

German Short Stories of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries
Wilhelm Jensen (1837-1911)

Magister Timotheus

(Schleswig: Schulbuchhandlung, 1866)

The green buds in the tops of the beech trees stirred whisperously in the morning wind. From a distance, what looked like a green shimmer lay over the crowned dome of the forest; it descended in ever-growing fullness, and right at the bottom, on the lowest branches, the soft, sappy leaves had already breezily unrolled from the burst buds. Siskins and chaffinches darted through them and away, the blue nuthatch hammered its way around the smooth trunk, and high up in the tree-tops newly-fledged woodpigeons cooed in the May sunshine, their wise, agile eyes looking down with happy curiosity at the forest-path beneath them and the wayfarer who was slowly walking along it.

Everything laughed and said, "The world is ours." Interspersed every here and there, a gnarled old oak stretched its gloomily bare branches like spectral killjoys into the budding, fragrant forest; but nobody cared about their sullen looks. Only, an old raven sat gravely on a withered stake, blinking morosely at the sight of the black, rent, and cloddy bark of the oak tree. He looked thoughtful and perhaps knew that he did not belong in spring; yet he sat defiantly where he was and listened to the footsteps which came up, ever nearer, through the wood. Now he stuck his half-bald head through his dishevelled wings and looked down at the approaching man with malicious joy – then he suddenly fluttered up and

disappeared, croaking angrily, between the trunks.

The man stopped and gazed after him for a moment before walking on. It was old Magister Timotheus, with his small, well-known little stick in his right hand, and his left hand placed in thoughtful composure on his back. He walked so softly and lightly that only rarely did a dried-up twig snap under his tread, or the previous year's leaves rustle up around his feet. Then looking at his watch, he walked onwards rather more quickly until he came to the sun-lit edge of the wood where the large meadow full of yellow primroses lay at his feet. They too must have been infected with the general intoxication, for as the old man strode through between them, he clearly heard giggling and laughter around him and: "The world is ours."

"You think so? You think so?" he said with a satisfied smile, "it seems that a little of it shall belong to me today." He bent down and picked up one of the high-spirited flowers to stick in his buttonhole. "It's a good old custom," he murmured, "the German suitor was doing it as long as five hundred years ago."

He had now reached the wooden footbridge whose high arch led over the river which flowed across the meadow from the forest to the town. It lay over yonder, straight before him, with pointed towers and turrets; an old, grass-covered wall still just about coiled around it. The morning sun flashed amiably in the small window-panes and off the gilded ball of the steeple, which towered up with dignity over the jagged gabled roofs; behind it, the mountains lay in a grey haze, but on one side the wooded slope reached down almost to the houses.

The greenish mountain-water shot away under the footbridge; the

old man had leant on the railings and looked cheerfully down into the playing ripples. But directly under him, a small, tranquil surface had formed from the water breaking against a tree-trunk that lay crossways a few steps in front, and out of this, his face now rose up from below, just as friendly and handsome and dignified as it looked down from above. There was something infinitely gentle and warm-hearted in the elderly magister's face with its silver-grey frame, and his small eyes looked out into the world with such happy good nature that one could almost take his hair to be a liar; only a few deep lines which stretched right under it, nearly all the way from one temple to the other, bore witness in favour of its truthfulness. But there was nothing sombre about them, nothing sullen; fifty-eight years had gradually drawn them into his high, intelligent brow, as drops carve furrows in marble; and as the friendly face looked down at the river, then back up again, with such a warm smile, they barely cast a light shadow over the sunny joyfulness of his features.

He stood and looked down at the golden rings of sunshine which rippled through one another over the yellow sand at the shallower bank of the river. All was constantly in shimmering, rollicking motion; silent, large-eyed fish darted up and down amidst the ripples, their scales shining. A young man came over the meadow from the town with searching eyes; yet the old magister did not notice him. He looked dreamily down into the play of golden waves, as if he would discover mysterious characters in the colourfully intertwined circles which broke away from each other only to interlace anew, and the old, ruminating eyes looked ever brighter and more joyfully clear. Now the boards of the bridge creaked close by; laughing, the

young man lifted a stone off the ground and skilfully threw it in a wide arc right into the golden circles of the river. As if struck with a magic wand, they disappeared; the fish darted to the side in alarm, while the stone penetrated into the marshy bottom and churned it up, clouding the water the colour of earth.

The old man had not noticed the cause; he saw only the effect. It may have made him think, for his eyes stared anxiously down as the merry rings of sunshine suddenly faded and the cloudy, muddy water foully welled up over them. But now a soft hand clapped him on the back, and he turned around in astonishment. "Do wedding-days make even people in years of discretion so vain that they look at their reflection in the water when there is nothing else at hand, Uncle?" a cheerful voice behind him asked.

"Felix," cried the old man, "my boy! It's you?" The troubled expression on his face vanished, like hasty shadows of clouds on a sunlit, waving field of corn; then he clasped the handsome young man in a tender embrace.

"My dearest boy, where have you come from?" he said at last, regarding the slim, graceful figure before him with eyes shining with joy once more; "I thought you were far away at the university, in the middle of your final examinations."

"All done, old one," laughed Felix. "Summa cum laude, the gentlemen were extremely gracious."

"Summa!" – the magister repeated, "upon my soul! One wouldn't know from looking at you. I looked quite different when I put my diploma in

my pocket, and that was quite simply without *summa* or *magna*. Yes, yes, my outward appearance looked different also,” he added in a murmur, thinking back in time, while he happily ran his eyes over his nephew’s tasteful clothes, “and it cost me many a bitter hour before I could obtain this gown. Take care you don’t turn the head of every girl in our little town, you crackerjack! *Summa cum laude!*”

“Well, it certainly didn’t do any harm, Uncle,” the young man said, “but you have beaten me to it and I shall have difficulty there, for you are a dignified man, completely different from me, the harum-scarum.”

They had crossed the bridge and were now walking together up the meadow-path to the little town. The old man had linked arms with the youth and walked with pride and erect dignity at his side. He had given no reply to the last remark, but rippling golden rings laughed merrily forth from his old eyes again. “You see, that was an ingenious idea of yours, Uncle, and so I could not possibly fail to be there on your day of honour,” the young man continued. “Hitherto, you have had nobody but me; that will now change, of course, but since last year –” he gave a soft sigh – “I too have nobody else in the world but you, and –”

“And he will stay there for you, as long as he lives, my boy,” the old man said affectionately, drawing his arm more tightly to his side. “It is settled; you are free now and will move in with me this summer for the time being – with us,” he corrected himself with a smile, “I think you shall like it there and come to feel at home again.”

