

**NOT WITHOUT BLAME**

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by **FREDRIK RAMM**

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TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY  
**DERMOT MCKAY**



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by FREDRIK RÅMM

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## A TRIBUTE TO FREDRIK RAMM

by the HON. C. J. HAMBRO

*formerly President of the Norwegian Parliament*

FREDRIK RAMM first became known in the press as the journalist who was with Amundsen on his flight over the North Pole. Then he was known for the daily column, "The Man in the Crow's Nest," which he wrote in *Tidens Tegn*. But he attained his greatest significance when he was roused to great Christian action through the Oxford Group's coming to Norway. His absolute honesty and the whole-hearted way he gave himself, made him a personality of extraordinary influence. He was one of the bitterest opponents of Denmark over the Greenland issue, and therefore attracted international attention when he later began to work for a better relationship between Denmark and Norway.

From the first day of the German invasion he stood boldly and uncompromisingly for faith and justice, and his courageous articles in both *Tidens Tegn* and *Morgenbladet* were of great moral importance. It was natural that he was one of the very first the Germans arrested. Because he could not compromise with evil, he was sentenced to life-imprisonment and taken to Germany to allow him no opportunity to influence people in Norway.

After three years of suffering he died—of double pneumonia the Nazis said. It is one of the methods of execution commonly used in concentration camps.

His long time in prison developed and deepened him. His life in these years resembles that of a great Christian martyr. He helped and strengthened everyone around him. His life and message from prison will never be forgotten.

## PART ONE

### I

It was a fresh April day. Halvor Grawe stood at the window of his office. Below, on a small peninsula in Oslo Fjord, lay his kingdom : an engineering works, employing three thousand men. The weather was fitful. Now the sun shone down on the bright-red machine-shops, the stocks, the floating-dock, the big yard with its heaps of scrap-iron : now a cloud bank swarmed up the darkening sky, and the sea went as black as coal, before sudden, sharp gusts of wind.

As he stood there with his hands in his pockets, a big, burly bull of a man, he recalled with a smile a remark his son had made to him as they had stood together at the window a few days before.

" If they've made you a Commander of the Order of St. Olav for that," Harald had said, pointing at the works, " they'll give you the Grand Cross when the new plans get under way."

During the past year, he and Harald had worked on a plan for a new, vast ship-yard. It was to be large enough for the building of the fifteen thousand ton vessels, which the Norwegian mercantile marine had at present to buy abroad.

Grawe had had the plan in mind for years, but until now he had felt the spirit of the times was unfavourable. Wealthy as he was, the scheme was beyond his resources, and he knew he would require a great deal of outside backing. He felt fairly sure of Government support, for the ship-yard would give employment to many thousands of men. . .

There was a knock. His secretary came in and asked if he could spare time to see Director Hørfeldt.

Hørfeldt was about the same age as Grawe : nearly sixty. He was one of Grawe's closest associates ; and on most points he was in agreement with Harald . . . He was an able and clear-headed business man, but at the same time he often surprised his friends by suddenly producing remarkable ideas. He opened conversation now by congratulating Grawe on his Commander's Cross.

" Other people slave away for years in the service of the country and don't get even a Cross of Merit for their pains, and here you come along and at one swoop you're a Commander . . ."

And he went on to tell Grawe that some of their mutual friends had met a few days previously and discussed holding a banquet in his honour.



“ We’ve never had the opportunity of expressing to you the very great regard we have for you,” he said.

Grawe at once rejected the idea . . . Hørfeldt exercised all his arts of persuasion . . . Tried treating the matter jokingly . . . But in vain. Nor did it help his saying that not Grawe himself was to be honoured but the society he worked in. He represented all the possibilities of a free and democratic community. It might almost be said that it was his duty as a citizen to allow himself to be honoured . . .

But the Works-Owner was not to be moved. Hørfeldt became irritated by Grawe’s inflexible attitude: Grawe by Hørfeldt’s importunity. As the director left the office, he met Harald Grawe on the stairs. It occurred to him that perhaps the son could be of use. He stopped him and asked if he would come out to lunch. And Harald Grawe, who liked Hørfeldt’s geniality and many stories, went with him. Hørfeldt explained what the position was . . . The captains of commerce wished to hold a banquet to honour his father; the Government and the Storting would certainly join in, though not officially perhaps . . . It would be a wonderful advertisement for Grawe personally, for the firm, and for the community . . .

“ But the obstinate mule says no.” Hørfeldt leant back despairingly in his chair. “ If it were me now ! . . . Can’t you get your father to accept the invitation ? ”

Harald Grawe shrugged. He knew that when his father had got an idea in his head it was impossible to shake him. But all at once he had an idea of his own and he said he would try.

When he got back to the office, he mentioned that Hørfeldt had spoken to him about the banquet and asked him to use his filial influence . . .

“ You know, occasionally a banquet like that has its points,” Harald said.

“ Rubbish,” his father replied. “ The only point of such banquets is to give you a head like nothing on earth the next day . . . ”

“ I think you ought to accept the invitation,” said Harald. “ It would give you the opportunity to launch your big plan as the next step in your life’s work. You’d get it surrounded right at the start with sympathy and glamour; which might be of enormous value later on.”

The idea caught on in Grawe’s mind. The lad was quite right. And, after thinking it over for a few minutes, he rang up Hørfeldt and said that Harald had got him to change his mind. They decided that the banquet should be held in exactly a week’s time . . .

And Halvor Grawe sat now—a week later—in his big house in Parkveien, waiting to drive down to the banquet.

He and Harald had worked strenuously for the past days to get the plan ready for presentation. For the benefit of the papers he had drawn up a resumé of his speech and had had blocks made showing the position of the new works. He intended to make the fullest use of the opportunities for advertisement. For that reason, too, he had some of his oldest employees invited; amongst whom was the friend of his boyhood, Nils Kirkeplassen, now a foreman in the section containing special-purpose machinery. The Minister of Trade also was coming; so was Storting Member Halvard Fjellgard and the old aggressive and radical trades unionist, Ola Tyrivolden, who was now the manager of the Labour Office and had originally come from the same village as Grawe.

There was a knock on the door. It was old Karen. She had lived with Grawe and his wife from the time of their marriage, and since his wife's death, ten years ago, she had been his housekeeper. Before that she had been in the service of his father-in-law, Professor Barner, from whom he had inherited the house. She now regarded Grawe as a son who had to be looked after: but at the same time she stood in awe of him.

“The Works-Owner must watch the time,” she said.

“I'm in plenty of time,” he replied. “You've told Guttormsen to be ready to drive me down at a moment's notice?”

“Oh yes . . . But suppose something went wrong with the car?” said Karen. “And the Works-Owner knows that Camilla wouldn't have liked you to arrive late.”

Grawe smiled at the old woman . . . She always spoke of his wife as Camilla; that was natural, for she had been present both at Camilla's birth and at her death. On her death-bed Camilla had made Karen promise to look after her husband; and he had promised that she should live in the house in Parkveien as long as she wished . . . She now came to him as a matter of course about all difficulties and about her differences with the other servants. And every time he was going off to a party she came shuffling along. Her remarks were always the same.

“Can't you get used to the idea that cars are now as reliable as trains?” Grawe asked her.

But Karen did not appear convinced this time either.

“Camilla would have gone with you to this banquet they're giving you,” she said after a moment.

“She certainly would,” he said. “It wouldn't have been much of a banquet for me otherwise.”

“No, the Works-Owner can rest assured of that . . . Our Lord never made a better person than Camilla . . . And she came from



such good families . . . Yes, Professor Barner was a wonderful person too . . .”

Grawe liked her talking about his wife, but he always felt irritated when she began to speak of his father-in-law. He knew it was childish to bother what the honest old woman said without the slightest hint of any ill insinuation. Camilla's wisdom and her faith in him had meant a great deal to him, and the money she had inherited from her father had been of great help, but he had taken the initial steps on his own without any aid from the Barner family.

“ You don't think I should have got very far without Camilla ? ”

“ No . . . But the Works-Owner said that himself, in the speech you made when Harald was confirmed . . . ”

“ Did I ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, I remember it very well. I stood down by the door of the annex as the Works-Owner spoke, and I remember so well that when you said it Camilla went red and looked up at you. ”

Grawe felt the conversation oppressive, and soon afterwards he drove off to the banquet.

In the vestibule of the reception rooms of Commerce House down by the harbour he was met by the invitation committee. Director Hørfeldt was master of ceremonies and toast-master ; he led them all into the banquet hall where the other guests stood waiting. Grawe was greeted with clapping and cheering, while the orchestra played a march which shook the room.

Half-way through the meal Hørfeldt struck the gong and the speeches commenced. Grawe knew in advance what each particular speaker would say. And as he sat there receiving all this homage, a strange and uncertain feeling came over him : the same feeling that came over him every time Karen spoke as she had done just before he left home . . . He wanted to leave the banquet and go back home to his study. He longed to be in the great empty house in Parkveien, where he could walk to and fro through the rooms, thinking out the schemes which later took practical shape in the companies of which he was a director . . . Hørfeldt had spoken true . . . It was not to him the homage was paid. All the speakers expressed the same idea . . . Our society is good because it produces men like Grawe . . . Grawe is a great man who creates great things in the society we have placed at his disposal . . .

After some time Grawe got a message from Hørfeldt, asking for a hint as to when he would like to speak himself. Grawe strove to collect his thoughts. To whom should he address his reply ? He looked round the table, whilst the chairman of the Press Society said what needed to be said about collaboration between the Press and industry. His eyes fell on Nils . . . Why not to the old workman, his boyhood's friend ? It would be a beautiful and fitting



gesture. All these folk could do with a reminder of the very special relationship existing between him and his older employees . . . But what would they all say? He wasn't afraid; but would it destroy some of the effect of his remarks about the plan if he demonstratively picked upon the representative of a world which many of the guests regarded as their enemy?

"Who've you thought of addressing your reply to?" whispered the Chairman of the Industrial Bank, the sponsor of the banquet, who was sitting next to him.

"Have you any suggestion?"

"Wouldn't it be a wise move to close by thanking the Minister for his positive attitude towards trade?"

George realised he was right, and the remark dismissed his groping thoughts . . . Nils was no longer his boyhood's friend; he was just one among three thousand workmen, hardly any better or any worse at his job than the average . . . Karen was his housekeeper, old and a bit muddled; and it was ridiculous to bother what she said, or to get sentimental because Nils looked a stranger as he sat there . . . He was Halvor Grawe, the poor boy from the remote forest township, who now had a Commander's Cross and a million-kroner fortune. He had had no help from anyone and deserved to be honoured. He'd deserve it all the more when he produced the plan he and Harald had worked out. He nodded to Director Hørfeldt, who struck the gong, and then he presented his and "my son Harald's" plan.

The Minister of Trade showed merely polite interest to start with, but bit by bit, as practical matters cropped up, he began to follow carefully. This Grawe was some fellow: he dealt with politics, customs problems, statistics, and labour questions; and at the end the Minister was overcome with delight when Grawe turned to him personally and toasted "the Minister of Trade, a pillar of all the constructive forces of the nation . . ." The speech was received with tremendous enthusiasm: the toast was drunk while the orchestra played a fanfare, and the atmosphere reached a heightened pitch. The banquet had a motif . . .

After the dinner Grawe tried to get hold of Nils Kirkeplassen, whom he wanted to greet . . . Nils was an outsider; moreover, the wine had done its work upon many of the guests, and Nils was a fanatical prohibitionist. But he was unable to find him, and when he enquired of the man Nils had sat next to, he learnt that the old man had gone away as soon as they had risen from the table . . .

Georg Hørfeldt was beside himself with joy over Grawe's speech.

"I don't understand the technical side of it, but my God, the political repercussions it'll have! Other people go about talking, year in and year out. Commissions and I don't know what else sit

and jaw. And here you come along with a whole scheme all worked out. The money'll be forthcoming all right . . . There's no one like you."

He moved close up to Grawe and said confidentially :

"Surely you'll join the Employers' Federation now? If you're to deal with such multitudes of the enemies of society you'll need all its power behind you . . ."

Grawe was annoyed and answered sharply :

"Don't forget, Hørfeldt, that the people you call society's enemies have made me what I am . . ."

Hørfeldt smiled.

"Forgive me, old chap; even on your day of triumph I can't resist pulling your leg: but you know I only talk like this to you. It'd be the end of me politically if it became known that I talked like that about electors . . ."

Then he stopped smiling :

"But, Grawe, you must also forgive me for something else. Just before we sat down one of your employees came up to me. He wanted to address a few words to you, he said, but I forgot to call upon him. I didn't write his name down on my list and it went out of my head. The worst of it is he was going to make you a presentation from himself and a number of other employees. It was a silver dish. I'm terribly sorry. But you just can't remember such things unless you write them down."

Grawe didn't know what to say . . . He couldn't be angry. He'd have to talk to Nils later. For the moment he forgot the episode; so many others wanted to hear more about the big plan. One of the editors had rung up his industrial correspondent and got him to come along for Grawe to give him detailed information . . .

Towards midnight Grawe went into a small room where Hørfeldt and a number of friends had established themselves. The genial director was in his best social form—slightly inebriated. The jokes followed one after the other like boys at leap-frog, and salvoes of laughter greeted each jest.

"Now listen, Grawe . . . This is an intimate little circle in here. We're all friends and we know each other well. I'll ask you straight out: why won't you join the Employers' Federation? It was stupid of me to speak of Nils Plasskirken, or whatever the fellow's name is, and the other workmen, as society's enemies. But there's something in it, because I'm damned if they're our friends . . ."

"Not so long ago I was a worker myself . . ."

"Yes, that's what I've always said about you . . . You're a hopeless dreamer. Because you were once a worker there's no reason why you should back up people whose one wish is to destroy every constructive force in the country. Are life's lessons entirely



lost on you? Once I used to think highly of the peasants. But my God . . . I've been cured of that. They're as selfish as the workers . . ."

"Shouldn't Storting Member Halvard Fjellgard have spoken to-night?" someone asked.

Hørfeldt glanced into the next room. Then he leant forward and whispered:

"Yes . . . He told me he had some sort of address to make, but I pretended I'd forgotten . . ."

"But why in the world? . . . A Storting member and a farmer!" said the man who had asked.

"Just for those reasons. We've at last had the opportunity of honouring Grawe as our man. Having got it, we can't let everybody who comes along make capital out of him. We can't be as stupid as all that . . ."

Grawe had followed these remarks with indignant attentiveness. Was that why Hørfeldt had also forgotten to let Nils speak? . . . The question burst from him.

"Don't be completely fatuous," replied Hørfeldt. "A speech by Nils Plasskirken?"

"Kirkeklassen," corrected Grawe.

"Just as you like . . . But a speech by him would have been the high spot of the evening. Can't you see that? A loyal old workman paying homage to his employer! . . . The most touching sight I could think of . . . But unfortunately I actually did forget Plasskirken . . ."

They all laughed . . .

"Excuse me, Grawe . . . You shall call me Feldthør for the rest of the night."

They continued in that vein for a time; then Grawe broke away. In spite of the Nils incident and his annoyance with Hørfeldt, he was pleased with the evening. Hørfeldt had probably acted in good faith, though it was extremely hard on the old fellow, and he was glad they were on a good footing with each other.

As he walked up Palace Hill, the old question, which had cropped up during the evening, recurred to his mind: should he join the Employers' Federation?

Many people had spoken to him about that lately. Harald had been very keen on it, and was quite right in his contention that the great enterprise was vulnerable. There was probably a good deal too in his argument that support for the monster works would be more easily obtained if he joined the federation and identified himself with the other employers in the country.

When Grawe got home he went into his study. On the desk lay a large, flat package and a letter in a clumsy handwriting. It was

from Nils, saying he had called in with a present from himself and the other older workmen. It had been their intention to hand it to him at the banquet, but he had not been asked to speak, so he had come round with it as he wanted Grawe to get it on his day of honour. He opened the package . . . It was the silver dish Hørfeldt had spoken of. Engraved upon it was a picture of the original smithy he had owned. And under the picture were the names of the half-dozen men who, together with Nils, had worked for him almost from the start.

He was pleased and touched to get the gift, and once more felt annoyed that Nils had not spoken. It was a trifling matter ; Nils was probably relieved, if truth were told, that he had not had to speak ; and his relations with him and the other older employees could scarcely have been better. They called him Halvor and he said Nils and Anders to them. But why did these strange feelings come over him when he thought about them as he had done at the banquet ? Why did these same feelings arise too when Karen brought up her old memories as she had done that evening ? . . . Deep down in his soul was a wound. It meant little ; but it was there all the time : a vague longing, woven together from the memories of his boyhood's home, of his parents, of Camilla, and of the first years of the works.

## II

Next day the papers were full of reports of the banquet, and *Dagens Stemme*, one of whose directors was Georg Hørfeldt, made a great feature of it. They had obtained photographs of Grawe's old parents and of the forest township far up in the mountains near the Swedish border, where he had been born.

The Works-Owner sat on at the breakfast table for a long time, studying the papers. It was nice to have such a fuss made of him. Karen, who brought his coffee, had also read the account and as usual she said :

“ If Camilla had been here, this would have made her so happy . . . ”

In the study his mail lay unopened. He had handed over to Harald a good deal of the day-to-day management of the works and before setting off in the morning he used to do as much work as he could at home. But to-day he looked with distaste at the big pile of letters and could not bring himself to settle down to work on them. He strolled over to the window and gazed across at the Palace Park where the lawns were beginning to be green.

Once more he seated himself at the desk ; but his eye was caught now by the picture of his wife, which hung on the wall directly



opposite him : and then by the photograph of his parents which was on the desk. It was a bad picture—it had been taken by an itinerent photographer who had come to the village when he was a boy—but he knew every line in the two faces. It was a long time since the picture had spoken to him as it did to-day. It was a long time since the contrast between the simple surroundings of his youth and the banquet, the big house, and the works, had forced itself so strongly on his imagination.

The past rose up around him ; seizing his mind by main force. He wanted to get to work on his mail ; he wanted to summon his stenographer . . . To plan, to make decisions . . . And yet he didn't want to . . . A smile curled his lips : he was sitting here with thoughts and feelings flitting hither and thither unchecked. How was it that he, who so rapidly made decisions affecting hundreds of human lives, could not now decide to get on with his work ? And why couldn't he bring himself to give a definite yes or no to the simple question of joining the Employers' Federation ? Why should he, who gave orders to bank-managers and engineers, be seized with uncertainty when he thought about Nils and Karen and the memories they stirred ? . . .

Yesterday at the banquet he had longed to be at home in his own rooms, so that he could work. Now he was there, and he couldn't work . . . How lonely I am ! he suddenly thought. He lived here in Parkveien, but when he came home no one was ever waiting for him. At the works they merely stood and bowed to him and said, " Yes, Herr Works-Owner : " all they thought about was getting home . . . Hørfeldt, Fjellgard . . . He let his associates and fellow-workers pass through his mind. Last night hundreds had honoured him . . . To-day the papers were full of accounts of his life and his achievements. He was admired and envied by hundreds of thousands. But in the midst of the money and the people he sat alone . . . Alone, and paralysed by it.

He began to walk through the rooms and stopped in front of a large painting of a forest township in east Norway. He had bought it because it reminded him of his own birthplace. The picture showed a sunset, and it had been painted at the time of year when foliage seems on the very point of bursting out . . . Should he take the two-seater and drive off to his village ? And stay there a few days ? Get completely rested in the strong fresh air ? Listen to the capercailzie in the early dawn ? There he would discover again the sense of certainty which his loneliness and his romantic dreamings had stolen from him. He rang up the office and said he was going away for a few days.

It was some years since he had been up there. Each time he had gone it had been on a sudden visit like this ; each time it had been



in connection with some great event in his life : and each time such a long space had elapsed before the next visit that he forgot the disappointment he had felt that the little township was not as he remembered it in his dreams . . .

He took with him his Commander's Cross and a complete set of the day's newspapers. On the way through the city he pulled up at a shop and bought a steel box, into which he put the cross and the papers. He had a vague notion of appeasing the village, so that it would no longer haunt him with its longings. The past should fall into its proper place in his thoughts ; no longer dominate and paralyse him.

He would get to the root of the dualism in his thought life. Work was his life : whatever hindered his work must be discarded. However much he wished it, he couldn't become again a poor peasant lad with great vows to himself and his village . . . And Camilla was dead ; what he had done to her couldn't be undone.

As he drove his mood gradually became more optimistic. He picked up people walking along the road in his direction, and when he saw the floor of a wood covered with blue anemones he stopped the car and picked a bunch, tying them to the steering wheel. At a few places there was still snow lying in the woods, but the roads were dry and firm and the ploughing was in full swing. As the ploughs turned over the ground he could see the magpies and crows following at a cautious distance behind the men and horses : there were wagtails too and they tripped up to the very heels of the ploughmen, stuffing themselves with maggots and caterpillars. He saw the first wagtail from the front. He could not remember exactly what that meant, but he felt it must be something good—for the spring day and the drive were giving him a great sense of well-being. The mere decision to do something had driven away much of his uncertainty, and the sun shone cheerfully from the spring sky. He heard the roar of the rivers and in every field tiny streams babbled.

He still drove through a land of alternate woods and fields. Big farmsteads crowned the hill-tops ; the huge dwelling-houses bore witness to power and prosperity. Though at the fringes of the woods and within the copses other farms were to be seen, small and dingy.

The landscape changed. The road swung eastwards and lay before him straight as a ruled line. The big forests had begun : and here the spring was still far off. The snow was protected from the sun by the trunks and thick tree tops. Here and there, snow still lay on the road itself . . . It clouded over and soon a thick, fine rain began to fall, while mists lay heavy and motionless over the highest hills. There was forest, forest, forest as far as the eye could see in every direction, with small clearings here and there containing



dwellings. Every so often giant lorries with trailers would come thundering towards him loaded up with timber : a whole coppice rolling down the road. At the wheel would sit a youth with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth . . . Occasionally a girl beside him on the driving seat . . . The machine had taken over from the old horses which had once slogged along the road with a few logs ; and from the river, which in early flood now was in the act of breaking the ice.

The forest thinned, the road made a detour along a ledge, and before Grawe lay seven fairy-like mountains. Big and dark. Far away on the sky-line. Huge, dome-like peaks rising above the endless forest. He felt at home ; the landscape resembled that of his own parish and the people he met looked what he felt people ought to look like. One face after another reminded him of people he had known in his childhood. Their eyes were clear and sharp : and from the corners of the eyes fanned out over the cheek bone the innumerable tiny wrinkles which these forest folk acquire through squeezing up their eyes in the strong sunlight as they stalk game and reindeer on the snow-covered uplands. Facial features were sharper, figures more sinewy, than in other places. People walked differently. They leant forward as they went and could march great distances with little exertion. He remembered how proud the boys were when the schoolmaster said that soldiers from their parish were the best marchers in the whole army . . . He began to think of his son. He was exactly like these lads. Slim, sinewy, and with well-marked, rather hard, features . . .

Half-way through the afternoon Grawe reached the side-road which turned off to his village. It was narrow and winding ; perhaps a little better in repair than when he was here last. That last visit had been made at a time of great crisis in the works : he had even considered issuing a debenture loan, thereby relinquishing the no-borrowing principle he had always followed. That was three or four years ago now . . . Before that he had not been there since his wife's death.

He reached the centre of the parish, where the chapel, the school, and a country store lay. There was no hotel : the few travellers who came and spent a night used to lodge with the schoolmaster . . . Grawe had not met the young schoolmaster before. He came from a neighbouring parish ; as also did his wife . . . They were newly married, and Grawe was a little dubious when he discovered that both of them were very religious. He was carried right into another world when, before settling down to the simple meal, they both folded their hands and in powerful voices sang grace . . . " God's blessing be upon this food, And fill our hearts with gratitude . . . "

When he had asked for a few nights' lodging he had told them

who he was and said that he had been born in the township ; and he had seen that they had heard of him. But he was glad when he realised they would not treat him with any special respect on that account.

He went out after the meal on to the open space in front of the house and lit a cigar. And he was carried back many decades into the past . . . The day was nearly done, and the air was sharp and chilly. The mist and cloud were dispersing. In the north-west the sky was clear and there was a glorious sunset . . . The whole valley was full of the sound of the river and of the streams that flowed down into it. A song thrush began to sing, and at its full-throated song the rushing of the water and the melting of the snow seemed to stop. He could see the little bird, in the top of a fir at the edge of the forest. His hosts came out too and all three of them stood and listened to the song.

“ It’s full of the joy of life,” said Grawe. “ But I expect you’ve heard enough of it.”

“ One never tires of hearing songs in praise of the Lord, whoever it is that sings them,” said the schoolmaster’s wife.

Grawe felt at home with all his body and all his soul. He suddenly remembered Hørfeldt—and felt at one with him too. The Oslo director had taught him to appraise red wine. With his help he had laid down a wine cellar . . . “ I like to know what I’m going to drink when I go out,” he had said to Grawe one day ; he had rung up to tell him about a particular wine he had discovered and wanted to recommend . . . What was it they had sung before supper ? “ God bless us with his father’s hand . . .” Could he expect anything else than that his ability to come to decisions should be paralysed, when he stood thus with one foot in this world and the other in the world he had been in last night ? In the one they sang psalms, in the other took their food and wine to the accompaniment of music from the operas. Could human beings stand at further poles than Hørfeldt and this young pair ? Where did he belong himself ? . . . When he had retired to his little bedroom, he tried to gather together all he had seen and experienced since his arrival in the village ; but he fell asleep in the middle of it, tired out by the journey, the spring air, and varied emotions of the day.

He had brought with him a small alarm-clock, so that he could wake up in time to hear the capercailzie . . . When the clock began ringing and he awoke in the tiny room, he was completely bewildered for a moment, unable to think where he was. But he shook off his drowsiness, pulled his clothes on and went out into the spring night. It was still and starry : in the north-east the sky was beginning to seem a shade lighter, and he marched off up a forest path towards a spot where he remembered from his boyhood the



capercaillies did their wooing . . . He heard them now ! . . . And he sat down and listened as long as the song went on. When he walked down the mountain again it was light . . .

He went over to the car and took out the steel box containing the Commander's Cross and the newspaper cuttings. The night before he had borrowed a small spade from the schoolmaster, and with the box and spade he walked to the churchyard where his parents lay buried. He had had a large tombstone erected over them, bearing their names : Harald and Gurine Gravdalen . . . There was still some snow in the churchyard. He dug quickly through it, down to the frozen earth. It was more difficult to dig through that ; he had to use the spade as a pick. He was unused to hard manual work and the sweat ran down him as he stood there hacking and shovelling, shovelling and hacking. At length he had got deep enough. He took the steel box and placed it in the hole, shovelled the earth back and trod it down over the box. By the time he had finished, the sun was high in the sky and smoke was rising from the neighbouring farm-houses. But no one was about yet. He had completed his task in the churchyard unseen.

He remained beside the grave for a short time . . . Why had he done this ? It was a sudden whim he had had as he left home. He would offer up on his parents' grave the outward symbols of his achievements in life. He had had a vague notion that this sacrifice would appease the paralysing forces within him. It was these forces that wormed their way into his thoughts and stopped action, making it possible for him only by enormous effort to break away from the past and re-enter the life that was now his. And he could no more dissociate himself from that life than he could return to the life he had abandoned. But as he went down the path again, with the spade over his shoulder, the excitement he had felt in the churchyard died away, and he was a little ashamed of what he had done ; and yet it seemed to him that his strange sacrifice was a natural thing.

He stayed on in the village for a few days : he spoke to people he knew and looked at the old places. Where his home had stood was now forest once more ; just a dip in the ground showing where the cellar had been. He felt awkward with the people he met, and they felt awkward with him. He was worth more than the entire parish, and he was continually on the alert against being exploited.

