

**The armless fiddler, a pediscript : being the life story of a vaudeville man / by C.H. Unthan ; with a preface by J. Malcolm Forbes.**

**Contributors**

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# THE ARMLESS FIDDLER











TWENTY YEARS OLD. MY FIRST ENGAGEMENT IN VIENNA, 1868; DIANASAAL, THE FAMOUS "WALTZ  
KING," JOHANN STRAUSS, CONDUCTING

219/35 10/6 net

# THE ARMLESS FIDDLER

## *A PEDISCRIP*

BEING  
THE LIFE STORY  
OF A  
VAUDEVILLE MAN

*by*  
C. H. UNTHAN

*With a Preface by*  
J. MALCOLM FORBES

ILLUSTRATED



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Motto:

Where there's a will there's a way





## P R E F A C E

AMONG the records of handicapped lives the autobiography of Herman Unthan deserves an important place. It is the story of the varied and interesting experiences of a person born without arms. In reading it one is reminded of the life of Helen Keller, for both individuals were courageous in the face of exceptional obstacles and both developed remarkable compensating abilities. The armless man learned to write, to play several musical instruments, to become an expert swimmer, and he managed to earn his living while travelling alone over two continents. He did not entirely escape the suffering of being pitied by others, and the loneliness of being different from the rest of mankind, but, to judge from the record of his activities and the way in which he describes them, he seems to have been a happy person.

Of especial interest to parents and educators is the account of Unthan's childhood. How much did his successful development depend on the attitudes of his parents? His father insisted that the boy should not be pitied by anyone, nor helped when he could possibly do things for himself. His mother gave him love and a sense of underlying security. He was allowed to play as one of the village lads and not made to be a lonely onlooker. It is a fundamental question to what extent compensations for organic inferiority are dependent upon the right kind of early environment, and to what extent there is an internal stimulus for adjustment from the disability itself. This book gives interesting evidence that the environmental conditions were extremely important.

I first heard of Herman Unthan from Dr. Seif of Munich. In his lectures on child psychology Dr. Seif often gave it as his opinion that the aim of education ought to be that "no child should despair." Well did the armless fiddler exemplify this goal!

J. MALCOLM FORBES

LONDON

*June* 1935



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# THE ARMLESS FIDDLER

## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

(1848-1863)

*Birth—Opinion of the Neighbours—The Midwife's Proposal—Father's Three Laws—My First Attempt to Wash Myself—A Slide into the Pond—A Climbing Adventure—Schooldays—Striving for Independence—Father's Birthday—Death of My Two Brothers—A Bitter Disappointment—A Shot through the Collar-Bone—Music-Lessons—Off to Königsberg*

WHILE the first rays of the sun beamed into the bright morning on April 5, 1848, I sent my first cry into the world in the old school-house of the farming village of Sommerfeld, in East Prussia. The few people present were horrified, not so much by my shouts as by my audacity in daring to thrust myself into this much praised and much blamed world WITHOUT ARMS. What was to become of me? What could be done with me? The news spread quickly. The ever-thirsty rushed into the tavern, tried to wash down their surprise with copious draughts, and came to the conclusion that such an armless thing could not live. The midwife must have thought likewise, for she offered to correct destiny by holding a pillow over my face: that would end all my troubles! My father's statement that wilful murder does not form part of a schoolmaster's duties was accepted by her with disgust and contempt.

My condition had been withheld from Mother until she asked for me. Father handed me to her with a meek remark as to my armlessness. She took me and put me to her breast with the words: "It is our child; God has sent it and will not forsake it." I stopped crying and was soon fully occupied in taking my first meal.

Mother and I were the only persons in the village who did not partake of the general excitement. Crying, feeding, and sleeping were—for the time being—my only ambitions.

The day after my birth the spring fair took place in the neighbouring town of Liebstadt. I became the topic of conversation, and within three days the news of my unconventional appearance had spread over the whole province.

After the period of shouting and wailing I took to laughing and cheering, with splendid success, until aunts and inquisitive old women overwhelmed me with their "kindnesses"; their pitying words: "Poor thing, what sin did you commit to be punished like this! We'll pray to God to call you to heaven!" often made me burst into tears. My father had repeatedly noted this change in my mood, and promulgated his first decree:

THE BOY IS NEVER TO BE PITIED BY ANYONE!

Before I had finished the first year of my life, my father had noticed that I often tried to catch hold of things with my toes when my feet were bare.

LEAVE THE BOY WITHOUT SHOES AND SOCKS

was his second decree. The idea that I should catch cold was rejected in the words: "Nonsense! We don't catch cold on our bare hands!" Thenceforth I played like all



the other children of my age, put my toys into my mouth as they did, snatched their toys from them as they snatched theirs from me, and kicked as they did. What it means for a child to sit apart from its mates and watch their pleasures, I never knew; I sat among them, and my cheers were the loudest.

One night—we were sitting at supper—Mother passed a plate of oatmeal porridge to my neighbour. I took a fistful with my toes and shoved it into my mouth. General shouts! “Wash the lad’s foot, give him a spoon and let him have a try at it!” My success was only moderate; everybody wanted to help, except Father.

LET THE BOY HAVE HIS WAY! WHOEVER HELPS HIM WILL  
HAVE TROUBLE WITH ME!

That was the third of his three decrees which made me an independent, able-bodied human being. I wonder if he was then aware that by his commandments he was laying the foundation of my future independence?

At the age of two years I had not yet made any attempt to walk, much to the distress of my parents. One day I suddenly got up from the floor and walked out into the street. Great rejoicing in the family! It was many years later that I learned from the mothers of armless children that none of them ever attempted to walk before they were two years old.

My own recollections begin with my first endeavours to wash myself, soon after my third birthday. All my people were absent; I pulled a chair to the wash-basin, into which I put my feet. All of a sudden the basin was empty. Before I had recovered from my amazement my parents entered the room. The water had run all over the place. “Let him wash himself!” said Father. It was



not so nice to do it under supervision, but I felt cleaner than ever before.

At the age of four my ever-cheerful nature experienced its first grief. Father had taken us to Granny. He then went away in a yellow mail-coach, to Salzbrunn, where he hoped they would cure his hoarseness. I could not understand why Mother cried all the way home when my father was having such a wonderful ride! At home I sat down at her feet and threaded her needles for her, to save time. My childish talk was often interrupted by her sobs. "Mother dear, why are you crying?"—"Oh darling, if Father doesn't come back we shall have no bread!"—"But Mother, the miller grinds the flour, and you bake it!" She stroked my cheeks and smiled through her tears. We tried to forget our sorrow in singing. I made up a "second voice" to popular songs, and did everything I could to lighten Mother's heart, generally with success.

About six weeks after Father's departure she received a letter from him, on reading which her face brightened. "Children, Father is improving; he will be back before long!" When we went to Granny's to meet Father I was allowed to sit between my brother Otto and the driver, but my sister Marianne had to sit on the back seat with my mother, where they could not see the horses; this made me feel sorry for my sister. My brother and sister were twins, and five and a half years older than I. The mail-coach arrived; Father alighted, looked very weak, and could not speak aloud, but there were good hopes of his complete recovery.

Father bought twelve acres of land of a farm which was being sold off in small lots. Mother's dowry, three hundred talers, had been spent on furnishing our home,



but my parents always managed to put a little money aside. A small capital had been saved out of Father's yearly salary of thirty-four talers, increased by the little sums my mother had earned sewing for the upper hundred of the village; the amount still lacking was borrowed. Because of his hoarseness Father was allowed to have an assistant teacher. Now he could spend his leisure in our field and the land belonging to the school, which speeded his recovery. Mother had time for sewing only in winter. We were five happy people.

Our school-house was old and dilapidated; school-room, teachers' apartments, stables and barn: all was under the same thatched roof, so that we could enter all the rooms without leaving the house. From our parlour one door led into the cowshed. When a calf was expected, we often peeped into the shed. That was very convenient, but when the manure piled up so high in the shed that the seepings threatened to run into our sitting-room, things became uncomfortable. We were in no way spoiled.

Sommerfeld stretches from east to west in a valley. There are eleven ponds, counting from one end of the village to the other. Only the largest of them has an outlet, and that only when the water is high. The water is not fit for drinking; the ponds are good only for tumbling into, especially for the children. In the summer of 1853 it was my turn. The school-house lay in the middle of the village, between the two principal ponds. When we were not watched at our play we children used to run to and fro between these two ponds. Sitting on the stones, I tried to catch a drifting reed, slid from my seat, and tumbled into deep water. My playmates ran away, yelling. Most of the people were harvesting in



their fields. When an old man at last came hobbling along to rescue me, he found me sitting on the stones. How I crawled out is still a mystery to me. Uplifted arms would have weighed my head down and drowned me, and the pious wish of the midwife would have been fulfilled. My armlessness had been my salvation. Not possessing a second suit of clothes, I had to be put to bed. My dread that I should be severely punished by my parents when they came home was turned into joy by their kisses and caresses.

One morning early I was pulled out of bed and quickly dressed by our teacher. He said: "Folger's house is burning and the wind is blowing this way; we are in danger of catching on fire; run quickly to the miller's!" I ran, but could not help looking back at the grand sight of our neighbour's burning house. People were running about with armfuls of wet washing, for it was Mother's big washing-day. Men were sitting on the roof of our house, pouring buckets of water on the brands that were flying from the burning house. I tried most anxiously to help here and there, but was sent about my business, for I was getting in the way. In spite of all the danger I was deeply impressed by the splendid sight, until at last the flames died down. We found every window-pane in the school-room cracked by the heat. Mother said that our escape was one of God's miracles. For many nights I dreamed of magnificent fires; their danger never dawned on me.

Folger had a new house built. I practised ladder-climbing so that I might inspect the upper story when the workmen went to lunch. I sat on the ladder, raised my feet to the lowest rung, shoved my body with a jerk to the next rung and so continued to the top. I surveyed



the scaffolding with the pride of a general reviewing his victorious army. To inspect a special detail I stepped on an overhanging plank, and went down with it. During the fall I fainted.

The returning workmen found me, lying with my face in the rubbish of the cellar. They carried me home, where I recovered my senses. I felt no pains, but a numbness in and about my head was much worse than a bearable pain would have been. A burning pang shot through my head from time to time. My face was a swollen lump, with a few scratches here and there, my nose, eyes, and mouth being nearly invisible; otherwise I was intact. Father had forbidden me to climb; I was afraid that there would be a severe reckoning, but nothing of the kind happened. Mother and sister drew my swollen lips apart, to find a hole into which to pour a drop of milk. I could not eat for a week; all my teeth seemed to be loose. My first glance at the mirror showed me that I looked like a swollen rainbow.

When my mother was tired of answering my endless questions she sent me into the school, and at Easter 1854 I began my schooling in earnest. Father had a low desk made for me, and placed me in front of the first row. My parents were surprised at the things I knew already; I could even read and write, having secretly taught myself to do so, hidden under a table in the school-room. My greatest pleasure was the singing lesson. Melodies written on the board that none of the others could sing were mere play for me. I listened piously to the tones of the assistant teacher's violin, and knew exactly when he was sharp or flat. If only I could have held the violin myself! I could have done better!

On the fourth of December a little brother was born



and christened Hans Robert at the next teachers' meeting in the schoolroom. Mother said I too had been christened in the school-house, which made me doubt whether we were proper Christians. We were delighted with the increase of our family, Mother and I most of all. Rocking the cradle soon became tedious to me, but after discovering that I could read at the same time I was happy, and rocked and read aloud to Mother. When little Robert stirred we softly sang him to sleep together. What quiet and happy hours they were!

In my second school-year it was my task to teach the alphabet to the beginners, and to reveal the secret that one and one make two. When all other means failed, we succeeded best with the help of our breakfast-rolls.

Since my involuntary bath I looked forward to another dip. "Father, when shall we go to bathe?" After I had repeated the question several times, he replied: "Boy, if you bother me I shall not take you at all." At last we went, and to our own pond. I drew a deep breath, as much as my lungs would hold, bent head backwards, lifted my toes slowly from the ground, and began to kick about. "Father, I can swim!"—"Boy, you are crazy!" He always called me "boy" when he was in a good humour. "Look, Father!"—"Why, you really can! It must be that the arms pull the body down. But be careful that you don't come to harm!" Towards the end of summer I could lie flat on the water and make vigorous strokes with my long legs.

One day we boys had been up to mischief; I had been the contriver, the two others the executors. Father questioned me closely; I answered at hazard, and was soon cornered. "I have always told you to leave lying to people with hands who don't want to lead an honest



life. You can't lead a decent life unless you are absolutely honourable. If you don't want to be so, better hang yourself to-day than to-morrow!"

I avoided Father, for I could not look him in the face, and I was ashamed of avoiding him. A good beating would have been a relief to me. It took a fortnight to put things right again.

It wasn't long before I did get a licking, but for a much more serious offence than our last piece of mischief. Once, when I had a difference of opinion with Mother, I allowed myself to say, in my eagerness: "That's a lie!" Mother turned pale, but said nothing. I could have sunk into the ground with misery, but I couldn't utter a word. After an uneasy silence Father said: "You know the fourth commandment theoretically; now I shall teach it to you practically!" And he fetched the supple hazel-stick from the school-room, laid me over a chair, and thrashed me with all his might. I did not utter a sound; I got up, when he had done, and went to our field. Once out of hearing I began to cry, and wept until I was quite exhausted. This outbreak was not due to the beating; I would willingly have accepted another if it would have wiped out my offence against my mother. How was it possible that I could have insulted my beloved mother! Cain had slain his brother Abel: Judas had betrayed his Master; but neither of them had sinned against his mother as I had done. I suffered the most painful remorse.

I tried to sneak into bed unnoticed, but Mother caught me. My efforts to choke down my sobs were in vain. She stroked my hair and said: "Poor child, things will be all right again!" I cried aloud. Everybody was kind and good except me. I could not have told her that it was not bodily pain that had made me cry out, but I



think she knew it. I found I could look at Father as though nothing had happened. He had never been unjust to one of us children, so I knew he was in the right this time; but Mother's kindness depressed me for a long time. My punishment prevented me from sitting down for a week and kept me out of school. At meals I had to stand and use the one finger of my left arm-stump, putting the handle of the fork into the short sleeve. In the same way I was able to write standing.

In the autumn the twins were confirmed. I asked permission to go with them "for practice." "What? At the age of eight?" said Father, laughing; but he granted my wish. In church I determined to learn wisdom from the Bible, which would lead me along the right path. With great enthusiasm I began to read it from the beginning.

Great heavens! What a disillusion! After I had finished the third book of Moses, I said to my father: "Did you know that God is not just? He almost always helps cheats and liars, and orders the inhabitants of the country to be killed, although they have done no wrong."—"How do you know that?"—"From the Bible."—"You can't understand the Bible yet; find yourself another book!"—"But Father, everybody can understand that; I will show you!"—"Get another book!" he interrupted me, violently.

My father had a house built on our field, and bought the adjoining twelve acres. He also bought a horse, a white one. Our joy, and above all mine, was endless. Everybody had his hands full. Father hung a small basket round my neck: "Do you think you can carry that as far as Weeskenitt?"—"Of course."—"Then you can go and fetch the fish to-morrow." Weeskenitt was a mile away from Sommerfeld; it lay between two lakes,



which were leased to some fishermen, from whom the people of the neighbouring villages bought their fish on certain days of the week.

At daybreak I went off with my basket. Behind the last house I took off my shoes and socks, hid them in the tall grass, and walked on barefooted. As I was passing our field, the sun was rising in all its splendour. Innumerable diamonds glittered in the grass; around the shadow of my head there was a halo which moved on with me. I felt as happy as if I had been given a precious gift. I had not to wait long, and was first served when the fishermen came; I received two small pike and two tench, paid two "dittchen" ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.), and walked off. I struggled up the slope; the sun was scorching; I was dripping with perspiration, and I had to rest repeatedly before I arrived at the top of the hill. The string cut into my shoulder and the fish floundered in the basket; I was sorry for them—but all this did not spoil the anticipated pleasure of eating my favourite dish, and I had not used up any shoe-leather. Radiant with pride I entered the house.

Mother put the fish into a dish: "Did you really carry them? How much did they cost?"—"They let me make the price, and I said 'two dittchen.'"—"Boy, you can always fetch the fish for us," said Father. I felt as if I had been promoted to the rank of general at least.

Curiosity induced me to make all sorts of experiments. I was trying to polish some boots in a dark corner, when Father suddenly said: "That's all right; from now on you can clean the boots for the whole family." Only Father used to wear boots on weekdays; the rest of us had clogs. I was relieved of this job after three and a half years: I had learned to work.



I tried also to make myself useful in the fields, piling up hay and grass with my feet; I picked up a row of potatoes with my left foot—standing on my right—as quickly as the others gathered two rows, kneeling and using their hands; I pushed manure into the furrows, following the plough, with my left foot, as the others did with the rake, and led the horse and the cows to the watering-place. How was it that the others did not enjoy their work as much as I did mine? I almost felt sorry for them.

Father's birthday was a festival for the school children. The children of the well-to-do farmers assembled in our field at four o'clock in the morning and sang hymns. Father dressed quickly and went out to thank them; the children surrounded him and gave him a present to which every child had contributed. The school hours were as usual. When they were over every child was given a cup, Mother and sister filled the cups with coffee, gave every child a roll, and the singers cake. "Who wants some more?" When all had had enough, the desks were pushed back against the wall, the assistant teacher took his violin, and dancing began. About seven o'clock even the toughest were worn out, and dragged themselves home; the smallest children were sent for.

On his thirty-eighth birthday (when I had passed my tenth) Father began to sing with the children while they were dancing. All fell silent; none of the children had ever heard him sing. I had to look at his lips for a long time before I could believe that it was really he who was singing. For nine years Father had not spoken a loud word. It was some time before I got used to Father's voice; Otto and Marianne, my elder brother and sister, had a faint recollection of it.



A new life began. I could ask Father all sorts of questions when we were working in the fields, and I always got answers which went to the root of the matter. Of course, I was more frequently put through an oral examination, but I soon got used to that. One subject in which we did not make any progress was religion. When I wanted to know what people had thought of God's omnipotence and infinite kindness during the Thirty Years' War, Father began to speak of something else. If I tried to return to the subject I got no answer. This did not prevent me from growing fonder of Father every day.

"Where is Hermann?" Mother asked one night. I was in bed; my folded clothes hung over the back of the chair. "Child, who undressed you?" asked Mother.—"I did it myself!" They made me get up, and dressed me; I undressed myself, and showed them how I did it. Sitting on a chair, I seized my jacket above the top button with the toes of my right foot, and drew it over my head. I put my right foot on my left thigh, drew my stomach in, pushed my big toe between the two top buttons, and pulled them open, continuing until they were all undone. Then I got up and shook my breeches down. Lastly, I folded my clothes and hung them over a chair. General surprise. Mother asked her usual question: "Child, how is such a thing possible?" That peculiar smile of Father's passed over his face as he said: "That is not at all bad!"—"Oh yes, and I shall dress myself too, and then I can go swimming whenever I like!"—"Oh, that's why!" and they all laughed.

Robert grew hoarse, and began to cough. Mother had to go on an errand, and told the maid to keep him indoors. On her return she saw him running about on



the ice of the pond in his socks; she carried him home, put him to bed, and gave him camomile tea. His breath became shorter and shorter. A sombre cloud hovered over us. I prayed to God to lay all the suffering on me and spare my dear ones; I would not complain. The rattle in Robert's throat grew worse and worse; on the evening of the fourth day it ceased altogether. Father and Mother, worn out with grief and lack of sleep, were sitting on the edge of the bed, holding each other's hands and crying softly. My prayers had been in vain. If God did not listen to such fervent prayers, He could not be nearly as good as my mother was. In the midst of all my grief this cut me to the heart.

I wrote the invitations to the funeral; our friends in the village I invited by word of mouth. From nearly everyone I had to hear: "Once more the Lord has taken the wrong one to Himself!"

Robert lay in his coffin, rosy and fresh as he had been in life. Snow and rain fell into his grave. When the first clods fell on his coffin I was seized with horror. To be all alone down there, without Mother, without us, after having enjoyed life for four years, must be horrible. Before the funeral feast began I stole away to bed. The idea of Robert's loneliness in the dark had exhausted me, and I soon fell asleep.

There was an emptiness in our house. Mother persisted in her opinion that Robert had been buried alive, in spite of Father's assurance that she was mistaken.

At Christmas a new happiness entered our house. Father came from the mayor's office (he himself was the mayor of the village) with the news that preparations were being made to build a new school-house and farm buildings in the summer. Mother smiled again; we



children were crazy with joy, and made the most daring projects.

In the spring Otto, who was always sickly, became worse. Years before he had been run over by a sledge—the horses had bolted—and had never completely recovered. His skin grew red in places, and sores broke out on his leg, which the doctor declared were scrofulous; he could do nothing for them. One day, on the way to our field, where the red bricks for the new school-house were piled up, he fainted; I fetched Father, who carried him home. It was his last walk; he had to suffer cruelly before death ended his pains.

Mother insisted that she must make the arrangements for the funeral with the pastor. She looked more contented when she returned; she had received permission to have Otto laid beside Robert, and to have Robert's coffin opened.

Otto's schoolfellows carried him to the churchyard. When the coffins were lying beside each other Robert's coffin was opened. Robert was just as he had been laid out thirty-three weeks earlier. Mother looked down, uttered a cry of relief, and fainted. After a few seconds she got up without help and said, gently: "Now I shall find peace." None of those present will ever forget that burial.

I kept as close to Mother as I could, in order to console her in her affliction. Gradually her tears became less bitter and less frequent.

One sunny Sunday Father forbade us to go skating. Bigger boys than I were skating; why shouldn't I go? Off I went. Crack! Three of us lay in the water! We got out without help, but what next? My black woollen suit—spun, woven, cut, and sewn by Mother—showed no sign of wetness after the water had run off.



The thermometer was below zero, but I walked up and down in the sunshine, in the hope of drying my clothes. When darkness fell I went home, drank my coffee, and stood against the hot stove. The lamp was brought in. "Hermann, your clothes are steaming!" said Father. He approached me, touched my jacket and asked, frowning: "When did that happen?"—"At two o'clock."—"And then you ran about until you thought you were dry?"—"Yes, Father; I fell through the ice."—"It seems so. Put the rascal to bed! Make camomile tea immediately, and pour it into him until he sweats!" I seemed to be frozen to my very bones. "Now our last one too!" said Mother, as she was undressing me.—"No, Mother dear, I won't be ill, it's only a joke!" I got off unharmed, except for three days' hoarseness, and Father's warning; I had a deep aversion to another settlement with the hazel-stick.

We had to move into our own house in the field, while the old school-house was being pulled down. I was everywhere at once, and tried to help where I was not wanted. My friend Fritz, a future school-teacher, arranged a place in the attic where the two of us could sleep and work. Life was full of adventure. When the wind howled of a night I fancied myself the captain of a vessel on a voyage of exploration. When the moon shone through the dormer window I went on the war-path with Red Indians. It was a splendid time! Early in the morning we went to the mayor's office, one of whose rooms had been turned into a schoolroom. We walked both ways, inspected the progress of the new school, and fell into bed, dead tired, at night.

In September we moved into the new school-house, which to us was like fairyland. So much room! So many



splendid hiding-places! What a pity I had nothing to hide! Two large separate schoolrooms! My father taught both classes, for teachers were scarce.

Coming home from swimming one day I ran to Mother: "I can wash my back and dry myself!" I showed her how I did it, with my left foot. If the others were pleased, I was more so.

"Count Dönhoff-Quittainen could pay for your education, with the help of funds under his control," said Father, "and it wouldn't cost anyone a pfennig. We shall go to see him to-morrow and ask him to help us." My heart leapt with joy.

It was a three hours' walk in beautiful sunshine. A footman received us. His clothes fairly dazzled me; I took him for the count until Father spoke to him. We waited while he announced us. When he came back, he asked Father to come in and told me to sit down. Hesitatingly I sat on the very edge of the silk cushion and waited a long time. Father came back; behind him was a tall, kind-looking gentleman in a plain black suit. I stood up. "What's your name?" he asked me.—"Hermann Unthan."—"How old are you?"—"Twelve," I said, in a loud, clear voice. He shook hands with Father, and we departed. I couldn't wait until we were out of hearing.

"Well, Father?"—"They'll have to talk it over. The Landrat, Count Dönhoff, and Count Dohna-Schlobitten. He will do his best." I rejoiced. "Well, well, the matter isn't so certain," Father said, quietly. I couldn't understand why they should refuse when it didn't cost them anything. My joy and my expectation were not to be shaken.

"Father, why doesn't the count wear such fine clothes



as his footman does?" Father burst out laughing, and I joined in, as I always did, without knowing why. "The count wear a gaudy livery! Mark my words, boy: true nobility is always simple."

"Mother dear, I am going to college!"—"If they don't make any rotten conditions," said Father. I couldn't conceive how such conditions could be consistent with true nobility. Father gave me a Latin grammar; I struggled with it, and tormented my brain with vocatives and ablatives.

"Father, I should like to learn to play the violin." They all laughed until they cried; I was furious. After school hours I got a stool from the kitchen, locked the door, tied the violin to the stool, seized the bow with my left foot, pressed on the strings with the toes of my right—and it sounded like the creaking of our old church door on its hinges. Never mind. I'll soon improve! I could read music, thanks to my singing lessons, and as to the fingering, I had watched Fritz. Every clear sound raised me to the seventh heaven.

One afternoon a carriage stopped in front of our house. "The Landrat and Count Dohna," said Father, and hurried out. I felt my heart throbbing in my throat while my destiny was being decided. "Count Dohna is talking," said Mother, standing at the window. "Father is shaking his head; the Landrat is getting emphatic; Father looks cross, so does Dohna. Good God in Heaven!" Father came in, as white as chalk. "For God's sake, what has happened?"—"Nothing." From his manner I knew that Mother would learn the reasons for their refusal later. And years afterwards I was told that the matter had fallen through when Father refused to change his politics.





MY FEET; THE TOES OF THE RIGHT FOOT  
SPREAD OUT



SHARPENING A PENCIL





"Child, I want to weave four lengths on the forty healds, two threads blue, two white, two red, two white; how much yarn do I need of each colour?" I would work it out for Mother. "Then get it ready," she said. On warping only I was allowed to turn the beam, and when the weaving began I filled the spools. Working together like this we drew very near to each other. "Mother, I have noticed that children with hands are not as happy as I am; isn't that a pity? They can't know what a fine place the world is."—"Child, it's nothing to do with their hands; it's because you are good. If you remain good, you will always be happy." Was there any merit in being good? I found none. And yet there is: contentment.

Great rejoicing: Grandfather Föllmer would take us to the christening of the youngest son of Mother's only brother. I sat on the front seat with Grandfather and admired the world. My excitement made me forget breakfast. At Behlendorf Uncle Fritz expected us, and we had coffee and cake in Grandmother's room. "Have you been hunting again?" asked my father, pointing at the four guns in the corner.—"What an idea! The game-keeper's boys left them there, to call for them to-morrow."—"Are they loaded?"—"I wouldn't keep a loaded gun in the house!" I was still eating when they went out. When I had finished I took one of the guns to the window, pressed my shoulder on it, and cocked it with my left foot. I heard the clock strike nine and then a thump . . .

Aunt Schindowski, Father's sister, lifted me up and supported me. Distant voices. "You'll die at once," said Father. "No, Father, my heart is not hurt," I answered meekly. "I'll fetch Dr. Beeck," said Grandfather. He



arrived with the doctor at half-past three; Beeck had been out in the country. I was still bleeding; all endeavours to staunch the blood had failed. "Are you in pain?"—"No, doctor." He staunched the bleeding. I was laid in a waggon half-filled with pea-straw, Father sitting on one side of me, and Mother on the other, and slowly driven the six miles to the hospital of Prussian Holland, the chief town of the district. When I was in bed, washed and bandaged, my parents kissed me, promised to visit me often, and left me. I was alone for the first time in my life. Thus ended Sunday, November 3, 1861.

During the night I asked for Mother and tried to get up; I had to be bandaged afresh, but I knew nothing about it. On the third day the pains began; on the fifth the ends of the splintered collar-bone were sawed off, without anaesthetic. One end of the bone splintered during the operation, and had to be sawed through again higher up. Beeck objected to crying; so I did not make a sound, and I would not be held, apart from being supported a little.

"He is just passing away," whispered Sister Marie, the following morning, when Beeck arrived. "Nonsense," I stammered.—"Who am I?"—"You are still Dr. Beeck."

I was in bed for four weeks, without being able to move as much as a toe. I had no pain, except when the wound was syringed; then the pain was terrible. My family often came to see me. Father brought me the Latin grammar. Sister Marie (Countess von Parels) spoiled me greatly. Two days before Christmas my parents took me home.

My sister peeled me out of my coverings and carried me to bed, crying. None of us could speak a word; the



greatest happiness has no words. We were together again, and my eyes kept returning to my mother. I had no other wish than to look at her.

Surprises were not customary in our family at Christmas. We discussed long before the time what was needed, and chose our presents from the list of necessities. The expectation prolonged our pleasure, and Father's Christmas tales put us into a festive mood.

I was to get a new suit, and my first overcoat; and looking forward to wearing the new clothes kept up my spirits while I was still in bed, where I had to remain for some weeks longer.

"The pastor wants you to go to the confirmation classes as soon as possible. You can catch up by yourself what you have missed." How could I be confirmed, with my religious doubts? With lies in my heart I dared not go to Holy Communion. I could not consult Father, as he had always avoided the subject; but our pastor, a good and kind man, would be able to give me advice.

While I was slowly recovering my strength the world appeared more beautiful to me than ever. Walking home from the field with Father one lovely afternoon I said: "That cloud looks like a volcano."—"You are right, boy."—"Father, I should like to see a volcano."—"Rubbish! I've never seen one myself!" was his answer.

After my confession the pastor reflected for a long while. "Well, you know, we all have to compromise on these points."—"But that is dishonest!"—"Well, we all have to make concessions in life." Now I understood Father's evasive replies. Six years after the confirmation of my brother and sister—on the same day of the same month—I was confirmed, and at once took Holy Communion.



My confirmation brought no change into my life; I helped Father in the school, played the violin, and studied. One day, when I was locked in my room practising, someone knocked at the door. I opened it. Father entered, sat down, and said: "Play!" I fiddled with all my heart.—"I shall ask Freitag to give you lessons." What rapture!

Freitag provided the music at all the festivities in the neighbourhood; and he always had a pupil or two. Father bought a violin for me, which cost three talers, and Mother made a hide bag for it. I went to Freitag's twice a week, the bag hanging over my shoulder, feeling like a minstrel. I learned only dances; Freitag knew no other music.

"Father wants you to go to Königsberg to continue your studies," said Mother, with tears in her eyes. I was torn between joy and the dread of parting from my mother. "Mother, will that be all right?"—"Yes, child, it is best for you, and if you are always a good boy no harm can come to you."

Father took me to Königsberg, to find a teacher and a boarding-house. Miller Patschke joined us; his stepson Heinz was going to be apprenticed to a watchmaker. At the inn a certain Herr Schuster was recommended to us, as the best teacher of the violin. Then a certain Dr. Lohmeyer was mentioned as a good teacher of languages; he too had been born without arms.

I played to Herr Schuster, and he offered to give me two lessons a week, without payment. "Lohmeyer might teach you French and Latin," said Father. Lohmeyer was a very short-sighted gentleman with gold-rimmed spectacles, a long fair beard, and a very sulky face. When I told him that I wanted to become a violinist he



only smiled disdainfully, but he declared himself willing to give me two lessons a week, like Schuster. I was not very pleased about this; and when we had left him Father said: "He's terribly embittered."

For board and lodging *en pension* we were recommended to a widow who was boarding four seminary students at five talers the month. It was agreed that she would board me—attendance included—for eight talers. Father visited a few of his colleagues at the gymnasium, who promised to give me lessons in the principal subjects. At night we went to the theatre. The music filled me with ecstasy. That there could be such music in the world! I returned to the inn like one in a dream. We ate the bacon and eggs which we had brought from home, and tumbled into bed, tired out.

Next morning I jumped out of bed quite alarmed and ran to the window. About twenty donkeys were giving us a serenade. I had never seen nor heard a donkey; I stood there and laughed and Father and Patschke joined me. Patschke had our breakfast brought to the room, to avoid the donkey-drivers. Having a couple of hours before taking the train home, we had a look over the town. At Schlobitten Patschke's waggon was waiting to drive us home again.

"Mother, how have you been getting on in the meantime?" It seemed to me as if I had been away for months, I had such a lot to tell!

My sister married our neighbour Folger's stepson, Gottlieb Schulz. We had merry wedding festivities, which lasted for two days.

The young people's parents had bought a farm and ale-house for them in Koschain. Father had been set against the ale-house. "He won't drink, of course, but



they don't know anything about it." However, he gave way to their pleading.

My outfit for Königsberg was prepared. I was to order a cape upon my arrival there. "What will become of you, child!" exclaimed Mother.—"You told me no harm can come to me as long as I behave myself, and I'll be sure to do that."

We had to leave at five in the morning. I forced my breakfast down with an effort. Mother pretended that she had eaten hers in the kitchen. An icy north-east wind was blowing. I sat warmly between my parents. We did our best to appear calm. Mother put her arm round me. As we neared the station Father said: "It 'ud be a pity if we had to begin now to teach you how to behave. Be good!" I couldn't answer. Father carried my luggage to where the fourth class carriages stopped, and went to buy my ticket. The train came in; I kissed Father; then Mother, who held me in her arms for a long while, said gently: "Stay as you are now!" I jumped into the train; Father handed in my box and my violin; the door closed with a bang. I was as though stunned; I stood with my face to the window, the tears streaming down my face, trying with all my might to restrain my sobs.

## CHAPTER II

### DILIGENCE REWARDED

(1863-1868)

*Music Lessons and the Gymnasium—The Armless Professor—At the Opera—A Visit Home—With the Blind—First Public Appearance—Examination—At the "Gewandhaus" (High School of Music) in Leipzig—The Charity Concert—Opinion of the Press—Concerts in Dresden—"Carl Caroné"*

KÖNIGSBERG! Terminus! A rather untidy-looking girl, about my age, came to meet me. "I am Frau Wall's daughter; I'm to take you home." She took my box and violin in one hand and the bag with my bedding in the other, and got into a droshky; I followed. "Neie Jasse No. 1," she told the driver, in such an overbearing tone that I was quite startled. The silence became unbearable, and I asked timidly: "You don't talk like we do; are you——"—"No, we don't come from hereabouts, thank God! We come from Berlin," she said, as though it were a crime to be "from hereabouts." I was flabbergasted, and felt very small and young.

Frau Wall received me with a friendliness that did not seem to me quite genuine. She unpacked my things, put my music and books on a shelf, my violin on the stand which I had made at home at Herr Schuster's suggestion, and carried all the other things out of the room, "to take care of them"—and my sausages and ham were never seen again. Frau Wall gave one the impression of an elderly maidservant, an infallible person on whom no argument would ever make any impression.



Four men turned up for lunch: two tailors and two soldiers. While we were eating five seminary students passed through into the adjoining room, which with a bedroom constituted their lodgings. I went out with the better-looking of the two tailors to choose the cloth for my cape and be measured for it. The cape was to cost seven talers, and it turned out to be the only good thing that I got while I was in Frau Wall's house.

In the evening two or three young gentlemen called on Fräulein Johanna, the elder of the two daughters. Therese, the younger sister, brought us some sandwiches, which she called "Stullen." It occurred to me that they were all making an effort to contribute to the common entertainment. I must show what I could do. After playing my fiddle I fell asleep in a corner, and woke with a start when someone spoke to me. I was too tired to defend myself against the pitying tone of their questions. At midnight the party broke up; my bedding was brought in, and my bed made on the sofa.

There was a loud ring. Frau Wall came in with a basket full of rolls, emptied it into a basket that stood on the window-sill, went out with the empty basket, and returned it to the baker's boy. The church clock struck six. Ah! Another delightful hour's rest!

A knock at the window. Another knock. "What's the matter?"—"I want my rolls." I called Frau Wall, who sold the rolls through the window. This went on until Therese came in with my washing water.

I managed to dress myself, except for a very little help from Frau Wall. My bedding was taken out; I was given coffee and a couple of "salt-cakes," and then I sat down to practise. After a few bars some children began to



gather outside the window and clamber up on one another's shoulders, in order to see what I was doing. I slipped into the next room and hid myself under the students' grand piano. This happened constantly before and after lessons in the school across the way, as well as during the recess.

After dinner I sat down to my fiddle again. Someone began to practise the piano in the next room. I went in. "How long are you going to practise, please? I am asking so I can arrange my own practising accordingly."—"Wednesday and Saturday we practise from now until ten o'clock, each of us an hour and a half." My hair stood on end. How was I going to practise six hours daily, as I had proposed to do? I took my French grammar and conjugated verbs. The student kept on repeating all his defective passages, which made it impossible for me to study. I took my skates and went to the castle pond.

I went for my first lesson from Herr Schuster. A violin was ready for me, fastened to a stool; the music was on a stand beside it. My hope that Herr Schuster himself would play was disappointed. My longing to hear him play was a constant torment to me. He sat down facing me, and I played. "Why do you use only three toes instead of four?"—"I don't know, Herr Konzertmeister; no one has ever called my attention to it."—"Try it." I had to play long notes, and scales, during which I was able to glance at him. He was tall and lean, with brown hair, a short beard, and a long drooping moustache. He spoke little but earnestly; his grey-brown eyes had a kindly expression; they were the most handsome feature of this majestic person. The lesson passed quickly. "Practise always with four toes!"



he said, as he bade me good-bye. This meant beginning all over again.

During the second lesson he found no fault with me. I plucked up courage, and complained that I couldn't practise at the boarding-house as long as I ought to. He advised me to ask the headmaster of the school to forbid the children to loaf about outside my window. "Get this music at Müller's circulating library, and thank the proprietor, George Tag, for the free subscription." I blushed and stammered something; he pushed me through the door, smiling, and Frau Schuster slipped a sandwich into my pocket, which I ate on the way to the tailor's, lest it should be "saved" by Frau Wall.

The headmaster listened to me attentively with a benevolent expression, but he expressed his regret that he had no control over the pupils outside school-hours. "My father would consider such helplessness impossible," I said, with a laugh which must, I fear, have sounded rather scornful.

Professor Lohmeyer was sulky and dissatisfied during the first lesson; and so he remained. His youngest brother, Eugen, who lived with him, told me that he had always been like that; I was lucky to have to stand him only for two hours; he had to be with him always. Later on he told me that, soon after his brother's birth, their father had written to the King, Friedrich Wilhelm III, for permission to put the child painlessly to death, as he would not be able to support it. The answer came that twenty talers would be paid to him monthly from the King's private purse, as long as might be necessary. That was a lot of money in 1832; so much that one of his brothers, who took care of him, was able to study



with him; but neither of them was precisely delighted with the arrangement.

"Two good ones are missing; who has taken them?" said Frau Wall, as she stood before the bread-basket.—"I don't know anything about it," said Therese snappishly, and walked out of the room.—"Has anyone been here?" asked Frau Wall, looking at me sharply.—"No, nobody."—"Well, they can't have run away!" The idea that I could have stolen the bread was so monstrous that I could not find words to answer her.

Frau Wall related the incident at table. "Nobody has been eating anything in this room," I remarked.—"What, eaten! Nobody eats money!"—"Money!" I said, in an expressionless voice. I must have looked terribly stupid, for they all laughed. "I thought it was good rolls!" I added.

The problem was soon solved: Therese appeared with a new red bow in her hair. "Where did you get that?"—"Somebody gave it to me." Smack! She was well boxed on both ears. I began to dislike the place more and more.

I had never complained in my letters home, in order not to distress my mother. Now I wrote that I should suffocate if I could not tell her all my experiences, and I asked permission to come home for Easter; I could walk from the station. My wish was granted.

They greeted me like a long-lost son from foreign parts. After a square meal I told them all my troubles; I explained that there were too many people in the house, which was too small for them; it was inconvenient never to be alone; the attendance paid for was not forthcoming, so that I had had to learn how to dress myself without assistance. If I was to make the most of my time I must find other quarters.



The effect of my tale on my father was so little what I expected that I grew hot all over. "They won't suspect you of theft any more," he said. "Heinz will go back with you, and live in the same room." I couldn't really enjoy my holidays. Mother tried to soothe me, saying: "Heinz won't put up with any nonsense."

And he wouldn't. He asked immediately for a drawer that he could lock, "so that I can eat my own sausages." He asked late visitors to take their departure, as he wanted to sleep, since he had to get up early; and he had found us another boarding-house, and had my father's consent in his pocket, before I said a word about moving.

"It is essential that you should hear more music," said Herr Schuster after the holidays. "Call on Councillor Simon, the Chairman of the Theatre Committee, and thank him for your free admission to the opera. I have arranged it with him." I moved my lips, but I couldn't utter a word, and I tried in vain to keep back my tears. Herr Schuster pushed me out of the room, laughing: "That's all right then!"

I was only half successful in my endeavour not to cry at Councillor Simon's. He helped me skilfully to get over my embarrassment, and when I said that I did not know how I could thank him, he replied: "By studying diligently!"

Would the day never end? Were the clocks going backwards? They were playing *Don Juan* at the opera that night. I sat with two others on the first of the three benches in the pit, and waited. After a long time other members of the audience arrived; then a man turned up in the orchestra, and began to fiddle about with a double bass. More musicians arrived; they began to tune up,



making hideous noises which sounded like caterwauling. At the sound of a bell they settled themselves in their places. The conductor entered; I straightened myself up on my bench; my heart was thumping audibly. Then everything seemed to vanish; I heard sounds that seemed to come from heaven; I was no longer myself; I was a part of the action: I fought with the Commander against Don Juan; I perspired so that my neighbour wiped the sweat from my face with his handkerchief, for which attention—because it disturbed me—I repaid him with a furious glance. During the second act I was seized with fear that the play might be coming to an end. When the curtain fell I was gasping for breath; Don Juan's end had completely overwhelmed me. That night I dreamed the opera over again, and woke exhausted.

On the second opera night I was already so self-possessed that I overheard critical remarks relating to the singers, which I regarded as sheer madness. But it was not long before I too found something to criticize.

Heinz and I had a little room to ourselves in Herr Werthmann's house, where I could play to my heart's content. "You must have been greatly disturbed at Frau Wall's," Herr Schuster remarked after a few weeks.—"Yes, and Frau Werthmann is like a mother to us, and she gives us enough to eat." This was the first time my teacher praised me.

One day he said: "I give a lesson every week at the Blind Institute, and I am getting on very slowly, as the pupils forget so easily; will you go there and help them to memorize at the piano?"—"Only too willingly!"—"Then call for me at nine o'clock to-morrow." Now I should hear Herr Schuster play; I should talk to the



blind people, and learn whether they were really as unhappy as people supposed.

The blind people walked about as confidently as if they could see. Herr Schuster introduced me to the Director, Herr Born, a little gentleman, who looked down at me severely. The two pupils, Skirde and Bull, who were about my own age, said they were pleased to "see me." I looked at Herr Schuster, who smiled. He made them play the pieces which they had learned during the previous lesson; they both went wrong in the same place. Then Herr Schuster played—at last! I listened attentively to the beautiful tone, the expression, the language of the soul! After listening to him three times the boys were able to play thirty-two bars. And so we went on. "Let them repeat it until it sticks," Herr Schuster said after the lesson, and away he went.

When it had "stuck" we had a chat. Skirde touched me. "You can feel me," I said. They both ascertained my small stature, and felt my head and face. "Bright fair hair," said Skirde.—"How do you know that?"—"It is as soft as silk; dark hair is harder. Do please come again soon."

At the next lesson everything "stuck," and we practised further with the correct fingering. "How often have you been here?" asked Herr Schuster.—"Twice."—"Are you missing anything by coming?"—"Oh no, I am learning here." Through my intercourse with the blind a new world was opened to me. The blind could tell the mood of their acquaintances by their walk; their assent to or disagreement with an opinion by their breathing, before they spoke. And how delighted they were when they found understanding and recognition! Is such tremendous psychological subtlety an



advantage in the everlasting fight of the cripple for his human rights? I could never find an answer to this question.

Herr Schuster took two months' holiday at the seaside. I employed the interval in taking lessons from the gymnasium masters who remained in the town, playing the violin, and going to the Blind Institute. I told my parents I should come home for the last few weeks of the vacation, and at Herr Schuster's desire I had a second violin stand made.

Mother met me in Schlobitten. I drove, and I had not half finished all I had to tell when we arrived in Sommerfeld. That evening the new stand was inaugurated. I had brought my violin with me, and I did my very best. Tears stole into Mother's eyes. The tension in Father's face gave way to an expression I had never seen there, which I can only describe as "exalted." Next morning Mother said to me: "We were talking about you last night, my boy, and we are now convinced that you will be able to earn your own living, without having to depend on the good graces of others." I saw my way clear at last! How anxious my parents must have been all these years about my future! How hard Father had tried to implant the love of honesty and duty in my heart! I made a solemn vow to keep faith with my parents, whatever might betide.

Father was never tired of hearing about the blind; he asked me questions until I had nothing left to tell. Before my departure he made me promise to do my best to help them. "He who has a surplus and does not apply it to the general welfare is failing in his duty; things won't go well with him in the long run."

Refreshed by a delightful holiday, I returned to my



studies and went full steam ahead. I had to steal the time for the blind boys and the opera; I often missed half an act, and even a whole opera if I had heard it already. My teachers had advised me to attend the school regularly for a year, in order to pass the *Einjährige*.\* This could be done at very little expense. But now I must try to prepare myself for the second form by Easter. For the time being this was to be a secret from Father.

At the Schusters' Father Christmas had a surprise for me. "We have raised twelve talers at the lodge, towards buying you a violin; I have added the rest." With these words Herr Schuster handed me a new violin. Words failed me. I put the violin on my stand, and with quivering lips I played while the tears rolled down my face. How that violin sang! After the lesson I shall have to thank him, I thought, even if I do break down! I swallowed a dozen times and began: "Herr Schuster . . ." but I got no farther. "All right, all right," he said; and he patted my shoulder and pushed me out of the room.

I swallowed down my dinner, and then I played and played and couldn't stop. When I was undressing that night I felt Frau Schuster's sandwich in my pocket; she had wrapped it up in a list of the members of her husband's lodge. I discovered by this that they had admitted Schuster only to the third degree, which disgusted me; such a man ought to be in the first degree, if not even higher! I made up my mind then to become a Freemason, no matter what it cost. That night I dreamed: I played on at least a hundred fiddles.

At the New Year a new inmate from Elbing arrived at the Blind Institute—Emil Pauls, whose eyesight was

\* The examination passed by those who wished to serve only one year in the army.



gradually failing. He had attended the gymnasium, and got as far as the second form; he was well read, and brought a new, free element into the stuffy atmosphere of the Institute. His favourite topic of discussion was religion, but he turned out to be an atheist. There was little for Pauls to learn at the Institute, except that he had piano lessons from Louis Koehler, the musical critic of the leading newspaper in Königsberg. Director Born allowed Pauls to accompany me twice to the opera, but then withdrew his permission.

It was getting on for Easter; I had passed my examination, and I entered the Institute with a radiant face, and greeted Born, who was standing at the entrance: "Young man," he said, "you have brought a passion for the theatre into this quiet place, and turned the pious hearts of my pupils away from God. I cannot allow this abode of peace to be turned into a den of evil. Go away for good, and try to become a better man!"—"But, Herr Born . . ." He raised his hand: "Go!" I laughed, and went away. How had I the pluck to laugh? After my next lesson I told Herr Schuster exactly what had happened and asked him to set matters right with Born. The ends of his moustache quivered. He asked me to repeat the gist of my religious discussions with Pauls, reflected a little, and said: "Let it go at that. Herr Born is a *very* pious man. I dislike dealing with such people, as reason has no effect on them. I shall discontinue my lessons there after Easter, so we shall both be gone." He repeatedly shook his head, and murmured: "Incredible!" A heavy load was taken off my mind.

