

essor's face far too well not to be aware that he had been angry and irritated, but not absent-minded. She thought, too, that she knew the cause of his displeasure. He required the most implicit obedience to his medical directions, and from Rosa's description of his practice in Bonn, was accustomed to have his wishes strictly respected. He had repeatedly—and finally with extreme irritation—forbidden Felicitas to carry little Anna in her arms, and yet to-day he saw that she had again disregarded his command. At least this was the only way she could explain the look of angry astonishment he had cast at her as he entered the garden.

Felicitas took her seat on a bench upon the dam. Here grew a lonely birch-tree, the elastic boughs, drooping downward from the smooth white trunk, formed a sort of arbor on the bank. The wind was scarcely felt in this sheltered spot—from time to time the grasses trembled as though drawing a longer breath, and the branches awayed gently to and fro. But the stream, swollen by the recent rains, dashed raging along, its gurgling, muddy waves tearing and plucking spitefully at the roots of the hazel bushes growing on its brink.

The child, with its clumsy little fingers, gathered a quantity of wild flowers and begged Felicitas to tie the things, most of which had been broken off close to the blossom, into a short-stemmed nosegay for "Uncle Professor." The troublesome task required patience and attention—Felicitas's eyes were fixed intently upon the bouquet in her hands, and she did not see the professor come through the cypress hedge and advance swiftly toward her across the lawn. An exclamation from little Anna made her look up—he was already standing by her side. She attempted to rise, but he gently took her arm, pressing her back again, and then sat down beside her.

It was the first time that she had ever wholly lost her self-possession in his presence. Four weeks ago she would have pushed away his hand with horror and instantly left him—now she sat as though paralyzed, helpless under the spell of some magician. It vexed her that he had recently assumed so familiar a tone in speaking to her—she desired nothing more ardently than to convince him that she hated, and abhorred him as fiercely as ever—but suddenly she found that she possessed neither courage nor words to express these feelings. Her timid glance scanned his face—he looked anything but vexed or angry, the deep flush had vanished. Felicitas was provoked with herself, because she could not help owning that the power and determination expressed in the rugged features subdued her against her will.

He sat beside her several seconds in silence. Felicitas felt rather than saw that his eyes were fixed intently upon her.

"Do me the favor, Felicitas, to take that hideous thing off your head," he said at last, in a tone that was almost gay, and, without waiting for the young girl's permission, he gently seized her hat by the brim and flung the shabby, ugly affair contemptuously on the grass. A ray of sunlight, glided through the dancing leaves, had hitherto flickered over the black straw hat, now it rested on the girl's chestnut hair—a tress glittered like spun gold.

"There—now I can see the angry thoughts behind your brow!" he said, with a faint smile. "A battle in the dark is always uncanny to me; I want to see my enemy—and that I have to deal with a very bitter one there"—he pointed to her forehead, "I will know."

Where was this strange preface-tending? Perhaps he expected some answer from the young girl, but she remained persistently silent. Her fingers grouped haphazard the butter-

cup, field-cups, and grasses the child continually brought her. These little hands, which would not be interrupted in the task they had begun, had lost much of their brown tint during the few days spent in the retirement of her room and looked almost rosy. The professor suddenly grasped her right hand, turned it over and examined the palm—it bore traces which could not be so soon obliterated, the skin was hardened in many places. The young girl who, by the express command of her stern guardian, had been reared to servitude, had certainly done her best to prepare herself for the position in life.

Though a deep flush crimsoned Felicitas's face during this scrutiny—close examination of the palm is almost as trying to very sensitive natures as a fixed stare at the face—she regained at this moment her former resolute bearing. Quietly raising her head she looked up at him, and he let her hand fall—then he rubbed his hand over his forehead several times as if trying to find words to express some embarrassing thought.

"You liked to go to school, didn't you?" he asked, suddenly. "Intellectual occupation affords you pleasure?"

"Yes," she answered in surprise. The question seemed strange—it was so entirely unexpected. But diplomatic phrases, spite of his command of language, were foreign to this man's nature.