One afternoon he sat in his room, resting after his morning's walk, when there was a knock on the door. An old woman came in. Her face seemed familiar ; there was something about her eyes especially. Then he remembered . . . It was his little friend, Marit, who had lived at the next farm. They had grown up together, and when he left the district, they had exchanged rings made of grass. He had said something or other about her waiting

till he came back. She hadn't done ; now she stood here, forty years later . . .

“ D'you remember me ? ”

Grawe said, yes, he did. She sat down, and they did not know what to talk about. Gradually it came out that her husband was dead and her children had left the village, with the exception of the youngest, who worked in the store. Grawe saw what she was after : she was old and poor, worn out with work ; he was rich, and he was still young in comparison with her . . . Surely he could help her with a little money then ?

And he gave her some. She thanked him prettily, curtsied, and asked him to forgive her for disturbing him, and went. He sat at the window and watched her walk away towards the store . . . Some time later there was another knock . . . Marit must have announced that Grawe had given her money ; an old gaffer stood in the doorway who had known Grawe's father, he said . . .

He gave this old man a few shillings too, but realising that one after the other would come, he went out of the house and began to walk up one of the lumbermen's paths that led into the forest . . . He walked on and on . . . And now he recalled that each time he had made these purposeless visits to the village, he had been disappointed. Something seemed to tell him that the source of his imagination and his toughness was here among the great forests, but he could not make contact with it again. He was as lonely up here among his own folk, as he was in the city among strangers. Down there they all stood and touched their caps and said, “ Very good, Herr Works-Owner . . . ” Here they replied yes and uhuh to all he said. And he could feel that they answered what they thought would please him . . . Now they came for his money . . .

First Marit, then the old gaffer . . . He was extremely sorry for them. He would willingly have given them all money. But was there nobody who could feel a bit sorry for him ? He came to a clearing in the forest, whence he could see out over the whole scene of his childhood : the scene that haunted him in the city, haunted him as he worked. And when he came up here, it had nothing to give him ! Some old poverty-stricken folk came to him for assistance . . . Otherwise he was a stranger . . . He was never, apparently, to know real fellowship with other human beings . . . He must be content to wield power over them.

These thoughts ran aimlessly through his head as he sat there on a stump, gazing into the distance . . . There was no help for it : he must abandon all dreamings wrapped up with his childhood's home. And when he arrived back in the city he would join the Employers' Federation.



### III

In the valley where Halvor lived with his parents on the little farm which supplied enough fodder to keep two cows going, all the forest belonged to companies operating from distant towns. When he was big enough to understand from the grown-ups' conversation that there was a world beyond the forests, he thought of the companies as huge trolls, like the ones which in old days had lived inside the round mountains he could see towering above the endless forests.

The companies controlled the life of the township. When he went down to the store with his father, the conversation between him and the other peasants largely concerned the next winter's lumbering prospects. The companies made their decisions: and neither prayers nor threats availed to alter them. The companies laid down how many trees were to be felled and driven or floated away; who were to do this heavy work, and how much they were to receive for doing it.

Even more cold and remote than the companies, were so-called good and bad times. Harald Gravdalen and his wife, Gurine, divided time into summer and autumn and winter and spring. But if the agents of the companies came up to the village and announced that times were good, it had nothing to do with the season: it meant that a lot of timber would be felled. Even in good times the lumbermen did not earn much and were still completely dependent on the produce of their small patches of ground. Those who had no fields had often to go hungry and wait for their neighbours to help them. They never waited in vain. Halvor often went off with his father to take food to a neighbour. Among the scattered farmsteads of the forest there was a fellowship which Halvor knew would save both him and his parents from starvation, however little timber was felled and however bad times were.

When Halvor was seven or eight, he and his father one day in the store met some men who had never been in the district before. Harald Gravdalen did not understand exactly what it was they were explaining, but he gathered that if he did what these fellows said, he would get better pay for his work in the forest . . . In the coastal towns where the companies had their offices, and where it was decided how many trees should be felled, the workers had begun to band together, and if they were too badly rewarded for their work they stopped until the companies gave better wages. The men went round the parish explaining these strange things, but some days after their coming the district police sergeant arrived and told them it would be best for them to leave. They did so . . . And next time there was a service in the little chapel the pastor who came preached a stern warning about wolves in sheep's clothing.

But the ideas had struck deep into the minds of Harald Gravdalen and others of the peasants. It was during the autumn that strangers had been in the village. Some weeks later the store-keeper said he had read in the papers that one of the companies owning the parish had gone into liquidation and that there would be no felling in the forests that winter. A little later agents of one of the other companies came and said that times were so bad that complete cessation of work that winter had been considered. For the sake of the men, that idea had been rejected ; but nevertheless wages would have to be reduced.

The men who had heard the strangers talk about strikes met one evening in the chapel and agreed to attempt one themselves. They told the agents that they would not work for the wage offered . . . Very well, said the agents, then there would be no felling that winter. One of them added that times were so bad that the companies would only have lost money on the timber. At that the lumbermen had to smile. Lose money on forests that grew of their own accord ! Lose money on God's gifts to mankind ! On what they used for shelter and for fuel ! . . .

And they struck. A young fellow named Ola Tyrivolden organised it all. No one lifted an axe . . . No one floated a log . . . The days passed and turned into weeks. Ola said that if they held out, offers of higher wages would come. But the weeks turned into months. The snow came and the rivers froze. But no offer came, for timber prices were so low that the companies were glad not to have to operate. People starved. Halvor's father would go to the chapel where the strikers met, to get news. Sometimes they sang a hymn, or one of them said a few words of encouragement : but nothing happened. The village was forgotten ; no one gave the slightest thought to the fact that there was a strike, and that a handful of human beings became grey-faced with hunger.

At last rumours got out that there was unrest in the village. The police sergeant came with a couple of constables, and one day Ola Tyrivolden was arrested and the strike petered out . . .

Timber prices rose after that and conditions returned to normal. But even Halvor and the other schoolboys in the village realised that something very serious had taken place ; and the atmosphere of the village was different ever afterwards. The police sergeant became hated . . . He was one of themselves : and he came and arrested young Ola. Ola was released immediately, for he had done nothing wrong, but when work recommenced none of the companies would employ him. A year or two later he, and a couple of other men who had taken a prominent part in the strike, were obliged to leave the district where they could no longer obtain work.

Harald Gravdalen was a quiet, cautious fellow and he kept in the



background during the strike. But he gave Ola Tyrivolden what help he could and Halvor often went with him to Tyrivolden's home with food and milk during his period of unemployment. He did not say much to his son ; sometimes though he expressed bewilderment that a village where people wanted only to live and work in peace should be so shamefully exploited . . . The forests belonged to others, he said . . . They wanted to take from them the fish, the birds, and the animals as well, and if they didn't submit they were thrown out of work . . . He used to talk too about the unity that existed among the people in the village, and he continually impressed it upon Halvor that the little community got along as well as it did because its members stood by each other and couldn't endure the thought of anyone being in need.

Some years after the strike Halvor's father was killed during the timber-floating. Then the lad experienced the fellowship his father had talked of. Often, when he and his mother sat in the house without a crumb of food left, the neighbours came round with food to tide them over.

When he grew bigger, and began to join in the lumbering, things went better for them both. At work he met the grown men who had taken part in the strike. They had formed a sort of union, and occasionally they had news from Ola Tyrivolden and the others who had been driven away by the companies. Down there in the city they had joined the recently-formed trades unions. One day the whole village read with pride in a newly-founded journal that Ola Tyriolden had become a member of the committee of one of the unions . . .

Halvor heard about all this. He did not understand much of it, but an urge to do something began to take shape in his mind. Exactly what he wanted to do he did not know. But he began to read whatever books and papers came his way, and he talked to his work-mates about what he had read . . . His father's fate loomed big in his mind. He remembered how Harald Gravdalen had struggled and sweated to obtain a living for his wife and son ; then one day he was drowned and the two of them had been left penniless and helpless. And how had he been drowned ? Floating logs which had grown in his own parish and which he himself had felled, whilst others were fed and clothed through his labours. If he stood up and thought . . . Then along came the pastor and the police sergeant.

"Be careful how you speak of the pastor," his mother said one day. "He gets his salary from the State, so it's not easy for him to set himself up against those who hold the power."

But from every other point of view she was pleased that Halvor was growing up and beginning to think.

“Don't throw away the faith that's been given to you,” she would say sometimes, when she thought he expressed his opinions too violently. “Whatever people do to you, and to one another, remember that Jesus is with you.”

Two years after Halvor's confirmation she died. The sixteen-year-old-lad could not maintain a farm which lay so far from the centre of the parish. He talked to the schoolmaster about the best course to take. There was some doubt whether he had the legal right to sell the farm: the buildings were his, but according to reports reaching the village there had been a High Court decision that the land belonged to the Companies. No one was thinking of buying Gravidalen however, and eventually he sold the buildings for demolition. He sold also their cow and the farm implements, and one summer's day left the township for good. He went round first and made his goodbyes. The most difficult parting was from the lass at the next farm: Marit and he promised to think of each other.

With a letter to Ola Tyrivolden in his pocket he went off. For the first time in his life he looked down on the parish from Storberget, the big hill to the west, which shut the township off from the world and reached right up to the tree line. He felt light of heart as he went off. His mother and father were dead after all; and Marit was going to wait for him. He knew that one day he would return and do for the village all he had dreamt of doing . . .

Some days later he arrived in Oslo by rail. He had great difficulty in finding his way about. The first night he spent in the open. Only when he had discovered Ola Tyrivolden did he find his feet in the new world. He hardly recognised Ola. When he had left the village some years before as a twenty-year-old lad his face had been open and ruddy, his manner friendly and gay. Even when the sergeant had led him away he had kept his good humour. Now Halvor met a pale, gaunt fellow, with a shut-away expression and eyes hard as flint, gleaming with hatred and fanaticism.

He was a leading agitator for socialistic ideas. When he first came to the city he had got employment in an engineering works, but before long he came into contact with the new party that had been formed. He remembered the first strike in his village and the manner in which he had been forced by the companies to leave his home; and he saw that here was a way to avenge what he and his family and the whole village had suffered. He bound himself by oath to build up a new society. He knew that many trials lay ahead, and for that reason relinquished all demands upon life. He became a prohibitionist because spirits hindered his class in their struggle for emancipation. And he was so taken up with the work that he neglected the girl he was courting. She gave him up. He swore that he would not let himself be turned from his course by women;



with an iron will he mastered his emotions and gave all his energy to the great purpose . . . What money he had to spend he spent on books, and he learnt German so that he could struggle through the works of the great theorists. Gradually he became one of the leaders of the growing party. When the owner of the works where he was employed saw the type he was, he seized the first pretext to be rid of him.

Then Tyrivolden gave himself completely for the cause. He lived for the struggle : ate when he had money after a chance job ; slept in the homes of comrades, in work-houses, in the tile works : all the time borne up by his faith in the coming nation and his hatred of society and the oppressors. He was sentenced once as a disturber of the peace . . . Now he held a position in the party offices and had a regular income . . .

When Halvor presented himself with the letter from the school-master, Tyrivolden did not recognise him : but he remembered Halvor's father well and enquired about conditions in the village. He had never been back himself.

"But it's never out of my thoughts," he said. "In fact it's the village that makes me go forward all the time. It's the village that has made me what I am. It was there I first learnt to go hungry : it was there I first got tough. And it was there that both I and the other fellows who were driven from our homes by the capitalists first got the idea that we'd sooner freeze and starve to death than give up what we believed in. It may take time—but the village also taught us to wait."

For a moment he looked in silence at Halvor, who was listening to his former neighbour in rapt admiration.

"Are you with us ?" he asked suddenly.

Halvor was uncertain what Tyrivolden meant, but he replied :

"I don't know. But I want to help the people at home."

"Then you're with us whether you know it or not," said Tyrivolden. "Come along to a meeting to-night . . . We've formed a new union and you'll see how we go about things."

That night Tyrivolden took Halvor with him to a small and dismal meeting-room. It was packed with people and the atmosphere was heavy with their exhalations and the smell of gas. Halvor had not dreamt that such a world could exist. Here sat men who had grown ashen-faced with hunger ; who had not eaten a good meal for months. Some of them were poor wretches who were simply glad to have a place to sit in. But there were intelligent men there as well, who had come to listen to Tyrivolden. Halvor understood little of the lecture. It was long and contained a great deal of theory. He did understand, however, what Ola said about life in their village, about the big companies, and about hunger and poverty in the great

forests. And he renewed his vow that when the opportunity came he would help the village . . .

He heard Tyrivolden speak of a young lad. He realised whom Tyrivolden meant, and he felt extremely self-conscious when Tyrivolden asked him to get up so that everyone could see the latest victim of capitalism in the little township.

Tyrivolden recounted Halvor's story . . . All he said was correct. His father had been killed at his work . . . They had gone short at home . . . His mother had worked herself to death . . . He had had to abandon the farm . . . And now he stood alone in the city, waiting for a job from the capitalists. Nevertheless, there was something about the story that Halvor did not recognise. He had never felt himself a victim. He had never hated as Tyrivolden hated, and as Tyrivolden believed everyone in the village hated. Readiness to extend a helping hand united them, rather than hatred . . .

"And because we've always lived beneath the scourge of capitalism," Tyrivolden said, "we, from that village, feel ourselves the pioneers of the class war. If you ask how we, who have lived so far from the great cities, have come to stand solid with the working classes here, then I will tell you : it's because back in our village we learnt our own particular form of solidarity . . ."

He paused and Halvor sensed the interest of the assembly. Then Tyrivolden went on :

"And that is the solidarity of hatred and hunger. We faced the worst capitalism in the world ; the great companies that sucked our very blood. We learnt then to hunger. And to hate . . . But we learnt too that if we hunger together the day can come when we shall destroy this capitalist society . . ."

As they went home together to Tyrivolden's attic that night, Tyrivolden asked Halvor what he thought of the ideas he had heard. Halvor was not sure himself . . . His friend seemed to be right in all he said . . . And he was generous itself to Halvor, who was to live with him . . . But there was something that frightened him. Was the fellowship of the parish nothing else than hatred and hunger ? . . . He hardly knew himself what he thought . . . Something about love flitted through his mind, and he tried to explain it to Tyrivolden.

"You must get rid of such ideas in real life," he replied. "D'you think we'll get anywhere unless we hate ? If they think you're full of loving-kindness they'll let you and the village rot together . . . I used to think like you. But the police sergeant stopped that. And if anything remained after that, it vanished when I went into the hell which a factory is for a peasant lad."

Halvor remained with Tyrivolden until he got used to the city.



He became thinner and paler, and a look came into his eyes which had not been there before. He began to think differently, too, and the village seemed strangely remote. Was it only a few weeks since he had left it? It had shrunk so tiny in those weeks.

He got a job at an engineering works, and left Tyrivolden's for a small attic of his own. As he picked up his bundle and bade Tyrivolden goodbye, the older man took his hand and said:

"Promise me one thing . . . Don't touch spirits till you're grown up . . . And keep away from the girls in the streets . . . Not because they're to be looked down upon: they're the most wretched of all the victims of the capitalists. It's hard for a peasant lad to be the slave of capitalism . . . But it's worse for a peasant lass to walk the streets of a great city . . . And you must read all you can . . ."

Halvor had grown to be fond of this strange fanatic who lived simply for others, and it was like a stab in his heart as he went down the stairs. And as he thought of what Tyrivolden had said about peasant lasses, Marit came to his mind. He felt a sudden wild longing for the forests, the huge clear sky, the roar of the rivers, and the stillness. And when he had got into bed in the little attic, whose windows were so coated with dirt and soot that the sky could not be seen through them, he cried himself to sleep for the first time since he had left the village.

#### IV

The majority of the men at the works where Halvor had obtained employment had originally been peasants. Some of them had left their homes because they wanted to; others had left because there was too little land attached to the family farm. They had dreams of returning some time, buying a small farm of their own, and setting up as their own masters: but they did nothing to realise the dream. The city had swallowed them; their world was the workshops, the set and routine tasks, the humming wheels, the whining sirens, and small apartments facing back yards and back streets.

Opposition to this life took root in Halvor's mind. His conversations with Ola Tyrivolden had started him thinking, and he began to hate capitalism. As he went home in the evening, bearing his empty lunch box, to rest and get washed before going off to the library, he used to wish that Tyrivolden would order him out in the great strike that would once and for all break the power of capitalism: then he could go back and do something for the village . . . He was ready for any sacrifice if the evil he saw around him in the city could be destroyed and life become as peaceful as it was in his home and in the forests.

The spark of liberty within him flared up in wrath against the life he led . . . Tyrivolden talked about "we proletarians." But he did not want to be a proletarian. Yet what did it matter what he wanted ; when the all-blighting capitalism each day bound him more firmly to the wheels, the endless bands, and the sirens ?

By the time he had had his wash he would feel calmer, and at the library he would read himself into another world . . . At first he had no plan for his reading : he dipped into belles lettres, history, economics, politics ; whatever caught his interest. He would day-dream amid these varied subjects. Should he return to the village as a poet ? Or as an agitator ? Should he follow in Tyrivolden's footsteps ?

When he had been in the city for a year, he met at the works a student who was getting practical experience before going to a technical school. This gave Halvor something to think about. If he was to emerge from the life he led at present, he must study something. It was not enough just to read a lot of books that gave him pleasure, compensation for the hours he spent in the noise and dust. He began to sound the student, telling him cautiously of the vague plans and hopes he had and hinting that he would like to study something which would make him of more use at his work. The student referred him to a number of elementary textbooks on physics and mechanics . . . And soon Halvor began to see his way forward. To achieve anything for his community in the great forests, he must have as much knowledge as those who ruled that community. It was not enough to hate. Or to hunger. Or to stand united. With such means he could protect others from injustice, but he could give them nothing new. One day the student said to him :

"Why don't you learn English and go to America ? You can get all the practical and theoretical training you want there, without the wretched exams you've got to pass in this country."

Halvor cut down on all unnecessary expenditure and used what he saved to take English lessons. He began to get a grip of the language, and a few months after his talk with the student he signed on as a deck-hand in a ship sailing for America. He left the ship at an American port and went to Pittsburg, where he got a job in a steelworks.

But, just as in the works in Oslo, he had dreamt of the village, so in the steelworks in Pittsburg he dreamt of Oslo . . . In the village he had had Marit, his relations, and all the familiar places . . . In Oslo he had had Ola Tyrivolden and the peasant youths whom he understood and who understood him ; he had had the student who helped him to plot his course. But here in the steelworks he had nobody. A man here had value only as a machine had value. He



did his work, and he drew his pay. No one expected anything more of him, and he could not expect anything more of anyone else. If he fell ill, so much the worse for him. His place was taken the moment he failed to be there.

There was no feeling of fellowship : neither the fellowship he had known in the village, which meant that people helped those in need, nor the fellowship of hatred, fostered by Tyrivolden. It was every man for himself. All strove to get to the fore, and none turned to help the man who fell. Hundreds of thousands of men, of many nationalities, fought to get in front, to get on top, to get past the others . . . When they heard of one who had reached the sunlight, then they paused a second to glance up in envy, before clenching their teeth once more with redoubled determination.

Halvor realised he had only himself to depend on here. But he saw the opportunities ; he would not go to the bottom in this hell of molten iron and slag heaps, sirens and coal dust. He received good wages ; profits were so high that it would not have paid to interrupt production for strikes or lock-outs. After he had been there for a time he changed his name. The Americans could manage Halvor ; Gravidalen was more difficult and it became contracted to Grawe.

Once or twice he was on the verge of giving up. He felt something in himself must snap . . . What was he trying to do ? Wasn't it better to be content with his good wages and to enjoy life as his comrades did ? It was a forlorn hope, to think of getting away from the filthy back streets and the hum of wheels. What chance had he of getting further than he had already got : machine-minder and greaser in one of the special-purpose shops ? There were tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, in front of him.

Sometimes he began to yearn for the lumbermen's shacks and the silence of the forests. How was Marit getting on ? They wrote to each other. One day a letter came in which she said she could wait no longer ; she was marrying another boy . . . He was surprised how little this intelligence meant to him. Hadn't he felt a closer tie with her ? In his restless, hectic life she had come to symbolise the village. Now she was slipping out of his consciousness : but the village remained though she went.

Each time despair came over him he drew new power from the thought of the promise he had made to his mother and father and to the village. His parents were dead. But he remembered the hopeless look on the faces of the villagers when fewer trees were to be felled and wages lowered . . . He was resolved to do something for the village. Perhaps one day return, buy a farm and raise the general level by—Yes, by what ? He never saw that clearly. Should he become a politician ? Become a Storting Member ? Or should

he join forces with Ola Tyrivolden? He did not spend much time thinking over these things. Nor was he often tempted to go off with his workmates to their dance-halls and shooting-ranges. He used his money to acquire the knowledge he would need when the day came.

He could speak perfect English now. At evening classes he studied engineering technology. One day he discovered that his manners were not those of the circles he aspired to; and as far as he could he made the necessary changes.

When he had been in Pittsburg some years, he happened one day to look closely at a machine under repair. It suddenly occurred to him that it was constructed on a faulty and inefficient principle. This was his chance.

He forced himself to be patient. He wanted to shout out his discovery, and get his freedom then and there. But instead he examined the machine to the last screw. He got hold of books on the subject concerned, and some time later went to the company's office, where he pointed out the flaw in the machine and presented his suggestions for future models. Next day he was taken on in the design room; and he was given a small fortune for his discovery. . . . The principle he had employed in his new design was applied to a number of other machines. Scores of workers could be discharged. Some months later one of the heads of the company came to see him and made an offer which opened up the widest prospects if he would agree to remain in Pittsburg.

Halvor Grawe now stood where hundreds of thousands of exhausted, grimy steel-workers hoped to get, but where they never did get. He was one of the few to whom people point when they want to show the system is right. . . . If one man could get that far, so could any man who really wanted to. . . . From now on it was the others who would have to sweat for him; capital was his servant, not his master, provided he regulated his life according to the requisite laws. He would no longer be lonely; nor stand in fear of the wheels and bands; nor curse the sirens that called him. He could set the wheels in motion, he could make the sirens wail. Should he accept the offer and attach himself to Pittsburg? Or should he return to the village and use in its service the money and abilities he had?

He decided to return, and wrote to the solicitor in the district asking for details of properties for sale. He remembered his parents. He thought of Tyrivolden, who gave himself so unrelentingly to help those in need and difficulty. Should he draw back when he had discovered his talent and earned a small fortune? A letter came from the solicitor: many people wanted to sell. And he told the firm he was going home. He was not clear yet just what he would



do. He had a vague idea of combining model-farming, politics and a campaign to recover the natural assets of the village for the villagers themselves. He had a feeling too that God would help him when it came to the point : there was no doubt in his mind that God had helped him during the difficult years he had been through. While he had lived in America he had gone to church regularly ; it was the only place in that city of steelworks where rest and quiet were to be found.

Some weeks later he left Pittsburg. As he went aboard the liner in New York his breast felt near to bursting, he had such an impulse to serve his village. He was young, almost rich according to Norwegian standards, and he had triumphed over all the difficulties which had beset his path.

On board he met a young Norwegian woman, Camilla Barner. She had come from Washington, where she had been visiting a brother at the Legation, and was returning to Norway.

## V

When Camilla Barner went aboard the liner in New York she had lived with her brother for a year. In Washington she had experienced all that a young woman can experience of gaiety and pleasure and she wanted to stay, but the tone of her father's letters became more and more beseeching ; in the end her brother too began to say she ought to go home.

But hardly had the Statue of Liberty disappeared from the horizon than she began to wonder when she would start on the next trip. If she stayed at home quietly for six months or so, there was good hope that her father would let her fare forth once more : the idea of remaining in the deadening atmosphere of her home was not to be borne. She was nearly twenty-five now. The efforts she had made to study had been unsuccessful, but her father had a big income and there was no need for her to work ; besides that he had purchased her a large annuity which would come into effect when he died. Wanderlust was in her blood ; as soon as she was grown up her father had begun to take her with him on the journeys he made to conferences. Since then she had learned to travel alone.

The first day at sea she noticed the broad-shouldered young man called Halvor Grawe. He was a little uncertain at table—did not use his knife and fork quite as those instruments should be used—but she had seen enough of the world to know that he was a man who had something in him. Why not a little flirtation ? She managed to get herself placed at the same table as he . . . During the following days, conversation with Grawe opened for her a new

world. She knew that workers, machines, political and social extremes, want and misery, existed, but she had never dreamt that she would come across them. Yet here she was, sitting in a deck-chair on an Atlantic liner, becoming more and more interested in a man who had lived in the midst of such things.

She understood him to say he had starved . . . She knew that people did starve, but she had never thought to meet a person who had actually gone short of food. And he had never been inside a theatre. When he said that she did not believe him . . .

“At home there wasn’t one . . . In Oslo I hadn’t the money, and in Pittsburg I hadn’t the time.”

She suggested a visit to the theatre as soon as they arrived home ; but she was almost frightened when she saw how his eyes shone with pleasure at the prospect. On the other hand, he had often been to church . . . which surprised her . . .

“That was the one place in Pittsburg where I could find peace to think things over,” he added.

She became more and more interested in him ; drawn by the strength in his eyes and his being. Was Halvor Grawe the man in her life ? . . . At the same time she was afraid. She would keep a tight hold on herself, restrain her feelings, and not relinquish the self-mastery she had been at great pains to acquire . . . Now and then in her life she had been attracted by some man, but she had never been really in love, and she was afraid of the storms which she knew could accompany genuine emotion. So she tried to keep their relationship within the bounds of a flirtation. But it became more and more difficult ; she saw she had set Grawe’s passions on fire : she was pleased, but alarmed . . . She reflected, with a kind of annoyance, that if their relationship developed any further it would be the end of her present carefree existence. This man would want all of her.

On the last day on board they agreed to meet when they reached home.

When Camilla saw her father on the quay, and when she stood inside the house in Parkveien once more, she felt overjoyed to be back. She went up to her room and the delight of home-coming seemed to sing within her. She remembered with a smile that her main thought as she left New York had been, how soon can I start on my travels again ? . . . She now wanted more than anything else in the world to be at home ; then whatever was destined to come to pass between her and Halvor Grawe would come to pass.

Two days after their home-coming they met. He did not know her part of the city and the country around—most of the spare time he had had before leaving for America had been spent reading. So when she led him out into the country beyond the city they went



along paths that were new to him. They had supper at one of the open-air restaurants and followed a woodland path back towards the city. It had just begun to get dusk. He stopped suddenly. Took her hand and said simply :

“ Camilla ! ”

And with that took her in his arms. He put one hand on her breast and kissed her . . . For a second she seemed to lose grip on herself and to be lifted out of time and space ; but his strength and violence frightened her. She wrenched herself away from him. Pushed him from her . . . She saw that he stood there helplessly. Was it just a game ? No, but why do you terrify me like that ? it echoed through her. And why were you so strong and violent ? . . . For a moment they stood together on the path ; then she began to walk on again. He followed by her side, and without saying a word they walked on until they drew near her home.

She knew there was no turning back on the course she had taken ; she knew that their destinies were bound together, that she was his and he was hers. And yet there was something inside her which protested against it. Live together : yes. Be with him always : she wanted that . . . But, accept the violent passion he had shown when he embraced her ? She did not know whether she dared. She did not know whether she dared, or wanted to, give herself to him down to the last fibre of her being, as he had already done to her . . . She must weigh it over at least.

“ Will you meet me tomorrow too ? ”

She saw how far away he was when she asked. She saw he did not understand what had just passed between them ; she saw he had had no coherent thought since she had pushed him away from her. He did not reply ; simply looked at her with profound doubt in his eyes, and suddenly he turned and walked rapidly off down the street. Then she was mortally afraid.

“ I'll expect you tomorrow at the same place,” she cried after him.