After Easter hard work began. The lessons with Herr Schuster were postponed until half-past six, and those with Lohmeyer discontinued. I could allow myself only



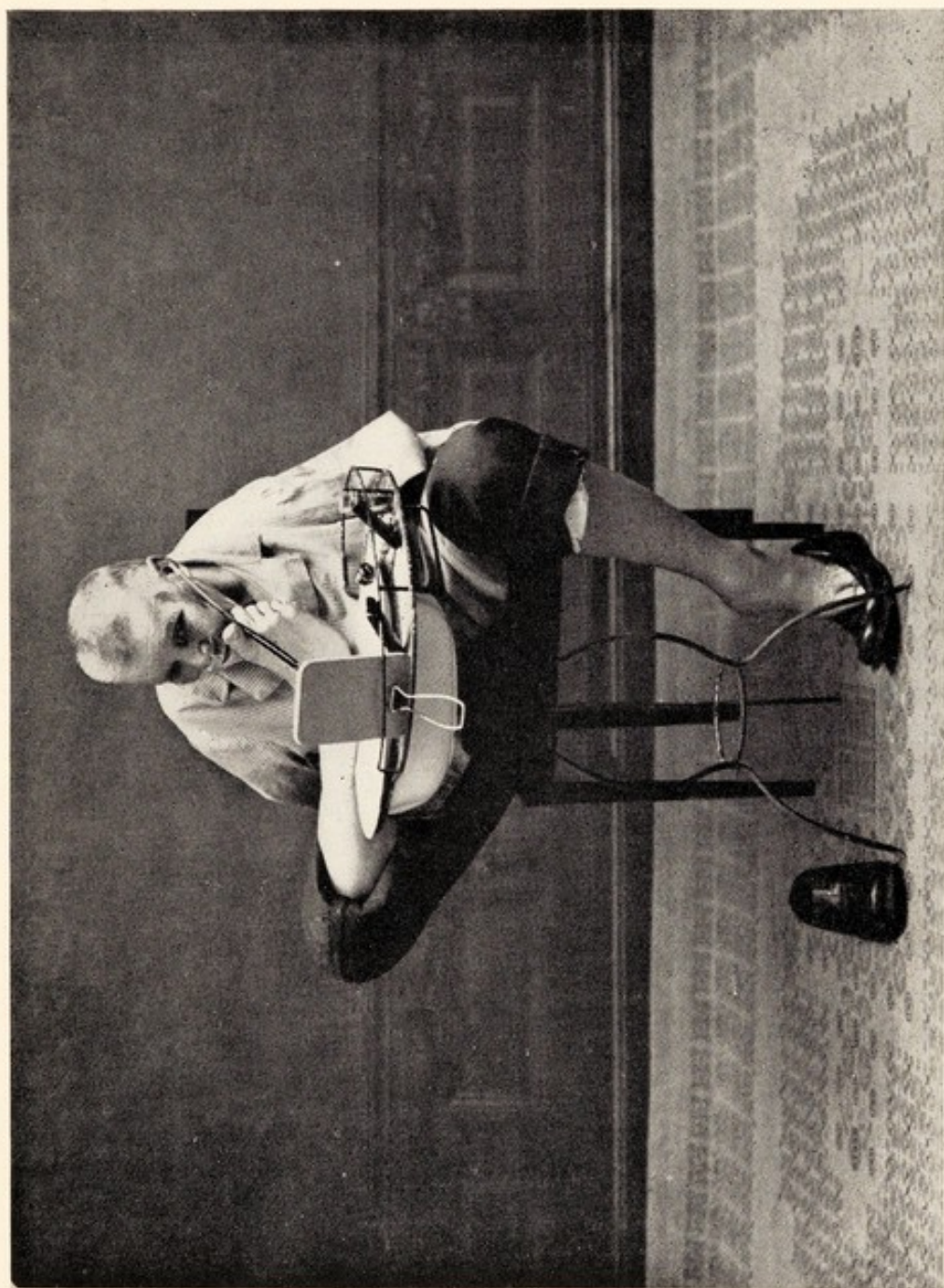
a fortnight's holiday in summer, and none at all at Christmas.

"We might try a public appearance; so far the expenses have been covered by the subscriptions. You will play four solos, and you will have to look round for amateurs to fill the programme," said Herr Schuster one day. The room swam round me; it was a good thing I was sitting down. I must have made that stupid face for which I had a certain reputation.

At the first rehearsal (when Herr Schuster's son Richard played the pianoforte accompaniments) I was quite alarmed to notice how badly I kept time. I felt ashamed of myself, but with careful counting I soon found the right rhythm. Father sent me money for a black suit; Frau Werthmann embroidered a beautiful waistcoat for me. Father was unfortunately prevented from coming by a teachers' meeting, and Mother could not leave her household.

The concert-hall was crammed. I felt—did I "feel" at all? Was I there or somewhere else? Eight o'clock struck. "Go ahead!" commanded Herr Schuster. I struggled up the steps, made the bow Frau Werthmann had taught me, sat down, took the violin out of its case, and fastened it to the stand. I was seized with a terrible fear that Richard might have run away. With an effort I turned round, and saw him sitting at the piano, as calm as though the matter did not concern him in the least. Still feeling as though I were not really present, I tuned up and nodded to him to begin. I fell in at my proper cue with a full, clear tone, playing the *Enchanteresse* by Singelée. I forgot my surroundings, until I was awakened by thundering applause. I had to take three calls. Richard made me take them alone. After the





A CLEAN SHAVE





variations in G major by Rhode with which I concluded, I had to bow again and again, and afterwards I had to accept innumerable congratulations. Herr Schuster put the box-office account and the takings into my pocket, with the words: "Go and get something hot to eat; you need it!"

I thoroughly enjoyed the first supper I had earned, to which I invited Heinz. I was even able to give a tip to the waiter! And my parents, to whom I owed everything, could not be there! I sent them a long report, and confessed that I had kept back a taler from the money enclosed.

Coming home from school one evening, I found Father, Patschke and Farmer Weiss waiting for me in my room. Weiss was almost deaf, and wanted to consult the best ear specialist. Frau Werthmann prepared supper for us all; the visitors had brought enough eatables for a month. Heinz came in and was greatly surprised.

Next morning Father went with me to Herr Schuster, and in the evening we all went to the theatre. During the ballet Weiss wanted to know whether "they were alive." After the theatre we went to the inn where the donkeys had once gives us a serenade, and did great honour to the roasted sucking-pig which Weiss's wife had sent for us. Tired out, Heinz and I went home.

Next morning I had to shirk my lessons. When I asked Father if Herr Schuster was satisfied with me, he said he had not complained; but I had a feeling that something was wrong. The ear specialist declared that Weiss's case was hopeless. We went to the station together. I felt relieved when the train left.

I wrote to my parents that I had passed the examination, to everyone's surprise, while two others had



failed. I went home for a holiday, and my parents' joy was unbounded. After the Good Friday dinner, for which I fetched the fish, Father said to me: "You are now eighteen, and will be able to stand a light cigar," and he passed me the box. "No, thanks. When you found me senseless six years ago, I had smoked the cigar-stump which had been lying on the flower-pot for three months. Since then I have sworn off smoking."—Shouts of laughter!

For supper we had beer. Next morning Father said to me: "Beware of alcoholic drinks; two glasses of beer have such an effect on you that you talk nonsense. My father's death at the age of twenty-eight was due to the abuse of alcohol."—I silently resolved that I would be abstemious. Mother and I understood one another perfectly, as usual. "Child, you will have to take a thorough rest in the summer; you look worn out." With her "Stay as you are now!" in my ears I returned to work. I was now to devote myself to studying the violin only.

The outbreak of the war of 1866 interrupted my work. "Bring everything home," Father wrote. What was the use of having passed my *Einjährlige*?

I was unable to stay at home; my brother-in-law had been called up with the reserves, and I had to go to Koschainen to put things to rights; for his affairs were in a bad way. He and my sister had been cheated right and left, and had run into debt. My sister asked me not to tell Father; she would try and make good again. Mother came for a visit, and took me home.

Mother and I always celebrated her birthday together on the quiet. As a little boy I found it unjust that they should make such a fuss over Father's birthday and none at all over Mother's. I asked her the date of her birthday,



but she laughed, and said: "I have forgotten." The next time we visited Grandfather I looked it up in the family Bible. From then onwards I saved a few coppers every year to buy rolls for her birthday, and we had coffee with sugar in it. How happy we felt! When Father came home from the field with my sister and my brothers I winked at Mother knowingly, and she smiled understandingly. We had a delightful secret in common, which formed yet another bond between us.

"Child, I ought not to tell you yet, but you are going to the Gewandhaus at Leipzig," Mother whispered to me one day. "You will not be a regular pupil, but the teachers there will give you private lessons."—For a while I sat with open mouth, and felt my heart stand still. "Mother, is that really possible?"—"Yes, you are to go at the end of August."

With the aid of some of his colleagues Father found a boarding-house for me in Leipzig. What a queer dialect the people spoke! And how the landlady counted every morsel I put into my mouth! How tasteless the food was! And how inquisitive the people were! Oh, my dear Königsberg!

At the Gewandhaus the pupils crowded around me. "To-morrow at ten o'clock you can play for us here," said Herr David, the famous violinist and teacher.

All the teachers and pupils who could spare the time were present. There was general astonishment at my playing. "Come to my house to-morrow at eight o'clock with your things," Herr David said, and walked away, the other professors following him. I was questioned in all dialects, though most of the questions had little reference to the violin. One pupil only introduced himself to me: "Eckert, from Colombus, Ohio. How long do you



practise every day?" he asked. What was it that made him appear so different from all the others?

"Who was your teacher?" asked Herr David, before my first lesson.—"Wilhelm Schuster, from Markneukirchen, a pupil of Theodor Pixis and Mildner of Prague." Herr David made me play scales, thirds, sixths and octaves; I added tenths, and explained where and why we had to deviate from the practice of the schools. "For the time being I shall give you two lessons a week," said Herr David. "You can take theory and other subjects at the Gewandhaus." My tears, which I had determined to leave behind me in East Prussia, found their way into my eyes again. Herr David's serious expression gave way to a smile; it seemed to me that I was being laughed at.

I had a new world to explore when my knees ached from playing; the history of music, aesthetics, theory (which I had already learned under Köhler), and especially the evenings at the opera! How much better it all was than in Königsberg! If only the students at the Conservatoire wouldn't make such critical remarks! Elsewhere they avoided me, and I did not take much notice of them; here they annoyed me. Eckert was the only one who was friendly with me. "I must see, just for once, how you are getting on," he said, and he went home with me. My landlady disdainfully put the lunch on the bare table. "Play something and then let us go." A gentleman stopped me in the street and wanted to know how I had lost my arms. "I was born without them."—"What, born so? Poor fellow, but that's really terrible!"—"Quite so," said Eckert in his American-German; "pull out your purse and give him something worth while!"—"You are a cheeky fellow!"—"Yes, always



when people talk so nicely! We are half-starved students of music, and we'll go and have a good dinner on the strength of your pity!" He took off his hat, gave the astonished stranger a graceful bow, and pulled me away by my sleeve. "You see, my son, that's the way to tell 'em off!" In East Prussia I seldom had such encounters, but here they were quite frequent.

"How on earth can you work in such a hole and live with such people? I'll have a look round and get you a decent place," said Eckert. "But for not more than eight talers a month!" I pleaded. Then he made me eat until I could hold no more. "The wise city fathers of Columbus who have sent me here to study, so they can listen to decent music among their apple-trees, can afford it," he declared.

Eckert soon found a place for me. He must have known how to treat my old landlady, for she let me go without the usual month's notice. On Sundays I had to go to him after dinner. We looked over his work of the previous week, a cantata which he was composing for an examination, until his landlady came in with coffee and a mountain of cakes. Sometimes he fetched my stand and violin, and then we played all day long; his landlady gave us a good dinner.

There was great expectation: Wilhelmj was to give a concert at the Gewandhaus! Pupils were admitted to the rehearsal. I found a corner for myself, from which I could not see him, and made ready to perspire. What was that? Such ethereal tones I had never heard; they seemed compounded of a thousand vibrations. I closed my eyes and listened. Loud applause, followed by hisses, recalled me to reality. Was it possible? Were there really students who did not know that the first and second movements



of the Mendelssohn concerto were played without an interval! . . . I had never dreamt that such beautiful tones as those of the Andante could be produced on a violin. They sang of divine peace; the player's whole soul was in his music.

A storm of unmusical applause startled me. Better to have no hands than destroy all reverence! The E major passages in the third movement were like prophets announcing the joy to come—and joy it was! And to think that I could partake of such joy! As soon as the last chord of the concerto had died away I left the hall; I could not take in anything more, no matter what was to come. I wanted to be alone.

In the concert Wilhelmj did not reach the same heights as at the rehearsal. Later on I learned that no artist can give of his best before an audience; the presence of so many people distracts him.

And this man Joachim had refused as a pupil because his right arm was too weak, Eckert told me. "That may have spurred him on; he is David's best pupil and always will be. We'll never hear such a beautiful tone again, my son!"

At a musical evening I played Beethoven's G major Romance and Haydn's Serenade with Eckert. The professors congratulated me; Professor Herrmann shook my foot. But there seemed to be a wall between the other students and us two. They seemed to consider me an outsider, and they did not like Eckert. "I am too honest for them," he consoled himself by saying. "Every one of them considers himself a blessed miracle, even if he can't tell one note from another, and you can't swank like they do." We were sufficient unto ourselves, and did not miss their friendship.



"I have suggested your playing in a charity concert; you can play the second part of Bériot's Seventh Concerto," David told me one day, after a lesson during which he had been unusually nice to me. I blushed, and must have made my "face," as he smiled.

I awaited the day of the concert impatiently; it seemed that it would never come. David lent me his Josef Guarneri, and allowed me to practise on it for three days before the concert. How that violin sang under my toes! As though it had a soul of its own! I could not tear myself away from it, and I missed my lessons for the sake of the dark, full, melancholy tones which I was able to draw from it.

The hall was crammed; there was no standing room even. I did not hear or see what was going on around me; I was conscious only of the tones of the violin. I felt no stage fright, but confronted the audience like a conqueror. Frau Werthmann's bow had been replaced by one I had learned by watching the actors. The tuning of the violin elicited an "Ah" from the audience. I began to play softly but surely. How the tones of the violin resounded in the big hall! It seemed to amplify them; this music was greater than I. Was it any wonder that I surpassed myself? There was a dead silence after I had finished. I had already left the platform when the applause began; it continued until I sat down for an encore, the last part of the *Fantaisie* by Bériot. Thunderous applause!

After the concert Eckert and I went to David, to return the violin; he had just returned from the opera. "Well, how did you get on?" Eckert told him; I attributed my success to the Guarneri. I had never seen David so excited. I had received my honorarium, and invited Eckert to a good supper.



"Fred," I said after supper, over the bottle of wine which he had to drink alone, "I cannot get rid of the feeling that, in spite of my success, I am not in the right place on the concert platform."—"Drink, my son, and scare the blues away!"

The morning papers contained long notices of my playing, my inventiveness, and my perseverance, which must be unique. Nearly all of them expressed the doubt whether the concert platform was the right place for me. I anxiously waited for the evening papers . . . all expressed the same doubts—except the less important sheets. The following night I could not sleep for worrying over my future.

What had I accomplished? My parents had deprived themselves of everything in order to finance my studies. All my efforts and all my diligence had been in vain. What now? In an orchestra I should be a disturbing element. Nobody would choose me as a teacher. I could not even carry my violin stand from one inn to another, if I should ever be compelled to go on such a mendicant pilgrimage. Was there no place on earth where I could earn a crust of bread by the art I had learned with such difficulty? How could I break the news to my poor parents? And it had been my heart's desire to make their old age comfortable! My anguish had to be hidden from them; I must fight it out by myself.

Professor Lobe, the musical critic, said to me at the Gewandhaus: "Will you play at my house to-morrow afternoon at four? I'll send my servant for your things."—"With the greatest pleasure, Professor."

How kind Frau Lobe and her daughter were! I felt quite at home with them. We had coffee and cake, and then I had to play without accompaniment runs, trills,



thirds and octaves. "The *Gartenlaube*\* will publish your portrait, and an article which I am going to write. Keil will pay for the photograph. This will be a great help as regards your future. Would you like that?" Would I like it! My face spoke for me; they all looked greatly amused.

That night my joy kept me awake, although I could not yet foresee any improvement of my prospects. I sent Father two criticisms that did not mention the concert platform; my portrait was to be a surprise for him.

Pohle, the conductor, invited me to play in several of his concerts in Dresden. I plucked up fresh courage. The concerts brought me in some money, which I put aside. Father advised me not to send my money home, but to save up a little capital. Since the concert at the Gewandhaus I had paid for my board myself. The article in the *Gartenlaube* appeared just in time for Mother's birthday.

"I'm going away for my summer holiday. I think your student period is over; I don't imagine you can go much further. If further progress is possible, it will be due to your own diligence. I wish you the best of luck!" Such were the words with which Herr David took leave of me. The tears ran down my cheeks.

What now? My troubles were worse than ever. I had the means to live for a while, but the idea of becoming a burden on Father once more was intolerable to me. I brooded day and night over the possibilities of finding employment.

"A very, very fine gentleman wants to speak to you," my landlady announced. "Ask him in," I said.

A tall, slender man of majestic bearing, with a long face and pitch-black hair and beard, a golden watch-

\* A well-known family magazine.



chain, and a diamond pin in his tie, made his appearance and bowed. I felt quite crushed by the dignity with which he presented his card; the shabbiness of my surroundings seemed an insult to him. With one eye—for I simply couldn't turn both away from him—I read the card:

CARL CARONÉ,  
Theatre Director,

Würzburg.

I invited him to sit down with a movement of my foot which I thought "elegant."

"I have been reading about you, and I think I can offer you an engagement," he began. "May I ask you to play something?"—"I am no artist . . ."—"Please, let me be the judge of that," he said, with a wave of his hand that made his big diamond ring sparkle. I played. Was his delight genuine? I hoped so, but I was not absolutely sure.

His plan was to engage me for six star performances in his theatre, under the usual conditions: I was to receive one-third of the net receipts, with a guarantee of twenty talers per evening. If I were a success, as he expected, he would arrange a tour for me on the road, as his own season was nearing its close. We should divide the receipts equally. I told him that I could not sign the contract without my father's consent. I wrote to my father at once, without telling him of my worries over my future and my career. When I had written and posted the letter Caroné became impatient; he wanted me to learn at once. He could not wait long for my decision. He would have to leave for Würzburg next morning, and then he would have to find some other



performer in my stead. I suggested that he should telegraph to my father, but Caroné said it would take a whole volume to make the proposition clear to him. I must think the matter over and give him my answer that evening at seven. He picked up his resplendent silk hat and disappeared.

I was in a turmoil of excitement; I went for a long walk. If I could only consult some friend! Eckert had gone to Italy "to hear some music"; Herr David was at Garmisch. The prospect—no—the certainty of getting rid of all my worries over the future tempted me very strongly; but there was Father! Without his permission I should have to refuse.

Herr Caroné received me in a gold-embroidered dressing-gown. "Please, let's have some refreshment first!" The table was laid; a sumptuous meal was served. I refused the wine. After supper he said: "Well?"—"I cannot do anything without my father's consent," I stammered.

"If your father could see the hundred-taler notes which he would have to count, he would surely not object. I shall write to him myself. You can return to Leipzig should he wish you to do so." That sounded quite sensible, and I accepted.

The following day Caroné bought a trunk for me. I packed what I wanted to take with me, and sent the other things home. I wrote to my father, and went to Caroné's hotel with my luggage, in order not to miss the train next morning.



## CHAPTER III

# ON THE ROAD

(1868-1870)

*First Appearance in Würzburg—The Deluded Press—Disagreement with my Father—In Vaudeville—Frankfurt, Munich, Vienna—Gipsy Music—The Chief of Police in St. Petersburg—"How is it done?"—Christmas in St. Petersburg—The Ladies—First Sea Voyage—The Dog Nero—Copenhagen, Hamburg, Berlin—Reconciliation with my Father—Cologne, Brussels, Paris—War!—England—Good-bye to Caroné!*

To my surprise we travelled by the slow train, third class. I could see and enjoy the beautiful country better that way; so far in my life I had seen only hills. What a lovely summer day! I had not imagined the world could be so beautiful. Should I ever travel in foreign countries? And perhaps on a volcano? My thoughts reverted to my father. How would he take my venture? Money did not mean everything to him; a fact which I had forgotten while negotiating with Caroné; honesty and a regular life were more important! Courage too he appreciated, and that I had shown.

At Lichtenfels we had to change trains, and wait for hours; and the same at Bamberg. There was a great deal of hustling and bustling in the waiting-room, and I began to feel very important. Caroné fell asleep; he looked old and worn; but I had never in my life felt so fresh and animated!

"At last!" Caroné exclaimed, when we arrived in Würzburg. I should not have objected to a longer

journey. In the cab he said: "The house is full to overflowing with actors and the theatre staff, but there is a little furnished summerhouse in the garden that will suit you; you can practise day and night there without disturbing anybody. First have breakfast, and then a good rest."

The summerhouse was hexagonal, nicely furnished, with sufficient room and a comfortable bed, the linen as white as snow. I felt like a king or a prince in a fairy tale. After a sound sleep I began to look about the place. A large poster was pasted on the gate:

Only three Performances!

The

World-Famous Violinist

WITHOUT ARMS!

HERMANN UNTHAN

*Incredible!*

*Unique!*

I turned hot and cold. What humbug was this? I hurried off to find Caroné.

"Had a sound sleep? Allow me, my dear friend, to introduce you to Frau Billé, my partner." Frau Billé was a portly, majestic lady with a haughty manner; she looked as though she would stand no nonsense. She was so amiable that I did not dare to come to the point. She had to appear on the stage that night, and soon betook herself to the theatre. Some visitors entered; I had no chance to speak to Caroné.

The theatre was half empty, the performance was poor. On either side of the curtain one of those terrible posters was displayed; I had to sit alone in a box and be stared at. I felt myself an accomplice in Caroné's swindle; I could not get Father out of my mind.



After the performance Caroné introduced me to several members of the Press; I was honoured with a seat at the right of Frau Billé. The newspaper-men interviewed me, but before I could open my mouth Frau Billé gave them answers that took my breath away. Where did the woman get these vile lies from? When she became too impertinent, I plucked up courage, and drew a deep breath, determined to speak up, but a sign from her silenced me. I almost sweated blood! At last the party broke up. The Director accompanied me to my pavilion. Alone in my hexagonal house, I felt as though I had been stealing horses, but I soon fell asleep.

In the morning Caroné took me to the tailor, to be measured for a suit. But first of all I forcibly expressed my scruples. He replied, with a courteous, pleasant smile: "My friend, is play-acting real? Beating the drum is part of the trade! We cannot live on nature unadorned; we must embellish it as the painters do; and for 'beating the drum' you need an impresario." I was by no means convinced, but what could I do?

Only members of the company and newspaper-men were admitted to the rehearsal on the day before the performance. The Press had long accounts of it. At night the theatre was full to overflowing. I played calmly, and had "a thundering success," as Frau Billé put it. After the performance the Pressmen tried to tackle me again, but Frau Billé intervened, telling even wilder tales than she had told the first time. What a liar that woman was! I sat there in agony, until Caroné saw me off to my summerhouse.

The theatre was filled for all my performances, but the attendance was poor on the other evenings. After my



first three performances three more were advertised, "owing to the enormous success," and after those three another three, to gratify "the general demand," and I concluded with a farewell benefit. On the last night the theatre was as crowded as it had been on the first.

I had not yet received Father's consent. I gave him a detailed explanation of the whole matter, without speaking of my anxieties. My anguish grew unbearable. Had the letter been stolen or lost? Finally the answer arrived, at dinner-time. I concealed my excitement, and did not find courage to open the letter until I was alone. My toes were trembling when I tore it open.

There were only three lines :

By your arbitrary action you have withdrawn yourself from my tutelage and forfeited for ever all rights to your parental home. I am returning your things to your address unopened.

GOTTFRIED UNTHAN

How long I sat there, what I thought, and how I got away, has faded from my memory. I came to my senses sitting on a tree-stump in the woods. "What have I done?" was my only thought. Everyone would see the mark of the prodigal son on my forehead! I did not dare to go home until it was dark; unseen by anybody, I reached the only place in the world that was left to me, and dropped half dead on my bed.

I told the waiter that I was not well and could eat nothing, but that he was not to mention it to anybody; he could bring in my breakfast as usual.

I brooded over my "offence" until my head nearly split. Had I only told Father about all my worries in time, things would be different! Now my explanations



would probably be taken as lame excuses or lies. My crime was that I had kept my troubles from him!

I could see Father reading my letter and passing it to Mother. Silence. At this thought I felt as if every bone in my body was broken, just as my collar-bone had once been, when I was a boy. I would have stood it gladly, if my suffering could have saved my mother from grieving.

I finally realized that Father's ideas on parental authority and filial obedience made it impossible for him to act otherwise. Perhaps he was waiting for an explanation. "But I have none to give!" I said aloud. Yet where there was no real guilt, time must surely lead to understanding and reconciliation. With that I began to feel a little hopeful. As the first rays of the sun entered my room I fell into a sound and peaceful sleep.

"Take a week's thorough rest, until I have settled my affairs here; then we'll go to Frankfurt," said Caroné. During that week I wrote the parts for a string quartette to accompany my solos. When the last of the actors had departed the waiter became talkative. It was lucky that I had come, he said. Now the people had been able to get nearly all their money. He explained, further, that Caroné came from Mannheim, where he had acted as prompter; he had thrown up his job to run away with Frau Billé, and the two had started the theatre in Würzburg on borrowed money. He advised me to be careful.

I travelled down the Main and through the beautiful Spessart mountains, going second class for the first time in my life. Beautiful landscapes had always filled me with reverence. I forgot my father and mother.

At Frankfurt I appeared for the first time in a variety show; an old wooden circus building had been adapted



for the purpose. It was a new experience for me; the atmosphere was fresher and more natural than it had been in the theatre.

On my first night the E-string broke after a few bars. "Oh's" of sympathy were audible. I quickly took a new string from the tin box in my violin-case, tied a couple of knots, and fixed it as rapidly as it could have been fixed with the fingers. I closed the violin-case with a bang, which made the audience roar with laughter, so that I could not tune my instrument. I put my big toe to my lips, and said "Hush!" and then there was another roar of laughter, in which I joined. There was endless applause after my two solos. Director Steinitz came up to me laughing and patted me on the shoulder, saying: "Splendid! You are a made man in Frankfurt!" It was not quite clear to me what he meant.

"We shall go to Munich from here," said Caroné. He had not settled accounts with me at Würzburg, and I had paid for my own suit, as he had needed the money to put things right "after the bad season." I asked him to settle accounts with me now, as I wanted to have my money in my own hands. He explained the absolute necessity of keeping an "emergency fund" in hand. I could always have as much as I needed, he said. I thoroughly disliked his mode of procedure, but whom could I ask for advice?

We were to stay in Munich at the house of Caroné's brother, where Frau Billé joined us. The brother's name—Osterchrist—betrayed his Jewish origin; "Caroné" was a *nom de guerre*. I must have made my "face" at the sight of Frau Billé. At the first opportunity Caroné told me, with his most amiable smile, that he and Frau Billé were "practically" married, but could not legalize their



relations until she was divorced from her husband; the divorce was to be granted in a couple of weeks' time, and until then Frau Billé would stay with his people.

I was to give concerts in conjunction with Josef Gungl, the old Bavarian "Waltz King." At the rehearsal he could not take his eyes off my toes; when I played his *Oberländer* he even forgot to beat time for the orchestra. His latest composition, *Hydropaten-Walzer*, was the next item on the programme. "Boys, I wouldn't have thought it possible!" he said, shaking his head.

Frau Billé went to Vienna with us. She was known as "Frau Caroné" or "Frau Direktor." Caroné told everyone on the train that his wife was "going to star at the Burgtheater." From Passau we continued our journey by boat. What a glorious feast for my insatiable eyes! Pöchlarn! Here, one winter, the minstrel Walter von der Vogelweide had received a fur cloak from the Count of "Bechelaren" in payment for his songs; I would try and earn one with my feet!

For a month I played in Vienna at the Diana-Saal where Johann Strauss and Michael Ziehrer conducted alternately. When Ziehrer was conducting I noticed numbers of top-hats in the cloak-room. There must be a reason for this, and I wanted to know it. To my cautious question the woman attendant replied: "Well, you see, Herr Ziehrer's father's a hatter, and a rich man, who can afford to give his fellow-hatmakers free passes, and their hats are always well ironed!" I kept my eyes open, and I saw that the hatmakers all sat together, and applauded wildly at a signal from Father Ziehrer, who sat among them as master of ceremonies. Strauss would have felt himself completely put in the shade had he been present, which he never was. This method of



ensuring the popular success of a conductor amused me greatly.

I was much amused, also, by the money which was then in circulation in Vienna. It consisted of long strips of paper, on which a number of five-kreutzer stamps were printed. Every waiter had a pair of scissors, and cut off what was due to him. There was no other money, apart from a very few large copper coins.

My portrait appeared in the magazines, and the newspapers printed caricatures of me, at which no one laughed more heartily than I. The best I kept for my father. What a pity I could not send them to him at once! Since I had done nothing wrong, my pride prevented me from asking his forgiveness. "Let us go to Berlin," I said to Caroné.—"I have already signed for Budapest," he declared. I was longing to play in Berlin, because then my father would read about me in his paper, and might even write to me. . . .

When we left, Frau Billé did not accompany us. I drew a sigh of relief. At Budapest we were taken to Frohner's Hotel, where we had free board and lodging. Frohner organized the concerts in the big Redoutensaal; I was to play three evenings during the coming week. Franz Liszt was sitting in the front row of the crowded auditorium. After the concert he congratulated me, and patted my shoulder and cheek. There was something in his manner that made me doubt the sincerity of his enthusiasm, but the appreciation of my audience was genuine.

Count Zichy Jenö made up a party, and invited me to hear the best gipsy band at the Hotel Pannonia the following evening. I had never heard a gipsy band, and I was fascinated. I had not dreamt that music could



express such burning passion as Rácz Pál drew from his violin, or weep with such fathomless yearning. Was it a dream? And suddenly the fiddle laughed until the heart had to dance in sympathy. Merrier and merrier grew the tune—and now—now the utmost limit of joy was overpassed—now came death, with three slow chords that sounded like passing bells. If Rácz Pál had been able to confine his full tones within aesthetic limits he would have been the greatest violinist in the world, but his emotions were always running away with him; he was “much too full of feeling,” as the Viennese used to say.

After a lively Czárdas a musician went round with a plate. Zichy took a hundred gulden note from his pocket, tore it in half, put one half on the plate, and said: “Now play for the other half!”

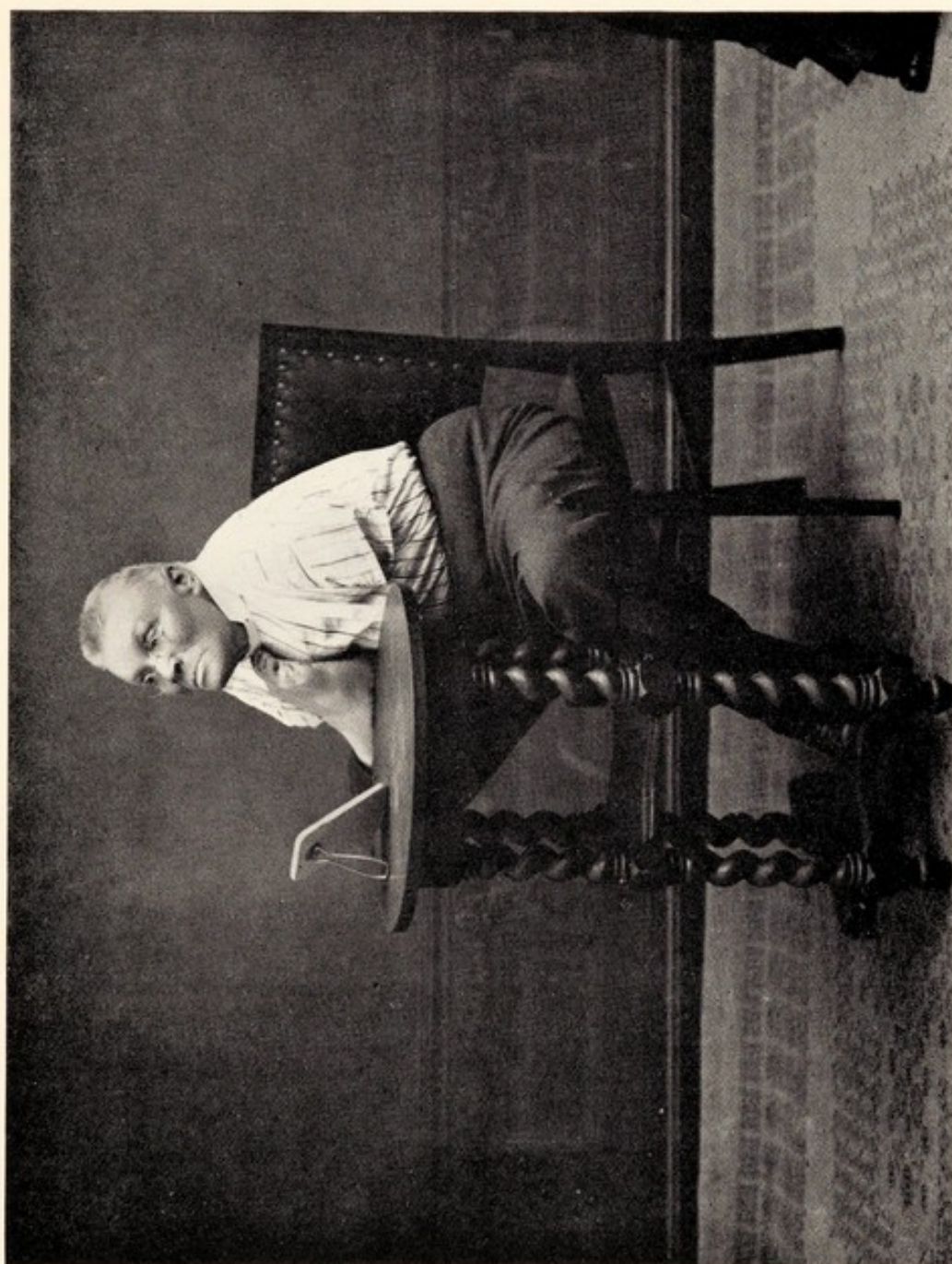
When I had once got over the novelty of the gipsy music, its false harmonies often offended my ears.

The party broke up late; we all agreed to meet the next morning at the world-famous Raitzenbad. I was the only one who was not staggering. Gipsy music rang in my ears for hours before I could fall asleep. If my mother could have seen how recklessly good money was thrown about by my new friends she would have ordered me home immediately!

Another week, with three concerts, and then we went to Graz, where they had a first-class theatre. Here too we stayed longer than we had contracted to remain.

After my first concert in Trieste a frail-looking gentleman came into our dressing-room and invited us to supper. Caroné accepted. When we were at table the gentleman said: “My name is Alfred Berg, and I am trying to engage artists for my father’s theatre in St. Petersburg. Can you play there on December 1st—





THOSE BEASTLY COLLAR STUDS





that is the 12th here—and what are your conditions?” Caroné behaved as though he thought he had found a fool; this annoyed me, for Herr Berg looked very ill, and he spoke my home dialect, which always had an honest sound to me. Caroné demanded an extremely high fee, but that did not worry me, as Berg, after all, could bargain with him. But he did nothing of the sort; he pulled some contract-forms from his pocket, filled two of them in, and the affair was settled. “I’ll give you your travelling expenses now, and an advance of three hundred rubles,” he said. Caroné’s eyes looked like a vulture’s as he pocketed the money. He went to bed drunk that night.

At Trieste the Bora blew for several days and carried my hat into the sea. When the train passed the Semmering, I rushed from one window to the other, treading on the other passengers’ feet and annoying them by my excitement. One gentleman asked me: “Are your parents still alive?” Frau Billé was not present, so I answered for myself: “Yes, thank God, my father is a village schoolmaster in East Prussia.”—“With your thirst for knowledge you will surely live to be a great comfort to them!” Fortunately the train was just passing through a long tunnel, so that nobody could see the crimson face of the prodigal son. . . .

In Vienna we rushed from one station to the other, found that we had no time for supper, and left at once for St. Petersburg—travelling third class.

The gentleman who met us at the station gave us Herr Berg’s compliments, explaining that he was his manager, and that we were to live in his house. “I’ll see to your luggage. There is a rehearsal at eleven.” I was to appear that same evening, after seventy-two hours in the train.

Our windows looked out on to the theatre, which was



a big wooden building. The interior was beautifully decorated. There were a lot of people present at the rehearsal, talking all sorts of languages, mostly French. The programme included French operettas, chansonettes, a ballet, acrobats, a German comedian, and other specialities. The rehearsal went off all right; we returned to our rooms and were able at last to take off the clothes which we had worn since leaving Trieste. The clean beds were a great comfort to us.

"Tschai!" shouted Samuel, our landlord, towards evening. I felt as heavy as lead, but I got up, had a wash and a glass of tea, and dragged myself to the theatre. Presently I was sitting on the stage with uplifted bow, waiting for the conductor to raise his baton. Then a frightful thing happened: a loud, inarticulate sound resounded through the theatre! I must have looked the picture of misery; I thought the audience would never stop laughing. Should I run away? I silenced them with a gesture and played as I had never played before. This time it seemed as though the applause would never end. Old Berg embraced me when the curtain went down for the last time.

Everyone drew back when a gentleman in uniform approached me. "How do you do it?"—"Do what?"—"I want to know how the violin is played."—"Oh, I can't tell you that!"—"I suppose you aren't going to tell me that you play it yourself? I want to know where the man is hidden who plays for you."—"That is my secret! I can't tell you that!"—"I am the chief of police."—"My name is Unthan."—"No swindling is allowed in Russia."—"Will you please come in?" I sat down in my dressing-room and played the Russian national anthem with double stopping. At the first notes he rose, took



off his cap, and assumed an expression as though he were about to be confirmed. When I had finished, he thanked me amiably, said a few words to Berg in Russian, and left. "That was lucky; he is very ready with deportation orders," said Berg.

Here I had a chance to improve my French. The ladies of the company took more interest in me than the men; there were a good many of them, as the operetta contained a number of women's parts: Finette, who, together with Therese, had some reputation as a singer of chansonnettes, was not beautiful, but piquant and saucy; she played the leading part, while Eugenie Deforet, who was a very beautiful woman, but as stupid as the day is long, took the second lead. This school of manners soon began to get too hot for me; it was all I could do to defend myself against the ladies. Finette offered to be "my friend"; the other two women were wildly jealous. Eugenie induced Finette's admirer, Prince Galitzin, to throw her over; in return Finette appropriated her wealthy friend, Baron Korff. That meant war to the knife!

"Get back there!" Finette shouted one evening at Eugenie, pushing her away. Eugenie advanced angrily, and Finette took off her shoe and hit her right and left with it, using language unfit to be printed. What had caused the row nobody knew; but in a moment there was a free fight on the stage. When the curtain went down some of the actors ran in front of it and went on fighting, the audience encouraging them with hearty cheers. The fight continued until nearly all the lights went out. Berg tore his hair behind the scenes. "I shall lose my licence!" he shouted.

All the members of the theatre were invited to a



Russian Christmas festival at Berg's house. There was a present for everybody. I received a silver cigar-case and a massive gold watch. My place at supper was beside Frau Berg; she was young and dazzlingly beautiful, a fascinating and lovable creature. This Christmas party will always remain one of the brightest spots in my memory.

A new artist, a sword-swallower, joined the company. I prepared him for the visit of the chief of police. Sure enough, after his *début* Captain Trepoff appeared and wanted to know "how that was done." Benedetti (as the Swede called himself) asked Trepoff for his sabre, raised the point to his mouth, and pushed it up to the hilt down his throat. Trepoff invited us to a restaurant for lunch, ordered the most expensive dishes, and walked off without paying or allowing us to pay. The manager and the waiters bowed to the floor before him.

Alfred Berg died of consumption. His death afflicted me deeply, and I went to his funeral. The world was the poorer by an honest man.

We joined the Hinné Circus at Moscow for one month. Once, as a reward, my father had taken me to Elbing, to see the Carré Circus, when we had been utterly amazed by the feats of the human and animal performers alike. I was now most eager to learn how these miracles were accomplished.

We were received with unpretentious kindness by Herr Hinné; he spoke an Old Bavarian dialect, which was in droll contrast to his lively manner and his Henri Quatre beard. As they were overcrowded, he asked me if I could put up with one side of his dressing-room. The members of his troupe were friendly people, helpful to one another and kind to their animals. There were several families among them, of six to ten members—



the Houckes, Prices, Nagels and Hanemanns—who set the tone of the little community, and I felt quite at home with them. The daily perils of their profession, from which they protected one another, formed an intimate tie between them, and helped them to understand and sympathize with other people's troubles. What a relief after the stifling atmosphere of vaudeville! Those who declare that the morality of the circus world is lower than that of the variety theatre are—in my opinion—guilty of a grievous calumny.

Business was so good that the box office was fairly besieged every day: which induced Caroné, a few days after our arrival, to demand more money. "It seems that you have little respect for your signature!" said Herr Hinné, sharply.—"I underestimated our value."—"Then remember it for the next contract."—"If you don't pay us more, Unthan won't play."—"Herr Unthan, do you refuse to play?"—"Certainly not," I said, after reading the contract.—"We'll see about that!" said Caroné, furiously, as he went out and banged the door.

A packed house, with no standing-room; the bell rang in my dressing-room. I went out, and ran against Caroné, who said: "I forbid you to leave your dressing-room!"—"Get the police!" said Herr Hinné to his son, a boy of eleven, who, in spite of his youth, did two acts on horseback. The lieutenant of police arrived. "Are you willing to appear?"—"Yes, perfectly!"—"He is not of age; I forbid it!" said Caroné angrily.—"Is this your signature?" the lieutenant asked him, pointing to the contract.—"I have . . ."—"I am asking if this is your signature?"—"Yes, but . . ."—"Then come along with me, so that this gentleman can play in peace!"

This affair must have been rumoured among the



audience; I was received with thunderous applause, which was repeated after I had finished, so that I grew quite tired of running to and fro and bowing. Caroné was waiting for me at the exit; he grumbled all the way home and late into the night. I declared that I would always stick to my father's principles, enjoyed my supper, and sat down to read Fénelon.

The diligent rehearsals in the morning were a joy to watch. The ring was full of riders and trainers; everybody was considerate, and avoided inconveniencing his neighbour. I played duets with young Nagel for hours at a time.

At the end of the month the circus moved to St. Petersburg. We travelled by special train, Hinné had had third class sleeping-cars attached to it. He treated his people like his own children. To lie in a sleeper, undressed, appeared so adventurous to me that I did not sleep a wink all night; but indeed I didn't want to, for sleep would have spoiled my enjoyment of the journey.

During the last week in St. Petersburg the ballet played a fairy pantomime in a temporary theatre of its own, a wooden building set up on the Admiralty Square. The acrobats and the armless fiddler were special attractions. The play began at eleven a.m., and we saw as many as twelve or fourteen performances daily. At noon and at half-past four samovars and sandwiches appeared behind the scenes, and we all helped ourselves. After the last performance everybody was given supper money, according to his salary. My share was five rubles.

A bill for 300 rubles was presented to Caroné, in respect of an old debt at Mannheim. He cursed and paid, declaring that the man owed him money, and that he was



a thief. The news that we were earning a lot of money had evidently spread as far as Mannheim.

In Riga the manager of the theatre informed me that my performance could not take place, as the audience wanted to go on listening to Heinrich Sontheim; further, Pauline Ulrich had been engaged as a star turn. I forgave the audience when I had heard Sontheim sing, a most beautiful tenor, whose voice reminded me of the tone of Wilhelmj's violin. There was no "attack" to be heard; the notes simply came and went as though by magic; he sang as though he needed no breath, and as though he need never stop. Every syllable was as distinct as if it had been spoken. Best of all, he adapted himself absolutely to the composer's intention. But did Gounod ever imagine that his *Faust* was so beautiful? Hardly. I sat there drunk with unearthly beauty. The impression was so overwhelming that even the sight of this all-but sexagenarian, rigged out like one of Berg's vaudeville singers, was powerless to diminish it.

We had great success with two concerts which we gave with Adrienne Darley, the contralto of the Mitau opera-house, on Sunday afternoons and evenings. After our return to Riga we embarked for Stettin. Caroné had received a black Newfoundland dog, called Nero, as a present from a friend.

My first sea voyage! I was sitting alone on deck, half an hour after sailing. "Take Herr Unthan below, and see he doesn't fall!" said the captain to the steward. We staggered down the companion; I was placed in a corner behind a table. From the cabins all round the saloon came groans and other sounds of sea-sickness. The supper ball rang. The captain and the first officer sat down at one table, and I—all by myself—at another.



The steward was ordered to help me. It was not necessary; I ate like a wolf! The sailors were delighted with my "valiant behaviour."

Caroné lay in the upper berth, fully dressed, his head bent over a tin bowl, groaning miserably. The steward had to undress us both; then he brought in a rug for Nero and left us. In spite of the increased rolling of the ship I soon fell sound asleep.

"Do you wish for breakfast?" asked the waiter next morning. Caroné only groaned. "Rather," I said. The smell of my beefsteak made him feel worse. I sat up in my bunk and made a good meal. Even Nero refused the bits I offered him. He then tried to get into my bunk, and snapped at me because I would not allow it. My pedal arguments had a convincing effect on him; from that moment he was devoted to me.

After three days of rolling and pitching we neared the coast. I was the first to escape the stuffy cabin; I climbed on deck and breathed the fresh sea air with delight. Haggard and hollow-eyed, one passenger after another dragged himself up the companion, holding on to the rail. They made up for three days' hunger with one meal which dug a big hole into the provisions. When we went ashore no one would admit that it had been "so bad."

My hopes of going to Berlin were not fulfilled. At Stettin I played in the Summer Theatre. Caroné received a wire from Hinné, asking him to come to Stockholm at our earliest convenience. After fulfilling our engagement we went to Malmö by way of Stralsund, and then to Stockholm on a Swedish steamer. The ship was exceedingly clean, the food tasty, and the weather calm. I fancied myself in paradise.



The Hinné Circus was giving its performances at the big Tivoli in the Tiergarten, small steamers going to and fro between that quarter and the city. We had two rooms near the circus. There was a little beach close by.

Early one morning Nero and I went to have a swim. When we approached the water, Nero barked "uff, uff," plunged into the water, seized the nearest swimmer by the hair, and pulled him ashore. The swimmer tried in vain to free himself from the dog's grip. "If I am saved like that once more, I'll be a dead man," he said afterwards. In the meantime I had undressed and dived from the spring-board into the water. Nero made for me, paying no heed to my shouts. When he was quite close to me I seized him by one hind leg and dragged him under water, balancing myself by means of my other leg. He struggled desperately. Bubbles rose to the surface. When I thought he had enough I let go. He shook his head, gasped for breath, looked at me quite abashed, and swam quietly beside me. Thenceforth he left the swimmers in peace. No one swam so far out to sea as Nero and I.

During the performance Nero was chained to the foot of the bed, lest he should interrupt the show. One hot evening, when all the doors stood wide open, and I had just begun to play, I saw Nero running toward me, and jumping over the orchestra into the ring; he put his front paws on my shoulders and knocked me over. Aware of his misdeed, he licked my face, the two of us rolling on the ground together. No one came to my assistance. I finally succeeded in getting up, and the audience yelled with delight. I was so covered with dust that I looked like a miller.



I sat down; Nero planted himself at my side, lolled his tongue out, and grinned. I began my solo. After a few bars Nero barked: "Uff," I answered "Ssht!" Another couple of bars, and he began to howl most dismally, ending with a high, long note. The spectators were doubled up with laughter. I boxed his ears; more laughter. I had quite forgotten that the dog howled only when I played on the G-string, and I started the same piece over again instead of beginning the second part of my solo. This time Nero began at once; he went dismally up two octaves of howls, and down with a jump. The spectators were no longer laughing: they were shrieking and rocking to and fro. Panting with rage, I got up and walked off. Nero seized the violin-case in his mouth, as he was accustomed to do at rehearsals, and trotted after me. The laughter must have lasted a long while; I had given Nero a good scolding when I was called to make my bow. No earthly power could have brought me on the stage again that night. I went to Hinné to excuse myself; he only nodded; he could not speak a word for laughing.

The dog had broken his chain and jumped through the glass of a first floor window. When Nero repeated his trick, and even improved on it, a few days later, Hinné was no longer amused. Caroné had to sell the dog. It was hard for me to part from Nero, and I believe it was even harder for him.

We went to Copenhagen—not to Berlin! How disappointed I was! But the crossing was delightful. Caroné had once more to lie in his bunk most of the time.

The Alhambra was a vast establishment with a theatre, ballet stage, concert hall, variety stage, circus, platforms in the gardens for wrestlers, and other speciali-



ties. I played one night in the variety show, and then was transferred to the ballet theatre, where Katti Lanner, the daughter of the Vienna composer of waltzes, was directing a troupe of 120 dancers, mostly girls. I had a very good time there, after I had been declared "inaccessible." Katti's rehearsals gave me new ideas about beauty of line, colour and grouping; and she was fond of talking to me. Then Caroné signed up for Hamburg, and Berlin was to follow.

Berlin at last! Would it bring about a reconciliation with my beloved parents, or would the split last for ever? When I was alone I would often picture Father passing the newspaper to Mother, and pointing to my name. Then silence! I saw Mother go out and cry secretly. Then I should get a few lines from them, and my old home and my parents would once more belong to me, after a year of lonely suffering. I was full of hope.

The Carl Schultze Theatre in Hamburg was a real people's theatre. Women sat there knitting and crocheting, but that did not prevent them from entering heart and soul into the play, laughing at comedies, crying over tragedies, and cursing the villain between the acts. The last turn of the evening was a farce in which artists supplied by an agent were "tried out" with a view to engagement by the director. Siamese twins who quarrelled and were "torn asunder" by the director, a juggler who dropped everything, a conjurer who had nothing but mishaps: all these were fired by the director. Then Benedetti swallowed his sabre, and was accepted, and so was I, with my violin; whereupon the "Clodoches" danced a cancan—in those days a novelty. The frantic applause annoyed me: to my thinking their performance



exceeded the bounds of decency. The theatre was sold out every night.