"Well," he continued, "I suppose you remember what I asked you to consider the other day?"

"I remember it perfectly."

"And have certainly come to the conclusion that it is a woman's duty to faithfully assist a man who desires to retrieve an error?"

Resting his elbow on his knee, he leaned forward and gazed eagerly into her face.

"Not entirely," she answered, firmly, letting the hands that held the bouquet fall into her lap, and looking full at her questioner. "I must first know what this reparation is to be."

"Evasions," he muttered—and his face darkened. He seemed to forget that he had hitherto spoken in general terms, and went on angry. "You need not be so terribly on your guard—I can assure you that the mere expression of your face would deter any one from making any superhuman demand upon you. The point in question is merely that—whatever your mysterious plan for your future may be—you should remain under my guardianship a year longer, and devote this time to the cultivation of your mind. Let me finish!" he cried, frowning and raising his voice, as Felicitas tried to interrupt him. "For once overlook the fact that it is I who am making this proposal, and remember that in providing for your intellectual development I am carrying out the wishes, nay, the express directions of my dead father."

"It is too late."

"Too late? Young as you are?"

"You misunderstand me. I wish to say that once, when a helpless child, I was forced to accept alms—compelled to submit. Now I am independent, I can work, and shall never accept even a penny that I have not earned."

The professor bit his lips, and lowered his eyelids till his eyes were almost concealed.

"I expected this objection," he answered, coldly, "for I am thoroughly aware of your indomitable pride. My plan is this. You shall enter a school—I will lend you the money, and you shall pay me back every penny later, when you are independent. I know of an excellent school in Bonn, and am the family physician of its worthy principal. You would be well instructed there, and," he added, in a slightly tremulous tone, "our eternal parting would be deferred a little while. In fourteen days my vacation will be over; I shall go back with my cousin to Bonn, and you can accompany us.

Felicitas, I begged you a short time to be good and gentle. I now repeat the entreaty. Do not obey the whispers of wounded feeling; forget—even if only for a moment—the past, and let me atone for my fault as far as possible."

Felicitas had listened with a troubled heart. As before, while relating his so-called vision, there was something alluring in the tones of his voice. He was not as mysteriously excited, but the sincere and earnest repentance, which he so frankly and gravely expressed without the least diminution of his manly dignity, touched her, though against her will.

"If I were at liberty to determine the course of my future life, I would willingly, gladly accept your offer, she said, in a more gentle tone than she had ever used to him—"but I am bound. The day I leave Frau Hellwig's house, I shall enter upon my new duties."

"Is this irrevocable?"

"Yes—my promise is sacred to me. I will never change or trifle with it, though it should entail the greatest inconveniences upon me."

He hastily rose and stepped out beyond the shade of the birch-tree.

"And may I not even be permitted to know what you intend to do?" he asked, with his face averted.

"Oh, yes," she answered, quietly. "I should have told Frau Hellwig before, if I had an opportunity. Frau Frank has engaged me as her companion."

The last few words seemed like a sudden thunder-clap. The professor turned abruptly, his face flushed crimson.

"The lady over yonder?" he asked, as though he could not believe his ears, pointing to the next garden. Then, swiftly returning to his place under the tree, he added in a resolute, imperious tone, "Dismiss that idea from your mind at once, I will never consent to it."

The young girl rose with an indignant gesture—the flowers fell unheeded to the ground.

"Your consent?" she said, proudly. "I do not need it. In two weeks I shall be free, and can go wherever I choose."

"Things have changed, Felicitas," he answered, controlling his anger. "I have more rights over you than you suppose. Years may pass before these rights expire, and even then—yes, even then it is a question whether I will release you."

"We will see about it!" she said, coldly and resolutely.

"Yes, you shall see about it. I had a long talk yesterday with Doctor Boehm, my father's most intimate friend, concerning the particulars of your reception into his house. You were confided to my father's care on the express condition that he should keep you under his protection until your father claimed you, or until some other faithful protector was found who would give you his name. My father appointed me his representative in case of his death, and I am firmly determined to maintain these conditions."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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