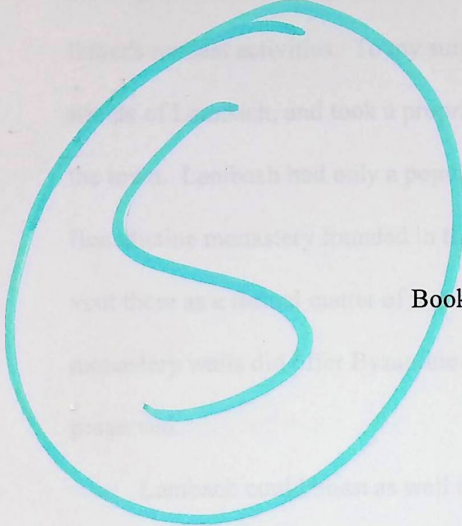
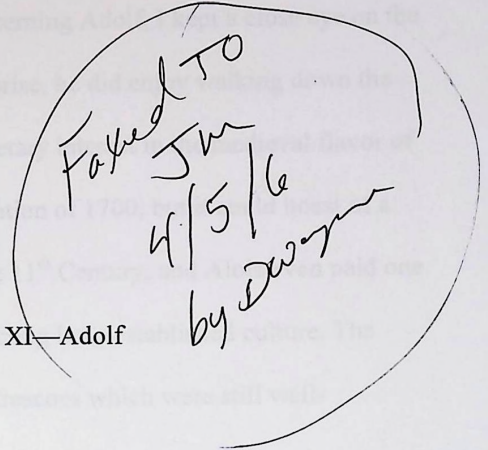


REVISION March 23, 2006



Book XI—Adolf

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In the summer of 1897, after the sale of the Hafeld farm, the family moved to the ~~town of Lambach~~ Gasthof Leingartner in Lambach, and, until the end of the year, they would live at that inn.

Alois had ~~at last~~ begun a true retirement. Indeed, he was obliged to recognize that he had aged in the last couple of years. He felt, for instance, no interest in the cooks and maids at the Gasthof. Worse, they seemed to have no interest in him. Indeed, he did not mind.

I would even say that Alois was temporarily content. Since that could prove good or ill to our purposes concerning Adolf, I kept a close eye on the father's modest activities. To my surprise, he did enjoy walking down the streets of Lambach, and took a proprietary interest in the medieval flavor of the town. Lambach had only a population of 1700, but it could boast of a Benedictine monastery founded in the 11th Century, and Alois even paid one visit there as a formal matter of respecting long-established culture. The monastery walls did offer Byzantine frescoes which were still well-preserved.

Lambach could boast as well of a church, Paura, that had been built in the shape of a triangle with three towers, three gates, and three altars which certainly made Paura an edifice unique enough to become part of his daily promenade. Indeed, it had the strangest effect on his thoughts. He began to wonder whether he had had a previous life here hundreds of years ago. Might he have returned to some shadowed hint of another life? He did not dismiss the notion. He could have been a medieval knight? Why not? Wouldn't that account for his boldest qualities as a man? Der Ritter Alois von Lambach!

Normally, he would have scorned such thoughts, but Alois was, by now, ready to brood just a little about the possible dimensions of death.

If it be asked once again how I am aware of such new concerns when Alois is, after all, not my client, I will reiterate that we can ingest a good deal of the mental workings of those humans who are closely related to an important client. Their casual thoughts are usually available and during periods of transition, we like to remain alert to their unvoiced themes.

Alois' meanderings about death came to me, therefore, without hindrance. Despite the novelty of his point of view, he had even come to decide that most people believed in secret that they would always live, that they would not cease to exist.

As a corollary to this broad surmise, he was obliged to ponder the nature of God. If such a Divinity did exist, would He not be busy with the world's affairs so busy indeed, that He could hardly afford interest in any but the most exceptional people? Since most humans, by Alois' measure, were nonentities, there was bound to be minimal attention ^{in the} Above concerning the average person. To Alois, this was a stimulating thought. Religious people were always taking it for granted that God had a personal

interest in them, but Alois had seen too much of life to believe that any higher power would have the patience to put up with clods. To the contrary, life was here to live, as indeed he had lived it, and reincarnation—well, maybe that was not so inconceivable. You could receive, thereby, your due reward or your punishment. Yet, if so, then he, Alois, must have been one hell of a licentious knight. Contemplating such a possibility put Alois in an excellent mood. New ideas were exactly what he needed, he now decided.

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These fresh thoughts may account for the reception he gave to a request from Adi that he be allowed to join the children's choir at the Benedictine monastery where he now attended school. Klara could hardly believe her husband would say yes. She had, for that matter, come close to warning the boy not to ask, but the impulse caused too much anxiety. What if God wanted Adi to be in that choir? If that was the case, then she could be interfering with the Lord's purpose.

So, young Adolf, spiritual hat in hand, did approach Alois, and managed to say that the monks told him he had a good voice. With his parent's permission, he could rehearse after school.

If it would be asked why Alois would be amenable to allowing any son of his to study with monks and priests, his answer would have been immediate. "I have made careful inquiries. These Benedictines conduct the best school in Lambach. Since I wish Adolf to do well in life, I choose to send him there despite other objections I will retain."

Adi loved the school. Soon enough, he knew that he was seen by the monks as one of their best pupils. In turn, Alois was delighted with his ~~son's good~~ marks. The boy was not only taking twelve required courses but was receiving the highest grade in each one of them. Alois was, therefore, in a benign mood.

"Let me tell you," he said, "when I was young, I, too, could lay claim to a good voice. It was a gift from my mother. She was once the soloist in the parish church at Dollersheim."