In Berlin Caroné took a room for me, paid my board at the restaurant for one month in advance, and told me that the rehearsal would be at ten o'clock; he himself might be a little late. I went to the theatre, introduced myself to Director Callenbach, and asked him to keep my letters for me until I called for them. "Why?" he asked.—"I don't trust my manager."—"I must look at the fellow." At the rehearsal he seemed well satisfied with my playing. Caroné arrived, and was annoyed that the rehearsal was over. He spoke a few words to Callenbach, and then withdrew. "I don't like that fellow!" said Callenbach, shaking his head. "Paul, all letters for Herr Unthan are to be brought to me in the office, do you hear?"—"All right." That evening Caroné turned up with Frau Billé on his arm. She was affable, but I could not conceal my antipathy.

On the third evening Callenbach came into my dressing-room with a letter: Father's handwriting! I did not dare to open it, and had to exert all my self-control in order to go calmly through my performance. Then I rushed home without supper and locked the door; but I still hesitated. With trembling toes I opened the letter; it read:

MY DEAR SON,

When your explanation reached me a year ago, my letter to you was already on the way. My answer to you was returned marked "no address." Since then I have not been able to discover your address. We are both in good health and are looking forward joyfully to your visit, which we hope will not be long delayed.

Your devoted Father,

GOTTFRIED UNTHAN



How utterly mistaken all my assumptions had been, and how wretched I felt to think that my stubbornness had brought such grief to my poor parents, when a word would have been sufficient to explain everything! Instead of the expected gratification there was a load upon my heart that threatened to crush me. After a sleepless night, tormented by remorse, I got up at dawn and scribbled a few lines to say that I was well, and would write full details the following day. I posted the letter and went for a walk. I should have a home again, but did I deserve it? If I had only had a friend to talk to!

The following day I wrote a detailed report and asked Father's advice as to whether I should leave Caroné. When I had posted the letter I felt greatly relieved.

The reply was as detailed as my report had been. I read it over and over again. Father saw just how matters stood, but advised me not to leave Caroné unless I had legal grounds. To break one's word meant a stain for life. Otherwise he had no fault to find with my principles and my attitude hitherto. That was a great comfort to me. Mother had written on the margin: "Your loving mother is longing for you." Tears are often the expression of the greatest happiness! I had only one wish left: independence and separation from Caroné. That question would be discussed in my own home, at my next visit.

I asked Caroné for a fortnight's leave and the necessary money. He declared, with a sweet smile, that he had signed on with the Carré Circus in Cologne, which wanted an extra turn. Later on I could have leave and money. I wanted money to send home. He could not spare any just now. I reported every word to Father, and sent him the gold watch which I had received in St. Petersburg. He had anticipated Caroné's refusal. The



unusual cordiality of his letter betrayed his pleasure in the watch more plainly than his words.

"Those are no trousers for a great artist!" said Callenberg in Caroné's presence, pointing at my legs. "Herr Caroné, shall I order a new pair?" Caroné nodded. I was measured for them by a tailor who came from Sommerfeld. He took the order without a deposit. I wore the new trousers for a week on the stage, but could not get the money to pay for them from Caroné. The morning before our departure for Cologne I declared: "Either I'll pay for the trousers to-day or I shall not leave with you. I don't want to be regarded as a swindler in my native village."—"I have other things to worry about than your trousers!" he said, and he went out.

Next morning he came in panting. "Hurry up, we shall miss the train!"—"Six talers."—"We'll send it from Cologne; be quick!"—"First six talers, and two hours to go to the tailor and pay him!" He threw one taler after the other on to the table; two rolled on to the floor. "Put it into this pocket, please! That's it, thank you!" We reached Cologne at the last moment, and I had to appear without rehearsal.

The king of Hungarian violinists, Miska Hauser, gave a concert at the Gürzenich. Since my appearance was early, I was able to hear the second part of it. I had been prepared for something exquisite, but this excelled all that I had ever heard. How different beauty can be! If Wilhelmj could be likened to a stately rose-bush, Hauser was a violet on a lover's breast. I was enraptured by his simple *Berceuse*, which was thenceforth one of my own best pieces for the better class of audience.

And still I could get no leave; Caroné had made new engagements.



In Brussels Singelée heard me play one of his *Fantasies* and sent his greetings to me. The atmosphere at the Casino was like that at Berg's; Christmas was very jolly. I drank two glasses of champagne, and was in high spirits. To my great annoyance the Director made the intoxicated prompter see me home.

Our success tempted Caroné to go to Paris. Herr Hübsch, the brother of Frau Billé, met us at the station, and took us to his bachelor's flat, where we waited until daybreak; then we went to the Hôtel Belgique, where rooms had been engaged for us. From my window I had a splendid view of the Swiss Gallery of the Louvre and the Seine.

I was to play at the Cirque Napoléon, if the ninety-year old director was satisfied with my playing. He said he would prefer to have me accompanied by a piano instead of the orchestra, so that the public would have no cause to suspect that someone in the orchestra was playing instead of me.

I made good use of the ten free days before my début, and had a thorough look at Paris.

One day I went to the circus to practise. "There's a rehearsal to-day, a classical concert to-morrow afternoon; no one from the circus is admitted!" growled the porter.—"I don't belong to the circus until the 16th," I explained.—"All right, go ahead!"

A large platform was constructed above the saddle-room and part of the riding-school. I went to my dressing-room and practised. A gentleman with a short, grizzled, full beard and a jolly face entered, carrying some big books under his arm, and stopped to listen until I had finished. "Impossible! Incredible!" he cried. "Can you play thirds?" I played the beginning of the G major



Romance by Beethoven, and explained why I had to deviate from the "fingering." "You are German," he said; "you might tell me the meaning of these words!" He opened one of the books and pointed to "Langsam, etwas bewegt," in the score of Schumann's D minor Symphony. We went through the book; he wrote the translation of the terms in pencil. "Come with me and listen to the rehearsal!"—"The porter won't let me in."—"You are invited for all time; I am Monsieur Padeloup." I gazed up admiringly at the self-sacrificing promoter of classical music, and tried not to laugh at the idea that anyone should introduce himself as "Monsieur."

The orchestra, consisting of about a hundred performers, differed considerably from that at Leipzig, and I had to listen attentively before I realized the nature of the difference. It lay in the brass instruments, which were hard and "brassy" at Leipzig, and beautifully soft here. Every musician did his best. The rehearsal was finer than the concert, as usual.

I was a sensation, and filled the house. The Court was expected to come, but disappointed us; the people were unruly and discontented. Barricades were built during the night on some of the boulevards. I sometimes had a look at them after the performance, before fetching Caroné and Hübsch from their eternal and quarrelsome piquet, which they played every night in a little café kept by a man from the Black Forest.

I was practising one day when Padeloup entered with a gentleman whom I knew at once from his portraits to be Sivori, the only pupil of Paganini. Without being asked I played a Romance by Beethoven and the Kreutzer Étude Op. 32. Padeloup watched Sivori, who stood



speechless. When I had finished Sivori spoke to Pasedeloup in Italian, his native tongue. "I thought I was dreaming when I first came in," said Pasedeloup.—"Incredible! Who was your teacher?" said Sivori.—"David."—Your bowing shows it." We conversed in a most remarkable French, each speaking worse than the other. Sivori let me try his famous Stradivarius, which had belonged to Paganini. We went to the rehearsal.

Sivori played Mendelssohn's Concerto. No one could have rendered it more perfectly; every note was exact, but the intellectual power of Wilhelmj was completely absent; his playing did not touch me in the least. Violinists like Sivori can play with the same expression a thousand times, while artists like Wilhelmj are carried away by their enthusiasm, which lends a bewitching beauty to their playing. In the second part Sivori played the G major Romance by Beethoven—which was not at all in his line—and then several of his own compositions, most brilliantly. I should have preferred to hear him play Tartini and Paganini.

"We shall have an unlucky evening," the artists said at the circus one night, "it's in the air." The first act went off all right, except for a rider who sprained his ankle on jumping from his horse. As an "enlightened" man I tried to talk them out of their superstitions. Then another artist met with an accident: doing the giant swing he fell from the horizontal bar and broke his arm. Every one of the artists was nervous when he entered the ring, and, in consequence, met with some sort of mishap. When I walked in the ringmaster said to me: "Lucky fellow! You can't hurt yourself!" What could happen to me? I felt uneasy nevertheless, but I behaved



with the most perfect assurance. After two bars, "ping," the E-string broke. That was just what I wanted! I took out the box of strings, and fixed the new string with true Parisian elegance, to the evident delight of the audience, and started afresh. A few bars and "ping" went the string again! The damage was repaired more quickly than the first time, but my nerves began to give way. A fresh start and another "ping." I must have looked a picture of misery, but suddenly my face lit up. I began to play on the A-string a popular ballad, consisting of five notes, which I had often heard in the streets, with the words: "J'ai un pied qui remue et un autre qui ne va guère" ("One of my feet is lively still, but the other's not much good"). The pianist, a clever Parisian, chimed in with the accompaniment; we were in a frolicsome mood, and so was the audience. "Another verse, another!" they shouted again and again. I had to take several calls; after taking the last one I was walking off backwards, when I tripped over a rolled-up carpet and fell flat on my back. Exclamations of sympathy, and then, when I sprang to my feet and made my stupid face, roars of laughter. Only one more turn was to follow: the "Firehorse," ridden by the ringmaster's wife. Rider and horse had to leap through flaming hoops. At the last hoop but one the horse changed his foot; the rider was thrown into the seats, broke her collarbone, and was carried out unconscious.

Herr Hübsch had persuaded Caroné to conclude a year's contract with me; all my expenses were to be paid, and I was to receive two francs daily in cash. One day the key of my trunk disappeared; two days later I found it in my pocket, but the contract was missing. Shortly after this Caroné ceased his payments to me. I



spoke to Hübsch about it; he was greatly annoyed, but could not do anything in the matter.

In May we moved to the Cirque de l'Impératrice. The Court was expected, but the war came instead. We went to London.

Nowhere is it harder for an artist to get a footing than in London. Caroné was recommended to an agent who turned out to be a crook. Several weeks were wasted before I appeared at the London Pavilion, where I played for three weeks. Frau Billé's six-year-old daughter came over with some friends. We had offers from the provinces for two or three weeks, but they did not suit Frau Billé, so she returned to Munich with the girl.

A wealthy London merchant, Mr. Weyl, invited us to spend Sunday with him and his family. I was anxious to show my progress in English, and although everybody present understood German, I saluted Mr. Weyl with the words: "How do you do, and how do you do your wife?" General blushing and noseblowing, which I failed to understand. Weyl promptly changed the subject. It was close on midnight when the party broke up, and then Weyl explained my blunder to me. A sleepless night followed. I declared the English language my sworn enemy. I never dreamed that in the future I should have to speak more English than German.

When we were in Sheffield Mr. Gascoyne said to me: "According to law I ought to pay you and not Caroné, whom you don't need at all." He gave us a month's re-engagement.

"You have signed contracts for Hull as well as for here, so I didn't know whether you would really turn up; I can't let you appear," declared the manager at Liverpool. I had just finished a letter to Father when



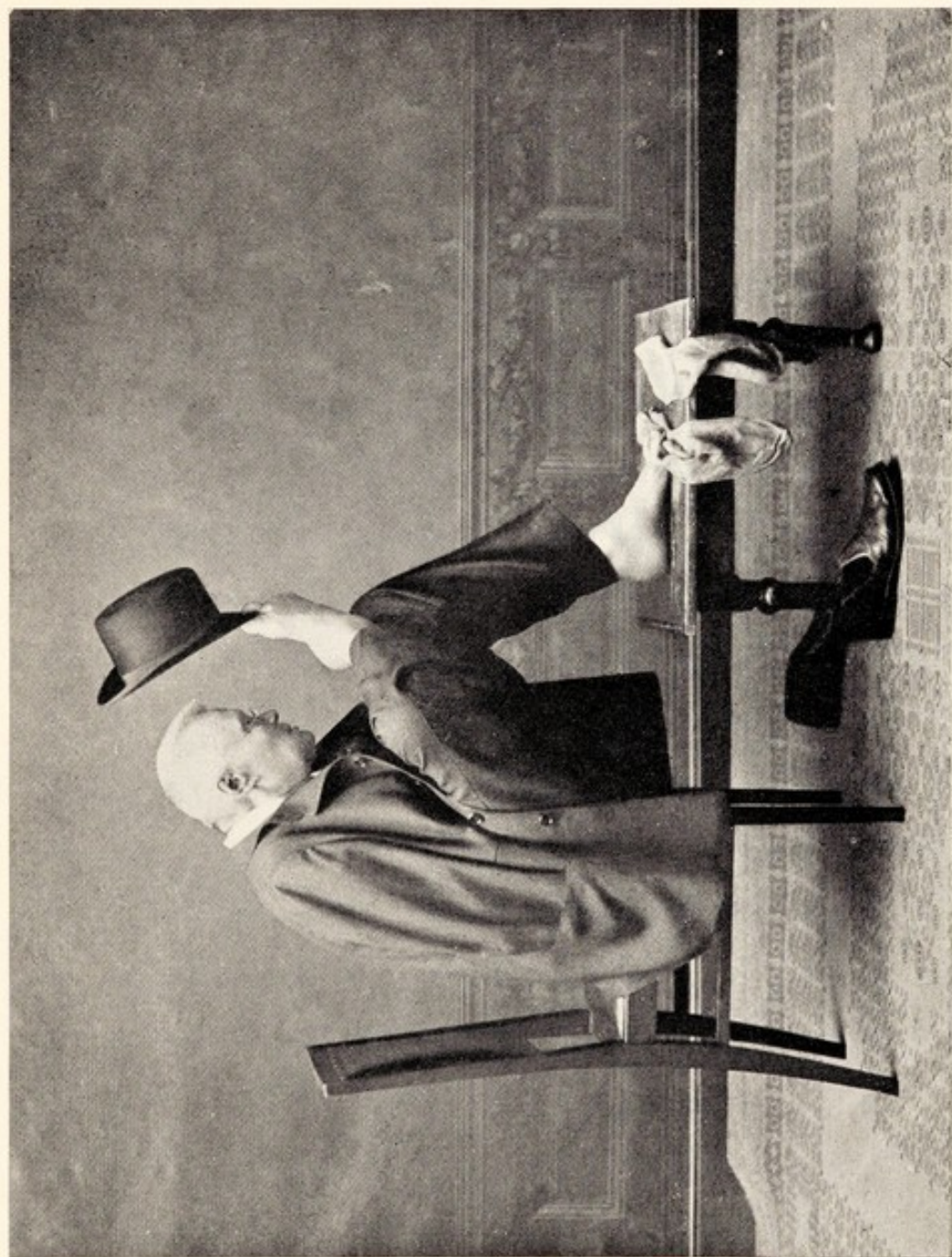
Caroné entered, drew the letter away from under my feet, read it, slapped me in the face twice with the back of his hand, and tore my letter to pieces. I wrote another in the landlady's room, telling Father that I would leave Caroné at the first opportunity, I thought at Sheffield.

"Have you a written contract with Caroné?" asked Gascoyne upon our return.—"No."—"Are you booked after this?"—"Yes, for Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Hull."—"All right. On Saturday I shall let him wait for his money. Meanwhile you pack your things and rush off to the station. This young man will help you and protect you against Caroné until your departure; you are to go to my friend Pritchard, where you will be hospitably received. You will be paid a pound a week for your expenses, and on the last Saturday I will pay you the balance for the four weeks, and you will leave for Glasgow, while I keep Caroné waiting until I can show him your signed receipt. I will write to my friend Rossborough at Glasgow to keep you out of trouble, in case Caroné should follow you. That thief has been getting fat at your expense long enough."

I felt as though I had been set free after a long imprisonment! I had no fear that Gascoyne had a card up his sleeve; he was too honest for that. My antipathy for Caroné had been evident from the first. The "young man" was a tall, strapping fellow by the name of Leo Baruch, who was looking for a job in an office. While packing I did not feel in the least heroic, but all went off smoothly, and I celebrated my first Sunday as a free man by writing a long letter to my parents.

Monday, during rehearsal, Gascoyne called me into his office. "Leo is no better than Caroné, but I have





PREPARING FOR A WALK: HAT FIRST, SOCKS AND SHOES LAST





nobody else at hand. Don't trust him, and don't promise him to take him with you; that would be jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. Caroné will start a row, but I'll settle him once for all on the last night. Now give us a good show!"

"You will come back to me immediately! I have parental authority over you!" Caroné opened fire on me. "A man is of age at twenty-one in this country," Leo informed him. Caroné began to shout; but Gascoyne came and showed him out.

On the last evening Caroné came on to the stage. I fled into the auditorium; he gave me a kick which sent me flying down the stairs. Several men laid hold of him and dragged him out. That was the last I saw of him.

Young Gascoyne waited for me at the station with my luggage. While Gascoyne settled with me, and I signed the receipt, and listened to good advice, Leo packed up my stage properties. We jumped into a cab; Mrs. Gascoyne put some sandwiches into my pocket; I had tears in my eyes when I said: "God bless you both!" and off we went. At the station we had ten minutes to wait. The train came in; I thanked my friends and jumped into the compartment. The wheels seemed to be beating time to the music that was in my heart at the end of my slavery; I had never felt anything lovelier than this rhythm which was bearing me into a new life. I did not expect to lead an easy life, but I was firmly determined to use all my energy to develop my gifts and talents. Life seemed too valuable to me to waste the first night of my freedom in sleeping! With my eyes wide open I let my thoughts wander into a happier future.



## CHAPTER IV

# INDEPENDENCE

(1870-1874)

*Blackmail—Home Again—Father's Birthday—At my  
Sister's—Mother's Birthday—Winter in England—  
Father's Death—Reunion with Mother—The Forgotten  
Birthday—England—Off to America—In a Gale—  
In the Ladies' Cabin—New York—The Broken String  
—My Friends—Dora—Fishing—Sharks*

IN Glasgow I jumped merrily out of the train. "Where is Mr. Caroné?" asked a woman.—"He hasn't come."—"He has engaged rooms at my house; the breakfast is waiting."—"All right! I'll take over his responsibilities." I was soon enjoying a tasty breakfast in a warm room. The landlord joined me. "It will be best for you to take your meals with us. I am the conductor at the Britannia Music Hall. Do you know that you are to play with us as well as at the Standard? You will draw a salary and a half, and a cab will take you from one theatre to the other every evening." I could not conceal my satisfaction; was fortune smiling upon me already?

In this cheerful mood I wrote a Christmas letter to my parents, told them everything just as it had happened, and announced my visit for about the end of April. Father had not yet written to say what he thought of my break with Caroné; so in spite of my happiness the tone of my letter was just a little cautious.

In the evening visitors came and played dominoes with my landlord for money; I refused their invitation



to join them, which they evidently took amiss. I went to bed early.

"Where is Caroné?" inquired Mr. Rossborough next morning before the rehearsal. I told him what had happened and asked for a contract in my own name. "No need; the man who works gets paid. By the way, Gascoyne has written to me. Should Caroné turn up, you only have to come to me." I asked him to recommend me a tailor; I needed a suit for the stage as well as an overcoat; I had enough money for them. "Go to Heyman, but don't pay him until he fits you properly. Tell him that I'll guarantee payment." After rehearsal he said: "Your programme is too serious for us." The evening performance proved that it really was too serious, and too long. The following evening I played popular Scottish songs to the Clyde-side workers, and concluded with a hornpipe, which brought the house down. "You know the tricks of the trade!" said Rossborough. The Standard Hall, on the contrary, was frequented by the better class, so that here my usual programme was neither too long nor too serious.

Caroné wrote a letter to Rossborough, asking for the pay "due to him according to contract." The crooked agent also demanded his "usual" five per cent commission. What Rossborough answered I never knew. "Here is a blank contract; all you have to do is fill in your terms and sign it." I never saw him again after that engagement, but I have always had a warm feeling of gratitude for him.

Father declared that he fully understood my proceedings. I was getting on splendidly; I saved some money for my visit home, and sent the rest to Father; I hoped to have enough by the end of March. I succeeded



also in securing engagements in England for July, after my visit home.

From West Hartlepool I was to go home. The variety theatre there was frequented by the crews of German ships. "On Saturday, at midnight, we sail for Hamburg; I'll take you along for one pound sterling," one of the captains offered.—"All right, here is the pound." I was afraid he might change his mind. We had a rough sea, but nevertheless a pleasant crossing.

In Hamburg I was advised to travel *via* Stettin and Danzig, as the trains passing through Berlin were being used to transport French prisoners of war. I wired home: "Arrive Thursday or Friday." In Stettin I acted as interpreter for some French officers, but I soon left them, as they were unmannerly. I had kept myself informed of the most important events through the newspapers, but had never imagined the enthusiasm of the population. I felt prouder than ever of my country.

I arrived in Schlobitten late at night, and lay down on the bench beside the stove in the waiting-room until five o'clock, when the mail-coach left. I took my seat behind the driver, so that my parents might see me on my arrival. My excitement grew greater and greater as we approached my "home town." "Your father gave me a tip to blow the horn very loud when we reached Sommerfeld, if you were aboard," said the driver. Where the highroad turns off into the village I saw my parents waiting for me. I jumped down into Father's arms. Then Mother held me in her arms until my trunk had been taken down; they insisted on carrying it themselves. "How tall you have grown, boy!" said Father, with a smile of satisfaction. "And how healthy you look!" said Mother, through her tears.



Never in my life had fresh, fine rye bread, fresh butter, and coffee with thick cream tasted so good to me, though no one can contend that East Prussia is famed for good coffee. No one spoke. "Nearly five years!" I said at last, with a deep sigh.—"They are over now, and have been a lesson to us all," said Father after a few moments' silence.—"God grant it!" Mother's whole soul lay in the words.

Duty called Father to the school. I began to relate my experiences to Mother. Father soon returned. "Come along, they want to see you!"—"Good morning, children!"—"Morning, Hermannche!" This mode of address had been handed down. It was like old times again! I had to tell them about my journeys in foreign countries, and addressing the children by name, for the family likeness told me who they were. The following day I gave half the lessons for Father.

"To-morrow is your birthday; will you fetch the fish for us?"—"Yes, Mother, that's my job here." The beautiful weather, the halo on the dewy grass, all was as in days gone by; what a pity I could not leave my shoes behind the fence again!

How much I had to tell! Caroné had repeatedly written to Father from Berlin, trying to obtain parental control over me, the only thing, according to him, which would prevent me from "going to the dogs." Father showed me Caroné's letters, and drew my attention to their contradictions, by which he had judged him more accurately than I had done on personal acquaintance. "I soon saw through him. This has been a hard lesson for you, but you will realize the good of it later on," said Father decisively. "I did not answer his last few letters."



"Mother, we've done enough feasting! You can go back to ordinary cooking now," I said one day.—"Child, we have eaten like this for the last two years; we are quite well off now!"

Father's birthday was a joyous occasion. I presented him with a gold watch-chain; it pleased him, but he did not wear it. The assistant master, Lokuschewski, who was called "Loku" for short, played the violin quite well; we played such dance music as the children had never heard before.

My sister and my brother-in-law did not come. "Their business is in a bad way; they will have to sell out," said Mother with a sigh. Later on we heard that they had exchanged their farm for a smaller one at Krönau, without asking advice of anyone. "If they won't take advice they can do without our help," said Father.—"Let me go there!"—"All right, but don't get drawn into making promises."

Conditions seemed hopeless at my sister's; they had lost all confidence. "Our parents do nothing but blame us; we'll fight it through ourselves," said Marianne defiantly. They were a sober and industrious pair, but they were both quite incapable of managing the place. The following day I went home, three hours on foot, with a heavy heart. The situation could not be worse; but lamentation would do no good. "Inspector Hintze in Spandau is looking for a new manager for his farm; I shall recommend Gottlieb to him."—"How do you know that?"—"I went to see the pupil, Wilhelm Nabitz, and Hintze got to talking about it."—"That would be fine, but will Gottlieb have the necessary authority over the men?"—"He must try it," said Mother. On Sunday I came to terms with Hintze; Gottlieb was to



begin in November. Things would not have gone so smoothly but for a game of skat, which lasted until three in the morning. Hintze and Nabitz went straight to work; I toddled home, tired and well pleased with the twenty-seven silver groschen which I had won—nearly a taler!

“Pastor Ebel has invited you to call with me. During the meeting you can stay with Frau Ebel; she used to be Fräulein von Baehr; she is very well educated, and will want to hear all about your travels.”—“Oh, that’s Else, the daughter of the headmaster of the municipal school in Königsberg; she was awarded the first prize for her haughtiness. I’ll do my best for her!”

Little Frau Ebel, pale and slender, treated me with an even mixture of dignity and amiability. She asked me to read her an article in the *Gartenlaube*. I read in a way that would have horrified even the peasant boys whom I had to teach at school. She stood my stammering only for one column; then she remembered that she had to give some orders in the kitchen, and fled from the room. She came back just before the teachers returned. I had to answer endless questions about England and Paris. It was eleven o’clock when the party broke up. “Why did Frau Ebel watch you so keenly when you were speaking?” Father asked.—“She must have thought I was a better talker than reader.” I told him what had happened; Father and Loku laughed so heartily that it roused Mother from her sleep, and I had to tell the whole story over again. “She is right,” said Father, “you read very badly indeed, but you talk like a book.”

“Father, Mother will be fifty years old next Tuesday . . .”—“What! I had nearly forgotten!” he



interrupted me.—“Well, you’ve had plenty of practice!”—“Boy, what shall we do?”—“A couple of days ago she was admiring some material in Liebstadt; we’ll get it for her, for a new dress.”—“Do you go and bring the stuff back with you! I’ll pay for it alone, as I have to make up for so many years!”—“That won’t do; in that case I shall have nothing; but if I get something myself I’m sure to make a blunder.”—“Get her a pair of shoes, really good ones!”

Mother had never had such a birthday in her life! “You know, Father, she and I have always celebrated her birthday secretly!” There, I had let it out at last! Could there be happier people than we were? “You have made your way splendidly up to now, my boy,” said Father at supper; “if you continue in that way you’ll never have cause to worry.” He had some business to attend to at the mayor’s office. “Have you ever thought about marriage?” asked Mother.—“I don’t want a wife from the variety or the circus, and others don’t want me, unless it’s out of pity. But even that would not last for ever, and what a life I should have to lead them! A woman who does not look on me as *at least* her equal had better leave me alone. I have not the least intention of marrying, so long as I have you.”

The day of my departure came. “Don’t be so sad, Mother dear!”—“That would be ungrateful, Hermann!”—“I have asked Father’s permission to come again next year.”—“Permission? To come to your home? You foolish boy!”

“Let us measure our height!” suggested Father. He was five feet and a half, I was five feet ten inches. “We are no beauties, but we’re healthy and strong, and that’s more important,” he said, smiling.—“Father, the last



years have been very hard on me; but I fully understand now that it has been good for me!"—"You have won a good footing with your clever feet, my boy! Hold on to it, and you'll never go wrong! But you'd better take the golden chain with you," he said, and he fastened it to my silver watch. "I have enjoyed it now for some time, but it does not suit my surroundings and my character; it may be useful to help you out of a difficulty one day." He would not keep it for all I could say.

We were all quite cheerful at my departure; we were looking forward to another such glorious summer. "Be always as you are now!" Mother whispered, with a whole world of love and happiness in her glistening eyes. The coachman blew his horn as heartily as if he had received a taler.

In Newcastle my landlord had moved into a better house; I had a fine room, which led directly into the garden. That was just the place in which to enjoy the memory of my happy holidays. My father's first letter told me how completely we had come together again.

Every week I sent some money home to my parents. Each letter from home contained a few words from Mother that spoke of quiet happiness. I was not idle for one week throughout the winter; and with a joyful heart I began to make preparations for my journey home. For Father's birthday I gave him at his desire a long account of the cultivation of the soil in England. The answer came from Loku; Father had caught a cold which would keep him in bed for a few days.

It was in Oldham, one of the dirtiest towns in England, on May 9, 1872. A moment before going on to the stage I saw a telegraph boy enter the theatre. "There is your next week's engagement," I said to a colleague



who was standing by. When I came off the stage the telegraph boy handed the wire to me. I felt as though the world had come to an end; something must have happened to Father! I was afraid to open the telegram, and sat in my dressing-room, hopeless and forlorn. When at last I opened it, with trembling toes, it read:

*Father died this morning. Funeral the thirteenth. Loku.*

"Pack up your things, I want to close the theatre," said the doorkeeper. I looked at my violin through a mist of tears; would it ever sound again? Or was its soul shattered for ever, as mine was? I kissed it, put it into its padded coffin, changed my clothes quickly, and went home. My landlord tried to console me, offering me whisky and brandy. I could not speak; I nodded to him to leave me alone, and retired to my room. I burst into a flood of tears, and wept until daylight. Then I suppressed my tears, dressed, and went to ask the manager for leave of absence for the funeral.

"Impossible! I have nobody to replace you! If you cancel your next week's engagement you will never be allowed to appear in England again. Not one of his trunks is to go out before Saturday night," he sharply instructed the doorkeeper.

*Cannot get away before July, my thoughts are with you,*

I wired to my mother. Then I went out to take the air and be alone. I sat down beside a shrubbery and let my tears flow. It was difficult to believe that Father no longer lived, and that Sommerfeld would have to do without him! I thought and thought. Poor Mother! I felt even more forsaken than many years ago in Würzburg, when I took my sorrows into the woods.



The memory of my last visit home was balsam to my wounds. When the sun set I broke away from my melancholy thoughts and went to my room. Somehow I managed to play that evening as though nothing had happened.

I wrote to Mother and explained the situation. I gave her my share of the inheritance, and asked her to decide whether I was to come home at once or fulfil my contracts. Her answer was calm and resigned. Father would not have peace in his grave if I did not fulfil my contracts. She could remain in the house until October; it would be time when I came in July to settle matters. I wrote three long letters to her every week, in which I described the smallest details of my life.

The days passed, and July came. What a sad meeting, and yet what a relief to be reunited to Mother! "Child, what a wonderful time we had last summer! Without that he would have died hard. In his delirium he was always happily beside his beloved son in England," said Mother, through her tears.

I visited Father's grave on Sunday; it was a bed of flowers. "We must have a railing round it, Mother."—"Yes, child, of wrought iron." At her wish we went to Holy Communion together.

On our way home Mother said: "What a comfort that I can move into my own house and not have to depend on others!"

I taught my father's class in all subjects—except religion, which was taken by Loku—until we moved into our own house. It was a cold winter, and we were often cut off from the village, but we never felt lonely. I went to Elbing and ordered a railing for a double grave, having first secured the place beside Father. The



railing was mounted on a stone foundation before Easter; Mother and I went to adorn the grave with flowers, when suddenly a burning wave went over me. Would Mother think that I wished that she too was there, when she saw the double grave? How could I have been so thoughtless? She looked at it for a long time, very sadly, but her face grew peaceful. Without looking at me she laid her hand on my shoulder and said: "How beautiful! And how thoughtful of you, my darling child!" A heavy burden was taken off my mind.

For my birthday Mother surprised me with a new hat. On her birthday something unheard-of happened: I forgot it! Late in the evening I remembered it. I slunk away and fell helplessly on my bed. How could such a thing have happened? The following day I heard my niece, whom Father had taken into the house to educate, say to Mother: "Mother, every time I woke up last night I heard uncle crying!" Before dinner I had to come out with it, for the first mouthful would have choked me. "But, my dear child, how can you grieve so! I never doubted your affection; I have proofs of it!" A cheerful if belated celebration followed.

After careful consideration I took Mother's advice to follow my profession again in the autumn. "Staying here would spoil your life," she said. I found a reliable farm servant; the maidservant stayed on. We discussed and arranged everything, so far as the future could be foreseen.

"Won't you feel lonely, little Mother?"—"How should I, in such a busy household!" The nearer the day of my departure came, the more oppressed I felt, as though some misfortune were approaching. Mother



no longer thought that she could not live without Father, as she had last year, but her joy in life had greatly diminished. She saw me off at the station. When the train came in sight she said: "What a blessing that your father lived to see you getting on so well! God has always been merciful to us." A kind smile in her dear eyes, a long kiss; I jumped into the compartment; she closed the door. I dropped into a corner, and did not stand at the window as usual; I could not repress my grief any longer; it was the only time in my life that I lost all control over myself.

I signed an eight weeks' contract for England. My tour began at Jarrow on the black Tyne. Crossing from Hamburg to Newcastle the sea was calm for the first time.

The weeks slipped by. In my long letters to Mother I told her everything that happened. One morning I received a letter from Benedetti: "Hermann Schuhmann from Munich is organizing a variety company for a year's tour in America. I have recommended you. Let me know where he can see you in the next fortnight. Money safe."

A fortnight later, after a performance, Schuhmann entered my dressing-room. Tall, slender, with a Kaiser Wilhelm moustache: a versatile, trustworthy Jewish type. We came to terms immediately. I was to leave directly after the expiration of my present engagement, and should have no time for a visit home. Mother was greatly pleased with my new prospects. "The spots on the paper are tears of joy, my child. You will now see the wide world, which you longed to do from your childhood."

On Saturday the members of the troupe went on



board the steamship *Cuba* at Liverpool. I arrived the Thursday before sailing, and strolled through the town and met old acquaintances. "What are you doing here?"—"We are leaving with Schuhmann." I counted 120 members going on board; my hair stood on end! How should we all appear on one programme? There must be a mistake! Should we have to swim back home? Benedetti, who was called "Ben" for short, only laughed. A French juggler, by the name of Beckmann, was even more indifferent.

The weather could not have been worse. No one was on deck but Ben and I. During the second week a few others turned up. The gale blew harder, and no one was allowed on deck. The air below became unbearable. One night the mainmast broke, crashed through the deck and thrust itself into the saloon. The seas crashing over the decks ran down into the saloon through the hole beside the mast, and with the rolling of the ship found its way even into the cabins. Never before had I heard such shouting, crying, cursing and praying! Beckmann (called "Beck") did all these things, and threw up green bile into the bargain. The mast was sawn off and a piece of sailcloth nailed over the gap.

One night, when I was staggering to my cabin, I was hurled from one side of the gangway to the other. The door of the ladies' cabin must have been left ajar; when I tumbled against it I suddenly found myself sitting in the middle of the room, where about two dozen ladies were undressing. They screamed as though they were going to be murdered. I cast my eyes down and did not raise them from the carpet. Hurrying out of the pitching, tossing cabin was not so easy without arms! I staggered to and fro, until at last I had the door



behind me! "For shame!" were the only words I could distinguish in the chorus. How could I help my "shamelessness"?

The shrieking of the women had collected a crowd, which was scandalously delighted by my misfortune. "Did you apologize?" asked the second officer.—"How could I?"—"Well, quick then! I'll hold the door!" He opened it a little. I began: "Ladies, I am . . ." and in I went again, this time into a remote corner! How I got out I don't know. "You are a lucky devil, I envy you!" said the hardened sinner. I could have poisoned him!

On the sixteenth day passengers appeared on deck, looking like corpses. On the seventeenth we landed in New York.

After a five days' rest, the first performance at the Standard Theatre. On the programme were ballet, pantomime, acrobats, trick cyclists, and other turns. Those of us who did single acts had to wait for our turn. The conjurer, Alfons Herrmann, with Schuhmann's brother Emil as manager, Herrmann's niece Dora, and her husband Singer formed a company of their own and went on the road.

Apart from my daily practice on the violin I had nothing to do. The more I looked at the country and the people, the stranger they seemed to me. My only intimate friend was Ben, who drew Beckmann into our company; the other members of the company did not appeal to me. I felt an emptiness, and was longing for work.

"I don't like this idleness, Mr. Schuhmann," I declared, when I received my second week's salary.—"Are you afraid of losing your money?"—"It's not that, but I feel as though I am receiving alms, and that depresses



me." He patted me on the shoulder and said: "The time will come when you will complain of too much work."—"That is impossible!"

One day, three weeks later, Ben, Beck and I were called into the office. "The owners of the theatre will not agree to a change of programme; I shall have to farm you out; that is, lend you to other managers. You, Unthan, go to the Boston Athenaeum on Monday; you, Beck, to Newark, at Waldmann's, and you, Ben, will appear here, at Falk's Tivoli. Everyone will get a cheque for his salary and travelling expenses to the next town every Saturday. You have nothing to do with the managers, but I hope to hear no complaint from any of them." We looked at each other. "Thank God for some work at last!" I said, with a sigh of relief. Ben growled something like "Tivoli, low class!" Schuh, as we called him, interrupted him with the remark: "In this country a dollar is worth a hundred cents everywhere."

That week I heard nothing but warnings that John Stetson, the manager of the Athenaeum, was an intolerable tyrant.

The steamer by which I left for Fall River was a fairy palace. There was a concert in the evening; the musicians wore a sort of military uniform. At Fall River we had time for a light lunch before the train left.

At the rehearsal a string broke. "Can't you do that at the evening show?" asked somebody, after I had put on another string.—"Are you Mr. Stetson?"—"Certainly."—"Those strings break when they like!"—"Try to manage it!"—"I'll do so."

"Four boxes are occupied by friends of mine," said Stetson in the evening; "try to make a good job of it!" When I tuned up before my second solo I helped a



string to break by means of a small piece of glass that I had concealed in my shoe, and the little private interlude met with the usual success.

I went from town to town, as I had in Europe, but there was a difference. What was it? In Europe the people lived in harmony with one another; the traveller felt at home everywhere. Here in America everybody tried to excel everyone else. Everybody was constantly squabbling. A harmless chat, as in Europe, was unknown here. Everybody spoke of himself as a hero. The longer I travelled, the more America appeared to me as a battlefield on which all were struggling desperately to get ahead of the others.

At first I felt as though the ground was rocking under my feet. Then I crept into myself, and clung to my mother as my one sheet-anchor. To her I wrote everything which could be told without disturbing her peace of mind; but the whole truth about *this* world would have distressed her.

At Easter Schuhmann gave me a voluntary rise, as there had been no complaints about me. I learned the whereabouts of "Schuhmann's Transatlantic Variety Combination" only every Friday, when my cheque arrived, or from the theatrical journal *Clipper*.

In Portland, Maine, I received a wire:

*Come next week opera-house Cincinnati. Schuhmann.*

After forty-eight hours' journeying Schuh received me with the words: "Now we shall stick together!" His brother Emil was bookkeeper and cashier; the troupe was considerably reduced; it consisted mostly of single acts, with the exception of four acrobats. Ben had a bed prepared for me in the room where he lived with



Schultze, "the man with a hundred faces," acknowledged as the greatest mimic of his time. In spite of his fifty-one years he felt and behaved like the student he had been at twenty-one; he never knew whether he had a clean collar for the evening, and sometimes went to bed with his top-hat on. His racoon was an inmate of our room, tidier and of cleaner habits than its master.

My début with the company for which I had been engaged eight months before took place in Louisville, and was a decided success. I noticed a change in Benedetti. He was "Americanized"; more superficial, quarrelsome, and inclined to obscenities. He had been my only friend.

I began to look more closely at my other companions. Schuh was completely the "business man," but was always courteous and obliging. His brother Emil, very shortsighted, a banker by profession, was quiet and pedantic, but always a good sport. Our stage manager, Brown, one of the cyclists, had once been a ship's carpenter, and was still one at heart. Beckmann, then the best juggler of his day, had grown up in a market booth, and was very excitable, but accommodating and willing to help others. The four acrobats were envious and petty-minded, as the English of the lower classes generally are. The Portuguese Ferreira was a riddle; shortsighted and cross-eyed, one could never tell whether he was sober or three parts drunk. His language was a mixture of Portuguese, Spanish, French and English, but he seldom had anything to say. When on the stage this semi-idiot became a highly gifted artist, putting his fingers to his mouth and producing tones which surpassed those of a flute in beauty. He could write his name only with difficulty, and had never had a



music lesson. His talent was a gift from Heaven, and could have never been taught. This man was compounded of opposites; all soul in his music, and perfectly soulless in his life. He was of middle height, had knock-knees and flat feet, was remarkably vain, and used to stare at the girls with one eye and at the weather with the other.

In the second rank there were the Russell brothers, who were English, and whom I had known when they were boys with the circus in Paris; Tom Lovell, also English, and a regular ladies' man, who directed the pantomime; the American Strong, with his trained canaries; and Miss Fontainebleau, a pretty English girl of indefinite age, who did a pretty act on the fixed trapeze.

A married couple, Mr. Singer, a "maid-of-all-work," and his wife Dora, who belonged to the bicyclists' troupe, and appeared in the pantomime, attracted my attention. They were like fire and water. What could have been the tie between that simpleton of a man and that well-bred woman, whose black, flashing eyes denoted a defiant and passionate nature?

"We ought to have missed this place," said Schuhmann in Memphis. "Half the population died here of yellow fever after the flood last year; they are just beginning to recover financially."

"To-night everyone must do his best; we'll have sharp competition next week," said Schuhmann at rehearsal in New Orleans. There never was such a rotten performance! Everything went wrong that evening; but it didn't seem to matter; the house was full every night.

"Dora wants to sing two songs next week; can you arrange the parts for the orchestra?"—"Certainly, if she



has the piano accompaniment." I wrote the orchestra parts for Baroness Rothschild's song *Si vous n'avez rien à me dire*, and Schubert's *Impatience*, and signed my name and the date on the last page.

At the rehearsal the conductor declared that he dared not play music which had been arranged by a non-unionist; but he would write the parts himself before the evening performance. Schumann wanted to negotiate with him. "Get a grand piano, and Dora will accompany herself," I advised. "Oh yes," cried the delighted coquette. That night she had to sing two encores. Her deep contralto was wonderfully beautiful and perfectly trained.

The railroad track from New Orleans to Morgan City had been seriously damaged by the flood and only temporarily repaired: every now and then a car jerked off the rails; once it was the engine, with the tender and mail car. "How long before we can get on?" Schultze asked the conductor.—"Two hours." The woods with their luxuriant creepers tempted us to take a walk. "Don't go too far! It's full of alligators," shouted the conductor. Beck turned back then and there.

After a day's jolting and jouncing we arrived in Morgan City, had a good meal on board ship, and lay down to rest in clean beds, while the steamer made her way towards Galveston, where we landed early next morning.

Here the flood had devastated large tracts of the countryside. The few habitable hotels were filled. Ben and I found shelter in the attic of a boarding-house. Dora arrived later, and was put into a garret above our heads. She had sent her husband off with the magi-



cian. As a preventive of fever, the houses had all been lifted a yard; the side-walks were raised wooden platforms, with steps down into the street at the end of each block. The street lighting was very poor. On our way home after the performance the person who led the way tumbled down the steps at every corner. I adopted a very cautious gait. Ben went arm in arm with Dora and remained with her in her attic for a while, but was soon replaced by someone else. Ben had to suffer for this later.

The journey to Houston, over the creaking wooden trestle-bridges, was most alarming.

One evening I sat meditating in a dark corner. How beautiful the world was here, and how peaceful the day had been! I seemed to feel God's presence. The door opened gently; Dora went to the piano, played a few chords, and then began the Andante of the Moonlight Sonata. I was filled with such reverence as I had never felt before. With infinite tenderness the last notes of the Andante died away. In this mood I was afraid of the Allegro; that would tear me out of my dreams. Instead of it Dora played nine short chords, the introduction to Schubert's *Impatience*. They cried aloud in ecstasy, clamouring impetuously for happiness, like a new spring. Poor Franz Schubert, if you could but have heard it! Perhaps you never knew such beauty! After the last verse she turned around and looked at me. "Oh, are you there?" It was like an icy shower-bath. How could so much talent, so much feeling for beauty, and so much—meanness be united in one being! I knew she had seen me on entering the room. I got up and walked out.

Galveston wanted us back for a week. Ben and I asked Emil, who went on ahead of the rest, to reserve a



room for us at the hotel. The trestle-bridges creaked louder than ever.

At Galveston we saw anglers with baskets full of fish. "Boys, let's go fishing!" suggested Ben. He, Beck and I set out at half-past three in the morning, sat down on the pier, and cast our lines into the water. Not a bite. "Have a drink!" said Ben, and produced a bottle of white wine. Not a bite. "Have another!" said I, and pulled a bottle of claret out of my bag. Beck caught a nice blacktail. "That's worth a drink!" he exclaimed, laughing, and pulled a bottle of brandy out of his pocket. From that moment we had only to throw out and pull in our lines; bite followed bite. We soon had a heap of fish. It would have been a pity to stop while our luck held. I was holding the line lazily with my foot, my legs hanging over the side of the pier. A strong pull at the line; I started and went overboard. Before I reached the water I was wide awake. People gathered, pointed to the nearest steps, and shouted: "Beware of sharks!" "Splash the water violently" I had once read in a book, and I acted accordingly. It was half-tide, and the steps were covered with seaweed; the waves washed me to and fro, until at last I got a footing on the steps and climbed up the thirty feet to the top of the pier. I was received with barbaric laughter. "You look like spinach and eggs!" shouted Beck, falling to the ground with laughter; but he jumped up like one possessed: he had sat down on his fish-hooks. Meanwhile Ben had pulled out my fish; it was a bull-fish, 28 inches in length, and weighing some 35 pounds: the "hero of the day."

The spectators were politely invited to withdraw, as Ben had to cut two hooks out of Beck's posterior with his pen-knife. A bite on his line! He pulled out a catfish;





OPENING THE DOOR WITH THE FOOT







and in taking it off the hook he cut his middle finger to the bone with its dorsal fin. A boy carried our fish home in a wheelbarrow; we followed, with a quickly collected crowd trailing behind us. Schuhmann heard our laughter and came to the window, where he swore like a trooper. We invited the company to a fish supper. The "hero" resisted knife and teeth, but the other fish were tender and tasty. It was a merry evening. My yellow linen suit was washed and hung up on the line. The wounds of my friends required some time for healing. Both were rather handicapped at the performance; it was a comical sight to see Beck hopping about the stage.

On our return to New Orleans we found the track in better condition. From the station we went straight on board the *Clyde*, which was bound for Havana; a thick fog kept us at anchor for thirty-six hours at the mouth of the Mississippi.



## CHAPTER V

# CUBA AND MEXICO

(1874-1875)

*Cuba—Disturbed Harmony—The Ladies again—  
National and Nigger Dances—Slave-drivers—Rebellion  
—The Dog and the Racoon—Against the English—The  
Bullfight—The “Cow Bull”—The End of the Republic  
—“Eviva Alfonso doce!”—Mexico—Revolt—On  
Horseback*

I stood as though under a spell. Was all this real? Were this sky, this limpid air, this rising sun, this landscape with its palm-trees, towers and palaces, a dream? Even in dreams I had never imagined such beauty. The very air was filled with miracles. We were driving into a forest of masts. The harbour lay before us like a wide lake. The rattle of the chain-cable roused me from my meditations. Officials came on board. Both the Schuhmanns went ashore. We had to wait until one of them came to fetch us. The officials honoured me with a number of questions, at which I merely shook my head. *Es Aleman* were the first words of Spanish I understood. The bustling activity on board the ships and the people ashore in their white suits and straw hats interested me enormously.

Emil came to take us ashore. Schuh met us at the Customs Office on the pier, and spoke to the officers in Spanish, pointing to me the while; but his Spanish was not much like that of the officials. I felt as though I were a museum specimen, and swore that this should be altered so soon as my toes could get hold of a Spanish



grammar. The formalities at the Customs consisted in opening and shutting our trunks. I cast an inquiring glance at Schuhmann. "Dollars are called 'pesos' here," he said, smiling.

Everything was strange to me. Narrow streets; no glass in the windows, but strong iron gratings, behind which sat vividly painted women of all ages, whose bold and provocative glances made me blush with shame. There was an atmosphere of decay about everything; but a cool, fresh air breathed from the patios, which offered, through their wide, open gates, a glimpse of resplendent palms, and fountains, and white marble columns. To avoid being run over by the traffic in the narrow streets, one had to squeeze oneself against the walls of the houses. The air was thick and stuffy compared with the fresh breeze blowing in the harbour.

Ben, Schultze and I were shown a big windowless room under the gallery in the courtyard of the hotel. A dim light entered through the unglazed "French window." Reading and writing were possible only near the door. But the patio, with its plane-trees and rocking-chairs, was a place to dream in! And quite close to the fairy-like Alameda. And all this was for me to enjoy, the cripple from Sommerfeld!

Aimée with her French operetta company was playing at the Teatro Tacon; we had to be content with a smaller theatre, the Albiso. After our second night Schuhmann sold the receipts of the next four weeks to speculators at the price of the full house. The speculators sold the tickets at higher prices, and made a big profit on the deal. At the Tacon Aimée played to empty houses and had to close down.

The harmony between the members of our company



was disturbed by a flirtation between Dora and Tom Lovell, of which Schuhmann did not approve. We were on the side of Schuh; the English backed up Lovell. Cutting remarks were exchanged, and the ill-temper of the English found expression even on the stage. "Lend a hand to shift the table!"—"Nothing doing! We are not servants like you!" Miss Fontainebleau, who had always been quiet and reserved, began to lead a life which cast Dora into the shade.

