

page 552-631 are really
for a small
note - but the quantity is the
same - see p 600 (two)

Ⓢ (13) these remarks are a
matter-of-fact I can only say
that I was at the time.)

BOOK XI

THE ABBOT AND THE BLACKSMITH

In the summer of 1877, after the sale of the Halpold property, the family
moved to the Gasthof Leingarten in Lenzburg, and, until the end of the year,
they would live at that inn. Leaving behind the responsibilities of the farm
opened a few small but surprising changes. Ⓢ

[For example, had been] his true resignation. Indeed, he was
obliged to recognize how much he had aged in the last couple of years. He
so much, indeed, that he could not recognize it. He
for instance, no interest in the work and trade at the Gasthof. Women
Nor did he mind it.
they seemed to have no interest in him. Indeed, he did not mind.

pages 583-631 are ready
for correction

Note: Put Walter Guesley in the
D. name book - see p. 600 (top)

(*) (If these remarks ~~are~~ are
matter-of-fact, I can only say
that I was ~~every~~ at the time.)

When I returned, it was to
discover that Alois had begun

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In the summer of 1897, after the sale of the Hafeld property, the family
moved to the Gasthof Leingartner in Lambach, and, until the end of the year,
they would live at that inn. Leaving behind the responsibilities of the farm
opened a few small but surprising changes. (*)

Alois, for example, had begun his true retirement. Indeed, ^{had} he was
obliged to recognize how much he had aged in the last couple of years. ^{and} ~~He~~
~~so much, indeed, that even he could recognize it, it~~
~~for~~, for instance, no interest in the cooks and maids at the Gasthof. Worse,
^{Nor did he mind it.}
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 ^{in regard to} ~~concerning~~ Adolf, I kept a close eye on ~~the~~ ^{senior's} 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.

Lambach could also point to 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 ^{and I must say that it} ~~promenade~~ ^(And mine - even). It had the strangest effect on his thoughts. ~~He began to wonder~~ ^{Alois had begun 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? It would certainly account for his boldest qualities as a man. Der Ritter Alois von Lambach!

^{It} Normally, he would have scorned such thoughts, ^{in the past, I could} ~~but~~ Alois was, by now, ready to brood ~~just a little~~ about the possible dimensions of death.

soon appreciate

the gift. Alois was by now, if just by a little

devil's can feel extraordinarily (surprised)

If it be asked once again how I ^{can be} am aware of such ~~few~~ concerns when
 Alois is, after all, not my client, I will reiterate that we ^{will on occasion} can enter some of the
 mental workings of those humans who are closely related to an important
 client. ^{For that matter, their} Their/casual thoughts are usually available ^{but it is} and (during periods of
^{when we look} transition, we like to remain alert to their unvoiced themes. Alois' meanderings
 about death came to me, therefore, without hindrance. He had come to ^{reach} decide
 a conclusion. ^{It was} ~~secretly believed~~ that most people believed in secret that they would always live, ~~that~~ they
^{certainly} 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 so busy with the world's
 affairs ^{thought Alois, (to show)} that He could hardly afford interest in any but exceptional people?
^(at least) Since most humans, by Alois' measure, were of minimal importance, ^{So, look up} there was
^{there in the Above why need attention be given to} bound to be small attention in the Above concerning the average person. ^{To}
^{I must say that for} He certainly enjoyed the notion ^(that) that
 Alois, this was a stimulating thought. Religious people were always taking it
^{what a folly!} 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
^{the sort of clods he, Alois, had had to deal with.} up with clods. To the contrary, life was here to live, as indeed he had lived it.
^{No, to the contrary} and reincarnation—well, maybe that was not so inconceivable. You could

As for
 =

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.

*It kept you out of the
quicksand of growing old.*

to entertain fresh thoughts
that will account

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I think it was the imperative he gave himself

These fresh thoughts may account for the reception Alois gave to

Adi's request

request from Adi that he be allowed to join the children's choir at the

Benedictine monastery. Klara could hardly believe her husband would say yes.

She had, for that matter, come close to warning the boy not to ask, but ^{then} ~~the~~

~~asked herself:~~
~~impulse caused too much anxiety.~~ What if God wanted Adi to be in that choir?

^{so,}
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
^{to stay after school}
permission, he could rehearse ~~after school.~~

If it would be asked why Alois ^{was} ~~would be~~ ^(in the first place) amenable to allowing any son of his to study with monks and priests, his answer would have been ^{ready.} ~~immediate.~~
^{if he would have said, "and then"}
"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 ~~no~~ ^{matter what} ~~despite other objections I will~~ ^{choose to} 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 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,
^{about permission to sing in the choir.}
"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, ^{"The} ~~A few~~ old ditties did come back. Do you remember the one that upset your mother?"

"I do," said Adi. ["] ~~Ach,~~ ^{Ach,} she kept saying, ^{'Ach,} 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."

Adi, however, was wondering whether if one day he might become a monk, or better, an Abbot. He loved their black habits. An image of heaven—

— would it not be?
(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 ^{why not that} he might rise supreme ^{and would} over all these monks ~~and thereby was instructing him early on the joy of~~ holding ~~the~~ authority in one hand and mystery in the other. ^{? I could see that} Indeed, he had a model. The Abbot of this monastery was the most impressive man Adi had ^{encountered} 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 hallway, but he also felt as if he ^{was still} were living in the dim light of the church itself, wholly at peace with its ^{but awesome} ~~with the powers of the church~~ powers and its darkness. ^(and full of the sermons he had heard)

So, with Angela's garment upon his shoulders, ^{listened to} he enunciated a prayer addressed to St. Michael the Archangel. He ~~heard~~ it every day at Mass and the power of the language filled his mouth. He was engraving the sounds on his palate for the moment when he would be alone in the forest speaking to the trees.