"Oh, yes, Father" said Adi. "I remember how well you sang on the day we first came to Hafeld from Linz. Your singing was so good."

"Yes," said Alois, "A few old ditties did come back. Do you remember the one that upset your mother?"

"I do," said Adi. "'Ach,' she kept saying, 'not for the children!'"

They laughed. The memory prompted Alois to sing the same lines from "Mein Guter Kamerad."

"He was the best I ever had,

"Together through good and bad,

"The drum called us to fight,

"He was always on my right.

"A bullet flew toward us,

"Meant for him or meant for me?

"Into his life it tore,

"At my feet a piece of gore."

Alois laughed and so did Adi. They remembered. That was when Klara had cried out, "No, not for the children!"

Now, Alois' voice grew even more resonant.

"My friend,' I said, 'I cannot ease your pain,

"But in life eternal we will meet again,'

"Mein Guter Kamerad, Mein Guter Kamerad."

Alois now declared in a voice made husky by the song, "Yes, I will give my permission. That is because I have come to believe in your future possibilities. You are to be rewarded for the excellence you have shown in your new school."

To himself, Alois was thinking, "Of course, I will not encourage him to go too far. No need for this one to end as a sickly priest."

The old walls of the monastery had, however, already inspired Adi to wonder if one day he might become a monk, or better, an Abbot. He loved ~~the~~ ^{their} black ~~clothing they wore~~ ^{habits}. The silences of the corridors resounded in his imagination. An image of heaven—his heaven to come--quivered in the rose windows. The boy was ready to weep before the power of Grosser Gott Wir Loben Dich:

"Holy God, we praise Thy Name,

"Infinite Thy vast Domain,

"Everlasting is Thy reign. . .

"Fill the Heavens with sweet accord,

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord."

While he sang, I was encouraging Adi to believe he might rise
supreme over all these monks and ~~let him know~~ ^{thereby ~~he~~ was instructing him} ^{early} the joy of holding
authority in one hand and mystery in the other. Indeed, he had a model.
The Abbot of this monastery was the most impressive man Adi had ever
seen. He was tall, his hair was silver-gray, his expression was elevated. To
Adi, he was as handsome as a king.

One time, alone in the room at the Gasthof that he shared with
Angela, he lifted her darkest dress off its hook, and draped it around his
shoulders as a vestment. Then he stood up on a stool. He knew he must
speak in a low voice so as not to be overheard by anyone in the passage
way, but he also felt as if he were living in the dim light of the church itself,
wholly at peace with its powers and its darkness.

So, with Angela's ^{garment} ~~dress~~ upon his shoulders, he ^{enunciated} ~~gave~~ a prayer he had
~~heard that day~~ ^(He had heard it just that day, and) addressed to St. Michael the Archangel. ~~He~~ did not
necessarily understand all of what he was saying, but the power of the
language filled his mouth. He was engraving the sounds on his palate in
order to send them forth again once he would be alone in the forest speaking
to the trees.

But first
~~But now~~ *which had preceded the prayer*
he did his best to repeat the sermon, "These fires of hell,"

he stated softly, "will reach into every pore of your body and will melt your bones and your lungs. A terrible odor will arise from your throat. The stench of the body will be heinous in its suffering. Terrible odors will follow. This is the fire that will never end."

He took a breath. He was ready for the prayer. He had memorized it. "Thy Glorious Majesty, we supplicate Thee to deliver us from the tyranny of the infernal spirits, from their snares, their lies, and their furious wickedness—O Prince of the Heavenly Host, cast into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls, Amen."

The prayer excited him. He felt most excited. Was he receiving a sign from above? Or, were these fires from below? He was having his first erection. He also felt like a woman. It must be the odor of Angela's dress. So, he threw that away from him, jumped down from the stool to kick the dress, then picked it up, sniffed it again, and was abominably disturbed. He still felt like a woman.

It was at this point that he knew he must do what many students were doing. He must start smoking tobacco. That was imperative. He must feel

like a man again, yes, purely a man, not half and half.

Over the entrance to the monastery was a large *svastika* carved into the stone of the arched gate. It was the crest of arms of a previous abbot named von Hagen who had been Abbot Superior in 1850. ^{it} It was possible that von Hagen might have been enjoying the similarity to his own name since the *svastika* was called a *Hakenkreuz*, a hooked cross. ^{later + von} For that reason, perhaps, he had had it installed over the gate?

Not too much, I hasten to say, is to be made of this. ^{with} ^{this particular} The *svastika* was subtly carved. It offered no suggestion of the organized crimes yet to come.

Nevertheless, there it was, a hooked cross, and on his ninth birthday, Adolf was caught smoking a cigarette in the shadow of the same gateway on which had been mounted the carved stone of von Hagen's *svastika*. The manner of the priests under whom he studied in ^{as a} ^{school} ^{was} ^{notorious} among

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Over the entrance to the monastery was a large swastika carved into the stone of the arched gate. It was the coat of arms of a previous abbot named von Hagen who had been Abbot Superior in 1850. It ^{is} ~~was~~ possible that von Hagen ^{had} ~~might~~ have been enjoying the similarity to his own name since the swastika was called a Haken-Kreuz, a hooked cross. ^{was it for} ~~For~~ that reason, ^{perhaps} ~~perhaps~~, he had had it installed over the gate. [?]

Not too much, I hasten to ^{adv.} ~~say~~, is to be made of this. ^{This particular} ~~The~~ swastika was subtly carved. It offered no suggestion of the organized furies yet to come.

