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MAGDA

A Play in Four Acts

By

HERMANN SUDERMANN

Translated from the German by

CHARLES EDWARD AMORY WINSLOW

Note.

HERR HERMANN SUDERMANN has achieved surprising success in passing from novel-writing to dramatic authorship. He has a style of the utmost distinction, and is well skilled in technique. His masterpiece, "Heimat," is absolutely original. No play has ever produced a more impressive effect upon German audiences. When it ceases to be performed, it will still hold a permanent and important place in the libraries of dramatic literature. Though a psychological study, there is no concentration of attention upon morbid conditions. All these have passed before the play begins. There is no passion for mere passion's sake. Its development proceeds from the energies of circumstances and character.

Herr Sudermann, unlike some of the new dramatists, is not lacking in humor; and the snobbishness, stuffy etiquette, and scandal-mongering of a provincial town are well illustrated by the minor characters. Into this atmosphere comes the whirlwind from the outer world with fatal effect. It is scarcely possible to

conceive more varied and intense emotions naturally and even inevitably evolved from the action of a single day. The value of the drama lies in the sharp contrasts between the New and the Old, alternately commanding, in their strife, the adhesion of the spectator or reader. The preparation for the return of "The Prodigal Daughter" occupies an entire act, and invests her entrance with an interest which increases until the tremendous climax. Yet the proud martinet father commands our respect and sympathy; and the Pastor, in his enlightened self-conquest, is the antithesis alike of the narrowness and lawlessness of parent and child, and remains the hero of the swift tragedy.

It is not uncommon that the scrupulousness attending circumstances where partiality would be a natural impulse, makes criticism even unusually exacting. It is believed that in this spirit the present translation may be somewhat confidently characterized as being both spirited and faithful.

E. W.

The Oxford.
January, 1896.

Persons.

SCHWARTZE, *Lieutenant-Colonel on half-pay.*
MAGDA, } *his children by his first wife.*
MARIE, }
AUGUSTA, *born* VON WENDLOWSKI, *his second wife.*
FRANZISKA VON WENDLOWSKI, *her sister.*
MAX VON WENDLOWSKI, *Lieutenant, their nephew.*
HEFFTERDINGT, *Pastor of St. Mary's.*
DR. VON KELLER, *Councillor.*
BECKMANN, *Professor Emeritus.*
VON KLEBS, *Major-General on half-pay.*
MRS. VON KLEBS.
MRS. JUSTICE ELLRICH.
MRS. SCHUMANN.
THERESA, *maidservant of the Schwartze family.*

Place. The principal city of a province.
Time. The present.

MAGDA

ACT I.

SCENE. *Living-room in house of* LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SCHWARTZE, *furnished in simple and old-fashioned style. Left, at back, a glass door with white curtains through which the dining-room is seen. There is also a hall door, through which a staircase to the upper story is visible. Right, a corner window, with white curtains, surrounded by ivy. Left, a door to the* LIEUTENANT-COLONEL'S *room. Steel engravings of a religious and patriotic character, in tarnished gold frames, photographs of military groups, and cases of butterflies on the walls. Right, over the sofa, among other pictures, is the portrait of the first Mrs. Schwartze, young and charming, in the costume of the sixties. Behind the sofa, an old-fashioned desk. Before the window, a small table with work-box and hand sewing-machine. At the back, between the doors, an old-fashioned tall clock. In the left-hand corner, a stand with dried grasses; in front, a table with a small aqua-*

rium. Left, in front, a corner sofa with a small pipe-cupboard behind it. A stove with a stuffed bird on it; and behind, a bookcase with a bust of the old Emperor William.

[MARIE *and* THERESA *discovered.* THERESA *at the door.* MARIE *is occupied with the sewing-machine.*]

THERESA.

Miss Marie!

MARIE.

Well!

THERESA.

Is your father still lying down?

MARIE.

What 's the matter? Has any one called?

THERESA.

No, but — There! Look at that! [*Producing a magnificent mass of flowers.*]

MARIE.

Good Heavens! Take it to my room quickly, or papa — But, Theresa, when the first came yesterday, weren't you told not to let any more be left?

THERESA.

I 'd have sent the florist's boy away if I could, but I was up on the ladder fixing the flag, and

he laid it down and was gone before I could stop him. My, my, though, they 're beautiful! and if I might make a guess, the Lieutenant —

MARIE.

You may not make a guess.

THERESA.

All right, all right. Oh, I know what I wanted to ask. Does the flag hang well? [MARIE *looks out, and nods assent.*]

THERESA.

The whole town is full of flags and flowers, and the most expensive tapestries are hung out of the windows. One would think it was the King's birthday. And all this fuss is about a stupid Music Festival! What is this Music Festival, Miss Marie? Is it different from a choral festival?

MARIE.

Yes, indeed.

THERESA.

Is it better?

MARIE.

Oh, much better!

THERESA.

Oh, well, if it 's better — [*A knock.*]

MARIE.

Come in!

Enter MAX.

THERESA.

Well, *now* I suppose I can leave the flowers.
[*Exit* THERESA, *laughing.*

MARIE.

You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Max.

MAX.

What on earth do you mean?

MARIE.

Are n't these flowers yours?

MAX.

Good Heavens! I can afford a few pennies for a bunch of violets once in a while, but this — Oh, no!

MARIE.

Nor yesterday's?

MAX.

No, nor yesterday's. [MARIE *rings.*]

Enter THERESA.

MARIE.

Please throw these flowers away.

THERESA.

What! Throw those beautiful flowers away?

MARIE.

You are right. The pastor would say, "If God's gifts do not please us, we must at least take care that they give pleasure to others." Would n't he?

MAX.

Probably he would.

MARIE.

Then you had better take them back to the florist's. Did they come from Zimmerman's? [THERESA *nods.*] Well, we 'll sell them if we can, and give the money to Pastor Heffterdingt for his hospital.

THERESA.

Shall I go now?

MARIE.

After you have made the coffee. I 'll serve it myself. [*Exit* THERESA.] These flowers are an insult! I need not tell you, Max, that I have given no one the shadow of an excuse for such a thing.

MAX.

I 'm very sure of that.

MARIE.

And papa was so angry. He simply stormed. And I was quiet because I suspected it was you. If he got hold of the poor fellow, it would go hard with him.

MAX.

Do you think it would be any better if I got hold of him?

MARIE.

What rights have you in the case?

MAX.

Marie! [*Takes her hand.*]

MARIE.

[*Gently disengaging herself.*] Oh, Max, please — not that. You know every corner of my heart. But we must think of the proprieties.

MAX.

Proprieties! Oh, pshaw!

MARIE.

Well, you know what a world we live in. Here, every one is afraid of every one else because each depends upon the good opinion of the other. If a few anonymous flowers can make me talked of, how much more —

MAX.

Oh, yes, I know.

MARIE.

[*Laying her hand on his shoulder.*] Max, you 'll speak again to Aunt Frankie, won't you, about the guaranty[1] of your income?

[1] Without which officers in the German army may not marry.

MAX.

I have already.

MARIE.

Well?

MAX.

[*Shrugging his shoulders.*] As long as she lives, not a penny.

MARIE.

Then there 's only one person who can help us.

MAX.

Your father?

MARIE.

No. For Heaven's sake, don't let him hear of it. He might forbid you the house.

MAX.

What has he against me?

MARIE.

You know how he has been since our misfortune. He feels that there is a blot to be wiped out; and especially now, when the whole town echoes with music, — when everything recalls Magda.

MAX.

What if she should come back, some day?

MARIE.

After twelve years? She will never come.

[*Weeps.*]

MAX.

Marie!

MARIE.

You 're right, you 're right. I will put it away from me.

MAX.

But who is the one person who can help us?

MARIE.

Why, the pastor!

MAX.

Yes, yes, he might.

MARIE.

He can do everything. He stirs your very heart — as if — And then he seems like a kind of relation. He should have been my brother-in-law.

MAX.

Yes, but she would n't have it so.

MARIE.

Don't speak angrily, Max. She must have made atonement. [*A ring.*] Oh, perhaps this is he.

MAX.

No, no, I forgot to tell you. Councillor von Keller asked me to bring him here to-day.

MARIE.

What does he want?

MAX.

He wants to interest himself in the missions — no, it 's in our home work particularly, I think. I don't know — Well, at any rate he wants to come to the committee meeting to-morrow.

MARIE.

I 'll call father and mother. [*Enter* THERESA *with a card.*] Show him in. [*Exit* THERESA.] Entertain him until I come back. [*Gives him her hand.*] And we 'll talk again about the pastor some other time?

MAX.

In spite of the proprieties?

MARIE.

Oh, Max, I've been too forward! Have n't I?

MAX.

Marie!

MARIE.

No, no — we won't speak of it. Good-by.

[*Exit* MARIE.

Enter VON KELLER.

MAX.

You must content yourself with me for a few minutes, my dear Von Keller. [*They shake hands.*]

VON KELLER.

With pleasure, my good sir, with pleasure. [*Sits.*] How our little town is changed by the festival! It really seems as if we were in the great world.

MAX.

[*Laughing.*] I advise you not to say that aloud.

VON KELLER.

What did I say? I assure you I did not mean anything. If such a misunderstanding got abroad —

MAX.

You have nothing to fear from me!

VON KELLER.

Oh, of course not. Ah, how much better it would be to know nothing of the outer world!

MAX.

How long were you away?

VON KELLER.

Five years, with examinations and being sent down to commissioners and all that. Well, now I am back again. I drink home-brewed beer; I patronize local tailors; I have even, with a noble fearlessness of death, eaten the deer-steak of the season; and this I call pleasure! Yes, youth, travel, and women are good things; but the world must be ruled, and sober

men are needed. Your time will come some day. The years of honor are approaching. Yes, yes, especially when one joins the ecclesiastical courts.

MAX.

Are you going to do that?

VON KELLER.

I think of it. And to be at one with those of the cloth — I speak quite openly with you — it is worth my while, in short, to interest myself in religious questions. I have of late in my speeches, as perhaps you know, taken this position; and as for the connections which this household has — let me tell you I am proud of them.

MAX.

You might have been proud long ago.

VON KELLER.

Excuse me, am I over-sensitive? Or do I read a reproach in your words?

MAX.

Not quite that, but — if you will pardon me, it has sometimes appeared — and not to me alone — as if you avoided the houses where my uncle's family were to be found.

VON KELLER.

And my presence here now — does not that prove the contrary?

MAX.

Exactly. And therefore I too will speak very frankly. You were the last person to meet my lost cousin, Magda.

VON KELLER.

[*Confused.*] Who says —

MAX.

You yourself have spoken of it, I am told. You met her with my friend Heydebrand when he was at the military academy.

VON KELLER.

Yes, yes, it 's true.

MAX.

It was wrong of me not to ask you about her openly, but you will probably understand my reticence. I feel almost as if I belonged to this family and I feared to learn something which might disgrace it.

VON KELLER.

Oh, not at all, not in the least. It was like this. When I was in Berlin for the State Examinations, I saw one day on Leipsic Street a familiar face, — a home face, if I may say so. You know what that is when one is far away. Well, we spoke to each other. I learned that she was studying to sing in opera, and that for this purpose she had left her home.

MAX.

Not exactly. She left home to be companion to an old lady. [*Hesitates.*] There was a difference with her father.

VON KELLER.

A love affair?

MAX.

In a way. Her father supported the suitor and told her to obey or leave his house.

VON KELLER.

And she went away?

MAX.

Yes. Then, a year later, when she wrote that she was going on the stage, it made the breach complete. But what else did you hear?

VON KELLER.

That 's all.

MAX.

Nothing else?

VON KELLER.

Well, well, — I met her once or twice at the opera-house where she had a pass.

MAX.

And you know absolutely nothing of her life?

VON KELLER.

[*With a shrug.*] Have you heard nothing from her?

MAX.

Nothing at all. Well, at any rate, I am grateful to you. I beg you, however, not to mention the meeting to my uncle, unless he asks you about it directly. He knows of it, of course, but the name of the lost daughter is never mentioned in this house.

VON KELLER.

Oh, I have tact enough not to do that.

MAX.

And what do you think has become of her?

VON KELLER.

Oh, music is a lottery. Ten thousand blanks and one prize. A host of beginners and but one who makes a career. If one becomes a Patti or a Sembrich, or, to come down to our own Festival —

Enter SCHWARTZE *and* MRS. SCHWARTZE.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Shaking hands.*] Welcome to my house! Councillor von Keller, my wife.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Pray sit down.

VON KELLER.

I should not have dared, madam, to ask the honor of this introduction had I not wished so strongly to share in the good and useful work which centres here. My purpose may excuse my temerity.

SCHWARTZE.

You 're very kind; but you do us too much honor. If you seek the centre of the whole movement, Pastor Heffterdingt is the man. He inspires all; he controls all; he —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Do you know our pastor, sir?

VON KELLER.

I have heard him speak many times, dear lady, and have admired equally the sincerity of his convictions and his naïve faith in human nature. But I cannot comprehend the influence he exerts.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

You will find it out. He is so plain and simple that one hardly realizes what a man he is. He brings every one round.

VON KELLER.

I am almost converted already, dear lady.

SCHWARTZE.

As for us here, all I can do is to give these weak and useless hands to help on the great work. It 's only right that an old soldier should dedicate the little strength left him by the throne to the service of the altar. Those are the two causes to fight for.

VON KELLER.

That 's a great thought !

SCHWARTZE.

Thanks, thanks, but no more of this. Ah, ten years ago, when they gave me my discharge, I was a devil of a fellow. Max, does n't my old battalion still tremble at my name ?

MAX.

That they do, uncle.

SCHWARTZE.

Ah, that is one thing you escape in the civil service, — being laid on the shelf without any fault of your own, — without the shadow of a fault. Then there came a slight stroke of apoplexy. See how my hand trembles now ! And what had I to look forward to ? It was then that my young friend, Heffterdingt, showed me the way, through work and prayer, to a new youth. Without him I never should have found it.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

You must n't believe all he says, Mr. von Keller. If he did n't always depreciate himself, he would be better thought of in the highest circles.

VON KELLER.

High and low, madam, everywhere your husband is known and honored.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Lighting up.*] Indeed? Ah, well, no vanity. No, no, that is the moth that corrupts.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Is it really so wrong to wish for a little honor?

VON KELLER.

Oh!

SCHWARTZE.

What is honor? You would call it being led up the room by the governor, or being asked to tea at the castle when the royal family is here.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

You know very well that the latter honor has never fallen to my lot.

SCHWARTZE.

Oh, yes, pardon me. I knew your weak spot. I should have avoided it.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes, just think, Councillor, Mrs. Fanny Hirschfeld of the Children's Hospital was invited, and I was not.

VON KELLER.

[*Deprecatingly.*] Oh!

SCHWARTZE.