He did not answer, or turn, and she watched him disappear into the dusk of the summer evening. Her father was out when she got home, and she was received by Karen. Karen wanted to talk to her, but she went straight up to her room and threw herself on the bed. What had she done ? Rebuffed the man she wanted to share her life . . . And why ? Simply because she was afraid of his love, and because she knew that her love for him would have to be just as unqualified. And that she feared to do, although she knew she must. The two and three hours that had passed since she had looked into the steely-blue eyes had taught her how far, far from real life she had drifted during the years she had spent in travel, rootless and restless. She realised too what a deep joy it would be to give herself to another person ; and that she had a worthy life-

work before her with this rather awkward country lad, whom she had known for a bare fortnight . . . She made her mind up ; she would accept Halvor Grawe's love and give herself completely to him. Not be afraid. Not hold back.

Next day she set off for the meeting place in good time. He was there already. Without saying a word she took his arm and they walked off. She asked him to forgive her for the day before. Tried to explain that she shrank back when she realised his love made demands upon her too, but that she was ready now to give him all. She tried to explain that if they lived together it would mean she must enter a new, active world, with duties and responsibilities which before she had not known existed. When she had told him all this—he did not speak—she was silent and they walked quietly on arm in arm for some time . . . They were now beyond the city and had reached the woods. She waited for him to say something, but he just walked at her side and stared before him. All at once she felt a deep and warm feeling towards him flow through her. She stopped abruptly, threw her arms round his neck, and said :

“ Halvor . . . I love you, and you must never leave me . . . ”

Again she felt frightened of this powerful man, for now he folded her so tenderly and quietly against him, as though she had been a small, helpless child, and he cried and told her the fears he had had that he might lose her.

Some days later they began to talk about the future. Halvor told her again of his childhood and early youth in the remote forest township ; of all the bonds he had with the people there ; of the grinding work that had been the life of his parents ; of the vague notion he had had for many years of returning as a benefactor. Camilla was willing to go there with him. She was sure he would find there the right outlet for his abilities and energy, and she knew she would be able to adapt herself to the environment.

Professor Barner asked his son-in-law whether, as a modern industrialist, accustomed now to life in great towns, he would be able to settle down as a farmer in the depths of the country. Wouldn't he have greater scope if he used his talents and experience in the city ?

Grawe's thoughts ran to and fro. Living in the city need not mean abandoning the village. And it would be difficult for Camilla to move up there where the people and conditions were new to her ; moreover, he felt a little afraid himself of going back to the solitude after so many years spent in towns among many people. And for all his dreams he did not know exactly what he would do up there.

One day he saw in the advertisement columns of a paper that a small engineering workshop was for sale. A few days later he had



bought the workshop, which was really little more than a large smithy. He wrote to the firm in Pittsburg and proposed that he should be their agent in Scandinavia, and they accepted his offer. During the autumn he and Camilla were married ; they moved into a flat down by the harbour.

They had intended spending their honeymoon in Grawe's village, but his work was already engrossing him to such an extent that they decided to wait. It was important to get things under way : and luck was with them. In the course of a few months he had reorganised the smithy, as he called his business, and secured from Pittsburg licences for the construction of machinery required in the new power-stations and industrial plants ; soon he had his hands full with orders. He needed more labour, a fact he mentioned one day to Camilla.

"Why not see if there are any men from your village in need of work?" she said. "Perhaps that's a way to help it."

Grawe remembered Ola Tyrivolden, whom he had not gone to see since his return to the home country, and some days later he went up to the People's House where his friend worked. Their meeting was not what he had hoped. Tyrivolden was now a trades union chairman . . . He had heard that Grawe was home again, having made a fortune in America, and that he had married an upper-class girl. So the reception he gave him was not warm. And he was rather irritated than anything else when he learnt that Grawe had come to get employees.

"You're now a capitalist," he said. "Didn't you leave home to help your village? And you come here to get hold of men to suck the blood of."

"Don't I help them by giving them work?"

"Work at one place or at another . . . What's the odds, as long as capitalism rules our lives? . . . No, revolution is what we need ; afterwards we can talk about work."

"In America—" Grawe began, but he got no further.

"To hell and damnation with America!" Tyrivolden shouted. "I was chucked out of the village where my people have lived as long as anyone can remember, and that shall be avenged . . . And I'm beginning to get my revenge. You've found out, I suppose, that the iron-workers are the most revolutionary in the country? The pioneers of the class war? . . . And who's made them that? Ola Tyrivolden and no other. And do you know that when the capitalists hear a fellow trying for a job comes from our village they won't take 'un? Ay, the lads up there are among the worst too. And Ola Tyrivolden is responsible for that as well . . . So I reckon they'll rue the day they refused to give me work. And now you're

going to be a director!" derided Tyrivolden. "Join the Employers' Federation!"

"I hope I shall never break so completely with you and my family and our village," said Grawe, with such solemnity that Tyrivolden realised he meant it: and that he meant it too when he went on to say that he regarded it as a duty to his employees to maintain a personal touch, and would always give as high wages as he could. Then he began to tell Tyrivolden about his life in Pittsburg.

Tyrivolden became more friendly as he spoke . . .

"But you've married right into the core of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist class," he said.

In the end Tyrivolden gave Grawe the names of a number of men. Grawe engaged them and personally trained them in their work. One of them was called Nils Kirkeplassen; he had been the companion of his boyhood. He had come to the city three or four years previously; he too having been practically forced to leave the village. He had been unable to obtain work in the forests on account of his political ideas.

When he told Camilla about the conversation with Tyrivolden, she was at first horrified. To think anyone could be so ungrateful towards a man who simply wanted to give people work! But when Grawe had told her something of Tyrivolden's past life and how it felt to be removed from the life of a remote village to a back street and a city factory, she understood.

"I would probably have reacted as he did," she said. "And it's your and my job, Halvor, to run the works in such a way that the extremes become less marked. Isn't that the best way to carry out your dreams? And it's where I can help you."

Again new worlds opened before Camilla's eyes, and she was filled with gratitude towards her husband who had brought her into this rich life of responsibility for fellow human-beings. When the first child had arrived, a boy whom they called Harald after his grandfather, and Camilla had regained her strength, she returned to these ideas. She took a course of housewifery and child-nursing and began to visit the workmen's wives. One result of this was that the men took an interest in their work such as Grawe had never seen before anywhere.

And the firm expanded. Camilla saw that in this open way of living they had found an answer to the great social problems.

"Let's continue along these lines . . . Let's never be seized with greed for money. We do very well on what we have. And isn't it good to know the men are happy?"

She became so absorbed in all she discovered through talking with the men's wives, and so eager to see that the rewards of the



work were properly shared, as she expressed it, that he felt he must damp down her enthusiasm a bit. Whenever he did, an unhappy look came into her face.

"Be careful, Halvor, that you don't become a slave of work . . . It's your dreams I'm trying to get you to remember now and put into practice."

And she was right. He wanted to hold back a little; he saw what sums were needed if the enterprise was to go forward. His wages were higher than in other firms and he was short of capital. But Camilla was not convinced. She maintained that if he followed the course he had introduced to her, great though intangible assets would accrue, and would more than outbalance the large wages bill. The growth of the firm proved she was right. In the third year of their marriage extensions were necessary; a year later they decided to build a quite sizeable machine-shop. The bank agreed to the plan: they saw what a force the new Works-Owner was. He had a hundred men in his employ; he had good connections with powerful interests in America; and furthermore his father-in-law was a well-known figure.

"I don't understand how you do it," Professor Barner said to him. "Either how you contrive to work as you do, or how you manage to remain on such a good footing with the workers in times like these when trouble is the accepted state of affairs in industry."

Grawe reminded him that it was only a few years since he was a worker himself.

"Back home I learnt that it was better to pull together than to have each man for himself. And in America I saw that no one finds it harder to switch from farm to factory than a Norwegian peasant lad. We become good workers all right, but we're stubborn, and there are none it's so easy to get out on strike as us. I know from my own experience that if industry here in Norway is to be a source of well-being to the country, we must leave plenty of room for the initiative of the individual worker."

One morning, in the city's leading newspaper, *Dagens Stemme*, there was an article about the new industrial magnate, Halvor Grawe, whom the city would do well to elect to the council at the next polls. Some days later he received a visit from Georg Hørfeldt of the People's Party. He wanted Grawe to enter political life and said it was his duty to place his talents at the country's disposal. Grawe did not know what to say. He had hardly given politics a moment's thought: whenever there had been elections since his return home he had forgotten to vote. If he had voted, it would probably have been for the Socialists.

He did not say that to Hørfeldt, and in the end he promised to consider being put on the list of candidates. He was very proud

when he told Camilla of Hørfeldt's visit. She too was pleased at this sign of her husband's progress.

"But you must be chary of Hørfeldt," she said.

"Why? Do you know him?"

"No, I don't know him at all. But I heard Father say the other day that he was an oily fellow. He'd been to him to get a subscription for party work, and Father couldn't stand him. By the way, his wife's maiden name was Barner and she's a distant relation of mine."

Some days later a letter came from one of Grawe's colleagues and competitors suggesting he should join their branch of the Employers' Federation. The times demanded unity. Grawe mentioned that too to Camilla and they discussed it.

"Don't do it, Halvor. And don't go on to the city council. They just want to make use of you for their own ends, and you will lose touch with the workmen."

So he turned down both suggestions. Shortly afterwards he heard from his workmen that some of their friends had been locked-out by a firm in another trade and were in need. He sent them money. He had money, they had not; and it seemed to him it was just as natural to help them as it had been natural that they helped each other out when things had been short in the little township. When the lock-out was over, representatives of various workers' organisations came to him from time to time and asked him to support now this, now that, cause; and if he was able he gave them a donation.

When the new machine-shop was finished he held a little party in it to celebrate its completion. He thanked the men for their help, and when he and Camilla walked home that evening she took his arm and said:

"If you knew how much you mean to me, Halvor, and how grateful I am because you have made life so rich for me . . . I didn't know what it was to live before you came into my life."

He pressed her arm in reply.

"Say something."

"What do you want me to say? That I love you? That I'm full of thankfulness that our life together is so happy? . . . Even though I wish we had a bit more working capital."

"Oh, Halvor . . . don't be so money-minded! The machine-shop is there, isn't it? Surely it's more important that the men who work in it do so happily than that we should have more capital? Mind you're not caught up in your own machines and programmes."



We don't lose our humanity only through politics and organisations. Didn't you say something of that sort the other day?"

"You're right, of course. But nevertheless . . . It's often difficult to have enough to go round."

## VI

Within a few years of Grawe's taking it over, the little works had become one of the largest engineering firms in the country. Constant expansion was necessary. Sometimes he felt disturbed at the rate at which everything that he touched grew. He had not time to maintain everywhere the personal contact he would have liked. Negotiations with the workers, which he had formerly conducted personally, he had now to hand over to a solicitor whom he engaged to run his office. The cause of his perturbation was lack of working capital. He did not think he could afford to cease expanding; the special-purpose machinery he made was in great demand; and he had responsibility towards his workmen; if he could not meet that demand, his customers would go elsewhere, and he would be left with idle workmen on his hands.

So he decided to expand and expand. Camilla agreed. But she, too, thought things went at a terrific rate. And she for her part was unable to keep in touch with all the homes. They had two children now: the younger was a daughter, Agnes.

One day Grawe was asked if he could deliver turbines for one of the new monster undertakings up country. He drew up an estimate. If the workmen would accept rather lower wages than usual, he could undertake delivery of the machines, which would be wonderful advertisement for the new firm. He called together some of the workers' representatives and explained the position. He had not much hope of persuading them, but after they had talked the matter over among themselves, they came back and said they would agree to the lower rate of pay. His old school-mate, Nils Kirkeplassen, remained behind in the office after the others had gone.

"I want just to say this to you, Halvor, that we've agreed because your wife has been what she has to our wives . . ."

He asked his sub-contractor for a tender for semi-manufactured units and the price was reasonable. But then he reflected how short he was of capital. He resolved to try a trick he had heard of some days before: to say he had had a lower tender from another firm . . . The sub-contractor was about to get up and go, when Grawe went on to remark what a pity it was to break off in this way a connection that had lasted so long.

"What do you mean?" the contractor asked.

"Well your competitor's low tender was made on condition I favoured him in future if other things are satisfactory," Grawe continued, though the words smarted in his mouth.

The result was that Grawe got what he wanted for a price at which he knew the sub-contractor would lose. Everyone has to look out for himself, he reflected. And he was proud to think he had shown himself a sharp business man. But he did not tell Camilla what he had done. There was no reason why she should know everything, he told himself: she would not understand things like that. He undertook delivery of the turbines. They were the first he had made, and he and his engineers and workmen put all they knew into them.

When they were finished their quality was far higher than the contract had provided for, and the purchaser on his own initiative raised the price. The whole transaction was very lucrative for Grawe; both because extra money had been paid and because he had got cheap materials and labour. When he worked out his winnings he felt as pleased as Punch. The money came at the right moment: his credit account was exhausted and he had just heard of a new riveting process the Norwegian rights of which he wanted to purchase. For a moment he wondered if he should offer the sub-contractor part of the extra payment and also give the men an increase on the agreed wages: but he dismissed the idea. The contractor had done well on previous business with him; and the workmen would be none the wiser. Moreover, would it not be in their interest if he modernised the firm? The riveting process would become increasingly valuable . . .

And although he did not like what he had done, he felt no violent pangs of conscience when some time later he travelled down to Copenhagen to inspect the process. I'm not throwing the money away, he told himself . . . It's being used in the best interests of all concerned.

The riveting process was epoch-making. He would recoup his original outlay on the very first steamer that left the stocks he was now erecting. But it was much dearer than he had expected, and he was obliged to return home before he could clinch the deal in order to explain to the bank the many advantages of the process. During the negotiations with the bank he had something of a shock: the manager said to him:

"We oughtn't really to let you have this money, but we have grown accustomed to placing absolute reliance in all your undertakings. And such people are few and far between in these days, Herr Grawe. All the same go steady—in all you do."

He remembered how he had deceived the sub-contractor and the



workmen and was left with a bad taste in his mouth. He promised himself it would be the first and last time.

When he had arrived back in Copenhagen and completed the purchase of the Norwegian rights, the heavy pressure of all this business was lifted from his shoulders. For the first time since his return from America he felt free from work, and he went for a walk through the beautiful and vivacious city to which spring had just come.

In the street he met one of the engineers with whom he had been dealing, and they went and had dinner together. The engineer ordered champagne ; he wanted to drink to the continuance of their good business connections . . . Afterwards they went to a dance hall. There Grawe met a girl who accompanied him to a hotel . . . Towards morning he awoke. She had disappeared, taking with her a thousand kroner.

He went home on the morning train. What had happened to him ? It was the first time he had ever drunk too much ; the first time he had done something he could not tell Camilla about. No—he had not told her about forcing down the price of the semi-manufactured turbines ; or about the low wages agreed upon, and the surplus paid for the turbines. Now this had happened. On the other hand he had boasted to her loudly of the bank manager's reference to his honesty.

Altogether it was a nasty piece of work : he would steer clear of anything of that sort in future. Not that it was entirely his fault. He did not know how much he could take. The engineer had filled his glass as though he had been pouring out water. And did it matter so enormously ? A thing like this in a foreign town ? No one knew anything about it. And he had nothing else to reproach himself with in regard to Camilla. He turned it all over in his mind as he sat in the train : but he did not feel altogether easy about it. And then the thousand kroner the confounded female had gone off with !

Camilla was at the station to meet him. She had never looked so lovely. He told her that, and she looked at him with gratitude.

"But what's wrong ? You've got a sad look in your eyes," she remarked at the supper table.

Ask her to forgive you at once ! he thought. But instead he pooh-poohed her remark : the negotiations had been exhausting ; they were difficult people to deal with ; so he was tired and nervy. The following day he had to go to the bank again for money to pay wages. The thousand kroner he had lost made it necessary to draw on his account once more. The following day again he needed more money and as he left the bank he met his father-in-law.

"I was just coming to see you," he said.

They went to Grawe's office and his father-in-law said :

"When I met you in the bank I had just been in to see one of the managers. He rang up and asked me to have a few words with him about you."

Grawe looked a little taken aback. He had just greeted both managers and neither had said a word more than what is customary on such occasions. His father-in-law felt awkward. Grawe must not take things in the wrong way. It was not the bank's intention to put pressure on one of their customers who happened to behave rather unconventionally now and then, but they had heard that Grawe had given money to various workers' organisations ; even supported workmen who were locked-out. He must not imagine that the bank had been spying on him ; an article in a trades union paper about a young, modern employer who supported the workers in their struggle, had drawn their attention to the matter. It was the duty of the bank to protect the money of their shareholders and depositors.

Grawe understood, and he had to admit that the bank was right. He remembered too the words of the manager some days before. Go steady—in all you do, he had said. He had no right either to give or to throw away the bank's money. But long after his father-in-law had gone he sat thinking : he would have given anything in the world to have been able to stand blameless before Camilla. He cursed the day he had lied to the contractor : there seemed some mysterious connection between that dishonesty and all that had since entered his life. He recalled something Camilla had once said :

"I believe our marriage is one of the exceptions, Halvor . . . We will live in such a way that when we're old we'll be able to look back without having anything to be ashamed of . . ."

"You set high standards," he had replied.

"I learnt that from you, and that's the reason why I love you more and more . . ."

During the weeks that followed he noticed himself how his relations with everything around him slowly altered. He became suspicious of his sub-contractors, on his guard against them : he became more cautious when he made tenders. If it was so simple to deceive people, he would be a fool not to avail himself of every opportunity. He told the lawyer in charge of the office to be on his guard in all dealings with the workmen ; the firm was growing and leakage of any sort was dangerous. He was uncertain in his approach to Camilla. He strove to prevent her knowing he was hiding something and his manner became forced. His humour often seemed to have been blown away.

"Can't you tell me what is on your mind ?" Camilla asked him one night. "You seem so shut away inside yourself." He was on



the point of telling her when Harald, who was suffering from whooping cough, had a violent paroxysm and she sprang out of bed to go to him. When she returned she had forgotten the subject they had been speaking of : and he said nothing. Then it occurred to him that as he had promised God he would never let it happen again, he need not tell Camilla anything. She often urged that they should go off somewhere together. He needed to get out of the daily round ; his behaviour showed that.

But he found it hard to get away. Night shifts were working just then to finish off the new stocks. Nils Kirkeklassen had asked him to discontinue the night work : the men felt the tempo was too much for them. For the first time Grawe was angered by such a request—he had always before paid attention to what the workmen had to say. He replied :

“ Let me inform you that I know best what tempo is required. If we’re to get new orders we must work.”

One night shortly after that Grawe was awakened by the phone. The crane on the new stocks had crashed, badly injuring one of the workmen. He hastened down to the works. The wife of the injured man had also arrived and was kneeling by the stretcher, overcome with grief. When she caught sight of Grawe she yelled :

“ You bloody slave-driver, you stop men getting their rest at night even and you’re such a jerry builder that you’ve killed him ! ”

Grawe noticed that her bitter outburst produced murmurs of assent among the men, and he gave orders that all work should cease. The man recovered. But the accident was reported in the papers : it was made much of and there were demands that an inquiry should be held. An inquiry was held, and its findings were that the accident had been unavoidable : and the discontent that had arisen among the workmen died away.

Some days after the accident Nils came to him and said that conditions in the works being what they were now, it was a matter of indifference whether or not he supported the trades unions ; people had heard he was going into politics and believed his gifts were bribes.

The hint Grawe had received from the bank, to act more circum-spectly, led him to make a big decision : he would revise entirely the running of the works and free himself from dependence upon other people’s money. He talked it over with Camilla, and she said she was in complete agreement : they must be unfettered in their relations with the workmen. He shelved a number of schemes he had for expansion and applied all his energies to the task of reducing his cash credit. Some time afterwards his father-in-law died and with their two children the Grawes moved into the great house in Parkveien. Camilla and her brother—still in America in

the diplomatic service—inherited a little money from him. One day she brought her husband a largish sum.

“Look—my contribution to the bank.”

“But that’s far more than you inherited from your father.”

“I’ve sold my life-insurance,” she said, “because I’m one with you and trust you and don’t want anything for myself . . .”

All the memories of their first years together swept over him ; he remembered that blameless time . . . the fellowship in which the two of them had lived ; when there were no lies or deceits between them, and he dropped to his knees and sobbed and sobbed. Camilla was horrified. She had not dreamt that money could have weighed so upon his mind, and she said :

“You silly boy . . . To let money shut you away in yourself as you have done. You must be over-strained.”

Again he had been going to tell her what actually had weighed upon him. But when he discovered that she thought lack of capital had been the cause, he grasped the possibility of starting afresh in his relations with her ; next day he took her a bunch of flowers.

“How sweet ! Thank you . . . You know, it’s a long time since this happened last,” she added a little provokingly as, with her back to him, she arranged them in a big vase.

He felt this little remark was a taunt. A long time since . . . Yes, of course it was a long time . . . But if she weighed things up in that fashion, then he’d damned well . . .

The nervous outburst he had made when she brought him the money, had made Camilla want him to take a holiday. He had had no vacation since taking over the works and his nervy, shut-away manner made her feel sure he needed a rest. One day she pointed out that he had not been to his home village since his return from America. It was now fifteen years since he had left the little township. He had felt no special desire to go there. His work and his home had absorbed him completely : the home where he had been born was gone, of course, and he had not kept in touch with any of the people there. The only one he had written to at all had been Marit—he had told Camilla about that a long time ago. Furthermore, so many of his contemporaries in the village were now at the works that he had almost the feeling that the village had come to him. Camilla had often been surprised that he, the man who had returned from America in order to settle in his birthplace, gave that place so few thoughts. One day she remarked upon this :

“Well, it’s this way, Camilla. You have taken the place in my life that the village once occupied. You have shown me the task I have in the works and in the home, and I haven’t room for anything more.”

When he spoke like that Camilla felt happier than she could say.



“Isn't it marvellous to know, Halvor, that we're among the few exceptional people who live completely for each other,” she would whisper on such occasions.

But when something had come between him and her, and between him and the men, he began to think more about his parents, his home, and the village. He had failed his wife, lied to his workmen : they had probably failed him, he persuaded himself to think. And he began to look back into his childhood and the village life, and surrounded it more and more with romantic thoughts. When he had lived there he could look anybody in the face ; he was innocent there, because his surroundings were innocent. He was unacquainted then with the new character his life had taken on ; and to overcome the sense of loneliness that had begun to steal in upon him latterly, he escaped into dreams of his village, or he worked so hard that every nerve in his body was tensed to the limit.

He talked more and more about his village, which prompted Camilla to say to him one day :

“ Well, I must see this kingdom of yours which you talk so much of, I'm beginning to be jealous of it. And I've had the feeling lately that you've been married to the works. You need to rest for a bit, so I think it might be good if you came up with me.”

He was pleased by the suggestion. The money Camilla had given him, together with his own strenuous efforts lately, had made him completely free from debt : he could begin to think of expansion again. The first world war, which had lasted for some time already, and seemed likely to go on and on, demanded that the country's own industries produced many articles formerly made abroad ; but he would have to plan his expansion in such a way that it would not all collapse when peace came. Before he applied himself to the task he decided it would be agreeable to spend a holiday in the village.

One day in the early autumn they set off. In the city the vegetation was still summer-like, but in the forests, when they reached them, autumn had made its entry. The potato plants were frozen on the higher farms ; in many places the leaves were yellow and red. The nearer they came to the township the more moved Grawe felt. He had a stronger link than he had thought with the great woods and their simple folk. Would all these bitter thoughts have taken up their abode with him if he had never left the village ? The mere fact that he had wrenched himself away from it had meant he was more easily infected by the evils of city life which had now such a grip on him.

Such a grip that he no longer felt simple joy in his relations with Camilla and with the men. She was his . . . Yes, what was she ? Guide . . . Good companion . . . But no longer life itself to him . . . Nor were the works. Could he find again in the village

the vision he had lost? A new contact with the people who lived there might perhaps be the source of power in his life, and the closer they drew to Storberget the more certain he became that it would be so.

Both of them were stiff from sitting for hours in the two-horse caleche, and when they turned off into the side road leading to the village he proposed that the carriage should drive on while they took the short-cut over Storberget. They reached the crest just before sunset and stood still, gazing down. The little red-painted farms with grey out-houses round them, the fields with their ricks, and smoke mounting the air in the still of the evening, the roar of the river—all was as he remembered it and had hoped to find it again. He pointed down the valley, far to the south where the river turned and crossed the frontier.

“There’s where father was drowned,” he said.

But suddenly he recollected how the men at the works had blamed him for the accident to their comrade. He remembered the woman who had shrieked “Slave-driver” at him, and he burst out:

“And people at the works from this place, people who know that my father was drowned, are so damnably foul as to suggest that I caused that accident to get a bit more cash!”

The sudden outburst frightened Camilla. What was wrong with her husband? With her Halvor whose mind had once been as clear and bright as the light of day? Who had once had room in his mind only for happiness and love and dreams of doing good? They went down the hill-side. He stopped again and when they had rounded a spur and could see further into the valley to the north, he pointed:

“See that crag: right under it in the woods was the little farm where Mother and Father lived. It looks as though it’s all grown over again now.”

Neither of them had anything to say. She did not know quite what was going on in her husband’s mind. Never before had she found in him bitterness towards the workmen; it was a new and foreign streak. An idea struck her:

“Do you know what we must do, Halvor . . . Buy back the piece of ground where you lived as a boy, clear it, and build a little farm there . . . It will do you good to have it, and me as well. And think what it will mean to the children, to be able to spend their holidays at the spot where their ancestors lived . . .”

He was pleased; the idea had struck him too, and by the time they reached the bottom of the valley they had almost decided on doing something of the sort. They got a room in the school-master’s house.

Everything in the village was as it had been. And yet everything



was different. He met people he had known. He asked after Marit. She and her husband lived at a little farm far out in the woods. They had a big family. He tried to recover his old relationships with the people he met, but something had come between them and him.

They looked upon him as a stranger, although he was one of them. He had lived at Gravdalen, which had been pulled down ; his father and mother lay in the churchyard under a big stone he had had erected two or three years ago. But at the same time he was one of the great ones—an enormously rich man. He could easily have bought up all that they owned. They wrote home from the city that two or three thousand men were employed at his works, while in the whole district there were only two or three hundred people altogether. He belonged to the ranks of those who ruled—ruled lock, stock, and barrel—their material existence. He might be one of those who decided how much was to be felled in the forests. People were amiable enough to him. Had they reason to be otherwise ? Some of them had sons and brothers who drew good money at his works. Many owed him thanks for assistance in time of need.

He told them about his time in America. About his work. That he had considered re-erecting the buildings at Gravdalen. And they responded politely and cautiously, but he could see only too well that they were on their guard against him, and as he sat there talking his illusions fell to bits. They stayed on however for some days : Camilla did what she could to help him to find his way back to his childhood emotions. But he did not find it, and when they set off for home once more he felt deeply disappointed with his visit. Why did I come ? he thought. The result was simply a shattered dream. Some twist had come into his life and into his relations with all mankind. He knew what the twist was. But he did not know what to do about it, nor want to do anything about it. It would only create new illusions for time to destroy. Better content himself with the fact that he had discovered what life really was, and make the most of that life. He did not talk any more of rebuilding Gravdalen : Camilla dropped the idea too. She was as disappointed as he with the visit.

He accepted the idea that life was an eternal scramble to get in front. A battle to defend oneself against pressure from without : pressure from Camilla, who was like a living rebuke to him, and also wanted to know why their life had disintegrated ; pressure from the men, who for some reason or other had lost their confidence in him, though he gave them better money, let them have canteens and baths, and had considered building them a holiday home ; pressure from the rest of the world, with which he had got on to hostile terms because he believed it was out to worst him, and which he therefore

had to strain every nerve to outdo himself. And after his visit, the village too exerted its pressure upon him : vague accusations that he had not fulfilled his vague promises.