Felix looked up at him in gratitude; cordiality flickered over his open, slightly haughty features. “If my new aunt is also happy to have me,” he

replied, half-inquiringly, "I don't know your wife at all yet, Uncle."

But the latter seemed to have heard only *one* word of this. "My *wife*," he said, "my little wife"; a smile of almost child-like blissfulness played around his lips as they unconsciously repeated this several times. "I bounced her mother on my knees," he added at length, almost as if he were speaking to himself, "I was a poor young lad at that time, and I was still one when she took the fat counsellor." He shook his head thoughtfully a moment, then he looked happily into his nephew's face and continued:

"And I would never have thought, when I went over every evening as a neighbour and friend of the house, and played with the little ones and they laughingly bounded towards me on the steps and climbed up Uncle Timotheus and searched his pockets –" The old man broke off with a smile and seemed to lose himself in the memory of that time as he walked on in silence, arm-in-arm with the youth.

"But how did it come about with you and Hedwig ... Isn't she called Hedwig, your little intended?" the young man asked out of curiosity.

"Hedwig!" the old man confirmed, nodding his head. "Hedwig was a very intelligent girl even at a young age, that is to say, as wild as a hoyden, but very attentive when I taught her lessons. She showed an extraordinary aptitude for Latin in particular..."

Felix laughed out loud. "Latin!" he said. "But Uncle, how did you end up wanting to teach Latin to a girl?"

Something close to a vexed expression, as far as this was at all possible, came over the magister's face. "I was not aware that Latin could harm any person whatsoever," he earnestly replied, "and if Hedwig had

only made more assiduous use of her talent for classical languages afterwards, we would now be able to often chat with one another like a married Roman couple, to the benefit of both of us, for nowadays there is hardly anyone left who knows how to hold a proper conversation in Latin.”

The youth saw that he was on the verge of offending the old man, and he compliantly gave way. “I at least do not, Uncle,” he cried; “for five years I’ve seen no other Latin letters than the ones in the *corpus juris*, so we can both profit from you this summer and hold Latin symposia” – he merrily swung the old man by his arm, causing his face to brighten into a satisfied smile again – “but you were about to tell me, Uncle, how it came about that you will make Hedwig your wife today – confessions, Uncle, confessions!”

The old man became embarrassed and blushed almost like a child. “Yes! How it came to be,” he stammered, “the *genesis*, you know, Felix, the *genesis* – I myself could not say; but when she grew up more and more, and became lovelier and more similar to her mother every day – that is to say, like her mother was twenty years before, when she was the prettiest girl in the town – and I began, by degrees, to feel, well, rather lonely, being so utterly alone in the house with old Theresa. – Well! and then I asked her, it will be seven weeks ago to the day tomorrow – she did say at first that she never could call me anything but Uncle Timotheus; and in her eyes, I was far too evidently a person commanding respect, for her ever to be able to address me familiarly, as man and wife really have to do; but in the end, she threw her arms round my neck and kissed me, and then her mother joined us and kissed me also and said, how at one time she herself

had often watched me as I passed her parents' house; how I had, however, always kept myself so stupidly and timidly at a distance whenever we happened to come together that in the end she took me to be really hardhearted and misogynistic – which truly had never been the case," the old man added after a short pause, giving a soft sigh, "for on the contrary – but now, everything has turned out so well," he broke off, "as well as I had sometimes imagined in my earlier years but ceased to expect long since."

The youth had listened attentively to his uncle's fragmented narration and, every now and then, surreptitiously observed from the side, with friendly interest, the old man's wistfully smiling features as he spoke. While chatting, they had arrived, without noticing it, at the round wall-towers of the old grey town-gate, from whose decomposing stone joints and cracks long tufts of grass and umbellifers covered with green moss waved down, and now they walked along wide, sunlit Gate Street. A few little boys with exercise books under their arms were chasing one another on the road; but they stopped out of respect and pulled their caps off their heads when the two men walked past. The old one gave them a friendly pat on the shoulder and they freely gave him their hand; then they cheerfully ran away and continued their game. Almost all of the adults also greeted the magister, and many made a stop to put a question to him; but today, quite contrary to habit, the old man often threw impatient glances at his watch and began to quicken his pace, until they came to a small, secret square surrounded by houses, with an old fountain in its centre over which Neptune poured bright, tinkling water out from a stone pipe. Here he came to a halt and contentedly pointed to a tall, grey gabled house with deep

bay-windows and wide-branching lime trees before the door.

“There it is,” he smiled, “I’ll show you it, let us go up for a moment, Felix.”

They walked over the old-fashioned paving and climbed up the broad steps. Then the old man opened a heavy oaken door and led him into the first-floor suite of rooms. His gaze rested contentedly on the neat, bourgeois decoration; only, the shelves jutted forward a little too much on all sides with grey books and folios. The magister’s study was entirely framed with them and, to find space for them all, he had divided the remainder equally in the other rooms. All the windows were standing wide open and the sun streamed in through the green buds and leaves of a lime tree, rippling dainty rings over the ceiling and walls, almost like the ones which the old man had observed at the river bank by the meadow. Perhaps they reminded him of that and started up anew the thoughts which had been suddenly broken at that time, for he stood still a moment and looked pensively at the shimmering golden circles once again. And once again, they suddenly disappeared as a dark shadow glided over and soundlessly extinguished them. The old man started, bewildered, from his daydream; but now he quickly perceived the reason. The young man had walked over to the window and was looking down the street; his body caught the rays; when he shrank back, dazzled, they rippled brightly and merrily over the ceiling and the walls as they had before.

The old man looked at the clock once more. “We shall have to make haste, or we’ll be late, Felix,” he said. “The Counsellor – my father-in-law,” he added – “has invited me to breakfast this morning, to be at his house in

the old, yearlong way, as a friend of the family, for the last time, and the wedding ceremony will be at two o'clock."

He drew his nephew down the stairs with him almost impetuously. "That door there leads to the garden," he said, as they were walking through the hallway, "it is bigger than one would believe, with lawns and arbours and all that a garden can have."