[*Laughing, and stroking her head.*] Ah, the moth that corrupts, the moth that corrupts! [*Enter* MARIE *with the coffee. She bows in a friendly way to* VON KELLER.] Herr von Keller, my daughter — my only daughter.

VON KELLER.

I've already had the pleasure.

MARIE.

I can't offer you a hand for welcome, Dr. Von Keller, but you may have a cup of coffee instead.

VON KELLER.

[*Helping himself and looking at the others.*] I am very fortunate in being treated like an old acquaintance of the family.

SCHWARTZE.

As far as we are concerned, you shall become not only an acquaintance but a friend. And that is no conventional politeness, Councillor; for I know you, and in these times, when all the

ties of morality and authority seem strained to bursting, it is doubly necessary that those who stand for the good old patriarchal order should hold together.

VON KELLER.

Very true, very true indeed. One does n't hear such sentiments as that in the world in general, where modern ideas pass current for small change.

SCHWARTZE.

Modern ideas! Oh, pshaw! I know them. But come into the quiet homes where are bred brave soldiers and virtuous wives. There you 'll hear no talk about heredity, no arguments about individuality, no scandalous gossip. There modern ideas have no foothold, for it is there that the life and strength of the Fatherland abide. Look at this home! There is no luxury, — hardly even what you call good taste, — faded rugs, birchen chairs, old pictures; and yet when you see the beams of the western sun pour through the white curtains and lie with such a loving touch on the old room, does not something say to you, "Here dwells true happiness"? [VON KELLER *nods with conviction.*]

SCHWARTZE.

[*Broodingly.*] And here it might have dwelt!

MARIE.

[*Hurrying to him.*] Papa!

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, yes, I know. Well, in this house rules old-fashioned paternal authority. And it shall rule as long as I live. And am I therefore a tyrant? Tell me. You ought to know.

MARIE.

You 're the best, the dearest —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

He is so excitable, you see, Councillor.

SCHWARTZE.

Have you not been well brought up? And shall we not hold together, we three? But the age goes on planting rebellion in children's hearts, putting mistrust between man and wife [*rises*], and it will never be satisfied till the last roof-tree smokes in ruins, and men wander about the streets, fearful and alone, like homeless curs. [*Sinks back exhausted.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

You ought not to get so wrought up, papa. You know it is bad for you. [MAX *makes a sign to* VON KELLER.]

VON KELLER.

Shall I go? [MAX *nods.*] This is an interesting subject to develop, Colonel. I must say I think perhaps you are a little severe. But my time —

SCHWARTZE.

Severe? Ah, well, don't think ill of an old man for speaking a little too hotly.

VON KELLER.

Ah, sir, heat is the badge of youth. I believe I am a graybeard beside you.

SCHWARTZE.

No, no. [*Presses his hand.*]

VON KELLER.

Madam! Miss Marie! [*Exit.* MAX *follows him.*]

SCHWARTZE.

Greet the battalion for me, my boy.

MAX.

I will, dear uncle. [*Exit.*

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

A very agreeable man.

MARIE.

Almost too agreeable.

SCHWARTZE.

You are speaking of our guest! [MRS. SCHWARTZE *makes* MARIE *a sign to be careful.*]

MARIE.

Will you have your pipe, papa?

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, dear.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

The gentlemen of the card-club will be here soon. How lucky that we did n't eat the haunch of venison Sunday! I 've ordered some red wine for the General, too. I paid three marks; that 's not too dear, is it?

SCHWARTZE.

Not if it 's good. Is your sister coming to-day?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

I think so.

SCHWARTZE.

She was asked to the Governor's yesterday, was n't she?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Sighing.*] Yes.

SCHWARTZE.

And we were not. Poor thing! She must look out for me to-day if she boasts. [*Aside*] Old cat!

MARIE.

[*Kneels before him, lighting his pipe.*] Be good, father dear. What harm does it do you?

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, yes, darling. I 'll be good. But my heart is sore. [*Bell rings.* MARIE *hurries out.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Here they are.

Enter MAJOR-GENERAL VON KLEBS, PROFESSOR BECKMANN, *and* MARIE.

VON KLEBS.

My humblest respects to the ladies. Ah, my dear madam! [*Kisses her hand.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Make yourselves at home, gentlemen.

VON KLEBS.

Ha, my dear Colonel, hearty as ever? All ready for the fray, little one? Now we are all right. But we were almost too late. We were caught in the Music Festival crowd. Such a confusion! I was bringing the schoolmaster along, and just as we passed by the German House, there was a great crush of people, gaping as if there were a princess at the least. And what do you suppose it was? A singer! These are really what one may call goings-on. All this fuss about a singer! What do they call the person?

BECKMANN.

Ah, General, we seem to be in a strange land to-day.

VON KLEBS.

We are under a curse, my dear madam. We are bearing a penance. [*They sit.*]

BECKMANN.

But you must know dall' Orto, the great Italian Wagner singer. We are very fortunate in getting her for the festival. If she were not here —

VON KLEBS.

Well, well, what if she were not? Eh? I hoped that our strictly moral circle, at least, would hold itself aloof from all this. But since the Governor gives receptions in the lady's honor! And, best of all, to cap the climax, who do you think was standing to-day among the enthusiasts, craning his neck like the rest? You 'll never guess. It 's too inconceivable. The pastor!

SCHWARTZE.

The pastor?

VON KLEBS.

Yes, our pastor.

SCHWARTZE.

How extraordinary!

VON KLEBS.

Now, I ask you, what did he want there? And what did the others want there? And what good is the whole festival?

BECKMANN.

I should think that the cultivation of the faculty of the ideal among the people was an object —

VON KLEBS.

The way to cultivate the faculty of the ideal is to found a Soldiers' Union.

SCHWARTZE.

But, General, every one is n't so lucky as to be a soldier.

VON KLEBS.

[*Sorting his cards.*] Well, we have been, Colonel. I know no one, I wish to know no one, who has not been a soldier. And all this so-called Art, — what good does it do?

BECKMANN.

Art raises the moral tone of the people.

VON KLEBS.

There we have it, madam! — We 're beaten, beaten by the hero of Königgrätz. — I tell you Art is a mere invention of those who are afraid to be soldiers to gain an important position for themselves. I pass.

SCHWARTZE.

I pass.

BECKMANN.

And will you maintain that Art — I have the nine of spades.

[*Bell rings. Exit* MARIE. VON KLEBS *makes an impatient movement.* SCHWARTZE *quiets him. They begin to play.*]

Enter FRANZISKA, *followed by the* PASTOR.

VON KLEBS.

Ah, Miss Franziska! [*Aside*] That is the end of us!

SCHWARTZE.

No, no, we 'll send her into the garden.

FRANZISKA.

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*] Oh, I am so hot! I must get my breath. Pray don't put yourself out, General.

BECKMANN.

Nine of spades!

VON KLEBS.

Hello, here 's the pastor too!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Good-day to you! [*He shakes hands with each.*]

VON KLEBS.

How long have you been running after the singers, Pastor?

HEFFTERDINGT.

What? Oh, yes. Yes, I am running after singers. That 's my occupation now.

SCHWARTZE.

You can play with our card-party though, can't you?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Unfortunately, no. I must, on the contrary, ask for a few serious words with you, my dear sir.

VON KLEBS.

Ah, but you 'll put it off, won't you, Pastor?

FRANZISKA.

Oh, for Heaven's sake! It 's so important. There must be no delay.

SCHWARTZE.

Is my sister-in-law in it too?

FRANZISKA.

Very much so.

VON KLEBS.

Oh, well, we can go away again.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Oh, we should n't like that at all.

SCHWARTZE.

If it were not you, dear pastor, who separated us!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

But perhaps, Marie, the gentlemen would be willing to take a turn with you in the garden.

VON KLEBS.

Certainly! That 's good! That 's famous! That 's what we 'll do! Miss Marie, be so good as to lead the way.

BECKMANN.

Shall we leave the cards as they lie?

VON KLEBS.

Yes, you have the nine of spades. Come on.

[*Exit* VON KLEBS, BECKMANN, *and* MARIE.

SCHWARTZE.

Well?

FRANZISKA.

Good Lord, don't you see how upset I am? You might at least give me a glass of water.

[MRS. SCHWARTZE *brings it.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

Will you promise me, my dear sir, that whatever may happen you will preserve your calm-

ness? You may believe me, much depends upon it.

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, yes; but what —

HEFFTERDINGT.

Miss Franziska will tell you better.

FRANZISKA.

[*After drinking the water.*] This is a day indeed! Fate is avenging me. This man has for years outraged my holiest feelings, but to-day I can heap coals of fire on his head. [*Moved.*] Brother-in-law, give me your hand. Sister, yours.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Pardon me, dear Miss Franziska, I think your news is so important that —

FRANZISKA.

[*Melting.*] Don't be angry, don't be angry. I am so upset! Well, yesterday I was at the Governor's. Only the nobility and the most important people were asked. You were n't asked?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Angrily.*] No.

FRANZISKA.

I did not mean to offend you. Oh, I am so upset! [*Suppressing a sob at a sign from the*

PASTOR.] Yes, yes, yes. I had on my yellow silk dress with the Brussels lace — you know I 've had the train shortened. Well, as I stepped into the room — whom do you think I saw?

SCHWARTZE.

Well, well, who?

FRANZISKA.

[*Sobbing.*] Your child ! Magdalene !

[SCHWARTZE *staggers, and is supported by the* PASTOR. MRS. SCHWARTZE *cries out. A pause.*]

SCHWARTZE.

Pastor?

HEFFTERDINGT.

It is true.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Standing up.*] Magdalene is no longer my child.

FRANZISKA.

Ah, just wait. If you listen, you 'll look at it in quite another light. Such a child you will welcome with open arms.

SCHWARTZE.

Magdalene is no longer my child.

HEFFTERDINGT.

But you may at least hear the circumstances.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Dazed.*] Yes, I suppose so.

FRANZISKA.

[*At a sign from* HEFFTERDINGT.] Well, the great dining-hall was crammed. They were almost all strangers. Then I saw his Excellency coming down the room. And on his arm was a lady —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

On his Excellency's arm?

FRANZISKA.

With dark hair, and very proud and tall — and around her a crowd of men just like the circle about royalty — and chatting and laughing. And any one to whom she spoke seemed as happy as if it were the Princess. And she wore half a dozen orders, and an orange band with a medal about her neck. I was wondering what royal personage it could be — when she turned half around — and — I knew Magda's eyes!

SCHWARTZE.

Impossible!

FRANZISKA.

That is what I saw!

HEFFTERDINGT.

My dear Colonel, it is true.

SCHWARTZE.

If she — [*Clasping his hands.*] At least she has not fallen! She has not fallen! Father in Heaven, Thou hast kept her safely!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

And what is she, to have such honor —

HEFFTERDINGT.

She has become a great singer, and calls herself, in Italian, Maddalene dall' Orto.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Listen, listen, Leopold, the famous singer of whom the papers are so full is our child!

SCHWARTZE.

Magda is no longer my child.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Is that your fixed resolve?

FRANZISKA.

What sort of a heart have you? You ought to imitate me. She offended me as only she could, — the little wretch! That is, then she was a little wretch. But now — well, she did not look at me; but if she had —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Leopold, she was on his Excellency's arm!

SCHWARTZE.

I tell you, and you, — and you, too, Pastor, — that I would rather have seen her lying in rags and tatters at my feet and begging for forgiveness. For then I should have known that she was still, at heart, my child. But why has she come back here? The world was large enough for her triumph. Why should she rob this humble provincial nest of ours? I know why. To show her miserable father how far one can rise in the world by treading filial duty into the dust, — that is her intention. Pride and arrogance speak in her, and nothing else.

HEFFTERDINGT.

My dear Colonel, I might ask, what speaks in you? A father's love? You could make no pretence to that. Your rights? I think rather it would be your right to rejoice in the good fortune of your child. Offended custom? I don't know — Your daughter has done so much through her own strength that even offended custom might at least condone it. It appears to me that pride and arrogance speak in you — and nothing else.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Angrily.*] Pastor!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Oh, don't be angry — there is no need of **that.** When I have something to say, I must

say it, must n't I? I might almost think that it displeased you that she has climbed so high in spite of you. Your pride demands something to forgive, and you are angry because there is nothing to be forgiven. And now, let me ask you, do you seriously wish that she had found her way home, lost and ruined? Do you dare answer for such a wish before the throne of God? [*A silence.*] No, my dear old friend. You have often, in jest, called me your good angel; let me be so once, in reality. Come with me — now — to-day.

FRANZISKA.

If you 'd only seen — [HEFFTERDINGT *stops her.*]

SCHWARTZE.

Has she made the slightest effort to approach her parents? Has she thought of her home with one throb of love? Who will vouch for it that my outstretched hand will not be repulsed with scorn?

HEFFTERDINGT.

I will vouch for it.

SCHWARTZE.

You? You, above all, have had a proof of her untamable pride.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*With embarrassment.*] You should not have reminded me of that.

Enter MARIE *with flowers, and* THERESA.

MARIE.

Papa, papa, listen to what Theresa — Oh! am I interrupting?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Pulling himself together.*] What is it?

MARIE.

To-day I got some more flowers; and when I sent Theresa back to the florist's, she found out it was not a man, but a lady, who had ordered them. And she could n't sell them again; so she brought them back. [*The others exchange glances.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

Tell me, Theresa, did they describe this lady to you?

THERESA.

She was tall, with great dark eyes, and there was something very distinguished and foreign about her.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Leads* MARIE *to the back of the stage, and lays his hand on* SCHWARTZE'S *arm.*] You asked for a token of love!

SCHWARTZE.

[*Staring at the flowers.*] From her!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

They must have cost a small fortune!

MARIE.

Theresa has something else very wonderful to tell, too.

HEFFTERDINGT.

What is it, Theresa? Quick!

THERESA.

If the pastor wishes it. When I came back, the porter told me that last evening in the twilight a carriage stopped before the door; there was a lady inside. She didn't get out, but kept watching all the windows of our house where there were lights. And when he went out to ask what she wanted, she said something to her coachman, and they were gone! [*All show signs of astonishment.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

That 's all, Theresa. [*Exit* THERESA.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Pardon us, dear Miss Marie, if we treat you once more like a child, and ask you to leave us alone for a moment.

MARIE.

I am so frightened at all this, Pastor. [*Imploringly.*] Papa?

SCHWARTZE.

What is it, child?

MARIE.

Papa, papa, do you know who this lady is?

SCHWARTZE.

I? No. I can only guess.

MARIE.

[*Bursting out.*] Magdalene — Magda! Magda is here! [*Falling on her knees.*] Oh, you will forgive her?

SCHWARTZE.

Get up, my child. Your sister is far above my poor forgiveness.

HEFFTERDINGT.

She is not above your love.

MARIE.

Magda is here! Magda herself is here! [*Throws her arms about her mother's neck, weeping.*]

FRANZISKA.