The speculators must have done well out of their bargain. On the occasion of the second Sunday matinée they set up a buffet against the back scene of the roomy stage, covered with the most tempting delicacies. On the third Sunday they were outdone by the German Club. Herr Bock (a tobacco king), the chairman of the club, came in person to invite the German members of the company—Ben, Beck, Schuhmann and myself—to consider ourselves honorary members of the club.

Emil, Ben and I went to see the national dances at the Louvre; they were danced by young people of very dubious character, and were steeped in sensuality. I was fascinated by the rhythm of the *Habanera*, which reminded me of gipsy music.

"Let us go and have a look at the nigger dances," suggested Emil. So we did, and what we saw was unimaginable.

At Mantanzas we visited the stalactite cave, a most wonderful sight. In the same town Schuhmann engaged the Freire brothers with their "Japanese Ladder"; they had been left behind by another company.

At Bemba we were invited to a hazienda, to see the sugar-cane harvest. The slave-driver, a rifle slung over his shoulder, two revolvers in his belt, a leather



whip in one hand, and the leashes of a couple of bloodhounds in the other, urged the negroes on with an "Anda!" when he thought they were not working fast enough. And this man was English! The children of the slaves, and their pigs, were tethered to the huts with ropes. After inspecting the hazienda we were invited to lunch by the owner. I refused. I could not have swallowed a mouthful in a house where the word "humanity" had no meaning. At the hotel my room had been given to someone else by mistake; I had to sleep on the billiard table with Charles Almonte; it was very hard lying.

In Cardanas crabs of all sizes promenaded the streets during the night. A priest knocked my hat off at a religious procession. Beck gave him an unreligious smack in the face that made him sit down with a bump. Except for the laughter of the bystanders the incident had no further consequences.

Schuh had engaged Juan Romero, the clown who sang Cuban national songs, and the tight-rope artist Luisa Zanfreta. It was soon apparent that she would excel even Dora and Miss Fontainebleau in the matter of easy morals. Romero was the first to succumb to her charms.

At Sagua la Grande there was nothing resembling a proper hotel. Sixteen of us, myself among them, had to make a great dormitory out of the loft of an inn. Our furniture consisted of two rickety chairs with wash-basins on them. Those who felt the call of nature during the night went to the window overlooking the street. The landlord advised us to use this window, as anything thrown out of the back window flowed into the cistern which provided the water for drinking and cooking.

On Sunday a big waggon took us to "La Concha" for a matinée performance, which was given in a store-



room built over the water; there were only a few isolated huts in the neighbourhood. Where were the spectators to come from? Well, they came, and came in crowds, paid their money, and—stood patiently. The water was visible through the cracks in the wooden floor, and the bicyclists who opened the show often got stuck in them, greatly to the amusement of the people, who had never seen a bicycle in their lives. The acrobats were afraid that their upper man would break through the floor in leaping down, so that many of their tricks had to be omitted. The Freire brothers could not work at all, their ladder being too high. Ben, Fereira and I got on very well, and Beck still better. In the run of the plate-catching act he was tripped up by a splintered floorboard and fell full length, the plates being all smashed, to the great delight of the audience. At the close of the performance many of the spectators came to thank us severally; they had never seen such “wonders.”

The insurgents in the east of the island were advancing toward the west. Schuhmann went to Santa Clara to see whether he could still get a licence. He soon wired us: “Be here Monday morning.”

The hotels at Santa Clara were crowded by people from the country districts who had fled from the insurgents, leaving their belongings behind. Schuh had obtained a most elegant room in the house of a wealthy family for Emil, Schultze, Ben and myself, on the condition that we would all be indoors by one o’clock in the morning. (The performances began at a quarter to nine and ended at midnight.)

The theatre was very old and dilapidated. Almonte’s top man leapt from the human pyramid and—to the amazement of the audience—vanished. He soon re-



appeared, in the middle of the stage, clambering out of the hole he had fallen through, with the dust of many years on his white costume and an expression of blank surprise on his face. He was not in the least hurt, and provoked an outburst of laughter. The hole was nailed up, but the bicyclists were badly handicapped. The following day the stage was properly repaired.

Presently the rumour ran: the insurgents are coming! Sentries were stationed at night; no one was allowed in the streets after dark. However, Schuh intervened, and an exception to the rule was made in the case of theatre-goers. Passwords were given out; ours was "*Compania Transatlantica*." When I was peacefully playing on the stage one night, distant firing was heard. The house was empty in a moment. "*Vienen!*" was the general cry of horror, but the rebels did not "come"; they lay before the town and besieged it, probably over-estimating the strength of the defence. There was a sufficiency of food, excepting milk. How long should we be kept here? Schuhmann was in a mortal fright; his brother Emil, on the contrary, was imperturbable. We played to full houses for a fortnight; then it was reported that the enemy was retreating.

Two days later we left for Cienfuegos. No name could be more appropriate for this town on the Caribbean Sea than "the city of a hundred fires." The heat was so intense—in December—that we could hardly drag ourselves about, and spent most of the time lying on our beds, stark naked. The city was beautiful, well planned, and clean; the comfort of the hotel was a delight to us after all we had gone through. At Christmas we made a Christmas-tree of a cedar-bough. When we returned from the show we found that the candles had melted away,



and we were so fatigued that we abandoned our Christmas celebration. Six performances followed in three days; we were all dead tired. "On New Year's Eve we'll make up for it," Schuh consoled us. "We'll open earlier than usual, finish at eleven, and then have a banquet for the whole company."

The show was rushed through. Ben and I were the first to drag ourselves to the hotel, in a temperature of 100 degrees. The dining-room was decorated as though for a wedding banquet. Beck entered first; Schultze followed with his racoon. Then a gentleman came in with some of our acrobats, accompanied by a big bulldog. The racoon was startled, and with one leap lit on the dog's neck. The dog ran about the room like a whirlwind, howling and barking, while his rider bit him where he could. Some of us shouted at the dog, others at the racoon, while the owners tried to get hold of their respective beasts. Two sideboards covered with crockery were overthrown. The chase became wilder and wilder, the shouts louder. The trestle under one end of the table was overturned, the table fell down, the plates and dishes clashed and rolled on the floor. One could no longer distinguish the animals; there was only a living ball, tearing to and fro, the racoon uppermost, the dog yelping. Both the Schuhs came in and left the door open. The dog shot out, quick as lightning; the racoon fell off, shook himself, sat down by his master, and looked as if he had won a battle. The Schuhs were speechless at the sight of the devastation. "That is a Schuhmann festival," said Almonte maliciously. Some of us turned an inquiring eye on Schuh, but he merely looked the other up and down; then he said casually: "Come along, Emil!" They went out.



"Come along, the cook is a fellow-countryman of mine; we'll celebrate in the kitchen," said Beck to Ben and me. The cook received us hospitably. We did such honour to the excellent dishes as three very hungry men could do, drank to everyone's health in the best wines, and staggered home to our room at four o'clock in the morning, when we had great difficulty in preventing Beck from singing the *Marseillaise*.

The owner of the dog was made responsible for the damage; he did not belong to the company, and had no business to enter the room; however, the landlord and Schuh offered to pay a third each. The dog was kept out of sight until we left town.

On New Year's Eve the bulletin board bore the notice:

On the last day of February the season will end for all English and North Americans.

THE DIRECTOR

The following morning we left for Havana. "Come with me to the Hotel Cabrera, we'll have some fun there," said Beck.

A busy time began. We played one night at Havana, the following nights at Guanabacoa, Habana and Marianao respectively, packing and unpacking every day. There were no matinées; the bullfights drew everyone to the arena. One ought to see a bullfight just once. What I had read about them was harrowing enough, but in reality what I saw was even worse: a horse running for dear life, his intestines falling out of his gashed belly and winding around his feet, to the delight of twelve thousand "images of God." . . . The second bull "refused." Bloodhounds were let into the



arena; they set their teeth in the bull's flesh and fought one another to get at his sexual organs. The bull dragged them along, trampling one of them to death and wounding others so severely that they lay on the ground, howling. "More hounds!" shouted the mob, until the bull collapsed and was at last given the *coup de grâce* by the puntador.

The third bull ran one of his horns through the breast of a horse, so that it fell over; he then did the same to the prostrate picador. "For the love of God! It is a 'cow bull'!" prayed a matador near me. The other two horses were killed in the same way, and a second picador was wounded. "More horses!" shouted the mob. Three more horses were brought in and quickly "finished off." A matador tried to entice the bull away from the prostrate picador, with his red cape; the bull attacked and chased him and pinned him against the barrier from behind. The matador dropped to the ground, dead. All the bull-fighters left the arena. Now some cows were admitted, and the bull followed them peacefully to the stalls. No one paid much attention to the last two bulls; everybody wanted to know when the "cow bull" would be in the ring again. On the way home it was explained to me what a "cow bull" meant: the bull closes his eyes when he attacks, in order to protect them from injury, and so loses sight of his adversary. Only one bull out of a thousand keeps his eyes open like a cow when he attacks, and so gets the better of his enemy; consequently all bullfighters are in mortal terror of a "cow bull."

Two Sundays later it was the "cow bull's" turn again. Fabulous prices were paid for tickets. The audience was in a fever of expectation; the bullfighters were strangely



calm. When the bull was let into the ring, the heavy trap-door fell on his back; he fell, with a broken spine. There was a loud outcry from the people: "Treason! It's a fraud!" The president and a city councillor received a thrashing.

Farewell Performance of the *Compania Transatlantica* at the *Teatro Tacon* for the benefit of the Poor under the patronage and in the presence of the Governor Don Martinez Campos. Carlos Benedetti will swallow an umbrella and open it afterwards. The whole company will appear in a street parade from twelve to four.

We all rode on horseback, wearing our stage costumes, the band at our head. I rode a fat carthorse, which I guided with my feet, the reins being attached to the stirrups. It had done with bolting years ago, if it had ever been so addicted. The sun was burning hot; to reach all the suburbs we repeatedly had to retrace our steps. The whole population was on its legs, shouting: "Adios! Buena suerte!" Suddenly we heard a distant tumult that drew nearer and grew louder. Not a word could be distinguished. I asked one of the crowd: "What's up?"—"The damned republic has ended at last! Alfonso XII has mounted the throne to-day at Madrid. Long live Alfonso XII!" I joined in the shouts; there was distant firing, and rockets were seen in the air. Fire-crackers were thrown under the horses' feet, which kept them dancing about. There were fireworks and rejoicings on every hand. In the land of bullfights accidents are regarded as amusements. Several of the horses fell, but no one was hurt. My old mare refused to be roused out of her philosophical calm. I saw Schuhmann's opera-hat lying at a street corner. A little further on I saw Emil, leading his and his brother's



horses by the bridles. We had literally to fight our way through the crowd, and I was the first to reach the theatre at five o'clock. Schuh was standing at the door. "Who brought you your hat?" I asked.—"Some young rascal, in return for a free pass."

At the hotel everyone was out except the clerk. I betook myself to the kitchen with Ben and Beck, where we found enough food for a good meal.

The theatre was crammed. The people's enthusiasm over the new kingdom broke out afresh from time to time, and as each of us appeared on the stage he was received with loud cheers. The programme went off smoothly. When Ben opened the "swallowed" umbrella, there was the usual "Ah!" followed by thunderous applause. Ben took one curtain call, then ran to his dressing-room and let the audience shout. With an anxious presentiment I followed him, slipped in behind him, and locked the door. He threw off his dress coat, spit a mouthful of blood into the wash-basin, took a gulp of claret, and stood on his head in a corner, with his legs against the wall, wine-glass and wash-basin within his reach. A knock at the door. He signed to me not to open it. From time to time he spat blood into the basin and drank a gulp of wine. After a while he said hoarsely: "That damned rough silk! I shall have a metal sheath put over the umbrella."—"Can I do anything for you?" He waved his hand, and a little later he stopped spitting blood and got up. "If the blood runs into the stomach I can't work for some time. Don't tell anybody. A good thing that I thought of the wine!"

"Out with you! The whole company has got to take a curtain call!" shouted the "ship's carpenter." We went



on to the stage just as we were. "Eviva la Compania Transatlantica! Eviva Alfonso doce; buen viaje!" the audience shouted over and over again. A farewell party was arranged for us at the German Club. The 14th of January was a memorable day for Spain—and for us.

"What was up with Ben?" asked Schuh next morning.—"I have promised not to tell; ask him yourself. But there is something else. Miss Fontainebleau was visited by a priest the day before yesterday, who had to read the early Mass yesterday at five o'clock in the morning. During the night somebody locked her door and put the key in his pocket. Next morning everyone in the hotel must have known about it. At nine o'clock the waiter 'found' the key on the floor, and went to inquire if the lady wanted anything. All the guests in the hotel were drawn up in a line, so that the reverend gentlemen—who kept his head well down—had to run the gauntlet. It is high time for us to get away; otherwise our three Graces will get us into the devil of a mess." I did not betray the fact that it was Beck who had locked the door.

The sun was setting as we passed Morro Castle. How enchantingly beautiful a tropical evening can be! I sat on deck, feeling more devout than ever I felt in church. The lights of Havana faded slowly. Should I ever again see the "Pearl of the Antilles"?

It was late. Whilst dreaming I had quite forgotten dinner, but I managed to get the better of half a stuffed duck. "Which cabin?" asked the German head steward.—"None as yet."—"Christ, what are we to do? The cabins are all occupied; why didn't you speak up sooner? Jim, put him in the ladies' cabin; there are no



ladies on board." I had a cabin with twelve berths to myself.

"Come into the smoking-room; there is high play going on," said Ben the following evening. A Spanish missionary held the bank; the gold ounces, equal to sixteen dollars, were all going his way. The head steward, who was playing for high stakes, was the loser.

The second night Jim, another German, brought ten nuns to my cabin. "Take the ladies out until I am dressed!"—"Good God! I had forgotten all about you!" On deck there was not even standing room; a regiment of soldiers had been taken on board at Campeche, six hundred men, with about four hundred wives, three hundred children and five hundred parrots; from the colonel to the last parrot all had to sleep on deck. I found an empty chair in the dining-saloon and went to sleep in that.

"There is a light cloud in the west, that means rain," I said in the morning. There was laughter. "It will be five months yet before we get the first drop of rain."—"But there is a cloud!" Those who had field-glasses searched the sky and saw nothing. They told me I was "seeing ghosts." "The cloud is growing bigger," I said at noon, and I let them laugh at me. At two o'clock the glasses on the captain's bridge were directed toward the west. "It's the snow on the Pic de Orizaba," the captain explained; "17,000 feet above sea-level."—"No ghosts?" I asked.—"I should like to have your eyes," said the old sailor, no longer scoffing. In the evening we disembarked at Vera Cruz. "Aren't the children a burden on the march?" I asked an officer who wore *espadrillos* instead of leather shoes, while the soldiers went barefooted. "Oh no; if they get troublesome



they are thrown into the swamp." The soldiers and their impedimenta were put ashore; the rest of the passengers stayed on the ship until the morning.

There was more gambling in the evening. Fortune smiled on the head steward. The missionary tried to force his luck by high stakes, and lost everything, to the last dollar. He asked for "his" money, first begging, then crying, and at last threatening: it was not his money, it belonged to the Holy Church, and he who robbed the Church would be damned to all eternity. Loud laughter was all the response. He declared that he would report the matter to the captain. They threatened to throw him overboard as food for the sharks. He had to accept his fate.

There was only one large room to be had at the best hotel, with three beds in it. "Stay with us!" said Schuh. "But no one must know that we all belong to the same troupe until we have rented a theatre, otherwise they will raise their prices."

We crossed the main square. "Herr Unthan, how did you come to Mexico? Where are you going to play?" a gentleman called out to me across the square.— "You go back to the hotel; go to bed and stay there until I've rented the theatre," said Schuh. I did so, and if anyone had made inquiries I should have pretended to be asleep.

In this country very few people could read and write. The day began with street parades, in full stage dress, on horseback, the band riding ahead, this being the only method of publicity. People pawned their last shirts to buy a ticket. There had never been such a sensation.

Our Englishmen told me that Lovell had been caught in Dora's cabin one night by Schuh and given a good



thrashing. Dora would have to leave in March, and so, very probably, should I, since the rest of the company would have to continue the journey on horseback. I noticed the malicious joy in their voices, and I should have liked to give them the lie, but controlled myself, and questioned Schuh. "You will have your own horse; if the riding is too much I'll buy you a small waggon," he said. My heart throbbed with joy.

We went by train as far as Cordoba. I shall never forget the sight of the snow-covered peaks above that tropical splendour! A German farmer invited us to dinner on his coffee-plantation. Here slavery had been abolished; master and servant were on excellent terms. On the way to Orizaba the line lay above a deep valley, and we gazed down at the treetops with astonishment. The town was clean. The hotel seemed to be only a stone's throw from the Pic. The most wonderful sight of all awaited us on the road to Puebla. The track rose continuously as far as Maltrata, and the vegetation became less exuberant. Then for three hours two mountain engines pulled us between bare rocks to a height of five thousand feet—to Boca del Monte, whence we could see Maltrata directly below us. None of us will ever forget the view from the bridge, two thousand feet above a little river which glittered below us like a silver thread. I could not tear myself away from the prospect, and left the others to take their lunch without me. Before me was splendour of the tropics, behind me the dazzling snow-clad range.

At Puebla we found the remnant of the Emperor Maximilian's followers; among them his physician. The Emperor was described as a magnanimous and heroic character, and this was admitted even by the Mexicans.



Mexico! The windows of my room looked into the third courtyard of the Hotel Iturbide. There had been several armed risings; no one ventured out of doors in the evening. We gave our performances at the huge Teatro National before empty houses; we risked our lives in taking the short walk to and from the theatre. "To-morrow the President will come with his staff; the house is sold out," said Schuh. President Lerdo de Tejado, a slender, delicate-looking man, was in peril of being shot. His pluck encouraged the people to go into the streets again. From that day we had full houses.

Horses were bought; I got a strong, roan-coloured horse which had been ridden by a major. The Mexican bridle consists of a bit with a ring at each end. The reins consist of a rope of several colours which runs from ring to ring, and when pulled tight reach almost to the rider's throat. I buckled a soft leather strap around my neck, and tied the reins to the strap with a slip-knot. By bending my head forward I could seize the reins with my teeth, and so control the horse if he became too lively. If I felt the thin string would break and leave me free. A delightful time followed; I rode every day for several hours with my groom, sometimes as far as the beautiful castle of Chapultepec. I talked a great deal to the horse, encouraging him, warning him, and soothing him when he stumbled, and could soon control him by word of mouth and the pressure of my thighs. Further, I taught Hector—as I had christened him—the "Spanish trot," and presently I was able to tell Schuh: "As far as I'm concerned, we can start."

The Englishmen and Schultze, who was leaving with them, had a farewell drink with us at the theatre bar. Suddenly the chandelier swung to and fro, glasses fell



on the floor, chairs slipped—and we laughed. “God have mercy on us! An earthquake!” cried the landlady, crossing herself. Our laughter broke off short. “Saddle up!” commanded stage-manager Brown. We were a troupe of thirty-four persons, in flannel shirts, leather breeches and jackets; one could not say who was master and who servant. At the sound of Beck’s bugle, purchased for the purpose, we rode off, our hearts full of expectation, along the road to Queretaro, accompanied as far as the gates by the townsfolk, and their good wishes.





A SQUARE MEAL







## CHAPTER VI

# THROUGH MEXICO

(1875-1876)

*Across the Mountains—Earthquakes—Eggs and Frijoles  
—Frijoles and Eggs—Don't Wash Yourself!—A Bath  
at Last!—Emperor Max—Wild Horses—Good Friday  
—Carrion Vultures—My Horse Comes Back—Silver  
Medals—Red Indians—The Fair and the Hot Baths  
in Aguas Calientes—Cock-fights—A Heavy Fall with  
my Horse—Highwaymen—The Volcano—A Suicide—  
Off to Panama*

THE sun was scorching. The earth quaked now and then. At noon we had a short rest in a village, consisting of a few miserable huts. At the *tienda* (inn) we had eggs and frijoles, brown beans of an agreeable taste, with pancakes of pounded maize. An hour's rest in the shade, and we were off again. In the evening eggs, frijoles, and hard beds. For breakfast black coffee and bread, and into the saddle. Our master of the horse, Pancho, a herculean half-caste, strongly objected to my attempt to wash myself. "Do you want your hide to peel off?" he shouted at me. I certainly didn't; as it was, what pains I had in my muscles and bones!

The rising sun warned us to hurry. At noon we had frijoles without eggs, but plenty of them; in the evening we had too few. My pains grew worse for three days, then slowly diminished. On the seventh morning we arrived at Queretaro, safe and sound, but unrecognizable for dirt and dust. Schuh had gone on in advance by diligence, and was waiting for us. Rooms were allotted.



I slid off my horse and rushed to order a bath. "You must cool off for a couple of hours, otherwise your skin will peel off," said the bath attendant politely. For one whole week I had neither washed nor undressed; I had been perspiring all day, the dust of the road settling down on me; there was a crust on my face that broke into small pieces when I laughed; I felt that I would give a kingdom for a bath! "You ought first to have some soup with an egg in it," advised the waiter, "otherwise some flesh will come off with the skin." The wise man smiled pityingly at my European ignorance.

Oh, what a treat to be clean! Bathed, with fresh linen and a clean suit, I had a sumptuous meal, with black coffee after it, in the exceptionally clean dining-room of the hotel. Half my weight seemed to have vanished or been transformed into intellectual vitality. Reader, you should learn to know this condition; it's worth trouble and sacrifice.

And the clean bed in the evening! The clean night-shirt! It was simply a fairy-tale! Then eleven hours' sound sleep, without moving!

But . . . how badly I played. Two hours of Rhode in the morning, two hours of Kreutzer in the afternoon, and my fiddle once more sang the old melodies. A parade every morning, a performance every evening, to a full house.

"Pancho, have the mare saddled to-morrow at six! I want to pay a visit to the Emperor Max!"

The tropical morning was like a prayer. A heap of small stones was piled up near the famous windmill; no cross, no other mark told of the tragedy that had been consummated here. Every visitor with a feeling heart for the Emperor Max's fate placed three stones on the



pile. I got off my horse and sat on these stones. What had lured him hither, who at Miramar, beside his beloved wife, lived in an earthly paradise? How his heart must have been wrung when he thought of his wife, who was now so unspeakably poor! Poor deserted man! How happy you might have been had you been born without arms!

"It's getting hot, señor!" said my groom. I chose three small smooth stones from the heap and put them into my pocket, as a reminder that a high position is no guarantee of happiness. To find three stones to replace those I had taken we had to walk quite a distance; visitors to the spot had long ago dilapidated the surrounding area.

A week passed. Burdened with a good proportion of the small change of Queretaro, we rode cheerfully in the direction of San Luis Potosi, ate frijoles with and without eggs, were glad when we had enough, and made bad jokes when we had to go hungry. This time I had no saddle soreness.

"We'll stop here," said Pancho early one afternoon, when we reached a place which consisted of a handful of huts. "Why waste time?" grumbled Weber, who, with his brother, had been taken into partnership by Schuh in Vera Cruz. "To-morrow we shall have to ride seventy-five miles through waterless country," Pancho explained.

We stretched ourselves out in the shade of a tree and watched an old woman preparing tortillas: Indian corn in the husk, which had been soaked in lime-water, was placed on a flat stone and ground down with another stone. The woman shaped the flat cakes with her hands and dried them on a heated rock. When the paste stuck



to her hands she spat on them to make it come off. That rather spoiled our appetite for tortillas; we could manage to eat them only when frijolis were scarce. That evening there was time enough to have most of the village chickens cooked for us.

The road was dusty. "Let them get ahead of us," said Ben, as he heard a trampling and neighing behind us. "A herd of wild horses! Hold fast!" shouted Ben to me. On they came, at a furious pace. Our horses joined in the race. "Let them run! don't pull them in!" commanded Ben, who had formerly been a circus rider. The track was level, so we gave them the reins until they began to snort. "Now pull 'em in slowly, but firmly!" Before I had begun to exert all my strength the left-hand rein broke away from the bridle. "Don't move!" We had dropped behind the herd, which had swerved off to one side. "Stand on tiptoe in the left stirrup! Lift the right leg over the saddle and kick yourself off backwards, but with all your might, or the horse will smash your skull with his hoof!" In another moment I found myself sitting in the brushwood, unhurt. "Bravo!" The string which fastened the reins to my neck-strap had broken without strangling me. My poor misguided mount followed in the tracks of his uneducated comrades, without paying any heed to me.

Ben got off his horse, unbuckled my spurs, put them into my pocket, and fired two shots, our call for help. The heat was intolerable; we dragged ourselves wearily forwards. Our shots were answered, so they had been heard; half an hour later Pancho and Weber arrived with two saddled horses. "It's fortunate that the beasts didn't break into our whole column; there's always some damage done in a case like that. Your horse will



find his way back," said Pancho, with imperturbable certainty. "Oh, rats!" grumbled Weber, who was calculating his share of the damage. "No rats, viene seguro," replied Pancho, as though soothing an infant.

The new horse kicked and bucked until my empty stomach seemed to rattle; where was my wretched Hector, with his gentle amble? Darkness fell quickly; it was pitch dark in a few minutes. We sat very straight in the saddle, for fear lest our horses should stumble, and gave them the reins. Uneasiness, a tormenting thirst, which had been increasing for hours (wine would have been as much use as boiling fat), and weariness resulted in a most unpleasant mixture of sensations. It was ten o'clock when we rode into a small village, which appeared to be deserted. Pancho knocked at the shutters of the *tienda*. After a while a sulky-looking fellow opened the door, starting back when he became aware of so many men and horses. "We'll pay for food and shelter," Pancho told him.—"Ave Maria santissima! to-morrow is Good Friday, and you godless men speak of eating still?"—"Let us in and light up!" commanded Pancho. We got some water, but nothing to eat; everybody would be fasting to-morrow, we were told. Beck took his gun and went out. Presently we heard a shot. Beck entered: "I've had an accident; my gun went off and the bullet hit a pig. What's the damage?" There was nothing for it but to light a fire, and very soon liver and chops, under Zanfreta's hands, were singing a most enticing song in the frying-pan. The pious scruples of the host vanished. He looked greedily at the frying-pan and brought us bread and wine. Later on he showed himself a valiant trencherman. We lay down wherever we could find a place, and slept without needing a lullaby.



For breakfast next morning the landlady prepared a juicy roast from the rest of the pig. We left nothing but the bones. On leaving the village, I read its name: San Francisco.

"What a pity to have to meet with misfortune on such a beautiful morning!" said Pancho.—"Why should we?" we asked.—"The vultures are following us," sighed Pancho. There was laughter; Weber laughed the loudest. "I'll bring one of them down." The next moment I heard a shot and saw his horse fall. He had taken the revolver from his saddle-bag, had accidentally pulled the trigger, and the bullet had gone through the horse's head. "The vultures know," said Pancho, and made three signs of the cross over saddle and bridle before putting them on one of the spare horses.

At noon the eight of us put our spoons into the common dish of frijoles. "This is unbearable," declared Ferreira, putting his spoon down and folding his arms. "What's unbearable?" asked Emil.—"Beck eats so fast that all the rest have to go hungry!" We couldn't help laughing, which enraged him all the more, and made us laugh the louder. In the evening we had better food, and a bed of straw. We were now only four leagues from San Luis.

"Why don't you ride your own horse?" said Schuh, rather crossly, on our arrival at San Luis. He had travelled by the diligence. I told him what had happened. "That comes of loitering behind. You are lucky to have got off so easily!"—"The horse will come back, but Weber's won't," said Pancho, and he told Schuh what had happened. "Well, he'll stand the damage himself," said Schuh, scornfully.

The theatre was sold out for three days. On Sunday



we gave a *matinée* benefit for the Junta Politica (a patriotic society) in the Plaza de Toros (the bull-ring). There, in the open air, I played the national anthem, without accompaniment, to about ten thousand people. I had never played in the open before. I myself could hear hardly anything, and was tortured by the idea that no one could be hearing a note; and it seemed to me as though the lovely melody would never end. "When I put my bow down, they will know that I have finished," I thought. The thunderous applause which followed was such a surprise to me that I must have made one of my very stupidest grimaces, for I noticed a strange merriment in the better rows of seats. I made as quick an exit as I could, and the way out seemed longer to me than the hymn. "What's the matter?" asked Schuh at the exit. "They are making fun of me! No one can have heard a note."—"Nonsense, I could hear very well from here." Ferreira's solo proved to me that he was right.

"You'd better come down quickly!" Where was the need to hurry? There was in the street my horse, saddled and bridled, and a man standing beside her. "Hector!" I exclaimed. The horse whinnied. Schuh came down. The man demanded five pesos which he had spent on feeding Hector; Schuh gave him seven. Everything that was not marked "*Compania Transatlantica*," such as revolver, tooth brush, comb and soap, had been stolen out of the saddle-bag. "It is exactly as I found it," asserted the man, and walked away.—"Why didn't he keep the horse too?" I asked Pancho.—"Anyone found in possession of a horse without a licence is hanged without trial; the same thing happens to anyone caught stealing a horse. Here in Mexico many people live



in huts, scattered over the country, a great distance from the next inhabited place; without a horse they would be doomed to starve."

At our farewell performance the mayor appeared on the stage and presented each member of the company with a silver medal, hung on a ribbon of red, white and green. At the close of the performance there were many curtain calls, and the audience cried: "Good luck! Come back!"

It took nine days to get from San Luis to Zacatecas. Water was scarce; we suffered from the heat in the daytime and from the cold at night. The higher we climbed, the stonier grew the track; finally there was no track at all, and we had to rely on Pancho to guide us. Schuh rode with us for the first time; he was a good travelling companion, and looked first after his people, then after himself.

We were riding through Indian country. One evening some men, looking very grave, turned up with a boy of fifteen, who had a long, badly inflamed gash on his leg. They were evidently asking for something in their language; I couldn't make head or tail of what they said. "You are a nice medicine-man! You are expected to heal him!" Beck informed me. I sent my groom for a small bottle of Friar's Balsam which I had in my saddle bag, dropped it on to the wound, and waited until it had dried like a coat of varnish. The boy's nerves quivered under the pain, but his pretty face remained unmoved. They thanked me and went back to their wigwams.

At dawn I was awakened by a hideous shouting and rattling. Wild-looking figures armed with spears and tomahawks were dancing around me, shrieking horribly, rushing at me and leaping back. My hair stood on end!



They must have taken pity on my terror, for their linguistic genius whispered: "Worship!" They were worshipping me as an idol! I burst out laughing, in which they all joined me. Beaming with joy, the boy pointed to his wound. "Let's get to horse! If the wound breaks open again it will go ill with us!" I said, eagerly. We rode off without delay; I did not feel safe until a good twelve miles lay between us and my worshippers.

To the sound of Beck's bugle we entered the hilly town of Zacatecas in double file. Nothing was prepared for us. The theatre had been taken by a troupe of actors who were earning a scanty livelihood. The other place of entertainment—a small hall—was so small that even with full houses we should not cover our daily expenses. What was to be done? Schuh smiled slyly, as though he had a scheme in his mind, and went to see the mayor with Weber. "Three days' rest, then we shall play at the theatre," he said on his return. The actors looked sourly at us, complained in very strong terms of the "accursed Freemasonry" which had once more caused good Christians to be sacrificed to the Moloch of godlessness, and went to play in the small hall. After our first performance they decided to rest until we had departed.

Zacatecas was a rich mining town. The people fought for the tickets at the box-office. To comply with a general request we played in the arena on Sunday afternoon, and in the evening at the theatre. The hotel was excellent; but for the parades in the straggling, mountainous town, and the rough pavements, our stay would have been very pleasant.

Schuh wanted to leave the place, but the mayor persuaded him to stay until the following Sunday, and we



played again at the theatre, and also in the arena. In the morning we had a two hours' parade, and at four o'clock a performance in the arena. About forty Comanche Indians arrived with their interpreter, who explained to Schuh that they had heard so much about the show that they would like to see it. As they had no money, they offered him a beautiful young chestnut stallion, with sparkling eyes, long mane, and a tail that reached down to the ground. We had never seen such a beautiful horse. Pancho was in ecstasy over it. Schuh took the Indians into the arena and gave them seats by our platform, on the sand. They showed no sign of emotion during the performance. When I kissed my foot to them they stared at one another; the audience roared. After the performance they came to our dressing-room and expressed their thanks. Each of them touched my feet. "Real feet," said their "wise man." Ferreira had to show that he had no instrument in his hand. They looked shyly at Ben and at his sword. "They take you for the devil," I said, laughing. He seized the stick which one of the Indians held in his hand; the man started back as if he had been bitten by a rattlesnake. Ben wiped the stick with a wet sponge and swallowed it; then he bent his chest forward, winked at them, pulled the cane out, and returned it to its owner, who took it as if it were white-hot iron. They all pushed out of the door. Outside each one wanted to take hold of the stick, but the owner held it fast and threatened them with it.

Starting from the arena, we made a torchlight parade. We had little time to snatch a bite of food and brush our clothes before the evening performance began. Immediately after this all our belongings were packed,



and we were given a banquet by Schuh and the city; Schuh had promised the city fathers part of the profits in return for giving us the theatre, and both parties were satisfied.

After three hours' sleep we had to mount our horses for a ride of ninety miles. Schuh rode with us, and at first even urged us on. "Come on, we'll be the pace-makers!" said Ben. Beck and I rode ahead with him at a moderate trot. After an hour's ride Pancho came up with us. "Slower!" We fell into an amble. I felt sorry for Schuh. While we were resting at noon the mail-coach caught up with us; there was a free seat, and Schuh, who could not stand the strain of riding, got in. We had to ride hard in order to reach Rinçon de Roma that night. Our baggage arrived the following morning. We unpacked quickly and hung the still damp clothes in the sun. Parade at eleven, performance in the arena at four. Then we packed up and during the night we rode the forty miles to Aguas Calientes.

The moon shone until after midnight; then the stars afforded the only light. We entered a forest; it was pitch dark. The horses dozed as they walked, and stumbled. One man fell off his horse; he had fallen asleep. Then, one after the other, six men tumbled off their horses. I forced my horse to a slow trot in order to keep awake. He did not understand me, and became impatient; I had to talk to him and coax him. The night seemed endless. At last there was a dim light in the east, and after a few minutes a mass of flames, as though the earth were on fire. A beautiful sunrise has always made a deep impression on me. We entered the town with the first sunbeams. Schuh awaited us. "You can sleep three hours, then parade." I flung myself on a



mattress, without removing my boots and spurs; the saddle was my pillow.

When the three hours were up I was still so sleepy that Pancho took me to the barn, pulled my clothes off, and poured several buckets of cold water over me. "You are the thirteenth," he said dryly. Quickly I got into my stage dress, drank a cup of hot coffee, and got into the saddle. The town was crowded. It was the beginning of the *feria* (fair), which was to last a week, and drew visitors from far and near. That was the reason why six of us had to camp in a windowless room in one of the *tiendas*. The parade lasted more than two hours, which seemed to us like ten. In the afternoon we played in the cockpit, and at night in the theatre. In the evening none of us could keep his eyes open; we all had to be waked and pushed on to the stage, where we recovered our senses at the sight of the audience, and mechanically went through our acts. Next morning nobody could remember what had happened to him after the performance, or how he had got into bed.

One day we rode, besides making the daily parade and giving two performances, to the hot springs to which the town owes its name and fame. A wooden bench, a few nails in a wooden partition, and a hollow in the middle of the floor constituted the "baths." I called the attendant. "Where is the water?"—"There," he said, pointing at the hole.—"Where?" He took my boot and splashed it in the water, which I had not seen. "Won't it be heated?"—"It is hot already!" It was so hot that I had to get into it by degrees. My groom knocked at the door. They had all had a bath, and washed and saddled the horses. I must have slept in the hot water for more than an hour.



All fatigue was gone; I felt as fresh and strong as though I had had a long rest.

The cock-fights were much talked of in the town. I went to see one, having asked for a late place on the programme. As a "pro" I got a seat in the first row, where I found a number of priests were sitting. In the ring were two peasants, each holding a cock on his lap, plucked bare with the exception of head, hackles and wings. Each had a bottle of brandy beside him. Bets were being made all round me. The referee entered the ring, announced the race and pedigree of the cocks, and shouted: "Go!" The cocks went for each other like beasts of prey: the spur-claw of each right foot being prolonged by a razor-sharp steel spur. At the first attack the bigger cock fell with his throat cut through; the winner crowed with all his might, until he was carried out. "That was nothing!" said the fat priest who sat beside me, benevolence in person. I was about to leave. "It's only just beginning!" he said amiably, and he pulled me down into my seat by my coat-tails.

Two cocks without spurs came next. There was general excitement. "A famous breed!" whispered my neighbour. The two birds shot at each other like furies, with bloodshot eyes, their rage increasing with every second. "Time!" shouted the referee. Each "father" took his "child" in his lap, squirted some brandy over its head and body with his mouth, put his tongue, drenched with brandy, into its beak, caressed it, and addressed it with encouraging words. "Go!"

The feathers were flying. "Fifty on the black!"—"A hundred on the red!" The people were seized with a fever; it was worse than the bull-fights. The gasping of the birds was sometimes to be heard through the tumult.



They were at the point of exhaustion. A second pause. In the third round they showed the same rage, but were soon played out. After a violent attack the black cock collapsed; but the red bird stood panting, and as though benumbed. Fresh bets were made, and the "fathers" egged the birds on. The black cock rose, fluttering, dashed at his enemy, and picked out one of his eyes. Cheers from one half of the audience, curses from the other. Both cocks stood silent, bleeding from innumerable beak-thrusts. The one-eyed bird dragged himself with difficulty toward the black cock, and picked out one of his eyes, then took fresh courage and picked out the other, the victim making no attempt to defend himself. Roars of applause; the place was like a lunatic asylum. The black cock collapsed; the red bird hacked at his enemy until he was dead; then he climbed on to the body with a last effort, crowed, and fell over, unconscious. "Wasn't that fine?" asked the enraptured priest.—"Does your Reverence think that God can take any pleasure in this 'game'?"—"God created the animals for our pleasure," he replied, unctuously. I walked away without saluting him, shuddering with horror.

"What is the matter with you?" said Schuh when he saw me. I tried my level best to appear cheerful on the stage, but I felt that my behaviour must impress people as unnatural. "The cocks seem to have turned you pious," sneered Ben. I sneaked off to my bed, but I could not get to sleep before daybreak.

"In ten days we've had ten parades and seventeen performances and have ridden a hundred and fifty miles, and no one has shirked or complained; that's something of a record!" said Schuh, as we rode through the town gate. "But it's high time to rest; our clothes are getting



mouldy from packing them when they are still damp," Ben observed.—"I should have liked to take the bath with me!" I sighed.

Three days' ride to Lagos. My horse often slipped on the stony ground. "Pancho, my horse must be shod without delay."—"Seguro, señor." Lagos was a nice little town. The parades were short; we rested for four days, and let the horses rest also.

The journey to Leon took us less than a day. It was possible to save six miles by following a very rugged short cut. Some of us went this way. "Don't press your horses, and don't speak to them! There's only a quarter of an hour of this!" advised Pancho, and he rode ahead of us; we followed one by one, the horses leaping from rock to rock. Ben's horse, which was just in front of me, often had to bunch his hooves together in order to find foothold on a rock. "We are nearly through!" shouted Pancho. At this moment Hector's hind feet slipped from a rock after a big jump; he tried to get a footing, but fell backwards and landed, after turning a complete somersault, in some short brushwood, on his left side; I had not stirred in the saddle. Pancho, Ben and Beck, who were behind me, were quickly on the spot; they found us already on our feet. Hector was trembling. I looked meditatively at the groove into which my left leg had fallen: "This hollow has been washed out of the rock, century after century, just to save my leg from being smashed to pulp," I said, with a pious shudder.—"Have you any pain?"—"Not worth talking about, but I expect poor Hector has," I said, looking down at his worn shoes. I laid my head against his. "If I'd seen what your shoes were like sooner, you good beast, we should both have been saved a fright."



Pancho was visibly distressed. We worked our way through the brushwood to the highroad. We had both got off with a few scratches. "I have measured the distance with Romero; you fell sixteen feet!" said Beck excitedly. Schuh was horrified when he turned up in Leon, two hours later, with the baggage. We were rewarded by a three days' rest. On the second day Hector was newly shod.

It was a long ride to Guanajuato, and at one point the road ran through a cutting: an ideal place for bandits. Carillo, the half-breed whom Schuh had engaged in Mexico for a daring trapeze act, told us: "We were robbed here three years ago, when we were with the Japanese. They expected to find a lot of money on Schuhmann; they were disappointed. They undressed him, left him only his drawers and one glove, and they made him lie down so that his face was on an ant-hill. They took nothing from us." Covered with dust, we entered Guanajuato. Schuh had gone ahead; the whole town turned out into the streets to greet us. "Ei, Herr Jeeses, here is a man with fair hair!" shouted a German, in the purest Leipzig dialect.—"Ride in and have a glass of beer!" shouted another, also in German. The door was wide enough. "With pleasure!" I said, and rode up the three steps into the saloon. Yells of laughter. "The horse is trampling my floor!"—"Didn't you expect that, when you invited us in? First my horse must have a glass of beer; then it's my turn; and we're not going till we've had it!" As many as could had crowded in after me. One of the customers gave Hector his beer in a quart jug, and held a pint mug to my lips. "I'll hold it myself," I said, and took it between my teeth and drained it to the last drop. Laughter and



applause. "Room there! Gangway! We want to get out!" I had to coax Hector down the steps; he went very carefully. "They are not drunk yet!" I heard, as we rode to join our companions. Since leaving Mexico we had seen no beer. There was a brewery here, but the beer was not good. There was a great spinning of yarns that night; there had never been so many Germans in the town before; we had brought new life into the place.

I should never have thought that the winning of a noble metal like silver was such a dirty job! Lodes had been found containing as much as 85 per cent of pure silver. The town was reputed to be rich, but it would have been richer if transportation had not been so difficult; and to make matters worse, the roads to the capital were waylaid by bandits.

Some years before this the Government had decreed the minting of seven millions of pesos. Presently it was informed that the money was ready to be fetched. The Government requested that provincial troops should convey it to Mexico City. The provincial troops declined the job. However, the Government needed the money, so it sent a regiment of Federal cavalry, with the necessary pack-mules, to fetch it. On the way back the officers and men divided the booty among themselves, and each went his own way with his mule.

The importation of goods was handicapped by the same conditions, which, naturally, doubled the prices of everything.

We spent a jolly week with cards and beer. There were rumours, however, of risings in the West. When money was scarce in those parts of the country, bands of desperadoes would gather together, urging their discontent with the Government as their excuse for



robbing their fellows. Frequent use had coined a word for this old Mexican custom: *pronunciamiento*, "decision, declaration." Schuh decided to play only in the towns that lay on the direct route to the coast. We left the town with real regret; and some good fellows accompanied us part of the way to Guadalajara.

Some of us were suffering badly from tropical diarrhoea; I most of all. For this the beer was partly if not wholly responsible. The food on the road was scarcer than ever, and the people more and more suspicious. At night we camped close together.

We had six miles farther to go before reaching our camping-place for the night, and it was rapidly growing dark. Suddenly Pancho shouted: "Stop! Dismount!" We had ridden into a field undermined by rabbits; the horses were stumbling into the holes and becoming restive. We had to spend the night where we were, to prevent our horses from breaking their legs. In the morning we saw that we were near the highroad.

We came upon a peasant who was drinking pulque, the popular beverage prepared from the maguey root. Maguey is a giant agave, of which the leaves are cut off, together with part of the rootstock. During the night a milky juice gathers in the hollow of the rootstock, which makes a refreshing drink. When fermented it is intoxicating. I felt an irresistible thirst for this milky juice. "May I have some?"—"Man, you'll kill yourself!" said Ben.—"Not a bit of it; it will do me good." I must have drunk the best part of a quart in one draught. It cured my diarrhoea. "How much?" I asked the peasant.—"Nothing," he answered. "If one can do good to a cripple in the morning, it brings good luck for the whole year!"



We rode for half an hour between one-storied houses before we came to the "Grand Hotel" in the centre of the city. "This gentleman can't be accommodated here," said the landlord, pointing to me. I remounted and rode to the stable with Pancho, while Schuh tried to convert the landlord. There was a fairly good room in the *tienda*, where I made myself comfortable; so that I refused, later on, to move to the hotel.

An earthquake was followed by several lighter shocks. "We are accustomed to this sort of thing; that's why we build only low houses," said my landlord. I went into the great square and sat on a bench with Ben and Beck. They told me about a troupe which had gone broke on the road and had tried to get a job with Schuh, especially Leopold and Geraldine, who were English, and had a trapeze act with a leap which had never been done before. "I have seen Lulu in that act in Boston; but the English will only make trouble again." At each shock of earthquake Ben made a pencil-stroke in his notebook. That evening we counted ninety-seven strokes. The following day the earth quaked for hours without stopping.

Schuh helped the stranded San Francisco artists by giving a benefit performance for them. Then another circus troupe arrived, which, by its looks, did not seem very well off. We played together in the arena, and did good business. Brown wanted to join his wife and daughter, whom he had left in Mexico. His real reason for wanting to return was his dread of robbers. Schuh engaged Leopold and Geraldine and Mrs. Austin, who did a sloping tight-rope act, with Geronimo, an Italian, as stage manager, and discharged not only Brown, but also Zanfreta and the two Freires, who went separate ways.



For our protection the Governor had given us a cavalry escort; partly, perhaps, for the sake of a colonel who had been waiting a week for an opportunity to go to Colima. The escort turned back the same afternoon, but he made bold to favour us with his company. "They would have been more useful to-morrow," growled Pancho. The sun was burning hot on our heads. A rider on a powerful mule joined us. The colonel rode on his right, I on his left, and Ben alongside of me. "It's hot! Uff!" said the man, wiping his face with a red bandana, which he waved in the air.—"If you do that again I'll shoot you!" threatened the colonel. After a while the man gasped: "This heat is unbear . . ." he got no farther; a shot, and he had fallen to the ground. I felt something moist splash in my face: it was brains and blood. Ben wiped himself, then me; we looked at each other in horror. Pancho came up, saluted the colonel with his whip, and said: "Thank you, señor colonel! I know that signal!" We left the corpse where it lay; the mule trotted with us for a while, then dropped behind.

At noon we rested beside a little wood. A shot rang out. Beck had taken a pot shot with his revolver at some sleeping animal. "Those things are no good!" said Romero, scoffing, and hurling a stone; he hit and stunned the animal. "A zorilla," Carillo told us, which left us no wiser. The pretty little beast was about the size of a cat; it had a smooth dark coat with two white stripes. We put a strap round its neck, and tied it to the saddle of one of the spare horses. Ben and I rode behind, to see what it would do when it recovered. Presently it moved! "Good God!" exclaimed Ben. An infamous stench took our breath away. Pancho came up, said "Maria san-





SHARP SHOOTING







tissima!" stabbed the beast with his sabre, and threw it aside. The stench adhered to the saddle.

Towards evening we came to a small town. "How do you come by that stench of a skunk?" asked an American. We knew then that "zorilla" meant skunk. The man accompanied us to the *tienda*, and advised us to bury the saddle, which we did, after vainly washing it and drenching it with eau de cologne.

"The people who meant to steal your horses and waggon live here; but you were too many for them!" the man told us. "They would not have taken anything from me," I said, thinking of the pulque man.—"No, that would have brought them bad luck." So superstition may sometimes have its good side. We chatted until a late hour. The man warned us of the place where we should probably be attacked by bandits on the following day. "I wonder whether he will be one of them!" sighed Pancho, after the man had left. That night we crowded as close together as possible, and kept sentries on guard.

We were not attacked on the following day, and arrived in Zapotlanejo early in the afternoon. The people implored us to give a performance; they had heard so much about us. "Without our baggage? Impossible!" Schuh replied.—"Boys," said Beck with a twinkle, "as they didn't rob us, we'll give them a show. Who's game?" Everybody made some excuse, but in the end Beck persuaded them, and they consented. The mayor had seats reserved for himself and his family. People flocked to the *tienda*, made a collection, and handed Beck 79 pesos; quite a fortune for that place.

The municipal band—a violin, trombone and big drum—began to play. Beck juggled amazingly well with oranges, plates, eggs, kitchen knives and wine-



bottles, in spite of the poor lighting. Carillo made a trapeze from a broom-handle and two pieces of rope which he tied to a beam. He swung to and fro over the heads of the spectators, who lifted their arms for protection. There was no possibility of escape, they were so crammed together. Carillo asked for a chair, balanced it on the broom-handle on two of its legs, climbed on the back of it, and let go of the ropes. Crack! The chair broke; the pieces were caught by outstretched hands. "Give me a strong chair!"—"No, that's enough!"—"Are you afraid?" A Spaniard would be ashamed to show fear. A chair was handed to him, and he stood erect on it, his arms crossed. Ferreira's fluting made them melancholy. Ben swallowed a couple of kitchen knives and the mayor's cane. Amazement, then thunderous applause. I sat down in a corner, to watch the impression which the show was making on these children of nature. "Come on, you!" commanded Beck; he laid a chair on its back on the floor, tied a violin to it, and said: "Fire away!" I was in a terrible fix. My feet had not been washed for four days. My riding-boots and socks had been taken off only for meals; I pulled off my boots and spurs, and whined out the most fearful music that ever was heard. Even Wilhelmj never got such applause. "Encore! Encore!" I must have made my "face"; my companions laughed. I squeaked out the national hymn. "Eviva Mejico! Eviva la Transatlantica!" In the middle of the applause Beck shouted: "Come here and sit down!" He had managed to get a table on which were cigarettes, matches, playing cards, a bottle of wine, two glasses and a corkscrew. "Give me a match and have a smoke!"—"Ecarté, two points for a bottle of wine!"—"Right!" I shuffled the cards,



Beck dealt, and I won.—“Open the bottle, pour it out and drink a toast!” The cork came out with a loud pop. “To the health of the charming inhabitants of Zapotlanejo and to their beautiful country! Eviva!” There was wild enthusiasm, such as I had seen only at a cock-fight. The mayor came and “shook hands” with me; the others followed. “Get tables and chairs! All present are invited to take refreshments with us!” ordered Beck.