He now walked through the streets so swiftly that sprightly Felix had difficulty keeping step with him. Soon they came to a large, ancient house; it was already hot outside, but when they stepped into the wide, bright stone hallway they were enveloped in a refreshing coolness. Nobody was to be seen inside; only a couple of colourfully-feathered hens fluttered up before them out through the half-open back door which led into the garden and onto the courtyard. Red, green, and violet sunbeams fell through its colourful panes of glass and down over the tiles. But now the door was suddenly flung wide open and a head with brown curls sprang laughing through the hallway.

"I *thought* it must be you, Uncle Timotheus," she cried, "when I saw my hens fluttering out so wildly; they are always afraid of you."

"You're a wild hen yourself, you are!" said the old man, tenderly stroking her lovely, tousled hair into place; "is this proper behaviour for a soon-to-be housewife on her wedding-day?"

"Oh, Uncle Timotheus – " she hastily wrapped an arm around his neck and kissed him, making the old man almost lose his balance – "a wedding day isn't different to other days, is it, stopping one from being happy? I was in our new home very early this morning; how pretty it is, and

the garden and the dovecote – but as for those ugly books, I'll throw them out of my rooms, you can keep them yourself, Uncle Timotheus.”

She now let go of the old man's neck and looked in astonishment at Felix, who had been regarding her in silent surprise.

“This is my nephew, whom I have told you about, Hedwig, and now yours also,” the magister said with a cheerful face, “he has come especially for our wedding and will stay with us over the summer.”

The girl clapped her hands in delight. “That's splendid!” she said, and she gave her hand to the young man, who was still struck dumb. “But papa has been waiting with his breakfast a long time: come, Uncle Timotheus – come, nephew!” she added with a mischievous laugh. And she took both of them by the hand and drew them through the carved wooden door into the state room of the old patrician house.

Four hours might have passed. It was May, but the sun burned down on the midday-empty alleys of the little town with the heat of July. The high gables stared pensively at their short shadows, and here and there an occasional girl's head bent out of a bay-window, listening with curiosity and looking up the dazzlingly sunny street to the church before hastily drawing itself back into the cool shade of the room.

But up over the vaulted church-roof and around the age-greyed decoration of the crumbling tower, the hot midday air shimmered and trembled. Sluggish, their wings tucked in, the town-pigeons sat on roof-ridges and edges and quietly cooed to themselves; while higher up, lonely jackdaws fluttered around the timberwork and timidly fled from the light of

day into the dark mouseholes. Down below, however, before the wide portal of the main entrance, where perpendicular sunbeams lay shining on the white tiles, the street gradually filled up with people. Old ladies came with out-of-print books under their arm and went and stood expectantly by the church door; then sturdy girls pressed in among them with babies on their arm, and other small lads and lasses merrily chased one another in among them and played hide-and-seek around the church-corners and in the silent shadows of the old, high-gabled houses, which had seen their forefathers playing the same games there as little boys, many hundreds of years before, in the same sunshine.

But everyone was looking with curious faces down the street towards the market square. "They're coming," was whispered back and forth through the ranks, and then necks stretched out further, only to often sink back disappointed in their hope, and the children eagerly continued their interrupted game. Yet nobody grew weary of waiting and went away – for who in the little town did not know that, this afternoon, good Magister Timotheus was to be married to Hedwig Birkener, the Counsellor's eldest daughter, and who would not have wished to see the stately old man and the pretty young bride together before the altar?

And now, all of a sudden, large bells over the heads of the curious onlookers began to ring, slowly but so powerfully that the sound might have travelled far, into the mountains, in the still of midday; and at the same time something splendid turned round the corner of Market Alley. It was the ceremonial procession, or rather its forerunners; those inhabitants of the little town who could stay on their feet followed as its train, and

although it was an ordinary working day, almost everyone was wearing their Sunday best to honour the young couple. In the middle, conducted by her mother, a still handsome woman of a fine presence, the bride walked with her maids of honour. She wore only a green wreath on her curly brown hair; a silk veil flowed around her lovely face and hung down low over her simple white dress; her small feet in light satin-shoes peeped curiously out under the embroidered hem of her slip. One could tell that she was taking pains to look serious and not turn round to those walking behind her; but from time to time the roguish lines around her mouth contracted involuntarily and the suppressed laughter of her lips sparkled mischievously forth from her shining brown eyes. Close behind her escort walked her father; he and Felix had the bridegroom in between them. The old magister walked almost stiffly and clumsily under the load of his dignity; his eyes, usually so cheerful, looked steadily straight ahead with dignified respectability. His ceremonial frock-coat reached down to a hair's-breadth over his knee, and the tall silk hat which he wore today in exchange for the grey felt cap that was known throughout the town, gave him an unusual, almost comical height.

A whispering now ran through the ranks as the procession slowly strode through them, and the old ladies gave friendly nods. The young lasses, on the other hand, looked attentively at the slim, unknown youth with the long blond curls and light-blue eyes who wandered merrily along at the bridegroom's side. Here and there one probably whispered in an undertone into another's ear, and a suppressed giggle ran from mouth to mouth, causing the old ladies to shake their heads in disapproval and the

Counsellor to look around with a grave expression. – But now the sexton opened one wing of the wide door and the crowd streamed and pushed their way behind the procession into the cool and shady choir of the church, through which the first, full waves of organ-music roared a ceremonial greeting at this very moment.

Then they were standing before the altar: the bride with her maids of honour behind her; beside her, with Felix as witness by his side, the magister; and after a long, edifying speech, which brought many a sob to sound out from the tall, carved pews in the background, the old, white-haired priest, moving the paper up close to his dim, almost blind eyes, read out the formulary. The “Yes” sounded out of the bride’s mouth like a clear silver bell, and the magister repeated it an octave lower with dignified gravity; and the priest raised his trembling hands to the top of their heads in blessing. But he missed his grasp, and his right hand solemnly came down beside the old man onto the blond locks of the young man, who remained under it for a moment in irresolute motionlessness, while all those standing around waited for the priest to notice his mistake. The magister was lost in silent reflection and noticed nothing of the blunder; but the bride, surprised at the pause, turned her head and discovered the error. An involuntarily smile played around her lips, and her eyes shone happily at the blind old priest; but then a bright red suddenly appeared around her temples when she met the eyes of the young man, who had likewise turned to her and was surveying her with large, silent eyes. He also reddened now and withdrew his head from the priest’s hand with a vehement movement, who looked up in amazement and now perceived his

error. He quickly put it right and completed the ceremony; but the only person not to have noticed the blunder at all was old Magister Timotheus, who was now leading his young wife with solemn gravity away from the altar and towards the congratulations of her parents and friends.

