

My correspondence with my beloved was in a good way. To be sure, during the first years we never wrote a letter which was not three pages long. In the course of the second year, we cut off at least half; and by the third, it was reduced to a single page. Time does wonders, but it does not extinguish true love. Augustina had, in the mean time, refused several young men who had paid their addresses to her. My letters were generally filled with regrets that I was not yet in a situation to ask her hand. My present salary was barely sufficient for my own personal expenses. The little inheritance from my father was nearly expended. She on her part assured me her parents were daily becoming more and more desirous she should accept some of the proposals of marriage which were made her, because she would soon have reached a certain age, when she would not be in so much demand, and would be called an old maid.

I felt her parents were right; and my understanding with Augustina being clear, I forgot the former proposal, and wrote to Mr. Waldern with regard to Augustina, that though I was not yet able to support a wife, yet I was consoled by the brightest hopes. This consolation did not go far with Waldern. He, in the meantime, refused again to give me Augustina, and gave me to understand that I made his daughter unhappy by these useless negotiations, since she was now in the middle of the twenties, and was advancing with a quick step toward the thirties.

On receiving this letter, I sighed sorrowfully. "The man is right, perfectly right," and I was magnanimous enough to acknowledge this to Augustina herself. I wrote to her, that as I could not see with any certainty the time when I could with propriety ask for her hand, she should not sacrifice her best years for me. I should not love her less, even if she were the wife of another; and my happiness would be increased, if I only knew she were more happy.

This gave materials for a correspondence that lasted for nearly a year, and in which the same circumstances were considered on all sides. We wished to exceed each other in love and generosity. But at last I gained the victory, or rather Time, the wonder-worker, gained it, for Augustina was already six-and-twenty years old, a fatal period for maidens who would not increase the number of the eleven thousand in heaven.

However, very unexpectedly I received a letter from the city in an unknown hand. A counsellor of justice, Von Winter, thanked me in the tenderest and most feeling manner for my magnanimity, for Augustina was now his wedded wife.

He begged for my friendship, and Augustina herself added a few pretty lines to the letter of her "dear husband," as she called him.

When I read this, it seemed as if I had fallen from the clouds. I cursed my untimely magnanimity, and Augustina's faithlessness. But what was to be done? Augustina was six-and-twenty years old. She was not altogether in the wrong. Notwithstanding, I was filled with extreme vexation on her account, which was increased when, a year after, her father died, by which event she arrived at free power over her hand and wealth. If she had only waited one year longer. Now it was all too late. I wrote not another line to her, nor she to me. We became to each other as if we had never met.

Partly in revenge and retaliation for Augustina's faithlessness, partly to amuse my mind, I looked about among the daughters of the land. Lovely roses were blooming there; willingly would I have gathered one of them, but alas the money!

Fortune now favored me. I was in a better place, in another city. Some of my labors drew the attention of the minister of State. I was employed in several important causes, and the success of these operated in such a manner, that when I had reached my thirtieth year, I received the honorable appointment of President of the criminal court, in the province in which I had until now been laboring. I had, beside the honor, a liberal salary,—was able to keep house handsomely,—visited the best families in the neighborhood, even where there were grown up daughters.

Thoughts of the city sometimes drove the blood to my cheeks, though I imagined I had forgotten Augustina, or I should rather say Madame Von Winter. As far as I could hear from travellers, her husband was a somewhat old gentleman of noble family; and the gracious lady lived, as they say in the court cities, upon the *court footing*, surrounded by admirers, every day engaged in parties of the nobility, pic-nics, ronds, assemblées, ridottes, concerts, &c. The old simplicity of her father's house was gone. I was grieved when I heard these things. I could not accustom myself to think of the good, the celestial Augustina as so employed. Sometimes I could not but think, "Thank God, that she is not my wife."

A second letter from the Minister of Justice made it necessary for me to take a journey to the city, which I had not visited for many years. I was received by the Minister, and even by the