We had as much food and drink as could be bought with 79 pesos. At the end of the meal, and after plenty of drinks, the mayor rose and made a long-winded speech, wishing us all eternal life, and assuring us that he would not part with the cane which Ben had “swallowed” for a thousand pesos. “I won’t risk offering him fifty!” whispered Beck. Then Schuh made a speech in his usual mixture of at least four languages.

“Time to go home!” said the mayor, when there was neither a morsel to eat nor a drop to drink left. After the horrible smell of garlic, onions, alcohol and tobacco-smoke the fresh air was a delight. That night I did not think over the happenings of the day, as I usually did, but dropped off to sleep immediately.

We overslept ourselves; the grooms had been drinking mescal and tequillo (liquors made from maguey). “We shan’t reach Colima to-day,” complained Pancho. We saw no suspicious figures on the road, as during the last few days. “They know that each of us has fourteen cartridges in his gun,” said Pancho cheerfully. Smoke lay above the Colima. Now and then a cloud was whirled up from the summit. I often glanced at it and thought of Father and “the volcano” that I longed to see.

It was night when we left the *tienda*. There was a glow of fire above the Colima. In my mind’s eye I saw



myself as a child, walking home from the fields with Father, and I seemed to hear our conversation. I went to bed, my eyes turned toward the mountain. A ball of fire shot up, burst, and sent out a spray of huge sparks, which fell like the drops from a fountain. Rockets shot up, lighting the dark sky for miles. I felt a mere nothing in the presence of the Almighty, and imagined that I could hear my father's voice saying: "All this is yours! You are part of it!" With deep gratitude in my heart I fell asleep. My last thought was for my mother. . . .

Knowing that we had had a narrow escape, we entered Colima the next forenoon. The town looked like a fortress. Ben and I had to appear before the Governor, who questioned us about the man shot on the road by the colonel, who had reported the incident. Our testimony was taken down, and we had to sign it. The Governor asked me for a signature "for himself"; then he said: "You are exonerated, Colonel," thanked us all, and accompanied us to the door. The incident turned out to be a good advertisement for us. My signature must have been shown about; I was stared at in the streets as never before. There was not much cash left in the town when we departed.

It was a good day's journey to Manzanillo, where we were to take the boat. The insurrection increased; the rainy season began. "We still have to pass the barrancas," said Pancho, as if he foresaw danger. It was not yet dawn when we left. The horses were in a bad way; since Guadalajara we had not dared to let them graze during the night. It was ten o'clock instead of nine when we arrived at the first barranca. A metalled road ran steeply downwards. "They can easily get at us here," said Pancho gloomily. "Half the crowd will have to



cross first.”—“Who volunteers?” shouted Schuh.—“I,” cried Romero, Carillo and I. A few others followed. We dismounted and walked beside our horses, which often slipped on the smooth stones. The road zigzagged through the thick jungle until we came to a stone bridge across a small river. Panting up the other side I counted fourteen turns. At the top three shots were fired, the signal for the others to start. The time seemed endless before they arrived. After two hours’ riding we passed the second barranca in a similar fashion; then we had a short rest.

Darkness fell; the road through the forest became narrower. “Single file!” shouted Pancho. His horse stopped in the pitch darkness, refused to go farther, and snorted; Hector did the same. Somebody struck a match: a rustle was heard. “A lynx!” said Pancho. We crawled along, but the horses balked again, this time without snorting. “We must go through; there are alligators here!” said Pancho. Hector refused to move. I coaxed him, and got into the saddle; it was no use. Then I gave him the spurs. He sprang forward, and fell into step behind Pancho. I can still hear and feel the thrust of those spurs, after fifty-three years. Our two lives were at stake; nevertheless I ought to have treated him more gently.

When the road widened Pancho, Ben, Schuh, Emil, Beck and I rode side by side; the others had lingered behind. We arrived at Manzanillo about ten o’clock, and went straight to the stables. Hector’s hide showed clots of blood where I had dug in my spurs. I laid my head against his and praised him; he paid no attention to me, drank thirstily, and then lay down. We got rooms at the hotel, but nothing to eat. We were told of a house where



a wedding was being celebrated; there we might get something. "We have very little ourselves," was the answer. A boy ran eagerly into the house; bride, bridegroom and some of the guests came out and stared at me. "How many of you are there?" asked the bride.—"Five."—"Sit down there at the table!" A dish was brought in. "It tastes like game," remarked Beck. "Look at the head! It's one of those lizards, as big as a cat!" It tasted good to us; the loud remarks of the guests about my feet did not disturb me. The bride brought me a plate full of cake. "For you only!" she said, with quivering lip and folded hands. "God will give me much happiness in my married life because I am able to make a gift to a *povrecito* on my wedding-day!"—"I wish you much happiness with all my heart," I said, as distinctly as I could, with my mouth full of lizard.

After a good night's rest I went to see my horse; he was still lying down. I caressed his neck and head, lay down beside him, and talked to him. He cast a sad, tired glance at me; I pleaded and coaxed him; at last he neighed faintly. In the afternoon he got up and ate enough to make up for the preceding days. To-morrow we should have to bid each other farewell! Our steamer was due!

The steamer passed without stopping; there had been trouble again between the Governments. We had to wait; perhaps the next steamer would stop. We were more than twenty strong young men, with nothing to do, in a miserable village of five hundred inhabitants! Fishing and swimming—swimming and fishing! Beck and I shot at an alligator through the back window; it glided clumsily into the water; we had to pay for the cracked panes, the only glass windows in the village.



An English brig appeared in the roadstead. "Who'll swim out to it? Nobody? Then I'll swim alone!" When I got within hearing, someone shouted at me: "Do you understand English?"—"Yes!"—"For God's sake go back; the water is alive with sharks!" I swam for dear life! The local policeman was standing on the beach, watching me. Instead of the compliment I expected after I was dressed, I heard the words: "You are arrested!"—"Why?"—"The Commissary will tell you."

The worthy, white-bearded official read the paragraph of the penal code relating to attempted suicide in a tone of voice that would have merited a death-sentence; but he declared that he would act leniently if Schuh and a native citizen would go bail that the attempt would not be repeated. He sent for Schuh, who had to bring one of the villagers with him. When they arrived, Schuh was in a bad temper. It was as though a murderer had been on trial. We all had to sign a document which was put into the archives, and then we all burst into shrieks of laughter. The Commissary declared that I was a lucky fellow. Had the wind blown as usual, I should have been devoured by the sharks, but with this westerly wind they had not scented me. We were urged to give a performance; the whole village promised to be there. We consented to give a benefit performance for the poor; so a platform was constructed in the middle of the public square. Everybody brought his own chair. The local band, consisting of one fiddler, was taken into custody three days before the performance, in order to give him time to sober up. It was a glorious day. In the evening the town was drunk dry. Towards midnight I saw the "band" lying in front of the *tienda*; when we went bathing next morning it was still lying in the same



position. Between that place and the bar of the *tienda* it drifted to and fro during the whole week. We had paid it liberally and it had assured itself of a good supply of drink.

Weber brought an action against Schuh through the American Consul, a native of Bremen, for overcharging. "You are the only person who had access to the books; you speak your mind, and you won't lose anything by it," Leopold assured me.—"What are you going to say?" asked Beck.—"What I know." Weber withdrew the action. "That was the first blow from the English," I warned Ben and Beck.

Beck pulled my bathing-drawers down from the mosquito-net over the bed and shook them out. Two large and five small scorpions fell out; we stamped on three of them. One day Beck brought us a tarantula on the twig with which he had transfixed it, and threw it on the flat roof. Some hours later we saw the hideous insect (which was about the size of a two weeks' old chicken, with very long hairy legs and malevolent eyes) trying to drag itself away, with the twig sticking out of it.

When the horses were rested, Pancho, the grooms and a party of traders went home with them. The following day the village was besieged by robbers. We put sentries out at night.

On the twenty-third day after our arrival the steamer arrived at midnight, announced her presence by firing a shot, and was jubilantly welcomed by our company. We went on board early in the morning. Life on the old paddle-steamer *Montana* seemed even more adventurous than it had been ashore. Officers, engineers, carpenter and bos'n carried each a couple of revolvers and a



dagger in his belt; the rest of the ship's company consisted of coolies. The passengers were none too attractive either. My mackintosh was stolen before we started. Sharks were swimming around the ship, and rushed at everything that was thrown overboard. We estimated the length of the largest of them at twenty-four feet.

Schuh was informed by the captain that cargo would be embarked and disembarked in the ports, but no one would be allowed to go ashore before Panama, as the whole coast was up in arms.

At last the anchors were weighed. We were rid of the two Webers!



## CHAPTER VII

# SOUTH AMERICA AND HOMEWARD BOUND

(1875-1877)

*Performance in a Monastery—Iquique on Fire—Life-saving—Valparaiso—International Exhibition in Santiago—Across the Andes—A Snowstorm—A Difficult Descent—The Argentine Mail—New Year 1876—Buenos Aires—A Seven Hours' Swim—Rio de Janeiro—Yellow Fever—Breaking up the Transatlantica—At Home—Betsy the Elephant—Christmas with Mother—The Armless Painter—Mother's Death*

At Panama, where we were held up for nine days, we gave four afternoon performances in the courtyard of a monastery, in order to pass the time while waiting for the steamer that would take us southwards. At Sommerfeld I had never dreamt that I should one day play in a monastery! Among the jolliest of the onlookers were the monks who looked on from the cloisters, and were joined by numbers of priests who had come from as far away as Colon. Those who paid for admittance brought their own chairs and sat in a circle; the others had to stand.

It was incredible that in so busy a port as Panama embarkation and disembarkation should be effected in such a primitive way. One wandered for ten minutes along a jetty; then one was rowed in an open boat to a tender, and the tender took one some ten miles out to sea, to the steamer, happy to have managed all the necessary scrambling without injury.



We sailed for Guayaquil, but were not allowed ashore. Passengers came on board in a state of great excitement, and told us that the President of the Republic had been hanged the night before, and that further executions were taking place. We continued our voyage.

We were allowed to land at Callao. The German guano exporters, Dreyfuss & Co., had built a railroad by which we reached Lima in 25 minutes. My fiddle had been damaged; Schuh took me with him; the others had to wait at Callao until Schuh had secured a theatre and I could fetch them. Business was booming. There was a high tariff on money taken out of the country. To avoid paying this Schuh purchased a lot of jewels which he stowed away in an old blue wooden box, one of whose sides had been broken and replaced by a white one; it had formerly contained tickets. Nobody would look for treasure in it. Only the Schuhs and I knew what it contained.

One of our unforgettable experiences was our landing in Mollendo, the port for Arequipa. Ben, Beck and I were wrapped up in a sail-cloth and hoisted up to a height of 75 feet by a steam-crane. Just before the crane lifted us, when we were still hanging over the water, the small boat was tossed up by a huge wave, and struck us a blow from which we suffered for weeks. No other way of landing was possible on the perpendicular rocks of the shore. Arequipa had recently been devastated by an earthquake, and was being rebuilt. In spite of this business was excellent.

Iquique was a lively and evidently prosperous town, but it looked as if it had been nailed together in a hurry. The paving of the streets had been left to Nature; the sidewalks were made of boards which sometimes gave



way under foot; the ends of the planks stood out, and one stubbed one's toes at every step. The neighbouring saltpetre-mines were a source of prosperity for the inhabitants. The land was barren, the nearest place where water was found was seven miles distant. The water was carried to town by mules, and when it arrived it was alive with insects and weeds. Everyone drank soda-water and beer; for washing and cooking condensed sea-water was used.

We made a pile of money, and packed our baggage after the last show, as we were to leave by steamer the following morning. Schuh had gone ahead. I put the wash-basin on the floor, the matches on the bed-table, and dropped off to sleep.

I was awakened by a loud knock at the door. "Get out, the town is on fire!" shouted Leopold. My only thought was how to awaken Emil. I felt for the match-box, which fell into the wash-basin. It was no easy job to wake Emil when he was really asleep! I rushed to the door—and when I felt for the key it fell on the floor. There was not a moment to be lost; I sat down quickly on the brick floor and felt for the key with both feet. I found it, found the keyhole with my right foot, and put the key into it with my left. I had hoped that somebody would come to our assistance, but not a sound was to be heard. Quickly I pulled on the first pair of trousers I could find, and threw a jacket over my shoulders; then with three strides I crossed the corridor to Emil's door; with one kick I burst in the lower panels and crept through the hole.

All this was the work of seconds; but what now? Standing on my right leg I put my left foot on Emil's mouth and squeezed his nostrils with my toes. I stood



and waited. Where were our companions? Where were the hotel people? Would Emil never begin to suffocate? Good God! It was a desperate situation. At last! His breast heaved; there was a rattle in his throat. He raised his arms and sat up. I let go; Emil tried to recover his breath. "Quick! The town is on fire! If you don't hurry up we shall be burned alive!" He sat up on the edge of the bed, stretched his arms, yawned, and rubbed his eyes. I yelled and swore at him. He got up at last, and went to the wash-basin with the intention of filling it with water. "Get dressed: here is your shirt!" I shouted at him, handing him one garment after another. Close at hand lay my father's last letters, with other precious souvenirs, but if I went to fetch them Emil would lie down and fall asleep again: he was still far from being awake.

"Get along!" I ordered him, when he was half-clad. He was on the point of leaving the room with only a few brushes under his arm. "Take these two portmanteaux!" He finally waked up when he got into the street. "Where is the little blue box?" he asked in alarm. I was holding it between my teeth.

Hastily we ran towards the theatre, where we expected to find our comrades busily engaged in the work of salvage. "Let's avoid the gas-works; we'd better make a detour," I cried. We were half-way to the theatre when the earth suddenly quaked, and there was a glare like a flash of lightning, followed by a terrible bang. The gas-works had gone up into the air. The inhabitants of the place were like men possessed by furies. Shops were broken open; whosoever would entered and took what he pleased, and on emerging was shot, stabbed or clubbed by the police, or got away with his loot. The worst



scenes were enacted in the taverns. But for the fact that everyone knew me the portmanteaux would have been torn out of Emil's hands.

We found the theatre open; no one was visible. "Stay here, I'll see what can be saved," said Emil.—"Give me your revolver," I said. Ready to fire if need be, I sat down on the blue box. How long I sat there I don't know; the time was out of joint. I heard steps. "Who's there?" No answer. The steps approached. "Who goes there? I shall fire!"—"Don't shoot, Herr Unthan!" The owner of the theatre came up to me; casual as usual. "Now we shan't need to break up the old shack," he said.—"Can't anything be done to save it?"—"Good Heavens, no; sea-water's no use, and there isn't any other. It was in the German Club that the fire broke out; with this wind everything will go. Every third year Iquique is destroyed, either by fire, earthquake, or a tidal wave."

Emil returned; he could no longer find the place where the hotel had stood. Almost immediately afterwards the rest of our comrades appeared. They had first rescued their own personal belongings. Now we went to work to save our theatrical properties. I carried my portmanteau in my teeth, Austin's tight-rope was hung over my shoulders, and Ben thrust his sabre under it. The fire crept nearer; we had to hurry from block to block until at last we reached open country.

"There is nothing further for me to do; I'm going down to the sea." I was tired out and wanted to be alone. I skirted the burning city which, four hours ago, had been the home of 35,000 more or less happy people. I had lost much, but, by the grace of God, I had been permitted for the second time to save a man's life.



"Will you come with me?" cried our bos'n. "Rather!"

My outer person was in a horrifying condition; what would they think of me on board the steamer? I had a pair of old slippers on my bare feet; the trousers were all right; the upper part of my body was covered by a knitted vest and an old jacket. There was nothing about me that marks the civilized being; not even a hat. The head steward received me accordingly, and sent me to the steerage, in spite of the bos'n's intercession and my own explanations. I was startled when in passing I saw myself in a mirror: I looked like a drunken brigand. I lay down on a couch and said to the head steward: "You'll have to carry me away from here, if you won't give me a cabin." He beckoned to the steward: "Fred, throw something over *that*!" I must have been already asleep when he covered me up.

Emil shook me until I awoke. "Come along!" Still half-asleep I staggered to the cabin. Emile undressed me, and I sank on to the bed.

Who was fumbling about there? The steward was placing a small table in front of my bunk. "Herr Schuhmann has ordered your dinner to be served here."—"Dinner? Why? What's the time?"—"Six o'clock; dinner's at half-past." I slowly came back to reality. I had been in the land of dreams; what I had dreamt I did not remember, but I knew that it had been more beautiful than anything on earth, and that it had wonderfully refreshed me.

"I have eaten nothing for twenty-four hours," I explained to the steward to excuse my appetite. After dinner some of my comrades came to see me. "I slept in the berth above you, and Ben slept on the couch, but you were so fast asleep, you didn't hear any of us," said



Beck. They told me that thirty-two people had been killed by the explosion of the gas-works. Wildmann (an acquaintance of ours) shot one of his workmen who was drinking champagne instead of helping to rescue valuable property, and reported himself to the chief of police, who told him to clear out, "as he had serious business in hand." Regular battles had been fought by the mob, although none of the fighters knew why he was fighting. Emil came in. "Well, how goes it?" he asked.—"Like the 'lieber Augustin.'"—"Well, your sense of humour isn't burned; the other things can be provided. At all events, to-morrow you can take the air on deck in your uniform; there are plenty of birds of your feather, and even worse."

"Have you your music?" asked the stage-manager.—"Of course, it's in my portmanteau."—"The only thing that was lost in the fire was the music for the two pantomimes."—"Good God, you had plenty of time to look after that!"—"We only just managed to get Leopold's jumping-machine out."—"I see, and Schuhmann's property could burn!"

I saw Schuh waving to us joyfully in the distance. His face grew longer and longer as our boat approached the shore. With a devastating look at me he burst forth: "It's scandalous that one has to drag such scum about the country!"—"Come along!" said Emil, and taking him by the arm we followed him, jolly as crickets.

Schuh came into my room. "See about getting some ready-made clothes, and send me the bill! There is nothing decent to be had in these little holes, least of all here in Antofagasta. You can get a proper outfit made in Valparaiso."—"Thanks! And I'll have to buy music-paper to write the pantomime music which was burned.



From Caldera onwards I must have a room to myself, so that I can write without being disturbed." Without a word he put a bank-note on the table and walked off.

Any old waltzes would do for the pantomime in the smaller towns, but in Valparaiso I wanted the action to be properly supported by the music. I wrote day and night. In some of these places Schuh was advised by the owners of the theatres to see that two of our people took the tickets at the gallery doors with their left hands while they held revolvers in their right, as otherwise they would be rushed by the mob.

Valparaiso! What a magnificent panorama, looking from the sea on a bright dewy morning! In the city I felt almost as though I were in Europe.

At rehearsals the music I had written proved to have only a few trifling defects, which I at once put right. Everybody was delighted. "Now we can act with proper emphasis and feeling," said Romero, who played the principal rôle in the pantomime.—"A colossal piece of work!" said Schuh, nodding his head, when he saw the pile of music. After the rehearsal he took me to the tailor's and helped me to choose materials; nothing less than four suits would content him. He was equally liberal at the haberdasher's and the shoemaker's. "Now something to house it in!" he said, smiling, and he bought me one of the finest American leather trunks. When I was fully rigged out I was spick and span as I had never been in my life; and then he put his old gold watch into my pocket and hooked the chain into a button-hole. He had a splendid watch and chain in his collection of jewellery. I was so overcome that I made my "face." He clapped me on the shoulder. "The legal finder's reward would have been very much more!" I



could not understand why I should receive a finder's reward, so I said nothing.

Iquique added to our fame. The theatre was sold out for days. We did not feel at home in the German Club. The natives of Hamburg and those of Bremen would not sit at the same table, nor would Bavarians and Prussians; all sorts of cliques had been formed. So I preferred to keep aloof altogether.

At our last performance Ferreira gave us one of his "surprises." He must have been drinking, and played horribly out of tune. Hisses were heard. He stopped and said: "Yo soy Portuguez, y un Portuguez vale mas que todos los Chilenos." An uproar followed. Cigar-boxes, knives and other articles were thrown at him; he left the stage, and was advised to get to the next station as quickly as possible, unless he wanted to be killed. He ran as he was, in evening dress, and caught a slow train for Santiago. Schuh was greatly surprised to see him in that condition and so much ahead of time.

There was an international exhibition at Santiago. Schuh had reserved rooms for us. The beautiful Teatro Municipal would have been admired even in Paris. It was sold out every night.

"I am sailing for Buenos Aires with Leopold and his wife; the rest will have to ride across the Cordilleras and play their way through as far as Buenos Aires. Do you want to go with me or with the others?" Schuh asked me.—"With the others," I answered, without thinking twice.—"It is a strenuous business crossing the Cordillera, and sometimes dangerous," he cautioned me.—"Well, is the sea safe?" I interrupted him.—"I shall ask my old guide, who took Gerstäcker across, to find a good mule for you. Provisions must be taken for a



fortnight. The mail riders get to Mendoza in four days; it took us eight, but there may be delays." I was lost in the anticipated delights of mountaineering.

As business was good, we remained at Santiago for several weeks, and were rewarded by a prize medal at our Exposition performance. Harmony reigned at the German Club, which made up for the unfriendliness in Valparaiso.

To become acquainted with our mules we played three days in San Filipe, whence we started on our expedition. I should never have imagined that a mule could be so immune to common sense. On a pass where the animals had to go single file their obstinacy knew no bounds, and we could scarcely manage them. When we skirted a precipice the beast I was riding insisted on walking on the outermost edge of the narrow path, as though it knew how terribly a man without arms suffers from dizziness. When I dismounted I had a hard task to coax it back, so that I could get out of the saddle without flying down a precipice of five or six hundred feet. Horses and dogs usually appeal to the better side of their master's nature; the mule turns him into a hypocrite.

For breakfast, lunch and supper, dry biscuit, ham, sardines and maté. But for the eyes, a continuous feast; no sacrifice could be too great for such splendour. During a most dangerous snowstorm we found shelter under a ledge of rock. On one occasion we had to wait three hours to let a caravan from the other side pass us. The guides had their own code of signals. In the evenings our old guide liked to tell about Gerstäcker; he had made him esteem the Germans. We stayed on the crest of the range until morning. It was said that both the



oceans were visible from that point. The Pacific was quite near; some said they saw the Atlantic too, but I could not discover the least trace of it.

The sun disappeared gradually behind the Pacific Ocean, as if it did not like parting from the snow-covered mountain-tops, its last rays fading slowly on Aconcagua. That night, in a dream, I saw Father riding by. He alighted from his horse, tapped me on the shoulder, and said: "Don't mind that the letters were burned! I shall always be with you!" and vanished in the distance.

I had imagined that the descent would be much easier. It was not exactly difficult; it was merely a matter of "feeling"; but that was just the point. At first all went well. When the descent grew steeper I had to lean back, so that I lost sight of the track. "Feeling" began, and my feeling was uneasiness. First I lost sight of my mule's mouth, and when I could only see the top of its head my uneasiness increased. I consoled myself with the ears, and I knew now why they grew so long. Even these disappeared, and I felt still worse. I was lying flat on the animal's rump, and couldn't possibly lean farther back. I could see nothing but the sky and myself, even when I turned my head to one side. If I lifted my head ever so little I should lose my balance, and mule and rider would be hurled into space. . . . I held my head back, and could not help wishing that "something might happen" and stop the descent, so that I could see mother earth again. And something really happened. Romero and Carillo had an attack of mountain-sickness, fainted, and fell off their mules for the third time within two days. They recovered when their faces and hands were rubbed with snow. I went on floating in mid-air. I had always thought



the angels were enviable beings; I was the poorer by the loss of another illusion. After nine days we arrived at Mendoza without a serious accident. I was so overjoyed that I forgave that bastard of a mule all its sins.

We were not profitable to Mendoza. They had never seen such "wonders" as ourselves, and all valuables were turned into tickets, until the town was cleaned out. Some years previously Mendoza and its 42,000 inhabitants had been destroyed in five minutes by an earthquake. The town had been rebuilt near the ruins, which still showed how terrible the disaster had been. The climate was magnificent.

For every passenger in the coach, a horse was hitched to the vehicle; on every horse was a rider who spurred him on with loud shouts; this was the Argentine mail, which dragged us in four and a half days through the dusty pampas, and then surrendered us to the saving arms of civilization: the railroad. "Why didn't you come earlier? The train left an hour ago," reproachfully said the English station-master, cashier, luggage-porter and telegraph operator at the station of Rio Cuarto.—"Never mind, we'll go to-morrow," said Emil, consolingly.—"Two trains a week; we have only one locomotive; the next train leaves Monday at nine."

Rio Cuarto was a small village with a miserable inn and a small river which drained into the pampas. Civilization had left not a mark there. On New Year's Eve, sitting on tree-trunks, Ferreira and I, accompanied by Romero with his guitar, tried to liven up the listening villagers. When the little church bells announced the New Year of 1876, in a tone that might have been its death-knell, we shouted, with hopeful hearts, "A happy New Year!" My most fervent wishes had silently flown



to my mother five hours earlier. I wondered if she had received my letter from Valparaiso! I had only one wish: to look into her eyes again.

On the road to Buenos Aires we lightened the purses of Cordova and Rosario to the best of our ability. In Buenos Aires I found a New Year letter from mother, containing good news; and we learned that our company had been increased by a little three-days-old Leopold. Schuh, it seemed, had been very anxious about me.

We were now at the height of our fame. Schuh had had plenty of time for advertising, and had been introduced to the circle of German professors of the University, by whom we were received like old friends. After a few days we felt quite "European." Professor Kordgien, a Masurian, maintained that there was not a house in which all the plates and bottles were intact; everyone in Buenos Aires had been trying to imitate Beck's juggling act! Some of the boldest had even been severely injured in their endeavours to swallow canes, and some valiant fellows had washed their feet as a preliminary to studying the violin, but had got no farther. The "Transatlantica" was the sole talk of the town.

Two gentlemen, Lohner and Göhrke by name, seemed to have taken a great fancy to me. "I shall call for you to-morrow at ten; take a bath first, and dress yourself carefully!"—"But why?"—"Good night." And Herr Lohner had disappeared.

The following day he arrived punctually. "Come on," he said. It was a broiling hot day. I trotted on beside him, but did not like to ask him again where he was taking me; at last we entered a house.

When I left that house several hours later, I was a member of a new family; I had seen the light; I had been



entered apprentice of the German Lodge, "Germania." The wish that I had cherished in my heart ever since I had read the paper in which Frau Schuster had wrapped my sandwiches had been realized! I had not realized at the time that it was almost beyond the bounds of possibility. Emil and Ben had also been accepted by the Lodge. After lunch with friends we went straight to the *matinée*. It was Sunday, January 30, 1876, on which a new chapter of my life was to begin.

Everyone at the theatre knew what had happened. Beck told me that Ferreira had sworn he was the first person who should have been honoured by the Lodge. To prove it he was drinking diligently. He gave us a disdainful glance, and went on to the stage as usual. After the first part of his solo he fell down at full length, for no apparent reason, and tried to get up, but failed. He then crawled across to the wings on all fours, pulled himself up, and whistled the second part, for some time without accompaniment, since the orchestra could not play for laughing. The whole house broke into uncontrollable shrieks of laughter. Schuh scolded Beck for not having reported Ferreira's condition. We all declared that we hadn't noticed anything.

From Montevideo we were recalled to Buenos Aires. On the way to Rio nothing remarkable happened, except that all three of us took the Fellow Craft and then the Master Mason degrees at the German "Harmony" Lodge of Porto Alegre, and that I won the bet to swim the seven miles from Porto Alegre to Pedras Brancas in seven hours without turning over on my back. The scorching sun blistered my back painfully, which did not, however, prevent me from attending the opening of the German Lodge at San Leopoldo. Herr Karl von



Koseritz, Master of "Harmony" Lodge, pointed out in his speech that I was the first and perhaps the last armless Freemason on earth!

When the ship entered the port of Rio de Janeiro the imposing beauty of the spectacle made my heart leap with joy. In the far distance the snow-capped mountains reflected the rays of the sun. The only drawback to this beautiful country was the yellow fever. I had an opportunity of hearing first-class music again from the Italian Opera at the Imperial Theatre. We alternated performances with them, and ours were soon better attended than the opera. The young Spanish tenor Gayarre captivated me: Sontheim's voice in his youth must have been much like his.

Schuh cautioned Heyman, the secretary, against stopping out late at night after seeing to the posting of the notices, which was one of his jobs; it was dangerous. One morning I learned that Heyman had just been taken to the hospital at San Sebastian, suffering from yellow fever. Schuh paid for his treatment in advance, and gave orders that he should receive particular attention. I could not help thinking of the poor Englishman, alone and unable to make himself understood. On the third morning I said: "I'm going to pay a visit to Heyman; who'll join me?" I was told that I was crazy. Heyman looked well enough; he shed tears of joy when he saw me. The doctor had hopes of him. The next morning I found him sitting stark naked at the open window and calling out: "Tickets, please!" I gave the alarm, and the doctor reprimanded the attendant. When I arrived on the following day I was startled by his appearance: he was dying. We buried him on the same afternoon; the whole company was present.



I was given a separate dressing-room at the theatre. On the steamer from Nictheroy, where we had played in conjunction with the Chiarini Circus, which had lost half of its artists from yellow fever, I felt the first symptoms of the fever. At the German hotel I negotiated with the German landlady to keep me there in spite of the legal prohibition, wrote a farewell letter to my mother, stamped it, and gave orders that it should be posted after my death. I sent for Dr. Johansen, who had cured several fever patients in the same hotel, and went to bed.

"You have caught a bit of a cold," said the doctor.—"If you don't treat me for yellow fever, I'll get another doctor." That did its work. "I'll try to pull you through." I began to perspire, not because of the tea they had poured into me, but because the seven blankets piled on top of me were nearly suffocating me. One suffers incredibly with yellow fever; an unquenchable thirst drives one nearly mad. I had little to drink and nothing to eat for nine days. "Can you eat a soft-boiled egg?" asked the doctor.—"Yes, and the hen that laid it too!" I was unable to walk for weeks. My reflection in the mirror frightened me. I was not yellow; I was as green as a corpse.

When the danger of a relapse was over I burned the letter I had written to Mother; my feelings cannot be described. At my first appearance on the stage I was received with loud cheers.

The "Transatlantica" was disbanded. Before the end Ferreira played his last trick. In spite of Beck's warning he used to stand on the wooden hood of the prompter's box. One night he suddenly disappeared in the middle of the solo, as though the earth had swallowed him. After a while his head emerged from the opening, and



his expression was so helpless that the audience yelled with laughter. He was covered with dust and cobwebs. A picture of misery, he finished his solo amidst the laughter of the audience.

The day of departure drew near. Romero and Carillo implored me to stay with the company, which Leopold and Ferreira proposed to take over, if I would remain as star attraction. Schuh, as well as Ben and Beck, advised me to go to Europe with them. I decided to stay, for fear lest my constitution, which had suffered from the fever, would not stand the European climate. Schuh was very sorry; so was I—later on. Even less sentimental persons than I was would have been moved by the parting from the friends with whom I had worked for nearly three years.

We kept going longer than I expected, and we should have been successful if only Ferreira had refrained from interfering with the management. Even Leopold could not prevent him from meddling. Conditions became unbearable; I left on a good mutual understanding, worked my way through to Para by means of concerts, and there took the steamer for Liverpool. I got an engagement immediately, but suffered from the climate, my skin peeled off my body; I did not dare to go to East Prussia to see my mother.

Gascoygne complained that his son Edwin had too many "friends" in England; he would do better in a foreign country. It would do him a lot of good if I would take him over to Holland. This was an opportunity for me to repay Gascoygne for his kindness in helping me to get out of Caroné's clutches. Edwin was a fine-looking youth, good-natured, and always game. "He will sober up in different surroundings, when he will be



responsible for himself." I thought it over, and decided to take him with me.

In Rotterdam I got him a position in the office of the Great Eastern Railway. But he preferred to "have a look round" first, to "find his feet." Director Pfläging of the variety theatre asked me to keep him off the premises, as he was too noisy. In Amsterdam some friends of mine offered him various positions; he had only to choose. He wanted to stay with me as long as I was there, he said, and begin work after my departure. He wouldn't listen to me, so I left him sufficient money, even to get home, back to England, and did what I had for years been longing to do—started on my journey homewards.

An acquaintance met me at the station and took me to Sommerfeld in his carriage. From the village I walked to our house through the pitch darkness, casting up my account with the past. The nearer home I got, the more dissatisfied I was with myself. How weak of me to have let Ben and Beck get the better of me, as if I had had no mother! Since our visit to Cincinnati I had not increased the amounts of the money orders I had sent home, although I was getting better pay. Certainly Mother had not been in need, but I had failed to do my duty. Oh, if only I could live these three last years over again! How could I face her? I stood at the window and felt my heart thumping. I heard our old clock strike three, and ventured a faint knock at the window-pane. "Is anybody there?" I was so terribly agitated that I could not utter a word.—"Who is there?"—"A stranger."—"My son!" I thought I should sink into the earth for shame, and yet there was in these words all the joy of a forgiving mother's heart. A light! The door was thrown



open; Mother held me in her arms and shed tears of joy, while I wept tears of regret and repentance.

Sleep was impossible; she wanted to know all that had happened to me, and asked me questions when she could not follow my narrative. Some of my letters from the interior of Mexico had never reached her. I did not gloss over anything, and confessed that I should have done more for her. "My boy, aren't you to enjoy life while you are young?"—"Mother, what enjoyment did you get when you were young?"—"Your father and I had to build up a home. Practical experience is more important for you. Your home is the wide world!" I eased my heart by burying my head on her shoulder and letting my tears flow.

Our servant entered with the trunk. Mother unpacked it, and suddenly uttered a loud cry. There were fifty pounds of coffee in the bottom of the trunk, which the Customs Officials had overlooked. "Mother dear, I have made good one of my childish promises," I said. Her sweet smile was the highest reward I could imagine.

The happiest days of my life followed. Her grief over the loss of my father and my brothers had given place to a quiet melancholy. A grand birthday feast, with strong unadulterated coffee and thick cream, revived our memories of the old days; we were infinitely happy. "Child, how wretched you must have been when you wrote that letter of farewell!"—"Yes, and what were they when I burned that letter!"—"Now, confess, what about getting married?"—"Nothing doing, Mother dear! I'm not looking for the right girl; she must come and find me!"—"She will be heartily welcome!"

The time of departure drew near. "I'll stay in Europe and come to see you as often as you want me!" She



insisted on taking me to the station. On parting from me she said: You have become self-reliant in America; now I have no fear for your future." We parted cheerfully, in the expectation of meeting again before long.

Prospects were bad. The Cotrelly Circus at Boulogne-sur-Mer was on its last legs; something had to be done. Looking over the stables, I found a pony-chaise and four well-trained ponies. "Will you arrange a parade for tomorrow? I'll drive them." Olive, the business manager, rushed to the newspaper offices to have the parade advertised.

Everybody was in the streets. Where the crowds were thickest I made the ponies dance. Whom did the people cheer? The ponies or me? On our return to the circus we found the box-office besieged. The debts were soon paid; the circus was afloat again.

One of our artists was Betsy, an elephant, whom I soon discovered to be a suffragette. One night a new piece of music was played, instead of the piece to which she was accustomed. In order to see what was the matter, she pushed her head through the plank wall of the old stall and looked into the ring, pushing several of the audience from their seats; she had a bigger success than the clowns.

The circus moved on to Lille, for the fair. "Come on, we have to get Betsy into the cattle truck!" said Olive. Betsy stepped into the truck and out again. Keeper Heymann urged her on; she would not move. Heymann got a whip; Olive took the hay-fork; ringmaster Klatt helped with his stick. They thrashed Betsy and shouted at her in the most ferocious and improper language. Betsy, evidently, did not understand what was wanted of her;



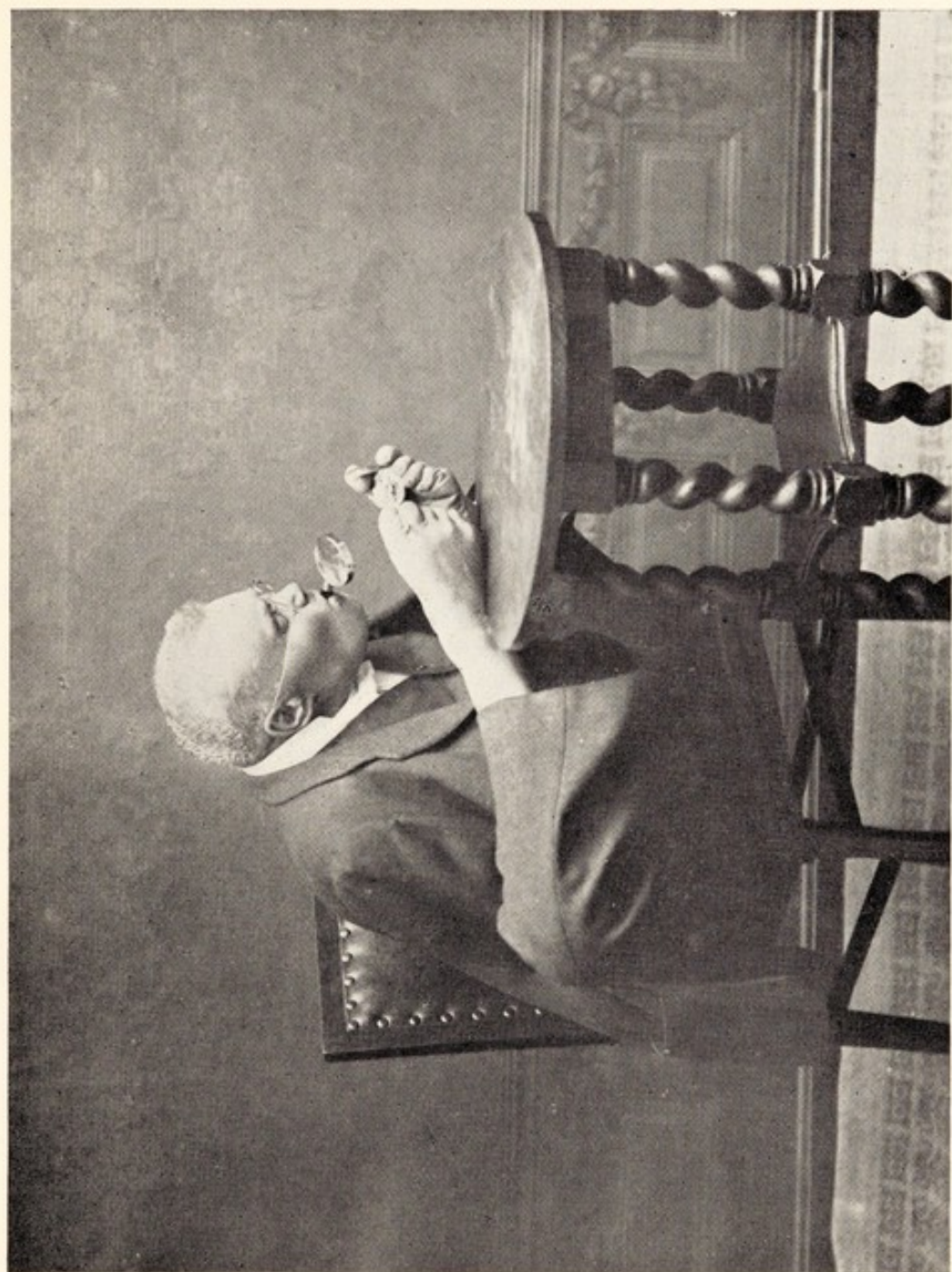
she began to go through her performance, far better than she usually did in the circus. They went on beating and Betsy went on performing. "I have an idea!" said Klatt. He fetched a rope, tied it to one of Betsy's legs, pulled the end of the rope through the slats of the truck, called up some workmen, and began to pull. Heymann shoved behind: "Pull!" Betsy raised her leg. As nothing further happened she put it down again. Klatt, Olive and the twelve workmen were flung across the rails. "Coax her with bread!" I advised. Heymann went for a loaf. "If you hadn't come to us we shouldn't have had the cash to buy a loaf!" said Olive jestingly. Betsy followed the bread like a lamb. I left late that same night, by the express. I reached Lille at dawn and saw Betsy standing in an open truck, Heymann sleeping quietly beside her. Having found the journey tedious, she had torn down all the slats and placed them carefully along the truck.

The opening of the new hippodrome was an enormous success.

The two "wise" donkeys used to pull their heads out of their halters every night and go for a walk. Betsy was jealous, broke her rope one night, and paid a visit to a neighbouring wine-cellar. She tore down as much of the fence as was necessary for her to pass through, smashed in the bottom of a wine-cask which she found in the courtyard, and drank the twenty-two gallons of burgundy which it contained. Then she went to have a look at the town. On coming upon a half-built house she tumbled into what would one day be the cellar, found a soft place for herself, and fell asleep.

We discovered her only after a long search. We made a sloping gangway of stout planks. She put one foot on





REGULATING MY HAMILTON WATCH







them and drew it back. "Not strong enough." Another layer of planks, and slowly, with an extremely dissipated expression on her face, she dragged herself up to ground level, and then, amidst the cheers of the assembled children, she tottered off beside Heymann to her stall. Then she drank several buckets of water, and slept until the evening.

Some colleagues told me that Edwin Gascoygne had hung around Pfläging's theatre for a time, pretending that he was waiting for my return. They got tired of him, and collected money to send him home. I was very sorry that I had been unable to be of service to his father.

In spite of the enormous business Cotrelly got into money difficulties. His wife spent his takings on diamonds; he was helpless. I left him. Soon afterwards Mme. Cotrelly drank herself to death.

Mother wrote me that she was afraid of the cold winter. I sent her a valuable fur coat from Dijon. At the end of November she began to complain of her health.

In the middle of December, in Paris, I received a telegram: "Dangerously ill, come home." I had to sacrifice part of my salary to get leave from Director Fernando. I did not sleep a wink on the journey from Paris to Sommerfeld.

"Child, I ought not to have called you! I'm much better!"—"Do you know how long it has been since we spent Christmas together, Mother dear? I am so happy to do so now, but so very sorry that I had no time to bring you a present."—"But, my child, no countess here has such a fur coat as I have!"

The doctor advised her to stay in bed, and assured me there was no danger. Outside the storm was raging, and the snow was piled up in walls; but we felt at



peace, our longing assuaged. I sat by her bedside and told her about my life; she listened, as though gazing into the depths of my soul. "Child, won't you be very lonely some day?" I laughed aloud. "A man who has been blessed with such parents as I can never be lonely. Father has been with me all the time."—"You will find a wife to take my place!"—"No, Mother. Your place will remain yours to all eternity; if I find a wife she will have to be satisfied with a place at your side."

"I shall take my nephew Hermann with me. Marianne loses a mouth to feed, and I gain a comrade. I will buy the most indispensable things for him here, and a proper outfit in Düsseldorf." Mother insisted on making her will, and I had to make a solemn promise that I would carry out all her wishes.

The night before my departure I laid my head on the pillow beside hers. She clasped her arms round my neck; and we were both silent. An angel seemed to pass through the room. "Child, do you want to break my heart?"—"Mother, my dearest Mother!"—"Child, the greatest happiness of a mother is mixed with sorrow."

Parting had never been so hard for me. She looked at me sadly. "Be good! God will not forsake you!" were her last words. . . .

After my *début* in Düsseldorf a fellow-guest at my hotel asked me over to his table, at which a little gentleman with a fine head and a heavy black moustache was sitting with a cloak over his shoulders. "I am the painter Adam Siepen, also armless." Our questions and answers were endless. Siepen was not much higher than the table; he had only one normal leg, with which he painted; the other leg, with a tiny foot, was only about ten inches long. His servant never left him, and drove him



everywhere in his carriage. Siepen was a popular portrait-painter; the Academy held him in high esteem. His misfortune had not been able to crush his soul; he was full of life and high spirits. Nevertheless, our topics of conversation were generally serious.

The manager of the variety theatre had let the place deteriorate; the better classes avoided the place. For the first time in my life I got no pay. "Uncle, does that happen often?" asked Hermann.—"This is the first and, I hope, the last time." The boy was a great comfort to me.

When I was in Vienna, Mother wrote me that she suffered from thirst; an orange now and then would refresh her. At times she was able to leave her bed. I sent her a box of the finest Messina oranges, and wrote to her almost every day. Hermann always added a few lines. Once he wrote that he had seen the Emperor quite close.

"You are going to Budapest. Give my best regards to my brother Sándor at the Café Rosner. I have written to him to get rooms for you," the conductor Rosner said to me. In Budapest we took our breakfast at the Café Rosner and heard the gipsy band in the evening; Hermann was quite fascinated.

I felt strangely uneasy on the morning of the second Sunday in March. Towards evening I called at the "Orpheum" for letters and found a wire waiting for me which I took to the dressing-room. "Uncle, you are as white as chalk; is there anything the matter at home?"—"Yes, your grandmother died this morning. We go home to-morrow. There will be enough time for crying during the night. Now we have to get money, and pack up."

I was fifteen gulden short for my journey. I knew that



Director Carlé, who paid us daily, could not afford to spare that sum. Sándor Rosner borrowed it from his father, but I had to leave my violin as security. Sándor apologized; it was not his fault. I wired home: "Tuesday evening eleven at Prussian Holland."

Would there never be an end to the journey? At last I entered our house, trembling with anxiety. She who had been everything to me was lying in her coffin. I fell on my knees before it. My heart prayed. To this day I don't know what it prayed for, but I am sure that there never was a more fervent prayer than mine, full of gratitude and veneration for her who had left me.

My sister and Aunt Schindowski, who had nursed Mother during the last weeks of her illness, would not let me sit up with Mother; they had arranged everything, and there was nothing left for me to do. The day before the funeral I stood by her coffin for a long while, and kissed her beloved face for the last time. God's holy peace lay on it.

Our relations arrived; then the school-teacher with the children. They began to sing. I felt a tension in every muscle, and exerted all my strength to stifle my sobs—but in vain.

At church the pastor delivered a "beautiful address." But what did he know about the woman in the coffin before him? What did any of those standing around me know? Who else can know the heart of a cripple's mother save the cripple himself? The pastor had finished, and approached the grave. In the tomb I saw one side of Father's coffin; Mother was laid at his right side. I sent my last greetings down to both my parents. Clods of earth fell heavily on the coffin. In undignified haste the relations muttered the last prayers. I was the last to go down on



my knees, and found nothing to say but: "You can never be parted from me; my last breath shall be a prayer for you!"

At the funeral repast I stood at the end of the table and saw that every guest was properly served. It was early in the morning when they said good-bye. We were alone.

I could now ask the question that would not pass my lips as long as Mother was above the earth: "Auntie, why wasn't I called before it was too late?"—"She wouldn't have it. She did not want you to see her suffer; she wanted you to keep her in your memory as she was last Christmas. She asked me to thank you for all your care and love, which has protected her from want, and made her life a happy one." I hurried away to be alone . . . alone with my saint.



CHAPTER VIII

ALONE IN THE WORLD

(1878-1883)

*Bucarest and Russia—The International Exhibition in Paris—Spain—Drowned!—France, Italy, Malta—Dead of Apoplexy!—The Orient: Constantinople, Jerusalem, Egypt—Dysentery—In the Debtors' Jail—Departure—Trieste, Dalmatia, Verona—Huge Show in the Amphitheatre—Munich—The Dislocated Toe—In Love—Vienna—Nicotine Poisoning—Brussels—The Black Nightingale—Parting from Gustel—Hungary*

WITH a heavy heart I disposed of the patch of soil for which my parents had worked so hard. The proceeds were divided between my sister and myself, according to Mother's wish. I went out into the wide world, poorer than the nephew at my side.

With my violin, I seemed to have recovered a part of myself. The journey down the Danube as far as Orsova diverted my thoughts a little from the fact that I was now alone. We opened our four eyes wide as we passed through the Iron Gates. Not until we reached Bucarest was I my old self again; Mother seemed to be always beside me.

In Bucarest, too, a young Jewish comedian attracted my attention, at first by his limitless effrontery. His mother called him Isidor; he was advertised as Raoul Günsbourg.

Sándor Rosner announced his imminent arrival; he could not get on with his father. His plan was to travel with me until he became of age, and he promised to



repay all his expenses from the money he would inherit from his mother. He had enabled me to be present at my mother's funeral, so I could not bring myself to say "no," as I ought to have done.