And then the procession made its way back, only in a less measured and joyful manner than before, and the young married couple walked arm-in-arm in the centre, giving friendly nods in all directions, where the people they passed by doffed their caps in greeting and cried out wishes for many happy years. The crowd surged after them and cried, "Vivat!" all the way down Market Street; all but two grey-haired old ladies who remained standing at the church door, thoughtfully shaking their heads. "It's not good, such a blunder at the wedding ceremony," said one of them, "I've seen this before." – She fell silent and nodded her shrivelled face meaningfully. The other agreed. "And actually, what was simply a mistake, was more in the order of things," she said. "Such a stripling of a lass and old Timotheus! He was already a big, confirmed lad when I went to the girls' school and when he met me up in the Marienplatz at midday – and that was long ago," she broke off with a sigh; "there was no thought of his bride of today's mother in those days, not for a long time yet."

Now the sexton came and closed the church door, and the old ones parted and wandered thoughtfully on their way. The church lay solitary again, as it had an hour before; only, pigeons cooed softly through the sunlit stillness and the pointed gables looked down at their elongated shadows in undisturbed silence. –

But from the first floor of the old, patriarchal house there resounded

the merry clinking of glasses; every now and then a loud flourish rang out, making the people in the street stand still and cast curious glances up at the bay-windows. These were decorated from top to bottom with fresh beech-leaves, and from time to time, giggling girls' faces looked through them, or a portly old gentleman with a flushed countenance walked up to one to get some fresh air and squinted uncertainly out into the light of day. Loud words rang out from behind, almost comprehensible down below, followed by joyous laughter with ringing glasses and popping corks. The Counsellor walked around the long table, glass in hand, bending down to clink glasses now here, now there, while holding onto the chair-back with his other hand, often well-nigh pulling the seat out from under the guest. Then he moved on, laughing, until he came to the upper end of the table. The celebrating newlyweds sat there, with Felix and the Counsellor's wife beside them. The latter's cheeks laughed happily, and she frequently dipped her slightly rosy nose down into the pointed, bubbling glass and became ever livelier and more talkative. From behind, the master of the house stepped between her and the magister, who was chatting merrily with her, and whose stories almost moved her to constant bursts of joyful laughter.

“Well, Sir Son, we must drink a dram together,” he beamed, bending down between them. “Twenty years ago, I wouldn't have seen the two of you sitting together so calmly – yes, yes, just admit it, old one, you were smitten with the learned gentleman, and now that the little one there has become your spitting image and he can't have you any more – ”

Something other than the flush of wine passed over the face of the

Counsellor's wife, and she hastily interrupted him by clinking her raised glass with his and the magister's. The latter might also have been a little embarrassed by the joke, for he turned to his other side, towards his young wife, who sat there between him and his nephew in silence, only casting an eye almost diffidently over the table every now and then.

It had been thus during the entire wedding feast; seeming to have lost her cheerful humour and that mischievousness natural to her since the homecoming from church, she sat still beside the youth, who would occasionally talk to his other female neighbour with a liveliness that was visibly forced before staring straight ahead in silence also. They had spoken barely a word to one another and their eyes almost anxiously avoided meeting, or, when this happened by chance, glided past each other hastily and uneasily.

The magister now turned round and regarded the two of them with surprise in his eyes. "Why are you both sitting as dumb as tailor's dummies?" he cried, laughing. "Come, clink your glasses to happy harmony and love in the home!"

He did not notice Hedwig's hand gently shaking as she raised her glass. "Yes, yes," he said contentedly when his glass had struck hers and his nephew's, "that was a proper clink! But what's this, the two of you haven't clinked your glasses yet. You're not angry at anything, are you? Has he been misbehaving, wiffy? You probably just didn't understand him; the refined gentlemen of the capital express themselves differently from we Boeotians in the provinces..."

She hastily shook her head and, half turned away, held her glass

out towards her neighbour. The youth, who had already set his down, took it up again. "If I might possibly..." he said.

But the old man interrupted him. "Hey now, what's this?" he cried. "You talk so formally with your only uncle's wife, boy? Your actual aunt? Give those glasses here! What nonsensical metropolitan ideas!"

He poured their glasses full to the brim while tears of laughter at their embarrassed faces ran down his cheeks. "So, now drink your reconciliation, and to informality!" he said. "Don't argue! And then you'll give each other a proper kiss, as becomes such close relations: I will not have discord in my house from the first day. And that's that!"

The rosiness had retreated from the bride's temples and she sat there pale and motionless. The Counsellor came over to her, staggering somewhat. "Yes, that's right and proper," he slurred, "reconciliation – bah, discord – disturbs the feast for me." The guests around them also took notice and concurred in their wine-merry mood.

"We have to, Hedwig," the youth said quietly, so quietly that only she understood him. She turned around at these words and stared at him: it lasted only a moment, but there lay a deadly, incomprehensible fear in her look. Convulsively, she seized the glass which stood before her and clinked it against his – they both drained their glasses and Felix quickly bent over her and fleetingly brushed his lips against hers. But before he could prevent it, she had wrapped her arm around the nape of his neck and ardently pressed her lips against his – then, rising to her feet, she forcibly rolled her chair back and set her glass down on the table so hard that a foot broke off with a **clink** and it made a deep cut in her dainty

fingers.

“Yes, that was well done!” the magister laughed happily, “now give me a kiss for being the peacebroker, little woman –” Only now did he see that blood was flowing heavily over her hand. “You have cut yourself, child; the abominable glass!” he said, carefully taking her hand. “But what is wrong with you? You’ve turned pale and you’re swaying –”

He leapt up and caught her. “The loss of blood,” she said quietly, “I’m not used to seeing blood.” She convulsively pressed her uninjured hand to her heart; her mother had likewise leapt up and come over; leaning on her shoulder, Hedwig disappeared into an adjoining room.

Back and forth, from one to the other, the tipsy little Counsellor ran, and he asked the guests not to let the accident, which was easily mended, dampen their merriment. But it had been interrupted and, as tends to be the case, was not easily restored. The feeling may have arisen in many of them that it was a good idea to use the moment to safely retire home before it grew too late; and in spite of all the remonstrances made by the host, who was eager to continue, the decorated state-room was empty after half an hour, and only overturned bottles and half-emptied glasses bore witness to the four hours of gaiety which had reigned there.