But first, he ~~did~~ ^{as it felt impelled} his best to repeat the sermon ~~which~~ ^{that} had preceded the prayer. "These fires of hell," he said aloud, but softly, "will reach into every pore of your body ~~and~~ ^{They} 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~~ ^{in its} suffering. Terrible odors will follow. This is the fire that will never end."

He staggered as he stood on the stool. The language had been ~~so~~ ^{too} powerful. He had to take a ~~few~~ ^{few} breaths before he was ~~ready for~~ ^{could utter} the prayer.

"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 did excite him. He felt most excited. Was he receiving a sign, him to believe he was receiving a sign from above, from above? Or, were these fires from below? He was having his first erection. But then to spoil it all—were other forces present? He proceeded to have the first erection of his life. He also felt like a woman. It must be the odor of Angela's dress. So, he threw it 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.~~

^{How the excited! I did my best to encourage}
^{yet he} ~~He~~ ^{had been} ~~also~~ ^{even kicked before he} ~~felt like a woman. It must be the odor of Angela's dress. So, he threw~~
~~it 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. ^{Since he} He ~~did~~ hate the ~~smell~~. ^{He had been} He had been ^{pleased} ~~he did~~ ~~not~~ ^{like} breathing the fumes of Alois' pipe since he had been an infant, ^{and he had} ~~never~~ ^{the smell} liked it, but now the need to smoke tobacco was imperative. ^{He had to} ~~He must~~ feel like ^{make} ~~a man~~ again, yes, purely ^{so} ~~a man~~, not half and half.

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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, ^{and I suspect} it is possible that von Hagen ^{enjoyed} had been enjoying the similarity to his own name since ^a the swastika ^{is often} was called a Haken-Kreuz, a hooked cross. ~~So, he had had it installed over the gate.~~

Not too much, I hasten to add, is to be made of this. ^{and so} ^{striking} This von Hagen's 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, ^{alone and} ~~He~~ ^{He was not alone for long,} Adolf was smoking a cigarette under it ^{as} the meanest of the priests under

whom he studied, ^{a prelate} notorious among the students for his silent tread, happened

to come by, ^{He} and caught young Adolf in the act. The cigarette (a twist of ^{Alois'} his

^{the boy's} father's pipe tobacco rolled into newspaper) was pulled right out of his hand-

^{fingers to be immediately life did it} and (stomped upon by the cleric with all the frenzy of a man who is squashing a

nest of cockroaches.

^{Adi was ready} "This act of smoking," said the priest, "is as bad as a crime." Adi began-

^{said} to weep before the priest even added, "It is possible that the devil has ^{already}

entered into you. If that is so, you will die without another happy moment, ⁴ not-

^{he} 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

^{collected} had assembled through the years.

Adi ~~was hysterical. He~~ swore that he would never go near tobacco again.

So soon as he could speak, he made a point of stating how much he disliked

smoking. "Oh, Father, I knew it was wrong. I detested it always."

At that moment, he ran down the stone steps of the entrance in order to

throw up in the grass. The execration had ^{that} come forth from this priest with ^{such} ^{had}

^{presented such} an aridity of soul that it entered into Adi as a full abomination. He could not

breathe. The long nose of this priest ^{was seemed} had been as malignant as his lips, ^{which were as} thin as a

knife edge. Yet in the midst of suffering ^{such a} ~~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 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 ^{and unforgivable} ~~fact~~ 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 ^{man of} ~~priest.~~" ^{the cloth."} ~~had~~

The sincerity in Adi's voice resonated with the full inspiration of an ^{It is one} ~~outright~~ lie. ^{sufficiently} ~~One~~ taste of anathema had been enough. He was now disabused forever of the thought of ^{becoming} ~~living as~~ a monk or a priest. Only his admiration for the Abbot remained intact.

~~By the measure of my endeavors, it~~
~~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 mean-

^{—small surprise!—}
 spirited cleric who was, ~~of course~~, ^{of course} one of my finest clients in Lambach, had ^{take a quick stroll over} ~~certainly~~ been alerted by me to the fact that young Adolf Hitler was smoking ^{to the gate that emblazoned} ~~tobacco under~~ von Hagen's hooked stone cross.

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I will say that ~~did remain as an echo of~~
~~his~~ *Adi's* veneration of the Abbot ~~was retained. It lived as the echo of his~~
~~his~~ *But* first infatuation, ~~even as~~ *with the long nose* his hatred of the priest who had excoriated him did
~~did~~ not diminish. *how when* And the good memory of the day that Alois gave him permission
 to sing in the choir was lost.

~~It would have dissipated in any case since by~~
 By now, it was ~~also~~ obvious that his father favored Edmund. Once, after
 Adi had given him a shove, Edmund even dared to poke 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 to wail
 with all the power of *his* 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~~ ^{always. 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 stinging to the boy's behind but without real force. Alois still lived in fear of the

~~uncontrollable~~ ^{kept striking} fury with which he had ~~beaten~~ Alois-Junior ^{once the youth was on the ground,}

Since these quarrels between Adi and Edmund resounded through the inn, Klara was embarrassed, but the innkeeper and his wife, content with the rent provided by the Hitlers, made a point of treating Klara with the greatest respect ^{The wife even tried to give her the illusion that} as if she ~~were~~ the perfect example of a fine, middle-class lady. Of course, Klara ~~never~~ ^{was not about to} believed her. ^(she knew better) She began telling Alois that the family needed to find more space at much lower cost. she was a

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

decided not to accuse him. He would deny it. The true problem remained; they had to move. Nor was Alois opposed. Adi's quarrels with Angela had been getting on his nerves. One time, he had said to Klara, "You wish me not to *give him a good one* 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."

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It could be said that Klara was beginning to have a few private thoughts.