But success continued to follow him. In the nick of time before the blockade was tightened, he managed to import some valuable special-purpose machinery ; which meant he could undertake to supply a great deal of the equipment for the new power-stations. Through his connections in America he was able to obtain steel and other metals long after imports had ceased for his competitors. The big profits he made on these orders he used for further expansion, and when an opportunity occurred he purchased an extensive plot of land along the fjord to the east of the works with a dim idea of building up a giant concern some time in the future.

## VII

One day when Grawe came home for lunch he found on the table in the great hall which reached up through both stories of the Parkveien mansion, a letter bearing American stamps and addressed to Miss Camilla Barner. She came home shortly afterwards and made no mention of the letter, and he forgot about it until later in the evening as he sat reading the newspaper. Then he remembered and said, not hinting at anything in particular :

“ I didn't know you corresponded with anyone in America ? ”

She looked up from her book and went flaming red.

“ It's nothing to be ashamed of,” he said, still without the idea of insinuating anything.

Then she told him that a short time before leaving America she had flirted a little with an American officer who had now written, asking if she was still unmarried and if it was any use his continuing to think of her. She was greatly embarrassed as she recounted this story ; went red once or twice, but smiled a little too, and said that he had meant nothing at all to her. During her travels she had met so many people, and even though she had once thought about this officer more than other men she had met, he was nothing to her.

Grawe felt rather sorry for Camilla as she sat there recounting this trifle and he was on the point of going over to her and putting his hand on her shoulder. But then a thought ran through his mind which he knew came from the devil himself . . . So she was no better than he ? She too had her secrets. Many ? What did he know ? He was glad, satanically glad . . . He knew how evil his thoughts were, but he could not stop rejoicing that she was on a par with himself. And to think he had gone round all this time with a bad conscience for that laughable incident he had been



involved in while drunk ! And all the time she had been, yes, she had admitted it herself, half engaged to somebody. Not that it made any difference at all to him. But why hadn't she told him about it ? He had told her about Marit . . .

They too had failed to live as exceptions to the rule ; both had something to hide. The discovery lifted a weight from him and he felt a sense of freedom. Instead of going and patting her shoulder, he answered curtly :

“ And it's the first letter you've had from him since we met each other I presume ?

She had had one before. It was a few months since, just after he had become so over-worked, she said, and he had had so many things to see to just then that she had not wanted to plague him with her little worries. For that matter she had soon forgotten about the letter ; and she had not answered it. When the second letter had arrived that day, she had thought of telling him, but it had seemed so stupid an affair that she felt it would be embarrassing to speak of it. He knew perfectly well that she was telling the truth. He knew she loved him and him alone, and that she was the best, most upright person in the world. He knew all that . . . But he did not want to use this opportunity to clear up things between them. His life was shattered ; he was out of Paradise—and now it appeared they had never been there. Her faith in him had rested on false foundations. He felt how something far, far down in his soul winced, how it warned him not to go on with these thoughts. But he followed them out to the bitter end. He might as well tear the last remaining illusions out of their life now ; they were grown-up, intelligent people : so he said in a cold businesslike tone :

“ We must be able to have the fullest confidence in each other.”

With that he went back to his newspaper and sent great columns of smoke out into the room from his pipe. He noticed how she flinched under the blow. Poor girl, he thought, but why didn't she tell him of these things ? He held the whip now and no longer needed to have a bad conscience. Shortly afterwards she rose and went upstairs. When she came down again he saw she had been crying and that she was longing to talk things out, but he made himself cold and distant and just went on reading the paper. The next day she wanted to begin, but he said :

“ There's nothing to talk about—from which you can see I hold nothing against you.”

After that she tried once or twice more to take the matter up, but each time he replied in the same way and refused to enter upon the subject. He was afraid that if they once began to thrash things out he would be forced to reveal his own secret ; and he felt they

had got on to such a realistic basis that their marriage was what a marriage should be. Besides he could not forget that she had hidden something from him. Was it perhaps her lack of openness that had made him want to hide up his secrets? He began to see his life in a new light. He was not without blame, but neither were others. He had fooled a contractor once and it had led to his adopting a whole new code of business ethics. But he had found that others were no better. And as regards the workmen . . . Perhaps it was wrong of him not to share with them the big profits on the first turbines. But everyone looked on him as a model employer; and moreover the men were not above tricking him too. He had been one of them and he knew all the dodges.

The years passed. By degrees his recollections both of the adventure in Copenhagen and of Camilla's letters from America sank so deep into his memory that they only came before him occasionally; when they did he shoved them back into the subconscious regions of his mind.

Yet what he had done to Camilla had constant repercussions in his life. When she lay in his arms he wondered sometimes: Is she thinking of me now? Or of someone else? Am I just a substitute to her? He knew that this phantom he conjured up between himself and his wife existed only in his own imagination, but it was none the less painful for that.

There were never scenes or unpleasantnesses between them; hardly was there real friction even; and the friends they made as the years went by regarded the Grawes as a couple who lived together more harmoniously than most—she was a little on the serious side perhaps, and he was often cynical in his view of humanity. Her time was more and more taken up. The bigger the firm became the more they were drawn into social life. Gradually she ceased visiting the workmen's homes; partly because there had become so many of them that she could not cover them all, and partly because she realised she was no longer welcome.

"Why is that?" she asked Halvor one day.

"What is there in this life that turns out as we expect? Does anything continue in the way it started?" he asked.

"That's true. But it's strange that when I only wish to do good to them they won't accept it. To begin with I used to make friends very readily with the women I visited. We used to get more and more attached to each other. I got such a lot from knowing those women! They opened up for me a whole new world of fellowship, of real fellow-feeling, just as you taught me to know a new world when you lifted me out of the duckpond I grew up in . . ."

She stopped . . . He was about to take up his book again, for



as usual when their conversation took too personal a turn, he made no answer. He just thought over what she had said and then went on reading. But this time she continued.

"And the only thing I had to give both to you and to those women was love. Now none of you will take it any longer . . . Why should our life have become one endless Monday morning, Halvor? Don't you ever wonder why? Neither of us thought it would when we met each other."

"No . . . Perhaps we didn't. But don't you think it seems a Monday morning, as you put it, because we were over-strained in those days?"

He knew that he was lying. Many times he regretted bitterly that he had not made a clean breast of things on the very first night after his return from Copenhagen. Her fondness of him was patent, and he was hers. But now it was too late. For between that incident and to-day lay years and years; a mountain of lies and falsehood, of coldness, of steadily-lowered business morals, of constant suspicion towards the workmen. Then perhaps he could have broken the chain of evil thoughts, words, and deeds which had followed the first things that had come between him and her, between him and the world . . . Now it was too late. All he could do was to continue to lie to himself and to the whole world . . . He did not think these things clearly, but he said:

"Have we any right to complain? I'm more than satisfied with what I've got out of life. I have a wife who has meant more to me than I know . . . I have two children who look as though they're going to be a credit to us. We have a firm which is expanding at such a phenomenal rate that it's past my comprehension how it does it, and even then I believe we only see the beginning as yet . . . We're going to be absolutely rolling in money . . ."

She listened to all this, nodded, and then replied:

"Don't you think I am grateful for all this? I realise these are the sort of blessings Christian folk give thanks for. And I realise what Father—the old rationalist—meant when he said that God was the world's greatest and most useful discovery. I know what a help that conception was to a lot of the women I visited. But I wasn't thinking of that at all . . . I wanted more from life than money."

"Have you any right to be discontented, Camilla? You have all that a woman desires."

"Perhaps . . . But I know that I would exchange it all, all, for what we once had, Halvor. I've often felt utterly despairing that I've not been able to keep alive the vision you had . . . Perhaps we ought to have gone up to your dale directly we were married? Instead of staying here?"

He had to harden himself lest what she said should hurt him too much. He gave a laugh and said :

“ If I’ve lost the vision, as you call it, you must have found it, if you fill your mind with all this.”

She shrugged her shoulders and took up her book again. He did the same ; they sat like that reading every night when they were not going out, and after the children were in bed. It was very seldom they spoke of their life in such a personal manner. But many times as the years went by he felt her look resting on him and he knew that with her whole being she was asking WHY ? Often he felt he could not bear to have those deep, blue eyes on him with their continual WHY ?

As they sat in church at Harald’s confirmation he prayed to God to be able to do something that would make Camilla really happy, and it came to him that he should give an address in her honour. He let himself go completely as he spoke. Some of the guests thought he was over-emotional . . . and it was not customary to speak in one’s wife’s honour on such occasions. But she felt happy. And when they went up to their bedroom that night she put her arms around him and said :

“ Thank you, Halvor, I didn’t know I’d meant so much to you . . . And mean so much . . . my beloved . . . What you said made me believe that we shall live really as one again . . . Do you think it is selfish of me to wish that continually ? . . . It may be . . . But I’m certain too that I’d willingly give my life to see joy in your eyes again.”

When they had been married for twenty years, the works were the biggest one-man enterprise in the country . . . Their son, Harald, had matriculated brilliantly : he was now working as an apprentice in the works before studying. The daughter, Agnes, was one of the loveliest girls in the city ; and though her father did all he could to spoil her, her mother kept the daughter’s feet on the earth. And as well as she was able she developed the sense of responsibility in both children. It was their intention to send the daughter abroad to live at a pension for girls, and they had already decided that they would drive her down by car.

Camilla became ill suddenly . . . It was her lungs. The doctor thought to begin with that it was not serious, but her strength slowly ebbed though he tried every possible means to stimulate her. He was amazed at the insidious way her resistance broke down, for apparently she was a strong, healthy person. Once when he visited her he said :

“ You must help me in the fight against this disease, Fru Grawe . . . You must determine to overcome it. I cannot do much, unless you help as well.”



She merely smiled. The doctor thought it was the saddest smile he had ever seen. He began to wonder whether she would die. This lady who had everything in life. Wealth, name, husband, children . . .

One day she said to Halvor :

“ I have done you *some* good in life ? ”

He was seized with a burning desire to ask her forgiveness, to tell her everything. But she could not stand any strong emotion, the doctor said ; so he answered only :

“ I’ve never been able to conceive my life without you, and the life we had together once has made me able to bear everything that has happened since . . . ”

Some days after that she died quietly, and without pain.

A clergyman had heard she was ill ; they asked her if she would like to talk to him. She had just shaken her head and whispered :

“ No . . . I don’t think so. ”

As Grawe and the children sat in the crematorium at the funeral, a thought stole into his mind : If he had spoken out, would she have begun to fight the illness ? . . .

## PART TWO

### I

Director Hørfeldt's father was a colonel. When Georg refused to become an officer too, he was bitterly disappointed. He was even more displeased when his son would not even enter the civil service, but went first into politics, then into business. True, the Colonel himself had married the daughter of a business man—one of the richest men in the country—but a Hørfeldt ought to serve the State. True, the State was not what it was in the time of the Colonel's father, but . . . nevertheless! Georg did quite the wrong thing, too, when instead of settling down in Norway he went off to Russia, to work for a big Norwegian firm in St. Petersburg.

It soon proved, however, that Georg had a keen instinct in money matters. And when his father saw this he began to resign himself to the fact that his son was a business man. A year or two later Georg married Else Barner, who was the daughter of an old friend of the Colonel's military academy days, and this further helped to restore Georg to favour.

During the war Georg speculated shrewdly, and when the revolution broke out he at once sent Else, their small daughter, and their money out of the country. He himself remained behind to safeguard the company's interests; and he only returned to Norway after the whole fabric of old Russia had disappeared.

On his return he had a nervous breakdown—the strain had been too much for him. While he was recuperating he went and lived in his old home again, in the quiet, old-fashioned district around Josefinegate. And as he slowly regained his strength the peace and dignity of his boyhood's surroundings achieved what his father had failed to do: they aroused within him an enthusiasm for his family's traditions. As he lay in bed he compared the chaos he had left with the orderliness and culture around him. By the time he began to walk about again, he had decided that the rest of his life should be devoted to the struggle against the Reds. When he told his father what he intended to do, it rejoiced the old man's heart.

Georg had already taken part in politics in a small way, and now with his fortune behind him it was easy for him to pick up the threads again. He was elected to the national executive of the People's Party, and made a member of the programme committee. He became a director of the newspaper, *Dagens Stemme*, and contributed articles to it regularly. Before long he had earned the



reputation of wielding the sharpest—opponents said the most virulent—pen in the entire Press of the People's Party.

Else approved of her husband's decision to re-enter politics. She too had been appalled by the horrors she had seen in Russia.

"If you feel called to defend our heritage and our language," she said to him, "you must go ahead. We've enough money, goodness knows, and more will accumulate."

They bought a house on Bygdø Island, which soon became a centre of social and political life.

They had married out of love. She had been training as a singer, but she gave up her career for her husband's sake. But she kept her voice in training and often sang at home. In fact many people said that the politicians who came there preferred Else's singing to Georg's politics.

He had a strain of fanaticism which prevented his becoming a leading figure on the political stage. Behind the scenes he exerted considerable influence, and as a lecturer he was much in demand, but this was not enough for Hørfeldt. He was bitterly disappointed, and his energies found an outlet in acrid criticism of opponents. Sometimes his polemics were so personal that even supporters were horrified. They egged him on nonetheless. Whenever a particularly biting article in *Dagens Stemme* showed he had been on the war path, they would ring him up: "That will serve the beggar right. . . Give him a repeat dose next week," they would tell him.

Two things in particular influenced his development. On his return home from Russia he had talked with party colleagues and they had agreed that he should try to establish personal contact with the National Party with a view to forming a coalition government. He therefore got in touch with a young Storting member, Fjellgard. In a series of conversations they discussed the possibility of collaboration, but soon found no agreement was to be reached. Hørfeldt was not a little surprised at the negative attitude Fjellgard adopted towards his ideas. When they had concluded their talks, Hørfeldt was amazed one day to see in Fjellgard's party newspaper an article obviously directed at his person, containing references to a wagtail of a business man who wanted to form a coalition government . . .

Hørfeldt, who had conducted negotiations in the best of faith, was furious; all the more so because many of his own political friends adopted for him the nickname "wagtail."

The other thing which had sharpened Hørfeldt's polemics was this: a big exhibition of family portraits was held in the Museum of Industrial Art, and Hørfeldt was allotted an entire wall. In his enthusiasm for the great assemblage of famous men of both his own

and other great Service families, which had been brought together, he wrote an article about the aspect of Norwegian culture these families represented. The article raised a storm of indignation. Hørfeldt and *Dagens Stemme* were made to smart for their "reactionary ideas;" they were called representatives of the German immigrants, of snobbery, of the blackest reaction. In the Storting, Fjellgard made some biting comments: an outlook such as had been expressed in connection with the exhibition in the Museum of Industrial Art belonged to the past, he declared, and those circles which were under the impression that their culture was the nation's culture must accustom themselves to the truth that they were simply tolerated in the country . . .

Hørfeldt sat paralysed when he read this . . . Who had led the nation's progress for generations? Who had brought about better living conditions for the people? Exploited technical discoveries? Established new means of communication throughout the country? Just those men whose portraits were being exhibited. Civil servants, doctors, business men, clergy, officers . . . First rate people, who had done their duty in the service of the nation, and who now defended their rights and their homes. Attacks like Fjellgard's, and the hatred of the Reds, were not merely an expression of jealousy and stupidity, but showed the grossest ingratitude: for "where would the fools have stood to-day if we hadn't been here to help them?" he reasoned . . . Had the upper class been an exclusive cast, he would have said nothing to these outbursts of resentment. But anyone who possessed talent could enter its ranks. Its vitality derived from its ability to generate new power from its own resources. Many of its leading men, both in the service of the State and in business, had risen by their own exertions only . . . Were the founders of their dynasties. And though they sprang from humbler circumstances, quickly acquired a broad and responsible outlook when they attained power and position. That alone made it as clear as day that the whole system was right . . . Private ownership, patriotism . . . Consider a fellow like Works-Owner Halvor Grawe, Hørfeldt used to say when he discussed these things. Up from the darkest forests to the topmost pinnacles of society . . . And has this class any protection? None but that provided by ability . . . When even educated men like Fjellgard attack us in this way, the Red danger is greater than we thought . . .

So in his political work he had to use stronger methods than ever . . . He noticed himself how this increased bitterness towards so many different people and opinions was beginning to make him cold even towards Else and the people about him . . . He was unable to curb his hatred . . . It spread and a destructively critical spirit filled all his being.



More or less simultaneously with this change of attitude, his relations with Else began to get difficult in another way. The hospitality they gave meant that they were invited out a lot. And Hørfeldt never said no to a glass of wine. His own wine-cellar was his pride. He liked small men's parties where they sat round the table for hours, where the subject of food and wine was cultivated as a fine art.

He was not too careful how he behaved to women when he had drunk too much. One evening as they were driving home together after a party, Else said to him :

"If you behave in that way, you can't expect that I shall be careful either . . ."

"All right," he answered cynically. "Is this the preamble to an agreement on the subject of bilateral freedom?"

"If you will . . ." Else shrugged in her corner of the car.

Next day he was sorry. He brought with him from the city a large bouquet of flowers and asked Else to forgive him. She gave him a little kiss on the cheek and smiled, but her voice was serious as she said :

"There are things we mustn't talk too lightly about."

Else told him too that his polemics were getting steadily more aggressive and full of personal spite. She often tried to get him to be a little more restrained in his reference to other parties and people.

"You didn't enter politics simply to pull down," she said.

"One must pull down before one can build up," he replied. "Let those who began attacking our culture begin behaving decently, then I'll reconsider things . . ."

"But don't you think there are things to put right in our own circle? You always turn on others . . ."

"Don't you think the others look after us sufficiently? Don't you remember how that clod-hopper Fjellgard looked after you and the rest of us here some time ago? A fine state of affairs we'd have in this country if he and his friends got control . . . He's even prepared to work with the Socialists. Yes, I said clod-hopper! There are some principles no one can get away from . . . The fatherland and the right of private ownership are the pillars which must support any culture . . . And the Church and morality are each one flank of the unshakable spiritual values of our culture . . ."

Else did not like her husband to talk about the Church . . . Nor to lay down the law about morality . . .

"When did you go to church last, Georg?"

"I don't remember . . . Yes I do! When Christine was confirmed. But whether I go there much or little has nothing to do with the Church's position as a cultural factor. I'm not myself religious . . . But that doesn't prevent my respecting religious

values and regarding it as one of the State's foremost duties to protect the Church . . . Nor am I a sportsman, but as some people are interested in sport it would be wrong of me not to give it my patronage . . . It's the same with the Church . . .”

“ Do you think one can make the comparison ? ”

“ Of course . . . The Church is more important than sport, hang it all. But it is equally unwise politically to neglect the one as the other . . . ”

In foreign politics Hørfeldt shared the Western European viewpoint. He was in agreement with Fjellgard as far as the Norwegian dispute with Denmark over Greenland was concerned. Not so much because he had any use for “ the icebergs in the middle of the Atlantic;” as because an active, nationalistic foreign policy was a valuable weapon in the struggle with the enemy at home, who constituted the real danger threatening the world. For that struggle all resources had to be mobilised. Those who were not with him were against him. In other words, Fjellgard and his National Party had to be beaten down. Now and then he felt like taking up the clubs against Works-Owner Halvor Grawe as well.

The man was a mystery to him ; and had been ever since his first meeting with him down at the little works . . . Hørfeldt could not understand why a man who had married into a good family and ought to have had one interest only—to hold at bay the enemy in their midst—did not whole-heartedly support him and his cause. Moreover he had been born a peasant, so love of the earth and patriotism ought to have been in his blood . . . He tried all he knew to get Grawe to identify himself with the great cause. But the pace was slow. After the death of his wife he was more reasonable. And the son, as far as Hørfeldt could gather, did not share his father's romantic and twisted ideas ; so as time went on it would no doubt be possible to induce him to enter political life. Hørfeldt did not count people as reliable until they were members of his party, and a man like Grawe, who was a national figure, must join it, if he had to be dragged in by the hair.

For Hørfeldt the right of ownership was the basic principle of life. It had not merely to do with stocks and shares, or a plot of ground, or a villa on Bygdø : it concerned his reputation, Else, Christine . . . The country . . . The right of ownership and human existence were one to him. And those who formed organisations for the purpose of abolishing the right of ownership, threatened something of far greater worth than silver and gold . . . They threatened life itself . . . Marriage . . . Moral concepts . . . If he was a little loose sometimes in practice, he certainly respected the idea . . . It was in his own *and* the workers' interests therefore to attack the Labour movement with every means available in an



ordered State. Though it was painful to contemplate the use of arms against one's own countrymen, it might become necessary, however good-hearted and honest the workers were individually. They had been led astray by their leaders.

Every election, indeed, showed an increase in that section of the Norwegian people which allowed itself to be abused by bandits whose one desire was to do away with the right of private ownership, and by traitors who refused to defend their country. At each election Hørfeldt and his friends were disappointed in the hope that at last the good sense of the solid Norwegian workman would prevail. Could he not see how things had gone in America? Could he not understand that those who led him merely lived extravagantly at his expense? That it was simply the desire to eat and drink well that drove them on?

But at each election he had new shocks. What good had all his agitation done? What was the use of his party's being in the right? of *Dagens Stemme* attacking the Trades Unions with redoubled bitterness for tyrannising over the workers, for stimulating unlawful conflicts? . . . The turn of the tide never came. The mind of the people was bewitched by charlatans . . .

On the evening of one election day he and some of his friends sat in the office of the editor of *Dagens Stemme*. They had received reports from all parts of the country of a favourable trend in the air; at last there seemed prospects that the Red wave would be stopped. Then the results themselves began to stream in, and the telegrams brought their hundreds and thousands of small figures which showed an overwhelming advance for the enemies of society and of the fatherland . . . Would they obtain a majority? It looked as though they would, and a gloomy silence fell upon the great editorial office when the possibility was named . . .

Suddenly there was a hullabaloo in the street below . . . They rushed to the windows . . . Scores of motor-cycles were thundering past in two columns; on the pillions sat girls waving big red flags. And between the two columns of motor-cycles marched a procession of grave-looking men, hat in hand, and women with ecstatic expressions, singing the Internationale . . . The blood ran cold in Hørfeldt and his companions as they stood there and watched the arch-enemy parade through the narrow street, demonstrating for naked revolution . . . They failed to get a majority and nerves recovered after the shock they had received from the roaring engines, the red flags, and the song of revolution.

When he was by himself sometimes Hørfeldt admitted that in the Red wave there were elements of the spirit of self-sacrifice and brotherhood: he wished in fact that that spirit were more common in the ranks of those who fought for the rights of the individual and

for the nation's culture. But why did the Reds want to rob him and his friends? Wasn't there enough for all? He envied no one. His one wish was to live in peace. Why were others jealous of him? Why did they disturb his peace? He did no one harm . . . Why was he threatened by a world movement? When such thoughts came over him he sat motionless in his study, drumming his fingers. Else on these occasions would come and talk to him to find what his thoughts were, or to help him by showing him a little friendliness. She saw how his hatred and bitterness were growing because his whole world seemed on the verge of collapse. But he would not listen to her. Only once he gave himself away. She asked him casually :

"How are things actually just now, Georg?"

And in a moment of tired frankness, he replied :

"I'm utterly fed-up with everything."

What had been the result of all his battles? Reputation, money, name . . . He had everything . . . But where was the happiness of mind he had known many grey ages ago? What had happened to his mind? Filled with hatred and anxiety from his constant hunt after the next cause to batter down, the next opponent to ruin, the next foe to go for. Uncertain and nervy from too much reading.

He felt at peace only when he flew on his skis over the slopes of Nordmarka ; or, in summer, when he tramped towards one mountain ridge after the other. He used to go so fast that the sweat poured off him and his heart hammered in his chest ; for then his thoughts dispersed. He felt at peace too when he was among his friends at the card-table discussing and discoursing, his tongue loosened by whiskey. Then he felt the same beating urge for something great and unknown which he had felt in his boyhood. And now and then he remembered a little episode :

He must have been fifteen or sixteen. That summer he had stayed with his family at a little bathing resort, and one day he rowed up the fjord in a skiff. A storm blew up, it began to lighten and thunder, the rain poured in torrents, and suddenly lightning struck down into the sea just beside the skiff, making water spout up at the clouds. He was scared to death, but then all at once he felt perfectly calm, and a thought ran through his head :

"Don't worry ! You have a job to do."

Yet although to outward appearances he had done well, he realised he was far from having reached inward greatness. But life was like that. He saw how all resigned themselves to that fact as the years went by. The possibility of achieving inward greatness was presumably an illusion. It was as stupid to strive after it as to hanker for the beating desire for the great and unknown of his boyhood days . . .



## II

Hørfeldt's work brought him into touch with an ever-wider circle of acquaintances and his influence increased. He was unofficially asked if he would accept nomination for the Storting. It was the one real pleasure he had had for a long time ; the one sign that he was in contact with human beings : for although he was so much in the centre of human activity, he became more lonely every year. People came to him with ideas ; provided him with material for new political attacks. He was egged on to further hatred and further bitterness. But the harder he battled for himself and for his cause, the worse did the world seem to become. It was determined apparently to follow the road to destruction. It showed not the faintest inclination to re-establish that pre-war society which had been based on respect for the fatherland and the sanctity of property ; and in which moral laws and religion were upheld. Well, it would have to be lashed until it woke up . . . Harder, more mercilessly . . . until it gave in.

And he lashed.

"Have you read what I've written to-day?" he would ask Else sometimes at breakfast, when he was particularly pleased with one of his articles.

"I daren't look at the malicious things you write . . ."

She took up the same attitude when he wanted her to go to a meeting to hear him speak.

"I don't want to listen to all the malicious things you say . . . Did you enter public life only to write and speak malice?"

Very well . . . If she wouldn't follow him and help him in the fight he waged for her and for all they possessed and stood for, he couldn't compel her. In this way they drifted still further apart and an even greyness settled over their marriage which was far, far from the hopes with which they had entered upon conjugal life.

She often complained that he did not show her the attentiveness in daily life that she considered was her due.

"You always used to once."

"But damn it all, Else . . . You can't expect a man as busy as I am to have time to think like somebody just married or engaged."

"Why not? You promised that, when we were younger. Why should you expect me to interest myself in your speeches and goings-on if you don't think of me? For that matter what is it that you want me to take an interest in? One idea to-day, another to-morrow."

"But life is always changing, Else . . ."

"There are limits. Often when we're out together and I've not had time to keep up with what's happening I find someone telling

me something about you or the views you hold which I've never had the faintest inkling of. And sometimes your interest in a question you'd always said was important, vanishes completely."

"What you say is the fate of all politicians. And if you see the problem, why don't you help me?"

"When do you help me with my difficulties?"

With that he shrugged and dashed away to a conference.

He froze . . .

One day he sat in his club reading. One of his friends came up to him in a slightly intoxicated condition and said :

"Georg, old boy, your writing, you know, is bloody clever . . . But by cripes you're malicious !"

Malicious? . . . He was not malicious. It was the world that was malicious. When the friend had left after a trivial conversation, a sense of hopelessness sank over him. But no one would have to know that . . . Or know how lonely he was . . .

One of the few people he really valued among his numerous acquaintances was Works-Owner Halvor Grawe ; but with him too he developed no intimate friendship. Hørfeldt tried now and then to become more intimate with him, but it didn't happen. It became one of his objectives to entice Grawe into his circle. Sometimes the two of them set off on long tramps together. He was a bit surprised himself to find how well he, as a typical city-dweller, and with such a background as he had, got on in the company of Halvor Grawe. Vaguely he thought it was because both of them were disillusioned men, and because they felt this.

But his friendship with Grawe did not stop Hørfeldt continuing to freeze, and he came to realise more and more clearly that something was seriously wrong with him. But what? Why did nothing ever grow where he had ploughed? There were more and more people he did not like to meet. His conversations with Else consisted of nothing. Among all these human beings he felt as lonely as if he had been alone on the only planet in the universe.

