

## Karl August Varnhagen von Ense

# Fascination and Love and other Short Prose

Translated into American English by Eugene Dobson  
Introduction by Terry H. Pickett

(Durch Terry H. Pickett erhielten wir Auszüge eines ungedruckten Manuskripts zur online-Publikation mit Übersetzungen kurzer Prosa und einer Novelle von Karl August Varnhagen von Ense ins amerikanische Englisch aus dem Nachlass des US-Gelehrten und Thomas-Mann-Forschers Eugene Dobson.)

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## EUGENE DOBSON (1936-2003)

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# VARNHAGEN GESELLSCHAFT

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## INTRODUCTION TO DOBSON'S TRANSLATION OF VARNHAGEN

Back in the early 1970s, about the time I published "Varnhagen's Mistaken Identity" in **German Life & Letters**, I convinced my colleague Gene Dobson to join me in translating a volume of Varnhagen's miscellaneous literary works. Our objective was to introduce Varnhagen and his circle to English-speaking readers.

Gene was a proven and effective translator, having done several volumes for the University of Alabama Press. He embarked upon the project with an initial enthusiasm that waned as he trudged through Varnhagen's oeuvres. In the end, he handed me a copy of his translations to date and confessed that he was simply stretched too thin to do the project further justice. He must, he said, set it aside, at least until he was finishing serving as head of the department.

Gene's exit signaled the end of any hope that I might present the English reader with a substantial sampling of Varnhagen's work. I knew of no other person with such translating skills who might willingly join me. Inquiries to other colleagues yielded no takers. I had no choice but to return to my solitary fascination with that singular person and his oeuvres.

One thing led, as it needs must, to another, and neither I nor Gene thought further about a project he so willingly joined and so soon gave up. It was some twenty-two years after my dear friend's early death that I came upon the manuscript again. I was (and am) busy ordering what papers and files I have left after turning much over to the Vanderbilt University Archives. Pulling out an aging manilla folder I saw that it was Gene's translation!

My first thought was to write my friend, Nikolaus Gatter, since he is clearly the most knowledgeable and resourceful scholar still active in exploring the period and preserving its documents. I thus consign Gene's translation to Dr. Gatter.

-Terry H. Pickett

## Translator's Preface

There was no more agreement among Varnhagen's contemporaries about the quality of his writing than there was with his political opinions, but the Jungdeutschland writer, Gustav Kühne, said that his style possessed an "...Ionic elegance and [...] spotless neatness... This style is essentially diplomatic. Varnhagen reports and expands, but he never contradicts. Where he might bring disgust and enmity to bear, he simply ignores."<sup>1</sup> This Olympian attitude is consistently present in his fiction, political, and critical writings, but it is not offensive. His style reflects his constantly curious, probing way, his perceptive discernment of character, and his effort always to be intellectually honest. It is representative of the liberal mind. In the story, Fascination and Love, he is already employing the psychonanalytical techniques of realism in his dogged search for the true motivation for Eugenia's actions. He treats the contrast between appearance and reality not with the Romantic view that it is exciting for its own sake but more like a doctor attempting to diagnose a particularly elusive illness. In this way, the motive of the dark and bright sisters so prevalent in the German Märchen-world takes on a new meaning. Theresa is good because she is honest and open and intelligent. Eugenia is no longer of any interest, once she has been analyzed and her mysterious charm has been rather superficially explained.

It seems worthwhile to quote a paragraph from Klaus F. Gille's little anthology of Varnhagen's writings concerning the Conversations at Teatime<sup>2</sup>: "Also the relations with Caroline von Fouqué took place during Varnhagen's

student years. Use of the formal structure of the conversation betrays not only Varnhagen's admiration for Friedrich Schlegel. 'The conversation seemed to me the most proper form for those critical words that I had to say, and I believe it will be found by others to be <sup>to</sup> a degree nonpartisan,<sup>3</sup> since the Baroness Fouqué herself was satisfied with it.'<sup>4</sup> Varnhagen was full of fascination for her beauty and domineering personality. 'She herself was much more than her writings.'<sup>5</sup> Ferdinand's sharp judgement of the reflective character of her work she confirmed in 1813 in a tortured self analysis. The reason for her artistic dependence -- which the veiled text of the Conversation at Teatime does not express -- was, according to Varnhagen, the uncritical imitation of her husband's certainly weaker talent."<sup>6</sup>

In Varnhagen's aphorisms (if that is what they are) as well as the two works already mentioned, effort has been made to retain the respective styles. The edition of 1815 of Fascination and Love was used, but the edition of 1879 (Cotta) was also consulted. The Conversation at Teatime first appeared in the Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände, July 20, 1811, pp. 689-90. This was the text used. The aphorisms also appeared in the Morgenblatt.

— Eugene Dobson

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Kühne: Varnhagen von Ense. In Zeitung für die elegante Welt. July 24, 1837, No. 142, p. 565f.

<sup>2</sup> Literaturkritiken: Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, edited by Klaus F. Gille, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen: 1977.

<sup>3</sup> To Cotta, July 1, 1811, unpublished (Cotta-Archiv, Marbach).

<sup>4</sup> Biografische Porträts (LV), p. 119; cf. Denkwürdigkeiten II, p. 28ff.

<sup>5</sup> Biografische Porträts (LV), p. 146ff.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 122ff.

### Fascination and Love

Among the souvenirs left behind by an Austrian officer who died after the Peace of Vienna from wounds received at Aspern, there was a notebook kept by the officer, who intended it as a legacy for his friends. The following pages represent a fragment of the book, containing charming pictures and this story, which will not leave the reader unmoved. The officer speaks in his own words, and thus begins the last chapter of his life.

The delicate disposition of the heart never revealed itself to me in a more tender manner than in the beginning of a pleasant relationship that I had with an actress, and its brief course I should like to describe here in faithful detail.

The strong passion of which I spoke earlier had in its passing depleted all my powers and desires through a burning struggle of life and death and had left me in a strange state of calm that seemed to make any new love interest impossible. Thus I passed several years without finding myself unhappy in the indifference with which I viewed my future. My heart on its proud journey had foundered -- the happy shores forever distant from me. My only concern was to reach the old harbor again. The little garrison in Upper Austria was quite suited to my mood. My stay there -- partly in the town and partly in the country -- offered me a quiet distraction, and I saw now and again some of the local noblemen, who indeed occupied me outwardly, but within left upon me not the vaguest impression -- nor even did their wives and daughters. A closer

relationship with my comrades, a closer connection with my superiors, along with some interests of the heart to which I devoted myself, filled up sufficiently the time that my profession left me free and restored little by little with the charm of the everyday that loss which had inevitably come about, resulting from the absence of that so powerful and familiar fascination of my soul. The days passed unnoticed as one hour faded into the next, and 157 I remained quite pleased with myself in the impoverished succession of inauspicious events. If anyone had ever told me in an earlier time that I would have been able to lead such an existence without feeling deeply discontent, I should have thought it impossible and laughed at the danger of dying away in this manner. In the same way I reacted negatively when my friends, for the sake of a little levity, maintained that love would make yet more claims upon me -- a view that I refused at the time to acknowledge. Nothing seemed more ridiculous to me than that I should again fall in love. This, of course, did not happen in the literal sense of that phrase, for the passion of which I earlier had been capable had disappeared to the last trace; however I would not have been able to believe that feelings which are similar to those could have been able to awaken in me such a powerful response and could have caused in me such great displeasure and sorrow, as the following will show.

The time for Carneval had come, and Vienna with her colorful and impetuous scenes began to excite our imaginations in a lively manner. The radiant circles of merry social life, the happy tumult and the noisy sounds of the festival dances, the comforts and luxuries that abound in this wealthy city with its enormous resources -- all this drifted out to us every evening on magic radiants through the dreary snowdrifts and icy streets in tempting

158 images to our parties held at the lonely inn on the market square of our little town and in vain assailed the quiet evenings and the all too early twilights of our tedious days. One evening several of the group decided to go into Vienna, and one of my friends who was seriously in love and full of thoughts of marriage spoke to me of accompanying him, to which I finally agreed, but my fleeting desire for the pleasure toward which we journeyed had disappeared again immediately after its first appearance. The rising sun found us already mounted and on our way against the cutting east wind blowing across the frozen snow to Vienna, which we reached safe and sound.

But one cannot force a happy mood. I avoided the frequent invitations of numerous acquaintances and lived much to myself. When my friend, occupied with his own situation and thinking of his greatest happiness, left me alone in the evening, I chose usually among all the entertainments to go to the theater, which at the time in Vienna was not bad. The theater, when one visits it daily, appears in quite a different light than if one only goes occasionally for an idyl hour out of ill humor or for distraction. The most numerous details of production become clear bit by bit. One comes to recognize the hidden mechanisms that produce a pleasureable impression. Reason learns to discern precisely and clearly the part that careful planning, awareness, mood, practice, habit, and coincidence play in a successful performance. Along with the whole, the individual parts become more clearly defined, and while the objects of comparison follow one on another in rapid sequence, there develops imperceptively a very sharp sense of judgment, the most precise view of the whole, and the most objective appreciation of detail. In a word, there are lovers and confidants of the theater, such as the French, who to their great credit attend in large

numbers, and such as those mentioned by Goethe as being the firm support of Serlo. And thus it happened to me also, as I learned to value the pleasure with which the faithful friends of the theater view even the most tasteless and repetitious performances and was amazed at the numerous insights and elucidations which each new evening brought forth. Without really being aware of it, I had come to take part in everything that had to do with the theater, kept up diligently with the reviews in the public press and sometimes wrote commentary myself. Now since my new ardor in its restlessness sought every opportunity to exercise the ability that I had achieved, it happened that I came into a closer relationship with the best actors and actresses. I was lured by them into their sacred shrines and during performance found myself as often on stage and in dressing rooms as among the audience.

At that time there were two women who shared the general favor of the public. Both were fair of form, pleasant in their demeanor, and of outstanding talent in performance, yet in each of these parts they were decidedly different from each other. The one, Theresa, radiant in her intelligence, fine education, and reason, was a free spirit and marvelously well read, so that she lived her bright youthful days in joyful cordiality, open and unpretentious. The other, Eugenia, sought rather after quiet seclusion. Her actions reflected a willful, tenacious character. Her affability could not conceal a certain seriousness that preferred an admiring respect to the most pleasant agreeableness. Of reason she possessed little, yet in every tone that she uttered there sounded a depth of feeling which lent to all her other characteristics such a virtuous grace that even the less pleasing sides of her character became dangerous to the hearts of men -- a grace that through the most extraordinry charm of

physical perfection became irresistible. While the former might be reproached  
161 for too great freedom, one might censure the latter for too much restraint,  
which made acquaintance, and certainly intimacy, with her rather awkward.

Even at the time when I met the two, this difference was already for the most part clear from their appearances on stage, for it seemed to me that one could justifiably see how each played herself, so that it might be just as possible to believe that their roles determined their personalities as vice versa.

This I had often pondered, and it appeared to me that the problem of representing a character whom one possesses in the traits of one's own soul could be solved more artfully than by simply acting out what one already is, for this is following nature rather than art -- that is, following the general character of a real existence rather than the higher one of a noble being. Thus I lamented that these two women actually did not understand what was to their advantage, and I resolved, as with many other matters that concerned their art, to find occasion to discuss it with them.