For years, she had felt that ~~was not suitable for her~~. Now, however, she ~~was~~ ^{private thoughts were not for her} ~~entertaining~~ ^{had begun to} a secret project. She had come to the conclusion that it ~~was time~~ ^{while she} ~~was time~~ ^{soon after the sale of the}

~~for Alois to buy a nice house for the family, but she knew he was not yet~~ ^{would be good} ~~ready,~~ ^{At present she would have to go along with his} ~~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~~ ^{at least} ~~and~~ ^{than the inn, and would also}

Angela would ~~at least~~ ^{finally} have her own room. ~~That move would be temporary as,~~ ^{Let her begin to}

~~far as Klara was concerned. Later, her step-daughter would require more. Let,~~

~~for enjoy some of the opportunities that Klara had never had. She wanted~~ ^{Later, once} ~~then owned a house in this town or another she~~ ^{could have} ~~Angela to make a fine, middle-class, marriage. And for the present, at the~~ ^{some} ^{hopes} ^{that} ^{Angela} ^{would} ^{yet} ^{make} ~~least, she certainly deserved to have her own room. She was such a good step-~~ ^{daughter.}

So, Klara ^{put up} ~~accepted~~ Alois' desire to move to the mill. There would be

endless work, but Angela was finished with school, and ready to take on her

part of the task. It was as if Angela was not only ~~her~~ ^{so good as a} step-daughter but ~~ready to~~ ^{might even be ready to} become the best friend Klara ever had, and certainly more loyal than Fanni.

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 four mules to activate the

and to add to this
grinding wheel. ~~To add to the~~ clamor, there was also a most active blacksmith

shop at the rear of the ground floor worked by a big fellow named Preisinger.

Living on the floor above

~~Upstairs~~, it would be a war against dust, but Klara was not unhappy. One

She was always ready to
reason was Angela. At ~~different hours of the day she could~~ be Klara's maid, ~~or~~ *or*

a devoted

younger sister, or a 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 *a little too* deliberate enough in her development *to leave Klara a little too* ~~to leave Klara a little too~~ foreboding

It loved
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!

~~At that time~~ however, after
 On a given day, however, after a visit to the town doctor, Klara came
 home with the news ^{that their} ~~of what the doctor had to tell them about Paula. Their~~
 daughter might be retarded. ^{The doctor had not only gone}

~~before her~~ ^{but the}
 Klara had had forebodings. ^{The comparison between Edmund}
 and Paula made ^{the condition of more obvious} ~~it clear~~. At two, their little daughter could not use a spoon
 without spilling most of the contents, whereas Edmund ^{had been} ~~was able~~ to manage the
 trip from the bowl to his mouth not long after he was a year old. At two, he
 could dress himself, even begin to wash himself. Paula could not. She would
 lie in her cot ^{with her friends} ~~like~~ the rag-doll she hugged to her breast.

Long before he was two, Edmund knew the words for arms, legs,
 fingers and toes, even his belly-button. Paula would giggle but knew none of
 these words.

→ During the doctor's examination, she could not keep her balance
 when trying to stand on one foot. ^{At same} ~~By the age of two,~~ Edmund was already
 kicking a soccer ball. Now, Paula looked blank when the doctor asked her,
 "What do you do when you are cold?" (or hungry? Or tired?)

^{lay saying,}
 Klara, to help Paula ^{say} ~~said~~, "Sleep," which Paula then repeated, ~~but that~~
 annoyed the doctor. "Please, Frau Hitler, no help," he said.

← "Yes," Klara now told Alois, "the doctor says she is backward."

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

"Alois, it could be true." Klara began to weep. "I have been worried."

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.

She ~~He~~ would snap at Adi, *and then* ~~Later, she would feel disloyal, but the truth was that~~ *The truth was that*

Edmund had *now* 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

left Hafeld. Edmund did have the sweetest smile, and the funniest face. Klara ~~remembered~~ *the expressions he offered, so* 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 *his little brother,* 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.

wise, so comical and sometimes so outrageous, he was a good little boy and a scamp, all in one

It would have bothered Klara a good deal more if she had known what Adolf's secret desire had become. It was to hit Edmund as hard as he could, *not be punished at all for* and get away with such an act. Everything about his baby brother infuriated him. Edmund's eyes were so blue. Everybody commented *Alois, Klara, and Angela thought. Even then* *But his own eyes, Zobel their* *stet* *and lo* Adolf decided, were deeper, a better blue, even if Edmund received the praise.

In Adolf's opinion, Edmund had a face that was squashed together. How he would have liked to squash it *little* more.

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 keep watching for him upstairs while he sat there waiting for Edmund to run by *so he could trip him*.

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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 the agreeable news 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 have looked to undertake such a seduction on his own.

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 and cultivated queen in Europe. 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 around Geneva 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 will 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 do need more than a few magnifications of their ego *in flammable many back* if they are to get it up for the deed.

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 *Swiss* *It was or help* spirit). It helped me that he was being ridiculed by those who should, he felt, *when he has* expect to have been ready to applaud him. "Convince them by way of your actions," I *counseling* kept saying to him. "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 from her person. No matter that

strangers 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 squalid acts without a moment of regret, let it not come as a surprise. Devils require two natures. In part, we are civilized. What may be less ^{apparent} palatable (and

~~apparent~~) on most occasions is that our ultimate aim is to raze civilization.

Such an enterprise must be able to call on one's readiness to do what it takes—

a fine expression I picked 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.

-7-

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 linotype machine, he was bankrupt.

his home in Hartford, Connecticut
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

day 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 ^{composed} wrote
an essay full of the incomparable flow of his language although, later, for a
myriad of reasons too labyrinthine to catalogue, he chose not to publish it. I,
however, came into possession of these pages by way of one of his servants.

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 bummer 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 invented kingship and the thousand other dignities. . . it 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 taken myself so seriously ever before. I knew that I was, at last, an actor in history.