Won't any one bring me a glass of water? I am so upset!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Are you quite resolved? [SCHWARTZE *remains motionless.*] Will you let her go on her way without —

SCHWARTZE.

That would be best.

HEFFTERDINGT.

How will it be with you if in your death-hour a longing for your lost child comes upon you, and all you can say to yourself is, "She stood before my door and I would not open it"?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Shaken and half convinced.*] What would you have me do? Must I abase myself before my runaway child?

HEFFTERDINGT.

No, you shall not do that. I — I — will go to her.

SCHWARTZE.

You? Pastor — you?

HEFFTERDINGT.

This afternoon I waited before her hotel to see if Miss Franziska had not been mistaken. At a quarter to four she came out of the house and got into her carriage.

MARIE.

You saw her?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

How did she look? What did she have on?

HEFFTERDINGT.

The performance began at four, and must be almost over now. I will wait for her again at the hotel, and will tell her that she will find your arms open to her. May I?

MARIE.

Yes, yes, papa, won't you let him?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Just think with whom your daughter —

SCHWARTZE.

Will you swear to me that no weak and personal motives are mixed with your intention, — that you do what you do in the name of our Lord and Saviour?

HEFFTERDINGT.

I swear it!

SCHWARTZE.

Then God's will be done. [MARIE *gives a cry of joy.* HEFFTERDINGT *presses* SCHWARTZE'S *hand.*]

SCHWARTZE.

[*Holding his hand, speaking softly.*] The way will be hard for you, I know. Your lost youth — your pride —

HEFFTERDINGT.

Dear Colonel, I begin to think that pride is a very poor sort of thing. It really profits us little to have it always in our mouths. I am giving back a daughter to an old father. I am giving back a home to an erring soul. That, I think, is enough. [*Exit.* MARIE *throws herself on her father's breast, laughing and crying.*]

ACT II.

SCENE *same as* ACT I. *It is evening; only a slight glow of sunset still shines through the windows.*

[MARIE *and* THERESA *discovered.*]

THERESA.

[*Bringing in a lighted lamp.*] Miss Marie! Miss Marie! — What is she staring at all the time? Miss Marie!

MARIE [*starting*].

[*From the window.*] What do you want?

THERESA.

Shall I lay the supper?

MARIE.

Not yet.

THERESA.

It 's half-past seven.

MARIE.

And he left at half-past six. The performance must have been over long ago. She will not come.

THERESA.

Who? Is any one coming to supper?

MARIE.

No, no, no. [*As* THERESA *is going.*] Theresa! do you suppose you could pick a couple of bouquets in the garden?

THERESA.

I might try, but I could n't tell what I was getting. It 's almost pitch dark.

MARIE.

Yes, yes. You may go.

THERESA.

Shall I try to pick the flowers, or —

MARIE.

No — thank you, no.

THERESA.

[*Aside.*] What is the matter with her?

[*Exit.*

Enter MRS. SCHWARTZE.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Well, Marie, whatever happens I 've put on my other cap, — the one with the ribbons. Is it straight?

MARIE.

Yes, mamma dear, very nice.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Has n't Aunt Frankie come up yet?

MARIE.

No.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Heavens! I forgot the two gentlemen entirely. And papa has locked himself up, and will hear nothing and see nothing. Oh, if the General should be offended! It is our most aristocratic connection. That would be a misfortune indeed.

MARIE.

Oh, mamma dear, when he hears what is the matter!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes, yes, I know. And the pastor has not come either. Marie, one minute. If she should ask you —

MARIE.

Who?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Why, Magda.

MARIE.

Magda!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What am I to you, Marie? They call it stepmother. I 'm more than that, am I not?

MARIE.

Certainly, mamma dear.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

You see, *then* I could not get used to having two such big daughters. But it 's all right now? [MARIE *nods.*] And we do love each other?

MARIE.

Very much, mamma dear. [*She kisses her.*]

Enter FRANZISKA.

FRANZISKA.

[*Irritably.*] One 's always disturbing these affecting tableaux!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What did the General say?

FRANZISKA.

The General? H'm, he was angry enough. "To leave us alone for an hour and a half, that 's nice courtesy," he said. And I think myself—

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*To* MARIE, *very sadly.*] There, what did I tell you?

FRANZISKA.

Well, this time I smoothed the thing over, so that the gentlemen went away in a good humor.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Really! Oh, I thank you, Frankie, a thousand times.

FRANZISKA.

Yes, I 'm good enough to run errands and play the scullery-maid; but when it comes to being one of the family, an old aunt with her heart full of love —

MARIE.

Who has offended you, Aunt Frankie?

FRANZISKA.

Yes, that 's very fine. But a little while ago, when I was so upset, no one troubled himself about me one bit. To guarantee an income so that our little miss can be married, I am—

MARIE.

Aunt Frankie!

FRANZISKA.

But as long as I live —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What are you talking about?

FRANZISKA.

We know, we two. And to-day. Who brought back your daughter to you?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

But she has n't yet —

FRANZISKA.

I brought back your daughter to you. And who thanks me for it? And who recognizes that I have pardoned her? For I have pardoned her [*weeping*] everything!

Enter THERESA, *in great excitement.*

MARIE.

What is it, Theresa?

THERESA.

I am so frightened —

MARIE.

What 's the matter?

THERESA.

The carriage —

MARIE.

What carriage?

THERESA.

The same as last night.

MARIE.

Is it there? Is it there? [*Runs to the window.*] Mamma, mamma, come, she 's there — the carriage —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Why, there *is* a carriage.

MARIE.

[*Beating on the door at the left.*] Papa, papa! Come quickly, be merciful, come quickly!

[*Exit* THERESA *at a sign from* FRANZISKA.

Enter SCHWARTZE.

SCHWARTZE.

What 's the matter?

MARIE.

Magda — the carriage!

SCHWARTZE.

Good God! [*Hurries to the window.*]

MARIE.

Look — look! She 's standing up! She 's trying to look into the windows. [*Clapping her hands.*] Papa! papa!

SCHWARTZE.

What is it you have to say?

MARIE.

[*Frightened.*] I? Nothing.

SCHWARTZE.

Perhaps you were going to say, "She stood before your door and you would not open it." Eh?

MARIE.

Yes, yes.

SCHWARTZE.

Do you hear, wife? She stands before our door. Shall we — in spite of our pride — shall we call her in?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Oh, Leopold, since everybody thinks so much of her —

MARIE.

Ah! She 's driving away!

SCHWARTZE.

No, no, she 's not. Come, we will bring her to you.

FRANZISKA.

Yes, yes, bring her to me, too.

[*Exit* SCHWARTZE *and* MRS. SCHWARTZE.

MARIE.

She 's sitting back again! If only the carriage does n't — What a long time they are! They must have got downstairs. [*Frightened, almost beside herself.*] There — there — oh, don't go away! Magda! Magda!

FRANZISKA.

Don't scream so! What 's the matter?

MARIE.

She 's looking round. She 's seen them. She 's stopping. She 's bursting open the door. She 's jumped out! Now! Now! She 's in father's arms! [*Covers her face and sobs.*] Oh, Aunt Frankie! Aunt Frankie!

FRANZISKA.

What else could a father do? Since I have forgiven her, he could not — he could not hold out —

MARIE.

She 's between father and mother. Oh, how grand she is! She 's coming — she 's coming. What a homely little thing I shall seem beside her! Oh, I am so frightened! [*Leans against the wall, left. A pause. Voices of* MAGDA *and her parents are heard outside.*]

Enter MAGDA, *brilliantly dressed, with a large mantle, and a Spanish veil on her head. She embraces* MARIE.

MAGDA.

My puss! My little one! How my little one has grown! My pet — my — [*kissing her passionately*]. But what 's the matter? You 're dizzy. Come, sit down. No, no, please sit

down. Now. Yes, you must. [*Places* MARIE *in an arm-chair.*] Dear little hands, dear little hands! [*Kneels before her, kissing and stroking her hands.*] But they 're rough and red, and my darling is pale. There are rings round her eyes.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Lays his hand lightly on her shoulder.*] Magda, we are here too.

MAGDA.

Yes, yes — I 'm entirely — [*Standing up, affectionately.*] Dear old papa! How white you have become! Dear papa! [*Taking his hand.*] But what 's the matter with your hand? It 's trembling.

SCHWARTZE.

Nothing, my child. Don't ask about it.

MAGDA.

H'm — and you 've grown handsomer with the years. I can't look at you enough. I shall be very proud with such a handsome papa. But she must get better [*indicating* MARIE]. She's as white as milk. Do you take iron? Eh? You must take iron? [*tenderly*]. Just to think that I am at home! It seems like a fairy tale. It was a capital idea of yours to call me back without any explanations — *senza complimenti* — for we 've outgrown those silly misunderstandings long ago.

SCHWARTZE.

Misunderstandings!

MAGDA.

I came near driving away. Would not that have been bad of me? But you must acknowledge, I have scratched at the door — very quietly, very modestly — like Lady when she had run away. Where is Lady? Her place is empty. [*Whistles.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Why, she 's been dead seven years!

MAGDA.

Ah, *povera bestia* — yes, I forgot. And, mamma! — yes, mamma! I have n't looked at you yet. How pretty you 've grown! You used to have an air of belated youth about you that was not becoming. But now you 're a dear, old little mother. One wants to lay one's head quietly in your lap. I will, too. It 'll do me good. Ah, what fine quarrels we used to have! I was a contrary little beast. And you held up your end. But now we 'll smoke the pipe of peace, sha'n't we?

MRS. SCHWARZE.

You 're joking with me, Magda.

MAGDA.

Sha'n't I? May n't I? There, there, — pure love, pure love. We will have nothing but love. We shall be the best of friends.

FRANZISKA.

[*Who has for a long time tried to attract attention.*] And we also, eh, my dear Magda?

MAGDA.

Tiens, tiens! [*Examines her critically through her lorgnette.*] Same as ever. Always active? Always, as of old, the centre of the family?

FRANZISKA.

Oh —

MAGDA.

Well, give us your hand! There. I never could bear you, and shall never learn, I 'm afraid. That runs in the blood, does n't it?

FRANZISKA.

I have already forgiven you.

MAGDA.

Really! Such magnanimity! I hardly — Do you really forgive everything? From top to bottom? Even that you stirred up my mother against me before she ever came into the house? That you made my father — [*Puts her hand to her lips.*] *Meglio tacere! Meglio tacere!*

MARIE.

[*Interrupting.*] For Heaven's sake, Magda!

MAGDA.

Yes, my darling — nothing, not a word.

FRANZISKA.

She has a fine presence!

MAGDA.

And now let me look about me! Ah, everything's just the same. Not a speck of dust has moved.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

I hope, Magda, that you won't find any specks of dust.

MAGDA.

I'm sure of that, *mammina*. That was n't what I meant. Twelve years! Without a trace! Have I dreamed all that comes between?

SCHWARTZE.

You will have a great deal to tell us, Magda.

MAGDA.

[*Starting.*] What? Well, we will see, we will see. Now I should like — What would I like? I must sit still for a moment. It all comes over me so. When I think — From that door to the window, from this table to the old bureau, — that was once my world.

SCHWARTZE.

A world, my child, which one never outgrows, which one never should outgrow — you have always held to that?

MAGDA.

What do you mean? And what a face you make over it! Yes, yes, though — that question came at the right time. I have been a fool! I have been a fool! My dear old papa, this happiness will be short.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Why?

MAGDA.

What do you think of me? Do you think I am as free as I appear? I 'm a weary, worn-out drudge who is only fortunate when the lash is on her back.

SCHWARTZE.

Whose drudge? What lash?

MAGDA.

That I can't explain, dear father. You don't know my life. You probably would n't understand it, either. Every day, every hour has its work laid out. Ah, well, now I must go back to the hotel.

MARIE.

No, Magda, no.

MAGDA.

Yes, puss, yes. There have been six or seven men there for ever so long, waiting for an audience. But I tell you what, I must have you to-night. Can't you sleep with me?

SCHWARTZE.

Of course. That is — what do you mean — sleep where?

MAGDA.

At the hotel.

SCHWARTZE.

What? You won't stay! You 'll put such an affront on us?

MAGDA.

What are you thinking of? I have a whole retinue with me.

SCHWARTZE.

Your father's house is the place for this retinue.

MAGDA.

I don't know. It is rather lively. First, there 's Bobo, my parrot, a darling, — he would n't be bad; then my pet maid, Giulietta, a little demon, — I can't live without her; then my courier, — he 's a tyrant, and the terror of landlords; and then we must n't forget my teacher.

FRANZISKA.

He 's a very old man, I hope.

MAGDA.

No, he 's a very young man.

SCHWARTZE.

[*After a silence.*] Then you must have forgotten your — your *dame d'honneur.*

MAGDA.

What *dame d'honneur?*

SCHWARTZE.

You can't travel about from country to country with a young man without —

MAGDA.

Ah! does that disquiet you? I can, — be quite easy, — I can. In my world we don't trouble ourselves about such things.

SCHWARTZE.

What world is that?

MAGDA.

The world I rule, father dear. I have no other. There, whatever I do is right because I do it.

SCHWARTZE.

That is an enviable position. But you are still young. There must be cases when some direction — in short, whose advice do you follow in your transactions?

MAGDA.

There is no one who has the right to advise me, papa dear.

SCHWARTZE.

Well, my child, from this hour your old father claims that right. Theresa! [THERESA *answers from outside.*] Go to the German House and bring the baggage —

MAGDA.

[*Entreatingly.*] Pardon, father dear, you forget that my orders are necessary.

SCHWARTZE.

What? — Yes, yes, I forgot. Do what you will, my daughter.

MARIE.

Magda — oh, Magda!

MAGDA.

[*Taking her mantle.*] Be patient, darling. We 'll have a talk soon all to our two selves. And you 'll all come to breakfast with me, won't you? We can have a good chat and love each other! — so much!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

We — breakfast with you?

MAGDA.

I want to have you all under my roof.

SCHWARTZE.

The roof of a hotel?

MAGDA.

Yes, papa dear, I have no other home.

SCHWARTZE.

And this?

MARIE.

Don't you see how you 've hurt him?

Enter the PASTOR. *He stops, and seems to control strong emotion.* MAGDA *examines him with her lorgnette.*

MAGDA.

He too! Let me see.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Just think. She is going away again!

HEFFTERDINGT.

I don't know whether I am known to the lady.

MAGDA.

[*Mockingly.*] You 're too modest, Pastor. And now since I have seen you all — [*Puts on her mantle.*]

SCHWARTZE.

[*Quickly, aside.*] You must keep her.

HEFFTERDINGT.

If? If you are powerless, how can I —

SCHWARTZE.

Try!

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Constraining himself, with embarrassment.*] Pardon me, madam, it seems very officious of me — if I — will you give me a few moments' interview?