With Theresa I had a lively discussion in which she here approved and there disapproved of what I maintained. She employed her reason only to confuse me, whereupon with a jesting indifference she let the matter drop. I was then eager to see how I might fare with Eugenia, whether she might also slip through my fingers, and for this reason I was delighted with the coincidence that occurred late on the same evening after Theresa had left, when Eugenia stepped into my box -- something she had never before done -- and sat down in the same seat that the other had left, right next to me. Eugenia answered well and easily to all kinds of flattering remarks about her past performances. What one can know from mere feelings she seemed to know quite well. Yet when

it came to knowledge acquired, her discourse became faulty, and even concerning the most essential matters about which she should have been able to instruct me, she showed the most severe inadequacies. She wished to hear nothing whatsoever of my suggestion that instead of the weak, sad heroine she should sometimes play the bold, evil one. I found myself unexpectedly involved in joking with her, and since not logical reasoning but mood and jest held sway, I reversed my position out of spite, as it had reached a rather desperate point and besides might to some extent be as true in reverse, and said, "For this reason you should play the evil roles. One plays best what one actually is. Why force a talent into a role foreign to it? Even if you succeed as well as you do in your present roles and give us Joan of Arc so charmingly, I should still above all else prefer to see you as Queen Isabeau."

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What she next answered I did not hear. It is even remarkable that I did not leave my own speech unfinished, for I had just begun to look into the face of the lovely woman and felt the fire of her charm flash through my veins. Each of her movements -- the rising, sinking, and changing of her glance; the trembling of her hair as it fell down the sides of her forehead in beautiful locks and tossed about with each movement of her lovely head; the magical opening of her lips; the rising and subsiding of her heightened impulses -- all this captivated my attention to the extent that in these movements I seemed to be seeing for the first time the amazing structure of the human body. My stare, lost in curiosity, must have been a joyfully astonished smile, for her lovely face suddenly assumed a brightness as our eyes met, and still I cannot think without delight of the softly glowing misty appearance of her face, which in youthful freshness was so warmly and vividly suspended before me.

164 I know not how long this dreamy condition may have lasted. It is enough to say that in spite of my passion, which yearned in seeing and being seen to harden into an eternal image, this trance faded in rapid waves, and I found myself full of sharp reproaches: my charges against her were atrocious, and I threatened myself with the punishment that such ugly animosity deserved.

"How is it that you know me?" she cried. "Where have you heard my soul speak that you can so hastily find its place on the stage like God in heaven?" Then she added, "But you are probably right. You are about to have your observation that I am evil confirmed, because I intend to hold it against you!"

I reminded her that my suggestion was merely that she play the role of an evil woman and that I would be quite satisfied if she would draw the line there, but my little joke was to no avail. She refused to let herself be convinced that it had all been meant in jest, and she indicated to me with spirited boldness that she was quite sensitive about our exchange. All imaginable refinement of phrase and the most impressive flattery that I could muster to mollify her had only very limited effect, and I remained discomfitted from a mood that I never intended to invoke and that I wished all the more had never taken hold, [since in the meantime my petulant attitude had completely disappeared], and in its place there was a turning towards desire and melancholy.

165 Half in disputation and half in courteous speeches, we suddenly saw that the end of the play had come upon us. The curtain fell, and the increasing noise of the crowd as it pressed into the exits awakened us from our spirited struggle and reminded us that it was time to depart. Eugenia stood up, threw a

black cloak round her shoulders, and with downcast eyes wished me a good night. Encouraged by her unexpected friendliness, however, I offered her my arm very politely and, contrary to my expectations, became her escort. In spite of the fact that both of us knew the house very well, we found ourselves at an exit that was not right for our direction. Since it was impossible to reverse our course, we threw ourselves into the confusion of carriages that flew past each other hastily with the shouting of coachmen and the snorting of horses. We found ourselves in apparent danger. The blinding lights disconcerted us as we searched for a way out, and only with the greatest difficulty was I able to lead Eugenia a bit further. She did not wish to wait a single moment but pressed on without hesitation toward her nearby residence. We had almost made our way to the opposite row of houses, when a coach suddenly turned in and with its rattling frightened us back into the mob. She laughed and started to make a second attempt, but it was not possible. Wheels flew past right next to us, as horses were suddenly looking over our shoulders, and since I was now a bit anxious myself, guided by heaven knows what demon, I seized the nearest carriage door, opened it, lifted Eugenia inside, and the coachman brought us immediately to her front door, where she thanked me for my aid by expressing great indebtedness and then disappeared from my sight. The coachman awakened me from the dreamy trance in which I stood rooted to the spot before her door by reminding me how he expected to be rewarded for his willingness to help us, and with pleasure I gave him a considerable tip, which he received gratefully, and then urged his horses on to find perhaps those people he had left stranded. I know not why it did not surprise me that he could find her house unaided. Only later did this occur to me, whereupon he passed again

quickly from my mind.

I reached my rooms quite disturbed and sullen, reprimanding myself most sharply for allowing my wretched mood to ruin just in its beginnings this most pleasant acquaintanceship through useless irritating provocations. Of course, I had no idea how important that acquaintanceship would seem to me, but now I became all the more disturbed that -- willing to go to any lengths 167 to draw Eugenia to me -- I should now have to continue for a long time the pitiable effort to erase the ugly impression that my conduct had made. A vision of her hovered constantly in indescribable charm before my eyes, and while I took her part and tormented myself with all the bitterness of a wounded self-love, I sought to deceive myself about the feelings that became ever clearer within me. I believed that I was obliged to make good an offence, and in my thoughts I went so far beyond the bounds of justice that I imagined owing her the most exaggerated and extravagant compensation.

In anyone besides myself I would not have hesitated for a moment after this mood became apparent to me to view it as the state of being in love, and yet even now I cannot bring myself to give my feelings of that time the name of love. It was the strangest mixture with all the single properties of love being present, and only the essence itself failing to appear -- the warmest fascination, the tenderest fervor, the certainty of contented calm, which was at the base of my desire for her presence. All the desperate yearning of a wounded heart moved and struggled within me, and yet my heart was not wounded. My old devastated heart was still as before. It was merely surrounded now by the glowing rays that this heavenly charm spread about. Because at that time 168 I was not completely honest and tried to deceive myself, it happened that I did

not exactly know my heart of hearts and was generally fearful of a new love. If I had but grasped the finer shadings of the endless multitude of feelings that are conceived under this name, I should have been able to spare myself much sorrow!

The dissension that came between us did not disappear for a long time. I found myself even more interested in the theater than before, and Eugenia also appeared regularly, yet all intercourse, all efforts long remained in vain. Although I succeeded finally in gaining some measure of warmth from her, the bitter cup of discontent often returned, which not I alone was forced to drink when she remembered the fateful insult, and called it "that teasing." But she would also not suffer this bitter memory to take root in me, for as soon as she perceived it, she took me into her innermost confidence, spoke softly to me, asked me for advice, made trivial requests of me, and treated me in all respects like a well meaning friend in whom she was quite confident. I cannot express how happily for me several evenings were passed in this way. Everything that had happened before this hour seemed insignificant to me. For the entire day I needed no other thought than the prospect of the evening. That this happy feeling was not concealed but rather was apparent to others I experienced all too clearly in some playful questions from the bright Theresa, for whom my love became the object of the most rollicking conversation. I took part boldly, attempting to prove that only she, and never Eugenia, could be the object of my love.

After some time when I complained to Eugenia for not having appeared one evening and depriving me of the pleasure of seeing her, she said that I might visit her and that this would be all the better since on account of inclement

weather she should often have to remain at home. I was overjoyed by this invitation, thanked her profusely, and repeatedly kissed her hand. Yet on the following evening when I had awaited her long enough, I stood round in restless hesitation as to whether I ought to take advantage of her willing response with a visit. For, I said to myself, when the evening's excitement in my blood and the credulity of my imagination help so to deceive me under the lights of the stage, why should I risk losing this lovely vision in relaxed domesticity? How often had the fabled Mariana and Philina pulled me away to the daughter of Thalia with the sweet promise of doubling my delight 170 by allowing me to see in living form what I had until then only read about in restless pleasure! And what did I find? I could still be thankful that my excited thoughts had not yet passed through my lips and that I could still withdraw discretely without embarrassment or derision. Such things I pointed out to myself in order to strengthen myself in the idea that it was better not to go there.

But in this secret conversation I was suddenly disturbed by a door that was thrown open in front of me, so that I stood there all at once in the bright light. In order to pursue my thoughts, I had left the theater, walked here and there through several streets, and found myself now to my surprise before Eugenia's house, where I had already rung the bell without having changed the direction of my thoughts! I chuckled about the arrogance of reason, was very pleased about the mad turn of events, and walked cheerfully up the steps. The maid opened the door. I saw before me two cherubim at play. The little girl smiled with bold eyes, while the boy had already laid his hand on my sword. My heart was suddenly calmed by the beautiful children. The

171 second door was opened, and I could hear the favorable response before the maid could repeat it to me. I entered Eugenia's room not without some secret uneasiness.

She was sitting calmly sewing at a small table. She greeted me graciously and asked me to sit opposite her. Her presence was reassuring. Everything expressed a peaceful order. The room was simple but decorated with a pleasant fullness. There was no glittering tinsel, no paraphernalia of the stage. She had before her what always can please a charming woman. A small chest with assorted jewels stood open on the table. The most beautiful rings adorned her hands. The finest lace lay spread over the sofa. A tasteful tea service was brought in. An abundance of exotic flowers decorated the windows. English engravings hung on the wall, and throughout the room there was the most tasteful furniture, including a cabinet of books in splendid bindings. In her dress there was something of her elegant modesty. Everything suited her well and exactly as it should. The shape of her beautiful body was at once visible and concealed -- a thrilling sight! After only a few words, our being together seemed an old habit. She was thoroughly gracious, indeed so obliging in the familiarity of her speech that I felt quite like a friend of many years and could not remember ever having experienced such a satisfying enjoyment, such domestic peace. The children came in, and through their playful, snuggling familiarity, our conversation achieved the liveliest movement filled with welcome disturbances. The deepest seriousness vied with childish gaiety, and Eugenia and I found ourselves no worse than the children, who were extraordinarily happy. In the meanwhile I had chosen my words in such a way that, although I thought to have expressed myself clearly, an

audacious impertinence seemed to be implied. It annoyed me extremely to have employed such phrasing, which would never have passed through my lips, had there been malice in my heart. But in the most charming way Eugenia helped me out of my embarrassment by answering in the best of humor my question, which alluded to the father of the lovely children, and continued in the most natural openness to answer my further questions. She appeared not to want to have any secret from me, and on this evening I heard a large portion of her life history, the telling of which on her lips took on a magic charm and displayed a power of truth which could only come from nature, but, if it should be art, is of the highest and strangest form.