To my woe, he was scathing. "I may value great writers," he said, "but look how Mark Twain exaggerates the event. It is hysterical. A thousand years! That is absurd. Sisi will be forgotten in twenty."

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

My thoughts were heard. "Oh," he said, "it's a bit of help. But you, like Twain, are much too impressed by mighty names. They count for so little once

they are gone. I'd like to clean the snobbery out of you. It's not the name. Only an exceptional client that we develop ex nihilo—or virtually ex nihilo—can affect history to our continuing advantage. But for that, we have to construct him from first brick to the last. Killing Sisi offered no such value. It was not at all conducive to ongoing social unrest. The riot at Khodynskoya is still serving us, whereas knocking off Sisi? I tell you that if I were a gourmet picking a perfect peach off the tree, I might be able to enjoy some ten minutes of gastric excellence. That would be analogous to the pleasure we can take because of your nice work with Luigi Lucheni. But it must not give you any reason to lose your sense of measure." Here, he did smile.

"There was one nice advantage to it," he said. "Our great author did retain his good sense on that point."

Twain had also written:

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 being aware of us, that good fellow, Mark Twain, must have been ^{So}very near to saying, 'Ordained from below.' Thank God, he didn't!"

How the Maestro could laugh on these rare occasions when he felt merry.

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I have, as I related, been 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 too God-fearing. *So she did not dare to* ~~she could not~~ employ calculated tactics. [^] Until they lived at the mill, it had never occurred to her that she might make him jealous. But she had come at last to understand that she had to put a little fear into Alois.

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 he might even need her. Even if he did not love her beyond measure—which was obvious—he needed her.

To Klara, for whom love could be no less than a covenant between all the members of one's family ~~while remaining loyal to the love of God~~ it had never occurred to her that marriages might also exist on need. Indeed, one did not even have to like one's mate.

^{at last} Armed ^{however} with that thought, she was able to recognize that Alois was at an age to feel jealous. She, in turn, so long as she broke no covenants but merely bent them, might, yes, might, make Alois jealous enough to wish to move away from the mill.

This possibility resided in the form of the big, soot-covered man downstairs, the blacksmith, Preisinger. Adi was fascinated by him, Adi often spent hours at a time watching him work and listening to him talk. She could hear their voices even as she worked in her kitchen on the floor above 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, ~~and~~ ^{even if} that was exciting to her. ~~Yet~~ ^{well} she was not about to ponder why. ~~Fire pleased her~~ ^{well} ~~and~~ ^{well} She had known since childhood that God was everywhere, ~~and~~ ^{well} so was the Devil. So long as one did not oblige oneself to ~~follow every thought~~ ^{follow every thought}, the Devil could have no access. God would be there to protect your ignorance. Klara also knew that one had to pay a price for refusing to ~~follow~~ ^{go along} ~~with~~ one's thoughts, but that was a less important obligation than to keep the Devil ~~away~~ ^{at a distance}.

So it was enough for her to understand that Adi would be full of ~~mystery~~ ^{a sense} ~~of mystery~~ ^{so that} ~~as~~ ^{would} he watched the blacksmith heat a piece of iron until it was white-hot ~~and then~~ another piece, also white-hot, could be attached to it. Out of the joining ~~could~~ come further joinings ready to become useful objects and tools, anything and everything from carriage axles to broken ploughs.

Soon enough came an occasion when she had to visit below. The water-pump in the kitchen needed a repair on its cylinder. The crack was soon

mended but then, to her surprise, she stayed a little longer and talked with the blacksmith.
~~man.~~ (Then, he invited her to come back whenever she would like a cup of tea.

To her amazement, this big bull of a man, this Preisinger, had nice manners. He not only treated her with the greatest respect, but he could converse nicely considering that he was as uneducated as herself. He did not brag, but did leave the impression which she found most agreeable (even as she had once had 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 having trouble with a shoe, but, as he explained, many merchants in the area depended upon him for repairs of all variety. Moreover, he was ready to admit, he could diagnose many an equine ailment. "I have also been, able to act, [as]
~~X~~ Frau Hitler, ~~a~~ veterinarian. Yes, I can say that. Because sometimes I have to know more than the vets."

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

"Frau Hitler," answered Preisinger, "I have seen valuable animals hobbled to where they could barely walk. ^(And for a simple) Why? For the simplest reason. The veterinarian, however good a fellow he might be concerning other animal ^{did} diseases, ~~does~~ not know as much about a horse's hoof as ^{was} ~~can be~~ necessary."

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

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

"Yes," said Klara, "how much work must ^{come rushing in} ~~there be~~ when there is ice on the ground."

To which, he answered, "I see that you understand these matters."

Klara had to blush.

"Give me a better grip on the ice," Preisinger now said. "I hear that so much. Once, on a freezing day, I had to shoe twenty-five horses. Every one of those farmers was asking me to hurry up."

"Yes, but Herr Preisinger would not agree," said Adolf. "He told me, 'Speed is speed, yet one nail gone wrong, 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 said, "there were nights when I couldn't sit down because I had the horse's name on my behind."

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

"His hoof. I can recognize horses by their hooves."

"You can?"

"Old Clubfoot. Old ^{Mean Hoof}~~Shoe~~. 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 you can get kicked for your trouble."

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

"No longer," he said. "Not even ^{one time}~~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 such a direction. Rather, he was ready to discuss how he might take off old shoes and compound his own special caulk for the hole left by the old nails—he was proud of the various

kinds of problems he was ready to solve. While he spoke, she looked at the occasional imprint of horses' shoes on his dirt floor, there in the dark dust on the earth floor. She certainly did like this man. She could share his pride in the sea-anchor he was making for a rich man—no, no ordinary problem, an anchor—one had to be certain there were no weaknesses between the ring, the stock, the crown, the flukes, the palm and the shank. *She did enjoy the sound of such words. "The palm and the shank," she repeated.* After her third visit in two weeks, Preisinger insisted on *returning* coming upstairs

with her one morning to collect all her knives which he then proceeded to sharpen in his smithy. Afterward, he refused all payment. What impressed Klara most was that his work clothes might be black with soot, and yet he moved with such a sense of where he was that no detritus was left in her clean kitchen.