He knew in his heart that he was not made to hate. Once he had loved life and everything in the world and all the people he came across. And he had received warmth in return. When that had ceased he didn't know . . . He knew simply that that time was now passed, and something evil and frightening had come between him and life. And as he strove to understand it, the years slipped by . . .

It was worst in the summer, during the holidays. Then he had nothing to do but hate, and the thought of the devilishness of the world filled his mind . . . The thought of what it had done to him and how coldly it had received what he had sought to do for it. He used to go for holidays to a little island out in the skerries where



he kept a skiff in which he rowed about between the islets. He would wear just his bathing-trunks and row and row till the sweat ran and his heart pounded . . . He was rowing away from everything . . . Often he would haul the skiff up on to some tiny islet and sit and stare out over the North Sea while the wind beat in his face and the spray swept right over the isle. Then sometimes he would stand up and, clenching his fists against the sea and the sun and the wind, would mutter :

“ God ! Why do you allow a human being to suffer so ? . . . ”

He got no answer. He came to the conclusion that catastrophe was inevitable for the world just as it was inevitable, he dimly feared, for himself. The only way out was to build up for himself as comfortable an existence as possible. To enjoy all that there was to enjoy . . . Food, wine . . . travel, art, theatre . . . sport, bridge. This refined humanistic outlook, the art of enjoying life, this Renaissance view of life, which allowed others to live and gave some sort of purpose to existence, was what distinguished the human being from dead matter. And this philosophy must at all costs be defended against the crass materialism which made human beings into animals, or defenceless marionettes in the hands of blind fate . . .

Perhaps this too led eventually to destruction ; but if so, a lonely son of man had at least lived out his life and, before the catastrophe came, enjoyed pleasures that the body and the soul can extract from existence.

It was a personal victory for Hørfeldt that Works-Owner Halvor Grawe at length accepted the invitation to the great banquet. His enthusiasm for the plan which Grawe there unfolded was unbounded, and the following day he rang Grawe up to discuss the whole subject further. He was disappointed to learn that Grawe had gone away for some days, and he decided to proceed on his own initiative. He persuaded the editor-in-chief of *Dagens Stemme* to write about the plan in season and out of season, with the leit-motiv that a society which produced a man like Halvor Grawe was sound and healthy ; that only those blinded by class-hatred could hold the view that it was rotten to the core.

Hørfeldt was even more enthusiastic when Grawe on his return declared that he would join the Employers' Federation.

“ At last you've decided to see reason,” he said : adding, “ There's simply the Storting left now.”

The reason for Hørfeldt's eagerness to get Grawe to stand for the Storting was that he knew the influence Grawe's name had upon tens of thousands throughout the country. Grawe was the knight-errant of commerce . . . If he joined the People's Party it would mean that tens of thousands thought again, at the very least. In

readiness for the approaching elections, he also began to prepare the way for big changes in party policy. The party needed livening up. The era of lukewarm opinions was over, and it was high time that the constructive forces in the nation let it be known that there was some distinction between themselves and the Reds. He wanted to introduce into the programme large defence votes, more scope for the teaching of Christianity in schools, and laws to safeguard freedom of employment . . . In this direction lay the country's salvation.

During the spring and summer he was amazed how half-heartedly these ideas were received. But he assembled a great deal of material for the support of his thesis when the programme committee set to work in earnest. At the first meeting of the committee he had a terrific shock. Practically everybody was against him . . . He got jumpy and irritable as the meetings went on . . . One day he discovered that conversations between the People's Party and the National Party had taken place behind his back. They had actually conferred with his personal enemy, Fjellgard. And Fjellgard had stated fairly directly that if Hørfeldt continued to attack him collaboration was out of the question.

He was thunderstruck when he heard this. Was the People's Party going to bow down before Fjellgard? . . . Was culture to be abandoned because a narrow-minded peasant demanded it?

"It seems that Director Hørfeldt confuses his own sympathies and antipathies with the nation's culture," the chairman of the programme committee remarked at one of the meetings . . . "And anyway it was hardly a happy expression of your culture not to allow the peasant Fjellgard, at the banquet in honour of Works-Owner Grawe, to pay his tribute to industry in the person of the guest of honour . . ."

Hørfeldt did not know which way to turn . . . His tongue felt paralysed. He simply shrugged and said not a word more for the rest of the evening . . . In the interval before the next meeting he went about like a sleep-walker. The state of the country was now such that even his own party comrades went over to the enemy. The idea seized hold of his mind. Else tried to induce him to tell her what was worrying him, but she could hardly get a word out of him.

"It's just one of the matters which interest me to-day and which I'm tired of tomorrow," he replied bitterly.

And Else shrank still further from reality.

By the time the next meeting came, Hørfeldt had decided to take up the battle in grim earnest . . . He gave a long and objective account of his views, but he could feel he was talking to deaf ears . . . This made him more nervous than ever and, hardly knowing what



he was saying, and without having intended to say anything of the kind, he allowed the following words to come from his lips :

"If the committee refuses to support these programme points, I will resign from the committee. And you know where I and *Dagens Stemme* will then stand."

"If Director Hørfeldt can manage without the committee," the chairman said, "the committee can manage still more easily without Herr Hørfeldt. Where you stand afterwards is a matter of complete indifference to us, but we know where *Dagens Stemme* will stand."

Not one of the other members said a word ; they simply sat and drew figures on the yellow order papers which lay strewn over the green cloth of the table. For some seconds there was a deathly silence in the room. Hørfeldt watched the pencils, a deep despair welling up in him. He knew he was a beaten man . . . He rose, collected his papers into his despatch case, and looked round on these men to whom he had linked his fate in a common struggle, but who now treated him as if he had been air . . . Fury seized him . . .

"To hell with the lot of you !" he yelled and rushed to the door.

"Was that the cultural section that left us ?" he heard behind him, and peals of laughter.

He went straight up to *Dagens Stemme*. Contrary to custom, he was stopped in the ante-room by the editor's stenographer, who told him the editor was engaged . . . If the Director would take a seat and wait. Some minutes later he slipped inside, and he saw from the editor's face that the chairman of the committee had been on the phone. He did not mince matters. Hørfeldt could not use the columns of *Dagens Stemme* for the expression of private opinions.

"Naturally we shall be glad of your continued collaboration and support in other directions."

But Hørfeldt had by now lost his head completely : he saw he had been the victim of a nicely laid trap, and he went further into it.

"You won't get it," he said.

And he added that he would have nothing more to do with *Dagens Stemme*. The editor took him at his word. In the evening edition appeared a small notice : "Director Georg Hørfeldt has informed *Dagens Stemme* that he wishes to resign from the managerial board . . ."

When he arrived back at the villa on Bygdø, Else was not at home and he began to walk to and fro through the rooms thinking of what had taken place. It was completely beyond comprehension. Without any warning he had been thrown out . . . He . . . Who had fought for the interests of all . . . Who had pledged his life to the struggle against the forces which destroyed home, society, culture . . . He had been expelled by the very people he had sought to protect. He walked to and fro in a daze. When the

evening edition came out, one of the other papers rang up to hear if there had been any disagreement on principle. For a moment Hørfeldt was tempted to give them the whole sensational story, but a thought checked him : it's not just your person that's concerned . . . Grawe rang up too and said he was sorry he had not warned him in advance. He had heard rumours . . .

When Else came home he opened the flood gates. He walked up and down, raging against life, against the party, against *Dagens Stemme* . . . She did not say a word, and suddenly he turned on her :

"Why don't you say something? Perhaps you agree with the men who have wrecked my life?"

"You know very well I don't, Georg."

"Well say something then . . . Why is it that I who have given all for others have my all taken from me like this?"

"Was it for others' sake that you carried on your struggle?"

"Of course it was . . ."

"I wonder if it wasn't for your own sake?"

"Myself or my home, my friends. What's the difference? . . . But from now on it shall be for me alone. They shall find out what it means to declare war on Georg Hørfeldt! . . ."

With that he broke off the conversation and continued his promenade through the rooms ; until Else stopped him with the words :

"Do you think you can base a cause and a life simply on hatred and fear?"

"I've not done that . . . And moreover, one can do it, if one hates intensely enough and makes oneself sufficiently feared."

"When did you last think a loving thought, Georg?"

"When did I last think a loving thought? . . ."

He did not make a reply but went on walking again . . . It was the old story. Else did not understand him. No one understood him . . . All right then, he would go his own way, lonely and alone, as he had done through the past years. But when the catastrophe had descended upon them all, they would see who had been right.

The days that followed were the strangest Hørfeldt had ever experienced. He had fought out a battle of principle. For years he had battled for a great cause which concerned his whole class, all his friends, and all society, and now when he ceased fighting scarcely anybody noticed it. He went up to his club where he thought he could feel the pulse of opinion. Some of his card-playing friends had heard rumours and sought further information. Others had learnt a little more and offered their sympathies. But no one realised that his whole life's work was in ruins.

Self-pity seized him and had the effect of making him stay in his



office, though there was nothing to do there. His secretary and office boy found the time hung heavily and in the end they gave notice. Then he was left sitting there alone.

Some weeks later the election campaigns began. There was no question now of his standing for the Storting. No one asked if he would speak.

One day he had a nervous headache. It became worse and worse during the following days, so he went to a doctor. Something was wrong with his nervous system. Too hectic a life, followed by the stagnation of the last weeks, had brought about a crisis in his physical condition. Examination showed that his tonsils were highly inflamed and he was advised to have an operation and a long rest.

He took the doctor's advice and had the operation. For several days he lay in a state of coma, overcome by physical and mental exhaustion, but he recovered gradually and went to a hotel up-country to convalesce. He arrived there one evening in early October at sundown. A heavy misty air lay over the open East-Norway landscape. The trees were bare, the last faded, red and yellow leaves hanging among the branches . . . The air was filled with the smell of cabbage roots, which the peasants were gathering into heaps. In some places the autumn ploughing was in progress. In the west the sun peeped through slits in the dark, grey cloud-banks and right on the horizon he could make out the snow-clad mountains. He was tired, dead tired . . . But after a few days the rest began to build up mind and body again. He emerged from his isolation and spoke to other guests in the hotel. He took some volumes by his favourite French authors from his case, and one evening, when his thoughts were beginning to busy themselves again, he caught himself in a mood of lukewarm optimism and recited the closing words of Maupassant's *A Life* : "Life is never either as good or as evil as one believes." He felt at ease both in body and in mind, although he dared not let his thoughts probe the future ; for he was certain that, once he regained his vitality, life would seem as catastrophic as ever.

One evening he got into conversation with a South African business man of about his own age. His name was John Garrett and he was in the employ of a South African diamond concern. He did not say exactly what he was doing in Norway ; a combined business and pleasure trip it seemed. He was an interesting man. He had fought throughout the war on the Western front, partly as an infantryman and partly as a pilot. The more they talked together, the more he liked the South African, and when they parted that night Hørfeldt decided he had not for a long time met anyone who left such a reassuring impression . . . There was something

about British culture, something the Germans would do well to acquire, he reflected as he went to sleep.

The next day the sun shone. There was summer in the air ; a light, mild wind from the south stroked softly around the cheeks, and little white clouds sailed across a high blue heaven. Hørfeldt met Garret at the breakfast table and proposed that they should hire a car, drive up among the mountains, and climb one of the heights so that he would get an impression of the country. They had lunch packets made and set off.

It turned out that Garret was more than just a business man ; he had also taken part in politics. And Hørfeldt smiled when he spoke of his articles and speeches, which, he said, were intended to prove to the public that his opponents were dishonest and their ideas rubbish. Were not just such insinuations his own greatest pleasure in life ? All that Garret said confirmed his own opinion of human nature. He recognised his own enemies, their hatred, covetousness, jealousy, and deceit, in the stories Garret told of his experience in South Africa.

There was a deeply human quality about Garret ; and it was that which made Hørfeldt get on with him so well. At last, he felt, he had met a man who was not afraid to look truth in the face. And the bold way the man had tackled every difficulty. He had had things out with the political enemies to whom he had been unjust and even apologised for the wrong he had done them. He had settled accounts with the contractors and customers he had treated unfairly. He had done the same with his wife and once he remarked :

“ Our life is a continual honeymoon now.” A great longing, a feeling of endless sadness and loneliness filled Hørfeldt.

Garret continued his account and began to reason about himself and his life. He pointed out how certain things he had done had led to certain results in other people's lives . . . He placed it all in the vastest perspective. His hatred might not be so dangerous in itself . . . His fear might not mean a great deal. But if responsible and influential men in the British Commonwealth hated and feared, there you had the seeds of war . . . If his home broke up, it was not so bad perhaps for anybody except himself, his wife, and his children. But if hundreds of thousands of homes broke up on account of everyday trifles, a whole civilisation might disintegrate.

“ The world's peace depends upon the individual being at peace with himself and with his neighbour,” said the South African.

On the way back to the hotel they did not talk much. Garret walked along with an absent expression and gazed out over the mountains. They were grey and colourless now, so far on in October, even though the clear autumn sun did its best to enliven



them. And there were few birds. The autumn shooting had probably thinned them out. Hørfeldt was absorbed with the new ideas Garret had set going in his mind . . . He was plainly right. There was some hope for the world if everybody put right the wrongs they had done. And he began to tell his companion that. He would work for reconciliation between Denmark and Norway. He would convince the Danes that they were wrong . . . He would also convince the Labour Party that they were on the wrong track . . . He would show his enemies how they had abused and misunderstood him . . .

"But isn't that exactly what you have done all your life?" Garret said with a slight smile. His smile was tinged with irony. But he had to acknowledge that Garret was right. He had done little but try to prove to others that they were wrong.

"And it hasn't achieved anything," continued Garret. "Do you think new efforts from your side are likely to be more successful?" Again the smile with that slight touch of irony. Though it's queer how confoundedly well it suits him! thought Hørfeldt, and again he had to admit Garret was right in doubting whether fresh articles would lead to better results than those he had written already.

"But you've just told me of all these cases where good results followed when you settled accounts with people," said Hørfeldt. "If people do the same here in Norway, the results should be just as good, surely?"

"Yes," Garret said, "that's true, but you didn't notice that it was I who made the first move? . . ." And after a short pause he added:

"You should do that too."

Hørfeldt smiled. Uncertainly . . . Patronisingly . . . He had heard many strange things from his new friend in the course of the day, but . . . was he to put things right? He, who all his life had fought for justice and truth: he, who had done the fair and honourable thing in every circumstance. The enemies he had as a politician were enemies because he had had to tell them the truth. He explained this to the South African. If there was no other way of ridding the world of strife, it had better go on as it was. He said all this as they tramped down the mountain-side towards the edge of the forest where the car awaited them. It was well on in the afternoon. The sun was nearing the horizon, but there was still warmth in it and the two men walked with jackets open and with their hats in their hands. They were following what was little more than a track animals used, and here and there in the hollows were great pools which they had to jump over. But as a rule the path lay before them, dry and well-defined, and twisting through the heather over the mountain-side. So far conversation had been

lively, but the last few remarks had left Hørfeldt in a thoughtful frame of mind : the talk flagged and the two men walked in silence side by side, and at a good even rate. Then the South African pulled up, so abruptly that Hørfeldt stopped too and turned towards him questioningly. They looked at each other in the eyes and Garret said :

“ I understand your objections and realise how unreasonable it would be to expect you to put things right with men who have done you wrong.”

“ It’s a good thing you know that it would be beyond human power to do it.” Hørfeldt smiled uncertainly. He was not sure what the other was getting at.

“ It was beyond my power, too,” he said, “ until I put my whole life and will in God’s hands. Then he gave me the power to settle accounts as you put it, and from that moment God turned me from a hate-filled and destructive being into a person seeking in his service to build up what I had laid waste, as I have told you . . .”

Hørfeldt grew stiff with amazement . . .

“ Well of all the damned and . . . ! You believe in God,” he exclaimed.

“ Yes.”

In a flash he understood why this man had affected him so strangely. Now he stood beside him on the mountain—beside him, Georg Hørfeldt, a respectable prop of society, a bit frayed at the edges perhaps, but presentable anywhere at all—and declared without blinking an eyelid that he believed in God ; now in the twentieth century. A business man, who had fought through the war. Was he joking, possibly ? But there was such a gleam in his clear blue eyes, and he looked so unashamedly certain of himself, that Hørfeldt held back the remarks he had had on the tip of his tongue, that he did not care for that sort of humour, and instead said :

“ I’m sorry I swore.”

Garret smiled and replied :

“ That was the first time you apologised to someone who had annoyed you ? Carry on.”

Hørfeldt did not reply. They began to walk again and shortly afterwards reached the car. For the rest of the journey neither of them said a word. When they reached the hotel they parted with a nod and a few conventional words. After washing and changing Hørfeldt sat down at the writing table to answer letters. But his thoughts were occupied with something they had never come across before. He had met a modern business man, of his own age, married and with three children, who believed in God. In other words he was a Christian. He gave a start when he thought of the word . . . And the fellow was so brazen about it that he told a



casual acquaintance at a hotel his inmost secret. Hørfeldt knew of two or three people in his large circle of friends who were probably Christians, but they were well-bred and tactful enough not to worry others with it. And this fellow . . . He did not merely say what he was, but hinted pretty directly that he—Georg Hørfeldt—ought to be a Christian too !

Had he not managed very well without any religion ? Did not everybody manage well without it ? Had his parents not done so ? A feeble religiosity which he had heard rumours of in his grandparents, had disappeared from the family with them. Naturally he and Else had been wedded in the State Church, and he and his brothers had been baptised and confirmed in the State Church. That was only what custom demanded ; the religious ceremonies had meant nothing to him. He had never learnt to pray—wasn't that the expression ?—and he had never had a conversation of a personal nature about religion.

People who went to church were usually dressed in black clothes, were solemn and dull, judged others severely, but on the whole were harmless. They did not steal, they did not drink, did not commit adultery—a comical expression. But he had not observed anything in their lives that was not in the lives of those who never went inside the walls of a church. All they did lay outside his sphere of interest . . . He could call himself neither an agnostic nor an atheist. Those words stood for things to which he was as indifferent as he was to Christianity.

Because certain people went to church every Sunday the world became no different. Every man should get on with the job in hand ; that was the secret : and behave towards others as they ought to behave to him . . . That was Christian teaching more or less. And good sense, provided the rest did it. But he was a politician. His task was to right wrongs, to condemn the mistakes of others, which of course was a positive contribution to the community . . . That the world was in its present state was the fault of society and of life itself : it was not his fault anyway, for he had lived a life that was respectable from every point of view.

At dinner he said little to Garret : and after dinner the latter went straight up to his room as soon as they had drunk coffee in the company of a few other men. They did not approach the subject they had discussed on their outing, and the South African was tactful enough not to say anything about God while the others were present. Hørfeldt went to bed early that night, tired out by the long walk, and he went to sleep at once. He woke early next morning and even before he had got the sleep out of his body and mind he had the sense that something unusual had happened to him the day before. But what ? Oh yes, it was the outing with Garret.

A decent chap, and he was glad his English was not altogether rusty in spite of lack of practice . . . His ideas were certainly original . . . Supposing he was right ? . . . Supposing there was a God ? . . . If only Garret didn't get so personal, if only he kept to his own experience, it would be interesting to hear a little more.

But suppose now he tried the effect of settling up with the people he had something against ? No one need know, and if it led to his getting on to a better footing with life it would be worth the effort. God did not come into the question. When he had dressed he stood for a while before the window and wondered if there was anyone he had wronged . . . Of course he was grumpy and quick-tempered at home, but that was nothing. But outside ? . . . Suddenly he remembered Storting Member Halvard Fjellgard : he was the political opponent to whom he had behaved worst. In one article especially he had been violently aggressive . . . Pah ! A most unpleasant train of thought had been started ; he hastened down to the dining-room, and as he drank his coffee and read in the newspapers about divorce and murder, war and civil war, fraud and accidents, he forgot all else . . . But when he went off on his morning walk he remembered the article again . . . What had he written ? . . . It was impossible . . . Yes, just that sentence he had been particularly proud of . . . Wasn't that the one he had read to Else at the breakfast table, making her exclaim :

"I don't want to listen to the hateful things you write ?"

And hadn't he then risen from the table, declaring that no one understood him, even in his own home, and walked to the door in a more bitterly belligerent mood than ever before ? . . . What was the effect of such an article on the person against whom it was directed ? It was intended to sting, wasn't that why it had been written ? But did it really help his cause ? It was perhaps more reasonable to assume that it would increase differences. Better think of something else, for if he went on thinking along these lines he might just as well give up altogether . . . But it was not easy to think of other things. The image of the man he had written about followed him . . . The image of his wife and daughter came before him too. He swiped furiously with his stick at one of the white-washed stones lining the road-way. To hell with Garret and the whole world ! . . . But the image of Fjellgard was still there : when he arrived back at the hotel, he sat down in the writing-room. Grinding his teeth with rage over his own stupidity, he wrote to Fjellgard and asked his forgiveness . . . The rest of the day he sat reading his French novels. Those fellows were certainly not plagued by conscience ; but it was strange that they weren't . . . He had not felt so full of beans for years. And after dinner, when the South African sat down beside him at a little table where he



was sitting alone with his paper and his whiskey, he felt quite pleased to see him ; and curiously enough was disappointed when Garret simply held a conventional conversation with him. Yes, his manner seemed so ordinary and so unpremeditated that Hørfeldt suddenly heard his own voice saying in a light playful tone :

“ How’s the good Lord getting on to-day ? ”

Before he had had time to think whether he had been tactless, or rude, or blasphemous, he received the reply :

“ Excellently. To-day as yesterday he guided my thoughts about both you and me.”

With that Garret started to recount a number of stories about something he called God’s guidance . . . Ghost stories, Hørfeldt would have been inclined to call them, had they not concerned ordinary things in business life, in homes, in everyday affairs. It could not be denied that the basis of it all was in order. “ If there was a God,” Garret said, “ it was reasonable to suppose that he had a plan for what he had created. And if he had a plan it was reasonable to suppose that the people he had made it for should be able to find it. And how could that happen except through human thoughts ? . . . ” It seemed that Garret seriously believed that his God could show him what he and other people ought to do in both the major and minor situations of life. And if God could do that, it was pretty obvious that the world could be a different place, for it was hardly in accordance with God’s plan that people should create for themselves a hell upon earth. In all he said there was a realism which Hørfeldt had not come across before in connection with such things. And of course Garret was right in saying that if something good was to get the better of all the evil in the world it would have to be realistic, for the evil was real enough. But how could he get the faith needed ? All the intellectual problems . . . All the misery . . . All the contradictions in the Bible . . . Garret had answers for these things. Yes, they were more than answers, he said, for they were his own practical experiences and he had discovered that, directly he did the good deeds which it was God’s will he should do, the intellectual difficulties disappeared, for it was not they which kept him from God, but the evil, both great and small, which he himself had done.

“ But all the misery ? All the wars ? The civil wars ? . . . All the crimes, all the foul things which we human beings do to each other ? You say there is a loving God, but I don’t think these things are consistent with love . . . And all the children who are born cripples and idiots ? ”

“ I am not in God’s counsel,” Garret replied, “ and I can’t answer that. I simply know this, that if all the evil things people do to

each other were removed, a lot of things would take on a different complexion. And that is where I have my responsibility."

Hørfeldt became more and more dubious about the outcome of this conversation. One thing was clear : he had never met the like of Garret, and after a short pause he told the South African that, in most of what he had recounted about himself, he had recognised his own thoughts and character. As the evening wore on it began to dawn on Hørfeldt that there was an inter-dependence between all human beings which he had never dreamt of before, and which all his life he had broken down. His boorishness in the home laid a clammy hand over the wife's happiness. His egocentric and condemnatory activities as a politician had created strife and division, labour troubles and social unrest ; his attacks on Denmark had brought about enmity between the two countries . . .

Then Hørfeldt remembered the letter he had sent earlier in the day. Should he tell Garret about it? Yes, why not? . . . There was nothing wrong in writing such a letter : at the worst it was just a stupid thing he had done. Perhaps Garret would simply smile at him. While he sat there weighing it up, he heard his friend say :

"How's the letter getting on?"

Hørfeldt started . . . Was Garret a thought-reader? Magician? Was he making a fool of him? . . . He looked at his friend . . . No, that face could not lie . . . A warm and living sympathy shone from his eyes, and about his mouth played an expression too faint to be a smile, but too definite to be nothing at all . . . And he told Garret what he had done. Garret replied that ever since the morning he had felt he should ask about it.

"Is that what you call God's guidance?"

"What do you think yourself?"

Hørfeldt made no reply. What could he reply? If he said no, he would be denying something which seemed suspiciously like the truth. If he said yes, he would commit himself to something to which he had no mind to commit himself. So he said nothing. He leant back in his chair ; gazed at the last embers in the huge fireplace ; noticed that all the fizz had gone from the glass which stood on the table. Everything was still in the big building . . . From the corner of the room came the tick-tock, tick-tock, of a grandfather clock . . . He had never noticed before how long a second was. In through the windows filtered the moonlight. Now and then it disappeared ; clouds were blowing up. About the hills on the other side of the lake hung a bright star . . . Hadn't he once reflected that when a ray of light eons ago left a star it was fore-ordained to strike a particular earthly situation? And now the ray struck two fairly ordinary people who sat and conversed in a manner which must have been unique in space and time.



Garret then leant forward in his chair, put his head in his hands, and said :

“Lord, you who see everything, and will always help us, I thank you for the days I have been able to spend here, and I thank you for having brought me together with my new friend. I ask that he may open his heart to you and accept power and love, and that you will use him in your service to rebuild the world whose need you see . . .”

Garret's prayer seemed to fit in simply and naturally . . . Was there any other possible conclusion to the day and their conversation? The prayer had filled him with a curious sensation . . . partly of indifference towards the past and the rest of the world, partly of expectation as to what would happen now. What would happen, he did not try to imagine . . . Would it be something concrete? . . . Miracles? . . . Would he experience the mystical? . . . Hear something strange? . . . A short space passed, Garret still sat leaning forward with his head in his hands . . . Then he stood up and put out his hand to Hørfeldt.

“Good night. It's late, and thanks for this evening.”

The quiet voice and the matter-of-fact remark drove away instantly both the indifference and the expectancy. The sentimental feeling which had come over him vanished, and it seemed to him that his voice had never had a more businesslike ring than when he stretched out his hand to Garret and said :

“Good night. Thank you for this evening and thank you for praying for me.”

He felt so much refreshed by the evening with Garret that as he undressed he allowed himself, for almost the first time since his illness, to think about the stormy scene at the meeting of the election committee. And now a thought he had never had before crossed his mind : had his treatment of Fjellgard and Halvor Grawe been any better than the committee's treatment of himself? The committee had exploited him, perhaps . . . Flung him aside as a wreck when his services had been performed . . . But hadn't he himself sought to exploit Grawe? And to exploit—wrongly—another human being was the worst sin there was. It was worse than stealing property. It was stealing human beings . . .

Were-wolf! That was the word to describe a man who did that. For a moment Hørfeldt tried to defend himself against the unpleasant idea. He had exploited Grawe for the sake of the cause . . . But his conscience did not relinquish its hold. Wasn't it for the sake of the cause that the others had exploited him? Was the cause distinguishable from his own egotism?

And what about Storting Member Halvard Fjellgard? Grawe he had used positively, Fjellgard negatively. He had singled him

out as a gratuitous victim and used his person and work as a means to get at his opponents. He had persuaded his party to turn violently upon Fjellgard simply because he had considered that more damage is done to a cause by breaking a man than by demonstrating that the idea is untenable. Were his relationships with Grawe and Fjellgard better than the pimp's with the street girl? Perhaps even, what he had done to Grawe was the more unscrupulous, for he had approached the Works-Owner under the mask of friendship.

He thought of Else . . . He had used her too in his struggle to protect himself and gain a name for himself. Wasn't it unscrupulous to demand that she should always find herself in agreement with his whims and vague ideals? He remembered a conversation they had had a day or two before his operation. He had held forth about the wrong that had been done him. And she had said that in every situation one had some blame oneself.

