a child with the name of the photographer printed on it, and, although only in ink, his own name.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *My Friend from Limousin* by Jean-Hippolyte Giraudoux]