It gradually began to grow dark and the stars rose in the heavens. The magister had gone to his wife in the next room, who had recovered from a light swoon under her mother’s diligent ministrations. The Counsellor sat on an old-fashioned divan in the corner of the room; he had filled a glass and laid it on the table before him, but his head slowly nodded onto his chest, lower and lower; a satisfied smile still played around his

lips; soon, however, his closed eyelids indicated deep sleep.

But Felix stood alone in the opened breast of the oriel window, looking out into the duskening sky. The green beech-twigs hung down, wilted, to his side, and he absent-mindedly crumbled the limp leaves with his hand. He had drunk hardly any wine, but his brow was burning, and he silently laid it against the cool stone wall of the window. Then he suddenly turned around, walked softly through the room and went down into the street. He followed its course and took the same road he had walked with the old man in the morning, through the town-gate and over the dewy meadow by the river. The moon was rising as he crossed the footbridge, and it gleamed silver light on the towers and turrets of the town, which lay in deep peace behind him. He had taken off his hat, and when he looked around, the full radiance fell on his pale, contending face. Below him the waves rippled and murmured; he looked steadfastly down. Finally, he put his hand over his eyes and quietly sat down at the water's edge among the damp primroses.

When he walked back over the footbridge to the town, the moon stood high in the heavens, and his footsteps reverberated for a long way through the empty alleys. Slowly he wandered up to the house which he had visited for the first time that morning with his uncle; the old gable lay almost as clear as day in the full moonlight, yet inside all was still and dark and peaceful. For one moment he paused, as if wavering; then he quickly took a key from his pocket, soundlessly opened the door, and carefully walked up the dark stairs to the second floor.

- - - - -

And summer came, laughing and golden, with endless blue, and the fields on the gently descending slopes began to softly change colour. They became yellower and yellower; amongst them there lurked, like happy faces, blue and red and violet interlopers and they swayed on their slender stems like laughing idlers through the serious stems which bent under heavy loads. The sun lay bright and joyful over all of this, and it did the eye good to glide with keen interest from afar over the blithely cheerful summer world.

Now who saw it from the beginning, as it came into being? Softly, still imperceptible to the eyes, mists rise from the horizon, yet the sun rests on the golden sea of corn almost hotter and more dazzling than before. Its brilliance breaks through the fluttering white clouds which hurry past it; but a surging, as of cobwebbed veils, sweeps over the windruffled peaks of the field – evanescently, like long sea-waves compressing each other. Behind these veils, the surface becomes still and calm in sunshine again, but the calmness is ever more fleeing, ever shorter; now shadows follow, denser and denser, until they cover everything in grey far into the distance: a gale burrows in among the stalks, eddying and loosening – then the sky is black, and the sunny day is transformed into dull, leaden dusk - - - - -

They pass by, the clouds, and the sun emerges again shining in victory. But where the blooming fields had been, there is now desolation and death; the colourful, laughing flowers lie withered and crushed, strewn on the ground between the broken ears, and the hope of the harvest is gone, as are the merry garlands of the reapers. The earth will beget them again, other stalks, as golden as these were, and other fragrant flowers –

but for other eyes and in another summer. - - - - -

They often stood still in the street, the townspeople, and their eyes joyfully followed the old magister walking along with his young wife. He walked more self-consciously and more erect than previously, and she hung to his arm, joking and chatting. He looked almost younger, and his ingenuous eyes laughed with even more good-natured contentment than usual; this brought joy to many a person who met them, now before the gate down by the river, now over in the foothills or in the streets of the town, as he always faithfully accompanied her and happily carried her purchases home at her side. It had been so throughout May and June; it almost seemed that the quiet, diligent magister had changed his whole way of life and suddenly found pleasure solely in idleness. Yet everyone readily allowed him this, for it was well known how arduous the troubles had been in which he had spent his youth and even his years of greater maturity. Now, however, the height of summer had arrived with sultry exhausting days, and they were seen together more seldom. It was natural, and he also wished, no doubt, to make up what he had lost during his honeymoon. Yet many people thought that they could tell, on those days when he took his long-accustomed walk over the meadow into the little forest opposite in the evening hour, now mostly alone, that his friendly face looked more strained and more serious. He often stood over by the riverbank, leaning on the wooden railing of the footbridge, and he could spend a long time looking down into the rippling waves, at the trembling circles of sunlight at the bottom, as they intertwined and separated – he fixed his gaze on this, but then something like a light mist would often lie

before the friendly, clear eyes, and it passed over his high forehead like hasty, waving shadows over the yellow, sunlit cornfield.

And days and weeks went by; everyone in the little town plied his trade and went his way and had no leisure, in the tangled course of life, to pay any heed to the doings of those others who were out of his sight. But anyone who happened to meet the magister on a lonely, remote path, wandering along with his brow bent forward and so deeply sunk in thought that he barely noticed the passer-by's greeting, was certain to follow him with his gaze and think, with a shake of the head, that some sorrow lay in the friendly old eyes.

Did it lie there? Yes, it lay there, when he stood at the dormer-window at the back of the old house, looking down into the garden. He had wanted to search for something in the attic, but the air being close and not breathable, he had hastily opened the dull, rusty window. A fairytale-like, sunny midday still lay over the garden down below, which was fenced around on all sides, like Sleeping Beauty's enchanted castle, with high, blooming creeper-hedges. A sensuous scent floated up from the jasmine, and the tops of the trees and bushes stood, as if under a spell, immovable in the air; brightly-coloured tulips, like transformed princesses, raised their heads out from the dark green with mysterious solemnity. Only, there was a soft rustling in the red-studded branches of the cherry-tree; a narrow ladder was propped against the trunk, and a white summer-dress flapped from its top rundle. Bright arms bent hither and thither and made grabs at the more distant branches; at one side, a half-filled basket hung on a broken knot in the trunk. The old man had remained standing at the

window and saw this as in a dream. Childhood memories came back to him, he knew not how, and he sank into daydreams under a fairytale sun. But then he started, for a branch shot up with great force and a quiet cry sounded up from below. Then the ladder slid, creaking, along the trunk and the white dress swayed to and fro. The old man anxiously stretched his arms out, but a young man, his locks flying, was already hurrying out from a side-bower towards the tree, where he caught the falling woman firmly in his arms. She was motionless with shock, her head lay on his breast, and he stared, bent over her face, silently straight ahead. Then she opened her eyes and stood up straight; yet she might have felt weak, for she threw her arm around the back of his neck and he put his arms around her for support as they walked slowly towards the shady bower.