"You're for ever throwing accusations at me," he had replied.

"Not at all, Georg . . . I don't accuse you in the least, because I know that for the way we get on together I must blame myself for not helping you more . . . But I ask you to think a little about yourself. You haven't let *me* down . . . I know you've given me what you could through these years. But have you kept the promises you made to yourself?"

He had given no reply. Just reflected that she was being sentimental again. Now he reflected that probably the truth of the matter was that, misusing his own life, he had thereby misused hers also . . . He sat thinking in this fashion far into the night. One thing after another came to his mind. At last his thoughts revolved about Else, Grawe, and Fjellgard, about and about, till in the end he felt completely distraught. So much so that he sprang up from the bed, banging into a little table, which fell with a crash . . .

He drew aside the curtain and let his eyes rest on the quiet, moonlit landscape outside. How long he stood there he didn't know . . . Grawe, Fjellgard, Else . . . To make the world a better place. . . . Again he saw Garret's face as he looked at him after they had prayed. . . Then Garret had shaken his hand firmly and said a brisk goodnight, chasing away the vague emotionalism that had begun to fill his mind. And he had felt a new firmness inside him which he had never felt before. . .

But he himself had not prayed. He had just waited. . . . He looked out now across the dark landscape beyond the window, where the soft cloud shadows were shifting silently over the trees, the fields, the distant lake. . . And he knelt down, and he mumbled a prayer: "If you exist, I will do your will from now on. Help me to put right what I have done wrong. . . To Grawe, and to Else. . ."



With that he got up again. A strange feeling had been born in him. For that matter, hardly a feeling. . . A new will . . . A will to life, to warmth. . . A will to sacrifice.

He turned slowly and climbed in between the sheets and fell asleep. As he fell asleep, a new restfulness filled his mind. . . When he woke up the next morning it was the first thing he was aware of. Then he recalled what he had undertaken to do, and a dread of what he had undertaken to do almost extinguished it. . . But he had decided, and he would not go back on the decision. He reached for pen and paper and, sitting up in bed, began to write to Else, telling her of the meeting with Garret and of what he had decided upon the night before.

When he had stuck up the envelope, he discovered that the new feeling had returned. He got up and dressed and went downstairs to post the letter. He nodded good morning to the porter with a broad smile, and as he did so felt so different that he expected the porter to notice a change in him. But the porter merely gave him a polite bow.

Hørfeldt went and got a newspaper . . . He sat in the hall and looked at the porter . . . Strange how uncommunicative he was . . . Though he was a hotel servant . . . He got up and took a step across the floor . . . No. He began to notice that forces were at work in him which he had known nothing of before ; and with that he went up to the stranger and said :

“ Something peculiar happened to me last night.”

The porter looked up.

“ I said to God that if he existed I would do his will from now on.”

And before Hørfeldt had time to think what more he should say the porter replied :

“ I decided that three years ago . . .”

They got talking. And as Hørfeldt stood chatting with the porter, as with an equal, and telling him a little of what had taken place in his life recently, and when he saw the interest with which the porter followed the account, he realised he had now begun to spread warmth about him.

The porter was called away and Hørfeldt strolled into the writing-room. . . Garret was there. When he saw Hørfeldt, he got up and extended his hand, and said :

“ You're up early.”

As there was no one else in the room, Hørfeldt told Garret too about his decisions of the previous night. Garret was delighted to hear about it and they talked, Hørfeldt at break-neck speed, until the breakfast gong went. Then Garret became suddenly more serious, and he said :

“ I’m very glad I’ve seen you this morning. I wanted to see you to say adieu—or, I hope, au revoir.”

Hørfeldt was crestfallen, almost angry. Garret had not said a word about going . . . He could stay a day longer at least . . . Just now when he felt he needed him . . . But Garret said that he ought to have left before. And he added some words which Hørfeldt did not like but which he realised were true . . . He needed to go forward on his own . . . He had said himself how he had leaned now on one person, now on another, and how first one circle of people, then another, had influenced his outlook and actions.

He had a strange feeling as he watched the South African disappear. He had never before spoken to any person as he had spoken to Garret, never before heard anybody speak of his life as Garret had done.

When the post arrived there was a letter for him . . . It was from Storting Member Halvard Fjellgard, who wrote that he was deeply moved by Hørfeldt’s words ; he had nothing to forgive, for he himself had often regretted the way he had behaved . . . He added that he realised great things were happening in Hørfeldt’s mind, and closed with the hope that he—Hørfeldt—would achieve a positive outlook so that he could use his abilities to the best advantage of the whole nation.

Had all the world become soft-minded ? Had the simple, uncompromising peasant his spiritual problems too ? The letter could hardly mean anything else.

But the letter proved that Garret’s idea worked. He had taken the first step and the other fellow had responded. This then was the new world. Soon he would extend it to Grawe and Else too.

He stayed at the hotel for a few days more and then travelled down to a little sea-side resort in Denmark, where he had planned to complete his convalescence. He had intended to stay there for two or three weeks, but after a week he felt so fit that he decided to cut his stay short and return at once to Oslo and his normal life. . . The big settling-up was at hand.

### III

He spent a night in Copenhagen *en route*, and visited his favourite restaurant. While he sat there the political correspondent of one of the big Copenhagen papers, an acquaintance of his, came up and began to ask about the prospects in the Storting elections. The question drew Hørfeldt right back into his customary world again.

“ I’ve made something of a withdrawal from politics,” he said.



“ One has to take rest some time. And for that matter it’s so long since I saw a Norwegian paper that I think you’ll be better acquainted with the position than I am.”

“ Have you been abroad ? ”

“ No, I’ve been up in the north of Zealand . . . ”

“ Then you must have had a thorough rest.” The journalist smiled. “ A politician like you ought perhaps to have the papers sent on to him. Excuse my being so forward, but I’m a trifle offended you must understand, on behalf of the profession, that anybody could manage without newspapers.”

The two men sat and chatted, and Hørfeldt noted with pleasure and surprise that towards this man, with whom he was very little acquainted, he had got a more friendly attitude. Suddenly the journalist asked :

“ What exactly is the feeling in Norway towards us at the moment ? Does the Greenland business still rankle ? I’m not asking so I can write about it, but just for the sake of keeping informed.”

Hørfeldt thought that here was an opportunity to show the Dane that there was an answer to the quarrel, but he was seized with uncertainty. What would this man say if he said here in this great restaurant that he had become a Christian ? and suggested that Christianity could solve this conflict ? In fact all conflicts between the nations ? He would think he had gone mad, and it was hardly the intention that he should make himself, and God, look ridiculous . . .

He contented himself with saying that time heals all wounds, but that Norway continued to think about the matter and hoped for the best . . . After some further, trivial, conversation the journalist went off.

When Hørfeldt got up next morning he felt vaguely depressed. He was not so happy as he had been in the past few days ; something of his deep dissatisfaction with himself and with life had returned. It was probably a natural reaction and would disappear when he got home . . . When he came to pay the hotel bill he discovered something charged for which he had not had. The waiter gave a satisfactory explanation, but Hørfeldt replied :

“ Don’t try those excuses on me. It gets rather beyond a joke if you’re always liable to be swindled by waiters.”

This little scene did not improve his humour. He was both irritable and rude as he left the hotel and drove away. When he had settled himself in the railway carriage and spread his paper out he noticed an article on Norwegian-Danish relations. It was by his friend of the night before, and based upon their little talk. It said nothing startling, but the tone was not at all friendly. It was

another of the trifles which helped to keep alive the bad feeling. He drew a sigh of relief that he himself was out of the everlasting clamour, and leaned back in his seat as the train moved off.

In Gøteborg Hørfeldt got out of the train to stretch his legs. And there on the platform was Works-Owner Halvor Grawe ! Hørfeldt was so amazed that he could scarcely stammer out a greeting. Grawe had been attending a launching ceremony at one of the big ship-yards ; he was very pleased to meet Hørfeldt and settled down in his compartment. His travelling companions, who looked as though they needed a little rest after a big launching banquet, established themselves in the next compartment.

Grawe began to talk about his visit to Gøteborg. He had not been in touch with Hørfeldt since telephoning him after his withdrawal from *Dagens Stemme*, and had had no real conversation with him since Hørfeldt's visit in connection with the big banquet. So he had much to recount. The plans for the works were beginning to take shape ; he had interested the Government in the scheme, and during his visit to Gøteborg he had conferred with leading Swedish industrialists on the subject ; for Scandinavian collaboration in this field was of great importance.

He was disappointed that Hørfeldt did not listen with greater interest to what he had to say. Now he came to look, the Director had a different expression on his face.

"But excuse me," he said. "I've completely forgotten to ask how things are with you. You've had some throat trouble I hear."

Hørfeldt nodded and began to talk about the illness . . . But how could he approach the crucial subject ? To tell Grawe that he had become a Christian would raise no difficulties ; the country-bred Grawe, he reflected, must have had some sort of religion. But how was he to tell Grawe of the game he had played with him down the years ? The throb of the wheels against the rails gradually formed a phrase in his consciousness : "I'm accusing you," it became . . . "I'm accusing you . . ." He knew what the indictment was . . . He had been a were-wolf. But before he came out with that he must tell his story. He had been getting it into shape when Grawe questioned him about his illness. He replied and then was silent again. His far-away-ness was so obvious that Grawe said nothing either. He remained in Hørfeldt's compartment, however, for he could hear his companions, overcome by the deeds of the night, snoring in the corners of their compartment : so the two men sat and gazed through the window while the train rolled northwards through fields and woods towards the Norwegian frontier.

"Cigarette ?"



Hørfeldt sat up. Grawe had taken out a cigarette case and was handing it to him.

"Thank you," he replied, but drew his hand back. "No, thanks all the same . . ."

Grawe took one himself, put the case back in his pocket, and looked a little questioningly at Hørfeldt, who took out his handkerchief and dried his hands . . . "I'm accusing you . . ." Surely he was sweating with all this thinking? . . . Again they fell silent.

"Excuse my asking," said Grawe. "Is anything wrong?"

Hørfeldt smiled across to him.

"I am grateful for your asking," he said, "and something is wrong or rather the reverse . . . There's nothing wrong any longer . . ."

And with that he recounted what had happened to him during the past days. He felt more easy in his mind as the account proceeded, but he made no mention of what he had realised concerning their relationship. When he had finished, Grawe, who had listened without interrupting, smiled.

"You know," he said, "most of what you've told me isn't new to me; my whole life I have thought about God, and sometimes when I've been in a corner, I've prayed."

He leaned back in his seat.

"I go to church sometimes, too . . . Though when I come to think of it, I've not been much since my wife died . . . Not because I'm afraid in any way, but in the city it's pretty well the same whether one shows people one's retained a bit of one's childhood's faith or not. But I'd hate to think we couldn't get the comfort religion can bring in a time of difficulty . . ."

It was quite dark outside. The train must have been in the frontier districts; it was seldom that a light betrayed habitation. Grawe continued, and his voice became almost sentimental:

"And I can tell you this, that what I retained of my childhood's faith was one of the factors which made me so reluctant to join the Employers' Federation . . . Perhaps not the faith quite, but the whole life up in my little home district, which includes Christianity, if you follow what I mean . . . And strange though it may sound, it's really because I've got this faith that I'm against all these social measures on the part of the community. I don't like the feeling that with my taxes I'm paying the community to take over the personal responsibility for the men at the works which I had before."

Hørfeldt had followed Grawe's remarks with great satisfaction. Naturally. But to begin with he had felt a little disappointed. Did this strong man need only the comfort of religion? But when he made the remark about his attitude to the Employers' Federation

and his view of responsibility towards workmen, he all at once saw again the same huge vision of Christian management which he had seen as Garret talked on the mountain top, and he was about to make a delighted exclamation when it cracked out from the lines . . . "I'm accusing you and only you" . . . Who got Grawe to desert that attitude? Who got him to join the Employers' Federation? . . .

He was on the point of telling Grawe what he had done, when the other stopped him with a question :

"You said you discovered you had become isolated in life. You felt alone ; wasn't that what you said ?"

Hørfeldt nodded.

"Was there any particular incident in your life which made this feeling of loneliness begin to grow in you ?"

"No . . . I can't really say there was. At any rate, I don't remember anything definite. It was more a condition I slid into."

"Did it affect your relationship with your wife ?"

"It affected especially my relationship with her."

Grawe was silent for a time and Hørfeldt saw that he was deeply moved.

"There wasn't any particular incident in regard to her? . . . No unfaithfulness, to put it bluntly, which made you begin to drift away from her? . . . You must excuse my being so direct, but since you yourself have told me so much . . ."

"No . . . I think we began to drift apart when she found that behind much of my big talk there were no corresponding thoughts and actions . . ."

With that they began what was little more than a discussion of the law of cause and effect, and relapsed into ordinary conversation. Hørfeldt was pleased, rather than the reverse . . . A train was no place to have out such a serious matter, even though the rhythm of the wheels on the rails was "I'm accusing you . . ." "I'm accusing you . . ."

But in a pause in the conversation, he said :

"By the way, I've not told you everything."

Grawe stopped him :

"Excuse my interrupting you. But can't we continue later? We're getting near the frontier, aren't we? . . . We're slowing down as far as I can make out."

And that was the end. Passport and customs inspection followed ; several travellers got into the compartment ; and there was no chance of further conversation ; in Oslo they bade each other farewell.

Hørfeldt got hold of a taxi, but as he jumped in he slipped and hit his cheek on the door ; when he lit the light in the roof of the taxi he saw in his pocket mirror that the cheek had gone quite blue,



and it smarted badly. What a way to look for one's home-coming ! While the taxi limped out through the November mud towards Bygdø, he was seized with self-pity over the accident and the smarting, and he reflected how in the short time since he had left the Danish hotel he had suffered defeat after defeat. Where was the help God had promised him in the fight with his difficulties ? Firstly the cowardice with the journalist, then the rudeness to the waiter, then the cowardice with Grawe, and now this dismal mood that had come over him because of the accident with the taxi door . . . Nor was he sure that he didn't dread his meeting with Else. In his letters he had told her from day to day what had gone on. On other occasions too when he had been off alone he had felt closer to her than in their everyday life ; on other occasions he had written that he wanted to remould his relationship with her : but each time after his arrival home the same thing happened. Everything had become grey again. It had proved difficult to live up to the big words. And Else, for her part, had always met him sceptically . . .

Now, however, he would stick to his guns. He had great hopes too that she would receive him differently from before . . . " It'll be a new person that comes home this time," he had written.

As he sat in the taxi he wished again he hadn't expressed himself quite so strongly . . . Down there in Denmark everything had seemed much easier ; but now he had met the everyday once more : his thoughts went back to the journalist, the waiter, and Grawe . . . And he felt the blue, smarting spot on his cheek. The taxi pulled up before the villa, which lay on a little knoll with a view over the city and the fjord. When he entered the hall a soft music met his ears from the drawing-room ; but simultaneously he noticed that the place on his cheek had got even bigger and bluer. Else was playing a little Swedish folk-song, which she was not especially fond of, but which he couldn't hear often enough. He went quietly into the room, his heart throbbing . . . Now he would redeem all he had told her in his many letters ! She turned round when she heard his step and rose . . .

For a fraction of a second he knew that she would come and throw herself into his arms . . . He knew that she thought, Now he'll come and hug me in against him and then everything will be new for us . . . But something held him back, doubt, uncertainty ; and he hesitated and said in a placid ordinary tone :

" Good evening. Yes, here I am again."

Then he walked across and embraced her as on an ordinary day. He could feel how disappointment streamed from her, soul and body. Not this time then either ! She freed herself and said :

" It's nice to have you back . . . I hadn't expected you before to-morrow, to judge from your last letter . . ."

Then she burst into laughter :

“But what in the world? . . . You should see what you look like, Georg! What have you done to yourself? Have you been fighting?”

He flared up. Was this the reception he should get in his own home? . . . Here he was coming to ask her forgiveness, to begin anew, to witness to God, and she simply laughed. He remembered in that fearful fraction of a second how on many previous occasions when he had returned home full of an indefinite fondness, he had been given just such an off-hand reception. But now? This evening . . . She must have known that what he had been through was nothing to laugh at . . . And he said so.

“Is this the way to receive me? Haven’t I told you what has happened to me? And then you laugh right in my face. Do you think it’s easy to do what I’ve written to you about? It’s not a laughing matter to put it at its lowest evaluation . . .”

He walked up and down the floor : then stopped and looked at her. She had sunk silently down on to the piano stool. The thought shot through him that this was entirely wrong, and that he was deserting the promises he had made to himself and Else and Garret . . . or was it God? Would he never get anything right into his life? Was God deserting him now? And, with that, self-pity came pouring in over him in heavy, dark clouds. He could not stop them. She must come half-way to meet him . . . She must see he needed help. God must see it . . . Then he reflected that he must look rather comical with the blue mark on his cheek. And he explained about the mishap with the taxi door, and about all the difficulties he had had. He continued :

“And so I come home to you. I need a little support, a little encouragement if you will, a bit of congratulation even, because for the first time in my life I’ve gone right through with something . . . And what happens? You just get up as though I’d come back from an afternoon walk . . . And when you get a good look at me you laugh . . .”

He remembered the porter at the hotel and told her of his conversation with him.

“This complete stranger who might quite well have thought I was stark, staring mad, he understood me . . . And you, who ought to be one with me, bear my burdens . . . You laugh at me . . . I can’t go back, even if you laugh at me every day . . . For one thing I’ve learnt : God exists and he loves me . . . But I don’t know why people should desert me . . . And you, if I remember rightly, said something about God being with me in your last letter . . .”

He knew that every word he said was unjust to Else. But he



could not stop . . . He knew how stupid he was being, but he had to keep on. He knew that he was undergoing the greatest defeat of his life, but he persuaded himself to believe he was in the right, that he had to say all this and that he was doing something sensible. The telephone rang all of a sudden. It could hardly be for him, so he made no move. Else got up and went into his study. He heard her say, "One moment."

The telephone conversation quietened Hørfeldt : and when it was over he stood still for a time in the study . . . And he prayed, "You mustn't let me go, even if I fly into a fury again as I've just done with Else."

When he went back into the room again, Else was no longer there : he heard her footsteps in the bedroom above. He was glad, for it enabled him to think over better what had happened. He began to walk to and fro through the rooms, as he always did when he was at home and had to ponder some important matter. This habit of his was so ingrained that to damp his steps a rug was laid down along the route he used to follow through the dining-room, the drawing-room, and into the study.

His love had been put to the first test . . . It had failed because he had no—Yes, what was it really he had lacked ? He walked and thought for a long time . . . He understood . . . He had wanted to be God's instrument without having his spirit with him. He tried again, as he had tried already many times, to find some sort of explanation of God . . . But again he had to give it up. He had to accept the fact that when he wanted to be in touch with him and was ready to do the things he believed were God's orders to him, he was there ; and when he refused to do those things, or to listen to the voice of his heart, he was not there. When he was on the point of rushing forward and taking Else in his arms, God was with him, but then his faith had failed. When he had stood on the threshold and seen Else rise, he had not been able to grasp the fact that if he had merely opened his arms and said "Else . . ." it would have been sufficient to lift their life into the new plane . . . Now he understood that. If he had wished God was ready to help them, but he had not had enough faith. And because he refused to act when God said, "Go ahead, I'm with you," his doubts came and his fall.

He did not know how long he walked to and fro thinking these things out, but at last he stopped before the great east window of the drawing-room. The autumn rain drove against the pane, and he could scarcely make out Ekeberg Hill which rose up from the fjord in the distance. In the direction of the city the sky was light as usual, but to the south towards Bunne Fjord everything was lost in a grey mass of rain. The road below was as slippery as glass . . .



The small ferries which went to the city had long since ceased to sail. Some cars pulled up before the next-door house, and a crowd of young people in evening dress tumbled out. They were visiting the young couple who lived opposite. He and Else had once remarked that it was a shame to see the young pair plunge into such feckless goings-on within a few weeks of their marriage . . . He put the lights out and slowly went up the stairs to the second story.

When he entered the bedroom the two lights on Else's dressing-table were burning. She herself lay fully clothed on the bed, asleep. He stood still for a moment and looked at her. Had she really become so grey? But even now, in sleep, her face was young and vital . . . The resting body was slim and lithe . . . It was as though something cold left him; he stood there and quite simply fell in love . . . He took a step or two forward . . . She moved, opened her eyes and raised herself; she sat on the edge of the bed and looked long and searchingly at her husband. Then took place what he had fled from before . . . He took two steps towards her, more whispered than spoke her name, and opened his arms . . . Before either of them had had time to think, she had got up and laid herself close to him, her tears flowing in silence whilst he stroked her hair . . . "My little kitten," he said. She trembled . . . It was many grey eternities since he had last called her that . . .

They talked for a long time. He told her how she had always been dear to him; but, out of fear of the difficulties arising from the big words, he had more and more hidden his feelings. He had actually become another person than the man she had once given her hand to . . . The reason for his quite consciously diminishing his own worth was that he thought it better to live on a safe but low level than a high one whence the drop was correspondingly deep. The last time this fear had overcome him was at his home-coming, he said; he had forgotten that he now had God to help him . . .

"If you knew how I looked forward to your returning," said Else. "Hadn't I looked out that Swedish folk song which I can't bear, simply to please you? . . . And then nothing happened . . . Your letter from the mountains I know off by heart, though sometimes you run your words into each other . . . D'you know, I've wept for joy.

"And then you just stood there in the door. I waited for the thing to happen that I've begged and prayed to God for for years . . . Yes, that's something you didn't know: I've many times prayed and sometimes read the Bible too . . . Ever since we were married . . . I wanted to burst into tears when I saw you'd simply come home as you had done thousands of times before. Then I saw the blue mark on your face and instead I laughed . . . It saved me, I thought, from I didn't know what . . .



“And then all you said . . . I felt I wanted to jump up and clap my hand over your mouth, but I thought, now everything is over anyway and he can say whatever he likes, things can't be any worse than they are. No, even this hasn't made him into my Georg, I thought . . . I've never felt more horribly miserable . . . I lit the lamps on my dressing-table . . . And I looked myself in the eyes and thought ; no I thought nothing at all, just felt utterly and completely lonely . . .”

A shadow went across Hørfeldt's face. She noticed it and stroked his cheek. He looked at her and an uncertain fold played about his mouth.

“And now . . .”

“You must be patient. Oh, how dear you are to me, Georg . . .”

“I put on the light and looked at myself and then came and sat here on the edge of the bed. At first I simply felt so disappointed that I thought the only way out was death. But then I began to reflect and it got worse still, because then I felt that the disappointment was due to my self-love . . . I wanted you to be as I had pictured you in my imagination and not as God had created you or given you the possibility of being. You had to be *my* Georg. I lured you into big words simply for the sake of my own sentimentality and then got disappointed when you didn't live up to them : whilst instead I should have helped you to realise the best in you.

“And when I had found this out I felt so overcome that I threw myself down on the bed and began to cry . . . And now we're sitting on it . . . I've got a feeling that my Georg has disappeared for ever . . . He was a stupid boy who simply led me up the garden path . . . But I've got *you* back and the you who will be Georg as God has thought of him.”





## PART THREE

### I

The day after Works-Owner Halvor Grawe's return from the visit to his home village he rang up Ola Tyrivolden and asked him to have dinner with him. He wanted to tell the great labour leader of his decision to join the Employers' Federation before he learnt about it from other sources.

He could hear how amazed Tyrivolden was to get the invitation, but he promised to come when Grawe said it was something important in connection with the new ship-yard that he wanted to discuss privately. During the meal they spoke of general topics only; and as they sat and drank coffee in the study, Tyrivolden pointed to the picture of Grawe's parents and said :

"I remember them all right."

Grawe remarked that he had been home, he called it home, for a day or two.

"Is it long since you were home?"

"I've not set foot in the place since I was chased away . . . Nor do I propose ever to go there again. When you've once broken away from a place like that you must never look back, but just push on. Yet I always regret having left . . ."

Grawe felt the kinship. He wondered if Ola Tyrivolden was a lonely man too.

"You've no reason to grumble, surely? Everything you've striven for you've achieved . . . If you frown you scare every employer in the country."

He was about to speak of his decision when Tyrivolden interrupted. And though something tired and strained had come into his æsthetic, fanatical face, he struck the table with his fist, making the coffee cups jump, and exclaimed :

"What's that? I've achieved nothing . . . My God : position, power, influence? . . . They quake in their shoes when I open my mouth? . . . Ay, true enough . . . But where's the freedom that I once strove to bring about?"

He threw himself back in the sofa.

"You know, Halvor, all my life I have fought against bureaucracy and dictatorship and now I'm the worst bureaucrat and dictator of the lot. That's bad enough . . . but ten times worse is the fact that I'm obliged to be a dictator : that people can't see what's good for them. Responsibility has brought with it power . . . First we organised ourselves to get freedom . . . Then when we were free

the organisation laid its hand upon us and turned us into machine-minders. Ay, what else am I? I'm every bit as much an employer as you are, if the test is tyrannising over human lives. I'm in charge of the Labour Office. I put one bloke here and another there. If they don't take the job, they have to make shift as best they can. I'm a slave-driver. Once I was driven. Now I drive . . . Exactly as you do . . ."

Grawe was more astounded than he could say. He had invited home the much-feared Tyrivolden, and the man had proved to be as lonely and miserable as himself.

"But you don't feel you've become a capitalist, surely?" Grawe smiled.

"No . . . But what difference does that make? You call me a socialist; I call you a capitalist. But it's pretty well immaterial what we call ourselves: we're all equally greedy . . . You know what the final outcome of my efforts has been? Well, once, I believe I told you that the capitalists were most scared of the iron workers, who I'd made the pioneers of the class war?"

Grawe remembered . . .

"But d'you know who's afraid of the iron workers now? The other workers. For they've become so strongly organised that they're thinking of seceding from the unions and standing alone against both workers, community, and capitalists . . . In conjunction with the foundry union, of course; for then they'll be able to dictate the import duties and the amount the State is to take of the home production at inflated rates. But you must be aware of all this; your big plan's built up on it. But here I am bragging away. What did you want to see me about?"

Grawe went straight to the point, without beating about the bush: for the position was quite otherwise than he had expected.

"I've decided to join the Employers' Federation," he said abruptly.

"It was high time," Tyrivolden answered. "Was that all you wanted to say?"

"No . . . But I told you once that I hoped I'd never betray my past to such a degree that I did that . . . And I didn't want to join now without letting you know in advance for the sake of old times."

Tyrivolden gave him a melancholy smile.

"We seem to be equipped with rather too delicate consciences, you and I, Halvor."

He lay back in the seat, looked in front of him, and said:

"You know, Halvor, when I listened to your speech at the banquet and knew that you weren't in the Employers' Federation, I thought to myself, well he's even dafter than I thought. For I've



often thought, if he doesn't join the Federation, it'll end up by them busting him . . . Nonetheless, in spite of everything, there's been something all its own about your works . . . It's as though she"—he pointed at Camilla's portrait—"went around the place like an angel yet . . ."

Grawe was unpleasantly moved. What rubbish was this? It was the wages he gave which kept the business free from unrest . . . Tyrivolden continued :

"But I'm in full agreement with you that you should now join . . . Oh yes, you should be forced to, if necessary, because it's wrong nowadays for people to be free. Freedom demands that we care for each other, and the time for that sort of thing is over . . . As we're filled with hate and fear, all of us, we've got to be in either a prison or an organisation . . . It doesn't matter what we call it. Both exist to punish or prevent crimes . . ."

When Tyrivolden went, Grawe remained in his chair for a long time, staring into the new world which had been revealed to him. It was even more the man's changing facial expressions than his words which had made an impression upon him. When he arrived he had been as Grawe was accustomed to see him at the conference table : fanatical and harsh, his eyes shining with hatred. Soon afterwards the mask had fallen off and Grawe had looked into eyes that were filled with disillusion and loneliness ; later they had betrayed a yearning for human affection, and when he had disburdened himself of the things that had oppressed him, his face had been open and its expression human.