MAGDA.

What have we two to say to each other, my dear pastor?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Oh, do, please! He knows best about everything.

MAGDA.

[*Ironically.*] Indeed!

MARIE.

I may never ask you for anything again, but do this one thing for my sake!

MAGDA.

[*Patting her and looking from one to the other.*] Well, the child asks so prettily. Pastor, I am at your service. [MARIE *thanks her silently.*]

FRANZISKA.

[*Aside to* MRS. SCHWARTZE.] Now he 'll give her a lecture. Come.

SCHWARTZE.

You were once the cause of my sending her from my home. To-day you must see to it that she remains. [HEFFTERDINGT *expresses doubt.*]

SCHWARTZE.

Marie!

MARIE.

Yes, papa.

[*Exit* SCHWARTZE, MRS. SCHWARTZE, FRANZISKA, *and* MARIE.

MAGDA.

[*Sits down and examines him through her lorgnette.*] So this is the man who undertakes by a five minutes' interview entirely and absolutely to break my will. That they believe in your ability to do it shows me that you are a king in your own dominions. I make obeisance. And now let me see you ply your arts.

HEFFTERDINGT.

I understand no arts, madam, and would avail myself of none. If they put some trust in me here, it is because they know that I seek nothing for myself.

MAGDA.

[*Ironically.*] That has always been the case?

HEFFTERDINGT.

No, madam. I had, once in my life, a strong, an intense desire. It was to have you for my

wife. I need only look at you to see that I was presumptuous. Since then I have put the wish away from me.

MAGDA.

Ah, Pastor, I believe you 're paying court to me now.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Madam, if it were not discourteous —

MAGDA.

Oh, then even a shepherd of souls may be discourteous !

HEFFTERDINGT.

I should commiserate you on the atmosphere which has surrounded you.

MAGDA.

[*With mocking superiority.*] Really? What do you know about my atmosphere?

HEFFTERDINGT.

It seems to me that it has made you forget that serious men are to be taken seriously.

MAGDA.

Ah ! [*Rising.*] Well, then I will take you seriously ; and I will tell you that you have always been unbearable to me, with your well-acted simplicity, your droning mildness, your — Since, however, you condescended to cast your eyes on my worthlessness and drove me from home with your suit, — since then, I have hated you.

HEFFTERDINGT.

It seems to me that according to this I was the foundation of your greatness.

MAGDA.

You 're right there. Here I was parched and stifled. No, no, I don't hate you. Why should I hate you so much? It 's all so far, so very far, behind me. If you only knew how far! You have sat here day after day in this heavy close air, reeking of lavender, tobacco, and cough mixture, while I have felt the storm breaking about my head. Pastor, if you had a suspicion of what life really is, — of the trial of strength, of the taste of guilt, of conquest, and of pleasure, — you would find yourself very comical with your clerical shop-talk. Ha, ha, ha! Pardon me, I don't believe such a laugh has rung through this respectable house for twelve years; for there 's no one here who knows how to laugh. Is there, eh?

HEFFTERDINGT.

No, I fear not.

MAGDA.

Fear, you say. That sounds as though you deprecated it. But don't you hate laughter?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Most of us cannot laugh, madam.

MAGDA.

And to those who could, laughter is sin. You might laugh yourself. What have you to be solemn about? You need not look at the world with this funereal mien. Surely you have a little blond wife at home who knits industriously, and half a dozen curly heads around her, of course. It 's always so in parsonages.

HEFFTERDINGT.

I have remained single, madam.

MAGDA.

Ah! [*Silence.*] Did I hurt you so much, then?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Let that be, shall we not? It is so long ago.

MAGDA.

[*Letting her mantle fall.*] And your work, — does not that bring happiness enough?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Thank God, it does. But if one takes it really in earnest, one cannot live only for one's self; at least, I cannot. One cannot exult in the fulness of one's personality, as you would call it. And then many hearts are opened to me — One sees too many wounds there, that one cannot heal, to be quite happy.

MAGDA.

You 're a remarkable man — I don't know — if I could only get rid of the idea that you 're insincere.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Will you let me ask you one question before you go?

MAGDA.

Well!

HEFFTERDINGT.

It is about an hour since you entered this house, your home — no, not so much. I could not have been waiting for you nearly as long as that.

MAGDA.

For me? You? Where?

HEFFTERDINGT.

In the corridor outside your room.

MAGDA.

What did you want there?

HEFFTERDINGT.

My errand was useless, for now you are here.

MAGDA.

Do you mean to say that you came for me — you to whom I — If any one had an interest in keeping me away, it was you.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Are you accustomed to regard everything which those about you do as the result of selfish interest?

MAGDA.

Of course. It 's so with me! [*Struck by a new thought.*] Or perhaps you — No, I 'm not justified in that assumption. [*Sharply.*] Ah, such nonsense! it is only fit for fairy tales. Well, Pastor, I 'll own that I like you now better, much better than of old when you — what shall I say? — made an honorable proposal.

HEFFTERDINGT.

H'm!

MAGDA.

If you could only end it all with a laugh — this stony visage of yours is so unfriendly — one is quite *sconcertata.* What do you say? *Je ne trouve pas le mot.*

HEFFTERDINGT.

Pardon me, may I ask the question now?

MAGDA.

Good Lord, how inquisitive the holy man is! And you don't see that I was coquetting with you a little. For, to have been a man's fate, — that flatters us women, — we are grateful for it. You see I have acquired some art meanwhile. Well, out with your question!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Why — why did you come home?

MAGDA.

Ah!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Was it not homesickness?

MAGDA.

No. Well, perhaps a very little. I 'll tell you. When I received the invitation to assist at this festival — why they did me the honor, I don't know — a very curious feeling began to seethe within me, — half curiosity and half shyness, half melancholy and half defiance, — which said: "Go home incognito. Go in the twilight and stand before the paternal house where for seventeen years you lived in bondage. There look upon what you were. But if they recognize you, show them that beyond their narrow virtues there may be something true and good."

HEFFTERDINGT.

Only defiance then?

MAGDA.

At first, perhaps. Once on the way, though, my heart beat most wonderfully, as it used to do when I 'd learnt my lesson badly. And I always did learn my lessons badly. When I stood before the hotel, the German House, — just think, the German House, where the great

officials and the great artists stayed, — there I had again the abject reverence as of old, as if I were unworthy to step on the old threshold. I entirely forgot that I was now myself a so-called great artist. Since then, every evening I have stolen by the house, —very quietly, very humbly, — always almost in tears.

HEFFTERDINGT.

And nevertheless you are going away.

MAGDA.

I must.

HEFFTERDINGT.

But —

MAGDA.

Don't ask me why. I must.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Has any one offended your pride? Has any one said a word of your needing forgiveness?

MAGDA.

Not yet — or, yes, if you count the old cat.

HEFFTERDINGT.

What is there in the world which draws you away again after an hour?

MAGDA.

I will tell you. I felt it the first minute I came. The paternal authority already stretches

its net over me again, and the yoke stands ready beneath which I must bow.

HEFFTERDINGT.

But there is neither yoke nor net here. Do not fear shadows. Here are only wide-opened arms which wait to clasp the lost daughter to the empty breast.

MAGDA.

Oh, I beg you, none of that. I do not intend to furnish a pendant to the prodigal son. If I came back as a daughter, as a lost daughter, I should not hold my head up before you as I do; I should grovel in the dust in full consciousness of all my sins. [*With growing excitement.*] And that I will not do — that I cannot do — for I am what I am, and I cannot be another. [*Sadly.*] And therefore I have no home — therefore I must go forth again — therefore —

Enter MRS. SCHWARTZE.

HEFFTERDINGT.

For Heaven's sake, hush!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Excuse me, Pastor, I only wanted to know about supper. [*Imploringly to* MAGDA, *who sits turned away with her hands before her face.*] We happen to have a warm joint to-day. You know, Pastor, the gentlemen of the card-club were to be with us. Now, Magda, whether

you 're going away or not, can't you eat a mouthful in your father's house?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Don't ask now, my dear madam.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Oh, if I 'm interrupting — I only thought —

HEFFTERDINGT.

Later.

MARIE.

[*Appearing in the doorway.*] Will she stay? [MAGDA *shrinks at the sound of the voice.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

'Sh! [*Exit* MRS. SCHWARTZE *and* MARIE.

HEFFTERDINGT.

You have no home, Miss Magda? Did you hear the old mother beseeching and alluring with the best that she has, though it 's only a poor dish? Did you hear Marie's voice trembling with tears in the fear that I should not prevail? They trust me too much; they think I only need to speak the word. They don't suspect how helpless I stand here before you. Look! Behind that door are three people in a fever of sorrow and love. If you cross this threshold, you rob each of them of so much life. And you have no home?

MAGDA.

If I have one, it is not here.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Embarrassed.*] Perhaps — Nevertheless you should not go. Only a few days, — just not to take away the idea that you belong here. So much you owe to them !

MAGDA.

[*Sadly.*] I owe nothing now to any one here.

HEFFTERDINGT.

No? Really nothing? Then I must tell you about a certain day, — eleven years ago now. I was called into this house in haste, for the Colonel was dying. When I came, he lay there stiff and motionless, his face drawn and white ; one eye was already closed, in the other still flickered a little life. He tried to speak, but his lips only quivered and mumbled.

MAGDA.

What had happened?

HEFFTERDINGT.

What had happened? I will tell you. He had just received a letter in which his eldest daughter bade him farewell.

MAGDA.

My God !

HEFFTERDINGT.

It was a long time before he recovered from the apoplectic stroke. Only a trembling in the right arm, which you perhaps have noticed, now remains.

MAGDA.

That is indeed a debt I owe.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Ah, if that were all, Miss Magda! Pardon me, I call you by the name I used long ago. It springs to my lips.

MAGDA.

Call me what you like. Go on.

HEFFTERDINGT.

The necessary result followed. When he received his discharge, — he will not believe in the cause, don't speak to him of it, — then his mind broke down.

MAGDA.

Yes, yes; that is my debt too.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Then you see, Miss Magda, began my work. If I speak of it, you must not think I am pluming myself on it to you. What good would that do me? For a long, long time I nursed him, and by degrees I saw his mind revive again. First I let him collect slugs from the rose-bushes.

MAGDA.

[*With a shudder.*] Ugh!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Yes, so far had it gone; then I gave him charge of some money, and then I made him my assistant in the institutions with whose management I was intrusted. There is a hospital and a soup-kitchen and an infirmary, and it makes a great deal to be done. So he became a man once more. I have tried to influence your step-mother too; not because I was greedy for power. Perhaps you 'll think that of me. In short, the old tension between her and Marie has been slowly smoothed away. Love and confidence have descended upon the house.

MAGDA.

[*Staring at him.*] And why did you do all this?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Well, first it is my calling. Then I did it for his sake, for I love the old man; and above all — for — your sake.

[MAGDA *starts, and points to herself interrogatively.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

Yes, for your sake. For this weighed upon me: The day will come when she will turn homeward, — perhaps as victor; but perhaps also as vanquished, broken and ruined in body

and soul — Pardon me these thoughts, I had heard nothing of you — In either case she shall find a home ready for her. That was my work, the work of long years; and now I implore you not to destroy it.

MAGDA.

[*In anguish.*] If you knew through what I have passed, you would not try to keep me.

HEFFTERDINGT.

That is all shut out. This is home. Let it alone; forget it.

MAGDA.

How can I forget it? How dare I?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Why should you resist when all stretch their hands out to you in rejoicing? It 's very easy. Let your heart speak when you see all around overflowing with love for you.

MAGDA.

[*In tears.*] You make me a child again. [*A pause.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

Then you will stay?

MAGDA.

[*Springing up.*] But they must not question me!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Must not question you?

MAGDA.

About my life outside there. They would n't understand, — none of them; not even you.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Well, then, they sha'n't.

MAGDA.

And you will promise me, for yourself and for the others?

HEFFTERDINGT.

Yes, I can promise it.

MAGDA.

[*In a stifled voice.*] Call them, then.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Opening the door on the left.*] She will stay.

Enter MARIE; *then* MRS. SCHWARTZE, FRANZISKA, *and* SCHWARTZE. MARIE *throws herself joyfully into* MAGDA'S *arms.* MRS. SCHWARTZE *also embraces her.*

SCHWARTZE.

It was your duty, my child.

MAGDA.

Yes, father. [*She softly takes his right hand in both of hers, and carries it tenderly to her lips.*]

FRANZISKA.

Thank Heaven! Now we can have supper at last! [*Opens the sliding door into the dining-room. The supper-table is seen, all set, and lighted brightly by a green-shaded hanging-lamp.*]

MAGDA.

[*Gazing at it.*] Oh, look! The dear old lamp! [*The women go slowly out.*]

SCHWARTZE.

[*Stretching out his hands.*] This is your greatest work, Pastor.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Oh, don't, I beg you! And there's a condition attached.

SCHWARTZE.

A condition?

HEFFTERDINGT.

We must not ask about her life.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Startled.*] What? What? I must not —

HEFFTERDINGT.

No, no; you must not ask — you must not ask — or — [*Struck by a new thought.*] If you do not — yes — I am sure she will confess everything herself.

ACT III.

SCENE: *the same. Morning. On the table at the left, coffee-service and flowers.*

[MRS. SCHWARTZE *and* FRANZISKA *discovered.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Excitedly.*] Thank Heaven, you 've come. Such a time we 've had this morning!

FRANZISKA.

So?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Just think, two people have come from the hotel, — a gentleman who looks like a lord, and a young lady like a princess. They 're her servants.

FRANZISKA.

What extravagance!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

And they 're calling and talking all over the house, and neither of them knows any German. And her ladyship ordered a warm bath, that was not warm enough; and a cold douche, which was not cold enough; and spirits,

which she simply poured out of the window; and toilet vinegar, which we did n't have at all.

FRANZISKA.

What demands! And where is your famous young lady?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

After her bath she has gone back to bed again.

FRANZISKA.

I would not have such sloth in my house.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

I shall tell her so. For Leopold's sake — [*Enter* THERESA.] What do you want, Theresa?

THERESA.

Councillor von Keller — he has sent his servant here to ask whether the Lieutenant has come yet, and what is the young lady's answer.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What young lady?

THERESA.

That 's what I don't know.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Then just give our regards, and say that the Lieutenant has not come yet.

FRANZISKA.

He is on duty till twelve. After that he 'll come.

[*Exit* THERESA. *As she opens the door, a great noise is heard in the hall, — a man's voice and a woman's disputing in Italian.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Listen to that! [*Speaking outside.*] Just you wait. Your Signora 'll be here soon. [*Shuts the door.*] Ah! And now, breakfast. What do you think she drinks?

FRANZISKA.

Why, coffee.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

No.

FRANZISKA.

Tea, then?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

No.

FRANZISKA.