I learned that from childhood upwards she had been trained for the stage and on the stage and had long been tossed about by the winds of chance, even before she had reached full development. Then however her beauty blossomed, and to her own astonishment her physical appearance more and more reflected lustre and charm, so that she was hardly able to collect herself because of all the attention and admiration directed upon her. And as now from this time onward the pitiful condition of her parents changed quite completely, she suddenly felt quite perplexed in the unaccustomed security and abundance. In this manner a year passed as the happiest time of her life, when her every wish was fulfilled, when all the flattery and praise brought only inner satisfaction and never conceit, rather her character developed in a kindly way. With the most innocent and enchanting words she described this happy youth and seemed not to have lost it, as she lamented the passing of it with such gentle melancholy. A suddenly sprung up passion for an actor brought her first grief. She languished painfully from the separation when her anxious father forced him

to go. But youth's tears dry quickly, and after some time she was attracted to a count, who, as it turned out, was passionate not for her love but her fortune and did not rest until he had gained it through marriage. Their 174 happiness lasted two years in secret, until the father of her husband discovered the truth, broke out in the most fearful rage, and through devious means had the marriage annulled. He would allow the son his freedom only on the condition that the young man would never again concern himself with his former wife and children but would turn this matter over to the father. When her former spouse proved so weak, Eugenia would have agreed to all the demands, but her father, who was a resolute man, brought suit against the count, and when he lost the accursed case, died as a result. After this she came again to live under the lights of the stage, where she did not require the proffered support and where each day she could forget more and more her unhappy fate through the joy that she found in her children. She now kissed the little girl, who had fallen asleep in her lap, gave me a look of tender submission, and smiled warmly through the tears that had come into her eyes.

Not easily could a story have touched me as deeply as this one. My eyes could not hide my emotion. The beautiful innocence, the very human truth, and the serenity with which she so charmingly recounted this story -- a serenity I might add that was not so deeply disturbed by these tribulations -- all this innocence, truth, and serenity created irresistible magic powers to which any 175 compassionate heart would be forced to submit. I grew inexpressibly fond of her. I had never experienced such charm. In the hottest fervor of my previous passion, I should have prized Eugenia's grace, had I known her then, high above that presented to me at the time, yet upon my heart there was no effect.

Now I repeated my visit often and found myself more and more strongly drawn there, so that in a short time my attention became directed almost exclusively to those evening visits. These were the kinds of hours of which one absorbed in the enjoyment of life sees himself so easily robbed through distraction, but even when absent I felt all my thoughts filled with the visions of those evenings. Sometimes I found Eugenia alone, sometimes she greeted me in the company of other persons who did not always please me, indeed were quite often troublesome to me, yet they usually appeared to be in a seeming state of subjection to Eugenia, and some, especially some of her artist friends, were, as I definitely knew, in need of help and felt in the presence of her magnanimity a welcome refuge. Under these circumstances my better self could do nothing other than attempt to suppress assiduously that animosity <sup>animosity</sup> boiling up within me and the foul mood with which the sight of this situation presented me, and this I was able to achieve rather easily since Eugenia's cheerfulness was directed to me in the midst of these people in an immeasurably <sup>more</sup> friendly and expressive way than when we were alone. Our personal closeness and intimacy grew, strangely enough, directly in proportion to the pressure of the presence of others, as in the freedom that comes with being alone together the degree of spirituality increases in inner content and trustfulness. In order to enjoy this intimacy, I soon found through favorable circumstances the opportunity -- whether I was permitted the privilege or whether I assumed it I know not -- to remain longer than the others -- a significant privilege that flattered me uncommonly.

This felicitous relationship united to a powerful extent the comfortable, satisfied ease towards which in later years life longingly tends with that fiery

youthful force that continues to press on in restless fervor and whose pleasant strength I seemed to remember more than to feel within me. The bright young woman seemed to be well inclined to me, to have tender feelings for me without any kind of stirring passion. For my part I gave myself without hesitation to that pleasant warmth that well might only have frightened me away, had I seen it increase into flaming emotion. When I look back now on the state of my emotions of that <sup>time</sup> ~~time~~, I must seriously condemn it as an insidious deception, under which the noblest and finest images of mankind might conceal and nourish the spurious changeling of feeble and insipid feelings. The slow, tired heart, relinquishing the battle timidly, its powers depleted by the first brave deed, will nonetheless assay to win the prize and the happiness of victory, even if it is only illusion, and the mild sensations of easy devotion, of attachment grown sweet through habit, of a cultivated experienced maturity developed from necessity will usurp with their dullness the place where the stout heart might have made the high claim of a noble destiny of either joy or sorrow and might have set this claim flaming with the joyful, natural truth of youth. There is nothing to these tender friendships that harbor all the warmth of affection and the charm of potential ~~feelings~~ <sup>feelings</sup> yet at the same time attempt to set up certain acceptable arrangements as primary limitations. It is best then for nature to demand back her freedom through feelings and to destroy the pretence, but then an unpleasant disintegration of the whole affair is hardly to be avoided. Truly I did not love Eugenia, but I was fond of her, and with all the soul that was left to me and a wealth of imitating memory, I embellished this fondness. We could have created quite suitably the impression of a comfortable, domestic love which its stability

would have firmly established with all proper appearance.

Even at that time I was often disquieted and more than usually concerned for my condition, but the indescribable charm, the irresistible loveliness, and the touching goodness of the beautiful woman again swept me away into different circles, where I was seized by a dizziness that I should later regret. My behavior became more and more frenzied. Even under plain or indifferent conditions, my impulses were more excited than normal sensitivity would cause, and my lively imagination drove me to utterances that appeared to be capable of coming only from a deeply moved heart. The following memories have remained with me of a conversation that should have some meaningful bearing in this respect.

It was late in the evening, all the company had left, and the children had long been asleep. Eugenia was sitting next to me in quiet contemplation and finally spoke of the fate of a friend who had become wretched from love. We agreed on the observation that only a few people know love in its highest sense and after a few further comments, I asked confidingly whether she could so love, if there were in fact such a thing as love. She replied with a smile that she had thought it over but since she had children it seemed impossible for her.

At least a passionate love was beyond her sphere. But aside from passion, I rejoined, there could be beautiful, rich love relationships, and I described with animation the lovely, sensible agreements that one could strike with judicious insight and prudently maintain to the benefit of both parties. She said that such agreements could be lovely and beneficial only in so far as both understood that they seldom lasted very long. She added that a man who did not love her could also not be her friend, for fondness came first, and respect was only secondary. Although she preferred to rely on the former, the latter

was also quite good. Thus she voiced to me a highly encouraging opinion, and I cried out, "Eugenia, how dear you are to me! You have heard this a thousand times, but now permit me to ask you whether you are fond of me." I bent over to her, and she looked up, looked at me a while calmly, then down again and straight up, as she said that I did not displease her. After further discussion from both sides, I asked whether perhaps I did not also have her respect. She replied, but this time without looking up, that she believed I was worthy of it. And so then, I continued excitedly, there was no obstacle to my being her friend! She replied that perhaps there was none. I asked rather more quickly why only "perhaps." Why not "certainly?" Well then, came her answer, certainly, and then she looked at me with such satisfaction and friendliness that I almost fell into confusion. I covered her hand with hot kisses and said, full of deep feeling, "I am your friend, even without your express wish, and yet if I am not deceived, it soon shall be your wish! I am aware how rewarding is slow deliberation. I do not overlook how dangerous it is to hurry. But am I supposed to act as though the certainty which I feel that you would now recognize me as your friend did not exist, after we have known each other for a year? Through this insight which offers me the promise of the finest development in our fine relationship, ought not I here in the present have the right to look forward into the future?" During my speech Eugenia had arisen, and after she had listened attentively and waited a short time in contemplative silence, she spoke the following words with impressive solemnity: "I shall gladly leave to you the decision as to how early or how late you wish to call me your friend, so long as you will allow me free choice in my own feelings and not presume that I should just as quickly declare

myself your friend. Just as restraint is disagreeable to you, so is haste to me and might perhaps make impossible what in the quiet order of a natural unfolding would turn out of itself. For how could I deny that you seem to me both estimable and excellent? The fact that I speak to you in such a way is proof enough!" With this she bade me goodnight, pressed her delicate hand to my lips as I kissed it, and disappeared from my longing eyes, which followed after her with astonished joy. Never had I received such an impression of her as on this evening when her beautiful countenance, suspended in a serene seriousness, was enhanced and exalted by a spiritual aura, and her last words had gone far beyond the limits of which I believed her insight capable.

If my feelings on walking home were not of boundless amazement, the cause lay in the furtive, deep, and irresistible stimulus which the fleeting touch of her fingertips had communicated to my nerves. The voice of desire resounded in my heart, and in a hundred unexpected visions, my personal hopes fluttered stealthily through my soul, which at the same time with passionate devotion submitted to the pious intentions and noble renunciations that a refined imagination so proudly evoked. In the intoxication of glowing waves that filled my breast with throbbing, I walked about for a long while through the dark snowy streets, until the colder air of the approaching morning -- of which the clangling bells of Saint Stephen's had already warned me in vain -- drove me home, where I fell asleep amidst lovely visions.

On the next morning I could not refrain from smiling about the intense mood which had led me, a man of mature years, back into the footsteps of my early youth, when as a happy child I wandered about under the dreamy trees

through many a sleepless night. I commanded myself in all seriousness to be reasonable and to employ mind and intelligence against that unenlightened exaggeration to which I was so easily susceptible. But as a result of this, I thought to have limited myself to strict rationale and thus permitted my confused feelings under this too reassuring superficial impression an even freer, more dangerous play, and thus the very thing that I wished to dispell concealed itself from me all the more and remained. Since this time Eugenia was closer to me, my behavior took on a more inward direction, and on my part our friendship became almost tender. A warm breeze bathed my senses.

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The most charming fascination seized them. It was no wonder that they were enthralled. But at the same time, what I felt was no less than love. I had rarely felt more exalted, more powerful feelings before, so that my present emotion did appear worthy of the name, yet it seemed to be only an outpouring of excited senses, for although it was thoroughly grounded in the regions of the spirit, it dwelt in those regions that are perhaps most closely akin to the senses. However that may be, my conduct always betrayed too much warmth and aggression for it not to give the appearance of passion. Only I believed Eugenia to be sufficiently secure against this appearance. My unreserved confessions, the increasing familiarity with which each of my most secret sensations expressed itself towards her, and the conscious, controlled discretion which held her constantly aware of each delicate expression of my spirit would be able to maintain her clear insight; and her heart, which on its part with great serenity showed itself to be free, would not take offence, if I continued my active assault on a superficial level, while relying on that inner discretion not to disturb her.

184      <sup>opinion</sup> The good ~~opinion~~, which with as much surprise as willingness I gained of Eugenia's reason, was of course not constant, but rather showed itself only occasionally, because frequently in the midst of spiritual utterances that surpassed my expectations in their goodness, there came forth some that fell far below what one should be able to expect from normal people. I cannot describe what a painful discomfort, what an agitated restlessness, came over me whenever my admiration, which should have liked to move continually in that direction, faltered at such barriers and in wild despair knew not which way to turn. When she came to herself again, her charm would restore everything, and it was as though nothing had happened, but occasionally she persisted with obstinacy in lapses unworthy of her which seemed to me inconceivable in light of her general character. For she had a fine ability to grasp concepts and a memory that stored away the good things, all the more diligently, the fewer she confronted. She was attentive to all instruction and was as worthy as she in need of it.