Nonetheless, there it was, a hooked cross, and on his ninth birthday, Adolf was caught smoking a cigarette in the shadow of the same gateway on which had been mounted the carved stone of von Hagen's swastika. The meanest of the priests under whom he studied ^{now} ~~in school~~, notorious among

the students for his silent tread, happened to come by, and so caught young Adolf in the act. The cigarette (a twist of his father's pipe tobacco rolled into newspaper) was pulled right out of his hand and stomped upon by the priest with the frenzy of a man who is squashing a nest of cockroaches.

"This act of smoking," said the priest, "is the worst crime a boy like you can commit." Adi began to weep ^{helpless} as the priest ^{even} then added, "It is possible that the devil has already entered into you. If that is so, you will die without another happy moment, not one, not ever again." Then the priest gave an evil smile (as evil, I must say, as any we are reputed to give.) He was summoning up the powers of anathema he had assembled through the years, ~~to exercise on any boy caught in any improper act.~~

Adi was hysterical. He swore that he would never ^{go near tobacco} smoke again. So soon as he could speak, he made a point of stating how much he ^{disliked} ~~detested~~ smoking. "Oh, Father, I knew it was wrong. I detested it."

At that moment, he ran down the stone steps of the entrance in order to throw up in the grass. The execrations had come forth from this priest with such an aridity of soul, ~~such an air of detestation,~~ that it came into Adi as a full abomination. He could not breathe. The long nose of this priest had

been as malignant as his ^{thin} lips, ~~as~~ thin as a knife edge. Yet in the midst of his suffering this ~~whole~~ set of atrocious feelings, Adi was already calculating how to seek forgiveness from the Abbot. He knew he would be sent over to ~~that~~ ^{his} office just so soon as he stopped vomiting.

Before the Abbot, he burst into tears again. He had the inspiration to say that he did not want this squalid act to interfere with his desire to become a priest. How much he wished to repent, he declared. When he was done, the Abbot even said, "Well, someday, you may yet make a fine priest."

The sincerity that resonated in Adi's voice had the full inspiration of an absolute lie. One taste of anathema had been enough. He was now disabused forever of the thought of living as a monk or a priest. Only his admiration for the Abbot remained intact.

It had been a profitable day for my endeavors. Given the many clients I had to oversee in that part of Austria, I cannot claim to have been always in the right place at the best moment, but on this occasion I was, and our evil-spirited cleric who was, of course, one of my finest clients in

Lambach, had certainly been alerted by me that young Adolf Hitler was smoking tobacco under von Hagen's hooked stone cross.

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Adi's veneration of the Abbot was retained. It lived as the echo of his first infatuation, even as his hatred of the priest who ^{had} excoriated him did not diminish. And the ^{good} memory of the day ^{that} Alois gave him permission to sing in the choir was lost ~~in an aftermath of shame~~. Alois always reeked of tobacco.

By now, it was also obvious that his father favored Edmund. Once, after Adi had given him a shove, Edmund even dared to poke ~~him~~ back.

"Don't you touch me," he said. "I am just as good as you are."

For that remark, Edmund was hit hard enough to ^{encourage him} ~~begin~~ (to wail with all the power of four-year-old lungs.

When Klara descended, Adi said, "Alois-Junior always used to hit me. Nobody ever cared about that."

Alois now loomed overhead. "You had your mother to protect you from Junior," he said. "I remember. She was on your side even when you were in the wrong. This used to upset Junior very much, and maybe I did not pay enough attention!"

Alois chose, therefore, to give Adi a spanking. It was ~~measured~~ ^{was} stinging to the boy's behind but ~~without~~ ^{was} real force. Alois still lived in fear of the uncontrollable fury with which he had beaten Alois-Junior ~~into~~ ^{into} unconsciousness.

Since these quarrels between ^{Adi} ~~Adi~~ and Edmund resounded through the inn, Klara was embarrassed, but the innkeeper and his wife, content with the room rent provided by the Hitlers, made a point of treating Klara with the greatest respect as if she were the perfect example of a fine, middle-class lady. Of course, Klara never believed her. She began telling Alois that the family needed to find more space at much lower cost.

Klara had also decided that Angela was much too old to keep sharing a room with Adi. Indeed, Angela had complained that one of her best

dressess had dusty shoe-prints all over it—that had to be her brother's doing.

Klara decided not to accuse him. He would ~~only~~ deny it. The true problem remained, ~~however~~ they had to move. Nor was Alois opposed. Adi's ^{guarrels} ~~spats~~

with Angela had been getting on his nerves. One time, he had said to

Klara, "You wish me not to touch him, but he's very trying."

"When children fight," said Klara, "it can be the fault of both."

"Well, I am not about to put her on my knee."

With true perturbation, Klara said, "Of course not."

"In any case, it is the boy. I repeat: I find him trying."

Klara now decided to tell Alois about the day Adi was caught smoking. In the hope that Alois might feel sympathy, she said, "Adi needs kindness. He needs that so much. After the Abbot forgave him, Adi told me, 'I didn't know a big grown man could be so kind.' Alois, he needs a little kindness from us."

Alois shook his head. "No," he told her, "you are his slave already. You had better understand—it is all to the good that he started smoking. Maybe in time to come he will like tobacco so much he will even become a real guy." At which point he laughed and laughed, until he began to cough.

Klara thought, "Yes, one tough guy, full of phlegm."