Strangely, the sun was in a cloudless, blue midday-sky, but they flew over the serious old face as it looked down into the empty garden area, those shadows – hastily impelled forward, those dull, undulating shadows...

Yes, sorrow lay there unmistakably; it was evening, and they sat around the table, snugly lit by the small dome lamp. The curtains were tightly drawn, for the first days of autumn had begun, and the tea-water hummed cosily in a shining copper pot on the chafing-dish at the side. In a deep easy-chair, the old magister sat and read; the lamp had been moved close to him, for he read out loud, and Hedwig and Felix leant back in the old-worldly comfortable sofa and listened. The shadow of the back of the lamp fell over them both, casting them half in twilight. She had placed her right hand over her eyes and seemed to be listening attentively; Felix also

looked motionlessly into space. But the old man's voice gradually began to tremble; he read on and on, but he did not hear his own words and his eyes anxiously wandered past the white pages. They were still sharp, these grave, sad eyes, and they clearly saw the two hands on the dark sofa-seat slowly approach each other. Now and then they seemed to hesitate, and moved quietly apart again; but they were drawn back together as if by magnetism, closer and closer. Now they had reached each other and rested in an intertwined caress – they were handsome, sympathetic hands, as if made for each other – involuntarily, the old man looked down at his – those dull, undulating shadows thronged ever more densely.

He himself did not know that he was not reading anymore, for he continued to move his lips mechanically but they no longer brought forth any sound. It was an apprehensive, uncanny silence as the three people sat close together and their thoughts ran apart, far, inaccessibly far. All of them failed to notice that a change had occurred, and they remained, motionless, in their positions; only, it lay ever more unmistakably in the eyes of the old magister as they looked over, softly trembling, at the white, intertwined hands – it lay, the bitter, silent sorrow.

But now the hands suddenly separated and they both gave a start. The book had slipped from the old man's careless fingers and fallen noisily onto the floor; Hedwig sprang up blushing and bent down to pick it up. Her hands were upon it, yet she pretended to still be searching, while she pressed the blood back out of her cheeks. Felix had also stood up and looked around in confusion.

“I have a headache,” he said, “and am going for a walk.” His voice sounded pinched, the old man nodded his head without a word. “Good night!” cried the young man. “Good night!” the other replied cordially, “may it do you good.”

Then he went out and the old man silently buried his face in his hands. The woman was still kneeling in the darkness; minutes passed by, it was so quiet in the room, one hardly heard a breath. Only the Dutch clock on the brown wall-panelling ticked back and forth. Finally, the magister said in a calm voice:

“Have you not found the book yet, my child?” She had composed herself and rose up. “At last!” she said, “the light is dazzling, and then it’s so dark down there.” She tried to speak naturally and avoided looking at him; yet as she laid the book on the table, her gaze involuntarily wandered over his face. It had an expression of infinite pain, as it was fixed ardently on her; a bright, sorrowful tear dropped off his grey eyelashes and rolled down, shining, over his cheek.

She caught her breath. “What is wrong?” she wanted to ask, but she only breathed the question; her neck, as though laced tight, could bring forth no words. He silently took her hand: “Hedwig! ...” he said then. She could not bear his look, her breast rose convulsively, then she suddenly fell down sobbing before him and pressed her brow to his knees, hiding her face with her hands.

He bent down to her and kissed her brow lovingly. “My poor child!” he said softly; but he could say no more, his voice trembled and tears gushed down from his eyes onto the curly head before him.

And once again, with unutterable tenderness and affection:

“Hedwig, my beloved child!” – – –

Nobody had seen this but the small hand on the old clock as it moved slowly onwards, almost up to midnight. She now stood by his side, her arms around his neck, her little head rocking, with gentle sobs every now and then, on his breast. And over her, it lay almost with a sunny clearness once more, the old forehead, as the sun will fleetingly shine down bright and serene through a torn gap in the hurrying throng of clouds onto the waving, storm-grasped sea of corn.

- - - - -

Yes, he needed to go! And he wanted to and clearly realised this in his good hours. Nobody spoke a word to him about it, and his old uncle was friendly and kind to him as before. Had he not promised the orphan a home in his house and, when informed of his decision to return to the city, asked him in a curiously trembling yet almost demanding voice to stay? They passed by one another on friendly terms, but an oppression hung over them and the conversation often lapsed into an awkward silence when they sat together around the table, or it was continued by one of the three with visible effort. Actually, only by the two men: Hedwig became more silent day by day and barely took part in what was happening around her. She never looked at Felix, and he avoided addressing her; only, every now and then, her eyes timidly met the old man’s look, to hastily be cast down. Then she disappeared, as soon as she possibly could, and mostly did not show her face again until it was evening, when she would sit with her sewing, diligently working, on a chair beside the magister’s armchair.

Cold, gloomy, late autumn days had come. Outside, the November wind swept over the brown stubble on the mountain slopes and whirled the thin leaves of the lime trees up into the air in fantastic spirals around the oriel-corner of Timotheus's house. It was the first of the month, and Felix had irrevocably fixed his departure for the second. His uncle had again urgently tried to hold him back, but he had brought forth such a host of convincing arguments, how his calling necessitated his return, that the old man was, in the end, unable to make any objections. So it was now settled and nobody spoke of it anymore. Hedwig had been there when the young man first emphatically expressed his resolve and fixed the day, and the old man's gaze had hastily flown, in anxious inquiry, over her face; but she heard this with indifference, occupied in the room, and spoke not a word thereto. Indeed, she probably barely heard it, for in the moment when Felix began to speak, the yellow china vase in which she was busy placing late asters slipped from her hands and fell to the floor with a crash. She bent down with a mournful cry over the beautiful heirloom that she had received from her mother as part of her dowry, and fervently gathered the pieces together. Then she rose to her feet and went, as she usually did at that time, to her room.

The last week had passed quietly and the eve of his departure came around. It presented an inhospitable contrast to the delightful, sunny May morning when the youth, having come on the night stage-coach, had met the old magister over on the footbridge among the laughing primroses. They had wilted long ago, and in some places the high-swollen river poured its water over them, in eddies yellowed with mud, for mighty

downpours had unloaded in the mountains – people in the little town called them cloudbursts, with a vaguely sinister conception of the word – and the rushing water tore stones of all kinds, up to those of a considerable weight, out of the rocky ravines and carried them down to the plain. On top of this, a gale howled today which grew as darkness fell, and any inhabitant of the little town whom an errand drove across the street darted as fast as a shadow back behind the cosy, protecting walls.