185      It was not long hidden from me that everything that came from her was actually mood which, rising and falling, brought with it a little of this and a little of that but always seemed charming and would have had to draw much attention to its emptiness to be able to destroy the pleasure one felt in the pure form. Thus she was rich in moods and of such a deep serenity that one could take it for a constant condition, and at the same time as the result of a mood she would appear stupid without, in fact, being so. I saw how this weaving and floating, rising and falling, hitting and missing was generally very often the case. Whereas most people might, by means of properly applied instruction, succeed in dispelling or concealing these caprices, it would some-

times happen that in the worst of cases these caprices would suppress the good in her.

With this explanation I could indeed salve my own conscience sufficiently, but for the others before whom Eugenia in my presence occasionally committed totally unpardonable inanities, there came over me each time the most painful horror, the most unrighteous impatience. Usually this happened on the occasion of a conversation dealing with the descriptive art or drama or the theater in general. That obstinate smile -- I noticed it each time she was speaking of things about which one only had to have heard in order not to err but about which she had extraordinary misconceptions and committed grave errors -- that obstinate smile brought me almost to despair, and there was no prevention or diversion that I could employ to aid her. Fortunately the other people, mostly good Viennese who in their easy manner care little to become involved in intellectual matters, expected not nearly so much as I myself. The lively mental activity that I as a Reichsdeutscher, or as the Viennese say a Reicher, possessed stood me in good stead and, sharpened by frequent use, proved often victoriously that I had heard Reinhold and Fichte lecture, although of their words I no longer remembered a single one. In such matters the exact opposite of Eugenia was Theresa, who had enjoyed a flawless education and, in the area of her art as well as in the related areas of poetry and music, possessed many fine insights which her practical reason knew how to employ and enliven. With clear thoughts she knew how to master the roles she was to play and with conscious consideration of how to see in the complexity a unity, whereby her excited, active manner, which easily followed in detail the spontaneous feelings, appeared all the more beautiful in its naturalness. It is true that Eugenia

made the greater impression on the public and was received with excited applause as often as she appeared, but this also happened when she did not understand at all the meaning of her role, made wrong entrances, recited her lines inappropriately, suppressed important and moving passages while stressing unimportant trifles, and thus not seldom distorted a lovely work of art. She had, of course, brought all her charm and visual loveliness 187 to bear, so that the enchanted audience forgot one thing after the other. How splendid must be her appearance, I often thought, when her artistic talent not only does not stand in the way of those talents with which nature has so richly endowed her but actually even exalts them!

I ventured to speak with her about this and was as amazed as I was touched to hear her speak of the success of her performances as something that caused her embarrassment and shame. Her modesty without question made her refrain from making claim to which the response of her audience might have entitled her, and she immediately began to enumerate those qualities required of a good actress which she lacked. She was so candid at my mild remarks that I could attend her with no other than genuine respect, and I admired the freedom with which she expressed her opinion -- usually so shyly proffered -- under circumstances that would normally have caused the greatest timidity. This behavior was singularly gentle and charming; indeed with respect to the rarity of such free confessions in general and to the special circumstances which distinguished this case still more, one might call her conduct magnificent, for what strength is required to be able to speak of the very thing for which one is striving and which one wishes so desperately to retain, which no one dares to impugn, and to deny that quality in oneself! I felt I should repress in

188 the sharpest way my vacillating opinion of her and silently beg forgiveness for that all too hasty judgment I had made earlier of her spiritual qualities. I could not comprehend what feelings in me had been able to implant in my soul such an unfavorable impression of her, and I could not at all forgive myself for having committed such an injustice. I was moved in my innermost heart and felt obliged to make restitution for what I had assumed and to compensate her with much love and kindness for what she had unknowingly suffered.

With this feeling the memory that lay in my heart of her gentle manner seized me, and from the praise that welled up at this memory, I wove a wreath that would please her much more than that earlier speech of mine. Thus selecting the outstanding moments of her performances, I drew attention to the favorable aspects of her talent. My memory did not desert me this time, and with eloquence I produced a minor masterpiece in the genre of the panegyric which created the most joyful impression and had a double effect through the good will with which she was obliged to respond -- even if it were only invented flattery -- and through the power of the truth which, it should not be denied, lay underneath it all. In a winsome way that showed her at her best, she 189 responded thankfully to the successful effort I made to restore honor again to the talent that had been so desparaged. Easily and quickly she found a thousand opportunities to show her good will. I was inexpressibly fascinated with all the friendly things that she said to me, with all the pleasantness that she showed me, and an overflowing cheerfulness took control of my whole being.

The discussion about the theater, or about any subject not touching us, afforded me no longer any inward satisfaction, and my heart strove fondly to

replace those dead observations with its own lively power. I wished to speak only of what came up between us, of the beauty of our being together, of our next coming together, of the present evening. And yet my mood was so mild and docile that I should easily and gladly have returned to the old abandoned course of conversation, but Eugenia led us to speak of subjects to which she gave greater attention than our own circumstances. How naively and unsuspectingly I gave myself over to her calm control may be seen in the fact that I innocently expressed my true feelings about Theresa and answered Eugenia's shrewd questions, which even then betrayed a malicious pleasure, with an unconcealed outpouring of praise, which was all the more innocent since it took a direction that in no way ran parallel to the praise I had given Eugenia. Unfortunately I was too swept up in my own happy feelings as to be immediately aware of how my outpourings were being received. Only when I had quite finished speaking and had given so many reasons for Theresa's excellence that even I could not concieve of any more, did I notice the change that had come over Eugenia. She had become pale, her eyes expressed annoyed boredom, her mouth was twisted in scornful disgust, and the usually agile movements of her hands had changed into an absentminded petting of the little dog that she had taken onto her lap. She let her head fall back feebly and afforded me hardly an unfriendly glance. "For God's sake, what is wrong with you?" I said as I sprang up from the chair, not aware that I had caused this transformation with my careless talk. But when I expressed concern and questioned her sympathetically, she withdrew coldly from me, her answers were dry and curt, and she resolutely refused my advances. She resisted every word as though it made her ill. Throwing out a few bitter syllables, she enlightened

191 me as to the cause of her sudden ill humor. It seemed impossible that this sensitivity to justified praise could be united with such hard self-renunciation in one person.

All my assumptions were confused -- I knew not how it had happened -- and I stood before her embarrassed and in astonished amazement, as before a riddle that benumbs the spirit with mysterious contradiction. She looked at me standing there and troubled herself as little at my astonishment as at my previous concern. Indifferently she stroked her dog, which on account of my sudden springing up was still growling at me. The outward as well as inner observation of the dramatic change to which my mind had to adjust in such a short time led me gently through the absurdity of my horrified state back to rationality, and as I for the moment took the matter more lightly than was later possible for me, I attempted to probe for any source of conversation that might create conciliatory feelings in the so deeply injured lady, and I succeeded to the extent that she, after several harsh and jealous outbreaks against her rival, attacked bitterly my own reason and judgment and found relief for herself in a scornful sarcasm that finally depleted the conflict. I was not at all deeply moved, and I know not how it happened that her anger no longer disturbed me, since I was yet still very taken with her charm, but whether it was that her moodiness played too obviously a part or that the truth which I had spoken was still too vivid for me -- for whatever reason, I bore the whole annoying turn of events with a rather firm resoluteness and took the signs of her unjust enmity much less to heart than afterward seemed to be the case in my memory. But here once again she was annoyed and did not conceal the source of her irritation. She accused me of a lack of sympathy and feeling to the same degree that before

she had found me guilty of prejudiced judgment and narrow-mindedness. She complained of a headache, said she felt sleepy, that she did not think she could see me tomorrow, urged me to leave, and for all that held me there some considerable time. As I took my leave she seemed well on her way to recovery, and it occurred to me that her outbreak was less against me as it was attributable to her general dissatisfaction and depression.

I now had time for all sorts of observations which the changing appearances of such a singular personality afforded and with which I occupied myself a good part of the night. Now I blamed the meanness and weakness that lay in this senseless jealousy, now I was again fascinated with the free passion that welled up with such power and which one usually tries to conceal with such care.

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In the irrationality itself that presumed to take imperious control, there was a secret allurement that affected me deeply. With what right, I asked myself, did Eugenia imagine -- how could she make the demand -- that I should bear the spiritual abuse of her malicious mood? How could this occur to her, if she did not have stored in her heart the greatest fondness for me and in its depths so much good will that she thought to have already paid in advance and atoned for the abuse? Indeed what is more endearing that an indignation that assumes certain claims to be definite which earlier were as much desired as despaired of? If through such thoughts I found within myself a satisfaction with that which concerned me personally, I was also now able to take not quite so seriously those things that displeased my soul and made demands on it, but rather with the help of God to allow to happen all the follies that afforded me such pleasure. The sweetness of Eugenia came ever more brightly into the limelight, and in this odd complexity of developments, because of an occurrence that

appeared to be so discouraging, my heart felt itself more and more drawn to her.

Yet the most difficult problem remained yet to be solved: I had to  
194 mollify her and also to revive that mood that brought me so much joy. This seemed quite difficult, however, because my frivolous manner in hearing her reproaches might have ruined everything. I should have to show myself now all the more eager, all the more touched and remorseful, and so with these thoughts in mind, which I took very seriously, I hurried back to her the following morning. I was told she had gone out and should probably be back soon. Thus I learned to my relief that she was not indisposed, that the excitement of the previous evening had had no serious effects on her, but although this might have caused me consternation, I should yet have preferred that she have a slight headache than that there were no effect at all. The maid, so accustomed to having me in the house, offered to open the room to me, so that there I might await Eugenia's return, but my impatience gave me no rest. I hurried off, promising to return in an hour. I decided to take a walk upon the bastion, where the open view of the surrounding villages in panorama and the air pouring in fresh from the country might refresh my uneasy heart. The sun shone down splendidly on the snow, the sky was perfectly clear, and only in the distance was there any fog. A great number of strollers was already hurrying past and increased with every moment, so that when I reached the imperial palace, where the traffic was at its heaviest, I slipped away from the throng and sought a less frequented part of the wall.  
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I had progressed hardly any distance when I saw two women approaching and could not trust my eyes when I recognized in them Theresa and Eugenia.

Astonishment hindered my steps, I stood still amazed, and as I puzzled, still uncertain whether it was they, I was relieved of all doubt by Eugenia's happy greeting, and the surprised and embarrassed manner with which I greeted her served long after as a source of amusement. Theresa, who knew of no reason for my strange behavior, joined in the laughter and asked what was so extraordinary about our meeting. Eugenia, who must have just thought on our conversation of the previous evening, blushed red on red -- a glow that my own face immediately shared, and Theresa, who saw the two of us suddenly so red, likewise blushed, so that strangely enough we all three expressed and were aware of the same condition. I was now obliged to join them, and the many people coming towards us and distracting us fortunately left no opportunity for conversation, in which my embarrassment would have been unmistakably apparent, for the things which I had seen transpiring did not cease to confuse me. I did not know how I was to account for Eugenia's high spirits, which seemed to conceal no resentment, and I could imagine no reason that would allow her to be so completely reconciled and go for a walk with that person whose mere mention the day before had excited such enmity. Theresa reproached me amicably that it had been so long since I had visited her, that I was seen almost not at all in the theater. She had thought me ill or perhaps no longer in Vienna, until today at rehearsal, whence they had just come, when Eugenia said that, oh yes, I was very much here because I had quite thoroughly annoyed her yesterday evening. That is going too far, I thought, and with good conscience she apes this friendliness and has even mentioned yesterday evening's altercation! Was this calculated, premeditated dissimulation or was it an inconceivable thoughtlessness? Theresa asked more precisely how it could occur to me to irritate such a lovely lady, and while I was seeking in my answer to be

vaguely general and was on the contrary involuntarily most precisely direct, Eugenia did not cease to laugh and continued this foolishness with abandon until we reached her house, where we were to go our separate ways. I bowed to Theresa and made to accompany Eugenia up to her room, very curious to make some sense 197 of her erratic behavior, but she drove me back, protesting that like a well mannered gentleman I should first accompany Theresa home and then might return, whereupon with much laughter and much lingering over all sorts of amusing and whimsical things, she finally withdrew.