Then it must be chocolate!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

No; coffee and chocolate mixed.

FRANZISKA.

Horrible! But it must be good.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

And yesterday half a dozen trunks came from the hotel, and as many more are still there. Ah, what there is in them all! One whole trunk for hats! A peignoir of real point, and open-work stockings with gold embroidery, and [*in a whisper*] silk chemises —

FRANZISKA.

What? Silk —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes.

FRANZISKA.

[*With a gesture of horror.*] It is simply sinful.

Enter MAGDA, *in brilliant morning toilette, speaking outside as she opens the door.*

MAGDA.

Ma che cosa volete voi? Perché non aspettate, finché vi commando? Ha?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Now they are getting their share!

MAGDA.

No, no; *è tempo!* [*Shutting the door.*] *Va, bruto!* Good-morning, mamma. [*Kisses her.*] I 'm a late sleeper, eh? Ah, good-morning, Aunt Frankie. In a good humor? So am I.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What did the strange gentleman want, Magda?

MAGDA.

Stupid beast! He wanted to know when I was going away, the idiot! How can I tell? [*Patting her.*] Eh, *mamma mia?* Oh, children, I slept like the dead. My ear on the pillow, and off! And the douche was so nice and cold. I feel so strong. *Allons, cousine!* Hop! [*Seizes* FRANZISKA *by the waist and jumps her into the air.*]

FRANZISKA.

[*Furiously.*] What do you —

MAGDA.

[*Haughtily.*] Eh?

FRANZISKA.

[*Cringingly*]. You are so facetious.

MAGDA.

Am I? [*Clapping her hands.*] Breakfast!

Enter MARIE, *with a tray of coffee things.*

MARIE.

Good-morning.

FRANZISKA.

Good-morning, my child.

MAGDA.

I 'm dying of hunger. Ah! [*Pats her stomach.* MARIE *kisses* FRANZISKA'S *hand.*]

MAGDA.

[*Taking off the cover, with unction.*] Delicious! One would know Giulietta was in the house.

FRANZISKA.

She has made noise enough, at least.

MAGDA.

Oh, she could n't live without a good row. And when she gets too excited, she quietly throws a plate at your head. I 'm accustomed to it. What is papa doing?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

He 's making his excuses to the members of the Committee.

MAGDA.

Is your life still half made up of excuses? What sort of a committee is it?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

It 's the Christian Aid Society. They should have had a meeting here this morning in our house. Now we thought it would not do. It would look as if we wanted to introduce you.

FRANZISKA.

But, Augusta, now it will look as if your daughter were more important to you —

MAGDA.

Well, I hope she is!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Of course! But — oh dear, you don't know what sort of people they are. They are deserving of great respect. For instance, there 's Mrs. General von Klebs. [*Proudly.*] We are friends of hers.

MAGDA.

[*With sham respect.*] Really?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Now, they 'll probably come to-morrow. Then you 'll meet, besides, some other pious and aristocratic ladies whose patronage gains us a great deal of influence. I 'm curious to see how they 'll like you.

MAGDA.

How I shall like them, you should say.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes — that is — but we 're talking and talking —

MARIE.

[*Jumping up.*] Oh, excuse me, mamma.

MAGDA.

No, you must stay here.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes, Magda; but about your trunks at the hotel, — I am constantly on the rack for fear something should be left.

MAGDA.

Send for them, then, children.

FRANZISKA.

[*Aside to* MRS. SCHWARTZE.] Now I 'll question her thoroughly, Augusta. Leave us alone.

[*Exit* MRS. SCHWARTZE.

FRANZISKA.

[*Sitting down, with importance.*] And now, my dear Magda, you must tell your old aunt all about it.

MAGDA.

Eh? Ah, look here, mamma needs help. Go on, quick! Make yourself useful.

FRANZISKA.

[*Viciously.*] If you command it.

MAGDA.

Oh, I have only to request.

FRANZISKA.

[*Rising.*] It seems to me that your requests are somewhat forcible.

MAGDA.

[*Laughing.*] Perhaps.

[*Exit* FRANZISKA *in a rage.*

MARIE.

Oh, Magda!

MAGDA.

Yes, sweet. That 's the way to go through the world, — bend or break; that is, I never bend. It 's the only way.

MARIE.

Oh, good Heavens!

MAGDA.

Poor child! Yes, in this house one learns quite other views. I bent, myself, yesterday disgracefully. Ah, how nice our old mamma is! [*Earnestly, pointing to the mother's picture.*] And she up there! Do you remember her? [MARIE *shakes her head.*]

MAGDA.

[*Thoughtfully.*] She died too soon! Where 's papa? I want him. And yet I 'm afraid of him too. Now, child, while I eat my breakfast, now you must make your confession.

MARIE.

Oh, I can't.

MAGDA.

Just show me the locket!

MARIE.

There!

MAGDA.

A lieutenant! Naturally. With us it always a tenor.

MARIE.

Oh, Magda, it 's no joke. He is my fate.

MAGDA.

What is the name of this fate?

MARIE.

It 's Cousin Max.

MAGDA.

[*Whistles.*] Why don't you marry the good youth, then?

MARIE.

Aunt Frankie wants a better match for him, and so she won't give him the guaranty he needs. It 's abominable!

MAGDA.

Si! C'est bête, ça! And how long have you loved each other?

MARIE.

I don't remember when we did not.

MAGDA.

And where does he meet you?

MARIE.

Here.

MAGDA.

I mean elsewhere — alone.

MARIE.

We are never alone together. I think this precaution we owe to our own self-respect.

MAGDA.

Come here — close — tell me the truth — has it never entered your mind to cast this whole network of precaution and respect away from you, and to go with the man you love out and away — anywhere — it does n't matter much — and as you lie quietly on his breast, to hurl back a scornful laugh at the whole world which has sunk behind you?

MARIE.

No, Magda, I never feel so.

MAGDA.

But would you die for him?

MARIE.

[*Standing up with a gesture of enthusiasm.*] I would die a thousand deaths for him!

MAGDA.

My poor little darling! [*Aside.*] They bring everything to naught. The most terrible of all passions becomes in their hands a mere resigned defiance of death.

MARIE.

Whom are you speaking of?

MAGDA.

Nothing, nothing. See here, how large is this sum you need?

MARIE.

Sixty thousand marks.

MAGDA.

When can you be married? Must it be now, or will afternoon do?

MARIE.

Don't mock me, Magda.

MAGDA.

You must give me time to telegraph. One can't carry so much money about with one.

MARIE.

[*Slowly taking it in, and then, with an outburst of joy, throwing herself at* MAGDA'S *feet.*] Magda!

MAGDA.

[*After a silence.*] Be happy, love your husband. And if you hold your first-born on your arm, in the face of the world [*holding out her arms with angry emphasis*] — so, face to face, then think of one who — Ah! some one 's coming.

Enter HEFFTERDINGT *with a portfolio.*

MAGDA.

[*Crossing to him.*] Oh, it 's you. That 's good. I wanted you.

HEFFTERDINGT.

You wanted me? What for?

MAGDA.

Only — I want to talk with you, holy man.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Is n't it good, Miss Magda, to be at home again?

MAGDA.

Oh, yes, except for the old aunt's sneaking about.

MARIE.

[*Who is collecting the breakfast-things; laughing, but frightened.*] Oh, Heavens, Magda!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Good-morning, Miss Marie.

MARIE.

Good-morning, Pastor.

[*Exit, with the table.*

HEFFTERDINGT.

Heavens, how she beams!

MAGDA.

She has reason.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Is n't your father here?

MAGDA.

No.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Is n't he well?

MAGDA.

I think so. I have n't seen him yet. Yesterday we sat together till late. I told him what I could tell. But I think he was very unhappy; his eyes were always searching and probing. Oh, I fear your promise will be badly kept.

HEFFTERDINGT.

That seems like a reproach. I hope you don't regret —

MAGDA.

No, my friend, I don't regret it. But I feel very curiously. I seem to be in a tepid bath, I 'm so weak and warm. What they call German sentiment is awaking again, and I have been so unused to it. My heart seems like a Christmas number of the "Gartenlaube," — moonlight, betrothals, lieutenants, and I don't know what! But the best of it is, I know that I'm playing with myself. I can cast it all off as a child throws away its doll, and be my old self again.

HEFFTERDINGT.

That would be bad for us.

MAGDA.

Oh, don't be angry with me. I seem to be all torn and rooted up. And then I am so afraid —

HEFFTERDINGT.

Of what?

MAGDA.

I can't — I can't be quite one of you. I am an intruder. [*Aside, fearfully.*] If a spectre from without were to appear, this whole idyl would go up in flames. [HEFFTERDINGT *suppresses a start of astonishment.*] And I 'm confined, hemmed in. I begin to be a coward.

HEFFTERDINGT.

I don't think one should be terrified at feeling filial love.

MAGDA.

Filial love? I should like to take that snow white head in my lap and say, "You old child!" And nevertheless I must bend my will, I must bend my will. I am not accustomed to that. I must conquer; I must sing down opposition. I sing or I live, — for both are one and the same, — so that men must will as I do. I force them, I compel them to love and mourn and exult and lament as I do. And woe to him who resists! I sing them down, — I sing and sing until they become slaves and playthings in my hands. I know I 'm confused, but you understand what I mean.

HEFFTERDINGT.

To work the impress of one's own personality, — that 's what you mean, is n't it?

MAGDA.

Si, si, si, si! Oh, I could tell you everything. Your heart has tendrils which twine about other hearts and draw them out. And you don't do it selfishly. You don't know how mighty you are. The men outside there are beasts, whether in love or hate. But you are a man. And one feels like a man when one is near you. Just think, when you came in yesterday, you seemed

to me so small; but something grows out from you and becomes always greater, almost too great for me.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Good Heavens, what can it be?

MAGDA.

What shall I call it, — self-sacrifice, self-abnegation? It is something with self — or rather the reverse. That is what impresses me. And that is why you can do so much with me.

HEFFTERDINGT.

How strange!

MAGDA.

What?

HEFFTERDINGT.

I must own it to you — it is — it is nonsense; but since I have seen you again, a sort of longing has awakened within me to be like you.

MAGDA.

Ha, ha! You, model of men! Like me!

HEFFTERDINGT.

I have had to stifle much in my nature. My peace is the peace of the dead. And as you stood before me yesterday in your freshness, your natural strength, your — your greatness, I said to myself, "That is what you might have been if at the right moment joy had entered into your life."

MAGDA.

[*In a whisper.*] And one thing more, my friend, — sin! We must sin if we wish to grow. To become greater than our sins is worth more than all the purity you preach.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Impressed.*] That would be — [*Voices outside.*]

MAGDA.

[*Starting and listening.*] 'Sh!

HEFFTERDINGT.

What's the matter?

MAGDA.

Nothing, it's only my stupid nervousness; not on my own account, believe me, only out of pity for all these. We shall still be friends?

HEFFTERDINGT.

As long as you need me.

MAGDA.

And when I cease to need you?

HEFFTERDINGT.

There will be no change in me, Miss Magda. [*As he is going, he meets* SCHWARTZE *in the doorway.*]

Enter SCHWARTZE.

SCHWARTZE.

Good-morning, my dear pastor! Will you go out on the porch for a moment? I will follow you. [*Exit* HEFFTERDINGT.] Now, did you sleep well, my child? [*Kisses her on the forehead.*]

MAGDA.

Finely. In my old room I found the old sleep of childhood.

SCHWARTZE.

Had you lost it?

MAGDA.

Have n't you?

SCHWARTZE.

They say a good conscience — Come to me, my child.

MAGDA.

Gladly, papa! No, let me sit at your feet. There I can see your beautiful white beard. When I look at it, I always think of Christmas eve and a quiet snow-covered field.

SCHWARTZE.

My child, you know how to say pretty things. When you speak, one seems to see pictures about one. Here we are not so clever; that is why we have nothing to conceal here.

MAGDA.

We also — But speak quietly, papa.

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, I must. You know what agreement you made with the pastor.

MAGDA.

Which you will keep?

SCHWARTZE.

I am accustomed to keep to what I have promised. But you must see that the suspicion — whatever I may do, the suspicion weighs like a mountain —

MAGDA.

What do you suspect?

SCHWARTZE.

I don't know. You have appeared among us as wonderfully as gloriously. But brilliance and worldly honor and all that don't blind a father's eyes. You seem to be warm at heart too. At least, one would think so to hear you speak. But there is something in your eyes which does not please me, and a scornful curl about your lips.

MAGDA.

Dear, good old papa!

SCHWARTZE.

You see! This tenderness is not that of a daughter towards her father. It is so that one pets a child, whether it be a young or an old one. And although I 'm only a poor soldier, lame and disabled, I demand your respect, my child.

MAGDA.

I have never withheld it. [*Rising.*]

SCHWARTZE.

That is good, that is good, my daughter. Believe me, we are not so simple as we may appear to you. We have eyes to see, and ears to hear, that the spirit of moral revolt is abroad in the world. The seed which should take root in the heart, begins to decay. What were once sins easily become customs to you. My child, soon you will go away. When you return, you may find me in the grave.

MAGDA.

Oh, no, papa!

SCHWARTZE.

It 's in God's hand. But I implore you — Come here, my child — nearer — so — [*He draws her down to him, and takes her head between his hands.*] I implore you — let me be happy in my dying hour. Tell me that you have remained pure in body and soul, and then go with my blessing on your way.

MAGDA.

I have remained — true to myself, dear father.

SCHWARTZE.

How? In good or in ill?

MAGDA.

In what — for me — was good.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Blankly.*] In what — for you — then?

MAGDA.

[*Rising.*] And now don't worry any more. Let me enjoy these few days quietly. They will be over soon enough.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Broodingly.*] I love you with my whole heart, because I have sorrowed for you — so long. [*Threateningly, rising.*] But I must know who you are.

MAGDA.

Father dear — [*Bell rings.* MRS. SCHWARTZE *bursts in.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Just think! the ladies of the Committee are here! They want to congratulate us in person. Do you think we ought to offer them coffee, Leopold?

SCHWARTZE.

I will go into the garden, Augusta.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

For Heaven's sake — they 're just coming — you must receive their congratulations.

SCHWARTZE.

I can't — no — I can't do it! [*Exit, left.*

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What is the matter with your father?

Enter MRS. GENERAL VON KLEBS, MRS. JUSTICE ELLRICH, MRS. SCHUMANN, *and* FRANZISKA.

FRANZISKA.

[*As she opens the door.*] My dear, the ladies —

MRS. VON KLEBS.

[*Giving her hand to* MRS. SCHWARTZE.] What a day for you, my dear! The whole town rejoices in the happy event.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Permit me — my daughter — Mrs. General von Klebs, Mrs. Justice Ellrich, Mrs. Schumann.

MRS. SCHUMANN.

I am only the wife of a simple merchant; but —

MRS. VON KLEBS.

