

Aside from that, the factory requires modernizing and enlarging, for which enormous sums are needed, which will have to be obtained."

"That was honest. Marriage being out of the question, we have to consider the other possibility: that you intend to remain single, in order to sanction your love and Carmen's. Just give me the assurance that each will see in the other a companion, helpmate, and partner for life, and I will go."

Laurenz Terbroich played with the glass he had taken from the table. "How can a human being make promises for so long a time? And for himself and another to boot?"

"You shall only promise for yourself, and for the time you can count upon according to honest judgment."

"I—can do that."

"Then you will go with me, and break your engagement to be married."

Laurenz Terbroich started again, this time so violently that the glass he held gave a sound as it struck the edge of the table. "Are you—crazy?"

"Then you admit that this engagement exists! The same engagement you denied with your glib tongue to my daughter. Not a word! . . . The devil! what a low-lived scoundrel. And with a thing like that I have to deal."

"Is the conversation ended?"

"Will you change your mind? Will you come with me, and show yourself as a decent man?"

"I give up Carmen."

"How grand! One cannot dispose of things one does not own."