This vacillating that with passionate energy sprang from one extreme to another had begun to enrage me in my innermost being, and it required Theresa's balanced, enchanting, and gentle words to restore me gradually to a state of mind that would make it possible for me to return to Eugenia. Of her Theresa spoke with deep insight, and although her judgment was less than favorable and she presented a very low estimate of the heart and mind of the whimsical woman, in that she accused her of the coldest vanity and the most unflattering coquetry, she nevertheless stated it all with such gentleness and good intention that it injured my feelings less than it compelled my reason to a closer examination.

I smiled at an accusation that showed me all too clearly that Theresa had never seen my charming friend in such happy moments as had been my lot -- moments which testified to the deep truthfulness, pure warmth, and quiet devotion of her soul, 198 which until now had been impugned by her unexplainable behavior but which could not be denied. Theresa smiled at the naïveté of my pious faith and wondered at my near-sightedness that could make things appear splendid to me which she viewed with healthier eyes. She laughed when I assured her that one must know Eugenia completely and know everything about her, as I did, from her own lips in order

to value her properly. "And what do you know?" she asked with animation, "Certainly only that which you ought to know. Would you like to wager that I can tell you a hundred stories of which ninety-nine will be new to you?" And then she began to describe incidents and characters fleetingly which I had to admit one after the other were new to me. Disconcerted I stood before her, yet I desired eagerly to learn more. To my earnest imploring, however, Theresa was unrelenting and assured me that this was only a means of teaching my eyes to see. She would say no more, for she did not wish to rob me entirely of an illusion in which I seemed to find such comfort, because what she had said up until now would quickly be forgotten if I chose to rid myself of it.

These utterances had very much unsettled my thoughts about Eugenia.

My vision of her was tarnished, each of its lines was uncertain, its brightest colors were darkened, and in the deepest depression I returned to her in order to test the truth and error of the original with a sharper attention! What made me most thoughtful was the conclusion that I could easily enough reach from all the observations of Theresa that Eugenia at the moment was in a situation that could only be described as in love. But in all the time when I had not noticed anything of the sort, and it seemed impossible to me that she, <sup>to</sup> who confessed me so much, could remain silent about such a thing, especially since such a confession could have about it nothing personally injurious for me, who constantly spoke of friendship and expressly excluded love.

When I came to her it required all the cordiality with which she received me to divert my gloomy and distraught spirit from the suspicion that against my will had gripped it. She did not at all attempt to rouse my mood, which was already prepared to fly up at the slightest provocation; on the contrary she was

gentle and good-humored, relaxed and indulgent. On this evening the Jungfrau von Orleans was to be presented, and for the first time Eugenia had the considerable and difficult task of portraying Joan before a public that, to be sure, was sympathetic but this time more than usually expectant. We spoke much about the character of this poetic drama and the leading role, 200 about the tone of particular passages. I found the opportunity to recall many memories, to call attention to certain meanings, to warn against misconceptions, and yet with all my efforts could not reassure myself about the success of this evening. I knew too well how and where those passages were, for which there was no alternative but to wait without anxious displeasure for the time when I should have to view this dear and worthy lady performing something which, according to my opinion, went beyond her ability. In the meanwhile she herself had not the least anxiety; with the happiest self-confidence she looked forward to the splendid role and believed that she had done all that was required, since her various costumes -- for the shepherdess as well as for the heroine -- were in order. She had spared nothing here and, indeed, was delightfully decked out.

For the first time in a long while I went to the theater, where the pressing throng was already assembling full of expectation. Even in the prologue Eugenia reaped the most excited applause, and her fate for the evening had already been decided. But I was by no means in a joyous mood. The most unpleasant ill humor persisted ever more obstinately in me, and I was ashamed of Eugenia and of the audience, who at many points really competed to see who would deserve 201 the prize for being the most tasteless. Particularly those scenes in which she had to express those impressionable feelings originating in the lower levels

of human emotions were performed by her excellently, and thus she represented the strong feeling of love which pierced her heart at the sight of Lionel with inimitable charm. The audience was beside itself with delight, and the applause at the end rose to a frenzy, which lay on me quite heavily. My ill humor notwithstanding, I still felt a powerful urge to see Eugenia, and I was perhaps only impatient to compensate with the sight of her charming person for the unsatisfactory aesthetic experience. I went to her and, contrary to my expectations, was received.

She was already in her street clothes; tired and yet still excited, she was resting on the sofa and seemed unusually satisfied and content. This mood was transferred immediately to me, for one could not be in her presence without sympathizing: if she felt comfortable, one enjoyed this comfort, as also her displeasure penetrated to everyone around her. It behooved me to be joyful, to be in extraordinary good humor, and she demonstrated her intentions with a thousand kindnesses, with intimate jesting, flattery and caresses. All the while Theresa's remarks continued to occur to me, and all my emotions hardened into a sudden coldness; but the encouraging fire in her friendly eyes thawed it each time and through renewed victory warmed more and more the overpowering tendency that finally delivered me totally into Eugenia's power.

We had eaten a small late-night meal, the table had been taken away, and I left my seat to sit next to Eugenia, who had sleepily and comfortably leaned back to an inclined position. One hand supported her head, about which her beautiful long hair, loosed from its bonds, flowed gracefully, and the other hand stretched out toward me, so that I might touch it with caresses. The less we spoke, the more excited became my thoughts, as my throbbing blood coursed

through its channels, and we gazed at each other for a long time in a serious and friendly way. Such actions intensify unnoticed, like drops falling in a pitcher until they stream over the rim. The steps in this direction, the utterances that lead to this overflowing, require no detailed description. It is enough to say that I found myself swept away out of my normal state -- freed from distinctions, decisions, habits which held the moment subjected to the whole -- and carried away by fascinating yet dangerous thoughtlessness.

203 Eugenia, who at first gave herself over gladly to this dreamy state which had extended the complex activity of mind and body into this languid indolence, found too late that the streaming waves were too overpowering and seductive for her to grasp the disappearing shore. A sweet ecstacy seized us. I kissed her lips and pressed her into my arms. She seemed less to resist than to comply. A strange uncertainty hovered over this scene, but for not very long. After a few moments the enchanted net disappeared that had held her soul prisoner, and an angry seriousness darkened the previously pale, lovely brow. She revealed herself to be deeply injured by my boldness. She lamented bitterly that such a beautiful friendship as I had offered her should suffer such ugly damage, should lose its finest attraction -- its ingenuous simplicity. She assured me that she could never again find with me that calm trusting feeling that my presence had made so valuable to her.

Her speech made me quite disturbed, as I could not find her reproaches unjustified, and I agreed that the too great liberty had also degraded in me the feeling of having experienced the highest and purest; yet even her distraught seriousness and her injured reproach created in my eyes an irresistible fascination, so that I could not cease to look on her with pleasure, and after I had tried

in vain to calm her and reconcile with her, I departed from her still in the most cheerful mood. I was preoccupied not with my injustice but with her charm, not with her cold response but with her warmth, and in this happy mixture of anxious concern and propitious memory of what had happened, the following lines came into being, which I sent off to her at the earliest opportunity:

Dir lieblichten von allen Frauen,  
 Die mit der zarten Schönheit stiller Macht  
 Mein Herz in Flammen facht,  
 Mein Auge fesselt in glücksel'gem Schauen,  
 Dir hab' ich mich zum treuen Freund geweihet.  
 Dir edler Neigung Fülle dargebracht;  
 In schönem Freiden, allen Harms befreiet,  
 Sollt' ich des holden Umgangs blüh'nde Bahn  
 In sußer Pflicht und ernfter Treue wandeln,  
 In trunkner Sinne Wahn  
 Die reine Glut des Herzens nie verwandeln:  
 Allein du selbst, der Himmelsgöttin eigen,  
 Heut im Triumphe deiner Zauberkunst,  
 Erkoren du zum höchsten Handeln  
 Bestimmt, zum Himmel glorreich aufzusteigen,  
 Unwiderstehlich kämpft der Liebe Gunst  
 Das stolze Herz darnieder?  
 Gewaltig mußt du selber zeigen,  
 Wie Menschliches das Göttliche bezwingt,  
 Dein Arm wirft Lionel zum Tode nieder,  
 Doch seines Blickes Pfeil dein Herz durchdringt.  
 Und Aller Augen sind in Thränen,  
 Und jede Brust von Wehmuth sanft erklingt!  
 Die Rückkehr nicht zu deinem hohen Sehnen  
 Ergreifet wie dies Eine!  
 Weißt du dem Bilde menschlichholder Schwächen,  
 Die knospend aus dem schönsten Innern brechen,  
 Solch übergroßen Reiz zu leihen,  
 Und wolltest, ungerührt nur du alleine,  
 Solch liebliches Vergessen nicht verzeihen?

This kind of question found favor: I received a polite note of pardon, and I was invited to come to her soon. I was flattered at the good success of my rhyming craft and suppressed an uncomfortable feeling which would not allow me to be quite pleased that Eugenia could -- out of thoughtlessness or vanity --

recover so easily from what had seemed to me to be her quite justified indignation of the previous day. Yet I savored with no less fervor the joy with which her wondrous presence filled my soul. The certain amount of reticence which she showed in the first days following was one enticement more to restore that trust whose effects were dear enough and to reestablish the sweet habit of close companionship.

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Thus several days were passed in these most eager and happy efforts, and it was soon clear that the brief interruption of our released passion, instead of estranging us, had only united our souls more closely and securely. We explained to each other numerous things, and after we had determined the nature of our relationship and had discussed it thoroughly, we decided that a danger was no longer possible, and with this security there came advantages which peacefully afforded us what the boldness that had brought us such strife would never have made possible. Thus the purposes that brought forth a declaration of war could only be achieved through a treaty of peace!

In these days it was that a friend whom I loved dearly but had not seen in many years interrupted somewhat through his unexpected arrival the course of this relationship. In our early youth we had had much in common, and through letters we had, in spite of the long separation, not only remained on good terms but even improved our friendship. On his way to a journey through Italy, he had permitted his companions to travel on ahead, and he planned to follow them within a month to Venice. This time he intended to devote to me as a parting gesture. Anton, so he was called, had been born into very favorable circumstances. A good education had aided his development, and thus he had entered the turmoil of life under the most honorable as well as the most propitious conditions. He

made many friends, found favor with women above most, and maintained in these  
207 associations a peculiar strength and honesty. Unfortunately he was prone to  
become involved in love affairs, a tendency which he could not explain even  
to himself. His sympathizing attitude could not resist the unhappiness of  
a married woman who chose him as her aid and deliverer. What he felt for  
her soon only became a torment because he knew it to be wrongful, and his first  
error, in which he had to persist by committing others, led him to the grievous  
fate of shooting the husband of his beloved in a duel. Another affair with  
an Italian singer, to whom his heart remained true for five years, turned  
out in an ugly way. A respectable and, so it seemed, happy marriage arranged  
for him by his relatives prevented his death.