Then, on a Saturday evening when he must have known that Herr Hitler *(Gasthaus)* would be off to the inn for his beer, so did Preisinger come by on a visit, dressed in his Sunday shirt and suit. That caused no little perturbation in Klara (and in Angela) but he, too, was uncomfortable and sat on the edge of the sofa.

Yet Klara would look back on this occasion with satisfaction. That was because when Alois returned, he was even more disturbed than his wife at the

sight of Preisinger, sitting on their sofa, huge hands clamped together in his lap. While he departed soon after Alois came in, he did bow to Klara and manage to say, "Thank you for your invitation."

Alois herded a number of accumulated ~~furies~~ ^{outrages} 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 then said, "I suppose I did." She had been courteous, merely courteous. 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 on some day or other. She had not specified. It had not been a true invitation.

"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, it had worked out well.

Not two days later, Alois informed her that he had sent a letter to a friend in the Customs House at Linz inquiring whether real estate was available 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 that they would buy that house before they even went to look at it. Each was full of the same determination for altogether opposite reasons.

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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 any lively hope for the outcome, yet he had felt a ^{sympathetic} quickening in her. Conceivably, it might in time ^{become} a legitimate match. Her husband was getting old. So Preisinger, full of his own 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 and in other circumstances this kid could have become his step-son.

"Why is iron so strong?" Preisinger asked, and replied to his own question. "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 a spirit which is its own spirit. Some are strong, some are gentle."

Young Adolf did not reply but he did nod. Preisinger decided to proceed further. "Grass," he said, "will bend before every wind. It is ready to give way to every foot that steps on it. It is the opposite of iron. Even so, iron ^{over come up} can be in ^{where} the same earth ^{out of} out of which grass can grow. Yet, once ^{this} iron ore is smelted you can make it into a scythe. A scythe is there to cut the grass."

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

"Yes. You do not step on a piece of iron. Iron will hurt any foot that does not show respect." Preisinger's breath grew heavy with the ardor he felt

that is because
for his subject. "Yes, ~~iron ore~~, once it ~~is~~ *has* passed through the hottest fire, will turn into 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 how hot a fire must be to ~~bring out~~ *call out* the will of iron that is in the ore. Iron is strong against every force except the one that made it iron."
That was hardly an answer to the question,
so, Preisinger went on to speak of the wonders of his trade, an outpouring he seldom allowed himself, but the boy was ready to hear it all. "It takes a man of force to become a blacksmith," Preisinger finally said.

Adi was ~~Agog~~ *unnamed* with the mysterious interchanges between the will of iron and the incandescences necessary to create it. *He even made* ~~that he would make the~~

the mistake later that night of trying to explain it all to Angela and to Edmund.

Alois, however, happened to overhear this impromptu sermon and proceeded to roar with derision. "The mark of a truly stupid man," he announced to Klara,

"is that he takes 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.

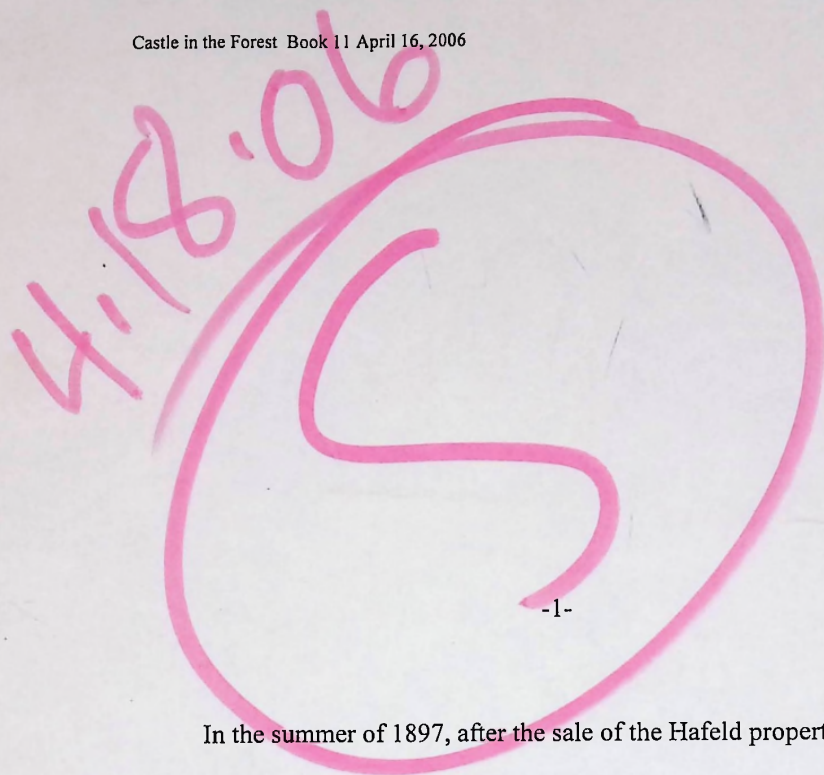
Nonetheless, Preisinger's discourse^{on the will of iron} was to prove of considerable use to Adi after he received his first serious whipping from Alois. That came after the collapse of forbearance on ^{the father's} ~~Alois'~~ part. The spirit of restraint he had been looking to develop as ~~a protection for his heart and as an atonement for whipping Alois Junior~~ came to an end on a given night when Adolf was out playing soldier in the woods with a few students from the monastery and ^{continued} ~~happened~~ to stay out long after dusk. Normally, Alois had only to whistle as evening approached and Adi would race upstairs from Preisinger's shop or come whipping back from the nearby woods. Indeed, if he ^{did not} ~~didn't~~ arrive soon after the echo of the first whistle, Alois would put him over his knee and give him a token whipping. 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 boy} the lingering light in the forest was exciting to ~~him~~. He saw the 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 a little (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. That left him morose. Then, Alois had to whistle for Adi ~~again and again~~. The interval became so extended that Alois decided ~~that~~ ^{him} it was a willful insult. So, he gave ~~the boy~~ a real beating.