It could be said that Klara was beginning to have a few private thoughts. For years, she had felt that was not at all ^{suitable} for her. Now, however, she was entertaining a secret project. She had come to the conclusion that it was time for Alois to buy a nice house for the family. Of course, he was not, as yet, ready. His present plan was to move to the unused part of a nearby grain mill. That would be considerably cheaper, and offer a good deal of space, and Angela would have her own room. That move would be temporary as far as Klara was concerned. Later, her step-daughter would require more. Let her enjoy some of the opportunities that Klara had never had. She wanted Angela to become a fine, middle-class, married lady. And for the present, at the least, she deserved to have her own room. She was such a good step-daughter, ~~so good at a time when so few were~~

So, Klara accepted Alois' desire to move to the mill. There would be endless work ~~to keep the dust away~~, but Angela was finished with school, and ready to take on her part of the task. It was nice. Klara decided that Angela was not only her step-daughter but ready to become the best friend she ever had.

So, early in the winter of 1898, they did rent a floor on the upper story of the grain mill. Its owner, one Herr Zoebel, ^{kept} used four mules ^{active at} to turn his ^{the} grinding wheel. To add to the clamor, there was also a ^{most active} blacksmith shop at the rear of the ground floor ^{worked} kept by a big fellow named Preisinger. Upstairs, it would be a war against ^{the noise and} the dust, ^{that} but ^{rose from below, yet} Klara was not unhappy. One ^{large} reason was Angela. At different hours of the day she ^{could be} was ^a Klara's maid, ^{or a} younger sister, and devoted friend. That left Klara free to enjoy some time alone with Paula.

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From infancy, there had not been a morning when Klara did not whisper to Paula, "You are so beautiful."

But now, although she was not yet two years old, Paula seemed ^{deliberate} slow enough in her development to leave Klara full of the ~~unhappiest~~ forebodings.

Alois did not notice. It was enough to dandle Paula on his knee and repeat, "You will be my darling, my princess." He was ready to dream of a time when this child would be the loveliest young lady in town. What an event her wedding would be!

On a given day, however, after a visit to the town doctor, Klara came home with the news that Paula might be retarded.

"Yes," she told Alois, "so the doctor said."

"He doesn't know what he is talking about."

"Alois, it could be true." She began to weep. "I have been worried. "
~~for quite a while."~~

Alois fell into a depression. His old gifts of perception, so skilled at spotting a smuggler across a Customs shed, were now addressed to examining Paula's smile. It seemed to him that her eyes were much too vacant.

An ugliness of mood descended upon the family. While Alois was off on his walk, Adi would look to badger Edmund. To Klara, that was ~~intolerable~~
~~doubly painful. She had grown disloyal. She could not help it. There wasn't~~
~~a day that she didn't snap at Adi, and for good cause. The truth was that~~ *later, she would feel disloyal, but then*
Edmund had become the bright light of the family. He had certainly grown right out of his runny nose and dirty pants. It was like the fairy tales Klara used to read to him. He had turned into a charming four-year-old, as full of future promise—in Klara's opinion—as a prince, and it had all happened since they had left Hafeld. Edmund did have the sweetest smile, and the funniest face. Klara had to laugh at him. But Adi was reacting badly.

Soon enough, he formed the habit of sticking a leg out just far enough to trip Edmund as he ran by. Edmund, however, would not complain, just get up and keep running back and forth along the floor of the loft ~~as if he was on an important mission.~~

It would have bothered Klara a good deal more if she had ~~known~~ ^{known} what Adolf's secret desire had become. It was to hit Edmund as hard as he could, and get away with that altogether. Everything about his baby brother was infuriating. Edmund's eyes were so blue. Everybody commented on that. How could they? His own eyes, Adolf decided, were a deeper, better blue, but Edmund received the praise. In Adolf's opinion, Edmund had a face that was squashed together. How he would have liked to squash it further.

Worst of all, Edmund was always receiving praise for taking such good care of Paula. Adi felt as if he had been the first to see that Paula wasn't too bright. He could have told them, but instead his mother and Angela were impressed with how much Edmund loved Paula.

Klara was even glad that the big, sweaty blacksmith, Preisinger, was down there in his shop hammering away at all times because Adi seemed to like this one man anyway, and stayed down there a good deal. That was

better than trying to watch him upstairs sitting in a chair while waiting for Edmund to run by.

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At this time I had to move from Austria to Switzerland, and was active in Geneva for the next few months overseeing the transmogrification of a petty criminal into an impassioned assassin.

Given the variety of clients I had developed in the area of Linz, I had to return to Austria more than once to take account of their condition, and so was able to keep up with events at the grain-mill in Lambach. I will not, however, speak of those matters until a little more is related about my assignment in Geneva. To those readers who are, by now, wary of these expeditions off to other narrative venues, I will add that this time, I will not be absent from young Adolf for more than an interesting chapter or two.

Moreover, a few pages of my text will quote Mark Twain. He was never my client—I would not have dared to make that attempt! In truth, if such a possibility had existed, the Maestro, given his admiration for great writers, ^{would probably} might have looked to undertake ^{such} ~~that~~ a seduction ^{on his own} ~~himself~~.

In the event, Twain, a most complex man, was not considered suitable material. Some of his associates were, however, and so I knew enough about him to respect the passion with which he wrote about the assassination of the Empress Elisabeth in Geneva on September 10, 1898. Married in 1854 to Franz Josef, she had long been considered the most beautiful queen in Europe. She was also esteemed for being a cultivated monarch. Indeed, her favorite poet was Heinrich Heine. What added to the lady's exotic status was that after the double suicide in 1888 of her beloved son, Crown Prince Rudolph, and his young mistress, Baroness Vetsera, the Empress dressed only in black. That tragedy, known to all of Europe as "Mayerling," was an event in which I had played no small part. Indeed, that may have been why I was chosen to shepherd Luigi Lucheni after he had been sighted as a putative assassin.