In the autumn I had to go to Paris from Kiev. My nephew, who had been a good boy before we went to Russia, took to smoking and drinking, and I could not restrain him. I took him back to his grandfather Folger in Sommerfeld and made arrangements for his further education.

There was an International Exhibition in Paris. Rosner wanted his fiancée Etelka to see it. I granted his wish, and had her join us. Before she left us I made her a present of my mother's fur cloak.

In Paris Schuhmann was forming a new troupe for South America. When he asked me to join him, I refused, in all politeness, and got him a few other good artists. Rosner was longing for his Etelka. I took him to London and tried to stuff some English into him; we worked at it all day long. One evening I was run over on the pavement by a hansom cab; one wheel ran over my knee-cap. I dragged myself to St. Thomas's Hospital, which was near by, and was bandaged. I was feverish when I got back to my lodgings.

I had to stay in bed five weeks. . . . An agent brought me a contract for Madrid. The offer was very tempting; I signed the contract, holding the pen in my mouth. I knew the language of the country from my travels in South America. After my recovery I had two weeks to get into practice again. Rosner was still longing for his Etelka, and went to join her in Vienna.

Upon my arrival in Madrid I reported to Director Parish at the circus, when my baggage was brought in.



The men asked an exorbitant price, and I read the Riot Act to them in fluent Spanish. Parish turned pale. "Your contract states that you have never been in Madrid before, and now you speak Spanish better than I, who have been here for twenty years; I cannot let you appear." I told him that I had been in South America for three years.

It was Parish's first season in Madrid after the death of his father-in-law, who had been as beloved as Parish was disliked. He had been warned that his first audience would hiss the whole programme. So they did; turn after turn was shouted, whistled and trampled into silence, until my turn came. So far all the artists had naturally felt embarrassed, and had appeared only because they were forced to do so. Conscious that I had something to offer that had never been seen before, I went cheerfully into the ring and made sheep's eyes at the public while they yelled "Outside!" Then I took *The Times* from my pocket, opened it and began to read. The paper hid me from the greater part of the audience. Silence! I took my violin out of its case and played as if my life had been at stake. No other audience is so easily carried away by enthusiasm as the Spanish. I had to take calls until I was tired out. At last I said: "If only you knew what marvellous things are in store for you, you would not deprive yourselves of them." The spell was broken; the rest of the programme went off in an orderly fashion.

The impresario Casado, whom I had known in Cuba, promised me huge sums for a tour through the peninsula. Since my experience with Caroné I had been suspicious of impresarios; but he showed me a very attractive contract for Lisbon, and I accepted. We got on splendidly. Then Casado began to read me pitiful



letters from his family, and ask for advances, and I had to give way. Rosner and Etelka were living in Vienna at my expense. The situation was becoming tiresome, so I told Casado that I should sail for France from San Sebastian.

The bathing was delightful in San Sebastian. In the water I always thought of Bach; the waves sang his fugues to me.

One day Baron B., a Frenchman, and Major Evans, a retired English officer, and myself, swam out to an island a little way out to sea; it took us an hour and a half. We lunched—on credit—in our bathing-costumes, smoked a fine Havana cigar apiece with our black coffee, chatted for a while, and then swam back. As we approached the beach we heard the newspaper-boys calling: "Three bathers drowned!" We dressed, and each of us bought a paper. Life seems more precious than ever with such a paper in one's pocket!

The Madrid string quartette gave a matinée. The curtains were drawn to keep the sun out. Soon after the opening of the quartette Sarasate entered, dressed in a suit of spotless white. He did not see the steps, and fell down at full length, making enough noise for six with his cane. After the movement had been played he crept quietly out of the hall.

Rosner joined me unexpectedly in France, with fresh promises to reimburse me when he came of age. We went to Italy, and did splendid business there. In Malta I met an opera troupe which was on the point of going smash and got them on to their legs again. One night I read in the *Corriere de la Sera* that I had died of apoplexy in Naples. The news had been spread by an artist to whom I had lent two hundred lire.



The view of Constantinople from the water was enchanting, but I was disappointed on landing. The Orient was a new world to me, except for the German beer-houses, which were not appreciated by the natives.

I found a suitable engagement at the Trocadero. "Let us," said one of the musicians, "have a look at the gaming-room in the hall at the back." I found Rosner there, gambling with my money. I bought him a ticket to Budapest and saw him aboard the steamer.

The Orient fascinated me. I played in theatres, in vaudeville shows, in harems, in the houses of pashas, and for family parties. I found the character of the people more full of exaggerations than elsewhere, both for good and for bad. The tale of even my most interesting experiences would fill volumes.

Never have I been more disillusioned than at the Holy Sepulchre. I went there with deep veneration in my heart, and found a crowd of rascals from all parts of the world, making a mere mock of the greatest sanctuary of Christendom. Away from the place!—the air was infected by the very dregs of humanity.

In Alexandria I suffered from dysentery. I lived with a Jewish family, who cared for me in my loathsome illness as though I had been their son. I compared their kindness with the behaviour of the creatures whom I had found guarding the Holy Sepulchre.

None of my new acquaintances in Cairo had warned me that the Théâtre Français could never cover its expenses, even if it were sold out. I gave one performance there, in partnership with a conjuror by the name of Hermann, and ran into debt. Hermann had nothing. We had already done bad business in the smaller towns. I wired to my old friend Heinz in Sommerfeld:



"Send immediately two thousand marks German Consul Cairo." While waiting for the money I kept expenses down as far as possible.

One morning I was arrested by the dragoman of the consulate; they were afraid I should leave without paying my debts, and a kavass led me off to the debtors' prison. He then obtained for me a loan of three hundred and fifty francs from a banker by the name of Beyer, and I was released. The consul, Herr von Treskow, agreed to leave me in peace if the consul-general would vouch for me.

In eloquent terms I explained the situation to Baron von Saurma-Jeltsch. "Humbug! Who will give you two thousand marks?" he asked.—"They are my own property, Baron!" He laughed diabolically. We had reached a street corner. "If you go this way, I'll go the other!" he interrupted me with icy coldness.

The khedive must have heard of my trouble. I was summoned by his chamberlain, who put £25 in gold into my pocket. I ran to Beyer with the three hundred and fifty francs, and then to the consulate, where I asked them to have the money order sent back when it arrived, as I was leaving. The place had grown too hot for me; I returned to Alexandria without prospects, but also without debts.

A concert in Alexandria yielded but little profit. "Listen to me!" said my landlord and fellow-countryman: "Winkler has sold out his business, and wants to see the world. Let him settle your affairs and go to Trieste together; you can then pay him back what you owe him." I agreed. Three days later I was sitting on the after-deck of the steamer, wondering how I had got into such a fix.



The Orient passed once more before my eyes. I saw silent, howling, and dancing dervishes in their morbid fanaticism; I saw my trunk fall into the sea in Smyrna, containing all my souvenirs of my mother, and my Masonic diploma; I heard myself shouting, "Man overboard!" when I fell one night into the Suez Canal; I went through my attack of dysentery, and recalled the few persons who had been kind to me.

In Trieste we heard that Alexandria had been bombarded by the English.

The Hotel Danieli was filled to overflowing by Lori Stubel and the members of her operetta company. The old landlord made room for us and asked me what Caroné was doing. I was engaged at the Teatro Fenice. Winkler was radiant; I was in my element again. Sometimes it seemed to me that my spell of misery had lasted for years.

The next steamer from Alexandria was crowded with fugitives. Some of them told me that my money had arrived the day after my departure. My difficulties must have been the talk of the town.

We went to Dalmatia with a variety company, did good business, ate rank goat-flavoured mutton, and looked on at the squabbles of our companions, who belonged to four different nationalities. Then we parted from mutton and fled to macaroni, to everybody's satisfaction. In Verona we planned a great offensive: a *matinée* in the huge Roman arena! It was sold out! Heavy rain set in, so the performance had to be postponed until the following Sunday. That week Garibaldi died, and national mourning was proclaimed. On the third Sunday we were at last able to appear, but the weeks of waiting had eaten up our profits.



Business improved, but the squabbles between the English and American artists grew daily worse. Winkler and I were homesick for Germany, and went from Milan to Zürich by the St. Gotthard Tunnel, which had been opened two weeks earlier. I had been invited to appear in the open-air theatre in Zürich. "The director was just going to sign the contract, when a tall, stout lady entered the room, and the director asked her opinion of you," Winkler told me.—"Unthan was an absolute failure with us," she declared.—"That ended the negotiations."—"What was the lady's name?" I asked.—"Frau Billé-Hübsch." On the steamer from Romannshorn to Lindau I told Winkler the history of Frau Caroné-Billé-Hübsch, as far as it was known to me.

On the day of our arrival in Munich I dislocated my right big toe, while taking off my socks—the floor of the hotel, the Leinefelder Hof, had been freshly waxed—and I had to stay in bed with an ice-bag on my toe.

Winkler signed for a month with the Aquarium on very good terms; I was to begin "as soon as my paw would allow it." Director Strasser and Manager Dedreux visited me every day, pressing me to appear. "It will take another week yet," said Strasser. "I'll advertise you, and I'll reserve a room for you in the Fürstenfelder Hof, opposite the Aquarium; you can move there as soon as you can hobble to a cab."

It is incredible what one can think out during three days in bed! I puzzled out the "fingering" with three toes for my easiest solos. Winkler came to see me, and announced that the Aquarium was very poorly attended; the curiosities were under separate management. The theatre had been closed by the police when a cobra had escaped; it had been kept closed until the reptile was



found dead under the floor. A certain proportion of the public sympathized with the director, but the majority were of the opinion that it was a "put up job." Unless he could get hold of some extraordinary attraction the end was near.

A nice prospect! "All depends on you!" I said, looking at my compress-hidden toe. At last we were able to leave the Leinefelder Hof and move into the Fürstenfelder Hof. The anticipated *début* approached.

A huge hall, the walls hung with various objects of interest. In the background a platform with a red plush curtain. On this platform all the living creatures, excepting the fishes and a bear, were introduced and explained by Strasser himself. There was also a skull that answered questions by "shaking its head" and nodding; a pair of Siamese twins; a ventriloquist; and then myself! I thought I should sink into the ground when I heard Strasser announce me. While I was fiddling, a little life came into the faces of the few onlookers. My toe was not yet sufficiently healed to do my card-tricks or to open a bottle of wine. That day we gave the usual three performances.

The attendance increased visibly. "Herr Strasser, we shall have to give more performances; I'll do it for the same pay." His eldest daughter, Auguste, had charge of the box-office; she showed great sympathy for my toe, which led to a mutual attachment. Our meetings took place in the box-office, so there was no possibility of keeping our friendly relations a secret. As I was afraid of gossip I called on Strasser, spoke to him openly, and suggested that he should replace me by another artist; I would leave at the end of the month for his daughter's sake and my own. "Why throw the baby away with



the water?" asked Strasser, without showing the least surprise. "Gustel is young; let's wait a bit; but give me your word of honour that this shall be only between ourselves, and, above all, that you'll play straight!" I felt my heart beating in my throat as though it would burst. As I passed Gustel I nodded without a word, but my face must have told everything; she laid her hand on her heart.

A time of supreme happiness followed. I was a daily guest at Strasser's table, so that I should be at hand for the performances. After closing down at seven Strasser and his wife often took their daughter and myself out to supper, where we generally met with the same crowd. On other evenings I would meet Gustel at the house of a friend of hers. Unexpectedly high box-office receipts increased our happiness. There was no longer any thought of my going. Strasser's expenses were very high, and he wanted to reduce my salary. "It's all in the family," I thought, and reduced my terms by fifty per cent.

The quality of the audiences consoled me for the manner in which I was introduced. The royal family appeared; princes and celebrities came, and most of them got into conversation with me, and never thought of regarding me as a buffoon. I have pleasant memories of Clara Ziegler and others, and some souvenirs. I saw much of the Schuhmanns at this time; they were both doing well.

"It will be very lonely here when you are gone," complained Gustel, "if I can't stand it I shall come to you."—"Come now, Gustel, just as you are; without you I've got no hold on life; I must have someone to work for. Up to now I have always been exploited by



those who called themselves my friends." She flung her arms round my neck, and wept. I loved her very, very dearly.

Winkler and I went to Vienna on the last day of the October fair. At the station Strasser was strangely excited; I couldn't make him out. Gustel and her mother were crying. I don't know how I felt. Was I really to go and leave everything behind? A long kiss; the porter pushed me into the carriage. I could not see out of the window; I flung myself on the cushions and wept.

In Vienna I reported to Pertl, who had recently taken over the Orpheum. Somebody held his hands over my eyes from behind: "Guess!" said Pertl. "Eh bien?" somebody asked. It was Beckmann! That was a meeting—and what a talk we had!

I should have been very happy at the Orpheum, which was then one of the best variety theatres in Europe, but my thoughts were with Gustel. Her letters were not happy. Once she complained that her father was throwing his money into somebody's lap. . . . That letter disappeared mysteriously after I had read it.

A week later I received a letter from Strasser that made me shudder at his vileness. How could such a low fellow as I dare to raise my eyes to his daughter!—how dared I even look at her, and so forth.—I wrote him that I could not get away before the New Year, but that I should then come and confront him.

Winkler had stolen Strasser's letter and had sent it back to him. I had long ago repaid Winkler the money which he had lent me, and he was always asking for advances; I now sacked him on the spot. I received no further news from Gustel; she must have been constantly watched.



I felt extremely depressed and smoked a great deal to pass the time. I had to go to a doctor. "A rather nervous heart, that's all I can find. But tell me once more exactly how you live. Do you do anything before breakfast?"—"I take a cold bath and smoke eight to ten cigarettes."—"Let me see what you smoke." He rubbed the tobacco between his hands and smelt it. "Acute nicotine poisoning!"—"I'll stop smoking to-morrow."—"There is no to-morrow; it's always to-day."—"I have bought my supply for to-day, and that'll be the last."

Has the world ever devised worse horrors than those of nicotine poisoning? I could not stand being alone; I had to wander about the streets at night; I saw more ghosts than those of the Walpurgis Night and Dante's *Inferno* put together, more snakes than I had ever met in America, and they all had a bone to pick with me. One night the cold drove me into a café. The hot coffee warmed me. Suddenly I saw my parents sitting on the sofa before me, holding each other's hands and gazing at me with the saddest expression. I tried in vain to turn my eyes away. There was a despairing look in Mother's eyes. A loud cry startled me. The few guests stared at me. A thickly made-up girl sneered: "He's got 'em again!"—"Not as you think, and you can bet that I shall never have them again!" I replied. It was I who had uttered the shriek.

Before every performance my anxiety became unendurable. What I felt was a compound of fear and assuaging hope: for I expected every moment to drop dead on the stage. In the state of exhaustion that followed I realized that I should have to exert my utmost will-power if I was ever to recover my health. It was part of the performance to inhale a few puffs of smoke, and



I knew that if I smoked some seven or eight cigarettes before appearing, my terrors would be dispelled: but remembering my father I refused to break the promise I had made to myself.

My health gradually improved. After a few weeks I felt that I had completely recovered. I realized months later that I must have been very far from well.

Beck called himself "Kaouli" in Europe. He lived a rackety life and coughed a great deal. "Eugen, you ought to take more care of yourself!"—"Oh, rubbish, don't be an ass!"

Rosner wrote often. He wanted to see me, but he could not get away. I went to see him in the hope that he would settle his debt to me, but he disappointed me. He told me that his father was planning to set him up, together with his brother Mundi, in a restaurant with a garden where concerts could be given.

When I arrived in Munich I found that Strasser had gone away with Gustel. I was told that he had almost beaten the child to death after receiving that unhappy letter from Winkler. Now for the first time I saw the man in his true colours. The *man*? . . . It was during the journey to Brussels that I began to realize what a fool I had been. It was high time to stop bothering about other people's troubles and to think of my own affairs. I made a host of excellent resolutions.

In Brussels I was enchanted by the voice of a negress who called herself "the black nightingale," and whose husband's voice (a baritone) went well with her own. They spoke English only, and I knew what that meant in a foreign country. I took them with me to Würzburg, where the woman starred as "Selica" at the opera-house. I played in the newly opened variety theatre, which was



frequented mostly by students. One of them drew Dr. Hans Virchow's attention to my feet. He came and photographed both my feet and myself in various positions. "Excuse my curiosity," I said, "but are you related to the famous Rudolf Virchow?"—"I have the honour to be his son," he replied.

Our comedian kept bothering me to let him be my partner in the card-playing scene. One evening he joined us on the stage with a "Salve!"—"Sit down in German; why, you couldn't decline 'mensa!'" I said.—"Conjugate!" growled a deep, heavy voice from the audience. I looked at his bloated face and watery eyes, and said: "He has been so long at the University that he's forgotten whether it's substantives or verbs that are declined." The house shook with laughter; I saw Virchow wiping the tears from his eyes.

I was longing to get back to Munich; I had to speak to Gustel. She was taking lessons in book-keeping, and her teacher gave us an opportunity of meeting at his house. Gustel declared that she could not give up her family. Had she been playing with me? Not altogether; the parting was difficult for both of us. We said farewell for ever, without a kiss. I saw nothing of her father.

A concert which I gave with the two black singers was a great success; the house was full to overflowing. I continued for a time to give such concerts, but I had to get Heinz to send me money. I finally obtained an engagement for them in Berlin.

What had become of my excellent intentions? Was I always going to pave the road to hell? I had relapsed into my old, bad habit. My self-esteem had fallen almost to zero. Presently I accepted the offer of a reliable vaudeville manager and joined him for a tour through



Moravia and Silesia; but I felt terribly depressed in the little towns we visited, although my salary was promptly paid.

"Come and have a thorough rest in my house," wrote Rosner. "There's room, and business is good." After my contract was concluded I wrote to him and his brother in Budapest. The garden of the Villa Andrassy had been beautifully fitted for concerts, but there was no concert-hall in the house; if it rained one had to stop. There was an orchestra of sixty performers, with Zierer, the famous hatter's son, as first conductor, and Stabs, a North German, as second. The cuisine quickly won a high reputation. Sándor felt and behaved like a monarch, whereas Mundi took things calmly. Here I found rest and peace, until the rainy Sundays put Sándor into a bad temper.

"Have you got my I.O.U. with you?"—"No Sándor."—"Well, send for it!"—"Here's the I.O.U., Sándor," I said a week later. He looked it over and tore it into fragments, and let the wind carry them away, saying the while: "Such formalities are superfluous between us." Having expected a settlement, I was disappointed.

Four consecutive wet Sundays caused general uneasiness. During one such Sunday the impresario Büatier walked in, looked greatly astonished to see me, and made a proposal: "My dear friend, we can make a fortune in the Hungarian theatres—in partnership!" He went off the following morning and wired in the evening. "Thursday début in Kecskemét." On my arrival there he went off to make further arrangements elsewhere.

Before long we had the reputation of being an infallible attraction. We did excellently. I began to feel myself again. In September I had to fill a long-standing contract



with the variety theatre in Prague. That contract seemed to grin at me hideously. On the way to Prague I broke my journey at Budapest, and presented Rosner with the costliest gold watch which I could find in Arad as some acknowledgment for my five weeks' uninterrupted rest in his house. Büatier went with me as far as Vienna, where he had business which would occupy him until I came to fetch him. He saw me off at the station.

A Bohemian porter roused me from my meditations by his shouts of: "Brague!"



## CHAPTER IX

### SAFE AT LAST!

(1883-1894)

*Prague—Miss Antonie Beschta and Her Family—  
Christmas—Together on a Concert Tour—A Dear  
Secret—The Wedding—Housekeeping in Paris—Cholera  
—Sharps shooting—In Berlin with the Anthropologists—  
Bohemia—Minx is Ill—Spain, England, Russia, Spain  
once more, Hungary, Paris—At the Cripples' Institute—  
Off to America, but Alone*

I WAS received in Prague by the Director himself, a most officious person, who showed me to a sordid room in the theatre (which had a restaurant, and let rooms to the artists) that would have cost only half as much in a decent hotel. The dressing-rooms on either side of the stage were very small, so that most of the artists had to dress in their bedrooms, and thus were completely at his mercy. Those who lived and ate elsewhere had to go through a hell on earth. It was news to me that the cooking could be bad in Austria. It was the lunch served for the artists that was so bad; in the evening the food was tolerable. But in the evenings I was invited to sup with the Director, when he made a show of me, and wondered aloud at my skill in using my feet at table. I was ashamed to the depths of my soul.

It was no honour to appear on that programme. Some actors from the famous Meiningen Court Theatre, who were playing at the Landestheater, were so overcome with the would-be serious performance of one of our lady singers that they burst out laughing. Next time they



brought some of their colleagues and asked for the same song. The singer was proud of receiving such a request, for she had not the least idea how funny the performance was. The presence of these actors at the supper-table was a real comfort to me. Since the Landestheater was not far off, I was able to find time to see at least simple acts there now and again. "Come and have a chat with us at the Café Continental," some of them urged me.

"Why are you always casting glances at that lady over there?" one of them asked me.—"Well, Herr von Raven, I am trying to read the lines which are etched in that beautiful young face."—"Well?"—"I understand another's grief, because I have known sorrow myself,' seems to be written on it."—"Come, I'll introduce you; the lady belongs to our company. Fräulein Antonie Beschta, this armless-harmless youth desires to pay his humble respects to you; he is Herr Hermann Unthan." My face was burning; I could have looked for a hole to hide myself in. With delicate tact the lady helped me to get over my embarrassment. We fell at once into a tone of harmless gossip; and I told her how the audience delighted in the attractions of our "Tingeltangel."—"You are getting a wrong impression of Prague; come and see me some time; you must meet my mother and sister."—"May it be soon, gracious Fräulein?"—"Not before to-morrow; our time for gossip is four o'clock. Good-bye!"

Her mother answered my ring. Seventy years had done little harm to her beauty. I always felt a strange reverence for young-looking old women. The beauty of her eldest daughter Mély was of a different character, in spite of a marked family likeness. They did not judge by outside appearances in that family; I felt that after a few words.



We were soon engaged in a most interesting discussion of Beethoven and Wagner, flavoured with coffee and delicious home-made cake. I had to tear myself away in order not to miss my performance. At every step I had the feeling of descending from the heights into the abyss.

"Where have you been?" asked the Director.—"At Beschta's." This name set him going; it was as though I had thrown a switch. Old Beschta had been regarded as a wealthy man. He died suddenly; his daughters had to give up their engagements in Altenburg, where Mély sang the first and Tony the second rôles at the Court Theatre, in order to take over the match factory. They had a lot of trouble before they finally sold it; by then there was little or nothing left. "I have offered them fine terms, but the silly things are too proud to sing for me," he concluded.

That night, in my dreams, I saw both the girls on the boards of our theatre; the Meiningen actors were sitting in front, doubled up with laughter. I woke bathed in perspiration. Then I sat up in bed and beheld the fate that had engraved the lines in Tony's face: care for her mother, the most sacred task of every child. How badly I had behaved in this respect while I was in America! If I could help her here perhaps I could atone for my fault!

Every day the time seemed to pass more slowly until it was four o'clock; then, in a flash, it was seven!

"Would you like to go on a concert tour through Hungary with me? You and your sister could accompany each other at the piano; you could sing songs with violin obligato; we should need no one but my manager, who is excellent. Think it over! I believe it's a sound idea, and I would be responsible for the expenses." After



full consideration they decided that it was impossible to get away before Christmas, but they could be ready the day after. "I'll spend Christmas with you, and then we'll all leave together."

"Would you like to go shopping with me to-morrow?" asked Tony.—"To be sure I would!" We had a confidential talk for the first time. She told me that her father must have foreseen his death; shortly before he died he begged her to look after her mother and sister. She said that stage life was almost impossibly difficult for girls who wanted to keep straight, and the higher one got the more one had to be on the defensive. Tears fell from under her veil. "I should like to make life easier for you, Fraülein Tony."—"I believe you; but there must be no misunderstanding in our relations."—"I shall never worry you with my attentions."—"I believe that too."—She raised her veil, and gave me a frank and trusting glance.

From that moment there was a tacit understanding between us, a dear secret, a magic charm which prevented me from making a fool of myself.

The time came when I had to leave Prague. I said good-bye to her mother and Mély; Tony said she would come to see me off. "How often will you write?" she asked, when we were standing together on the platform.—"As often as I can, at least twice a week."—"All aboard!" Her eyes were moist with emotion. My face quivered; I kept my tears back with difficulty; I leaned out of the window and nodded my head until the train entered the tunnel; then I buried my face in the cushions and let my tears flow.

I was never so tired that I could not write at least one page to Tony every day. It was not so easy to write to



three women when one is thinking of one only. "It is only from your letters that one can really get to know you; never from your appearance and behaviour," wrote Tony. Her letters were kindling flames hitherto unknown to me. I saw her by day, I dreamed of her by night, and I told her so in a letter. "Whether it is love, I cannot tell. Once I imagined myself to be in love with an innocent girl, but I forgot her so quickly that it cannot have been love, which is said to last for ever! 'But thou my heart and soul hast captured, which were whole.' " I continued to write "thee" and "thou"; she allowed me to write the words, but she did not respond in the same terms.

I grew diplomatic; I asked for Mély's and Tony's birth certificates, which I told her would be needed when I applied for a licence to give concerts; and I sent Tony's and my own to Bütier in Máros Vásárhely, where we were going to open our tour. He was to notify the registrar of my intention to apply for a licence. If Tony refused me there was no harm done.

I arrived in Prague late at night; it was impossible to call before nine o'clock the following morning. I was too early, and wandered about until the clock struck nine. At last! I felt my heart throbbing. I gave a timid ring, and the door was opened with the words: "Are you there at last?" and two arms were clasped around me.—"I am alone; Mother and sister have gone to the market. Is this the beginning of perfect honesty, that I have to get my letters on the sly and read Mother and Mély only half of them?"—"Do you know *The Marriage of Figaro*?" That was the first good laugh we had had together; but Tony was startled when I told her that I had applied for the licence. Then we laughed again.



"Don't tell Mother and sister! This needs careful consideration." We had got so far when her mother and sister returned. I was heartily welcomed.

Christmas Eve! A cloud seemed to overshadow our merriment: it was the anniversary of Herr Beschta's death. But as we talked we arrived at a degree of mutual understanding and intimacy that was worth more than noisy jollity.

When we left for Hungary the girls' mother wept as though we were going to Australia.

"Well, do you know, we are sold out for three days!" said Büatier. "We shall have to give more concerts. The rooms are bad, but the food is excellent." He told me with a glance: all is ready!

"We are going out to get some fresh air, Mély."—"In such weather? Don't stay out too long!"

I returned. "Where is my sister Tony? Where have you been so long?"—"I have the honour to introduce myself to you as your brother-in-law and the head of the family! We were delayed a little at the registrar's; my wife will appear in a moment." She stared at me, speechless for a while; then she stammered: "Mother!" I kissed her. "Think—I can look after your mother better than you can alone!" She thought for a while, then she said, slowly: "I believe it will be for the best!" I shouted across the corridor: "Tony, you can come in now without risking your life!" The sisters fell into each other's arms and cried as though I was going to be buried. The icy weight that had lain on Tony's heart and mine had melted at a touch, and now we were in a festive mood. Mély could not yet understand why we had been in such a hurry. Büatier revealed the plot to her, and we all had a good laugh. There were never four happier



people at a merrier wedding! It was late when we parted.

The greatest happiness is not to be expressed in words.

Yes, Mother, she has come; the right one; and I feel secure as on your breast! She has taught me to view the world with different eyes, and people will no longer twist me about to serve their purposes. I have only one object in life: the happiness of my wife, who has given me a heaven on earth!

Business was good beyond all expectation. My mother-in-law wanted us to come home for Easter, and we were in need of a rest. We were all three of us alarmed at the idea of having to tell my mother-in-law of our marriage. After the first tears of joy had been dried, Tony took her mother by the hand and led her to me, saying: "Mother, this is your son! Boy, this is your mother!" The perspiration trickled down my face. But she was not astonished! Her honest face was slowly lit up by a smile that made it beautiful: "I've thought for some time that would be best!" she said quietly. I danced with joy, cheering aloud. "Boy, have you St. Vitus's dance?" Mother held me fast in her arms and kissed me. "You're a good boy, be good to my dear girl!"—"And not to you, Mother?" The house was ringing with joy. "Is she to go on living here with us?"—"As long as I have anything to say about it!"

"Good news, Mother! We are going to Paris next week!"—"Dear me! So far away? and Mély?"—"It will be a bigger household now, and you two can attend to furnishing our new rooms!"

One should surely be happy in Paris! We found a charming little flat of two rooms, glass-covered veranda,



kitchen and maid's room, near the Folies Bergères, where I had an engagement. We were alone at last! I went out to buy our provisions, and carried them home in my pockets. Had there ever been such a happy couple? In the mornings I crept out of bed and prepared the coffee. Once, when the milk turned sour, I went out and bought a tin of condensed milk. I awakened my wife with a long kiss: "Madame est servie!" There was much talk and laughter. "Lord! no milk?" I put a spoon of condensed milk into her cup. "Stir and say 'Mene tekell' Then it will turn white!" She stirred. "But that is magic!" From that day we called *café-au-lait* "magic" and coffee-drinking "conjuring." On one such occasion she mentioned the Sphinx; I rhymed it with Minx, and Minx has been her pet name to this day.

I had begun to play the cornet as a pastime, and soon made sufficient progress to make my cornet-playing part of my programme.

"Arban was here last night, and said that it was a pity that with all your talent you have such a bad method of cornet-playing. Guiller must take you to the Conservatoire at the next opportunity," said our conductor, Desormes. Guiller played first cornet in the orchestra; Arban was the professor for the cornet at the Conservatoire. I went with Guiller to see Arban, who was very amiable. "Who was your cornet teacher? You have an excellent method in violin playing."—"I never had a teacher; I learned to play by watching others."—"We have lessons here three times a week; you are very welcome to come. Watch our system of breathing!"

Alas, what crimes I had been puffing into the world! Now I got to work seriously, without consideration for poor Minx's ears. One day Guiller told me: "Desormes



has written a very pretty polka: *Cydalise*. You can play that now." He made me study it, and had the music distributed to the orchestra at rehearsal. "Who's going to play this?" asked Desormes.—"Monsieur Untemps." That was what they had made of my plain East Prussian name!

The introduction of this polka is of classic beauty. Desormes cast a surprised glance at me as I played it. There was loud applause from the orchestra when I had finished. "You have given me a very great pleasure; I thank you," said Desormes, patting me on the shoulder as we went out together.

"Minx, let's go to the Neuilly fair; Beckmann has a sweet stall there; they say he's so ill that he can't work any longer!"

What a shocking wreck this former athlete had become! He was very near his end, and his absolute indifference horrified us. "Let's go!" whispered Minx. A month later we read the announcement of his death.

One day I came home with my pockets full of provisions, a loaf of rye bread sticking out of my breast pocket. "Two gentlemen are waiting for you!" They introduced themselves as Louis Forbé, manager of the Reichshallen Theatre in Berlin, and his friend Paul Cinquevalli. "What are your terms for Berlin? and when are you free?" "They can keep me here as long as they like. It's true I have been five months here; but I know that you and Rosinski are not on friendly terms; if your colleague hears that I am leaving to go with you he will keep me here out of spite." He gave me a contract for one month, to begin on any date in September at five days' notice from me.

"Forbé is a Polish Jew, and as sly as they make them.



His nasal deformity does not add to his attractions. The juggler and acrobat is not a pleasant fellow, but he's said to be very good. Forbé has a bad reputation; he used to travel with specialities," Minx told me.

"Let's go to the Jardin d'hiver and have a chat," said some German acquaintances. We generally went home directly after my turn, but for once we accepted the invitation. We took a table, ordered lemonade, and began to talk German. One of the nightly "lady" visitors passed us several times, and suddenly spit on the floor, shouting: "Merde pour les sales allemands!" In a flash I was up and standing with my foot on her Spanish shoe, pressing it for all I was worth. She shrieked as though possessed, at the top of her register. The ushers who came rushing up to us could not make out why she was shrieking; her skirt covered her feet and mine. When her face began to turn blue I let her go. She was not seen at the Folies for several days.

Ira Paine, the famous sharp-shooter, was on our programme. "I can do that too," I said to Minx. After Paine left I too "killed" little plaster-of-Paris figures, firing across the stage.

Tired of Paris, we went to Berlin, where we heard that the performances at the Reichshallen were being given before empty houses. Forbé and Cinquevalli met us at the station and took us to Kiskalt's "Stadt London" Hotel near the theatre.

As always in an empty house, the excellent programme at the Reichshallen made a poor impression. "Minx, shall I be able to get things going?"—"Hardly, boy!" The proprietor, Schlegel, made the fine weather responsible for the poor houses.

How thin the little orchestra sounded at rehearsal after



the forty-two performances in Paris, and how mechanical! When I asked for slight changes of expression here and there I saw none but sulky faces. An empty house in the evening. Silence after my violin solo; but I read the approval on the faces of the audience, and smiled when the storm of applause broke forth. The card-party cheered them up, and my cornet solo was "a thorough success." From that day forward people fought for tickets at the box-office. My contract was prolonged for another month.

We sent for Mother to come to Berlin, and showed her everything that could interest a woman of seventy-one. "Doesn't the artist interest you?" a gentleman in the next box asked her one night, for she did not seem to be attending to the performance.—"He's my son-in-law." The thing that made the deepest impression on her was the Mausoleum at Charlottenburg. After a month's stay she felt homesick and left for Prague.

"You are always so obliging; may I take you one night to the Anthropological Society? All you will have to do is to demonstrate the agility of your toes."—"Anything for science, Professor Virchow."

The agility of my feet and toes astonished the men of science; at the lateral movement of the little toe there was "a general shaking of heads"; and none was more surprised than the President, Geheimrat Rudolf Virchow. He got me to demonstrate various movements with my toes, especially with the small toe, and thanked me by "shaking hands" with me. Later on I learned the reason of their surprise: Hans Virchow had opposed his father's theory that the muscle responsible for the lateral movement of the little toe (*peroneus brevis*) was undeveloped even in primitive man, maintaining that it had merely



been atrophied by modern footwear. My feet had settled the scientific quarrel between father and son in favour of the son.

We spent Christmas in our newly furnished home. While Minx slept in the train I pondered over our life. Hadn't we been too happy up to now? Were there no misfortunes in store for us? There had always been someone in need of help, hanging round my neck until I lost my footing and suffered in my professional standing. It was only now that I realized this. But a wife like Minx added to my prestige. How beautiful was the home she had made for me!

Some well-known Bohemian theatrical managers worried Minx to persuade me to star at their theatres, until I at last consented. But I had to speak French on the stage. "Well, why not? My French will be most appreciated where it is least understood." I was lucky enough to put a few theatres on their feet again, and I worked harder than in vaudeville! A contract called me to Dijon. Minx being ill, I had to go alone. She caught me up on the way to Barcelona.

"Minx, don't ever give alms to a beggar in Spain!" She did it, though, on the very first day, before I could stop her. "Well, now you'll have them on your trail wherever you go!" For a long while I negotiated with the beggar, until I had beaten him down to one and a half pesetas a week, for which consideration he would see that we were not pestered by the members of his guild. "Sir, with you business talents you would easily earn a fortune in our profession, instead of making a fool of yourself every night at the circus," he told me. Minx nearly died of laughter when I translated this to her. But from that day we were pestered no more.



One day, after receiving his weekly payment, the fellow looked at me with a real beggar's stare. "Well, what do you want?"—"Señor, give me your wife!" Minx had understood him; we roared with laughter in the open street.

In Madrid we put up at the Hotel Peninsular. Some fifty years earlier the last victims of the Inquisition had been tortured and executed in the cellars of this very house. Our rooms were in an adjoining building, whence we looked out at the Puerta del Sol. The day after my first appearance, which created a sensation, we were on our balcony when the King and Queen with their suite passed through the street on their way to Mass. The last carriage of the procession was held up by the mob, the occupant was pulled out, given a good thrashing, and thrown back into the carriage. "That was the Governor of Madrid; he has officially admitted that the cholera has broken out, which keeps the foreigners away and ruins our business. Now there will be trouble," said our landlord, Don Antonio.

After Mass the King, amiably smiling, his silk hat in his hand, bowed from side to side as he drove back to the palace, while the Queen, with her long Habsburg lip, sat under her red parasol as though she had swallowed a ramrod. The plaza was crowded; the royal carriage had great difficulty in winding its way through the press. "The trouble will begin when they get home," said Antonio. "You're in luck, to see a revolution on your very first day!" said Kirst, a Dresden traveller, to Minx.

Words of command were heard, some being in French. "Load!" A policeman standing beneath our balcony obeyed the order with trembling hands; he touched



the trigger, and the bullet passed whistling between our heads. This unlucky shot was followed by the French command: "Feu!" There was a volley, followed by the terrible cries of the wounded. We withdrew into our bedroom. There was more firing and shrieking at intervals. In the distance we could hear a military band, and bugle-calls. I cannot describe the impression the affair made on us.

Suddenly there was a thundering on the iron-bound door. We started; Antonio grew pale to the lips. A few heavy kicks, and the door flew open: "Señor and Señora Unthan are to come to the performance; the carriage is waiting." I was alarmed when I saw the carriage of the Minister of the Interior, the best-hated man in Madrid. Only the carriages of the highest Government officials, easy to recognize by their gold stripes, were allowed to pass through the streets. Fellows with gallows faces stared into the carriage, looking for someone to thrash, and withdrew their heads, disappointed, when they saw us. "The man without arms and his wife!" they said.—"Well, you've got through safely?" smiled the Minister, Romero Robledo, who was waiting for us in front of the circus with his friend Felipe Ducascal, circus proprietor, deputy, wholesale merchant, and goodness knows what.

All was quiet when we went home. At the Puerta del Sol the soldiers were dancing with their girls between the piled rifles.

We spent two highly interesting months in Madrid.

"Walk right over the cloak!" I cried to Minx, as she was about to walk carefully round the capes that lay outspread at her feet. This would have been an insult to her admirers. They were smart young fellows, in good



society, who cried "Salero!" hat in hand, as they proffered their capes.

"Will you accept an engagement for a month in San Sebastian?"—"Mr. Parish, there are no foreigners left there; you'll be let in!"—"That's my affair." And how tempting was the idea of San Sebastian! "I'll teach you to swim there, Minx! We'll treat ourselves to a room in the Hotel Ingles, with a view over the sea that is simply unique."

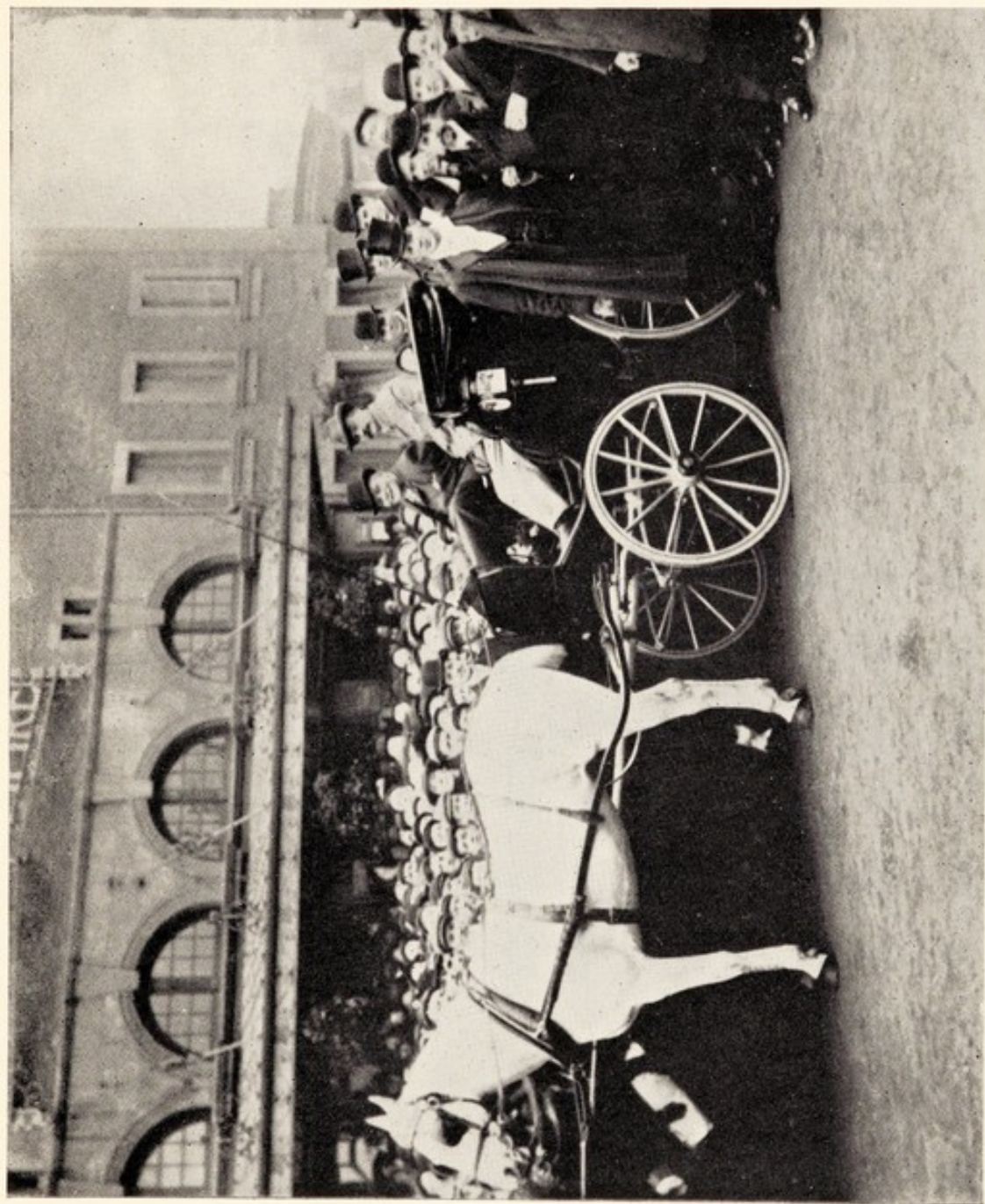
My old swimming-master received me with the words: "Are you going to drown yourself again?"—"Yes, like the first time, and my wife too!"

"Look here, Minx! Come out until the water is up to your chin. Then hold tight to my belt under water, and I will swim with you, but you must never grab hold of me!" After some practice I took her out a hundred and fifty yards from the shore and back again. "We have never yet had such a good lady swimmer here," said the swimming-master. After a fortnight she could swim alone. What a time we had!

The theatre was large and handsome; the programme was good enough for London or Paris; but the town was empty, and consequently the theatre also. All the members of our company indulged in long swims, and were deadly tired in the evening. It was a wonder that Parish didn't close down; he was losing a fortune.

The Portuguese frontier was closed on account of the cholera. We had to go to Lisbon by way of Paris and Le Havre, and, unluckily, by a steamer that was carrying a cargo of empty barrels for Xeres. The weather was bad. I could not be served in our cabin, as Minx could not stand the smell of food. When we reached the Customs-house at Belem we, the only passengers, were





DRIVING A PHAETON: IN FRONT OF THE EMPIRE THEATRE, SHEPHERD'S BUSH,  
LONDON, 1886







condemned to five days' quarantine. My wife could not stand the food. When we were released we went to the Central Hotel at Lisbon and made up for all we had suffered. We went on to Oporto, where business was splendid, as it was on our return to Lisbon.

The agent whom we had engaged for the tour through Spain wanted his travelling-expenses in advance. "Why is the man so excited? Better find out first!" advised Minx. The King of Spain had died, all the theatres were closed, and our agent would have liked to pocket his advance! Minx had smelt a rat!

We went to London without thinking twice. The big liner *La Plata*, from Buenos Aires, was to sail in three days' time, and the weather was so fine that we were able to go on deck the second day. "I can see the smoke of a steamer in the distance," I said. Two hours later the officers on the bridge detected a ship, and then a whole English squadron of seven battleships.

Minx disliked London immensely, but the English life appealed to her, especially in the provinces, where she felt perfectly at home.

I took out a life policy with the Gresham Life Insurance Society. My Hungarian marriage-certificate being insufficient, we had to be married again, on December 30th, the anniversary of our wedding in Hungary. When I went to the registrar to obtain a licence I had a comical dispute with that official. "Bachelor?" he asked.—"No, married."—"Then you must bring the death certificate of your wife."—"God forbid!" The matter was soon settled. Minx had to repeat the oath in English after me, as she had been unable to understand the registrar. She had no idea what she was saying.



We made arrangements to reach home the day before Good Friday. There was such a heavy sea that we missed the train in Rotterdam, and reached home only on Good Friday morning. What joy it was to be back! Our home seemed lovelier than ever! A frail-looking girl of about twenty, Pepi by name, had recently entered our service. "She is not very strong, but willing; she needs feeding up!" said Mély.

We meant to have a long rest; I had never felt so comfortable and contented.

Our quiet happiness was interrupted by a telegram:

*Can you open with me first next month? One month guaranteed.*  
[The conditions were most tempting.] *Raoul Günsbourg,*  
*Director of the Renaissance Theatre, St. Petersburg.*

In my mind's eye I could see his mother, as she told him, when I was taking him to Russia: "Behave yourself, Isidor! Behave yourself with the gentleman!"

Mother's face grew sad. "So my poor Tony is to leave me again!"—"The offer is too good to be refused," I said, "but I am fed up with gipsying about by myself; Mély, will you come with me?"—"I'd like it only too well!" she said, with radiant eyes.

Passports and money for travelling expenses were handed to us in Berlin. From Elbing onwards I stood at the window. When the train passed through Schlobitten I felt homesick, and gazed in the direction of the cemetery where my parents lay; and I sent them my silent greetings.

At the Wirballen Customs my three rifles and my pistol were taken away from me, and I was told to call for them at the Customs-house in St. Petersburg, if I could get a licence for carrying arms. In Wilna Mély



woke just in time to see a Jewish porter walking off with our portmanteau and the cornet-case. She jumped up and held the holster of her revolver under the porter's nose, whereupon he turned round, put the luggage back where he had found it, and went off, murmuring something about "changing trains."

Günsbourg met us at the station, and was most amiable; he had found a couple of rooms for us, with good board. I told him about my rifles, and concluded: "The day after to-morrow I ought to do my shooting act. By the way, they did not find my cartridges." The following morning he took me to the police station, where I submitted my case to an official, who was covered with gold braid. "Have an application made out with a three-ruble stamp on it, and call again in about three weeks' time."—"But I have got to have the rifles to-morrow!"—"What? Here in Russia?" he said, smiling.—"Certainly, here in Russia!" I said, with a decisiveness that made him stare at me.—"Please, may I write here?" He looked at me as if I had gone mad. "If you like."—"Raoul, send for a three-ruble stamp." I asked for paper, sat down, and wrote. The room was filled with uniforms in a moment. Suddenly they all withdrew. A gentleman in a plain uniform entered the room and looked at my writing. "You write a good hand!"—"Foot, if it please your Excellency," I said, giving him the paper.—"What do you shoot at?" I explained. "That sounds impossible! Be here to-morrow at nine o'clock, but not at half-past nine; those fellows in the Customs-house are awfully slow. I shall be at the theatre to-morrow night." He was gone.

I had a lucky evening. Everything went off well. Gresser, the omnipotent Chief of Police, came on to the



stage. "Now I believe you! Let's go and have a drink!" He seized me by the sleeve and took me to the nearest restaurant. We passed a sentry, who presented arms. From that day onwards the sentry presented arms whenever I passed, and all the sentries who saw him do so followed suit. Gresser left the restaurant without paying, just as Trepoff had done years before; the proprietor bowed even lower as we left than the man whose establishment Trepoff had patronized.

It was with the greatest pleasure that I accepted an invitation to play at a charity concert in Pawlowsk, where "everybody who was anybody" would be present. Every seat was occupied in the huge hall. "You'll have to shoot to the right," ordered Gresser.—"Impossible!"—"Then I shall have to arrest you on the stage!"—"I shall miss everything!"—"That's all right, you need only shoot!" When I entered the stage I saw the reason of his order. In the stage-box on the left of the stage sat the Tsar Alexander with his family. My little target would have had to be placed just in front of them. It was a miracle that under these unusual conditions I did not miss a single shot.

Günsbourg introduced me to several Grand Dukes, who were very polite to me, but treated him as an inferior. The Grand Duke Sergius wanted to know when he could expect some "pretty new singers," and even old Constantine had to contribute a few obscene remarks. I suddenly realized the ladder which Raoul had climbed to prosperity. I learned that the lessee of the Renaissance Theatre was a notorious money-lender, who had "business relations" with officers of all ranks, and Günsbourg was his tout.

Vladimir and Sergius came repeatedly to my dressing-



room, asked me to order vodka, and left me to pay for it.

My engagement was prolonged for another fortnight.

One night a fellow, well under the influence of drink, pestered me to drink with him at the bar. I seized him with my teeth by the back of his collar, carried him out, and let him fall to the ground. He must have had a hard fall, as he had drawn up his legs in his efforts to kick me. I was received on my return with loud laughter, which increased when the delinquent reappeared, looking thoroughly bewildered. I had risen greatly in the esteem of all the toppers!

Moscow and Kiev were too "Russian" for Mély. She didn't want to go farther eastward, where brutality and drunkenness increase with every step. I got our passports for the journey home.