Full of Preisinger's precepts, Adi took a new oath. He instructed himself to have the strength to live with whatever came down on him ~~now~~ ^{from above}. He would fortify his will of iron. Even as the first blow fell, he was issuing ~~further~~ orders to himself to live with a will of iron, ~~yes, live with a will of iron~~. He would fortify such determination by biting his ¹¹⁸ ~~teeth~~ against each and every remembrance of sobbing before the priest and weeping before the Abbot.

Tears stood out in his eyes yet he would not allow himself to cry ~~out~~. Preisinger's mighty biceps oscillated before his eyes even as he was being whipped. Let his father injure himself against a will of iron.



In the summer of 1897, after the sale of the Hafeld property, the family moved to the Gasthof Leingartner in Lambach, and, until the end of the year, they would live at that inn. Leaving behind the responsibilities of the farm opened a few small but surprising changes.

Alois, for example, had begun his true retirement. Indeed, he was obliged to recognize how much 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.

also point to
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? It would certainly 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 enter some 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. He had 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 so busy with the world's affairs that He could hardly afford interest in any but exceptional people? Since most humans, by Alois' measure, were ~~of minimal importance~~ ^{small} ~~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.

It would be asked why Alois would be accessible to allowing my grandchild to study with monks and priests, the 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 -2- Alois was delighted with his marks. The boy was not only taking excellent spiritual interest but was

These fresh thoughts may account for the reception Alois gave to a request from Adi that he be allowed to join the children's choir at the Benedictine monastery. 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 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."

Adi, however, was wondering whether if one day he might become a monk, or better, an Abbot. He loved their black habits. 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 thereby was instructing him early on 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 hallway, 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 upon his shoulders, he enunciated a prayer addressed to St. Michael the Archangel. He ~~had~~ ^{every day at} heard it ~~just that day, and~~ ^{Mass and} ~~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 for the moment when he would be alone in the forest speaking to the trees.

But first, he did his best to repeat the sermon which had preceded the prayer. "These fires of hell," he said aloud, but 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 staggered as he stood on the stool. The language had been so powerful. He had to take a few breaths before he was ready for the prayer.

~~But he had memorized it. He was more familiar with these words,~~ "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 did excite 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. He did hate the smell. He had been breathing the fumes of Alois' pipe since he had been an infant, and he had never liked it, but now the need to smoke tobacco was imperative. He must feel like a man again, yes, purely a man, not half and half.

-3-

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 possible that von Hagen had been enjoying the similarity to his own name since the swastika was called a Haken-Kreuz, a hooked cross. So, he had had it installed over the gate.

Not too much, I hasten to add, is to be made of this. This von Hagen's 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 under it ~~in the shadow of the even as~~ ^{as} the meanest of the priests under whom he studied ~~now~~, 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 cleric with all 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~~ ^{as bad as a crime.} you can commit." Adi began to weep before the priest even 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.

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

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 that it entered into Adi as a full abomination. He could not breathe. The long nose of this priest had been as malignant as his lips, thin as a knife edge. Yet in the midst of 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 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 in Adi's voice resonated with the full inspiration of an outright 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~~^{mean-}spirited cleric who was, of course, one of my finest clients in Lambach, had certainly been alerted by me to the fact that young Adolf Hitler was smoking tobacco under von Hagen's hooked stone cross.

-4-

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.

By now, it was also obvious that his father favored Edmund. Once, after Adi had given him a shove, Edmund even dared to poke 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 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 stinging to the boy's behind but without real force. Alois still lived in fear of the uncontrollable fury with which he had beaten Alois-Junior.

Since these quarrels between Adi and Edmund resounded through the inn, Klara was embarrassed, but the innkeeper and his wife, content with the 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 dresses had dusty shoe-prints all over it—that had to be her brother's doing.

Klara decided not to accuse him. He would deny it. The true problem remained; they had to move. Nor was Alois opposed. Adi's quarrels 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 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~~ ^{but she knew} course, he was not ~~so~~ 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 at least 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~~ ^{make} a fine, middle-class, ~~married lady~~ ^{marriage.} And for the present, at the least, she certainly deserved to have her own room. She was such a good step-daughter.

So, Klara accepted Alois' desire to move to the mill. There would be endless work, but Angela was finished with school, and ready to take on her part of the task. It was as if Angela was not only her step-daughter but ready to become the best friend Klara ever had, and certainly more loyal than Fanni.

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 four mules to activate the grinding wheel. To add to the clamor, there was also a most active blacksmith shop at the rear of the ground floor worked by a big fellow named Preisinger. Upstairs, it would be a war against the dust that rose from below, but Klara was not unhappy. One reason was Angela. At different hours of the day she could be Klara's maid, a younger sister, or a devoted friend. That left Klara free to enjoy some time alone with Paula.

On a given day, however, after a visit to the town doctor, Klara came home with the news of what the doctor had to tell them about Paula. Their daughter might be retarded.

Klara had had forebodings. The comparison between Edmund and Paula made it clear. At two, this little daughter could not use a spoon without spilling most of the contents, whereas Edmund was able to manage the trip from the bowl to his mouth not long after he was a year old. At two, he could dress himself, even begin to wash himself. Paula could not. She would be in her cell like the reg-

-5-

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 enough in her development to leave Klara full of foreboding.

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!