Through these incidents a vail of sadness hung over his life, and he  
seemed not to know how to deal with it, for he had become despondent in its  
shadow. Since his reason had remained intact, whereas his emotions had had  
only wretched experiences, he was uncommonly severe with himself, forebearing  
toward the world, but also withdrawn. Only the warm love which he still held  
for me from our early years could dissolve the cold reserve that had become  
his habit. My heart, however, while rejoicing in the enjoyment of his old  
208 friendship, did not willingly dispense with the charm of my recent companionship  
with Eugenia, whom I was forced to neglect somewhat in the first days. What I  
told my friend of her he accepted, indeed in my opinion, much too coldly: I  
felt he should have been more curious and more concerned, but he was rather  
pleased when I suggested that we visit her. My written request elicited the  
most agreeable answer.

This first visit with Anton made me quite happy: I had not seen Eugenia

for a time, and I had believed her image to be firmly implanted in my mind, but how she put it to shame! She seemed to have become more beautiful, more noble, more charming, and it has since been my experience that absence each time allows one to forget somewhat, and that reunion always contributes a freshness. She was totally obliging and gracious with Anton and appeared to be saying to him that for my sake she was accepting him immediately as one of her friends; she showed me such attention, affection, and trust that I told my friend how much happiness he had brought me, since through his presence her show of affection, far from being restricted, on the contrary increased. Anton found himself in the best of spirits and revealed, to my pleasant surprise, the finest gifts of social intercourse without, however, shaking off that taciturn coldness which I mentioned earlier.

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Gradually several other people arrived, among whom also was Theresa, and the conversation became more lively; Anton in particular had several pleasant discussions with Theresa and seemed to be very attracted to her intelligence. Hardly had Eugenia noticed this when she began to make it her business to ~~their~~ disturb <sup>their</sup> conversations, to change the subject, to bring in other views, and through a hundred whims and caprices, which showed off splendidly the strength of her charm, to draw the whole attention of the company to herself. Her dazzling activity won the field with decided superiority, and this was not for a moment challenged by Theresa, who by no means was herself less attractive for it; to be sure, the latter permitted the former her desired predominance with such noble, willing indulgence that to my eyes she manifested a different superiority -- that of a lofty mind which is above any kind of smallness and seeks its superiority in sublime serenity. My friend, however,

did not wish to obey immediately Eugenia's arbitrary mood, but rather in spite of the laughter and disturbance, continued his conversation with Theresa, while I, not without some embarrassment, attempted to check his 210 defiance. Yet she herself in withdrawing turned him over gradually to Eugenia, so that finally he fell into the latter's hands and, because of the eagerness with which she sought opportunity to please him, could not for long find his fate regrettable.

I, who now for a while remained rather unattended, was nourished by Theresa with unaffected appreciation, and her sincere friendliness, her gentle discernment, touched me in a thoroughly beneficial way; yet actually there was something else that I wanted, and I was by no means satisfied by my decision, for this regard that I was receiving was actually only to compensate for the minor injury that Eugenia was doing me by ignoring me.

It was late when we departed. As soon as we were alone, Anton began a panegyric to Theresa. "No!" he cried, "One cannot believe what a fine character this woman has. What intellectual ability she has, what originality in her perception!" And thus he continued to describe in detail the surprises he experienced from her lips and the pleasure he felt in her manner. To me this was all quite accurate, and I could only agree. But impatiently I finally brought the subject round to Eugenia. After some consideration he answered 211 rather coldly that she was very fetching, indeed very engaging, yet he had to lament that it was easier for him to see how others might feel this about her more than he himself could actually feel it -- all the more so, he added, since the falseness of her character as a whole and her miserable hypocrisy would never permit me the illusion that I might expect love from her. I was horrified by

the unexpected, harsh judgment.

"I must say," I responded with hostile indifference, "that the degree of acumen which you attribute to yourself seems to me so high that I must doubt it somewhat. You see Eugenia for the first time, a few brief hours, and everything is already decided. Sentence is passed, and she is condemned!"

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"Sentence is passed?" my friend responded in amazement. "But you have already said the same thing to me. What was it you said to me of her that did not shape that opinion? I?" he cried as I released him. "Of course," he said, "Do you not remember how you asked that I be lenient with her, told me that she was irrational, moody, capricious, that truth was crushed by her willfulness, that she avoided all conviction, and such like descriptions, all of which were today evident enough? Perhaps you believed that you were introducing all this merely as aspects of her amiability. To be sure, she is very amiable and has a charming nature. I also have confirmed this, but it seems to me that from her faults -- and truly serious faults -- you have tried to flee completely. That, of course, is not possible!"

I could not convince myself that I had brought forth in him this dreadful opinion of Eugenia or -- what was even more vexing -- that in my own heart I nourished such viciousness, and yet my troubled spirit could not avoid completely the intruding fear of some hidden truth.

My feelings for Eugenia, however, were already too strong for me not to throw all the blame finally onto my friend. Because of painful chagrin and uncomfortable displeasure, I attributed the whole matter to him and held him responsible. The more I thought of Eugenia, the more I recalled her behavior, reviewed her utterances, the less possible it became for me to lay the faults

that Anton had expressed at her feet. I sought in vain for the cause that could have led him or me to the misapprehension under which one of us necessarily labored, but with great self-satisfaction I convinced myself that I was certainly free of it. In the meanwhile some yielding on his part seemed to support me, and accordingly increased my stubbornness, so that it seemed to be the fruit of my intervening rectification, since it had happened to begin with only out of boredom and indifference, and he later saw how very concerned in it I was. I thought to myself, if I should tell you all that I know about her! If I might tell you, could tell you! But it would be a betrayal to reveal the beautiful secrets of her soul to one who is ill disposed to her. No, even though this might win you over to her, it may not be! I kept my word, and in spite of the fact that Anton, who viewed every new person as a problem to be solved, continued to question me more closely about Eugenia, he never learned anything more from me. A warm sympathy would have been able to gain all my trust, but I remained closed to his cold curiosity.

In spite of the numerous distractions that the great city offered Anton and the social demands that were made on him from all sides, he usually knew how to arrange his time so that he could spend a part of the evening with me at Eugenia's, and if he were detained somewhere else, he nevertheless came late at least to fetch me. She continued to be favorably disposed to him and did not conceal from me what she sometimes allowed him to notice -- that it was a favor to me. He was bright and cheerful, so skilled at entertaining others; his experiences, his knowledge, and his attitudes -- the descriptions of which were always fresh and attractive -- were all an inexhaustible treasure; moreover in company he consistently showed good intentions, and thus his presence was

always welcome to us, and we passed the most pleasant hours with him. He soon felt himself at home, chatted and jested, played with the children, yielded to a happy comfortableness; in Eugenia's rooms everything was so pleasant for him, so easy and cheerful that he was never happier and took this to be the haven after his restless wanderings and constantly praised the serene seclusion of this hiding place. But he never ceased to commend Theresa to me at every opportunity and to disparage Eugenia, whom he called a charming liar, a little monster of whose malice one should needs be wary. I smiled at these speeches that made such an insignificant impression on me, especially so since his actions clearly demonstrated the opposite.

New cause to torment me, however, was given him by the changing moods which Eugenia showed from time to time chiefly agianst me and which united within them an attraction and a repulsion so strangely that I was caught in the most painful situation without actually knowing what to do about it. She often seemed to waste an expression of good will of the most impressive sort in order only to allow the indifferent coldness that followed to be all the more effective. My most fervent assurances of boundless respect, of deep affection, served her sometimes as a means of amusement, sometimes angered her as an insult, so that I did not repeat them even in the most sincere terms. My friend did not wish to permit this mistreatment, but I let it pass in silence and even found an irresistible charm, a constantly reviving delight in those outbreaks of incomprehensible lust for power, which flattered me with the delusion that she loved me and that her impatience only expressed itself angrily in this way, so that not only did I not evoke this word from her lips but, moreover, should myself avoid hearing it or speaking it. There was no shortage

of passionate scenes, and I did not always seek gently to avoid their occurrence. Her reproaches concerning my disposition, my indifference, my inconsistanty -- all things that originated in me only out of the suffering that she caused in her conduct toward me -- brought me often to the point of despair, which, by her tears resulting usually from the painful emotion and the reconciliation produced by the same, then came to an end.

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The exquisite intervals of joyful indulgence and rational trust always regained for her tenfold the power that my heart in indignation had refused her. That I could perceive this perversity as a favorable sign and even that she should seem to me still charming in all her peculiar agitations was all the more excusable because I saw this extraordinary behavior directed at me alone and never against Anton or anyone else. It was an especial agony for me that my friend, whom she instructed of our quarrel with great distortion of the facts, was often summoned by her to judge between us or to mediate, and he with galant discretion would always hold me up before her eyes as the culprit; however, at our lodgings, or even on the way thither, would reproach me for my yielding and endeavor to convice me clearly and plainly how everything in this woman was vain and false. How was I to reply to her when she had Anton's support rallying against me and triumphantly opposed me with his authority, which according to his view, even though it might speak for me, I could never employ without offending her extremely? And he would smile knowingly about my anxious embarrassment without ever either giving me a warning rebuke or Eugenia a cheerful submission. Her bold liveliness and her aggressive mood, with which she constantly found new ways to agitate, offered him a continuing drama that was entertaining, and the whole situation -- the pattern of conversation, the

furnishings, the place -- everything was quite suitable to him and comfortable.

217 Theresa, whose closer acquaintance he had eagerly sought, he neglected more and more, although as often as her name was mentioned, he praised her excellence seriously and solemnly with ever more tender expressions and assured me that he would never cease to honor her with the deepest respect because he had seldom found her equal. If only in the same way with my rational powers I might have conceived of the truth within and have escaped from the outward illusion! Anton did not let his judgment bewilder me through pleasantries, but just as little did he try to renounce a tender inclination, because she was only that and nothing deeper. "Piecemeal are the good things of life offered," he often said, "and piecemeal they are to be received, so that whoever rejects them to await them as a totality will lose everything. Accept each good thing thankfully, although it may be meager. No moment is lost but the one that is rejected. Look here, I try to conform to the times. To me a certain graceful figure has appeared, a solace overflowing with happiness, and I give myself over to her joyfully without finding it necessary out of delusion or madness to value it above what it is or is supposed to be."

218 It was strange, however, that his clear explanation notwithstanding, I could not comprehend his behavior. The contradictions in his judgment and taste were too apparent for me not to seek other justification than what he gave. It could sometimes have seemed to me that he might be courting the lovely lady's favor for the same reasons that he gave for trying to separate me from her. I became jealous and suffered all the more from the new torments I had prepared for myself because I was not always capable of hiding the disturbances that I felt in my heart. Thus came about many a vexation, many a quarrel, and many a tense

estrangement and was seldom compensated for by the happiest moments, even those of express reconciliation.