Now it was gloomy, leaden dusk; contrary to habit, the old magister had refrained from his evening stroll. He had crossed over from his study to the living room with his stick and greatcoat; Hedwig met him at the door. “Do take an umbrella,” she said, “I think there’ll be rain, and you catch cold so easily.” She carried a basket over her arm and was busy with household affairs; he heard her go down the stairs to the kitchen, then walked to the window and looked out. Leaves fluttered down in circling shoals, as if chasing each other, over the paving; high over the gables of the houses, standing out black against the grey clouds, crows fought the wind in vain and alighted, croaking, with spread wings on the ridge of the roof. The old man followed them absent-mindedly with his eyes; finally, he sat down unthinkingly on the chair in the corner and leaned his head back. The wind moved the bare branches of the lime tree against the window-panes, lights gradually appeared in the houses opposite – he saw and heard it as in a dream. From time to time he opened his eyes, but he might have been thinking far into the past and noticed nothing of the deep darkness that lay around him. The sun played on the waves and his eyes were fixed on the golden circles as they came and flowed through one another, ever brighter

and livelier – then the surface suddenly trembled and they vanished; ugly, cloudy sludge swelled over it, and when he turned round, a handsome, laughing young man’s countenance was behind him and it said - - - -

A connected image swiftly ensued. Again the golden curls on the wall disappeared, and a soundless shadow glided over it. But then it had gone, and the curls returned and a smile of melancholic satisfaction played around the silent, wistful lips of the old man.

He knew that he was dreaming, for now he heard the young man’s voice again. He did not see him, but it sounded close beside him, behind his back, quiet, low, and yet, it seemed, with an agitation that required great effort to suppress. “Is it you, Hedwig?” it said, “I came down to say farewell to you; I depart with the first light of day.”

“Yes,” came the barely audible answer out of the darkness, “Farewell, Felix, and if –”

But her voice failed her, and all that could be heard was a suppressed sobbing sound with convulsions that suffocated her breast.

“Hedwig, what’s wrong with you?” the youth asked in a quavering voice. He may have taken her hand, for she anxiously wrung herself free. “Go, Felix, go!” she sobbed, “and never return, if you love me – oh God! Why did you come?” He said nothing in reply; she heard the doorknob move under his hand, breathlessly she listened through the darkness. Now the hinge began to turn with a creak, and her senses began to sway and flow into each other. She did not want to – she fought back the word – but her lips gasped it out:

“Felix!”

There was a heart-rending woe in this; he had to turn around, and he stepped back into the room. Now she had taken his hand and held it tightly enclosed in hers. "So you're going for the last time?" she stammered, "and I'll never see you again?"

Deep, fearful silence; they could have heard the anxious heartbeats in the dark oriel-corner, but they felt only the wild thumping in their own breasts. He had drawn her to him; her head lay trembling on his shoulder.

"Oh God, what is to become of us, Hedwig?" he said.

"I was a child, Felix," she whispered, "and had never known love; but now I feel it – here – here – I'll surely die if you go."

He did not answer; nobody spoke a word. The minutes passed, they simply rocked silently in each other's arms.

"Enough, Hedwig," he finally forced out, "You are his and have already given me too much of what belongs to him."

He wrested himself free from her with a vigorous movement, but she now forcefully threw her arms around his neck and held him.

"Yours," she said in a daze, "yours for ever – wherever you go, my thoughts shall go with you..."

A rattling sound came from the stairs outside, which a ponderous foot was slowly ascending. With one last kiss, they tore themselves away from each other and hurriedly fled to the right and to the left, into side rooms. Then the door opened and a broad gleam of light fell over the threshold. The maid walked in and placed the candlestick on the table. She took the tablecloth off it and laid another one. Thinking she heard a sound behind her, she turned around; then she gave a shriek and started back in

alarm.

“Lord Jesus, Magister, what’s wrong with you?” she asked. Right behind her, in the middle of the room, was the old man’s deadly-pale face, his eyes roaming dully over her. He moved his lips without speaking, and motioned her to silence with his hand; then he walked slowly through the open door and felt his way down the banister to the hallway.

He had neither hat nor stick as he walked along the street, although the oil-lamps flickered dimly in the wind; and none of the people who ran hurriedly home, driven by the storm, paid any heed to him. The rain whipped his face and stuck his tousled hair down around his temples; now his feet rustled in the darkness through the heaps of withered leaves on the road, and an old memory flashed through his mind. “The world for us is over,” his lips murmured. “Spring will come again, but it is over for us, and others wish to claim their right to it.”

He came down to the gate. He had often passed through in the night; without clearly becoming conscious of it, he felt an involuntary surprise at a dim lamp burning under the arch. As he walked past it, the tower-watchman grumpily stuck his head out of a window-breast.

“Everyone is worried that the footbridge is unsafe this evening because of the high water,” he said monotonously. Then, cursing the rain that was pouring in, he slammed the window shut again. He had not recognised the old man, who had very often stopped off and chatted with him when on his walks, and was hardly likely, no doubt, to think of his being outside at this hour in such a storm.

The old man had continued on his way; he had heard the words but

did not connect them to any meaning. He mechanically followed the long-familiar road in the dark; he did not think of the present, but was drawn irresistibly over as if by invisible hands – his world lay there; in memory. Behind him, the world belonged to others, but there, it was his and he had to stand there looking down, even if it was night around him. The world was not so dark outside as it was inside him, and only over there could he illuminate and banish it, where the sun had played on the waves, golden circles signifying happiness, separating and intertwining...

Yes, the world belonged to others, and had to belong to them, and the withered leaf had to fall to make room for the green one! What was he doing, thrusting himself into young, into laughing, spring? What was the rigid, withered oak doing, desiring the soft, caressing tendrils of the ivy? Who could know that it was still strong and powerful and full of life in its innermost pith, who saw only the bare branches and the grey, clod-covered bark? –

The old raven had known when it flew away croaking through the green tops of the beech trees!

And again – all thoughts were bitterly compressed to the one point! Whipped by the storm, the dark waves under him shot away in a tumbling rush; he did not see them, but he heard and felt them shaking the rotten piers and making them shake and sway. Did the warning cry of the gatekeeper now suddenly echo in his ear? But what else were they to do, the old, tired piers? They had withstood the gnawing waves long enough – now it had become autumn around them, dreary, frosty autumn, and no spring beckoned to them anymore and none would miss them, for the

forest was dead and the flowers gone – who needed them now? To whom could they be of use now?