"He's a dreadful piece of work," the Maestro said, "but made to order for us. A most unbalanced little malefactor. He sees himself as a serious philosopher, and is sincere in his belief that only the most exceptional individual deeds can leave a lasting influence on the public. So, go to it!"

I worked with Luigi Lucheni. I expanded the gaseous irresolutions of his psyche, then compressed such vapors until they were as focused as a blowtorch. Assassins need many magnifications of their ego.

I did not fail. Lucheni, an impoverished young man, chose to become an anarchist after he came to live with the Swiss. In Geneva, he found revolutionaries who accepted him, at best, with misgivings. His fellow Italians chose to call him Il stupido (which doubled the daily compression of his spirit.) It was certainly helpful that he was being ridiculed by those who should, he felt, have been ready to applaud him. "Convince them by way of your actions," I kept imprinting upon his dreams, "You are here among us to take the life of someone who is very high among the oppressive classes."

"Who is this person?" he asked.

"You will know when you see him. Or her."

Poor Empress Elisabeth! She was so proud and so poetic that she allowed only a few bodyguards to escort her when she was on vacation. Even then, they had to stay at a remove of ten paces. No matter if strange persons might approach. After all, it was invariably a tourist asking for an autograph. So, as she stood by herself on a promenade along the banks of the Rhone, Lucheni came up, took out a rat-tail file, and thrust it into her heart.

He was immediately apprehended, his quarters were searched, and his diary examined. All the world soon knew that he had written: "How I would like to kill someone—but it must be someone important so it gets in the papers."

He might have chosen Philippe, the Duke of Orleans who was ^{also} in Geneva then on a visit, but so was the beautiful Sisi—Empress Elisabeth. Sisi, I knew, would count for more. Even as I had led the anathematic priest by his long nose to the gateway where Adi was smoking, so did I direct Lucheni to Empress Elisabeth.

If it is discomfoting to the reader that I usually present myself as a calm observer, capable of a balanced narrative, and yet am also able to abet

the most atrocious acts without a moment of regret, let it not come as a surprise. Devils require two natures. ^{In part, we are} Part of us is civilized. What may be less palatable and less apparent on most occasions, is that our ultimate aim is to ~~destroy~~ ^{raze} civilization. Such an enterprise must be able to call on one's readiness to do what it takes—a fine expression I would pick up years later from a minor client who worked on a film crew.

In any event, the immediate effect of the deed was exceptional. I will, however, leave that description to Mark Twain himself.

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The author was resting then in Kaltenlangteben, a small Austrian town forty miles from Vienna. By way of the failure of his investment in the Paige Compositor, a new kind of linotype machine, he was bankrupt.

So, he left Hartford and travelled through Europe giving popular lectures for fees large enough to absorb some of his debts. He happened to be resting in Kaltenlangteben when the murder of Elisabeth occurred, and wrote at once to a friend: "This murder will still be talked of and described and painted a thousand years from now."

I cannot begin to speak of the elation with which I read those words. My own opinion of the importance of the deed had now

been confirmed by a master of prose. Indeed, Twain was so powerfully affected that he soon wrote a essay full of the incomparable flow of his language. Then, for a myriad of reasons too labyrinthine to catalogue, he chose not to publish. I, however, came into possession of these pages by way of his chambermaid.

The more one thinks of the assassination, the more imposing and tremendous the event becomes. The destruction of a city is a large event, but it is one which repeats itself several times in a thousand years; the destruction of a third part of a nation by plague and famine is a large event, but it has happened several times in history; the murder of a king is a large event, but it has been frequent.

The murder of an empress is the largest of all events. One must go back about two thousand years to find an instance to put with this one. . . . The assassination of Caesar himself could not electrify the world as this murder has electrified it. For one reason, there was then not much of a world to electrify. The news traveled so slowly that by the time it reached the

remoter regions, it was no longer a fresh event, it was history. But the world is enormous now, and prodigiously populated—that is one change; and another is the lightning swiftness of the flight of tidings, good and bad. "The Empress is murdered!" When those amazing words struck upon my ear in this Austrian village last Saturday, three hours after the disaster, I knew that it was already old news in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, San Francisco, Japan, China, Melbourne, Cape Town, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and that the entire globe with a single voice was cursing the perpetrator of it.

... And who is the miracle-worker who has furnished to the world this spectacle? All the ironies are compacted in the answer. He is at the bottom of the human ladder, as the accepted estimates of degree and value go; a soiled and patched young loafer, without gifts, without talent, without education, without morals, without character, without any born charm or any acquired one that wins or beguiles or attracts; without a single grace of mind or heart or hand that any tramp or prostitute could envy him; an unfaithful private in the ranks, an incompetent stone-cutter, an inefficient lackey;

in a word, a mangy, offensive, empty, unwashed, vulgar, gross, mephitic, timid, sneaking, human polecat. And it was within the privileges and powers of this sarcasm upon the human race to reach up—up—up and strike from its far summit in the social skies the world's accepted ideal of Glory and Might and Splendor and Sacredness! It realizes to us what sorry shows and shadows we are. Without our clothes and pedestals we are poor things and much of a size; our dignities are not real, our pomps are shams. At our best and stateliest we are not suns, as we pretended, and teach, and believe, but only candles; and any bumper can blow us out.