And so one day when I could no longer bear this uncertain situation and fortunately found Eugenia alone, I opened to her my whole heart, my hopes as well as my doubts; indeed I declared myself prepared to offer her my hand, if I might hope that this would make her happy. There followed a long passionate scene. She reproached me dryly for my jealousy, for the insulting suspicion of falsehood, which seemed to her the most monstrous in the world. "I love you too much," she cried out, "to deny to you now, as I perhaps should, that I love you! As concerns your question whether I am still perforce bound by earlier relationships or whether some other burdensome obligation limits my freedom, I can only say to you that the strongest protestations and oaths should no better convince you than your own experience, your own eyes, which nothing can escape concerning me and my affairs."

219 Her countenance glowed with a serene flush, her eyes expressed angry love, her whole being was moved, it was a heavenly sight! Yet I held back my impatient impulse to throw myself at her feet and asked her again, "Eugenia, this moment is decisive. It must be the last that gnaws and torments me. I permit myself yet this question: Are you really not involved in something that you are keeping from me? Consider well before you decide to lie! Remember that you can tell me everything, that I am your friend more than your lover! Only be forthright, and assured of my sympathy, my aid, you can tell me everything!"

She looked at me astonished, allowed herself to show some displeasure, and then asserted repeatedly the pure innocence of her heart. She said that the quietness and seclusion in which she lived, the openness of her routine, of

her manner, and my own view of her as well ought to protect her from such calumny. "Oh, of course, if you still doubt, then there is nothing for you as clear as sunlight and all means of convincing you are in vain!"

220 I cried, "There is no longer any need for that; I believe you with unshakable conviction! Eugenia! I am the happiest of men here at your feet!"

How could I describe in what turmoil of dizzy thoughts I finally left her, with what an overflowing of ecstatic feelings I hurried to seek out my friend. A vision of her confession of love hovered constantly before me and brightened all the dark scenes of my former life. I felt that I was experiencing a finer, deeper love than that terrible passion which had torn me so violently without making me happy. Anton could not be found for a long time, but finally I heard he was at a great midday banquet at the Prater, and so thither I hurried.

A numerous company of men only was already happily assembled to celebrate the nameday of one of their members. Immediately many of my friends called out to me. I was welcomed with loud applause and forced to sit down before I was able to look around for Anton. He was sitting at the opposite end of the table and nodded contentedly to me. The excited tumult made any attempt at conversation impossible. Against my will I had to take part in the festivities and was forced to toast with one ringing cheer after the other, to the army, to the brave Archduke. I would not have been able to let pass such heart-felt entreaties to drink these healths, even if it had been proper to refrain. The wine, which meanwhile was not spared, stimulated us more and more, as usually happens when young people have assembled without any cause to be sentimental. Some began to speak in a rather open way of their adventures and love affairs,

as each confessed with abandon his great happiness or lack of it.

I had been listening for a while to these tales, which for the most part were rather banal, when a young lance officer, who on account of his pleasant appearance and clever liveliness had often awakened my interest, held a bitingly satirical tirade, in which as he called out the names of the best known wanton women, named to my surprise Eugenia and brought forth from his audience the most responsive laughter. It was as though a deadly shaft had shot through my brain when I heard that dear name resound in this shocking context. I could not believe what I was hearing. I must have almost fallen into a swoon because the deathly pallor as I raised myself so frightened my neighbors that they sprang up with me thinking that I would immediately collapse. But I pulled myself together, threw deathly stares at the lancer, who had also anxiously hurried over to me, and with trembling lips I declared that for this shameful calumny I demanded satisfaction from him as well as from anyone else who would dare to attack the honor of a lady whose friend I acknowledged myself to be and about whom one could say nothing ill without speaking the vilest lie. My response brought forth general amazement, and some attempted to calm me. The lancer no longer looked at me with concerned curiosity but rather with annoyance. I noticed that he smiled calmly as he answered softly the questions with which people were confronting him. Then he bade me follow him into an adjoining room, where he made the following statement: "If I had known how involved your feelings are with Eugenia, I should certainly not have mentioned her name. But I must confess that your behavior causes me consternation. If you are in love with this woman, then it is best for you to know that she is no saint, and whoever is mixed up with her must also learn to

tolerate her reputation."

"And if her reputation were really such," I cried out, "how could you repeat and spread such untruth?"

"What I could or could not do," he continued easily, "is something we need especially to discuss. Incidentally, besides this answer I can give you one that will indeed be unexpected enough to you. You have to know that I am precisely <sup>acquainted</sup> acquainted with Eugenia -- as precisely as an encouraged lover can know his beloved. I esteem her, however, rather lightly, since she has betrayed me -- just as for me she betrayed Baron Lauenstädt who now supports her and is cuckolded enough in Hungary, where he is now travelling, and can count as much on her fidelity as he is faithless to her."

"Then it is true!" I cried out in bewilderment. "And she would have betrayed me just as shamelessly."

"My word of honor," he replied earnestly, "serves as guarantee for the truth of what I have said."

I was beside myself, going from one end of the room to the other as I wrung my hands and from time to time let out nonsensical sounds.

Anton, who in the meantime had spoken to the lancer, came to my side now and said that we should go home. This appealed to me very much, and I followed him toward the coaches after taking a hasty departure from the company. When we stepped into the square where the coachmen were standing and waiting, one of them gave me a familiar greeting and called for a tip. When I asked Anton what the fellow could want with me and said that I did not know him, "Oh yes," the coachman continued with satisfaction, "I know the gentleman very well. I drove your honor home one evening with Madame Braun." On hearing Eugenia's name

I winced and stopped to ask when and where that might be. It turned out that this was the same coachman who on that first evening, when I brought Eugenia out of the theater and into the mob, had given over his coach to my disposal with such unusual willingness. "I have driven madame as well as my master," he said, "and I know her house as well as my own, but my master, he had to wait til the next day and made a great fuss."

Everything was clear to me. "Whom do you serve?" I asked quickly.

"Baron Lauenst<sup>adt</sup>, but today I am driving his brother, for he himself has been on a trip the whole time and is supposed not to return until tomorrow.

I hurriedly pressed some bills into his hand, threw myself into the coach with Anton, and we rode back to the city.

I had heard enough to have no more room for doubt. In full concert the truth stormed against my embattled spirit on all sides. Anton, who on the way explained and clarified everything -- the enchanted deceptions of the morning and the present glaring rays of truth -- attempted to comfort me and cleared the best path for this by relating to me everything unfavorable about Eugenia that he had heard. With this insight into the lies she had perpetrated, I felt all her charm for me vanish. Now that her spirit no longer contained any truth, it seemed to me her outward character -- her lovely figure, her beautiful face -- everything was killed. Just as one strips all the leaves from a branch, just so was every pleasant feeling wrenched from my memory of her. It was the lie alone that made her appealing, and freed from this, my eyes saw nothing more than a narrow, ordinary woman who was too unskilled at lying to be able to capture the prey she so ardently pursued. I could not conceive how I had been able to bear her insane moods, her ridiculous reproaches for so long -- how I had been

able to ferret out something supposedly meaningful that seemed worthy of careful contemplation. I constantly renewed the consideration as to how it was possible that I could delude myself so long to this degree. Her loss no longer pained me: what did give me pain was the shame that I had experienced and that still could have serious results. I wished to have nothing more to do with her and refused to entertain the suggestion made by Anton that I should visit her that evening, allow her to repeat all her assurances, and then expose her perfidy. I had no wish to avenge myself, to shame her. It would avail me nothing to see her put to confusion. It was simply over between us and mattered not to me whether or how she would discover or understand my changed attitude. When Anton saw how firmly decided I was, he wished me happiness at seeing my mind so clear and my heart so free. He said that my resolve reflected a neglected prudence that would easily heal those wounds inflicted by my former lack of discretion. He went on to say that I should be thankful for this healing, which in the end can save a rash person from the trouble that he himself might not be able to avoid! "I, however, am cautious," he continued, "and have nothing to fear where I can see clearly. Do not therefore be annoyed with me if I continue to see Eugenia, as I intend to do this evening. Me she has not betrayed, for as she may easily see afterward, I have known her for what she was from the beginning, and I make no personal criticism of her. She pleases me and there is so little to please one in this world that one must not allow this little to escape. I could not quarrel with my friend's reasoning. As he understood the matter, he was quite right, and if his behavior might appear strange, this lay in the peculiarity of such an innocent, direct, and odd mode of conduct that was devoid of all affectation.

We went our separate ways and now seldom saw each other in the evenings, for this time he devoted completely to Eugenia, with whom he was quite satisfied, although as he later learned, she deceived him in every possible way, but he recognized it soon and merely observed what in his opinion was a comedy performed exclusively for his amusement. Finally he effected a reconciliation between me and the lancer by explaining to us that a deception, once it has been exposed and suspended in every respect, cannot exist effectively in a single relationship, and no matter how glorious the battle over a woman's virtue may be, it becomes highly ridiculous as soon as both warriors are aware of her wickedness.

The season of Carneval had rather slipped by. In any case, all the merriment of it held little charm for me, and now since I had totally forgotten about it as a result of the unhappy deception, there remained for my stay in Vienna nothing to attract me or to heal me, not even to mention the break that had taken place with one I had held so dear and also in part with my friend. My thoughts turned now solely to the events of the greater world, the course of which was becoming ever more serious and which gave to the last days of pleasure a ghastly fascination, so that many who had been happily taking part in the festivities became preoccupied with a sense of doom which in the normal natural course of things would not have overtaken them. The impending great war in which the fate of Austria would be decided more seriously than in many years, called every true heart to arms, and a high excitement enlivened the brave hosts of the verteran army as well as the youthful courage of the militia. Every dweller in this happy land also wanted to be her defender. Already Germans were pouring in from everywhere, so that under the glorious banner of the Prince

who was once their Emperor, they might secure liberty for all. A higher assignment called me from my regiment to Prague, whither I had to make rapid preparation for departure.

All my arrangements having been made, I planned now not to be in Vienna on the following morning. I had already taken my leave of Anton, and since he was as usual with Eugenia, I, being thus left alone, decided to spend my time at the theater where I hoped to find Theresa, who had not accepted my last repeated attempts to call. She was alone in the box, and when I announced my imminent departure, she could not totally conceal a certain dismay. Convinced of her sympathy, I recounted for her the outcome of my relations with Eugenia. Her attention was quite anxious. The remarkable coincidence of finding again on the evening the wretched coachman through whom at the very beginning I might have been able to understand everything, made her thoughtful, and finally she asked whether I should have preferred to know everything right from the beginning or whether perhaps I might not rather have had the happy illusion which with that knowledge would have been impossible. I assured her that the truth was never too dear for me at any price, and I could no longer at all ascribe the loss of my illusion to the real Eugenia, who never could have made me happy. We spoke at length of the sudden resolution of the affair, of Anton's strange conduct, and of the false and seductive charm of Eugenia.

"Oh, how happy she could have been!" cried Theresa suddenly staring straight ahead as though she had not really wished me to hear.

"What is this?" I asked, "You have no reason to say this. Are you not thoroughly happy? I thought you so, thoroughly! Such words can come only from someone who has a complaint. You are surely attractive enough!"

I looked at her questioningly, as though she should speak further, but she retorted fiercely: "Not another word! Not a single question more!" And this with such vehemence that I was truly restrained from inquiring further. We both stared straight ahead. Then after a while I began to speak once more.