My husband will do himself the honor soon —

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Won't you sit down, ladies? [*They sit.*]

FRANZISKA.

[*With aplomb.*] Yes, it is truly a joyful event for the whole family.

MRS. VON KLEBS.

We have unfortunately not shared the pleasures of the festival, my dear young lady. I must therefore refrain from expressing that admiration to which you are so well accustomed.

MRS. SCHUMANN.

If we had known, we should certainly have ordered tickets.

MRS. VON KLEBS.

Do you expect to remain here for very long?

MAGDA.

That I really cannot say, madam — or, pardon me — your ladyship?

MRS. VON KLEBS.

I must beg you — no.

MAGDA.

Oh, pardon me!

MRS. VON KLEBS.

Oh, please!

MAGDA.

We are such birds of passage, my dear madam, that we can really never plan for the future.

MRS. ELLRICH.

But one must have one's real home.

MAGDA.

Why? One must have a vocation. That seems to me enough.

FRANZISKA.

It 's all in the point of view, dear Magda.

MRS. VON KLEBS.

Ah, we 're so far removed from all these ideas, my dear young lady. Every now and then some person gives lectures here, but the good families have nothing to do with it.

MAGDA.

[*Politely.*] Oh, I can quite understand that. The good families need nothing, as they have plenty to eat. [*A silence.*]

MRS. ELLRICH.

But at least you must have some residence?

MAGDA.

If you call it so, — a place to sleep. Yes, I have a villa by the Lake of Como and an estate at Naples. [*Sensation.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

But you 've said nothing to us about that.

MAGDA.

I hardly ever make use of them, mamma dear.

MRS. ELLRICH.

Art must be a very trying occupation?

MAGDA.

[*In a friendly tone.*] It depends upon how one follows it, my dear madam.

MRS. ELLRICH.

My daughter used to take singing-lessons, and it always taxed her very much.

MAGDA.

[*Politely.*] Oh, I 'm sorry for that.

MRS. ELLRICH.

Naturally, you only do it for pleasure.

MAGDA.

Oh, it 's so much pleasure ! [*Aside to* MRS. SCHWARTZE, *who sits near her.*] Get these women away, or I shall be rude !

MRS. VON KLÆBS.

Are you really engaged by a theatre, my dear young lady?

MAGDA.

[*Very sweetly.*] Sometimes, my dear madam.

MRS. VON KLEBS.

Then you are out of an engagement at present?

MAGDA.

[*Murmurs.*] Oh, come, come! [*Aloud.*] Yes, I 'm a vagabond now. [*The ladies look at each other.*]

MRS. VON KLEBS.

There are really not many daughters of good families on the stage, are there?

MAGDA.

[*In a friendly tone.*] No, my dear madam; most of them are too stupid.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Oh, Magda!

Enter MAX.

MAGDA.

Oh, that must be Max! [*Goes to him and shakes hands.*] Just think, I had quite forgotten your face. We were great friends, were we not?

MAX.

Were we? [*Astonished.*]

MAGDA.

Well, we can begin now.

MRS. ELLRICH.

[*Aside.*] Do you understand this?

[MRS. VON KLEBS *shrugs her shoulder. The ladies rise and take their leave, shaking hands with* MRS. SCHWARTZE *and* FRANZISKA, *and bowing to* MAGDA.]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Confused.*] Must you go already, ladies? My husband will be so sorry —

MAGDA.

[*Coolly.*] *Au revoir*, ladies, *au revoir!*
[*Exit the ladies in the order of their rank.*

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Turning back from the door.*] Mrs. von Klebs was offended, or she would have stayed. Magda, you certainly must have offended Mrs. von Klebs.

FRANZISKA.

And the other ladies, too, were hurt.

MAGDA.

Mamma dear, won't you see about my trunk?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes, yes, I 'll go to the hotel myself. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear! [*Exit.*

FRANZISKA.

Wait, I 'm coming too. [*Spitefully.*] I must make myself useful, of course!

MAGDA.

Oh, Aunt Frankie, a word with you.

FRANZISKA.

Now?

MAGDA.

We 're going to celebrate a betrothal to-day.

FRANZISKA.

What betrothal?

MAGDA.

Between him and Marie.

MAX.

[*Joyfully.*] Magda!

FRANZISKA.

I think, as I occupy a mother's position towards him, that it is my right —

MAGDA.

No; the giver alone has rights, my dear aunt. And now don't fail.

FRANZISKA.

[*Furiously.*] I will make you — [*Exit.*

MAX.

How shall I thank you, my dear Miss —

MAGDA.

Magda, my dear cousin, Magda!

MAX.

Pardon me, it was my great respect —

MAGDA.

Not so much respect, my boy, — I don't like it; more weight, more individuality!

MAX.

Ah, my dear cousin, should a young lieutenant with twenty-five marks' pay, not to speak of debts, have individuality? It would only be a hindrance to him.

MAGDA.

Ah!

MAX.

If I manage my men properly, and dance a correct figure at our regimental balls, and am not a coward, that is enough.

MAGDA.

To make a wife happy, certainly. Go and find her. Go along!

MAX.

[*Starts to go, and turns back.*] Oh, excuse me, in my happiness I entirely forgot the message I — Early this morning — by-the-by, you can't think what a tumult the whole city is in about you — well, early this morning — I was still in bed — an acquaintance came in who is also an old acquaintance of yours, very pale from excitement, and he asked whether it were all true, and if he might come to see you.

MAGDA.

Yes, let him come.

MAX.

He wanted me to ask you first. He would then send in his card this morning.

MAGDA.

What formalities the men go through here! Who is he?

MAX.

Councillor von Keller.

MAGDA.

[*Speaking with difficulty.*] He — what? — he?

MAX.

[*Laughing.*] Pardon me, but you 're as white now as he was.

MAGDA.

[*Quietly.*] I? White?

Enter THERESA *with a card.*

MAX.

Here he is. Dr. von Keller.

MAGDA.

Let him come up.

MAX.

[*Smiling.*] I 'll only say to you, my dear cousin, that he 's a very important man, who has a great career before him, and promises to be a pillar of our religious circle.

MAGDA.

Thank you !

Enter VON KELLER *with a bouquet.*

MAX.

[*Crossing to him.*] My dear Councillor, here is my cousin, who is delighted to see you. You will excuse me.

[*Exit, with a bow to each.*

[VON KELLER *remains standing at the door.* MAGDA *moves about nervously. Silence.*]

MAGDA.

[*Aside.*] Here is my spectre ! [*Indicates a seat at the table, left, and sits down opposite.*]

VON KELLER.

First, you must allow me to express my warmest and most sincere good wishes. This is a surprise which you happily could not have expected. And as a sign of my interest, allow me, my dearest friend, to present you with these modest flowers.

MAGDA.

Oh, how thoughtful! [*Takes the flowers with a laugh, and throws them on the table.*]

VON KELLER.

[*In embarrassment.*] I — I see with sorrow that you resent this approach on my part. Have I in any way been wanting in the necessary delicacy? In these narrow circles a meeting could not have been avoided. I think it is better, my dearest friend, that we should come to an understanding, — that we should know the relations —

MAGDA.

[*Rising.*] You 're right, my friend. I was not at the height of my own nature just now. Had I been, I might have played the deserted Marguerite to the end. The morals of home had infected me a little. But I am myself again. Give me your hand bravely. Don't be afraid, I won't harm you. So — tight — so!

VON KELLER.

You make me happy.

MAGDA.

I 've painted this meeting to myself a thousand times, and have been prepared for it for years. Something warned me, too, when I undertook this journey home — though I must say I hardly expected just here to — Yes, how is it that, after what has passed between us, you came into this house? It seems to me a little —

VON KELLER.

I tried to avoid it until quite recently; but since we belong to the same circles, and since I agree with the views of this family — that is, at least in theory —

MAGDA.

Yes, yes. Let me look at you, my poor friend. How you have changed!

VON KELLER.

[*Laughing nervously.*] I seem to have the misfortune to make a rather absurd figure in your eyes.

MAGDA.

No, oh, no! I can see it all. The effort to keep worthy of respect under such difficulties, with a bad conscience, is awkward. You look down from the height of your pure atmosphere on your sinful youth, — for you are called a pillar, my dear friend.

VON KELLER.

[*Looking at the door.*] Pardon me — I can hardly accustom myself again to the affectionate terms. And if any one should hear us — Would it not be better —

MAGDA.

[*Sadly.*] Let them hear us.

VON KELLER.

[*At the door.*] Good Heavens! Well [*sitting down again*], as I was saying, if you knew with what real longing I look back from this height at my gay, discarded youth —

MAGDA.

[*Half to herself.*] So gay, — yes, so gay.

VON KELLER.

Well, I felt myself called to higher things. I thought — Why should I undervalue my position? I have become Councillor, and that comparatively young. An ordinary ambition might take satisfaction in that. But one sits and waits at home, while others are called to the ministry. And this environment, conventionality, and narrowness, all is so gray, — gray! And the ladies here — for one who cares at all about elegance — I assure you something rejoiced within me when I read this morning that you were the famous singer, — you to whom I was tied by so many dear memories and —

MAGDA.

And then you thought whether it might not be possible with the help of these dear memories to bring a little color into the gray background?

VON KELLER.

[*Smiling.*] Oh, pray don't —

MAGDA.

Well, between old friends —

VON KELLER.

Really, are we that, really?

MAGDA.

Certainly, *sans rancune.* Oh, if I took it from the other standpoint, I should have to range the whole gamut, — liar, coward, traitor! But as I look at it, I owe you nothing but thanks, my friend.

VON KELLER.

[*Pleased, but confused.*] This is a view which —

MAGDA.

Which is very convenient for you. But why should I not make it convenient for you? In the manner in which we met, you had no obligations towards me. I had left my home; I was young and innocent, hot-blooded and careless, and I lived as I saw others live. I gave myself to you because I loved you. I might perhaps

have loved any one who came in my way. That — that seemed to be all over. And we were so happy, — were n't we?

VON KELLER.

Ah, when I think of it, my heart seems to stop beating.

MAGDA.

There in the old attic, five flights up, we three girls lived so merrily in our poverty. Two hired pianos, and in the evening bread and dripping. Emmy used to warm it herself over the oil-stove.

VON KELLER.

And Katie with her verses! Good Lord! What has become of them?

MAGDA.

Chi lo sà? Perhaps they 're giving singing-lessons, perhaps they 're on the stage. Yes, we were a merry set; and when the fun had lasted half a year, one day my lover vanished.

VON KELLER.

An unlucky chance, I swear to you. My father was ill. I had to travel. I wrote everything to you.

MAGDA.

H'm! I did not reproach you. And now I will tell you why I owe you thanks. I was a stupid, unsuspecting thing, enjoying freedom like a runaway monkey. Through you I became a

woman. For whatever I have done in my art, for whatever I have become in myself, I have you to thank. My soul was like — yes, down below there, there used to be an Æolian harp which was left mouldering because my father could not bear it. Such a silent harp was my soul; and through you it was given to the storm. And it sounded almost to breaking, — the whole scale of passions which bring us women to maturity, — love and hate and revenge and ambition [*springing up*], and need, need, need — three times need — and the highest, the strongest, the holiest of all, the mother's love! — All I owe to you!

VON KELLER.

What — what do you say?

MAGDA.

Yes, my friend, you have asked after Emmy and Katie. But you have n't asked after your child.

VON KELLER.

[*Jumping up and looking about anxiously.*] My child!

MAGDA.

Your child? Who calls it so? Yours? Ha, ha! Dare to claim portion in him and I 'll kill you with these hands. Who are you? You 're a strange man who gratified his lust and passed on with a laugh. But I have a child, — my son, my God, my all! For him I lived and starved and

froze and walked the streets ; for him I sang and danced in concert-halls, — for my child who was crying for his bread ! [*Breaks out in a convulsive laugh which changes to weeping, and throws herself on a seat, right.*]

VON KELLER.

[*After a silence.*] I am confounded. If I could have suspected, — yes, if I could have suspected — I will do everything ; I will not shrink from any reparation. But now, I beg you to quiet yourself. They know that I am here. If they saw us so, I should be — [*correcting himself*] you would be lost.

MAGDA.

Don't be afraid. I won't compromise you.

VON KELLER.

Oh, I was not speaking for myself, not at all. But just think, if it were to come out, what the town and your father —

MAGDA.

Poor old man ! His peace is destroyed, at any rate.

VON KELLER.

And think ! the more brilliantly you are placed now, the more certain is your ruin.

MAGDA.

[*Madly.*] And if I wish for ruin ! If I —

VON KELLER.

For Heaven's sake, hush ! some one 's coming.

MAGDA.

[*Springing up.*] Let them come ! Let them all come ! I don't care, I don't care ! To their faces I 'll say what I think of you, — of you and your respectable society. Why should I be worse than you, that I must prolong my existence among you by a lie ! Why should this gold upon my body, and the lustre which surrounds my name, only increase my infamy? Have I not worked early and late for ten long years? Have I not woven this dress with sleepless nights? Have I not built up my career step by step, like thousands of my kind? Why should I blush before any one? I am myself, and through myself I have become what I am.

VON KELLER.

Good ! You may stand there proudly, but you might at least consider —

MAGDA.

Whom? [*As he is silent.*] Whom? The pillar ! Ha, ha ! The pillar begins to totter ! Be easy, my dear friend. I am not revengeful. But when I look at you in all your cowardly dignity — unwilling to take upon you the slightest consequence of your doings, and contrast you with myself, who sank through your love to be a pariah and an outcast — Ah, I 'm ashamed of you. Pah !

VON KELLER.

For Heaven's sake! Your father! If he should see you like this!

MAGDA.

[*In agony.*] My father! [*Escapes through the door of the dining-room, with her handkerchief to her face.*]

Enter SCHWARTZE, *happy and excited, through the hall-door.*

SCHWARTZE.

Ah, my dear Councillor — was that my daughter who just disappeared?

VON KELLER.

[*In great embarrassment.*] Yes, it was —

SCHWARTZE.

Why should she run away from me? Magda!

VON KELLER.

[*Trying to block his path.*] Had you not better — The young lady wished to be alone for a little!

SCHWARTZE.

Now? Why? When one has visitors, one does not — Why should she —

VON KELLER.

She was a little — agitated.

SCHWARTZE.

Agitated?

VON KELLER.

Yes; that 's all.

SCHWARTZE.

Who has been here?

VON KELLER.

No one. At least, as far as I know.

SCHWARTZE.

Then, what agitating things could you two have to talk about?

VON KELLER.

Nothing of importance, — nothing at all, I assure you.

SCHWARTZE.

What makes you look so, then? You can scarcely stand.

VON KELLER.

I? Oh, you 're mistaken, you 're mistaken.

SCHWARTZE.

One question, Councillor — You and my daughter — Please sit down.