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Long before he was two, Edmund knew the words for arms, legs, fingers and toes, even his belly-button. Paula would giggle but knew none of these words.

During the doctor's examination, she could not keep her balance when trying to stand on one foot, ^{and she} ~~By the age of two, Edmund was already kicking a soccer ball.~~ Now, Paula looked blank when the doctor asked her, "What do you do when you are cold?" (or hungry? Or tired?)

Klara, to help Paula, said, "Sleep," which Paula then repeated, but that annoyed the doctor. "Please, Frau Hitler, no help," he said.

"Yes," Klara now told Alois, "the doctor says she is backward."

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

"Alois, it could be true." Klara began to weep. "I have been worried."

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. He would snap at Adi. Later, she would feel disloyal, but the truth was that 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 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.

It would have bothered Klara a good deal more if she had known what Adolf's secret desire had become. It was to hit Edmund as hard as he could, and get away with such an act. Everything about his baby brother infuriated him. Edmund's eyes were so blue. Everybody commented. But his own eyes, Adolf decided, were deeper, a better blue, even if 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~~ *a little more.*

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 keep watching for him upstairs while he sat there 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 have looked to undertake such a seduction on his own.

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 and cultivated queen in Europe. ~~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 will 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 do need more than a few 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 helped me 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 saying to him. "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 from her person. No matter that strangers 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 discomfiting 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 squalid acts without a moment of regret, let it not come as a surprise. Devils require two natures. In part, we are civilized. What may be less palatable (and apparent) on most occasions is that our ultimate aim is to raze civilization. Such an enterprise must be able to call on one's readiness to do what it takes—a fine expression I picked 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 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 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 although later, for a myriad of reasons too labyrinthine to catalogue, he chose not to publish it. I, however, came into possession of these pages by way of one of his servants.

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 bummer 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 invented kingship and the thousand other

dignities. . . it 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 taken myself so seriously ever before. I knew that I was, at last, an actor in history.

To my woe, he was scathing. "I may value great writers," he said, "but look how Mark Twain exaggerates the event. It is hysterical. A thousand years! That is absurd. Sisi will be forgotten in twenty."

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

My thoughts were heard. "Oh," he said, "it's a bit of help. But you, like Twain, are much too impressed by mighty names. They count for so little once they are gone. I'd like to clean the snobbery out of you. It's not the name. Only an exceptional client that we develop ex nihilo—or virtually ex nihilo—can affect history to our continuing advantage. But for that, we have to construct him from first brick to the last. Killing Sisi offered no such value. It was not at all conducive to ongoing social unrest. The riot at Khodynskoya is still serving us, whereas knocking off Sisi? I tell you that if I were a gourmet picking a perfect peach off the tree, I might be able to enjoy some ten minutes of gastric excellence. That would be analogous to the pleasure we can take because of your nice work with Luigi Lucheni.

But it must not give you any reason to lose your sense of measure." Here, he did smile.

"There was one nice advantage to it," he said. "Our great author did retain his good sense on that point."

Twain had also written:

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 being aware of us, that good fellow, Mark Twain, must have been very near to saying, 'Ordained from below.' Thank God, he didn't!"

How the Maestro could laugh on these rare occasions when he felt merry.

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I have, as I related, been 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 too God-fearing. She could not employ calculated tactics. Until they lived at the mill, it had never occurred to her that she might make him jealous. But she had come at last to understand that she had to put a little fear into Alois.

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 he might even need her. Even if he did not love her beyond measure—which was obvious—he needed her.

To Klara, for whom love could be no less than a covenant between all the members of one's family while remaining loyal to the love of God, it had never occurred to her that marriages might also exist on need. Indeed, one did not even have to like one's mate.

Armed with that thought, she was able to
recognize
~~so it finally occurred to her~~ that Alois was at an age to feel jealous, and she, in turn, so long as she broke no covenants but merely bent them, might, yes, might, make Alois jealous enough to wish to move away from the mill.

This possibility resided in the form of the big, soot-covered man downstairs, the blacksmith, Preisinger. Adi was fascinated by him, Adi often spent hours at a time watching him work and listening to him talk. She could hear their voices even as she worked in her kitchen on the floor above 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, and that was exciting to her. Yet, she was not about to ponder why. Fire pleased her so. 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 have no access. God would be there to protect your ignorance. Klara also knew that one had to pay a price for refusing to follow one's thoughts, but that was a less important obligation than to keep the Devil away.

So it was enough for her to understand that Adi would be full of awe as he watched the blacksmith heat a piece of iron until it was white-hot and then another piece, also white-hot, could be attached to it. Out of the joining could come further joinings ready to become useful objects and tools, anything and everything from carriage axles to broken ploughs.

Soon enough came an occasion when she had to visit below. The water-pump in the kitchen needed a repair on its cylinder. The crack was soon mended but then, to her surprise, she stayed a little longer and talked

with the man. Then, he invited her to come back whenever she would like a cup of tea.

To her amazement, this big bull of a man, this Preisinger, had nice manners. He not only treated her with the greatest respect, but he could converse nicely considering that he was as uneducated as herself. He did not brag, but did leave the impression which she found most agreeable (even as she had once had 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 having trouble with a shoe, but, as he explained, many merchants in the area depended upon him for repairs of all variety. Moreover, he was ready to admit, he could diagnose many an equine ailment. "I have ^{also been} on occasion, ~~Frau Hitler, doubled as a~~ ^{can say that. Because sometimes} veterinarian. Yes, I am excellent at that if I choose to say so myself. ^{I have to} ~~There~~ ^{are occasions when I am obliged to} know more than the vets."

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

"Frau Hitler," answered Preisinger, "I have seen valuable animals hobbled to where they could barely walk. Why? For the simplest reason. The veterinarian, however good a fellow he might be concerning other animal diseases, ^{does} ~~did~~ not know as much about a horse's hoof as ~~was~~ ^{can be} necessary."