"Why did you not tell me everything, since you must have known? You must have been informed. Why did you not tell me how it was with her and in what way she was living, all of which could have been no mystery to you? You must tell me!"

"What I said to you was enough to make you attentive. More I could not say, not I!"

"And why not," I continued. "There can be no such reasons. Speak please! I beg you to speak!"

Theresa hesitated for a long while. I saw her seeking anxiously for escape and became all the more pressing. I begged her constantly not to let me depart without satisfying me about a mystery that seemed to be present here and that would constantly torment my thoughts.

"Listen then!" she finally said and looked at me for a long while as my eyes stared into hers with tense expectation. She seemed to hesitate but not to despair, and after a long silence she continued: "I also was weak enough to be guilty of this frailty, but it was not frailty. It was impossibility! Affection, deep affection held me back... You loved Eugenia. She pleased you. She tormented you. I loved you more! Even more I tormented myself! Now that your happiness is out of reach, that your eyes will not see me tomorrow, I have the miserable courage to confess to you how it is and was with me. The

shame, the unhappiness, the happiness of seeing you -- all is lost. I shall protect myself no longer. Now it is too late. You know not yet the confusion of the world: it is greater than you think. So that you do not imagine me better than I am, you should know that in the midst of this I was loved passionately and gave myself over to it and am now bound by my innermost conscience. So it is with me! Make of it what you can and what you will."

Shaken by such an unexpected confession, I required some time to pull myself together and to survey the whole story of sad misconceptions. All the praise that Anton had heaped on Theresa, which I myself with unsuspecting heart had attributed to her, occurred to me now once again, and I could see before me the possibility of happiness which had passed away forever, untried because of my blindness. Yet it was amazement I felt more than pain, because what I never possessed, was still attempting to possess, I could not count as lost. Theresa's admission had lifter her above any feelings of sadness, and there hovered over us only the heavy seriousness of the humiliating recognition that man is subject to a strange fate which he at most can glimpse but will never succeed in understanding.

The play was over. I grasped Theresa's hand as we left the box. "Once in this place," she said as we walked out, "you declared that we should exchange our roles. It has happened in a different manner from what you had in mind, but you can see yourself that nothing is improved, that each still played a different role from what she was." I accompanied Theresa to the door of her house, where she pressed my hand, turned me back, and bade me an eternal farewell.

Concerning the writings of the Baroness de la Motte Fouqué

A CONVERSATION AT TEA TIME

OTTILIE, FRANZ (reading), FERDINAND (enters).

FERDINAND: Oh, once again I discover you reading. Lovely Ottolie, you furnish us no entertainment sitting there with your lips still. Why not at least take all the wisdom that is printed there and give it life with your voice?

OTTILIE: That is a fine thing. It is not enough that we women write. We are also to read aloud to you?

FERDINAND: That book by a woman?

OTTILIE: Oh, you also belong to those who cannot abide a book written by a woman!

FRANZ: Well that is at least better than his not being able to abide women who write books.

FERDINAND: I must admit that I prefer reading women to reading their books.

FRANZ: In France a woman who writes is charming. In England she is considered to be decorative. With us here in Germany she finds only reproach.

FERDINAND: As it should be. The charm and decorativeness of a German woman is her domesticity. Moreover it is not enough for a German that a woman writes: he also observes what she writes, and I should like to use my recent comparison of a certain type of writer with ravens particularly for these nightingales.

FRANZ: What are you saying about domesticity? Even if one could give the French and English women much fancier names, it is the German women writers who are precisely housewives.

FERDINAND: The German housewives whom I know do not write. I cannot think of a single one. Can you give me examples?

FRANZ: Certainly: Sophie Brentano, Elisa, the author of The Florentine, the author of Agnes von Lilien, Amalie von Imhof, Friederike Brun, Karschin, Karoline Pichler, Margarete Klopstock, and many others whom I could mention along with the Baroness Fouqué.

FERDINAND: Indeed, that is worth consideration!

FRANZ: Do you know the writings of the last mentioned lady?

FERDINAND: I have not read her, but is that necessary in order to judge her?

OTTILIE: Oh, that is too wicked! But I should like to hear your raven parable.

FERDINAND: No matter how high he climbs and bears upward the pilfered gold, one is aware that it does not belong to him, that he has picked it up somewhere out of attraction to its bright appearance, and only too often this attraction to the brightness and shininess causes him to take a false piece for a genuine one. The other similarity is that when they speak one might believe that one were hearing human speech. At the same time I see that my parable becomes an offence when we begin to speak of the Baroness Fouqué, whom it certainly does not suit. But so as not to lose my metaphor, let me say that she could be called a white raven, a phoenix among women writers. If that does not satisfy you, then do it better!

FRANZ: Let me say then that she appears to be like a fairy who, descending from the heavens, associates herself more and more with mankind. At first surrounded by a wondrous fairytale world, she strews about flowers and precious stones from the breezes in endless abundance. Then already closer to reality but still with a strange magical excitement, Rodrich comes forth, out of space, out of time, out of costume, yet in basic character clearly and sharply defined. And now in the

Frau des Falkensteins this creative woman has dedicated herself to the real existence of this world, to all its details and limitations, and calls forth from it the purest ray of light, by which all creation is warmed.

FERDINAND: I should prefer a series of colorful images of life to such a philosophical-religious propensity in these poetic presentations.

OTTILIE: Yes, a woman who is a poet appeals more to me also than one who knows Greek and Latin and speaks wisdom.

FRANZ: A poet? What does it mean to be a poet? Does it mean to measure syllables and make rhymes? Or rather does it mean to recognize the most exalted and the most profound, to express life truly and beautifully, to fill reason, feeling, and sense with clarity, being, and culture, to lift the spirit and calm the soul -- that is what this writer, whom you do not wish to call poet, can and does constantly.

FERDINAND: But it continues to remain awkward. She would have to appear as a visionary, as a prophet.

OTTILIE: Well, she is not without vision, and some traits of her character appear prophetic.

FERDINAND: Cold reflections, ghostly apparitions.

FRANZ: You call coldness what is actually a serene discretion.

OTTILIE: The ghostly quality of her characters actually fits. It is true that they do not always step completely out of the shadows.

FRANZ: On the other hand I should like to say that she presents the conditions and relations of her characters in a lively and urgent way.

OTTILIE: This again seems to be a more masculine talent.

FERDINAND: A woman, then, working on her own: if she is going to write, then it is not relations, not diversions, not fabrications, not imitations that should

occupy her pen. With all the resources of her existence, all the ground of her being, all the powers of her nature, she should become her own subject. Then would the world gain true value from her works, which then might take an imperishable place in the annals of existence. One had the feelings in these abortive novels about Delphines, Korinnes, and Frauen des Falkensteins that while bringing them forth the author did not use her finest powers. Women writers could see a quite different advantage and effect of their talents and spirits if, undistracted by these things, they would express themselves purely and clearly. But in this they all err. I know of only one who is quite free, the Greek Sappho, who in the order and power of that fire and passion that she breathed into her poems, dared as her final work the plunge from the cliffs of Leukas.

V A R N H A G E N  
G E S E L L S C H A F T

## General Contributions to History

## Eagerness to Learn

A recruit was given a dozen lashes. The sergeant announced to him the reason was that he could understand nothing and was to be sent back. "Oh, hit me a few more times!" the recruit pleaded wretchedly, "maybe it will work after all!"

## The Critic

"Anyone with taste cannot stay to the end of Cendrillon."

"Is it so bad?"

"Terrible!"

Two days later. . . "I've been to see Cendrillon."

"Well how did you like it?"

"Quite nice."

"You see, didn't I tell you?"

## Love

Some harsh parents were trying to force their daughter into a bad marriage,

"No!" she cried several times, "I can never marry this man! I do not love him!"

"What?" said the father, "Why do you have to love first?" and turning to his wife he said, "Tell me, did we love each other? And yet we married anyway!"

## A Different Nature

I am deeply homesick for foreign lands.

### The Factories

A rich factory owner boasted, "I nourish over five hundred human beings!"

"On the contrary," responded a student, "You are nourished by five hundred human beings."

*\* Nourishing*

### Sociability

As evening was falling a diplomat made a call on a young woman who could not speak at all on account of her swollen gums. He, however, spoke all the more, and when he had become passionate and had finished his speech, he grasped the lady by the hand and cried, "You are divine!" What he meant by this was that she entertained him so admirably.

### Marriage

Once a man looked at his child seriously for a long time and then asked his wife urgently whether it was really his child. The woman, quite moved, replied, "Since you are in doubt, my dear husband, I shall give you certainty. See here, I give this child to you! Now you can no longer hesitate to call it your own."

### Religion

A young woman of easy virtue cried bitterly because she felt she could not go to confession because she was convinced that she would not be able to resist what the priest would require of her.

### Urbanity

The poet, Br., once read from his poetry to a lady whom he found alone, and finally noticing that he was receiving very little attention, he said, "But I am boring you!" The lady replied in the most charming voice, "Oh, that's all right!"

### A Matter of Conscience

A wife entreated her husband not to drink, but he replied that he was embarrassed to let the jug pass since his friends would jeer at him. "Well," she replied, "at the proper time when the jug comes round, I'll put out the light, so that no one will know whether you drink or not." He seemed satisfied with this arrangement, but when the decisive moment came, he drank nonetheless. His wife reproached him bitterly and said that no one could see him. He answered, "But God sees me!"

### Lessons

A Danish scholar quite steeped in German culture and one of its propagators bragged in jest that he had come to Germany as a scholar, that he had taught but that he had learned nothing. "Except German!" Someone whispered to him and made him laugh with pleasure.

### Privilegia

A peasant was asked why the coocoo lays its eggs in the nest of the hedge-sparrow. He thought a bit and then replied, "It must be an old privilege."

### Patriotism

The confectioner, S...., in Halle was asked how it was when the Brunswick Oels Corps marched through the city. "Oh," he said, "that was a most fortunate day for Halle. My shop was not empty the entire day!"

### Prince

Two swineherds sitting about idly were discussing what they would do if they should become wealthy and prominent. "Well, what would you do," said the one, "if you were prince?" "I?" replied the other after some consideration, "I would tend my swine only on horseback."

### High Finance

A knight in Jutland by the name of Kalff separated himself from his master, retaining possession of two castles, and went over to his master's enemy, who rewarded him then with a third castle. With these three he then returned to his first lord, who said with a laugh, "The calf has returned as a great ox."

### Nobility

A Swiss was staying at an inn in Charlottenburg and often heard the innkeeper called Louis. When a foreigner asked him what his name actually was, he replied, "I will confide in you that my name is Herr von Hasli and I come from a noble line but call myself Louis because it isn't appropriate to be a man of quality."

### The Third Estate

Someone said to a peasant, "In heaven you will have everything good, for there you won't need to work." The peasant looked at him doubtfully and said, "Oh, we'll have to do something. We'll probably have to help make it thunder."

### Human Connoisseurship

Chamfort was one of the greatest human connoisseurs. Once he saw a dog gnawing on a bone and expressed great satisfaction at finally seeing a natural impulse.

### Tolerance

"I hate the Jews so much," a cultivated Jew once said, "that if everyone thought as I do, I should have been sitting in Spandau long ago."