At home we were received as if we had been away for years. From this time onwards Minx no longer attempted to help me in everything. During our first separation she had had time to consider how far I differed from a whole man. "Boy, every armless person could be independent if he had your education from his early youth. Couldn't that system be taught in the cripples' institutes?"—"Father used to say to me: he who has plenty and does not share with the needy is failing in his duty. I'll think it over, Minx."

She was perfectly right. My independence had made me perfectly happy; if I could teach others to free themselves from their helplessness it would add to my happiness.

Minx, Mély and I wanted to keep together for a time, so we went on a concert tour through Hungary. Things went all right until we came to Kalocsa, where I slipped



on the wet clay, fell, and dislocated my left ankle. They carried me to the hotel, where my foot was cooled with ice-cream secured from a festal reception at the convent. Next morning I was carried on board the steamer, where I lay in agony until we reached Mohács. My appearance on the stage after a five days' rest was premature; I soon began to limp, and the joint swelled. "My foot is too important to take chances with; I'm going to Berlin to get proper treatment; who will go with me?" Mother wanted Tony at home with her, so Mély went with me.

Professors Virchow and Bergmann examined my foot. They twisted and turned it until I said, in despair, "Better cut it off!" I was sent to Dr. Morian for treatment. After a month I was allowed to go home, but with strict orders to take great care of my leg.

"For goodness' sake, why do you limp?" I was asked by a friend in Paris. It had become a habit, and I had to watch myself closely to get rid of it.

We spent another summer in Paris; and I continued my cornet lessons with Arban.

Two little incidents from our tour through Spain: At the Opera House in Seville the anatomist of the University came on to the stage at the request of the mayor, and wanted to ascertain whether I had arms hidden under my coat. In reply I showed him the stump of one arm. He examined it closely, and said, fully convinced of his wisdom: "That is an amputation!"—"Yes, and just to please you the surgeon left one finger with a nail on it. Was it not at your university that Sancho Panza was made M.D.?" He went away, utterly defeated, and Minx warned me solemnly: "You will be killed one of these days!"

We had a look at the Cathedral in Burgos during a



divine service. The church was almost empty. Some of the priests had been behind the scenes to see our show, as they did not want to be seen by the audience. Was I dreaming? The beautiful baritone voice of the sexton sang in pure Spanish: "There is the man without a-r-ms!" All eyes were turned upon me. "He plays the violin with his fe-e-t," he continued. Considering the sacredness of the place, I disappeared as quickly as possible.

A gang of beggars attacked us at the door. "Nothing doing!" I said. Their leader came up to me. "Sir, you must have had bad parents. If you'd been educated to our profession, you would have been able to retire long ago, and would not have to make a fool of yourself at the theatre every night." He shook his head at our laughter. We were told by reliable people that in Spain poor parents would dislocate the joints of their new-born children's arms and legs, in order to prepare them for the profession of beggars. They made them look as ill and loathsome as possible.

We wandered about Europe, and went to the next exhibition in Paris. Arban had recently died. Ira Paine had taken an iced drink after the performance one hot night, and had dropped dead.

We had an engagement at the Wintergarten in Berlin. Virchow and Professor Goldscheider measured every movement of my toes. Kastan had to make plaster casts of my feet in different positions; they can be seen in the anatomy hall to this day.

I offered to give an "exhibition" at a cripples' institute, as I wanted to see what a school for the armless was like. "You want to come and let us admire you!" said the director condescendingly.—"Oh, really not!" And



with that I was already off and away. Was it my calling that frightened them? Were there really people who preferred to leave cripples in their misery because the way which would have led them to joy and happiness was not to their personal taste?

In Scheveningen I could swim wherever and whenever I liked. Bathing at night was prohibited, but we found it so refreshing after the show! I ventured, and others followed. We did it twice; the third time four of us were arrested, but we got off with a piece of good advice. When we were arrested for the fourth time all the seven of us, in our bathing-costumes, were taken before the venerable white-bearded commissary. "You are the ringleader!" he rebuked me. "I don't want to have any trouble with your Minister; the next time you'll be put across the frontier."—"Well, Mynheer, I know Herr von Saurma-Jeltsch from my Cairo days as a kindly and benevolent person; he'll probably get you a decoration if you hang me!" The old gentleman had to smile. The following morning I went to see him: "The Scheveningen boundary is quite close; we'll bathe at night from the neighbouring village."—"Thank God! I can understand that you young fellows enjoy it, but I am held responsible."

Before starting on a trip to America we went home to get a new outfit. Mother knew nothing about this, and nobody had the pluck to tell her. She was eighty-one years of age. I finally had to come out with the news, and I tried to break it gently. She looked at me for a long time; then she sobbed: "Boy, don't do that to me! Don't take my child across the water! I shall die here of anxiety!" My heart bled at the sight of her grief. "No, Mother, of course not, I'm going alone."



## CHAPTER X

### “ON FURLOUGH”

(1894-1908)

*The Sea Voyage—Gerhart Hauptmann on Board—  
Queer Questions—Mark Twain—The Bet—The  
World's Fair in San Francisco—New York—Mély's  
Death—The Elections—Home Again—The Third Paris  
Exhibition—The Champion Swimmer—Again to  
America, Alone—England—Argentina—French Culture  
—Rio de Janeiro—At Home—On the Rhine—Italy and  
England—My Valet Jack*

MINX and I had to separate for the first time, without knowing when I should return.

The floating palace, the S.S. *Elbe*, weighed anchor in the Bremerhaven roadstead, and steamed out against a heavy north-westerly squall, to the notes of *Must I then, must I then leave my home?* We could not expect fine weather at the end of January, but we forty first-class passengers had done our best to provide against emergencies. We introduced ourselves to one another, giving our names, which seems to be an exclusively German habit. One young man kept on asking us if we thought he would be seasick; and how would he know if he was seasick? I promised to call his attention to the fact. An hour later he gripped the rail for dear life, hung his head over the side, half smiling, half blushing with embarrassment, while the perspiration ran down his face. “Now you’ll soon begin to be seasick,” I remarked. It was a good thing that he was in a helpless condition, or he would have murdered me!



Captain Kurt von Gössel was one of your tough Nordic seamen of the purest water. I had never felt safer on board ship than I did here.

Long before dinner-time all the passengers had disappeared. "On our last trip we had Eugen Sandow on board; he asked me to remember him to you," said the captain. I had often been on the same programme with the athlete Sandow, the founder of a system of physical exercises. "I expect he ate your ship empty; I can do a bit in that way myself!" I said. After our first dinner the captain confirmed my boast. The cheery conversation of this experienced sailor was a great treat to me.

The weather was so bad that we reached Southampton towards evening instead of in the morning. There we took on more passengers. "The most celebrated German poet is on board; he is at dinner," said Herr Hartmann, who was on his way to Mexico, to get rid of his lung trouble.—"What, Hermann Sudermann?" I inquired.—"No, Gerhart Hauptmann."—"I've never heard of him!" People flocked to the dining-room to watch the poet eat. I didn't move.

The following morning Hauptmann introduced himself to me, and I responded with my own name. He was a slenderly built man with a dull, sallow complexion, a trifle under my own height. His features spoke of living, his forehead of thinking, his eyes of seeking. His fair hair was already growing thin at the temples. He spoke simply and unaffectedly. He had none of the peculiarities which are often so unpleasantly noticeable in eminent men. He was evidently suffering from a sort of seasickness without nausea, which left him sleepless and frantically restless. I fetched a pillow from my cabin and offered it



to him. At every violent movement of the ship the muscles of his face contracted.

Some of the passengers used to annoy him by asking the most extraordinary questions. What did he think of Schopenhauer? And of Zola? And who was the greater man, Goethe or Schiller? He answered the last question in a very diplomatic manner: "Here is a beautiful lime-tree, there a magnificent oak. Each is unique in its own fashion, but they cannot be compared." He often talked to me, perhaps in order to find out what sort of a fellow I was.

One morning we happened to speak of Goethe, whom he preferred to all other poets. I discriminated between the scientific inquirer and the poet. As a poet I preferred Shakespeare; his characters were more definite, more closely knit, more firmly rooted in reality, except in the fairy plays; and his language. . . ."—"The language tells you nothing," he interrupted me.—"You probably have read the insipid translation by Schlegel-Tieck; do you know the old Orléans version?" I asked.—"No!"—"A pity! But really Shakespeare can no more be translated than Fritz Reuter. I don't by any means underrate Goethe; but I prefer the poet who draws a more definite line between reality and metaphysic."

Hauptmann was not a great talker; he seemed to prefer to listen; this was probably owing to the seasickness which never left him until we landed. When I spoke of my wife and my happiness at home there was an expression on Hauptmann's face which I could not interpret.

Thanks to a heavy sea we had not been allowed on deck for five days. On the sixth day we ventured to hurry along the deck to the smoking-room. Fresh air!



What a delight! Over our black coffee in the smoking-room the conversation grew lively. Hauptmann seemed to be the centre of attention, though most of the time he sat silent, smiling as cheerfully as his condition would permit.

Captain von Gössel sometimes amused himself by pulling the leg of anyone who seemed to be pushing himself forward. I was surprised that he had not yet tackled me.

At the skat table there was talk of Valparaiso, the destination of one of the indefatigable players. Gössel asked them: "Which city lies the farther east, Valparaiso or New York?"—"There won't be much difference; Valparaiso may perhaps lie a few seconds farther to the east," I said, rather doubtfully. The smoking-room fairly shook with laughter. "That's just like an artist!" said one of the skat-players.—"Well, take Panama or Colon: which lies the farther east?" asked Gössel.—"Panama!" I answered promptly. If possible the laughter was even louder; at last somebody said: "But, Herr Unthan, Panama is on the Pacific, Colon on the Atlantic side!"—"Right, but don't forget the kink in the isthmus!"—Gössel sent for a chart and spread it on the table. Even the card-players got up to have a look—and returned to their seats in profound silence. "I suppose you've been there?" asked Gössel, with a smile.—"Yes, of course!" Everybody looked at Hauptmann, who sat there as pensive as the Americans, who had not understood a word of our discussion. I had a vague feeling that he would have been better pleased had I been proved wrong.

The weather became more endurable. Five passengers, men and women, myself among them, were sitting on



deck (I was tied into my chair). The knot of the line which lashed our five deck-chairs to the guard-rail of the engine-room came undone. The chairs slid from the engine-room to the ship's rail, and back again to the engine-room, and Hauptmann ran his head against it. As we rolled over to port we again slid feet foremost against the ship's rail, and back to the engine-room; Hauptmann reached it first, and it looked as though he were going to butt it with his head, but he prudently bent forward. At the second rush against the ship's rail the lady sitting next to me clutched at the netting with one hand and at my trousers with the other. This certainly saved her from sliding back again, but it dragged me down in my chair until the rope that secured me was round my throat. "For God's sake, save Unthan, he is being strangled!" cried Hauptmann to the deck-steward, who rushed up and rescued me.

Before we reached New York the pilot came on board, threw a bundle of newspapers on the table, and told me: "Your portrait's in every paper; New York is waiting for you. Your directors are afraid you'll be late." Pointing to the skat-players, I said: "These gentlemen tried to frighten me with the story that a man without arms would never be allowed to enter the U.S.A." They all rushed for the papers, except myself. "Don't you want to know what's in them?"—"Not in the least! I know the portraits and five-fourths of the articles are lies!"

"Herr Hauptmann, I have an album in which only a few are allowed to perpetuate themselves. It would give me great pleasure . . ." said Gössel.—"Willingly, when the sea's a little smoother."—"And your foot-script?"—



"It shall be scribbled in!" I replied. We were nearing Hamilton Island when Gössel placed the magnificent album on the table before me. It contained a poem of eight lines by Hauptmann, in a very small handwriting, beginning:

"Sei mir gegrüsst, o Meer, du Weltenamme . . ."

Metrically—and its metre was all I really understood—it seemed to me a perfect little masterpiece. "Herr Hauptmann," I said, cheekily, "no one has yet seen you greeting the ocean with such enthusiasm! I think I'll write a poem too," I declared and, during lunch, I jotted down some humorous lines on the menu-card, which I subsequently copied into the captain's album.

Lloyds officials somehow managed to get us ashore against the regulations—on Sunday, after sundown. I said good-bye to Hauptmann on the landing bridge; his two sons, aged five and seven respectively, had come to meet him. Someone had come to meet me too, and at the theatre I was heartily welcomed by Directors Koster of Hamburg and Bial of Breslau. "We have to put a bit of Yankee humbug into your act. Rush up to Sandow and kiss him as though you hadn't seen each other for years. That sort of thing's a draw here," Koster explained.—"All right!" I said, laughing.

The size and the splendour and the blazing lights of the theatre made me stare. I greeted Sandow according to instructions. "Look out, or some of those who can't see us will dislocate their necks!" said Sandow. I had firmly resolved to allow nothing to astonish me in America.

At the rehearsal I found that nearly the whole programme was new to me. German artists gave me all sorts



of advice; above all, to incorporate plenty of German words in my English.

The house was packed to the last seat. Two of the Germans who had given me good advice were a wash-out. When my turn came I said in my best English: "When in Europe I was told that the man who doesn't speak broken English is not esteemed in this country. I was in such a hurry to see this beautiful country and this magnificent theatre that I had no time to learn broken English. So you'll have to take me as I am." This established contact between myself and the audience. That evening I was a great success in everything, in spite of the strain and fatigue of the journey. Once, when taking aim at a target, I suddenly had to put my rifle down. "Ugh! I'm still on my sea-legs! The whole theatre's rolling like a ship!" Americans always show a most encouraging understanding of anything unusual.

My fellow-passengers and the ship's officers filled one row of boxes. Next day I was told that Hauptmann had been there; but I did not see him.

I was just wiping off the perspiration and make-up in the overheated dressing-room when two men knocked at the door, came in, and introduced themselves as reporters. They bombarded me with questions, and examined my feet. I had to move about cautiously, as I had nothing on but a bathing-cloak. Meanwhile two other men came in, without knocking, looking round the door in some embarrassment. They all conspired to drag me off to the Press Club, and they had their way.

There, of course, I was a "find." They wanted to know what had struck me most in America, and what I wanted to see. Niagara? Yellowstone Park? As Koster and Bial had advertised my "first appearance in America" I



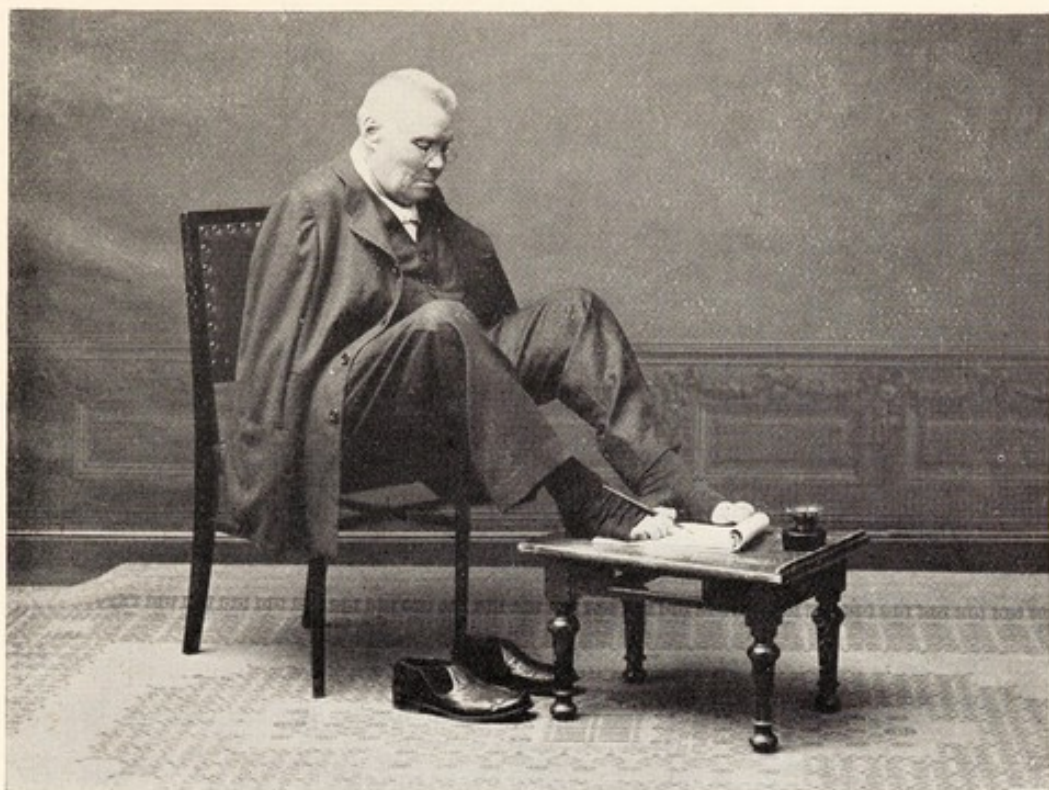
had to confirm their lie by holding my tongue. "Those things will wait, but I'd like to see Mark Twain, and hear him speak."—"Sam, come here; here's a man come over from Europe specially to see you!" Clemens appeared. After reading his works, his appearance rather disappointed me. I had imagined a very cordial sort of man; and he was cordial, but sparing of his words; but keen as a razor, and his eyes had a mischievous twinkle. I was startled to find it was four o'clock. We broke up like a party of women: that is, we stood talking for ever so long before we separated.

My valet had saved up some money in order to visit his relations in Missouri, and one fine day he decamped; he even made things worse by sending his best wishes and expressing his thanks. That same day a beggar came into my room, with the words: "Don't you recognize me?"—"Oh yes, you are Robert Prang, my old school-mate. How the dickens did you get into these reduced circumstances?" It was the old story; he promised not to drink any more. I got him a new outfit and sent him to the Turkish baths, with instructions to leave his old rags there. The former law-student was in heaven.

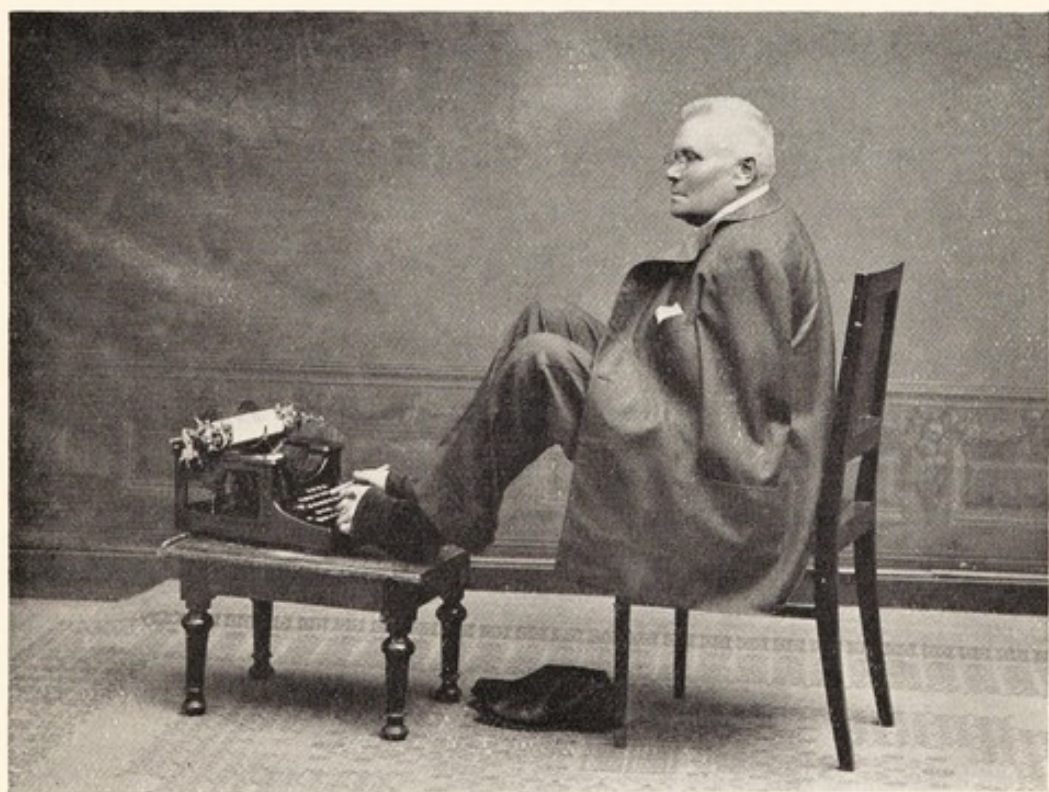
It was a happy time. I sent a long letter to Minx with every mail, and a cheque every week.

The world-famous impresario Amberg was engaging artists for the World's Fair in San Francisco. That his partner Materna should be financing the company without the knowledge of his celebrated aunt did not seem to me quite proper. Materna guaranteed my salary, and persuaded me to join the company. In San Francisco we stopped at the Palace Hotel, where I was to give a private performance to the Press. I was sitting on the carpet in front of the bath and shaving myself when the





THE OLD WAY OF WRITING



WRITING ON THE WOODSTOCK "ELECTRITE"







first reporter pounced in upon me; I had not heard his knock.

"Go on, please! I couldn't have met you at a better moment!" I wrapped as much bath-cloak round me as my occupation would permit, carefully wiped the razor, had a pleasant chat with him, and ushered him politely from the room. He disappeared with the words: "I'm always lucky!"

"Carl Wilhelm Materna, things are going to go wrong!"—"Why, Carl Hermann?"—"The programme is badly chosen. I appeared before bored spectators, and I could only half wake them up."—"Amberg is a man of experience."—"Amberg will eat, drink and save money, and you'll be the loser!" Business did not improve. Sandow arrived, and had as little success in the Exhibition casino as we had had in the theatre. The manager of the menagerie talked Sandow into a wrestling-match with one of his lions. It was a put-up job. The lion refused to fight, being half-poisoned with dope. Instead of improving matters by his visit, Sandow had made himself the joke of the town.

"Amberg is afraid that I shall skip; he's having me watched; he would not shrink at having me arrested," Materna complained. "I have telegraphed to my aunt to wire me \$8,000 so that we can get back to Europe."—"You needn't worry, Materna; your aunt will earn so much by singing twenty-four notes." We went to Stockton and Sacramento, only to lose more money, and then returned to New York, having announced by wire my *début* at the Central Opera House.

"A good thing I took the latch-key when I left," said Prang, as we neared our quarters at midnight. "Our rooms are untenanted; we needn't disturb anybody."



The landlady nearly had a fit when she opened the door the next morning and saw me lying in bed.

I had the usual success at my début at the Opera House. Jack Ruppert, the proprietor of the establishment, told me one night that some gentlemen would be obliged if I could go to the green-room. There I found a party of financial magnates who had just finished supper, and were drinking, some champagne and some mineral water. "First have a good supper!" I ate for all I was worth, and was fully conscious that my eating was a show for them; and they put all sorts of questions to me.

"You are the happiest fellow I know," said somebody whom they called John D. "And what about your money, Mr. Rockefeller?" I asked him.—"I can't buy your *joie de vivre* with all my money; that makes me a slave among slaves. I have a suggestion to make: Give me the handling of \$10,000 of your money, and I'll guarantee that in six months you'll have \$250,000." I thought for a while.

"All that money, when I got it, would have been lost by others, who may need it more than I do," I replied. "I earn with my feet as much as I need, and I can even put a penny aside for my old age. I want to be able to lay my head on the pillow in peace every night." A wet blanket seemed to have fallen over the company. Next morning Ruppert said to me, laughing: "You gave John D. the hardest smack he has ever had in his life!"

Prang took to drinking again. One night he arrived at the theatre staggering and hiccupping, and he dropped everything on the stage. The playing-card I was accustomed to cut edgeways into halves while he held it joggled with every hiccup. The audience shook with laughter, but I did not; I was compelled to discharge



him. I was unlucky with my valets in America. The next man was excellent, but sickly. I sent him to Aachen to be cured.

I was resting in bed after a night's train journey. Guldin, my valet, lay on the sofa, reading. Suddenly the clock struck two. I sat up, terror-stricken. "For God's sake, what's the matter? You are as pale as a ghost!" cried Guldin.—"Something dreadful must have happened at home; but I don't know what." It was a hard blow for me when I received Minx's letter eleven days later. At the very moment of my terror Mély had died of heart-failure in Minx's arms. I feared for my wife's life, and asked if I should come home at once. "Not yet!" My letters to her and hers to me were our only comfort.

I was once more at the Orpheum in San Francisco. Mundi Rosner was conductor there; he asked me about his brother Sándor. "I have heard that he is travelling with an electrical act, under the name of Edwin Rousby, but I have not seen the act. In Berlin he wanted to embrace me in the street, but I gave him the cold shoulder," I said.—"He tried to break up my orchestra here," said Mundi.

During the elections I was in Los Angeles. The Democratic Party offered me the rights of citizenship, a tax receipt, and five dollars if I would vote for them; the Republicans offered the same and ten dollars. Had I accepted, each party would have had to commit perjury. I laughed, and declared that I preferred to remain a stupid but honest German.

Three years passed before Minx could clasp her arms round my neck again. The last traces of her grief were soon dispelled.

The Third International Exhibition in Paris. Inci-



dentally I had become a champion swimmer, and showed my "new art" at the Nouveau Cirque. In my swimming act I was followed by twelve fox-terriers, who had to fight in the water for a football with leather straps. One night they broke loose from the kennels and rushed into the water just as I had dived to the bottom of the tank, to bring up a five-francs piece in my mouth and a plate between my toes. On coming up I heard them panting behind me. I turned round, pushed the plate into one terrier's mouth, and pulled the other, who was going for my money, under the water by his hind leg. As the other dogs did not see any fun in this they scampered off. Bubbles came up from the "diver." The plate hero clambered out of the water, and I let the other one go. Both took to flight as though their lives had been at stake.

My landlord had witnessed the performance; he thought the "stunt" with the terriers delightful. I disabused him.

Another offer from America tempted me greatly. Minx and I had to part again, but "only" for six months this time. On our way back we received the first wireless telegram: the King and Queen of Serbia had been murdered.

Minx met me in Hastings, in dear old England. We had a very good time, until Buenos Aires wanted me. Minx's mother was too old to be left alone. I had a bad cold when I left Southampton on the *Danube* in January, and cured myself by bathing in hot sea-water.

As we approached Pernambuco a French steamer passed us, going southwards. We got ahead of her in Bahia, and saw the passengers of all classes standing on deck, putting their tongues out at us, and shouting



words not fit to be repeated, even in French. We saw the same steamer run aground when we went from Montevideo to Buenos Aires.

The man sent to the waterside from the theatre went off with the sixteen lady artists who had travelled second class, but forgot the trick cyclist and myself, who were in the first class. That spoke volumes. We went to the "Kaiserhof," to which I had a recommendation. We reported to Director Carlos Seguin before the *matinée*. "You have three days' rest; your *début* will take place on Wednesday."

The theatre was in an extraordinary condition. It was being rebuilt, but the performances were still continuing. By day the men were working at one side of the gallery and the stage; here there was a deep pit, which was covered every night with planks, and inevitably there were chinks between the planks. This plan, and the original way in which it was being carried out by the young director, delighted me, as it did him. The spectators were fond of hissing the lady singers off the stage. The show ended with a wrestling match. No one had been able to throw Hitzler (from Munich) for months.

On my first evening three lady singers were hissed off the stage. The cyclist stuck in the chinks between the planks. Once he suddenly disappeared altogether, as though the earth had swallowed him. Then his head emerged from a rent in the paper "drop" at the back of the stage; the man and cycle followed. The laughter was indescribable. My turn came next.

"Don't speak French! It's disliked here!"—"Then Spanish?"—"For God's sake, no! They will shout 'gallego!'" Seguin called after me, as I walked on to the



stage. But my little speech in Spanish had an unprecedented success. I performed to perfection that night. When I left the stage Seguin embraced me.

There seemed to be something in the air which compelled the people to hiss the artists off the stage. I was always conscious of this beforehand, and I drew Seguin's attention to it, but I myself was never hissed.

After thirty-six days I parted from Seguin on the best of terms, to continue the tour in Montevideo, and then went on to Rio de Janeiro with five lady singers, travelling second class. The engine went on strike for four hours in Santos. One of the passengers, an English fireman, finally set it going again, with a single turn of the hand. When we arrived in Rio on Saturday it was too late to get our baggage through the Customs, and we had to wait for it until Monday. The formalities at the Customs-house went off smoothly. My success continued. After six weeks in Rio and Sao Paulo I went straight home.

The rest that I intended to take there was interrupted by a wire from a circus in Dortmund, which needed somebody to boost up the takings, which I did successfully until the autumn. Then I went with the Sidoli Circus to Italy, where I was Minx's cicerone. Books could be written about all that we saw there, and all that happened to us. Minx could hardly be dragged away from Pompeii. Naples, Rome, Florence, Genoa and Turin were all unforgettable. It was a long and tedious journey from Turin to Wigan in England, from heaven to hell, but to a better people.

The manager in Wigan recommended me a valet. "He is not much good, although he's the son of the police inspector; but I could not find anyone better." The valet



had a dissolute appearance, but looked after me so well that I asked his mother if I could take him away with me. He had never been long in any of his positions, and was only too glad to get away. Six months later, when I had to leave for Hanover, he wept at parting from me. I promised to employ him again when I returned.

The circus in Hanover was soon set afloat again. The director showed his real character, which was that of an ostler. I had to pull him up repeatedly in order to keep him within bounds, but we were very glad when it was time to return to England. Jack Harrison gave us a hearty welcome and re-entered our service.

Suddenly Minx was called back to her mother, whose health was failing. My valet Jack became absent-minded, forgetful, unreliable. "What's the matter with you, Jack? Out with it!" At the seaside he had made "HER" acquaintance; she was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. They had promised each other to wait; now she had turned him down, as his prospects were not improving. "Where is she?"—"Lady's maid in Ramsbottom, to learn good housekeeping."—"We shall be in Bury in three weeks' time; I should like to see her. Don't be discouraged!" Jack unloaded all his sorrows on me.

Elsie was a healthy, good-looking girl. My promise to try and get Jack a position in America, where we were going in July, straightened things out, after some resistance on her part.

In Manchester Jack got a wire: his father had died. I advanced him the money to get a decent outfit for the funeral. He had become a different man. I had painted to him in the blackest colours the temptations that were waiting for him in America. He swore that he would be on his guard.



Minx came from Prague with an outfit for me and sufficient linen for Jack. She invited Elsie to stay with us for a couple of days before our departure. Jack's mother too came to see us. After lunch she took Elsie with her. Minx left in the afternoon. It was Jack, not I, who cried at her departure. At half-past nine we were on the stage in Stockport; twelve hours later we stood on the deck of the Lloyd liner *Friedrich Wilhelm*, and moved down the Solent into the open channel.



## CHAPTER XI

# NEARING THE EVENING OF LIFE

(1908-1914)

*America again—The Salt Sea and the Rocky Mountains—11,000 Feet above the Sea—The Silver Wedding—Havana and Central America—The Pest, Yellow Fever and Smallpox in Venezuela—Nicaragua Lake—Seven Active Volcanoes—Newly Built San Francisco—The Journey Home—To England, Alone again—Death of my Mother-in-Law—Change of Public Opinion in England—Film Acting—At the Sanitarium—In my Old Country Again*

AFTER playing for a week at the Victoria Theatre in New York we went on to Spokane. No sleepers were to be had for weeks, on account of the Seattle Exhibition. Sitting up for four days and nights, perspiring all day long and shivering with cold at night, was no joke! In Chicago, where we had to wait for four hours, we were met by my former valet, Wysocki, who had become a rich manufacturer. He encouraged my valet Jack, and promised to help him if he should decide to remain in America for good.

A much-longed-for visit to Yellowstone Park had to be postponed again. The train passed through the barren territory beside the Yellowstone River and across the wildly-riven Rockies. Sometimes the train seemed to float in mid-air on the single track. Many of the passengers were pale with terror.

I had not been able to wash myself for four days, and had a bath on my arrival. The crust was beginning to



come off when Jack knocked at the door. "The Press manager wants to see you; he will wait until you are ready for him." I answered with a mouthful of Hungarian. There's no tongue on earth like the Hungarian for blowing off steam. It would have been easy enough to work up good, honest publicity for me out there, but no, lying is second nature to them. I had to let them do as they liked.

The city of Spokane comprised everything from skyscrapers to wigwams, and the inhabitants varied accordingly. James Durkin, an Irish whisky and wine dealer, who had become very rich, had offered to double President Roosevelt's salary if he would accept a position as Press agent in his business after the expiration of his term as President. It was hardly probable that he expected an answer, but the offer was so crazy that all the papers in the United States were writing about Jimmy Durkin. Such eccentricities were quite common in the West; but the country was fertile and the climate splendid. Thanks to its advantageous situation, Seattle will forge ahead of San Francisco one day.

What had become of the beautiful streets of San Francisco? The greater part of the city was now a waste of ruins in which men were busily excavating. It was a wonder that the horses did not break their legs on the causeway, and the people on the sidewalks. The people who had been burned out—the earthquake did not work much destruction, but the fire was devastating—took refuge in the Japanese quarter, settled down as well as they could, and lived more casually than ever.

One day I drove a team of horses through the streets, with the Press manager sitting beside me. When we came to the great stores, the "Emporium," he asked me



to "stop a minute"; he had to get a new neck-tie. While I was sitting there like an idol of the oilfields, with the reins and whip between my toes, a negro, dressed in gaudy colours, a member of a troupe of bicyclists whom I had known in Europe, came up to me and began to tell me a long story, much to the amusement of the bystanders, whose numbers rapidly increased. Presently I began to feel like Wellington at Waterloo: "I wished that either the night or the manager would come!" For a quarter of an hour I sat in the pillory; then the sinner appeared with the most bland and innocent expression. I welcomed him in Hungarian, with a few Russian interpolations; whereupon, as though he had understood me, he said quietly: "Don't forget it's good publicity for the theatre!"

One day Jack came in with the news: "The street sweepers here earn three dollars a day!"—"Mr. Harrison, from to-morrow on you may sweep the streets!" That cured him—for a while.

San José had suffered more from the earthquake than San Francisco. I bought a typewriter from the manager and started typing with the rubber ends of two pencils clenched between my toes. After two months' practice I was able to fix the paper and write a short sentence, with half a dozen carbons, on the stage; I took the paper out, signed it with a hard pencil, and had the six copies distributed among the spectators, who literally fought for them.

We went eastward to Denver. The waters of Salt Lake rose and fell in oily waves. I had crossed the Rockies by three different routes now; they were all different, but all magnificent. From Colorado we ascended as high as 11,000 feet; the air became as thin as it had been on the



Cordilleras in Chile. In Denver I had a surprise on the stage: I got so short of breath while playing the cornet that I had to invent new phrasing. The air was dry and peculiarly mild; one felt very well, but any effort quickly fatigued one.

My friend Pitrot awaited me in New York, with a contract for the Pubillones Circus in Havana. I drummed as much Spanish into Jack's head as he needed for the performance. He was beginning to show signs of the American exaggeration and untruthfulness without which no American could live. Now and then I caught him lying, but I said nothing, as his lies were too trivial for serious treatment.

I was surprised to recognize in Señora Pubillones little Geraldine, Leopold's daughter; with her was her mother, who had now grown very stout. Leopold himself and his son Alfred had both sacrificed their lives to their profession. We talked over old times. I proved an attraction, as usual, and it seemed to me that the theatre was in bad need of a successful season. My drive through the streets caused a "revolution," as the Press manager beside me described it. At Christmas we had roast sucking-pig and marzipan, without which no Cuban Christmas would be complete.

I had looked forward to our silver wedding anniversary for years, with the full intention of celebrating it with the family to atone for our secret wedding. Destiny willed that I should be in Havana on the day in question, wondering what they were doing at home. Minx's letter reached me the very day and made it a festival after all. There are times when written words mean more to a man starving for love than spoken ones! In the evening a "special" appeared: Messina had been destroyed by an earthquake.



We went on the road with the circus; the life reminded me vividly of my days with the Schuhmanns.

In spite of the promise he had made to Elsie, Jack had relapsed into his bad habit of excessive smoking; he was also growing obstinate and quarrelsome. If I could only have realized why! He had sent Elsie a gold watch, he regularly dispatched money-orders to his mother, and he had saved up a nice little sum; all this made him get too big for his shoes. When once I told him that he had been more reliable in Europe, he retorted: "Then you'd better get somebody else!"—"Very well!" I wrote to Elsie and his mother that he had given notice, and that I had lost all control over him. After I had found a new man he begged me to take him back. "No, Jack! You have seen, heard and learned, and have now arrived at the point where you must either stand on your own feet or go under." He wept; I could not act otherwise; I knew that life would be hard for him at first, but was sure that he would pull through. We had shared good and evil fortune for three years.

Pitrot sent me to Central America for six months, a manager, Clark, two other artists, and an electrician accompanying me. First we went to Port of Spain in Trinidad. The purser on board the steamer had lost one arm, and was very proud of his independence. When the steamer stopped in Granada for some hours we made the most of the opportunity by having a good swim. The purser went down the gangway; I dived from the deck, and soon left him behind me. I showed him how to use his legs to increase his speed.

Bubonic plague, yellow fever and smallpox having broken out in Venezuela, the steamer went straight on to Colon, stopping in Porto Columbia; we had to be



vaccinated on board ship by an English doctor with a bit of old sheet brass. "Doctor, if you have German vaccine, you might as well use a German appliance instead of your instrument of torture!"—"That's all very well, but we have to draw blood!"—"And can you do that only with your pitchfork?"

One day of quarantine in Colon. We were allowed to remain on board, where we were safe from infection; but how hot it was! By accident I broke a small piece out of the back of my violin. "Oh, we have an excellent violin repairer! Mr. Brooks is an artist at it!" I was told. Mr. Brooks was a negro, as black as ink, and he brought my violin back five minutes before I had to go on the stage. The sound was terribly weak, and upon examination I found that the soundpost was missing. Early next morning I called on the "artist." "Mr. Brooks, what have you done with my soundpost?"—"Mr. Unthan, I swear by God in heaven that I put it into your string-box." We managed to get it into place by our combined efforts.

We appeared all along the Panama Canal on the premises of the Young Men's Christian Association, and received all the profits, as well as free board and lodging.

Our intention to go farther south from Panama was foiled by the epidemics along the coast. We had to return to Colon, where we took the steamer for Port Limon, which ought to be called Port Banana; banana-groves, interspersed with coffee plantations, extend from Limon to San José, the capital of Costa Rica. How did the modern theatre with its splendid wall-paintings and ceiling get here? And the excellent performance! I met old friends from Spain who wanted me to stay at the theatre, but I could not comply with their request. All their ready cash had been taken to Caracas by their



advance agent to secure the theatre and arrange for advance bookings; then the smallpox and the plague had broken out in Caracas and no one was allowed to enter or leave the town. I was moved with pity at the misfortunes of this troupe of honest and unpretentious people, the more so as my performance at the smaller theatre was doing them much damage, attracting the greater part of the public.

Our manager, Clark, looked with a jealous eye upon my intercourse with the actors. "If you try to leave us you will be arrested," I was warned by one of our people. I played on a percentage basis and had to look on while I was cheated on every side. This was endurable, as before my departure from Europe my life-insurance policy had matured and been invested in an annuity sufficient to keep Minx out of difficulties; but the thought that I was bound to such a gang of thieves weighed heavily upon my mind. Clark had given us wrong addresses, so that I was without any news from Minx for sixteen weeks. I wrote to her all the more frequently, but I could not tell her the whole truth; the anxiety would have killed Mother.

A fellow from Graz, by the name of Beck, applied for the position of valet with me, as he wanted to get away from the country. He was very shabbily dressed, but had a nice, open face, and was twenty-two years of age. "I've got some money, please; and if I could get a little more, I would rig myself out properly," he said. I accepted.

Clark chartered a very old undecked steamer to take us south from Port Limon to a town on the southern outlet of the San Juan River—a trip of eight hours. Landing was very difficult, and we had to wait two



days for the steamer from Bluefields which was to take us to San Carlos, on Lake Nicaragua. Travelling through the wilderness, far from the highroads of civilization, always had a great appeal for me. The river steamer, which had a paddle-wheel at the stern, was a day late; never in my life had I been on such a primitive vessel. Board partitions with two boxes containing straw mattresses were the cabins. Everybody had to draw his own washing-water from the river with a leather bucket. Next to the roomy kitchen was a room boarded off, with two long tables and four benches: the "dining saloon." This "saloon" contained the ship's sole treasure: a sheet of pictures by Gustav Kühn of Neu-Ruppin! The kitchen! There was no time to clean it; they had to cook! During our first meal they came from the kitchen to watch me eat and to "shake hands" with me, and then they made "German noodles" in my honour. The white paste was rolled out on the brown kitchen table until the dough was brown and the table white. A green *gulasch* was served with it. If only they had not had any table-cloths! Those they had made one almost sick to death.

The San Juan River is the boundary between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. It runs through flat country, covered with a forest of fruit and timber trees which filled me with delight. From time to time we stopped to take a stack of wood on board for fuel. I was just going to ask why they did not pick up the billets with their hands, when a hissing culebra popped her head out of the stack and disappeared again. I did not put any more questions.

"We need rain badly, otherwise we shan't get over the rapids," sighed the captain. We had to wait one day for



the rain. At San Carlos there was communication with Granada. The steamer crosses the lake to set down and take on passengers. During the stormy night we saw seven volcanoes in action. I thought of my father and seemed to feel his presence.

Granada and Leon had been fighting each other for years, each wanting to be made the capital; to settle the quarrel Managua was chosen in their stead. From then onwards Granada and Leon suffered a decline. We did very good business in Granada. Why didn't the Americans build the canal here? In comparison with Panama there were almost no technical difficulties, and the soil would not have trickled away from under their feet. There is no danger of earthquakes in this district of active volcanoes.

The railway took us to Managua, where the theatre had been burnt down. We had to play in the courtyard of the hotel. The President announced himself, but sent his wife with her suite instead. "They won't be killed," said our landlord. He was not keen on having murders committed on his premises.

The public park of Managua was alive with wonderful green lizards. Every morning, at eleven o'clock, a grey lizard, the size of a cat, crawled slowly along the ridge of our house, lay down on the roof, basked itself in the sun until five o'clock, and then went back to the place it had come from. The alligator-hunting in Lake Managua was leased.

Leon bore all the signs of decadence. Here Clark began to try to boss me. I advised him to mind his own business, as I did mine. One night we played in Corintho; here there was the last proper landing-stage. After this we were slid down into lighters in a sort of sledge,



rowed ashore, and drawn up in a sort of bird-cage. I had never beheld such wonderful phosphorescence as that to be seen in the breaking waves at Acajutla.

In Salvadore and Guatemala the earthquakes made good for what we had missed in Nicaragua. One night Beck was thrown out of bed, and I tossed against the wall. Bad economy, sweated labour and exploitation were the characteristics of all these Governments. The American railway company in Guatemala had their engines rebuilt to be run on oil fuel. Immediately a bill was submitted to Parliament to raise the tax on oil. This bill meant ruin for the railway company. Some of the deputies of Parliament offered to vote the bill down, but it would have cost the company so much that they preferred to rebuild the engines for coal fuel.

I was waiting for Clark at the Hotel Union in Guatemala when I heard a shot. A man had been fired at by his friend, who wanted the money returned which he had lost in gambling. When the police arrived the wounded man was lying on the floor, bleeding and imploring for a drink of water. "It's awfully hot," said the chief of police; "let's have a cool drink. After they had had their drink the chief said: "Give the man some water!"—"We have tried, but he can't drink until the wound in his mouth has been stitched up," said the waiter. The victim was taken to a hospital, and died the following day. The murderer had had plenty of time to make his escape. "After eight or nine months he can come back safely," was the general opinion.

Beck fairly danced with delight: "Clark is negotiating with a conjurer who has his whole family with him; we shall be able to get away! Hurrah!"

But—where should we go? I had not enough money



to return to Minx. The nearest country where I could hope for work was Mexico. The first steamer took Beck and myself to Santa Cruz. "How did you get here?" asked the head steward, when he saw me on the *Cosmos* steamer *Radames*. What it means to get out of a den of thieves can only be felt, never explained. It was a great relief to be able to talk freely again. "But you always had Herr Beck," the steward consoled me. I agreed; Beck was a good chap, who had once been so thoroughly "cleaned out" in New York that he had to leave that city as cook on a steamer bound for Buenos Aires, with no other clothing than one shirt and a pair of trousers.

A thirty-six hours' journey, third class, from Santa Cruz to Mexico, was no joke! Shortly before the capital the gang of hotel touts who were out to capture guests entered the train. I shook my head to everything, as though I did not know the language. "Señor Unthan," said an old half-breed with a face like a mummy, "you don't mean to tell us that you don't understand our beautiful language!"—"Not likely! I am going to Keeffe's." Scornful laughter. It was the most expensive hotel in the city. "He always stops there," said the old man.

I closed immediately for two weeks with the "Novidades"; the director then sent us to Vera Cruz, where the malaria got me so badly that I could not sleep for twelve nights; but I took no quinine, and appeared on the stage every night. The first night in Puebla I at last fell asleep in a rocking-chair; an earthquake threw the chair over, and jolted Beck out of bed. "I am getting used to it now," he said dryly.

Before starting for home I had to pull myself up financially in the States; I was ashamed to confess the



full truth in my letters to Minx, as she had very often warned me: "Read your contracts carefully before signing them!" Beck would not go to the States at any price. I gave him a letter of recommendation to some friends in Havana, where he had decided to go.

As though by magic a magnificent new San Francisco had arisen during my absence. Anxious to make some money quickly, I accepted offers below my price. On the whole I had luck, and saw my way clear to board a Lloyd liner for home in Galveston. The night the earth passed through the tail of Halley's Comet we had the most terrific thunderstorm in Dallas (Texas) that I have ever experienced.

We stopped in Havana. The other passengers wanted me to go ashore with them as their guide; but I had not yet completely recovered from the fever, and had to stay on board. I had enough leisure to think over the days I had spent here, and felt sore at heart when I saw the lights of that Paradise vanish in the distance. Halley's Comet shone in the starry heavens with a brilliance found only in these latitudes. Was it a foreboding of bright or cloudy days? Whatever was to come I would keep to the straight way, as I had been taught by my parents.

I left Bremen by the midnight train. The fifteen hours to Prague seemed endless. Our maid Pepi met me at the station; that spoke for itself; I had not the courage to question her. Minx met me at the door, to which she had dragged herself with difficulty from the bed which she had not left for months. The continuous anxiety about me had caused a complete breakdown. She, despite my precaution, read the truth of my precarious situation in my letters, or had it reached her by the same mysterious



means that had warned me of Mély's death? Her heart was very weak. Her mother, now 97 years of age, relieved her heart by mournful sighs, which had such a depressing effect on Minx that Mother had to be moved into another room, where her sighs could not be heard. There were two rooms between the two sick-beds. Mother's sufferings were merely those of old age. She would not permit me to stay long by her bedside, saying that my place was with my wife.

As I sat beside my treasure, listening a hundred times to her heart, I was sometimes overcome with faintness, and Minx detected this. Dear old Doctor Alois Pollak examined my heart; he did not tell her the truth, but she knew it from observing my need of rest. But it seemed as though her heart grew gradually stronger, as I quietly told her of all my adventures. In August she was able to sit on a sofa for a few minutes, and later for hours at a time. The doctor made her slowly ascend and descend one step of the stairs, then two. When she was strong enough to take three steps, she said: "Boy, you can't waste your time here. I am on the road to recovery. Go to England!" I went. Mother had never cried so bitterly as she did this time at my departure. The journey was very tiring. Would that beastly malaria never get out of my bones?

From Minx's letters I saw that conditions were improving at home. She was able once more to nurse her mother. Her letters came very regularly; and one night one was delivered to me in my dressing-room. Afterwards my valet told me that I had looked into it and uttered a cry. At midnight Mother had said, "Go to bed, I'm all right." Immediately afterwards she breathed her last. Her daughter had not been strong enough to



accompany her to the churchyard; Pepi had to represent both of us. And now this daughter who had saved me from myself—who for twenty-seven years had made my life a festival—thanked me from the bottom of her heart for all I had done for her mother, as though she had not been my mother too! She had given me an opportunity of making good what I had perhaps failed to do for my own mother.

Minx did not wish me to come home, as she wanted to have a complete rest first. Sidoli wanted me for his circus in Milan. After two successful weeks there I returned to Prague. At the first opportunity Pepi said dryly: "Nursing the old lady much longer would have killed both of us!" We enjoyed the rest thoroughly, and gained in strength of body and soul.

In the autumn the old Henry Circus came to Prague. The director had not changed in the least: he was kind to his animals, as they cost money, and good to his people, as of old. The programme was poor, the attendance likewise. "You have not appeared here for thirty years, and you are loafing about like a lord. Joking aside: your appearance at the circus would do me good." Minx pleaded with me: "Do accept, Boy! I'm beginning to be myself again." She drummed the most essential Czech words into me. The ponies neighed with joy when they found sugar in my pocket, and when I drove them I avoided the steep hills of the city. Business pulled up. Things went so well that I was dragged about Bohemia until November; then I went home and played the "independent gentleman" for the first time in my life.