VON KELLER.

My time is unfortunately —

SCHWARTZE.

[*Almost threatening.*] I beg you to sit down.

VON KELLER.

[*Not daring to resist.*] Thank you. [*They sit.*]

SCHWARTZE.

You met my daughter some years ago in Berlin?

VON KELLER.

Yes.

SCHWARTZE.

Councillor von Keller, I know you to be as discreet as you are sensible; but there are cases in which silence is a crime. I ask you — and your life-long relations with me give me the right to ask, as well as the mystery — which just now — In short, I ask you, Do you know anything discreditable about my daughter's life there?

VON KELLER.

Oh, for Heaven's sake, how can you —

SCHWARTZE.

Do you not know how and where she lived?

VON KELLER.

No. I am absolutely —

SCHWARTZE.

Have you never visited at her house?

VON KELLER.

[*More and more confused.*] No, no, never, never.

SCHWARTZE.

Not once?

VON KELLER.

Well, I called on her once; but —

SCHWARTZE.

Your relations were friendly?

VON KELLER.

Oh, entirely friendly — of course, only friendly. [*A pause.*]

SCHWARTZE.

[*Passes his hand over his forehead, looks earnestly at* VON KELLER; *then, speaking absently.*] So? Then, honestly — if it might be — if — if — [*Gets up, goes to* VON KELLER, *and sits down again, trying to quiet himself.*] Dr. von Keller, we both live in a quiet world, where scandals are unknown. But I have grown old, very old. And therefore I can't — can't control my thoughts as I should. And I can't rid myself of an idea which has — suddenly — taken possession of me. I have just had a great joy which I don't want to be embittered. But, to quiet an old man, I beg you — give me your word of honor that —

VON KELLER.

[*Rising.*] Pardon me, this seems almost like a cross-examination.

SCHWARTZE.

You must know, then, what I —

VON KELLER.

Pardon me, I wish to know nothing. I came here innocently to make a friendly visit, and you have taken me by surprise. I will not be taken by surprise. [*Takes his hat.*]

SCHWARTZE.

Dr. von Keller, have you thought what this refusal means?

VON KELLER.

Pardon me, if you wish to know anything, I beg you to ask your daughter. She will tell you what — what — And now you must let me go. You know where I live. In case — I am very sorry it has happened so: but — Good-day, Colonel! [*Exit.*

SCHWARTZE.

[*After brooding for a time.*] Magda!

MARIE.

[*Running in anxiously.*] For Heaven's sake, what 's the matter?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Chokingly.*] Magda, — I want Magda.

MARIE.

[*Goes to the door and opens it.*] She 's coming now — down the stairs.

SCHWARTZE.

So! [*Pulls himself together with an effort.*]

MARIE.

[*Clasping her hands.*] Don't hurt her! [*Pauses with the door open.* MAGDA *is seen descending the stairs. She enters in travelling-dress, hat in hand, very pale, but calm.*]

MAGDA.

I heard you call, father.

SCHWARTZE.

I have something to say to you.

MAGDA.

And I to you.

SCHWARTZE.

Go in — into my room.

MAGDA.

Yes, father. [*She goes to the door, left.* SCHWARTZE *follows her.* MARIE, *who has drawn back frightened to the dining-room door, makes an unseen gesture of entreaty.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE: *the same.*

[MRS. SCHWARTZE *and* MARIE *discovered.* MRS. SCHWARTZE, *in hat and cloak, is knocking on the door at the left.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Leopold! Oh, Heaven, I dare not go in.

MARIE.

No, no, don't! Oh, if you 'd only seen his face!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

And they 've been in there half an hour, you say?

MARIE.

Longer, longer!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Now she 's speaking! [*Listening, frightened.*] He 's threatening her. Marie, Marie! Run into the garden. The pastor 's there, in the arbor. Tell him everything, — about Mr. von Keller's being here, — and ask him to come in quickly.

MARIE.

Yes, mamma. [*Hurries to the hall-door.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Wait a minute, Marie. Has Theresa heard anything? If it should get about —

MARIE.

I 've already sent her away, mamma.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

That 's right, that 's right. [*Exit* MARIE. MRS. SCHWARTZE *knocks again.*] Leopold! listen to me, Leopold! [*Retreating.*] Oh, Heaven! he 's coming! [*Enter* SCHWARTZE, *bent and tottering.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

How do you feel, Leopold?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Sinking into a chair.*] Yes, yes, — just like the roses. The knife comes, and cuts the stem, and the wound can never be healed. What am I saying? What?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

He 's out of his mind.

SCHWARTZE.

No, no, I 'm not out of my mind. I know quite well — [MAGDA *appears at the door, left.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What have you done to him?

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, what have you — what have you? That is my daughter. What shall I do with my daughter now?

MAGDA.

[*Humbly, almost beseechingly.*] Father, is n't it best, after what has happened, that you should let me go, — that you should drive me into the streets? You must get free of me if this house is to be pure again.

SCHWARTZE.

So, so, so! You think, then, you have only to go — to go away, out there, and all will be as before? And we? What will become of us? I — good God! — I — I have one foot in the grave — soon it will be over — but the mother, and your sister — your sister.

MAGDA.

Marie has the husband she wants —

SCHWARTZE.

No one will marry a sister of yours. [*With aversion.*] No, no. Don't think it!

MAGDA.

[*Aside.*] My God!

SCHWARTZE.

[*To* MRS. SCHWARTZE.] See, she 's beginning now to realize what she has done.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Yes; what —

MAGDA.

[*In tender sympathy, but still with a tinge of superiority.*] My poor old father — listen to me — I can't change what has passed. I will give Marie half my fortune. I will make up a thousand times all that I have made you suffer to-day. But now, I implore you, let me go my way.

SCHWARTZE.

Oho!

MAGDA.

What do you want of me? What am I to you? Yesterday at this time you did not know even whether I still lived; and to-day — It is madness to demand that I should think and feel again as you do; but I am afraid of you, father, I 'm afraid of you all — ah, I am not myself — [*Breaking out in torment.*] I cannot bear the sorrow.

SCHWARTZE.

Ha, ha!

MAGDA.

Father dear, I will humble myself before you willingly. I lament with my whole heart that I 've brought sorrow to you to-day, for my flesh and blood still belong to you. But I must live out my own life. That I owe to myself, — to myself and mine. Good-by!

SCHWARTZE.

[*Stopping her.*] Where are you going?

MAGDA.

Let me pass, father.

SCHWARTZE.

I 'll kill you first. [*Seizes her.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Leopold! [*Enter* HEFFTERDINGT. *He throws himself between them with a cry of horror.* MAGDA, *freed by the old man, goes slowly back, with her eyes fixed on the* PASTOR, *to the seat, left, where she remains motionless.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*After a silence.*] In God's name!

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, yes, yes, Pastor — it made a fine family group, eh? Look at her! She has soiled my name. Any scoundrel can break my sword. That is my daughter; that is —

HEFFTERDINGT.

Dear Colonel, these are things which I do not understand, and which I do not care to understand. But it seems to me there must be something to do, instead of —

SCHWARTZE.

Yes, to do, — yes, yes, — there 's much to do here. I have much to do. I don't see why I 'm standing here. The worst of it is — the worst of it is, he can say to me — this man — you are a cripple — with your shaking hand — with such a one I can't fight, even if I have had your daughter for a — But I will show him — I will show him — Where is my hat?

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Where are you going, Leopold? [MAGDA *rises.*]

SCHWARTZE.

My hat!

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Gives him hat and stick.*] Here, here!

SCHWARTZE.

So! [*To* MAGDA.] Learn to thank the God in whom you disbelieve, that he has preserved your father until this hour, for he shall bring you back your honor!

MAGDA.

[*Kneeling, and kissing his hand.*] Don't do it, father! I don't deserve this of you.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Bends weeping over her head.*] My poor, poor child!

MAGDA.

[*Calling after him.*] Father!

[*Exit* SCHWARTZE *quickly*

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

My child, whatever happens, we women — we must hold together.

MAGDA.

Thanks, mamma. The play will soon be played out now.

HEFFTERDINGT.

My dear Mrs. Schwartze, Marie is out there, full of sorrow. Go and say a kind word to her.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

What shall I say to comfort her, when all the happiness has gone out of her life? [MAGDA *jumps up in anguish.*] Oh, Pastor, Pastor!

[*Exit.*

MAGDA.

[*After a silence.*] Oh, I am so tired!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Miss Magda!

MAGDA.

[*Brooding.*] I think I shall see those glaring bloodshot eyes before me always — wherever I go.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Miss Magda!

MAGDA.

How you must despise me!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Ah, Miss Magda, I have long been a stranger to despite. We are all poor sinners —

MAGDA.

[*With a bitter laugh.*] Truly we are — Oh, I am so tired! — it is crushing me. There is that old man going out to let himself be shot dead for my sake, as if he could atone for all my sins with his single life! Oh, I am so tired!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Miss Magda — I can only conjecture — what all this means — but you have given me the right to speak to you as a friend. And I feel that I am even more. I am your fellow-sinner, Miss Magda!

MAGDA.

Good Heavens! Still harping on that!

HEFFTERDINGT.

Do you feel the obligation, Miss Magda, to bring honor and peace back to this house?

MAGDA.

[*Breaking out in anguish.*] You have lived through the sorrow, and ask whether I feel it?

HEFFTERDINGT.

I think your father will obtain from that gentleman the declaration that he is ready for any sort of peaceable satisfaction.

MAGDA.

Ha, ha! The noble soul! But what can I do?

HEFFTERDINGT.

You can — not spurn the hand which he will offer you.

MAGDA.

What? You don't mean — This man — this strange man whom I despise — how, how could I —

HEFFTERDINGT.

Dear Miss Magda, there comes an hour to almost every man when he collects the broken pieces of his life, to form them together into a new design. I have found it so with myself. And now it is your turn.

MAGDA.

I will not do it — I will not do it.

HEFFTERDINGT.

You will have to.

MAGDA.

I would rather take my child in my arms and throw myself into the sea.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Suppresses a violent start; continues after a silence, hoarsely.*] Of course, that is the simplest solution. And your father can follow you.

MAGDA.

Oh, have pity on me! I must do whatever you demand. I don't know how you have gained such power over me. Oh, man, if the slightest memory of what you once felt, if the least pity for your own youth, still lives within you, you cannot sacrifice me so!

HEFFTERDINGT.

I do not sacrifice you alone, Miss Magda.

MAGDA.

[*With awakening perception.*] Good God!

HEFFTERDINGT.

There 's no other way. I see none. You know yourself that the old man would not survive it. And what would become of your mother, and what would become of your poor sister? Miss Magda, it is as if with your own hand you set fire to the house and let everything burn that is within. And this house is still your home —

MAGDA.

[*In growing agony.*] I will not, I will not. This house is not my home. My home is with my child!

HEFFTERDINGT.

This child, too. He will grow up fatherless, and will be asked, "Where is your father?" He will come and ask you, "Where is my father?" What can you answer him? And, Miss Magda, he who has not peace in his heart from the beginning will never win it in the end.

MAGDA.

All this is not true, and if it were true, have I not a heart too? Have I not a life to live also? Have I not a right to seek my own happiness?

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Harshly.*] No; no one has that. But do as you will. Ruin your home, ruin your father and sister and child, and then see what heart you have to seek your own happiness. [MAGDA *bows her head, sobbing. The* PASTOR *crosses to her, and leans over the table pityingly, with his hand on her hair.*] My poor —

MAGDA.

[*Seizing his hand.*] Answer me one question. You have sacrificed your life for my sake. Do you think, to-day, in spite of what you know and what you do not know, do you think that I am worth this sacrifice?

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Constrained, as if making a confession.*] I have said already I am your fellow-sinner, Miss Magda.

MAGDA.

[*After a pause.*] I will do what you demand.

HEFFTERDINGT.

I thank you.

MAGDA.

Good-by.

HEFFTERDINGT.

Good-by. [*Exit. He is seen through the open door speaking to* MARIE *and sending her in.* MAGDA *remains motionless, with her face in her hands until he has gone.*

Enter MARIE.

MARIE.

What can I do, Magda?

MAGDA.

Where has the pastor gone?

MARIE.

Into the garden. Mamma is with him.

MAGDA.

If father asks for me, say I shall wait there [*Nods towards left.*]

MARIE.

And have n't you a word for me, Magda?

MAGDA.

Oh, yes. Fear nothing. [*Kisses her on the forehead.*] Everything will come out well, so well — no, no, no. [*In weary bitterness.*] Everything will come out quite well. [*Exit, left.* MARIE *goes into the dining-room.*]

Enter SCHWARTZE. *He takes out a pistol-case and opens it. Takes a pistol, cocks it with difficulty, examines the barrel, and aims at a point on the wall. His arm trembles violently. He strikes it angrily, and lets the pistol sink. Enter* MAX.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Without turning.*] Who 's there?

MAX.

It 's I, uncle.

SCHWARTZE.

Max? Ah, you may come in.

MAX.

Uncle, Marie told me — What are the pistols for, uncle?

SCHWARTZE.

Ah, they used to be fine pistols, — beautiful pistols. See, boy, with this I have hit the ace of hearts at twenty paces, or say fifteen. And fifteen would be enough. We ought to have been in the garden already, but — but [*help-*

lessly touches his trembling arm, almost in tears] — but I can nevermore —

MAX.

[*Hurrying to him.*] Uncle? [*They embrace each other for a moment.*]

SCHWARTZE.

It 's all right, — it 's all right.

MAX.

Uncle, I need not say that I take your place, that I meet any man you point out; it is my right.

SCHWARTZE.

Yours, — why? In what capacity? Will you marry into a disgraced family?

MAX.

Uncle!

SCHWARTZE.

Are you prepared to strip off the uniform of our regiment? Yes, I might set up a gambling-house, and you could play the stool-pigeon for a living. There is no knowing what we might do. What! you, with your beautiful name, your noble name, propose this sacrifice, — and I to profit by it! Ha, ha! No, my boy; even if you still were willing, I am not. This house and all within are marked for ruin. Go your way from it. With the name of Schwartze you have nothing more to do.

MAX.

Uncle, I demand that you —

SCHWARTZE.

Hush! Not now! [*Motions to the door.*] Soon I may need you as one needs a friend in such affairs, but not now — not now. First I must find the gentleman. He was not at home — the gentleman was not at home. But he shall not think he has escaped me. If he is out a second time, then, my son, your work begins. Until then, be patient, — be patient.

Enter THERESA *from hall.*

THERESA.

Councillor von Keller. [SCHWARTZE *starts.*]

MAX.

He here! How —

SCHWARTZE.

Let him come in. [*Exit* THERESA.

MAX.

Uncle! [*Points to himself in great excitement.* SCHWARTZE *shakes his head, and signs to* MAX *to leave the room. Enter* VON KELLER. *Exit* MAX. *They meet in the doorway.* VON KELLER *greets* MAX *courteously.* MAX *restrains himself from insulting him.*]

VON KELLER.