And now we get realized to us once more another thing which we often forget—or try to; that no man has a wholly undiseased mind; that in one way or another all men are mad and one of the commonest forms of madness is the desire to be noticed, the pleasure derived from being noticed. . . . It is this madness for being noticed and talked about which has made kings pick one another's pockets, scramble for one another's crowns and estates, slaughter one another's subjects; it has raised up prize-fighters and poets, and villages' mayors, and little and big politicians, and big and little charity-founders,

and bicycle champions, and banditti chiefs, and frontier desperadoes, and Napoleons. Anything to get notoriety; anything to set the village, or the township, or the city, or the State, or the nation, or the planet shouting, "Look—there he goes—that is the man!" And in five minutes' time, at no cost of brain, or labor, or genius, this mangy Italian tramp has beaten them all, outstripped them all, for in time their names will perish; but by the friendly help of the insane newspapers and courts and kings and historians, his is safe and will thunder all down the ages as long as human speech shall endure! Oh, if it were not so tragic, how ludicrous it would be!

I rushed to present this to the Maestro. I do not know that I had ever taken myself so seriously. I knew that I was, at last, an actor in history.

To my woe, he was scathing. "I do put stock in great writers," he said, "but I also take precautions. Mark Twain has blown the event out of all proportion. A thousand years! That is absurd. Sisi will be forgotten in twenty."

I did not have to ask, "Does the event then serve no large purpose?"

My thoughts were heard. "Oh," he said, "it's a nice bit of help. But you, like Twain, are much too impressed by mighty names. Once they are gone they count for so little. You would do well to clean the snobbery out of yourself. It is our exceptional clients on whom I depend. Occasionally, one of them becomes ~~gale, even as an individual~~ gale, to affect history to our advantage. But, for that we have to construct

~~"You live with this concept all the time, he then said, "But you do not seem to know what it is. Our central aim is to construct a client from the~~

first brick to the last. ^{Killing Sisi offered} Concerning individuals, that is ideal. Killin Sisi was ^{a circumscribed} not of no such lasting value to me. It was merely a limited event. How can it

~~compare, for example, to sizable occasions like Khodenskyo?~~
gourmet) might) pick a perfect peach off the tree, I would be able to enjoy some

ten minutes of gastric excellence. That ~~is~~ ^{would be} analogous to the pleasure we can take because of your nice work with Luigi Lucheni. But should it give you any reason to lose your sense of measure?"

He may have been a little more pleased, however, than he was ready to admit. He did add, "There is, I must say, one serious drawback to

(*) Conducive to ~~the~~ ^{travel the expansion of} expanding social true social invest. The riot at the docks is still serving us ~~serving us~~ ^{But Sir does not compare that} ~~each with each~~ ^{whenever knocking off Sir? I} tell you that if I were a

trusting the best novelists. They are prone to hysteria. The power of their words ^{does} can over-excite their insights."

If I had only a poor idea by now, of what he might say next I was, of course not ready to disagree.

"I know," he added, "I do tell my best devils to admire great novelists—indeed, we must! Certain insights can come only from them! But be wary. ^{leave them} For their best moments ~~often excite them to exaggeration, and, then they are~~ prone to vertigo. They veer off from the more valuable insight that hovers just beyond.

"Here," he said, "is one more example. Look how close he did come on the last blast of his trumpet." "

I looked again at Twains final words:

Among the inadequate attempts to account for the assassination, we must concede high rank to the many which have described it as "ordained from above." I think this verdict will not be popular "above." If the deed was ordained from above, there is no rational way of making this prisoner even partially responsible for it,

and the Genevan court cannot condemn him without manifestly committing a crime.

"Yes," said the Maestro, "when it comes to possessing some awareness of us, Twain must have been so near to saying, 'Ordained from below.' Thank God, he lost his nerve!"

How the Maestro could laugh on ^{these} ~~those~~ rare occasions when he ^{(felt merry,} ~~found~~
~~a matter sufficiently droll to leave him merry.~~

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I was, as I related, at a distance from Lambach until after the assassination, and by then the Hitlers no longer lived in the grain mill nor even, indeed, in Lambach. They had moved to a larger town (Leonding, pop: 3000) and that, at first, was much to Klara's satisfaction, for it was the result of her subtle manipulation of Alois. It had taken her a long time to

begin to understand how to motivate her husband. She had always been much too God-fearing ^{She could not} to employ calculated tactics. ~~But she had come at last~~ ^{AT}

to understand that she had to put a little fear into him. ^{stet} ~~Until they lived at~~ ^{stet}
^{stet} ~~the mill, it~~ ^{had} never occurred to her that she might make him jealous.

But she had come at last

Klara, who had never been able to believe in all these years that she was worthy of her husband—he was still so preeminently an uncle!—now came to realize that Alois might even need her. Even if he did not love her beyond measure—that was obvious!—he did need her.

^{To} ^{Don't} ^{could be no less than}
~~For~~ Klara, ~~to~~ ^{whom} ~~ideal~~ love ~~was~~ ^a covenant between all the members of one's family, it had never occurred to her that marriages ^{might} ~~could~~ also do reasonably well on need. Indeed, one did not even have to like one's mate.

So it finally occurred to her that Alois was at an age to feel vulnerable and she, in turn, so long as she broke no Commandments but merely bent them, might, yes, might make Alois jealous enough to wish to move away from the mill.

Such a possibility could be glimpsed in the form of the big, soot-covered man downstairs, the blacksmith, Preisinger. Adi was so fascinated by him. He often spent hours at a time watching him work and listening to him talk. She could hear their voices in her kitchen and the sounds that came up were curiously engaged with those she made—the splash of water

from a pail to a basin seeming to be answered by a few ringing blows on an anvil.

