

Rebecca (*getting up from her chair*). Did you hear that?

(*The door opens, and ULRIK BRENDDEL comes in. Except that he wears a white shirt, a black coat and a good pair of high boots, he is dressed as in the first act. He looks troubled.*)

Rosmer. Ah, it is you, Mr. Brendel!

Brendel. John, my boy, I have come to say good-bye to you!

Rosmer. Where are you going, so late as this?

Brendel. Downhill.

Rosmer. How—?

Brendel. I am on my way home, my beloved pupil. I am homesick for the great Nothingness.

Rosmer. Something has happened to you, Mr. Brendel! What is it?

Brendel. Ah, you notice the transformation, then? Well, it is evident enough. The last time I entered your doors I stood before you a man of substance, slapping a well-filled pocket.

Rosmer. Really? I don't quite understand—

Brendel. And now, as you see me to-night, I am a deposed monarch standing over the ashes of my burnt-out palace.

Rosmer. If there is any way I can help you—

Brendel. You have preserved your childlike heart, John—can you let me have a loan?

Rosmer. Yes, most willingly!

Brendel. Can you spare me an ideal or two?

Rosmer. What do you say?

Brendel. One or two cast-off ideals? You will be doing a good deed. I am cleaned out, my dear boy, absolutely and entirely.

Rebecca. Did you not succeed in giving your lecture?

Brendel. No, fair lady. What do you think?—just as I was standing ready to pour out the contents of my horn of plenty, I made the painful discovery that I was bankrupt.

Rebecca. But what of all your unwritten works, then?

Brendel. For five and twenty years I have been like a miser sitting on his locked money-chest. And then