Colonel, I am grieved at having missed you. When I returned from the Casino, where I am always to be found at noon, — where, I say, I am always to be found, — your card lay on the table; and as I imagine that there are matters of importance to be discussed between us, I made haste — as I say, I have made haste —

SCHWARTZE.

Councillor, I do not know whether in this house there should be a chair for you, but since you have come here so quickly, you must be tired. I beg you to be seated.

VON KELLER.

Thanks. [*Sits down, near the open pistol-case, starts as he sees it, watches the* COLONEL *apprehensively.*] H'm!

SCHWARTZE.

Now, have you nothing to say to me?

VON KELLER.

Allow me first one question: Did your daughter, after our conversation, say anything to you about me?

SCHWARTZE.

Councillor, have you nothing to say to me?

VON KELLER.

Oh, certainly, I have a great deal to say to you. I would gladly, for instance, express to you a wish, a request; but I don't quite know whether — Won't you tell me, at least, has your daughter spoken of me at all favorably?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Angrily.*] I must know, sir, how we stand, in what light I am to treat you.

VON KELLER.

Oh, pardon me, now I understand — [*Working himself up.*] Colonel, you see in me a man who takes life earnestly. The days of a light youth — [SCHWARTZE *looks up angrily.*] Pardon me, I meant to say — since early this morning a holier and, if I may say so, a more auspicious resolution has arisen within me. Colonel, I am not a man of many words. I have already wandered from the point. As one man of honor to another, or — in short, Colonel, I have the honor to ask you for the hand of your daughter. [SCHWARTZE *sits motionless, breathing heavily.*] Pardon me, you do not answer — am I perhaps not worthy —

SCHWARTZE.

[*Groping for his hand.*] No, no, no; not that, — not that. I am an old man. These last hours have been a little too much for me. Don't mind me.

VON KELLER.

H'm, h'm!

SCHWARTZE.

[*Rising, and closing the lid of the pistol-case.*] Give me your hand, my young friend. You have brought heavy sorrow upon me, — heavy sorrow. But you have promptly and bravely made it good. Give me the other hand. So, so! And now do you wish to speak to her also? You will have much to say. Eh?

VON KELLER.

If I might be allowed.

SCHWARTZE.

[*Opens the hall-door and speaks off, then opens the door, left.*] MAGDA!

Enter MAGDA.

MAGDA.

What is it, father?

SCHWARTZE.

Magda, this gentleman asks for the honor — [*As he sees the two together, he looks with sudden anger from one to the other.*]

MAGDA.

[*Anxiously.*] Father?

SCHWARTZE.

Now everything 's arranged. Don't make it too long! [*To* MAGDA.] Yes, everything's all right now. [*Exit.*

VON KELLER.

Ah, my dearest Magda, who could have suspected it?

MAGDA.

Then we are to be married.

VON KELLER.

Above all, I don't want you to entertain the idea that any design of mine has been at the bottom of this development which I welcome so gladly, which I —

MAGDA.

I have n't reproached you.

VON KELLER.

No, you have no reason.

MAGDA.

None whatever.

VON KELLER.

Let me further say to you that it has always been my strongest wish that Providence might bring us together again.

MAGDA.

Then you have really never ceased to love me?

VON KELLER.

Well, as an honorable man and without exaggeration I can scarcely assert that. But since early this morning a holier and a more auspicious resolution has arisen within me —

MAGDA.

Pardon me, would this holy and auspicious resolution have arisen within you just the same if I had come back to my home in poverty and shame?

VON KELLER.

My dearest Magda, I am neither self-seeking nor a fortune-hunter, but I know what is due to myself and to my position. In other circumstances there would have been no social possibility of making legitimate our old relations —

MAGDA.

I must consider myself, then, very happy in these ten long years to have worked up unconsciously towards such a high goal.

VON KELLER.

I don't know whether I am too sensitive, but that sounds almost like irony. And I hardly think that —

MAGDA.

That it is fitting from me?

VON KELLER.

[*Deprecatingly.*] Oh!

MAGDA.

I must ask for your indulgence. The rôle of a patient and forbearing wife is new to me. Let us speak, then, of the future [*sits and motions to him to do the same*] — of our future. What is your idea of what is to come?

VON KELLER.

You know, my dearest Magda, I have great designs. This provincial town is no field for my statesmanship. Besides, it is my duty now to find a place which will be worthy of your social talents. For you will give up the stage and concert-hall, — that goes without saying.

MAGDA.

Oh, that goes without saying?

VON KELLER.

Oh, I beseech you — you don't understand the conditions; it would be a fatal handicap for me. I might as well leave the service at once.

MAGDA.

And if you did?

VON KELLER.

Oh, you can't be in earnest. For a hard-working and ambitious man who sees a brilliant future before him to give up honor and position, and as his wife's husband to play the vagabond, — to live merely as the husband of his wife? Shall I turn over your music, or take th tickets at the box-office? No, my dearest friend, you underestimate me, and the position I fill in society. But don't be uneasy. You will have nothing to repent of. I have every respect for your past triumphs, but [*pompously*] the highest reward to which your feminine ambition can aspire will be achieved in the drawing-room.

MAGDA.

[*Aside.*] Good Heaven, this thing I 'm doing is mere madness!

VON KELLER.

What do you say? [MAGDA *shakes her head.*] And the the wife, the ideal wife, of modern times , the consort, the true, self-sacrificing helper of her husband. For instance, you, by your queenly personality and by the magic of your voice, will overcome my enemies, and knit even my friends more closely to me. And we will be largely hospitable. Our house shall be the centre of the most distinguished society, who still keep to the severely gracious manners of our forefathers. Gracious and severe may seem contradictory terms, but they are not.

MAGDA.

You forget that the child on whose account this union is to be consummated will keep the severely inclined away from us.

VON KELLER.

Yes, I know, dear Magda, it will be painful for you; but this child must of course remain the deepest secret between us. No one must suspect —

MAGDA.

[*Astounded and incredulous.*] What — what do you say?

VON KELLER.

Why, it would ruin us. No, no, it is absurd to think of it. But we can make a little journey every year to wherever it is being educated. One can register under a false name; that is not unusual in foreign parts, and is hardly criminal. And when we are fifty years old, and other regular conditions have been fulfilled, [*laughing*], that can be arranged, can't it? Then we can, under some pretext, adopt it, can't we?

MAGDA.

[*Breaks into a piercing laugh; then, with clasped hands and staring eyes.*] My sweet! My little one! *Mio bambino! Mio povero* — *bam* — you — you — I am to — ha, ha, ha! [*Tries to open the folding door.*] Go! go!

Enter SCHWARTZE.

SCHWARTZE.

What —

MAGDA.

Good you 're here ! Free me from this man, take this man away from me.

SCHWARTZE.

What?

MAGDA.

I have done everything you demanded. I have humbled myself, I have surrendered my judgment, I have let myself be carried like a lamb to the slaughter. But my child I will not leave. Give up my child to save *his* career! [*Throws herself into a chair.*]

SCHWARTZE.

Mr. von Keller, will you please —

VON KELLER.

I am inconsolable, Colonel. But it seems that the conditions which for the interest of both parties I had to propose, do not meet the approbation —

SCHWARTZE.

My daughter is no longer in the position to choose the conditions under which she — Dr. von Keller, I ask your pardon for the scene to which you have just been subjected. Wait for me at your home. I will myself bring you my

daughter's consent. For that I pledge you my word of honor. [*Sensation.* MAGDA *rises quickly.*]

VON KELLER.

Have you considered what —

SCHWARTZE.

[*Holding out his hand.*] I thank you, Dr. von Keller.

VON KELLER.

Not at all. I have only done my duty.

[*Exit, with a bow.*

MAGDA.

[*Stretching herself.*] So! Now I'm the old Magda again. [SCHWARTZE *locks the three doors silently.*] Do you think, father, that I shall become docile by being shut up?

SCHWARTZE.

So! Now we are alone. No one sees us but He who sees us — there [*pointing upward*] Quiet yourself, my child. We must talk together.

MAGDA.

[*Sits down.*] Good! We can come to an understanding, then, — my home and I.

SCHWARTZE.

Do you see that I am now quite calm?

MAGDA.

Certainly.

SCHWARTZE.

Quite calm, am I not? Even my arm does not tremble. What has happened, has happened. But just now I gave your betrothed —

MAGDA.

My betrothed? — Father dear!

SCHWARTZE.

I gave your betrothed my word of honor. And that must be kept, don't you see?

MAGDA.

But if it is not in your power, my dear father.

SCHWARTZE.

Then I must die, — then I must simply die. One cannot live on when one — You are an officer's daughter. Don't you understand that?

MAGDA.

[*Compassionately.*] My God!

SCHWARTZE.

But before I die, I must set my home in order, must I not? Every one has something which he holds sacred. What is sacred to your inmost soul?

MAGDA.

My art.

SCHWARTZE.

No, that is not enough. It must be more sacred.

MAGDA.

My child.

SCHWARTZE.

Good! Your child, — your child, — you love it? [MAGDA *nods.*] You wish to see it again? [*She nods.*] And — yes — if you made an oath upon its head [*makes a motion as if he laid his hand upon a child's head*], then you would not perjure yourself? [MAGDA *shakes her head, smiling.*] That's well. [*Rising.*] Either you swear to me now, as upon his head, that you will become the honorable wife of his father, or — neither of us two shall go out of this room alive. [*Sinks back on the seat.*]

MAGDA.

[*After a short silence.*] My poor, dear papa! Why do you torture yourself so? And do you think that I will let myself be constrained by locked doors? You cannot believe it.

SCHWARTZE.

You will see.

MAGDA.

[*In growing excitement.*] And what do you really want of me? Why do you trouble yourself about me? I had almost said, what have you all to do with me?

SCHWARTZE.

That you will see.

MAGDA.

You blame me for living out my life without asking you and the whole family for permission. And why should I not? Was I not without family? Did you not send me out into the world to earn my bread, and then disown me because the way in which I earned it was not to your taste? Whom did I harm? Against whom did I sin? Oh, if I had remained the daughter of the house, like Marie, who is nothing and does nothing without the sheltering roof of the home, who passes straight from the arms of her father into the arms of her husband; who receives from the family life, thought, character, everything, — yes, then you would have been right. In such a one the slightest error would have ruined everything, — conscience, honor, self-respect. But I? Look at me. I was alone. I was as shelterless as a man knocked about in the world, dependent on the work of my own hands. If you give us the right to hunger — and I have hungered — why do you deny us the right to love, as we can find it, and to happiness, as we can understand it?

SCHWARTZE.

You think, my child, because you are free and a great artist, that you can set at naught —

MAGDA.

Leave art out of the question. Consider me nothing more than the seamstress or the servant-maid who seeks, among strangers, the little food and the little love she needs. See how much the family with its morality demand from us! It throws us on our own resources, it gives us neither shelter nor happiness, and yet, in our loneliness, we must live according to the laws which it has planned for itself alone. We must still crouch in the corner, and there wait patiently until a respectful wooer happens to come. Yes, wait. And meanwhile the war for existence of body and soul is consuming us. Ahead we see nothing but sorrow and despair, and yet shall we not once dare to give what we have of youth and strength to the man for whom our whole being cries? Gag us, stupefy us, shut us up in harems or in cloisters — and that perhaps would be best. But if you give us our freedom, do not wonder if we take advantage of it.

SCHWARTZE.

There, there! That is the spirit of rebellion abroad in the world. My child — my dear child — tell me that you were not in earnest — that you — that you — pity me — if — [*Looking for the pistol-case*]. I don't know what may happen — child — have pity on me!

MAGDA.

Father, father, be calm, I cannot bear that.

SCHWARTZE.

I will not do it — I cannot do it — [*Looking still for the pistol-case.*] Take it from me! Take it from me!

MAGDA.

What, father?

SCHWARTZE.

Nothing, nothing, nothing. I ask you for the last time.

MAGDA.

Then you persist in it?

SCHWARTZE.

My child, I warn you. You know I cannot do otherwise.

MAGDA.

Yes, father, you leave me no other way. Well, then, are you sure that you ought to force me upon this man — [SCHWARTZE *listens*] that, according to your standards, I am altogether worthy of him? [*Hesitating, looking into space.*] I mean — that he was the only one in my life?

SCHWARTZE.

[*Feels for the pistol-case and takes the pistol out.*] You jade! [*He advances upon her, trying to raise the weapon. At the same moment he falls back on the seat, where he remains motionless, with staring eyes, the pistol grasped in his hand, which hangs down by his side.*]

MAGDA.

[*With a loud cry.*] Father! [*She flies toward the stove for shelter from the weapon, then takes a few steps, with her hands before her face.*] Father! [*She sinks, with her knees in a chair, her face on the back. Calling and knocking outside. The door is broken open.*] *Enter* MAX, MARIE, HEFFTERDINGT, *and* MRS. SCHWARTZE.

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

Leopold, what 's the matter? Leopold! [*To the* PASTOR.] O my God, he 's as he used to be!

MARIE.

Papa dear! Speak, one word! [*Throws herself down at his right.*]

HEFFTERDINGT.

Get the doctor, Max.

MAX.

Is it a stroke?

HEFFTERDINGT.

I think so. [*Exit* MAX. *Aside to* MAGDA.] Come to him. [*As she hesitates.*] Come; it is the end. [*Leads her trembling to* SCHWARTZE'S *chair.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Who has tried to take the pistol.*] Let it go, Leopold; what do you want with it? See, he 's holding the pistol and won't let it go.

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Aside.*] It is the convulsion. He cannot. My dear old friend, can you understand what I 'm saying to you? [SCHWARTZE *bows his head a little.* MAGDA *sinks down at his left.*] God, the All-Merciful One, has called you from on high. You are not her judge. Have you no sign of forgiveness for her? [SCHWARTZE *shakes his head slowly.*]

MARIE.

[*Sinking down by* MAGDA.] Papa, give her your blessing, dear papa! [*A smile transfigures his face. The pistol escapes from his hand. He raises his hand slowly to place it on* MARIE'S *head. In the midst of this motion a spasm goes through his body. His arm falls back, his head sinks.*]

MRS. SCHWARTZE.

[*Crying out.*] Leopold!

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Taking her hand.*] He has gone home. [*He folds his hands. Silent prayer, broken by the sobbing of the women.*]

MAGDA.

[*Springing up and spreading out her arms in agony.*] Oh, if I had only never come! [HEFFTERDINGT *makes a motion to beg her silence. She misunderstands.*] Are you going to drive

me away? His life was the cost of my coming. May I not stay now?

HEFFTERDINGT.

[*Simply and peacefully.*] No one will hinder you from praying upon his grave.

[*Curtain falls slowly.*]

THE END.

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