"It's comforting to discover there are others in the same boat," Grawe had said. "Have you any friends?"

"Have you gone crazy?" laughed Tyrivolden. "But if you tell anyone what I've just said, I'll deny every blamed word . . . Because you and I, we've got to be enemies."

When he went off, he wore again his customary expression. As Grawe watched his tall, lithe figure marching down Parkveien, he reflected that no one would believe him if he described the real Ola Tyrivolden . . . Was Tyrivolden the only one who was lonely and disappointed in the midst of success?

When Grawe told Harald that he had decided to join the Employers' Federation, his son was delighted.

"It will strengthen our hand in all the negotiations connected with expansion," he said.

Harald proved to be right. The slight suspicion the industrialists had had, that Grawe was in secret league with the socialists, vanished when he identified himself fully with them, and no one in the workers' organisations raised any objections either. Among his own workmen it caused a certain amount of disgruntlement ; they

considered that they had done nothing which called for such a step ; and he heard rumours that some of the youngest were thinking of a protest demonstration.

Harald bristled up when he heard about this. "What did I say ? Those blighters have just been waiting for a convenient opportunity to get their knife into you, and now they're wild because you've got in first."

Grawe toyed with the idea of telling Harald what Tyrivolden had said about his mother's influence over the workmen even now, many years after her death. But he decided not to. The less he thought about that sort of thing the better. They lived in an age of wolves : they must be wolves themselves . . . But he could not stop himself saying :

"Mother wouldn't have liked our joining the Employers' Federation."

"I know Mother was against it," Harald answered, "but you know yourself how sensitive she was . . . And if there's anything that must be eradicated from our minds, it's sensitiveness."

"I believe you've a new, great period before you, Father," he went on. "A step like this, and then the big works. And the banquet . . . You know, she ought to have been alive for that."

They stood together in Grawe's office and looked out over the works. It was a lovely mid-summer day : the sky was blue, a fresh wind made the waves intersect on the fjord, and the din of the machine shops filled the air. Grawe said :

"Harald . . . I beg of you, never speak of Mother in connection with the things we've been discussing."

"No, no, I didn't mean to say anything that would hurt you," Harald replied quickly. Then he paused. "But since you've interpreted my remark as you have I think it's right to point out to you, Father, that it would be dangerous if, out of a regard for her and for what you and she talked about together and experienced when you were young, you failed to keep pace with the mechanisation which is going on at present. In your private life too you must take the consequences of your life work."

"What do you mean ?"

"An enterprise like ours changes living conditions and changes the way people think. You have mechanised three thousand men and totally changed their mental environment . . ."

"Mother often said we ought to look after the men more . . . Our responsibility towards them doesn't consist simply of paying them well, she often said."

"Yes, I know she felt that way. But I believe that most of our men regard the firm as I do. It's a machine which gets us money ; the relationship between them and you is just as impersonal as



between two cog-wheels. They know they need you, and there's no more to it. You can spare yourself the trouble of looking after their souls, because they don't want them looked after."

"What about Nils and Anders? . . ."

"Well, dash it all . . . You and they are old friends . . . But you realise, of course, they're not specially popular with the rest? . . . Since we've got on the subject . . . Can't you make an experiment with control-boxes on the new lathes?"

"I'll think about it, Harald."

He did not like his son continually coming back to the question of automatic control instruments. Of course it was a good thing to ensure that the machines were properly used, but wasn't it right to leave something to the initiative and skill of the worker?

It was strange that he should find it so hard to tear his ideas away from the romantic period before the Great War. He worked in a vast modern undertaking, amongst hard-boiled people. But in spirit he belonged to an out-of-the-way forest community, among dreaming sentimental idealists. He had begun to realise this himself, but how painful it was to be modernised, as Harald called the process he had begun by joining the Federation!

But he realised that the decisive act of joining the Federation was chasing off the dreams: it had been like a searchlight in the surrounding uncertainty. He discovered in the weeks that followed that his ability to act had increased.

## II

During the summer Grawe became so engrossed in the plans for expansion that one morning he handed over to Harald the entire day-to-day management of the works. His son declared that if he was to have full responsibility, he must be allowed to carry out his ideas of up-to-date labour management. Grawe agreed; the only point he stuck out against was the use of automatic control instruments, and here they agreed on a compromise: Harald should collect data for a time and then they would together consider the future. The father and son got on to a closer footing than before, and Grawe overcame a slight fear he had had for Harald's lightning wit and sharp tongue.

Harald on his side was more and more surprised by the complexity of his father's mind. One day he would be astounded at the ease with which he came to the most far-reaching decisions, almost without thinking . . . And the next day he would be horrified at the way he day-dreamed . . . No friction arose between them on account of the modernising of the works. Grawe

disliked, to begin with, the strict material control which Harald introduced, but after a fortnight he was able to report that large sums had been saved and Grawe was obliged to submit.

Grawe became fonder of the boy. One day he said to him :

"I've got the feeling that you want to educate me, Harald. In the past month or two you've got me to do one thing after another which is contrary to my own ideas. First I went to the banquet, then I joined the Employers' Federation, and now I've submitted to your plans for making machines of us all."

Harald gave a short laugh.

"But you like being modernised?"

"I can stand it from you . . . But ever since I arrived at man's estate, I've detested being dependent upon anyone. Just the thought of anyone being able to make use of me for his own ends was enough to infuriate me : and that's probably why I've got on the way I have done."

"Well I can congratulate myself that you're making big strides in your modernisation."

"In what way do you mean?"

"Among other things you're less sentimental."

Grawe had noticed this himself ; it found expression for one thing in a diminished capacity for sympathy with people in trouble : he was glad to feel how his sense of personal responsibility was disappearing. One day he discovered that he hadn't had the slightest guilty feeling for a long time at the thought of Camilla. He could look at the picture of her without his conscience pricking ; when he discovered that he felt a release which was intoxicating. It must be true what he had read and heard . . . The individual is free from blame . . . The collective body is responsible for the actions we perform . . . The system breeds the sin . . .

One evening when he was sitting with his coffee and after-dinner cigar, Karen came in to speak to him. He looked up rather irritably from his book. Was she going to bother him again with her troubles?

"What is it?"

Karen sat down on the very edge of a big easy chair and said :

"It's a thing I've thought about for a long time but haven't dared to mention . . ."

He put the book aside, leant back in the chair, and looked at Karen with a slight smile :

"Have I become so frightening that you daren't talk to me?"

He saw she collected all her courage ; and she replied :

"Yes."

He laughed in a forced way.



"Really? And what is it that you haven't been able to say to me?"

Karen collected herself again:

"Camilla said to me before she died that if I understood that the Works-Owner was in difficulties I was to say that she had realised that there was something which had been weighing on your mind. But if this had been something wrong against her she had forgiven it, because her life with you had meant everything to her."

Grawe had followed the old woman's speech—which she made with downcast eyes, like a lesson committed to memory—first with amazement and then with anger . . . What the devil had his state of mind to do with her? What did it matter if Camilla on her deathbed had unbosomed herself to her? . . .

Yet in a way it was rather touching . . .

"Had you anything else to say?"

Karen looked up again. She did not know at all how Grawe had received her words . . . His voice told her nothing, but as there was a hint of a smile on his lips she went on:

"Yes."

"Well, go ahead. I know that what you say and do is inspired by concern for my welfare."

"It was just . . . It was just, is the Works-Owner angry with Nils Kirkeplassen?"

Grawe frowned. Wasn't this getting too much of a good thing?

"Where have you got that idea?"

"He was up here some weeks ago and asked if the Works-Owner had said anything to me . . ."

"But why?"

"He said that he and the other old workmen had made a silver dish for the Works-Owner which he was to have presented at the banquet, but it hadn't come off. So he had come up here with it, but the Works-Owner had never thanked them for it, and for several months the Works-Owner had behaved in an altered manner. They'd all talked about it at the works."

Grawe did not like the situation. It was wrong of him, of course, not to thank them. But what could he do about it now?

"Thank you, Karen, for coming and telling me this. But I'm not angry with Nils or anyone else at the works. And I've got no more difficulties at the moment than at any other time. You know, of course, that we've got big plans for the future on hand, and I've more to think about than usual and many problems; but we'll get over them, don't you worry . . ."

"Yes, with God's help," said Karen slowly. "And I pray for the Works-Owner," she added and got up and went out.

Grawe almost envied her as she went; such simple people, in

spite of everything, had something in their life . . . If God *could* help with the expansion of a works there would be no difficulties ! . . . It was the first time she had spoken to him in this manner and it moved him more than he would admit . . . But her remarks about Camilla's message and the story about Nils were extremely unwelcome just now. Wasn't it just such ideas and considerations he must leave behind if he were to build up the new enterprise ?

He jumped up. It was late. He changed quickly and went out to a dinner . . . When he arrived home Karen was sitting dozing in the hall. She woke with a start when he came in, and he asked : " Why are you sitting here ? "

Karen rose and came right over to him.

" The Works-Owner mustn't be cross at what I said this afternoon . . . And not do anything to Kirkeplassen."

Grawe now got really angry . . . Would he never have peace to get on with his work ? Were these shadows of the past to follow him for ever ? He said roughly :

" Of course I'm not cross. And I shan't do anything to Kirkeplassen. But be good enough not to pester me with this again, Karen, because I've got enough to worry me already, without digging rubbish up from the past."

Karen seemed about to reply. She did not move for a long time . . . But all she said was :

" I'm only trying to do what I believe Camilla wants me to do . . . "

" Good night, Karen . . . So we'll talk no more about it."

But in the following days Karen's remarks occupied his mind more than he cared to admit. He wasn't now quite in the mood he had achieved a week or two ago. His " modernising " hadn't got far of course . . . One day Harald said when he was up in the office :

" What's up, Father ? You seem to me on the melancholy side . . . I hope that my efforts at modernising you haven't been too much ? "

" No . . . On the contrary, I see that you're entirely in the right. But now and then I'm afraid I'm too old."

" One's never too old to take thought for oneself."

Grawe did not know whether he should tell Harald of the conversation with Karen, but before he knew what he was saying he had blurted out the whole story. It made no great impression upon Harald. He smiled slightly :

" Poor old girl. Won't you send her to an old people's home ? It's a bit too much to have her around doing this sort of thing . . . It's dangerous for your soul. Excuse my putting it that way, but since you're so inclined to brood over your relations with Mother



it may be fatal for us all if you're subjected to such spiritual rape . . . As regards the silver dish, you can simply dictate a letter to the donors and thank them nicely and say you're sorry you didn't do it before. 'They'll understand that, having so much to do . . .'

There was one thing Karen said which pleased me."

"What was that?"

"That Nils had said that everyone in the works had noticed your altered behaviour. I have too, and I'm certain that that's one of the reasons why production's gone up. Simply by being less sentimental you've increased discipline, and thereby production . . .

"And when we get the control-boxes installed, at any rate on the newest machines, both discipline and production will be even better," Harald added.

"In a day or two I shall be going to Gøteborg," Grawe said, "I'll keep my eyes open and see how they set about things down there . . . There's one thing though I'd like to discuss with you."

"Uhuh? . . . You seem to have a lot on your mind. Spit it all out . . . Nothing hampers the ability to work so much as skeletons in the cupboard."

Grawe disliked Harald's easy, matter-of-fact tone. He wanted to talk to his son about what had oppressed him in his relationship with Camilla. Some time ago he would not have dreamt of doing that; but listening to Harald's theories the other day it had struck him that he ought to discuss it with someone realistic in his outlook like Harald . . . Harald's last remark, however, made him feel inclined to say nothing about it. Harald had sat down and was waiting for his father to begin; but Grawe simply sat motionless at his desk and gazed out of the window.

"Well . . . Aren't you going to start? Something to do with women, eh?"

The question made Grawe jump . . . And it all came out . . . The adventure in Copenhagen . . . How the girl stole the thousand kroner from him. The incident of the letters to Camilla from America . . . How he used them to attack her in order to defend himself against his bad conscience, and how all this had haunted him.

When Grawe had finished his tale—well, if the man hadn't tears in his eyes! thought Harald—he hardly dared to look up, but waited as if for his sentence . . . He heard Harald's cold and precise voice:

"Was that all?"

Grawe turned his head and looked at his son, who was smiling at him:

"Don't you think it's enough?"

Harald laughed . . .

"D'you know, Father? It was stupid of you, with your peasant's

conception of faithfulness in marriage, to deceive Mother. And it wasn't very nice of you to hurt her as you did, but if you think you've ruined your life and hers and the whole works with that affair, you're mistaken . . . Mother was unhappy sometimes, I expect, because she knew you were holding something from her . . . But I'll be jiggered, she was no weakling and her way of helping you was superlative. I think you were always an ideal husband. Thoughtful, kind, and attentive . . . A bit serious now and then . . . I'll tell you what it is that's bothering you about this business . . ."

Grawe, who had swallowed up every word his son said, looked at him with tense expectancy . . .

"It's your self-pity. You've been sorry for yourself because your conscience has plagued you, and you've not really had any serious conviction that you've done anything wrong against Mother. And, in my opinion, you haven't done, either . . . Dash it all ! . . . Relations with a woman outside the marriage vow, once . . . And you'd been married for twenty years and travelled alone all round Europe !"

"Have you ? . . ."

"I don't feel any need to confess ; I've put my conscience to a merciful death. But you can draw what conclusions you like from my remarks."

"But Astrid ? . . ."

"She doesn't ask . . . When we got married we agreed there should be no hysteria between us . . . We suited each other and we've got on all right . . . Though actually it's on the cards that we may separate."

Grawe sat up with a jerk.

"Separate ! You and Astrid ! But why ? You say yourself that you suit each other."

Harald looked a little embarrassed by what he had said . . .

"Perhaps I should have waited a little before I told you this ; we're not quite clear ourselves yet what we shall do. But the fact is that Astrid has got a certain idea into her head. She wants to have a child, she says, and I don't . . ."

"But why, Harald ?"

The son picked up one of the morning papers and read aloud the headlines.

"That's what the world's like. D'you think it's any place for an infant ? Look at our works if you like . . . We get the most money from machines which destroy the world . . . and put men out of work . . . I'm an egotist and want to get all I can for myself. I know there's a deep satisfaction in having children, and as far as that goes I'd like to give that satisfaction to Astrid . . ."



But I'm thinking also of the future. I'd have the very hell of a time when the war comes and the result of my sentimental happiness is simply cannon fodder . . . I'd sooner renounce the whole issue."

"You don't take an optimistic view of the future . . ."

Grawe looked at his son with a certain admiration for the logical way he held to his course . . . He was also grateful for his having received the confession so calmly. Harald's remarks had been true enough ; it was just silly to go about as he did, reproaching himself for that affair. There was something too in the suggestion that, if Karen went on reminding him of things that were dead and done with, he should see about getting her into a home for old people . . . Moreover Harald was right in saying that it was more his own peasant's idea of faithfulness which had troubled him than his conscience . . . It was good to have discussed the matter . . . It pained him though to think that Harald was considering separation. And he said that.

"Yes, I don't like it either," Harald replied, "and perhaps I'll get her to see reason."

"It's a devilish time we're living in," said Grawe.

"Don't be sentimental on my account, if you don't mind . . . And try and get out of this guilt complex ; then you'll be able to get down to your work and extract a little joy out of life, instead of dreaming of the snows of yester year . . . When are you going to Gøteborg ?"

"Sometime next week . . ."

"When you come back I hope you'll have met so many modernised industrialists down there that without unnecessary scruple you'll adapt your personnel management to match our technical equipment."

Harald went off. Grawe called in his secretary and dictated the letter to Nils and the other men who had given him the silver dish. He liked the idea of settling the matter by letter.

Some days later Harald came into the office.

"Engineer Knagen complains that there's perpetual trouble about the latest machines in the riveting section where Nils and Anders and the older ones work," he said.

"Oh, it'll be all right when they've learnt to handle them properly," Grawe answered.

"Knagen says it's so marked that it may be sabotage."

At that Grawe laughed.

"Sabotage in my works ?"

Harald looked at him gravely.

"Don't laugh, Father. It's not only you that's getting modernised here. Suppose they wanted to demonstrate . . ."

“ You really mean that someone or other is actually committing sabotage in the riveting section ? ”

“ Well . . . there’s something queer going on.”

Grawe went down to the section, accompanied by Harald. He got hold of Knagen, who explained the position, and together they went to see the machines. Nils and the rest gave them an unfriendly good-day. Grawe said nothing : he decided that this was to be the end of the familiar tone . . . The works was a place of employment, not a chimney corner. He was shown the machine from which the trouble originated and went over it carefully. Then he threw off his jacket and put on the overall of the engineer of the section and set to work to give the complicated machinery the most thorough overhaul. He discovered a faulty adjustment, picked up a spanner, and put it to rights. Then turned on the power . . . The machine went at once and he looked round proudly. Harald smiled. Knagen looked uncomfortable ; but was reassured when Grawe said :

“ Don’t worry too much. It’s the manufacturer’s fault, and this machine has always been my speciality.”

Nils and the other men had followed Grawe’s work with great interest. When he got busy with the spanner they crowded tightly round to see what he was doing. They smiled more and more when they saw that Grawe handled the spanner as in the old days, and they were impressed when they realised he had discovered the cause of the trouble. When he had finished Nils could not contain himself :

“ You’ve not lost your old knack.”

“ Oh no, I still know a few of the tricks of the trade, you know.”

Everything slipped from his mind as he stood there in an overall once more, with dirty hands and a spanner. He remembered the silver dish and said :

“ It was wrong of me to forget to thank you for the silver dish. Thanks, all of you.”

Nils gave a smile, broad with joy.

“ We thought you’d like ter see ’ow the old smithy looked . . . ”

Grawe returned then to his office. The whole incident had given him intense satisfaction. It’s funny how things work out, he thought. Why can’t relations between people always be as good as they were down there between us just now ? . . .

After a few minutes Harald came in ; Grawe was even more delighted when his son began to praise him and said that little things like that made him understand how he had carved his way in life.

“ But the episode taught me other things besides.”

“ And what are they ? ”



“If old, conscientious, and trusted workers can mishandle machines for a long period as Nils and the rest here have done, one can imagine what younger and ill-disposed men may do. If we're to draw any lesson from the episode, it must be that we should fix automatic control instruments on all our machines.”

Grawe had been thinking just the opposite. In the short space while he had stood in the dirty overall with the spanner in his hand, he had been carried back to the unmixed joy he had felt for his work during the early years. He had been reminded that the human element must never be forgotten in modern industry . . . When his son made his calculating remark, he felt a little ashamed of his reflections and did not feel inclined to voice them.

### III

During his stay in Goteborg Grawe met a number of colleagues, and heard many people talk about modern factory management. There were two main conceptions. Some were in favour of individual treatment of the workers ; but most, including all the younger ones, swore by thorough mechanisation.

“It's absolutely my experience,” declared a young manager, “that just as the workers must mind the machines, the machines must mind the workers : otherwise there won't be the cohesion in production that it's essential there should be. No doubt it takes some of the interest out of the work, but the accounting machines at the bank control our management of enterprises so strictly that the interest in our work suffers too. One may regret the passing of the old atmosphere of mutual trust now that the machines take over the tasks of inspection and management, but I don't think it's any good trying to stop the development. Everyone has his own interests nearest his heart . . .”

Wasn't this like listening to Harald ? The young manager was the head of a family business which had been in the process of collapsing when he returned from studies abroad and set about modernising it.

“Do you employ automatic control instruments right through your factory ?” asked Grawe.

“I don't make a nail without having every stage of its production automatically controlled,” he said.

Grawe's visit included the launching of a big tanker that was to belong to a Norwegian shipping firm of which he was chairman. It was the ship-owner's wife who christened the vessel, and when she threw the champagne bottle against the prow Grawe was sur-

prised to hear her name it *Astrid Grawe*. He thanked the ship-owner, who replied :

“ When the first boat goes off the stocks in your new works, I hope we shall be permitted to call it *Halvor Grawe* . . . But you certainly must have an absolute faith in your own plans if you think of entering into competition with these fellows here . . . ”

During the visit he received many impressions and new ideas of modern, large-scale industry. He saw how right were his own plans for collaboration between rolling-mill, ship-yard, and the shipping companies ; and how necessary it was to build upon solidarity between capital and labour. But he became more certain than ever before that one man and one will must control such an enterprise. Who owned it was not the deciding factor. It was better of course if owner and manager were the same person . . . But one will must control, even though it was understandable that officialdom, workers, and community should be opposed to such ideas. They saw the situation from their respective positions : none of them had an all-over view . . .

He obtained, too, greater respect for his son's clear conception of the automatic control of working tempo. A little slackness at one machine decreased the tempo of the entire works ; one man's theft of a minute had repercussions in all directions . . . Automatic control could save an enterprise economically.

Naturally it was unpleasant for the individuals controlled. But he could not take such factors into consideration ; he had to think of the whole only ; of the three thousand.

And the workers must study more. Highly trained specialists were needed to handle the complicated machinery. They must have good pay, but no sentimentality must creep into the relationship between them and the management . . .

“ Impartiality is the order of the day,” said an old grey-haired manager from central Sweden. “ Had I grasped that ten or fifteen years ago my mill would now be a thriving concern. But I let the times get ahead of me. What use was it that the machines were in good order, and that the men were old and loyal, when neither they nor I knew that they produced only a fraction of what they should ? ”

“ But you've no cause to complain,” someone answered. “ You got that sub-contract for gun barrels . . . ”

“ Yes, that's true,” said the grey-haired manager a little sadly. “ It was certainly that which saved us.”

Grawe sat up when he heard these remarks. He made enquiries ; he learnt that an engineering works which had the support of the armament industry had far better chances than the others. But the armament industry was now consolidated in such a way that outsiders could not hope to get a share.



He lay awake most of the night . . . Harald was right. Thorough rationalisation and control of labour in the present works was the first step in the launching of the giant plan. Moreover, he would engage a couple of hundred boys who, with an eye to the giant works, could begin their training now . . .

The next day he travelled home. On the train he met Director Georg Hørfeldt. The conversation made him a little uneasy. It turned upon just such subjects as he wished to avoid.

He came home to the big house. Alone . . . What was it Hørfeldt had said? That he had escaped from his loneliness, that he didn't need to be afraid of anyone . . . If the opportunity presented itself perhaps he would talk further with Hørfeldt.

The following day he told Harald of all that had happened on the trip.

"You can order control-boxes for the newest machinery and then we'll see about engaging some apprentices . . ."

"Excellent, Father. We need some too. But on short notice, eh?"

"Yes, of course."

Harald stood and regarded him thoughtfully. Grawe wondered what was coming.

"There's one other question."

"What's that?"

"The question of whether we should produce arms."

"I appreciate the advantages it would bring, but all arms production has been cornered long ago."

Harald smiled triumphantly and handed him a brochure in German. Grawe looked at it and then handed it back.

"I don't want you ever to show me that again."

Harald took back the brochure and replied icily:

"D'you imagine they'll have one gun the fewer because you refuse. If you don't make them, there will be plenty of others only too ready to do so."

The following day Grawe remembered his idea of inviting Hørfeldt round. He telephoned the director who said that he would visit him in Parkveien in the course of the afternoon.

It was dusk when Hørfeldt rang the door-bell of Grawe's house and was taken by the maid into the study, where Grawe received him with open arms. He placed his guest in a big easy chair before the stove and himself sat down in a sofa which stood out from the wall. Although the pair of them had had a lot to do with each other in the course of the years, it was the first time they were to speak to each other as two people. Until now they had hardly

discussed anything but politics, finance, and social questions. Hørfeldt remarked upon this.

"Have you ever talked about other things to other people?" asked Grawe. "I haven't . . ."

"Nor I. I was afraid of giving myself away to the people I was with."

Grawe pricked up his ears, remembering his talk with Tyrivolden.

"Had you any unpleasant secrets?"

"Not really. But you know I was afraid of people finding out what a cynical egoist I was."

Grawe looked at him, surprised. There was hardly a person Hørfeldt was acquainted with who did not know he was a cynic, and when Hørfeldt now solemnly told him that he was a cynic, Grawe had to smile:

"Excuse my being somewhat amused . . . But I've known for a longish time that you were cynical."

A serious look had come upon Hørfeldt's face which Grawe had never seen before, and he almost felt that a new person was sitting there before him. The cynical expression was gone. The flabby lines in his face, which came from many dinners and much wine, were also gone. The set of his face was firmer and clearer, more like a child's. He was quite excited to know what Hørfeldt would say. Then Hørfeldt asked:

"Do you remember many, many years ago there was a little article in a newspaper saying that the city must see that the young Works-Owner, Halvor Grawe, became a member of the Council?"

"Yes," Grawe replied, surprised.

"Do you remember that some time afterwards I paid you a visit with the idea of putting you on the list for election?"

"Yes. That was the first time we met each other . . ."

"I was then the secretary of our party. Amongst other things it was my job to keep an eye open for coming personages, and you were one we had to reckon with . . . I'd learnt of your exceptional ability. My father knew your father-in-law, so when I happened to meet Professor Barner in the street I was able to ask him about you."

"But Hørfeldt, my dear fellow, where's all this leading?"

"Wait a little . . . I'm going into it thoroughly, so that you'll grasp it all properly. It's not as simple as you think . . . You got a warning once from the bank about giving money to the workers' unions?"

At that Grawe pricked up his ears in earnest.

"Yes."

"It was I who was responsible . . ."



"You . . . How did you know? . . . And how did you dare to risk—?"

"When I examined your position, with a view to bringing you into political life, I found that you had the strangest ideas, and decided we couldn't use you until you had undergone a certain amount of cleaning-up. What was worse, you had helped the workers economically during a lockout. Worst of all, you, who were without a doubt the most vital force among the city's younger industrialists, gave moral support to the workers by the way you behaved and thereby undermined what we achieved through our propaganda. When I accidentally discovered that you drew heavily upon your cash account, I asked the bank manager if it was in the bank's interest that you used its money to support agitation inimical to society."

Hørfeldt did not look at Grawe, who several times felt like breaking into what he was saying, but controlled himself. Hørfeldt continued :

"There was an occasion on which you had an accident . . . I think it was a crane fell down, injuring a workman. The following day there was a row in the radical Press . . . But d'you recall that in *Dagens Stemme* there was an article declaring that it was unfair to treat a young man in that way? . . . It went on to say something to the effect that so far as the paper knew Halvor Grawe was not of their own shade of opinion, but that that didn't prevent their appreciating his ability and defending him against unjust attacks. An accident may happen to the best . . ."

Grawe nodded.

"I remember those lines well."

"I wrote that article ; I thought it would make it easier for you to feel in sympathy with us if we acclaimed you in spite of our differences of opinion."

Grawe recalled how Camilla had warned him against Hørfeldt and his circle. "They simply want you and your money . . ." she had said. But he had given a superior smile. Now he sat here in his own room and heard how this cynic had spun a web around him for years . . . As Hørfeldt had made another pause, Grawe said :

"Go on. This is beginning to get interesting."

"The years went by . . . Your firm grew, you got richer and richer and more and more influential. I realised how important it was for the entire community and for our party that you didn't develop wrongly, if I might put it that way. If you and your workers came to be a community within the community, an isolated cell where there was peace between capital and labour, then our struggle was entirely useless. All we did to secure our interests and to prove that private ownership was the foundation of all

culture would be disproved by you and your firm . . . I feared you like the plague : because I couldn't deny that you were more capable than anybody else. I was therefore glad when your workers organised themselves . . .”

“ Why ? ”

“ The result was bound to be that you took up sides.”

“ Why did you give me such careful thought ? ”

“ Because you were so superior both as a technician and a business man . . . The best ought not to go to other places than our party . . .”