When the swallows came back I remembered that I too was a bird of passage. "Oh yes, let us go to England,"



said Minx. I got a contract by return of post for the London Coliseum. Before our departure we watched the eclipse of the sun from our balcony; then we got into a cab and went to the station.

When the train stopped in Dresden an excited gentleman entered the compartment with the news that the *Titanic* had gone down. "Where?" asked I.—"Off Cape Race."—"Then it's the captain's fault!"—"How can you blame him?"—"At this time of year he ought to have been three hundred miles south!"—"Did you ever cross to America with Gerhart Hauptmann?" said a gentleman who had been sitting quietly in a corner.—"Yes, on the *Elbe*."—"He has described that trip in a novel which is just being published in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. There's a description of the shipwreck in the last chapter; you are saved by your valet. I don't remember what he calls you." I looked at Minx. "That is strange," said she, shaking her head.

I could not get the *Berliner Tageblatt* in England, and ordered Hauptmann's complete works from my bookseller in Prague. It was really time that I took some notice of the literature of my own country!

What the deuce was the matter in England? I had visited that country for the last forty-two years, and had friends in almost every town, who had always been pleased to see me. During my last visit it had seemed to me that their feelings toward me had grown somewhat cooler. Now the attitude of many an old friend expressed antipathy, even hatred. "You Germans are only waiting for an opportunity to make war on us!"—"You are crazy!" Then I began to think about the matter. Looking back, I was able to trace the manner in which the authorities had turned the people against us. On the



coronation of Edward VII the music-halls and variety theatres had begun to scoff at Germany and the Germans. The masses, utterly incapable of forming their own judgment, had been successfully turned against us. Those who were able to judge rightly were the wire-pullers.

In the New Year's edition of *John Bull* Horatio Bottomley (this was in 1913) crowned his perpetual policy of stirring up strife by a prophecy, based on old books and astrological calculation, that the German Empire would disappear from the face of the earth during the following year. In order to watch the progress of this madness I subscribed for the *Daily Mail*, the principal mischief-maker, for some months. But it was no laughing matter! For the first time in my life I was glad when my contracts expired and we could leave for home.

I began Hauptmann's *Before Sunrise*, his first book, in order to observe the development of the poet through the six volumes.

*Before Sunrise* aroused bitter feelings in my heart. I leaned back in my chair and let all the women I had known during the last forty-five years pass before my mind's eye. There were some that were worth paying money to see, but if Hauptmann's heroines continued to develop as they began through his six volumes they would put my three graces, Zanfreta, Dora, and Fontainebleau, in the shade.

During my travels I had grown familiar with the life of different classes, but I had never met women like Hauptmann's principal female characters; this seemed strange to me; Gersuind and others were even repulsive. In none of them did I find "das ewige Weibliche das uns hinanzieht." Had the poet never encountered it? I sought the genial element in vain.



I admired the psychological development of religious insanity in Emanuel Quint; but his Artus Stoss proved that he had no more understanding for the soul of a cripple than for that of a true woman.

"Minx, an agent wants me for a 'little film' to be made in Sweden. That can only be *Atlantis*, and I shall ask a good price for it." We were soon on our way to join the Nordisk Film Company in Copenhagen.

I was told that another character who in the novel had been taken from real life had been engaged for the film; the Viennese actress from the Hofburgtheater, Fräulein Ida Orloff, who had created the rôles of "Pippa" and "Gersuind," and was now to play the part of "Ingigert." The film company had asked Hauptmann who would be most suitable for the part of Artur Stoss, but Hauptmann had not even answered their letter.

Now followed a splendid time. Ida Orloff was a charming woman of twenty-two, a great beauty, and her candour and honesty sometimes took one's breath away. It was not astonishing that she had made a deep impression on Hauptmann. The three and a half months we spent together laid the foundation of a lasting friendship. The making of the film led us into all sorts of adventures.

Passing through Berlin I went to see Goldscheider as usual. "Your breathing is bad!" he said.—"Professor, I have not come about my health."—"I know that," he answered, "but it is my duty to take care of my friend." He diagnosed dilatation of the heart, and wanted to send me straight into a sanitarium. "I can't do that; I have made arrangements to appear in another film in Berlin." Owing to an incompetent director and a poor photographer the film turned out a failure. In this film, *The Man Without Arms*, I had to save the heroine from



drowning. The part of the heroine was played by a professional lady swimmer, who boasted a good deal before the filming began, but was then seized with terror and fainted in the water. I pushed her to the surface with my knee, got hold of her blouse from behind with my teeth, swam ashore on my back with her, and handed her over to the bystanders. After the scene was filmed a second time, I had to protect myself against the wind and cold by remaining in the water while she dressed in our only motor-car.

Next morning I 'phoned to Goldscheider and confessed to the forbidden swimming. "You are crazy, I shall wire to your wife to come here immediately!"—"But I feel very well!" I said, laughing.

I had to go home, to give my heart eight weeks' rest, and then went to the sanitarium, where I had such a rest as I had never enjoyed before. My weight and my superfluous fat had to be reduced by means of diuretin, a limited diet, and very little liquid. The feeling of hunger passed off after the first three days, but the thirst was tantalizing.

My heart became too quiet. One night I felt as though it would stop altogether, and I had a dream in which I saw Minx enter the room, and felt her hand caress my hair. From that moment there was a slight improvement, and after another six weeks I was able to go home for Christmas. Goldscheider had saved my life for the first time.

*Atlantis* and *The Man Without Arms* had been shown in Königsberg; they wanted Artur Stoss to appear personally. I should once more see the country of my youth, after thirty-six years of absence!

We stopped at the Berliner Hof, where I had



envied elegant travellers when a boy. Schuster's little house had made room for a modern building. The small room where I had practised for so many hours had disappeared. The castle pond where we had often broken through the ice was now surrounded by a beautiful promenade. Cousin Ferdinand came to see me. The working out of our relationship was quite a complicated business. He had been a pupil of my father's during the last year of his life. Greetings to you, my boy, when you read this! Greetings to you and yours!

"If you are the Unthan of our village, come as soon as you can and stay for a while," wrote Fritz Nehm, the local and district administrator of Sommerfeld, the wearer of the Order of the Red Eagle, whom I had once taught his A B C. We accepted the invitation.

The old simplicity and frugality were gone. The people had locks on their doors. "We live, eat and drink differently now," Fritz boasted.—"Certainly, but you also have more rheumatism, more diabetes and more mortgages."

We went to my parents' grave and gazed at it for a long time. Flowers and bushes grew luxuriantly within the well-kept enclosure.

Had Heinz forgotten to have Mother's tombstone erected? I ordered one for both my parents. Heinz had been in his grave close by for the last ten years. . . .

"How beautiful and peaceful. I wish my people were buried here too!" said Minx gently. Thank God! I could face my parents' grave with a clear conscience. May they continue to rest in peace!

"I think it would be only right that we should be able to see what the whole world has seen. You'll have to give us a show," I was urged. "All right, then, on



Saturday a performance for the village, and one for the neighbourhood on Sunday. Who needs the proceeds?"—"The fire department; I am the treasurer," said Fritz Nehm IV. Great jubilation! The fire department was the richer by 500 marks.

My old friends nearly smothered me with their loving attentions; the valves of my heart went wrong again, and I had to go home. Was it to be for a long rest, or for ever?



## CHAPTER XII

### WAR !

(1914-1917)

*Outbreak of the War—With the Wounded—The Cripples' Home—An Armless Boy—Saxony and its King—With the Wounded in Berlin—At the Circus in Copenhagen—The Busch Circus—Subscription for Armless Soldiers—The Cripples' Home in Würzburg—The Becketow Circus in Budapest—A Fair-minded Circus Director—Ettlingen in Baden—A Manual for One-armed Persons—Artificial Limbs Overrated—In Poland—Heart Trouble, and Home Again*

THE hope of leading a tranquil life in the future helped me to recover. I recapitulated the most important events of my life, until I had the basis of a *Weltanschauung*. As a pastime I attended medical courses at the University.

Psychologists and pedagogues had urged me for years to write the story of my life, which would be most useful in the treatment and education of cripples. I had begun the preliminary work when the news of the double murder in Serajevo set the world on fire. I had observed the increasing hatred of Germany in France since 1877, and in England since 1902, and I foresaw a war which could only end in the complete defeat of one of the adversaries.

I saw the first transport of wounded soldiers and heard their moans. Terrible visions arose before me. How would these many thousands endure the crippledom which had befallen them?

“Minx, I’m going to teach the cripples in the hospitals



how to do useful work and be happy in doing it. You will have to help me to get them over the hardest time."

I offered my services to the VIIth Army Corps in Prague, and to the War Office in Vienna, for lectures and demonstrations in the hospitals at my own expense. I was not even deemed worthy of an answer.

At the same time Goldscheider, the Surgeon-in-Chief of the VIIth Army, wrote from Laon to ask me what the six armless soldiers he had there could be taught to do with their feet. He had suggested to the Medical Department that a special hospital should be devoted to armless and one-armed soldiers; an orthopaedist, a teacher who, having lost both hands, now did all sorts of work with the stumps, and I myself would be the instructors. I wrote to him that I could not promise anything for certain, that all would depend on the age, previous occupation and good-will of the respective cripples; it might never amount to much, but any occupation would help them to pass the time and forget their misery to a certain extent. All I asked for was a room for my wife and myself and free board.

Dr. Brettner, the head of the war hospitals in Berlin, asked me to send him photographs, showing some of my extraordinary feats; they would be published in *Über Land und Meer* for the consolation of the wounded. I sent him four photographs and asked him if he did not think that the lectures and demonstrations which I should be very pleased to give would be more effective. He was delighted with the idea, and I gave my first lecture at the Königstadt hospital in the beginning of April 1915. A young soldier who was being treated for heart trouble was at my disposal for pianoforte accompaniments and general assistance.



The Medical Department informed the hospitals that I was at their disposal for lectures; hardly a day passed without a lecture. My assistant turned out to be very satisfactory and helpful. For two years I succeeded in getting his leave prolonged when he was to have been sent back to the front. Once the troops had already received their iron rations and had given three cheers for the Kaiser when I walked into the barrack square: "Major von Hagen, on behalf of Major von Voigts-Rhetz I have to announce that Musketeer von Pfingsten has provisional leave; the official permit follows."—"Ah, you want your minstrel again! von Pfingsten, forward! I suppose you are crying because you can't come with us? Dismiss!"

The Medical Department did not accept Goldscheider's suggestion that they should assemble the armless and one-armed men in a special hospital.

I offered to lecture at the Cripples' Home hospital. The director listened to me as though I bored him. If that is his usual manner of dealing with cripples, God help them, I thought. He sent me to one of the staff, and I gave my lectures, but the director did not attend them.

"How did you lose your arms?" I asked a nine-year-old boy.—"They were crushed between two railway buffers."—"Can you do any work?"—"No, I am going to have artificial arms." I advised the instructor to have the boy's feet trained properly. He had a photograph taken, showing me teaching the boy how to write with his feet. Later on that photograph was published in a book which the instructor published for the glorification of the Institute, but the lessons were never given.

One day, when I asked the boy if he was progressing, he replied: "The doctor says I need not bother about my



feet; he is having artificial arms made for me which will enable me to do everything." I had not much confidence in this idea, knowing by experience how little mechanical assistance is worth. The doctor explained that he was going to have Sauerbruch arms made for the boy. I told him very plainly that I doubted if it would be possible to develop the biceps sufficiently for the execution of the movements necessary in the use of artificial arms, and advised that his feet should be trained at the same time. It would then be up to the boy to decide which was easier for him: to use his feet or the artificial arms.

My offer to give a lecture at the Royal Hospital in Dresden was accepted. The King was present. Lingner had made various plaster casts of my feet, which were shown by his museum director, who made a bombastic speech about the "wonder." This lecture gave Lingner an opportunity of coming into contact with the King, who was displeased with him.

"Dunnerwetter noch 'mol!" exclaimed the King, after my first shot, which cut a lead pencil in two, as he picked one of the halves up from the floor and searched for the other half. Instantly two officers of his suite were crawling about on the floor to find it. "May I keep them?" asked the King, holding both halves in his hands. "Certainly, Your Majesty, it only costs ten pfennigs."—"What do you find most difficult?" asked the King at the end of the performance. "I don't find anything difficult, but playing the violin has required most practice." I was delighted with the natural manner and original remarks of the King, who was absolutely unaffected.

Many of the hospitals in Berlin asked for me. It was my greatest reward to see the sad faces of the wounded



grow brighter, and even to hear their delighted laughter. By that time I had become accustomed to the sight of the terrible wounds and amputations, which in the beginning had made my heart bleed. I thanked God that Minx's shortsightedness prevented her from seeing the worst.

For the time being I had sufficient means; however, my capital was small, and my annuity had been confiscated by the British Government. In the course of the years, even with the strictest economy, our finances would reach a very low ebb.

In summer Sarrasani wanted me for Copenhagen. The good Hotel Weber had become the meeting-place of all the Entente spies. Weber, as an Alsatian, was obliging to all parties.

"If the King can see you play the violin, blow the cornet, and swim at the same performance, he will attend the show." Sarrasani felt my pulse. "Let him come, I shall divide my act, and appear in the first and second part of the programme," I replied. After the dive I remained a long time under water. "I hope he won't be drowned," said the King to Sarrasani, who was sitting in the adjoining box. From now on I appeared twice every evening, but was exempt from the afternoon performances.

Then the Busch Circus wanted me. I appeared daily for six weeks, and at the same time lectured in a different hospital almost every afternoon. During a rehearsal the rifle slipped out of my feet and went off. The bullet pierced the calf of a lounge standing behind me. He sued me, and the judge advised him to accept a settlement out of court, so I paid him 400 marks. The affair was the fault of the management, whose duty it was to prevent people from loafing about during rehearsals.



Now various directors of hospitals in the provincial cities asked for me. The Medical Department refused to pay the travelling expenses of my assistant, but informed me when I was wanted.

The result of my public subscription for armless soldiers was very meagre. Only a few of the principal newspapers published my appeal; most of the papers had organized subscriptions of their own for other purposes. The *Deutsche Tageszeitung* printed a thousand appeals free of charge, but the Medical Department refused to send them out as official mail, and made me pay the postage.

Professor Dr. Riedinger, Director of the Cripples' Institute in Würzburg, wanted me for a lecture. On my sixty-eighth birthday he introduced me, with other cripples, to 2,000 soldiers, in the hall where I had once played for Caroné. . . . Then I gave a lecture for the medical profession only, undressed, except for drawers, as there were ladies present. A gentleman tried the strength of my sound arm-stump: "It is a pity that it is not stronger; I could have made you an artificial arm which would have been a perfect substitute for a natural one."—"Hardly!"—"Nothing simpler!"—"I doubt it, since no matter where the artificial arm went my leg would already be doing its work, and according to Erasmus of Rotterdam two objects can never exist in one and the same place at the same time." The bystanders bit their lips to suppress a smile, and the champion of prothesis hastily disappeared. "And that was a Geheimrat!" sighed one of the older professors.—"Well, I never thought that such things as you have shown us would be possible!"

"It is high time for you to take a rest!" advised



Professor Riedinger. We spent a couple of weeks in real comfort at home. The orthopaedists had persuaded me, at the Berlin Congress, to write a book for the war cripples, with as many illustrations as possible. In my beautiful home, into which the sun shone from day-break to sunset, I wrote seventy-eight pages in twenty days, in the language which I had proved to be most effective during my lectures, without bothering much about grammar. This little book appeared under the title, *Ohne Arme Durchs Leben* (Through Life Without Arms).

Hardly was the last word typed when the Becketow Circus wanted me for Budapest. My empty purse urged me to accept. Captain von Máday paid us a visit. I gave him no peace until he translated my lecture into Hungarian.

Director Becketow was a *rara avis* indeed: an honest circus director whose manners did not smack of the stable. With him we felt very comfortable; it was here that I first had a real rest. Rosner's sister told me that Sándor had been very unlucky with his wife; Mundi had constantly had to help him out. To my offer to give lectures in the hospitals I received no answer.

I made good my promise to visit Ettlingen in the State of Baden. All citizens of that State who had suffered wounds in their arms or legs were assembled in a special hospital which had originally been built for a military school. The latest improvements were installed there, and all expedients which had proved helpful were adopted: a great contrast to the general confusion prevailing in Prussia. Wise Dr. Goldscheider! Baron von Künssberg, a Heidelberg professor, was heart and soul devoted to the care of the wounded. His *Manual for the One-Armed* was used in all the hospitals. He invited me



to see him, and introduced me to Dr. Eugen Fischer, Professor of Anatomy in Freiburg, then director of the Ettlingen Hospital.

"I can't allow the wounded to be made more miserable," was his reply to my offer.—"I'll pull them out of their misery, Doctor!"—"That is what you think!"—"Come and listen to one of my lectures to-morrow in Karlsruhe; if you like it you are welcome to it; it doesn't cost anything!"—"You think . . ."—"I think the care of your patients is the thing you have most at heart!"—"You can give a lecture to-morrow at five o'clock," he said, patting me on the shoulder.

I had found the doctors and their assistants most interested in their patients everywhere, but nowhere did I find such warm-hearted and friendly devotion as in Fischer and in Künssberg, who, on the day of my lecture, had been promoted to professor. When I explained to them the effect which swimming has on the circulation they arranged for the wounded to be transported to the swimming-bath in Karlsruhe, where I performed all my feats and got Künssberg to take some photographs of me.

"Where will you lecture next?" asked Fischer.—"In Munich."—"Give my compliments to Franz Stuck, and give the artists a lecture; tell them not to paint fins instead of feet."

Frivolous Munich was quite given over to caring for the wounded. Prince Ludwig Ferdinand was acting as chief physician of one of the hospitals. Every hospital had its lecture. Professor Fritz Lange, Director of the Cripples' Institute, did not overrate the value of artificial limbs, as did so many of his colleagues. The army surgeon at Luisenbad was greatly astonished to find that



the armless swam quicker than the legless, as I had foretold they would.

In Munich I met many an old acquaintance. It was a great pleasure to meet Hermann Schuhmann, who was now eighty years of age, and whose wife had died in America, where his three sons were "minding their own businesses." Father Schuhmann felt more at home in Munich, with his old friends, than in America.

"You lucky fellow! How did you get *that* wife? Strasser came to a terrible end," he said, when we were alone for the first time.—"Trouble brought us together," I said. "She was anxious about her mother and sister, and I was going to the dogs. Trouble must be a good foundation for married life."—"You two don't need company," he sighed, thinking of his own wife.

The daily lectures fatigued Minx. Becketow wanted me in Vienna. I left Minx at home, to take a rest, and went there by myself. I had to run about the city for six hours before I found a room in a hotel, and succeeded at the Erzherzog Rainer only because the porter knew me.

Königsberg wanted me. Minx was wonderfully rested, so I took her with me. At the hospital of the Cripples' Institute I discovered, to my amazement, that the "Hoeftman man" who was said to have earned his own living for years as a locksmith with his artificial arms had never done a stroke of work!

The Medical Department informed me that I was required in Frankfurt a/M. A student, Rudolf Völkel, whose lower jaw had been shattered by a bullet, offered to assist me. This fine-looking man was terribly disfigured and mentally depressed. My happy disposition cheered him up a little. He played the piano remarkably well, and we got on splendidly together. We loved our



work, and there was any amount of it in Frankfurt! Neither Professor Dr. Ludloff nor his assistant Dr. Simon, at the Cripples' Institute was very partial to artificial arms and legs.

The Austrians asked me to come to Lublin. While we were getting our passports a soldier rushed into the room, quite beside himself with excitement: "Russia has collapsed—the Tsar has been taken prisoner by his own people!" he gasped. I had never seen Minx in such a state; the tears ran down her cheeks; how I felt no words can tell.

The journey from Frankfurt a/M. to Lublin was terribly tedious. In the hospitals we missed the cleanliness and good order to which we had been used in Germany. Would it ever be possible to get them clean? On our journey from Lublin to Warsaw we had to wait five hours in Ivangorod. The air in the waiting-room was not fit to breathe, and we preferred to walk up and down on the platform, admiring the star-spangled sky. It was my birthday. When we asked at headquarters for our rooms the captain said: "I'll have to send you to the Hotel Europe, the cleanest in town, but if you get lousy, don't blame me!"

On removing the dead skin round the nail for the *n*th time I went a little too deep; for the first time I suffered from painful suppuration, so that my lectures had to be postponed. "A bit of Polish nationality must have got under the skin," said the Staff Surgeon-Colonel in Warsaw dryly. Here again we found order and cleanliness. The Poles declared that Warsaw had never been so beautiful. But what with the bakers' strike and the obstinacy of the people in authority we had a very hard time; my heart went on strike again, and we had to go home.



## CHAPTER XIII

# MORE WAR AND THE SMASH

(1917-1922)

*Neglected People—Off to Bucarest—Swimming Festival—Field-Marshal Mackensen—"Military Official in Civil Clothes"—The Eastern Front—A New Star—Baggage Lost and Found—The Breakdown—Medals—Homeless—A Poor Boy—Lecturing in Schools*

"You must at least have a two months' rest," declared the doctor in Prague, after a thorough examination. After a fortnight's rest I felt that I was strong enough to write. I wrote "Neglected People" and sent the article to the *Gartenlaube*; it was published in No. 34, 1917. I began my article by telling the story of Lohmeyer, who is mentioned in the second chapter of this book, and continued:

"Charles Felux used to copy famous pictures—with his feet—in the Antwerp Museum, and sold them to visitors at good prices. Adam Siepen led a quiet life in Düsseldorf. Pictures by Charles Ducornet of Lille may be seen in the Louvre Museum in Paris. All these men were able to earn a livelihood, but they were dependent on the help of their servants in their homes. Charles Tripp showed people how the armless can eat and drink, and sold samples of his foot-writing in Barnum and Bailey's Circus; Annie Lee did the same in the Dime Museums in America.

"In St. Helens, Lancashire, a mother came to me with her nine-year-old armless daughter, to ask my advice. Her child had been sent away from school, as her presence

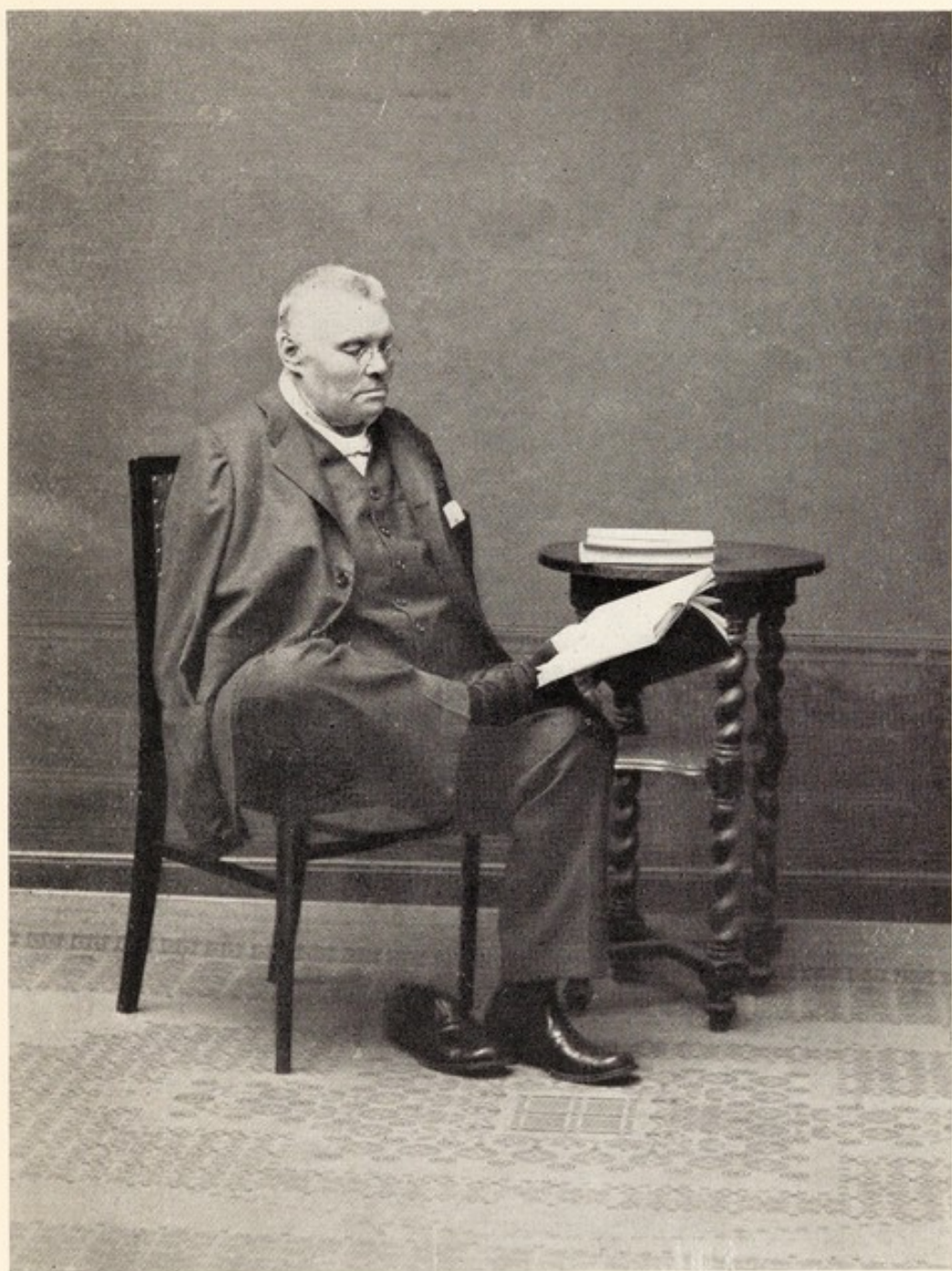


had been disturbing. I called on the school and read them a philippic, explaining to them that an armless girl would be no more of a disturbance than a red-haired boy after the first few days. They let themselves be persuaded. There was a similar case in Hamburg-Altona: the teacher wanted to have an armless girl sent to school in Stellingen, miles away; then a young lady offered to give the girl private lessons at home. Neither of these cripples had been taught to hold a pen or anything else; each had to contrive her own way to get at things. That is the reason why so many armless people I have met on my travels have not been able to do any work, and were a burden to their families. If a special school were opened where armless persons could be taught by the most advanced and experienced armless teachers, the pitiful misery that repeats itself with every generation would be wiped off the earth for ever.

“In what professions could the pupils of such a school give satisfaction? There are a number of possibilities: Those with a pedagogical gift could be trained as teachers for schools of the same kind, or as private teachers; others, gifted with a good voice, would easily find suitable places in church choirs; others as guides in museums and similar public establishments, or as interpreters, according to their talents.

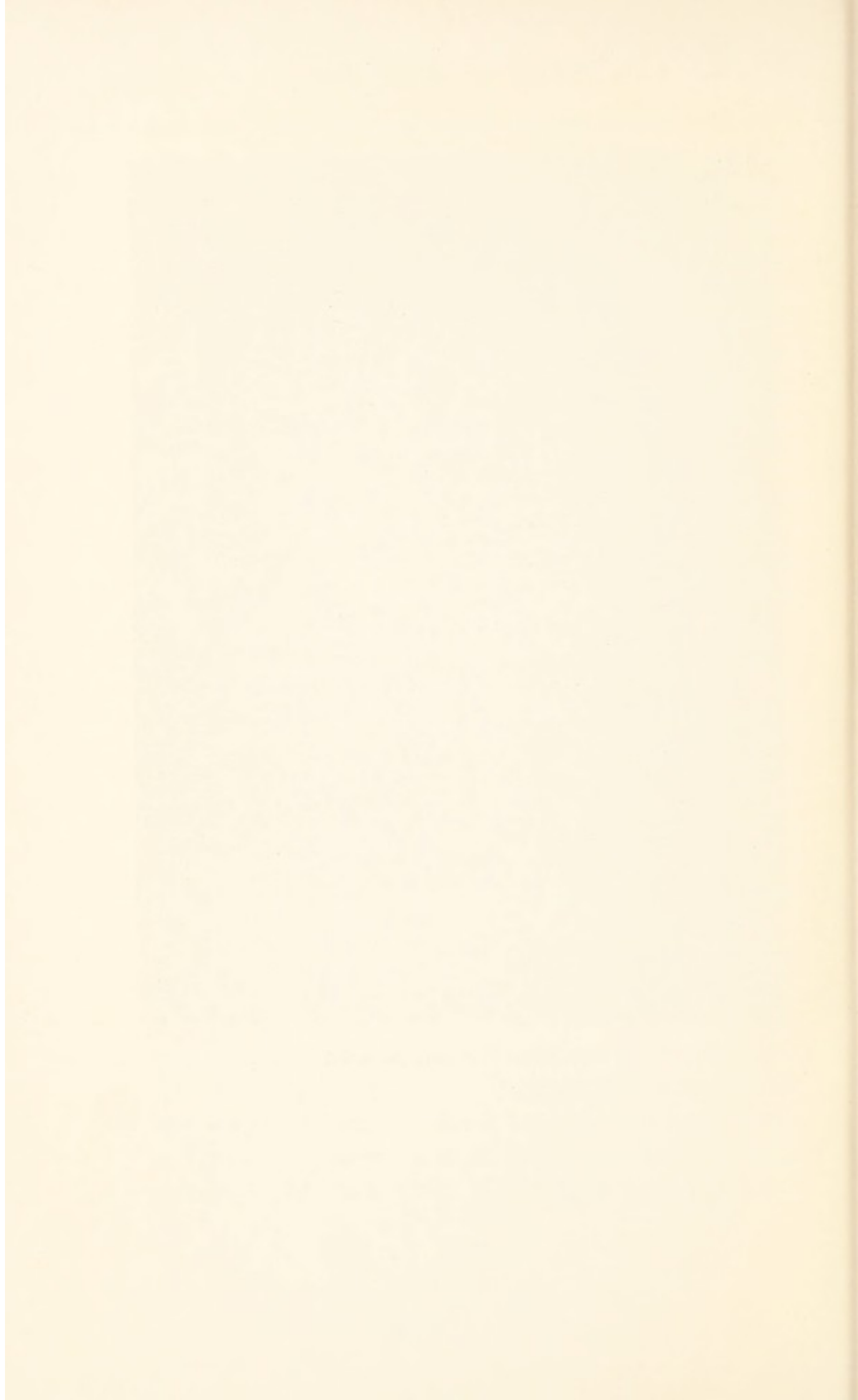
“What should the pupils strictly avoid? Vaudeville and every other kind of show business. It has not harmed me, thanks to my stubbornness, but ninety-nine out of a hundred will go to the bad on its slippery soil. The most important duty of the school would be to ascertain wherever armless children are born, and immediately to instruct the parents to leave the feet bare from the ninth month of the child's life. The doctors would have to





PICKING UP KNOWLEDGE







notify the school authorities when and where an armless child was born. In every three million persons one child is born armless. The opinions of medical authorities differ as to the cause of the deformity, but it is certain that these defects, like all subnormal abnormalities, are not hereditary, as are the supernormal: for instance, five or six fingers, and more than one thumb, and similar over-productions. A search for armless children in Germany would lead to the discovery of about twenty; quite enough to be assembled in a special school. All soldiers who have lost their arms could be taught in a hospital school connected with the children's school. In my mind's eye I see the children and men playing together, as though there were no such afflictions in this happy world!"

I had scarcely finished the article when letter after letter arrived from Bucarest, asking me to go there as soon as possible. The doctor said: "Not yet!" Why should I not risk as much as millions of others did? We started our journey, and in Budapest I got permission to take the military train. In Predeal, the frontier station, tickets and baggage checks were collected, and we had to continue our journey without them. In Bucarest we were met by a corporal who turned out to be a professor at the Leipzig Lyceum. He took us to a magnificent room at the Hotel Kronprinz.

My first lecture, on September 2nd, gave new life to the soldiers, who were tired of the inactive existence they had led for months. For the time being my heart could only stand four lectures a week.

There was a swimming-festival at the military swimming school on September 9th. Everybody was there, from field-marshal to common soldier; the place was



packed. Even the roof was crowded with spectators. I had to fight my way through to the spring-board, and began with a header. I explained in a loud voice the different strokes I was able to employ, floated on my back, crossing my legs as others cross their arms, scratched my forehead with my toe, and threw kisses to acquaintances. I put a coin on a plate and let both sink into the water; then I brought up the coin with my mouth and the plate with my toes. The day was a complete success. The "Russian Steamroller" caused great merriment: Lying on my breast I drew the water toward my body, swimming feet forward. When my feet touched the wall I shouted: "Happily arrived in Vladivostock!" Roars of laughter; then a crash, and shrieks! The roof had broken down under the weight of the spectators. "Nobody hurt," announced a voice.

My friend Fritz Nicolai, the German diving-champion, dived from a height of thirty feet in complete field uniform, his rifle over his shoulder. On coming up he pushed up his helmet, which had been forced over his face, and hurt his nose so that it bled. Field-Marshal Mackensen congratulated him on the training of his swimming-school, and shook hands with him. When he went to change his clothes he was swearing like a trooper. "Have you hurt yourself, Fritz?"—"Rubbish, 'hurt yourself!'" he said, in the purest Frankfurt dialect; "but that one has to stand before such a man, bleeding like a swine, is hell!" They held their Field-Marshal in high esteem.

Before I left Mackensen asked me: "Are you a German?"—"East Prussian, Your Excellency."—"What school did you attend?"—"The Königsberg Gymnasium."—"What have you been paid for your services up to now?"—"Nothing. I was glad enough that the



Medical Department did not put more obstacles in my way.”—“That must be altered! Would you be satisfied with a captain’s pay?”—“I should not like to accept any pay. I have succeeded in helping every wounded soldier who was able to move to make some attempt to work, and so I have made him forget his thoughts of suicide. If it were known that I was paid, I should lose my influence, as is the case with many of the doctors.” He, his adjutant and I looked at one another for a while; then Mackensen said: “Then we shall see that you get good board and lodging. Should you have any special request to make, or any complaints, come to me personally.”—“Your Excellency, I am sure there will be no reason for complaints when your order has been given,” I said. They both saluted; I tried to make a “military salute,” and felt that it was a terrible failure.

To what heights an armless man can attain! According to my papers of identification I was a “high military official in civil clothing” attached to the Educational Department of the Printing and Publishing section of the Military Administration in Rumania. I grew strong enough for daily lectures. The admission was 50 bani for officers, 25 for corporals, and 10 for soldiers. The receipts were divided in equal parts between the commander’s office, the Educational Department, and myself.

We had been summoned for four weeks, and had only our summer clothes with us. Minx had to go to Prague to get warm clothing. She refused to be accompanied by a courier, as she “might lose him on the journey.” Meanwhile I gave lectures in the provinces, accompanied by my orderly Karl Krug. In Calarash the Turks were so astonished by my accurate shooting that



they collected 700 lei for me. I refused to accept the money. Half the sum was given to the Red Cross, the other half to the Red Crescent.

A description of my nine months in Rumania would fill volumes. The difference between the German and Austrian Armies was remarkable. When our officers wished to see their wives, they had to meet them in Kronstadt in Hungary, whereas the Austrian officers' wives were running about in Rumania by the dozen, dressed up as hospital nurses, though they went to the hospital only when there was a show or some similar "amusement." At my lectures they looked at me as though I had been a calf with two heads.

The Rumanians were not so hostile as the Polish; they appreciated our fair-mindedness, not being accustomed to it in their own Government.

We were ordered to the Western front, with tickets for Berlin and two weeks' leave in Prague. I dispatched our luggage the day before our departure, and told the corporal to send it on to Ploesti that same night. He promised to do so; but no trace of it was to be seen in Ploesti, nor in Kronstadt, Budapest, or Vienna. The German Kommandantur in Vienna wired to the office of the railway company and to our captain in Bucarest. I got the officer in command of the railway-station to give orders to have the luggage sent on to Prague without delay. Each of the five pieces of luggage carried a label: "Special Officer's Luggage." We went on to Prague.

The first night of that journey, when everyone was asleep in the compartment, I was waked by the stuffy air, opened the window, and saw a bright, magnificent star below the constellation of Hercules. I expressed my surprise. One of the passengers, a captain, looked



through the window, and said: "It's only your imagination that makes you distinguish a single star among that lot!"—"If you had been in the trenches for a year, and suddenly saw a newly built house opposite your home, you'd be just as surprised as I am now!" Four days later the new star, a "Nova," was reported by the astronomers.

We wrote to all stations through which the luggage would have to pass, and relied on the offices of our good captain, Geheimrat Dr. Volkmann, the founder of the "Bugra" and the "German Library." The greater part of our clothes and linen were in the trunks, and all our other requisites. At that time it was essential to have a permit to buy even a pocket-handkerchief.

Minx was in great distress; she could not sleep at night. I told her of my American travels, and everything I could think of, to make her forget the loss of the luggage.

It was two months to a day after our arrival in Prague that our friend Richard Müller sent us fifty pounds of potatoes by his son. Walter turned round on the stairs: "I nearly forgot; Father sends word that your luggage has arrived at the station." Minx was again seized with anxiety. "How much of it will be left?" We found the four trunks intact; only my typewriter was damaged, but that could be repaired. Minx needed a three weeks' rest before we could proceed to Berlin.

Things looked rather gloomy at the Medical Department. There was no need for me in the West. I was to report to the Director of the Cripples' Institute, where I should have to teach seven armless soldiers and seven armless boys. The Government would pay me; the Institute would provide for board and lodging. Amused



by such an idea, I reported at the Cripples' Institute. At the gate I saw my armless boy, grown very tall during the last two and a half years.

"You have no artificial arms yet?"—"The doctor has pierced my stumps, but they are not yet healed."—"That was barbarous! What are you doing now?"—"Nothing! I have got to wait." The teacher had not even tried to stop his idling about. "The boy is constantly making mischief among the patients," complained another cripple. I had a look round until the professor came. As I had anticipated, he had no room for us, and the food was "not good enough—for you."

A new friend, whose wife was an old friend of Minx's, invited us for a long visit to his villa in Berlin. "You have such a soothing influence on my wife, whose nervousness is constantly increasing; you will do me a great favour!" he said. We accepted. I continued my lectures at the hospitals.

The revolution broke out on November 9, 1918. "To-night the miller of Sansouci has died," I said to Minx in the morning. My poor country, what will you have to go through! I fell dangerously ill, and sent for the doctor.

"Erysipelas," declared Goldscheider, before he had reached my bedside. So it was, with all its symptoms. I was unconscious for two weeks; Minx knelt beside my bed, to prevent me from uncovering myself. "If he catches cold now, it means sudden death," said Goldscheider. I was firmly determined to pull through, out of sheer gratitude to Goldscheider and Minx.

The Red Cross Medal was brought to my bedside; later on the "Medal for Distinguished Service to the Country." The signing of the documents had to be



postponed. Who had applied for those medals? All I knew was that I had nothing to do with it. We received the finest Christmas gift from Goldscheider: the news that I was going to get well!

I had regained enough strength to walk about indoors, when we received a wire from our friend Müller in Prague, informing us that our beautiful home would be rented to strangers in consequence of our continued absence. This was due to the hatred of the Czechs for the Germans! Minx went to Prague to fetch our furniture. A decree had been promulgated forbidding German property to be taken out of the country, but Müller managed to pack her off with it. "We might not be able to pay you your wages from now on," said Minx to Pepi.—"Then I shall go to work and support the lot of us!" she replied, and returned with Minx. Our new friend in Berlin had our furniture put into his store-rooms.

We had come from Rumania with 400 lei less than we had taken there. Our annuity from London had been stopped; we had no home and nothing in view. . . .

I offered to give lectures at schools where the teachers complained of the children's laziness, and the offer was graciously accepted. At a performance given for the benefit of the crippled, Kurt Diron came up to me and asked me to give him violin lessons. "Too late now! What about your artificial arms?"—"I only had them on once, they hurt me too much." That is what the craze for artificial arms had done! It was said that the doctors who had been so partial to artificial members had grown wealthy by recommending them. At the schools I was more successful. "It's much easier for you to work with your hands than for me with my feet," I told the children,



and thundered aloud against alcohol and nicotine. Teachers arranged evening entertainments for parents, who paid a small admission fee, which was spent on school books for poor children. I was richly rewarded by the laughing eyes and applauding hands of the children. The happiness derived from this work did much to promote my complete recovery. When Völkel came on a visit from Frankfurt we forgot our unsettled state, and were perfectly happy, in spite of the small food rations.

The inflation had a terrible effect on the prices of food. When our meals grew too meagre friend Müller was always ready to help us out. He proved a real friend, under the most difficult circumstances—true as gold. How could we have pulled through those hard times without him? Thousands put an end to their lives by suicide!

Professors of anatomy, surgery and orthopaedics had been watching my endeavours during the war, and wanted me to show their students what kinds of work can be performed by the feet. I gladly agreed, and lectured to the new students as often as the professors deemed it necessary.

Our new friend had discovered that his foreign correspondent was turning over orders to his competitors and pocketing a percentage for doing so. To stop this our friend brought all foreign orders home from the office, and had them translated and answered by me. That paid for our keep. His wife urged him to have the cottage enlarged. He was able to get a licence for rebuilding only when I declared to the authorities that the projected rooms were to be our lodgings. While the building was going on the inflation sent prices up daily, and he ran short of money. All I could do was to offer



to pay rent for our two rooms and to provide for our keep. My endeavours to get an apartment in a vacant house were ineffectual. I was told that I ought to be glad to have a roof over my head! Our friend needed the room in which he had our furniture stored. It was put in the garret. Menacing clouds were hanging over us! Would there never be a glimpse of sunshine?



## CHAPTER XIV

# SUNSHINE TO THE HAPPY END

(1922-1928)

*A Letter from America—Lord Blainsburg's Committee—Jack and Elsie Harrison—German Honesty—Becoming Reasonable—Lawsuits—Homeless Again—A Home at Last!—A Valuable Present from America—Reward for War Work—My Eightieth Birthday—Serious Illness—A Disagreeable Surprise that Turns Out to be Profitable—Pepi Provided For—General Survey of my Life—A Last Wish*

THE Gresham Insurance Society of London sent me a letter which they had received from Harrison, asking them if I was still alive, and if so, for my address. I wrote Jack a long, detailed letter, not painting things too blackly. He had found a suitable position with a railroad company in Minneapolis, had married Elsie in 1915, and had taken her to his home. He wrote that he would send us eatables, and would try to come over and see us in 1923. "I have made many friends," he wrote, "but, on close examination, not one has proved as true and honest as you have been."

Lord Blainsburg had authorized the Gresham to pay my annuity since January 1923, but I found that one-third had been withheld for the English income-tax. We were at last in a position to entertain Jack and Elsie in a proper manner. We took a drive through the city, and they were greatly astonished to find Berlin unharmed. "Everybody in Minneapolis thinks that Berlin was destroyed by bombardment, and we find it the



finest city we have ever seen!" My exposition of the real state of things made them open their eyes. Jack changed a dollar at the Zoo station, and received five hundred marks less than the proper exchange (a dollar was then equal to two thousand marks). "Those five hundred marks are gone for ever," said Elsie. I went back with Jack, and we got the five hundred marks when I explained the matter to the railway official. We had a delightful ten days. When the day for parting came, Jack cried bitterly; I suppressed my tears by sheer will-power.

Minx managed to persuade me to give up lecturing on my seventy-fifth birthday, with the argument that "it was high time for me to become reasonable." I felt neither better nor worse after my promise, so she soon allowed me to withdraw it. The University wanted me for a lecture, and Minx urged me to accept.

In the autumn our "new friend" brought an action against us to get us out of his house; he lost the case, and appealed. The new action dragged on until August 1924. We were ordered to move out on September 30th, and to pay costs. I submitted the sentence to the Housing Department (Wohnungsamt), and they finally sent us to the little flat in which we are living now. But where was I to get the money for moving, and the costs of the lawsuits? We had become as poor as church mice, but I found friends to help us.

To be installed with our own furniture, which we had not seen for nearly six years, was wonderful! To make ends meet I wrote articles on my travels and various other topics, which were readily accepted and well paid for by various newspapers. Things had taken a turn for the better! After six years of uncertainty and



misery we had landed on our feet again. It seemed miraculous to us.

Translating foreign letters for a typewriter firm, I came across an illustrated description of the "Woodstock Electrite." The keys had to be pressed down only three millimeters. That machine would prolong my life for years! I wrote to the Woodstock Company, explaining my case, telling them in what theatres in Chicago I had appeared on the stage, and asking them whether they could make me a present of an "Electrite." I had forgotten all about the matter when the machine arrived. Our joy—the three of us, Minx, Pepi and I share all our joys and griefs—was indescribable. Writing became an amusement! Whenever I had had a stroke of luck it had come from America!

On my seventy-eighth birthday Professor Kopsch presented me with the six volumes of his illustrated *Anatomy*. About the same time I received 5,000 marks from the Government for services to my country during the war. We went to the Director of the Disconto-Gesellschaft and asked him to have it invested as he thought best. If I invested the money myself I should probably not only lose it, but get myself into trouble besides. That is the sort of business man I consider myself. The interest of six and seven per cent was a nice addition to our income.

A slight arthritis deformans in my knee had been made much worse by overwork and cold during my war service. It grew very painful, and prevented me from stepping into the tram-cars. Travelling was out of question, but I had travelled quite enough! The theatres for which I had to write criticisms could be reached by the Underground. Fortunately I feel no pain when



writing. A fortnight before my eightieth birthday the publishers of the *Gartenlaube* invited me to their offices, to be photographed. There I saw a paper lying on the table which at first turned me sick and then furiously angry: it was a list, signed by eight prominent persons of widely different political opinions, calling for subscriptions as a birthday gift for me. Who had been able to gather that crowd under one hat? I finally ascertained that Dr. Hanns Heinz Ewers, the celebrated author, had started the game, and had been assisted by a school inspector, Herr Schleyer. For ten days we had photographers and reporters in the house from morning till night. Minx did her best to entertain them in one room, while I was being photographed and questioned to death in another. Some of them used flashlights, which did not improve the atmosphere. We had a very busy time. The secretary of the Busch Circus called on me and induced us both to be present at a performance to be given in my honour on my eightieth birthday. As Paula Busch had signed that odious subscription list, we could not refuse. The night before my birthday I had to attend the performance at the Scala variety theatre. During the interval I happened to be looking about for my editor. "What on earth makes you look so sulky?" asked Leo Heller of the *Abendblatt*.—"That confounded beggarly subscription!" He rebuked me in such reasonable terms that I began to see the matter in a different light. I wrote my report on the show very early next morning, knowing that callers would appear with their congratulations. The first was Heinz Amelung from the *Gartenlaube*. He surrendered the door-handle to Dr. Treitel, who came to offer his own and Burgomaster Boess's congratulations. They came by twos and threes, until Minx said at two



o'clock: "You go to bed now, or you won't be fit for to-night!" She continued to receive the visitors until the car called for us at seven o'clock. Many friends were waiting for us at the entrance of the circus. I asked Dr. Ewers to sit with us in our box, but he had taken a seat opposite us. Speeches were addressed to me after the first part of the performance, to which I had to respond. I am afraid my responses were nothing to be proud of, but they did not damp the enthusiasm of the audience. We were photographed, and then invited into Paula's room, where a small but select party was assembled. I had a nice chat in English with Miss Walker, the daughter of the Mayor of New York. After having been photographed again, we managed to sneak out before the second part commenced. Two motor-cars were packed with the flowers and wreaths which had been given us. Pepi had supper ready for us, and listened with great interest to Minx's narration of the glorious evening.

The following morning we looked over the congratulations: 278 telegrams and letters, baskets of delicacies, and two dozen bottles of wine—for the total abstainer!

But the festivities had been too great a strain for me; two days after my birthday I fell seriously ill. "Nervous prostration," Goldscheider declared, "can be cured only by strenuous exercise." In my state of weakness the idea of having to exercise made the perspiration run down my face. "Professor, why is it that I never perspire from the thighs downwards?"—"Hard to say. I should be inclined to assume that the moisture that forms the perspiration has—from your earliest childhood—been used up by the excessive movements of your lower limbs." I found exercising very hard at first, but it gradually grew easier.



Goldscheider had saved my life for the third time at the same price—my sincerest thanks!

It was now high time to settle my worldly affairs. The money from the Government, in addition to the result of the subscription, allowed us to regard the future without fear. What relieves my mind most of all is the fact that we can secure the future of our faithful Pepi. We have made a will to the effect that she will inherit everything in our possession, the bank deposits, and all that may be forthcoming from my literary work. It will guarantee her a comfortable living.

It grieves me deeply that I did not succeed in getting a school for armless cripples founded. Eighty years without arms! I have enjoyed everything that people with arms can enjoy. Naturally I have had hard times during my long life, but they have only made me value my happy times all the more, and look upon them as the essential part of my life. I have never—not once—felt that I should have been happier with arms. What I have been and what I have had I owe to my wise parents, and to my beloved wife. I have never met anyone whom I had reason to envy.

Now the action of my heart is such that I may be called into the next world at any moment. On my arrival there they shall show me where and what there is to be done, and they'll be surprised to see how energetically I shall set to work! I have only one wish left: that I may see my parents again, and that they may be able to see me before I leave this world! Then they will read in my eyes that their teachings have not been wasted on me. They taught me Faith, Hope and Love, and of these the greatest is Love!





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