She knew why Adi was eager to be with the blacksmith. The man worked with fire. While she did not wish to explore such an insight since one never knew where certain thoughts might lead, she had known since childhood that God was everywhere, and so was the Devil. So long as one did not oblige oneself to think, the Devil could gain no access. God would be there to protect your ignorance. Klara also knew that one had to pay the cost of refusing to follow one's thoughts, but that was less of an obligation than to keep the Devil away.

Ergo, she was not about to ponder her love of fire. No need to search ~~into such matters~~ ^{Further}. It was enough for her to understand that it was natural for Adi to be full of awe ~~while watching~~ ^{as he watched} the blacksmith heat a piece of iron ~~in his furnace~~ until it was ~~be~~ white-hot, because then another piece, also white-hot, could be attached to it. Out of the joining would come further joinings ready to become repaired objects and tools ^{anything and} ~~everything from carriage axles~~ to broken ploughs.

Then came an occasion when she had a good reason to visit this smithy. The ~~kitchen~~ ^{in the kitchen} water-pump ^{cylinders} showed a crack on its ~~handle~~. That was soon mended but then, to her surprise, she stayed a little longer ^{and they} ~~to watch and~~ ^{talked. Then,} ~~talk.~~ Soon enough, the man invited her to come back whenever she would like a cup of tea.

To her amazement, this ^{big ball} ~~bride~~ of a man, this Preisinger, had nice manners. He not only treated her with the greatest respect, but he could converse, and most nicely ^{considering that he} ~~He~~ was as uneducated as herself, ~~yet had a full~~ ^{and easy manner.} He did not brag, but did leave the impression which she found most agreeable (even as she had once been overcome with just such sentiments about Alois) that he was a person of natural importance. She could hardly believe how agreeable it was to listen to him as she sat in the one good chair of his shop while Adi stood beside her close to transfixed.

Preisinger's active business was not only with farmers in the area, and occasionally with travelers whose horses were close to losing a shoe, but, as he explained, many merchants in the area depended upon him for work of a more complex variety. Indeed, as he was ready to admit, he could diagnose many an equine ailment. "I have on occasion, Frau Hitler, doubled as a

veterinarian. I am excellent at that if I choose to say so myself. There are occasions when I do know more than the vets."

"Can you really say that?" asked Klara, and blushed at her own straightforwardness.

"Yes, Frau Hitler," answered Preisinger, "I have to say it. I have seen valuable animals hobbled to where they could hardly walk. Why? For the simplest reason. The veterinarian, however good a fellow he might be concerning other animal diseases, does not always know as much about a horse's hoof as is necessary."

"I suppose that would be true," said Klara. "You have had so much experience."

"Young Adolf may tell you. There are market days when I have to shoe as many as twenty horses, one after another, no stopping."

"Yes," said Klara, "and there must be so much work when there is ice on the ground."

To which, he answered, "I see that you have a natural appreciation of the problems that can arise."

Klara had to blush.

"Give me a better foothold on the ice," Preisinger now said. "I hear that on many an occasion. Once, on a freezing day, I had to shoe twenty-five horses. And every last one of those farmers wanted me to hurry up."

"Yes, but Herr Preisinger would not agree," said Adolf. "He told me, 'Speed is speed, yet one nail misplaced, and that horse will never trust you again.'" Adi's cheeks were flushed. He could not tell Klara what else the blacksmith had confessed. "Young fellow," Preisinger had told him on another day, "there were nights when I couldn't sit down because I had the horse's name on where I sit."

"The horse's name?" Adi had asked.

"His hoof. I am able to recognize horses by their hooves."

"You can?"

"Old Clubfoot. Old Ironsides. What name would you like? I will find it for you on my backside."

He had laughed, but then, seeing that Adi was bewildered, Preisinger was quick to add, "I am joking. Only joking. A good blacksmith knows that if you drive a nail incorrectly, you can get kicked for your trouble. There you are sprawling on the floor."

"How often does that happen?" the boy asked. He was so obviously seeing the event in his mind that Preisinger removed himself quickly from such images.

"No longer," he said. "Not even once a year now. In this work, you have to be very good or you don't last."

With Klara, Preisinger did not proceed in that direction. Rather, he was ready to discuss how he might compound his own special caulk for the hooves—he was proud of the various kinds of dilemmas he was ready to engage. While he spoke, she looked at the occasional imprint of horses' shoes on his dirt floor, there in the dark dust. She certainly did like this man. She could share his pride in the sea-anchor he was now making for a rich man—no ordinary problem, an anchor—one had to know one's way around the ring, the stock, and the crown, the flukes, the palm and the shank. All those names were on the tip of his tongue!

By her third visit, Preisinger insisted on accompanying her upstairs one morning to collect all her knives in order to sharpen them in his smithy. Afterward, he would accept no payment. What impressed Klara the most was that his work clothes might be black with soot, yet he moved with so

nice a sense of what his body might touch that no detritus was left in her kitchen.

Then, on a Saturday evening when he must have known that Herr Hitler would be off to the inn for his beer, so did Preisinger come by ~~for~~ on a visit, dressed in his Sunday shirt and suit.

That caused no little perturbation in Klara (and in Angela) but the man was uncomfortable and sat on the edge of the sofa. Their conversation lacked its customary flair.

Yet Klara would look back on this occasion with contentment. That was because Alois was so disturbed when he came back to see Preisinger sitting on the sofa, huge hands clamped together in his lap. While the blacksmith ^{departed} ~~left~~ soon after Alois' return, he did bow to Klara and say, "Thank you for your invitation."

Alois chose to herd a number of accumulated furies until he and Klara were alone in their room.