Yes, he became conscious of it with total clarity now, the watchman's warning cry, and as the waves loosened the posts under him, he felt them beginning to move – as the planks bent and a groaning ran faster and faster along the footbridge. He did not stir; with his hands placed together on his breast, he looked upwards – who was it who directed, over the black swarm of clouds, with gracious hand, the streaming waters and the fates of men?

Certainly – it was all-knowing; only the short-sighted, tired eye did not penetrate it. Yet, when it has closed in fleeting rest and opened again, it will look back with a smile and the anxious earthly shadows will fall off - -
- -

The sound rang out far through the dark night. A shattering crash, then the waves broke with a splash and the bridge gave way, collapsing with a thud. But the storm drowned out the sound; they shot down the river in eddies as fast as an arrow, the old, rotten, overlived fragments – then the wave silently threw them out onto the lonely edge of the bank.

- - - - -

A cloudless, golden November day. Slowly fell the last leaves from the trees; but the full, autumnal sunlight lay warmly on the grey towers and turrets. It drew golden circles in the billows of the river, and golden, sporting rings through the open windowpanes on the lonely walls in old Timotheus's room. It looked into the faces of the inhabitants of the little town, who walked along the streets more silently than usual, and through

the breast in the gatekeeper's window, who stood before it and took his black ceremonial coat out of the wardrobe. He looked solemn in this, as he walked out through the door and glanced silently down through the gateway and over the meadow one more time; then he went slowly away with the others, with black crepe around his hat.

They all seemed to have *one* destination. The pigeons on the roof-ridges of the church cooed and fluttered contentedly in the warm sunlight, but then they suddenly flew up in alarm and darted about high over the town, shimmering white, when the bronze clapper beside them dully began to move and interrupted the autumnal peace with its solemn sound. Then the procession came around the corner.

The boys, of almost every age, walked in pairs at the head; sadness lay upon the little faces, which were usually so happy. With serious looks, they walked slowly, in their Sunday best, through the streets then over the market-square and through the Northern Gate and along the old, crumbling town wall. And now straight over the path up the little hill, through the barway, past teetering, half-fallen crosses where the tall, yellowed grass murmured over inscriptions that had faded away. At last, these became sparser and stood farther apart from each other; then they came onto the sunlit hilltop, and the freshly thrown-up earth hampered their steps. A bowed old man with streaks of silver-white hair stood beside it, leaning on a spade, and signalled to them; and they silently ranged themselves around the dark hollow, waiting the approach of the long file which was still moving steadily through the barway down below. From time to time, a small head craned forward and looked curiously, earnestly, down into the

depths – cool air rose up from them into the sunny autumn air – and then a whisper passed through the ranks and high-pitched voices sounded out in solemn melody over the listening crosses on the slope – “How softly they do lie!”¹ – while the black coffin rocked slowly down into the cool depths.

And then the song died away and the old, hoary-headed priest stood, with raised hands, at the edge of the grave.

“Yes, how softly they rest,” he said in a quavering voice, “after the joys and the sorrows which fall to their lot on this earth!” Then he spoke of how they had, but a short while before, stood together so very differently and, with hearts full of hope, forged another bond, which they thought would happily enfold them, faithful and fast, for a long time to come. And how life was like a river, in which every drop pours into the Sea of Eternity, the one after a short wandering, the other after a long one; and how the river was similar to life, which also suddenly sweeps away the supports from under the trusting foot and leaves it without a hold over the days and months and years which stream ever by – for the departed one rests softly and free from care, but those that remain cannot free themselves from the thought that they could perhaps have spared him much, could have cleared the way before his feet of many a stone that made him weary...

A vehement sobbing sounded beside him from the midst of those standing around, and a figure dressed in deep black pressed, trembling, her lowered veil to her face. Everyone around her sensitively pretended not to notice; the old priest broke off and added in a gentle voice:

¹ “Wie sie so sanft ruhen” – words by Friedrich Gottlob Klopstock (1724-1803), put to music by Friedrich Burchard Beneken (1760-1818).

“But may they, and all of us, find reconciliation and peace with the help of Him who rules the hearts in our own souls – Amen –”

He pulled the spade out of the ground and accompanied the clods he cast down with words of blessing. The sound of thuds rose up from the depths when they touched the hollow lid; then one person after another stepped forward and bedded him down, with a final farewell, ever more tightly in the narrow chamber. They had all loved him in life for so long and there was no-one who refused the dead man this last, sad gift.

No, no-one – except for two black figures who stood among them and motionlessly watched them walk up to the grave and pour down the earth and walk the path back to the town. Now they had all disappeared; the boys also walked seriously along the graveyard; but then, in front of the barway, their long-restrained happy nature broke out and they hurried off to their places of play to spend there the free, sunny autumn day romping around. What did they know of grief and death, and what of that bitter, life-benighting remorse!

Only the old, white-haired gravedigger still stood beside the grave. He had experienced all this many hundreds of times and may well have given himself up to his own thoughts during the ceremony; now that all had become silent around him, he looked up and regarded the black, motionless figures for a moment, then he shouldered the spade and walked reverently up the other side of the churchyard.

They were alone, entirely alone – as they had believed themselves to be in the dark that time. In silence he lay before them, almost covered by earth; only at one side did the black coffin look solemnly out. He could

no longer prevent what they did – indeed, he had never wanted to.

No; he stood beside them in the bright sunshine and looked at them with those sad, mournful eyes. She had walked up to the grave and lifted the veil from her deathly pale, tear-stained countenance; but she could not bear the sight and, with a shudder, placed her hand over her eyes.

“Farewell, Hedwig!” said a sombre voice over from her, and she looked up into the serious, ghostly-pale face of the young man. Without saying a word, he held his hand out to her, but he could not reach her over the broad hollow. “The grave lies between us,” he said softly.

She nodded earnestly. “Forever!” she said, and her hand fell slowly back. Then she picked a handful of earth up from the ground, threw it onto the coffin, and walked down through the graveyard. He stood still and watched her, but she did not turn around; before the barway, she lowered her veil again and walked along beside the town wall, through the gate, and up Market Street. People respectfully gave way to her in the street; she gave no heed to their greetings but slowly walked on to her father’s house and entered the hallway. The doors had been open, but she closed them firmly behind her and stood still for a moment, soundlessly moving her lips; then she swept her hand over her serious brow and walked, with resolute steps, up the dark stairs.