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

"Young Adolf ^{will} ~~may~~ tell you. There ^{are} ~~have been~~ market days when I ^{have} ~~had~~ to shoe as many as twenty horses, one after another, ^{No} ~~without~~ stopping."

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

To which, he answered, "I see that you ^{understand these} ~~have an appreciation of~~ ~~natural~~ matters."

Klara had to blush.

"Give me a better ^{grip} ~~feeling~~ on the ice," Preisinger now said. "I hear ^{so much,} ~~that on many an occasion~~ ~~is what they always ask for.~~ Once, on a freezing

day, I had to shoe twenty-five horses. Every ~~last~~ one of those farmers ~~was asking~~ wanted me to hurry up."

"Yes, but Herr Preisinger would not agree," said Adolf. "He told me, 'Speed is speed, yet one nail ~~misplaced~~ ^{gone wrong}, 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 said, "there were nights when I couldn't sit down because I had the horse's name on my behind."

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

"His hoof. I can recognize horses by their hooves."

"You can?"

"Old Clubfoot. Old ~~Ironside~~ ^{Shoe}. 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 such a direction. Rather, he was ready to discuss how he might take off old shoes and compound his own special caulk for the hole left by the old nails—he was proud of the various kinds of problems he was ready to solve. While he spoke, she looked at the occasional imprint of horses' shoes on his dirt floor, there in the dark dust on the earth floor. She certainly did like this man. She could share his pride in the sea-anchor he was making for a rich man—no, no ordinary problem, an anchor—one had to be certain there were no weaknesses between the ring, the stock, the crown, the flukes, the palm and the shank.

After her third visit in two weeks, Preisinger insisted on coming upstairs with her one morning to collect all her knives which he then proceeded to sharpen in his smithy. Afterward, he refused all payment.

What impressed Klara most was that his work clothes might be black with soot, and yet he moved with such a sense of where he was that no detritus was left in her clean 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 on a visit, dressed in his Sunday shirt and suit. *same 97*

That caused no little perturbation in Klara (and in Angela) but he, too, was uncomfortable and sat on the edge of the sofa.

Yet Klara would look back on this occasion with satisfaction. That was because when Alois returned, he was even more disturbed than his wife at the sight of Preisinger, sitting on their sofa, huge hands clamped together in his lap. While he departed soon after Alois came in, he did bow to Klara and manage to say, "Thank you for your invitation."

Alois herded 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 then said, "I suppose I did." She had been courteous, merely courteous. 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 on some day or other. She had not specified. It had not been a true invitation.

"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, it had worked out well.

Not two days later, Alois informed her that he had sent a letter to a friend in the Customs House at Linz inquiring whether real estate was available 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 that they would buy that house before they even went to look at it. Each was full of the same determination if for altogether opposite reasons.

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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 any lively hope for the outcome, yet he had felt a quickening in her. Conceivably, it might in time be a legitimate match. Her husband was getting old. So Preisinger, full of his own 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 and in other circumstances this kid could have become his stepson.

"Why is iron so strong?" Preisinger asked, and replied to his own question. "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 ^a its own spirit ^{which is its own spirit}. Some are strong, some are gentle."

Young Adolf did not reply but he did nod. Preisinger decided to

proceed further. "Grass," he said, "^{will bend before} ~~can be bent by~~ every wind. It ~~has to~~ ^{is ready to} ~~give way to~~ ^{steps on} ~~accept every footstep~~ ^{and} that ~~tramples upon~~ it. It is the opposite of iron which ~~can be extracted out of the same earth from which grass can grow, but, once~~ ^{is smelted you can make it} ~~smelted, iron ore is ready to be made into a scythe that can cut the grass.~~ ^{A scythe} ~~is there to cut grass,~~ ^{with}"

"That is so interesting," said Adi, ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{with} real enthusiasm.

"Yes. You do not step on a piece of iron. ~~You do not trample upon it~~ ^{hurt a} Iron will ~~injure~~ ^{injure} any foot that does not show respect." Preisinger's breath

grew heavy with the ardor he felt for his subject. "Iron ore, once it ~~has~~ ^{is passed} passed through the hottest fire, is ~~ready to become~~ ^{will turn into} 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." Think of how hot a fire must be to bring ~~forth~~ ^{out of iron} the will that is in the ore. "Iron is strong against every force except ~~but~~ ^{the one which created it} that made it iron."

Preisinger went on to speak of the wonders of his trade, an outpouring

he seldom allowed himself, but the boy was ready to hear it all. "It takes a man of force to become a blacksmith," Preisinger finally said.

Adi was so agog with the mysterious interchanges between the will of iron and the incandescences necessary to create it, that he would make the mistake later that night of trying to explain it all to Angela and to Edmund.

Alois, however, happened to overhear this impromptu sermon and proceeded to roar with derision. "The mark of a truly stupid man," he announced to Klara, "is that he takes 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 discourses on the will of iron was to prove of considerable use to Adi after he received his first serious whipping from Alois. That came after the collapse of forbearance on Alois' part. The spirit of restraint he had been looking to develop as a protection for his heart and as an atonement for whipping Alios-Junior came to an end on a given night when Adolf was out playing soldier in the woods with a few students from the monastery and happened to stay out long after dusk. Normally, Alois had only to whistle as evening approached and Adi would race upstairs from Preisinger's shop or come whipping 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 whipping. 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 the 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 a little (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. That left him morose. Then, Alois had to whistle for Adi again and again. The interval became so extended that Alois decided that it was a willful insult. So, he gave the boy a real beating.

Full of Preisinger's precepts, Adi 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 fell, he was issuing further orders to himself to live with a will of iron, yes, live with a will of iron. He would fortify such determination by biting his teeth against each

and every remembrance of sobbing before the priest and weeping before the Abbot.

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 himself against a will of iron.