She was contrite. "No, I didn't invite him." She shook her head as if to tumble a few bits of memory back into place. "Well, yes," she said, "I suppose I did." Adolf had been spending so much time down below with

Herr Preisinger that she thought it would be polite to make a suggestion, no more, that Herr Preisinger visit them for her strudel. But only for some day or other. She had not specified. It had not been a true invitation. She had been courteous, merely courteous.

"And you did serve him strudel?"

"Well, I had to. Does one offer a guest nothing?"

"A guest?"

"Well, a neighbor."

On it went. Afterward, she never knew how much of all this could have been planned. She would deny such a possibility. Nonetheless, not two days later, Alois informed her that he had sent a letter to a friend in the Customs House at Linz inquiring about available real estate in Linz or nearby. "I am bored here," he told her. "The noise from below is becoming intolerable."

A week later, an answer came. There was a fine little house at a very good price in Leonding just five miles from Linz.

Klara and Alois knew they would buy that house before they went to look at it. Each was full of the same determination if for altogether opposite
reasons?

reasons. ✓

This is the third or fourth
Chapter that has ended with
a word or a line for the
entire page. This is not
permissible for the final
manuscript. If necessary
reasons below the first
page of each new chapter.

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This would be all I need to narrate about Preisinger (since they would never see him again after the move to Leonding) but I cannot leave the man without speaking of one of his final conversations with Adi now that he knew that Klara would soon be gone.

Needless to say, Preisinger had fallen in love. It could not be love with lively hope for the outcome, yet he had felt a quickening in her. Conceivably, it might develop in time. Her husband was getting old. So Preisinger, full of his own ~~man-made and~~ hard-acquired dignity, was desolate when he heard that she and the boy would soon be gone.

He acted, therefore, in the only way he could. He took the liberty of offering the depth of his working philosophy to the boy. He might be only nine years old, but by Preisinger's estimate, there was true eagerness to know more.

"Why is iron so strong?" Preisinger asked, and replied to his own question. "That is because it is in its spirit to be strong." He paused. Any further exposition would depend on the boy's reaction to what he would next be told. "Every material," Preisinger said, "has its own spirit to offer. Some are strong, some are gentle."

Young Adolf did not reply, but he did nod. Preisinger decided to proceed further. "Grass," he said, "can be bent by every wind. It has to accept each footstep that tramples upon it. It is the opposite of iron even if the ore that is used to make iron can be extracted out of the same earth from which grass will grow. Yet, once smelted, iron is ready to become a scythe that will cut the grass."

"That is so interesting," said Adi, with real enthusiasm.

"Yes. You do not step on a piece of iron. That is because iron will injure any foot which fails to show respect." Preisinger's breath grew heavy

with the ardor he felt for his subject,
his voice was full of ardor. "Iron, separated from its ore by the hottest fire,
once it is
is ready to become a unique material."

"Unique?" the boy asked.

"Unlike any other. Unique."

"Yes, that is so." The boy paused. He hesitated to ask his question,
then did. "What is a will of iron? How is that made?"

Preisinger was delighted. "Think of the kind of spirit that is in the
iron. It is resistant to every force but one, and that is the force which
created it."

"Do you mean fire?"

"Exactly so. Few people can understand how hot a fire must be to
mold the will of iron. It takes a man of force to become a blacksmith,"
Preisinger finally said.

Adi was agog with these mysterious interchanges between the will of
iron and the incandescences necessary to create it. So, he would make the
mistake later that night of trying to explain it all to Angela and to Edmund.
Alois, however, happened to overhear, and proceeded to roar with derision.

"The mark of a truly stupid man," he announced to Klara, "is to take his own occupation so seriously that he comes to believe it is superior to others."

Klara, now in the course of developing a few private opinions, decided that Alois had also puffed himself up to the sky when he worked at the Customs House. "This country would be bankrupt without us," he always used to tell her. As was her habit, she smiled at him and shrugged.

Nonetheless, Preisinger's encomiums to the will of iron were to prove of considerable use to Adi on the day he received his first serious whipping. That came after the collapse of numerous forbearances on Alois' part. The spirit of restraint he had been looking to develop as a protection for his heart ^{as} and an atonement for whipping Alios-Junior came to an end on a given night of late autumn dusk when Adolf stayed out playing soldier in the woods with a few students from the monastery. Normally, Alois had only to whistle as evening approached and Adi would race upstairs from Preisinger's shop or come racing back from the nearby woods. Indeed, if he didn't arrive soon after the echo of the first whistle, Alois would put him over his knee and give him a token spanking. In secret—he would hardly admit it to himself—he liked the feel of Adi's buttocks.

On this night, however, Adi did stay out—the lingering light in the forest was exciting to him. He saw this last of the sun's disappearance as one more variety of fire. It was night before he came through the door.

Alois had been brooding over Paula's condition—just that day she had been trying to jump up and down, (which, the doctor had assured Klara, would be a sign of development) but had soon given up. Despite Alois' coaxing, she had not tried again. Then, Alois whistled for Adi and was given no response. The interval became so extended that Alois decided that it was a willful insult.

So, this time Alois gave him a real beating.

Full of Preisinger's precepts, he took a new oath. He instructed himself to have the strength to live with whatever came down on him now. He would fortify his will of iron. Even as the first blow came onto his buttocks,, he was issuing orders to himself to live with a will of iron. Live with a will of iron. Every remembrance of whimpering before the priest and weeping before the Abbot was there to fortify all determination.

Tears stood out in his eyes. Yet, he would not allow himself to cry out. He would anneal his will into iron. Preisinger's mighty biceps

oscillated before his eyes even as he was being whipped. Let his father injure his hand against a will of iron.

In 9 chapters, the ending came to two lines or less, 5 times.