“ That's certainly flattering.”

“ I worked systematically . . . And I've followed up others in the same way. Others again I've tried to overthrow and render impotent . . .”

“ Fjellgard, for example.”

“ Yes, I was thinking of him particularly. By the way, I've written to him and tendered on apology.”

“ But why did you persecute him, and do all you could to win me ? ”

“ He was a peasant and had his roots in the land. You had broken away.”

This suddenly infuriated Grawe. He had been alone and defenceless . . . That was why they had caught him. Fjellgard had his farm, his land, and his family at his back, so they couldn't get hold of him but instead tried to overthrow him.

“ But I interrupted you.”

“ When you told me the first time that you wouldn't join the Employers' Federation, but remain outside for the sake of your men, I thought you were hopeless. But then I tried new methods to capture you. I got you to join the Industrial Bank, and our party voted you on to commissions and committees. To put it cynically : you fell into the trap . . . You became more and more coloured by our party, especially outside your own business ; for outside it you didn't know the people you had to come into touch with and had no sentimental considerations or fixed ideas . . .”

Grawe had followed Hørfeldt's last words with swiftly alternating feelings. Now he was furious, now flattered. He had not dreamt of even the possibility of such a web being spun about him.

“ I also got you to join the club so that you would be constantly surrounded by the right people,” continued Hørfeldt, “ and then when, this spring, you at last joined the Employers' Federation, I knew that it meant an enormous strengthening of our front. To conclude the story I may also mention that that was my purpose with both the commander's cross and the big banquet.”

Grawe was in a strange state of mind. Hørfeldt's account of how his life had been moulded by others, of how he had been exploited,



amazed him. When he heard of the first small ways in which Hørfeldt had watched over him, he had found it difficult to control himself, but later when Hørfeldt ceased giving details and confined himself to the broad outline he became calmer. He certainly did not like Hørfeldt saying he had got him into the trap . . . . He got up and began to walk up and down the floor. He had really no cause to be angry with Hørfeldt. His life would certainly have run much the same course ; nor could he deny that Hørfeldt had done him a number of services during the years he had known him.

“ Have you finished ? ”

“ No . . . I'm just going to begin . . . . All I've told you so far has been the outward circumstance. The effect of my thoughts . . . . Also I've partly suggested that a particular social environment was responsible for what I did. But one night I saw what it all looked like in God's eyes. And I saw that until I had shown you my inner self I couldn't ask you to forgive me.”

“ You frighten me almost . . . . ”

“ That night I felt like a vampire ; I saw that all my life I had lived on others. I made myself the centre of life. When I grappled with you as I did, and undermined your opinions and ideas, it was simply out of concern for my own life . . . . I drew, bit by bit, from you the life and the plans which I now know could have been of advantage to tens of thousands ; while as it is you're becoming a symbol of strife in the community. I cut across the plan God had laid for your life . . . . I implanted my cynicism in your life and little by little drove out of your life what God had given you. I don't know precisely what I have achieved, and it's not simply my *actions* towards you that I now stand in fear of . . . . It's still more my evil and egoistical thoughts . . . . ”

Grawe stiffened as Hørfeldt spoke. He stood in the middle of the floor and looked down at him as he sat in the deep easy chair. As he spoke, he again in Grawe's eyes had that slightly bloated, cynical expression ; the blasphemous smile and the easy amiability which had stamped his face. Suddenly Grawe saw it : there was his enemy . . . . There sat the man, the system, the philosophy which had destroyed his life . . . . Hørfeldt was to blame that he and his childhood's home had become strangers . . . . He it was who had undermined his faith and got him to deceive Camilla and to lie to her . . . . He it was who had insinuated himself into the relationship between him and the men, and had rooted out the sense of fellow-feeling . . . . Now he sat here and recounted it all . . . . Untouched by the sufferings and difficulties he had dragged him into . . . . And why had he done it ? In order to live his parasitic existence . . . . What were his interests ? Red wine . . . . Spicy

literature . . . And to satisfy these demands on life he had used him—Grawe—without thinking of anything but himself.

It was deathly still in the big room . . . The light of the embers in the stove, and the lamp which stood on the mantelshelf lit up the central portion by the armchair where Hørfeldt sat motionless. Grawe stood by the window. Hørfeldt rose and looked across at the massive figure. He felt moved by the occasion and had spoken the final sentences in a thick voice. He took a step or two towards Grawe, stretched out his hand, and said :

“ It was this which I felt I must tell you, and now I ask you in God’s name to forgive me . . . ”

Everything exploded for Grawe . . .

“ This is too much ! . . . You devil . . . D’you say in God’s name ? . . . Never in all eternity will I forgive you.”

He lost control of himself entirely. The suppressed feeling of many years surged up in him and he rushed straight at Hørfeldt and gave him a punch on the jaw that sent him sprawling . . .

“ There’s your forgiveness . . . ”

With that he threw himself onto the sofa and shouted :

“ Get out . . . get out ! Otherwise I don’t know what may happen . . . Get out, you devil ! ”

Hørfeldt got up. He glanced at Grawe, who was half lying on the sofa, and went quickly towards the door. There he stopped and said :

“ I am well aware that I deserve this.”

“ Get out, you hypocrite ! ” yelled Grawe.

When Grawe heard the sound of the front door in the hall, he sat up on the sofa and clutched his head. What was this he had heard ? Was it possible that he, Halvor Grawe, multi-millionaire and dictator of the largest industrial concern in the country, honoured and feared in many quarters, had simply been a tool in this fellow’s hands ? . . . He forced himself to be calm. That Hørfeldt had regarded him as something of an upstart he had once or twice suspected, but it had been his secret pride that he had used both Hørfeldt and his whole circle to his own ends. After the large and distinguished dinners he had often smiled at the thought that most of the company would be only too delighted to run his errands.

When Hørfeldt had made his final remarks one curtain after another which had hidden the truth from him had been torn down. He had everything : money, ability, power . . . And yet he had been exploited, as his father and his mother had been exploited . . . But this would be the end of all that ! People should see that Halvor Gravidalen was no stupid sheep to be shorn by all and sundry.



#### IV

The following day Grawe rang up Harald and said that he would not be seeing him for a time. He wanted to think over what Hørfeldt had said.

He went through his whole circle of acquaintances and discovered there was not one he could call his friend, after the conversation with Hørfeldt. They all exploited him in one way or another . . . Some of them simply drank up his good wines . . . They were harmless and stupid ; and, unlike Hørfeldt, they didn't understand what a magnificent catch he was . . . Then there were those who came to him for economic support. Some were no doubt excellent people whom it had been pleasant to give a leg up . . . Pleasant until now : for after talking to Hørfeldt he had little doubt that the reasons and explanations they gave were largely dishonest and selfish.

But none of these had impinged upon his entire life. They had been parasites of a lesser kind . . . The financial circles, now, were worse ; they had drawn his powers and his interest away from the works, and hidden pretty direct swindles beneath his gilt-edged name . . . Yet these fellows too had respected certain things . . . Hørfeldt had respected nothing. He had taken all . . . Food . . . Wine . . . Money . . . Name . . . Soul . . . Joy. He had sucked it all out of the man who in his folly had let him play fast and loose with his whole existence.

His employees ? . . . What regard need he take for them ? They thought of him probably just as Hørfeldt did, and the other parasites . . . They were less gifted at sucking, but that wasn't their fault.

He decided to introduce automatic control of labour throughout the works ; together with conveyor belts . . . Consideration of other human beings seemed not to be so highly respected that he need take it into account either . . .

A day or two later, as he strode across the big asphalt yard, slippery with oil and half-melted snow, he realised that he had got a new attitude towards the whole familiar picture. Before he had felt a part of the buildings, the purring wheels, the racket, and the striving workers . . . Now he had the feeling of having been torn away from them. His responsibility was gone ; why should he put himself out, when even his friends simply wondered how to exploit him ? The only person in the world he could count on was Harald . . . He felt a wave of warmth and gratitude towards his son when he saw him sitting in the office.

Harald was honest with him ; he wouldn't make use of him in any way that didn't serve the interests of both. By teaching him a little objective modern philosophy of life, the lad had prepared him

for receiving the blow Hørfeldt had given him. He told his son that as he reported both the conversation with Hørfeldt and the decision he had made with regard to the management of the works.

“And you were so angry that you hit him?”

“Yes. I’m only glad I didn’t hit him a lot more, because the whole room went red before me when he capped everything by asking my forgiveness in God’s name!”

“What d’you say? Well, that’s in accordance with . . . The man’s turned a Christian . . . Fancy, Hørfeldt . . . Now, you see, he’s repenting of his sins . . . Well, he’s got a big job on there . . . But joking on one side, Father, what was I saying? . . . Ah yes, watch out for feelings. They spring from evil and one can’t tell what unpleasant results they may not have: one may find oneself sprawled on the floor of Works-Owner Grawe’s house in Parkveien!”

“But surely life would be very poverty-stricken at that rate, Harald? Control hatred . . . All right, that’s excellent. But control love, joy! . . .”

Harald now had his father where he wanted him.

“Shall we thrash this out properly, Father? You said my life must be poverty-stricken . . . That’s one of the mistakes people make when they judge life by the happiness that feelings give them. My life isn’t poverty-stricken . . . Nor is it rich . . . Some people would have it that without feelings one must freeze . . . I never feel cold because I’m never warm. I’m never unhappy because I’m never happy. You classify people’s lives after those standards because you’re taken in by feelings.”

“But do you never know happiness?”

“No, so I’m free from sorrow.”

“What do you live for then?”

“Myself.”

Grawe listened with a kind of terror. Harald made these remarks with as great matter-of-factness as if he had said it was a fine day. And he went on:

“People generally feel ashamed of their egotism. They think it’s wrong to be egotistical, and because they think that, egotism becomes a curse to them. It’s exactly the same case as with the sex instinct. People were ashamed of it, so it became a curse. People have at last begun to see that there’s no reason to be more ashamed of the sex urge than of hunger or thirst. It’s the same with egotism . . . It’s time will come all right. And it’s always been there just as the sex-urge has. Did people omit to satisfy the urge because they were ashamed of it? Far from it . . . Well I have taken my self into my service. I’ve eliminated feelings in my life. I’m training my will to serve me in both great and small matters.”

“Haven’t you any ideals then?”



“ My ideal is to live so that I enjoy myself.”

“ Don't you believe in anything at all ? ”

“ As you use the word, no . . . But I believe there exist eternal and unchangeable laws. I believe in the existence of something absolute from eternity to eternity. But it's not anything that was created or that creates. It's the most abstract thing and the most simple. It is that two and two are four . . . The immutable laws can be expressed in figures and formulæ ; and these laws, mathematics, exist independently of time and space. If everything in the universe were to vanish and not leave a trace behind, nevertheless the abstract fact that two plus two is four would continue to exist.”

“ But how have you come to hold these ideas ? ”

“ By studying machines. If I can make my life into a precision machine, I'll get the best possible out of it. For myself.”

“ But you're married.”

“ Yes. I married because of my physiological make-up. Moreover it's a pleasanter way of living than for ever chasing after women.”

“ But what does Astrid say to this ? ”

“ She's in full agreement with me. She wished to marry for herself, and when, after discussing the matter, we found that we suited each other, we got married.”

“ But now she wants a child ? ”

“ No . . . It was a passing whim, which she has relinquished.”

“ Is this the new generation ? ”

“ I don't know. But we are logical results of the way things have developed. We have technical precision machines. We are physiological and psychological precision machines . . . Or shall we say, we will be ? A new type of human being is in the process of being produced. He is the result of the big city, of technical progress, of culture. He's as far removed from the emotional religious human type of the past as the big city is from the farmstead ; or modern technique from the life of the nomad ; or our culture from barbarism. Now and then, of course, some sentimentally-inclined city-dwellers suffer relapses. Then they become miserable. They discover what they term emptiness. To avoid such relapses I tread warily of anything primitive. I avoid for example holidays in mountain huts.”

“ Don't you think there may be a reaction against all this ? ”

“ That there will be relapses is certain . . . But what has moulded me ? Our culture. I'm egotistical. And I believe that things will develop, in the long run, on the lines along which I live and think. I believe that the more we human beings learn from machines the better.”

“ But surely it's we who make them ? ”

“ At first sight it seems so. Yet they are simply the results of abstract and unalterable figures and formulæ which exist independently of them or us. If a machine breaks down, there is a fault in its construction . . . in the formula. We can now construct adding machines which calculate better than the human brain, which actually break down if they are made to add up wrongly ; because the controls step in. Our brains add up wrongly without noticing it. It’s paradoxical, but true . . . I’ve specialised in modern labour-saving, precision machines because that industry is in league with the future. I’m not a supporter of the capitalist system or any other . . . My egotism fits equally well into any form of society that can be thought out. We’ll pretty certainly have the support of the socialists for our big plan, which is quite natural. A new firm. Labour possibilities. I would say in fact that egotism is the one law of life which is applicable under all social systems, because it has itself no principles it must defend or maintain . . . It doesn’t defend traditions. I’ve only myself to take into account.”

“ But what about the men who become unemployed because of our machines ? ”

“ It’s bad luck for them.”

“ Ah, but aren’t you afraid of the hungry masses ? ”

“ You want to discuss the matter from the social-philosophical angle ? . . . Machines replace a number of workers, but it’s now so cheap to produce food and clothes and money that the egotistical community is able to keep them alive, and their rebellious leanings in check, by means of relief. Aren’t we doing that already ? Haven’t machines created a hard core of people who’ve nothing to do and never will have ? . . . So we say that in our compassion we alleviate their suffering . . . Again fleeing from our egotism and being ashamed of it. We tell ourselves that it’s not egotism which has created the unemployment, and that it’s not concern for our own well-being which prompts us to allow these people to live on our surplus ; but we’re careful that they shall not live well enough for their intelligence to wake up. We meet only their most animal needs . . . As with the sex instinct. We regard prostitutes with the same mixture of fear and contempt as the community does the unemployed. Just reflect, Father . . . You’ll see that egotism actuates both the individual, the class, and the popular majority . . . You watch out for your interests, our class for their interests, and any popular majority for theirs. A thickly populated district overrides the rights of a thinly populated one . . . A big and organised class or wealth bloc has no consideration for a small class.”

Grawe remembered how his village had been drained of its resources by the big companies, and how it continued to be regarded as an awkward corner of the country. Harald was right here too.



"An idea may seem very fine and humanitarian until it is put into operation," Harald went on. "When it is launched forth into life all the weak sentimentality surrounding it vanishes and the egotism appears. Everywhere. In every case."

"It'll lead to utter chaos!"

"Possibly."

"What d'you live for then?"

"I'm fond of good food. I value a good cigar. It pleasantly excites my nerves to drive a car at speed. I like sport and art..."

"Don't you ever feel the urge to fight for a cause?"

"No... Whether people think as I do or not is a matter of indifference to me. In fact I almost think it would be rather awkward if most people were logical in their conclusions."

He looked at the clock and got up...

"But I'm afraid you must excuse me... I promised Astrid I'd be home early and you know how unpleasant small upsets are in the home. My egotism, you see, is logical enough to make me courteous towards her in order to spare myself bother..."

He spoke this with a smile, as though they had just held the most ordinary conversation, and went out. But he put his head in at the door again and said:

"You mustn't think that I haven't appreciated, and don't appreciate, being with you. On the other hand, I hope that we'll always be able to enjoy one another's company."

Grawe nodded at what his son said, and when the door was closed again he took up his paper knife and drummed on the desk while he stared out into the foggy November day. He was surprised he did not feel more ill at ease, for he had just heard judgment passed on himself, his life, and all he had achieved... To begin with during the conversation his feeling towards Harald had been almost pity... Hardly thirty years old and so completely without illusions; scarcely any pleasure before him except what the five senses yield. And yet he had a calm and smiling presence. Then he recalled the illusions he had had himself at the age of thirty, and what his present state was, and he almost envied Harald who would experience no disappointments.

What had he said? We must be precision machines; he had learnt from machines, which had neither joys nor disappointments, but simply functioned as long as their structure was in working order... Was that the purpose of life?... Simply to function...

Before returning home for dinner he took a walk round the works. In the boiler-room he stood still for a long time, staring at the great driving-wheel as it went round and round and round... Blindly, at the same dizzying speed which made the four spokes, each of

them far too thick to be encompassed with two hands, disappear before the eyes . . . The big driving-belt, too, ran round and round . . . The only variation in the monotonous sound of the fly-wheel and the belt, was the regular tap of the join in the belt against the shiny steel of the wheel . . . He counted the seconds between the taps . . . Each time there was a gap of not quite four seconds by the big control-clock which hung on the wall . . . Control-clock . . . Yes . . . Every bit of machinery in the entire works was controlled by that clock . . . So why should the men escape their fate? They were simply precision machines, or they could become that . . .

He continued to walk through the buildings and was pleased and proud to observe once more the order, cleanliness, and discipline which Harald had been able to bring about. The lad was able, and his philosophy was suited to life, as life now was. He stopped in a small gap between the two great sliding-doors of the machine-shop and gazed into that portion of his realm. It had grown up around the little smithy. It was now only a small part of his giant concern. It was to become an even smaller part. Clearly, those who stood at the head of such enterprises as this could not feel, think, and desire in the same way as the men who came and went in the workshops without any other thought than how to squeeze the most money out of their employers . . . out of him . . . He was annoyed that so many, especially of the younger men, pretended they never saw him so that they need not touch their caps to him . . .

There was another of those insolent beggars now . . . The man had seen him. Grawe was sure of that.

"Hey, you!" he shouted.

The man stopped.

"When you pass me it's the common practice for you to bid me good-day," Grawe snarled.

"Sorry, Gov'nor . . . I didn't see you," the fellow said, and whisked off his cap . . . Grawe went off . . . Satisfied with the frightened expression the man had got at the sharp words . . .

Suddenly he remembered again the sight of Hørfeldt lying flat on the floor. He smiled . . . He'd do that to the lot of them.

## V

One day Grawe and Harald agreed that as there had been few new orders lately they could not afford to retain all the apprentices they had engaged in the autumn. They were therefore all given notice; the short-period notice agreed upon in their contract. The lads however refused to accept it. They wanted the same period as the



ordinary workmen . . . Grawe said no. He wouldn't be dictated to by these lads, all of whom had annoyed him by their bad manners. The day after he had refused to consider giving longer notice one of the most expensive pieces of machinery suddenly blew up during a pause . . . It was simply luck that no one was injured, and investigation showed it was probably a case of sabotage . . . This made Grawe all the more determined . . . If they wanted war they should have war: he refused in harsh terms a proposal for negotiation from the committee of the works' club.

In the lunch-hour the apprentices assembled outside his office and shouted and hooted; during the afternoon a deputation from all the employees came up to see him and said that if he refused to negotiate with the lads they would cease work immediately . . . Grawe replied that there was nothing about which to negotiate; and the conflict began the same day . . . An illegal strike at his works where there had never before been an hour's stoppage! It was with a strange feeling that he stood at his window that day and watched the men leave the works, while little by little all noise died away.

Again Harald had proved right. What had he said? Just wait . . . before you know what's happening they'll be at your throat. But he was in the Employers' Federation now and the men reckoned wrong.

"We've nothing to discuss," he said to Harald. "We'll stand our ground until the men give in, if the works collapse before our eyes."

He convened the central committee of the Employers' Federation and explained the conflict. He had conferred in advance with the board of the Industrial Bank and extracted their promise that if there were a general lock-out they would deal generously with the firms concerned. Nevertheless the central committee was little inclined to support any such action. In particular Grawe's biggest competitor was against stoppage. But after the first meeting Grawe went up to him and said that if he failed to support him now, he—Grawe—would cancel the price agreement between the firms, and at the next meeting Grawe got the committee to agree to institute a sympathy lock-out if the men did not resume work immediately. One of his colleagues said to him:

"I didn't know you were so obstinate . . . If I'd thought you were, I wouldn't have been so keen on getting you in here."

"I think a lot of people have made a mistake," Grawe answered. "I don't like being made use of, but I like to make use of others . . ."

The Government tried to arbitrate.

"Not a wheel shall turn until the men resume work and the apprentices submit to the agreement," replied Grawe.

When he was informed that he could not count on the Socialists supporting his big plans if he behaved as such an enemy of labour, he replied that in that case he would relinquish his plans. He had money enough. Complete deadlock had been reached. *Dagens Stemme* declared that a conciliatory spirit ought to be shown. Grawe got into touch with the editor of the paper and the next day the paper pointed out who ought to show the conciliatory spirit . . .

“How long do you propose to stick this out?” It was Ola Tyrivolden, who called one day at his home, which was under police protection.

“Are you asking just for the sake of knowing, or are you asking so that you can pass on my answer?” said Grawe. “Not that it matters either way . . . I’ll hold my ground until I get what I want; and as it looks as if it’ll take a bit of time yet, I’ve been thinking of having a little holiday down south . . .”

“You’re obstinate, Halvor. Don’t you ever reflect that you’ve got a lot of people from the old village at your works?”

“Do they ever think of me?”

“Aren’t there any concessions you can make?”

“No. Have you some offer?”

“Your men won’t budge . . . They’re beginning to leave town . . . They’ve sent their wives and kids to friends in the country . . . And even if the apprentices are horrified now at the state of affairs they’ve brought about, more or less in youthful daredevilry, the older men won’t let them give up now. D’you remember the last conflict? It went on for nine months.”

“I don’t propose to give in.”

Ola Tyrivolden looked at him hopelessly.

“If you got the contract for the new coastal patrol vessel for the Navy . . .?”

“I do not propose to give in.”

“But in that case perhaps you’d be able to re-employ the apprentices you’ve sacked?”

Grawe thought for a moment and then said:

“Perhaps I would, but if so the boys’ll have to sign new contracts. The point for me is that the old ones have expired. I tell you, Ola, that you know as well as I do that one man must make the decisions, whether you call the social system this, that, or the other.”

Ola Tyrivolden seemed about to reply, but repressed what he had been going to say and went off. The following day Grawe was given the contract, the lads signed new contracts, and work started once more; the lock-out which was to have begun the next day was called off . . . He had scored a victory all along the line. The Employers’ Federation, the bank, the Press, and the Government



had given in to him. When he thought over the conflict, he smiled. For the first time in his life he had used his power to the fullest extent, and not for a moment allowed himself to be swayed by anything but his own wishes. The wound Horfeldt had given his pride and vanity was healed ; and he said to Harald :

“ I see more and more that you are right . . . A policy of considered egotism takes us furthest.”

“ You don't think it'll be difficult to restore the tempo to its old level? You know an affair like this leaves a lot of bad feeling afterwards.”

“ I've thought of that too,” Grawe answered. “ We'll have to rely on the control apparatus working, and you'll have to tighten up on the discipline. If there's any fuss we'll take up the cudgels once more . . . But I've come to the conclusion that we should pay out a week's extra wages . . . The whole business is over now. I have got my way, and I've money enough. I don't want a stupid affair like this to make permanently bad relations between our operatives and us. What d'you think? All of us have the same interest really. It's just that one man must be boss . . .”

Harald looked dumbfounded.

“ You're absolutely unique, Father . . .”

“ Yes. D'you think we should do it?”

“ Without a shadow of doubt.”

“ All right, you make out the notice then and let the accounts department know.”

The men were no less astounded than Harald. And they liked the rumour which spread through the firm that it was the junior partner's idea. When Harald heard it he went to his father and asked if it was he who had put the rumour about.

“ Yes, I hinted at it to Nils one day when I met him in the yard.”

“ But why?”

“ Well, I'll tell you, Harald. I can get along without any sympathy. But you, in view of your future management of the firm, need to be popular with the men. You don't want to bring a child into the world for fear of its being involved in war. That's your form of fatherly egotism. I have brought you into the world, and I can't bear the idea of your suffering for my victories.”

“ How d'you mean?”

“ The reason why I behaved harshly in the conflict was that I wanted to avenge myself against the people who believed they could use me for their own ends. That revenge I got. But I don't want it to cause you difficulties . . . You follow? A well-considered egotism.”

“ Now and then I simply don't understand you.”

“The egotism of youth, ennobled with the wisdom of age ; perhaps we can put it that way ?”

When work was in full swing again Harald came one day and said :

“You know, Father, I think that little affair has had an entirely salutary effect. While the firm has been growing, and particularly during the recent changes we made in the system, such a mass of bother had piled up that there was bound to be an explosion some time or other. Anyway, I’ve not seen people going at the work as they are now, ever since I came home. It hasn’t done us the slightest harm ; on the contrary . . .”

Grawe had noticed the same thing, and though he ought not to have liked the sentimental surge which Harald’s words produced inside him, he could not in his heart of hearts deny that he was pleased at the turn events had taken.

A day or two later, however, he attended a board meeting at the Industrial Bank. Quite another atmosphere met him there. In the past month or two he had noticed that at the meetings people had had a hostile attitude towards him. Gradually he gathered what was in the wind.

The sympathy lock-out for which he had forced forth promises had not been popular ; but they had not dared to oppose him. But when, after getting their help to triumph over the men, he proceeded to pay them for the period of their illegal strike, his connections in financial and industrial circles regarded his behaviour as a direct insult ; they began heartily to regret having got him on to so many committees and into so many societies. But they could not be rid of him ; his personal ability was all-conquering, and the mere appearance of his name in connection with any bank or firm was enough to guarantee its position in the eyes of the public. So as he sat on committees now he felt like a sort of animal-tamer. Growling colleagues accepted his ideas but were ready to tear him down at the first opportunity. And they would give him no support in addition to what they had already given him . . .

Even the ship-yard plan did not receive their unconditional support any longer. They thought that when it was completed he would appropriate all the power to himself. When he discovered how opinion had turned against him, he mentioned it to Harald, who was more pleased than anything else over this unexpected opposition, and brought up again his idea of combining civil and arms production . . .

“The profits would be so great,” he told his father, “that their personal objections would be overcome. Their love of gain would conquer their hostility to your position . . .”

Grawe did not reply . . . Harald scrutinised him closely and said no more.



One day when he and Harald were sitting talking in the office, the secretary came in and announced a German, Herr Sager. His card showed that he represented a world-famous engineering and arms works with which Grawe had previously had dealings.

"Wants to sell us some new machines, I suppose," he said.

Sager went straight to the point.

"I'll speak quite openly about my firm's plans. We've studied as carefully as we could the scheme you have in mind. We noted how extremely well thought-out the whole idea is in detail, but also how enormous the capital expenditure for both the steel-works and the engineering works will be. We have been of the opinion that such an enterprise is beyond the resources of Norwegian capital . . ."

Harald glanced at his father . . . Sager went on :

"On the other hand a concern of that size, or even greater, could succeed if based upon more all-round production."

"But if you think we could not get enough money for the construction and running of a works of smaller size, surely we couldn't tackle anything bigger?"

"That's where we would come in, both as regards capital and production."

Grawe could not see what he was driving at. Harald on the other hand said :

"You mean that the new works ought to make your lines? . . ."

"There's no point in concealing the details any further. The new machine-guns and field-guns we've developed. I'll explain . . . Our firm has arms subsidiaries in many countries, but directly a war breaks out any enemy governments will naturally take over our subsidiary companies. We intend therefore to spread our production over as many countries as possible, and preferably those which have a chance of remaining neutral. We hadn't actually thought of Norway until we heard of your big plans ; and even then we didn't believe any collaboration was possible with respect to our export lines . . . Your country has taken up such a very definite attitude regarding arms-traffic . . . But we've made investigations . . . At any rate the matter could be discussed."

"On what basis?"

"We provide the same sum in capital as is mentioned as the share capital, supply all the machinery needed in the special armaments section, and are allowed to appoint a number of our engineers and foremen in that section . . ."

The upshot of the conversation was that Grawe and Harald were to travel down to Herr Sager's firm to investigate the possibilities further. Having received full assurances that the Government and the party leaders in the Storting would place no difficulties in the way of collaboration with the great arms trust, they set off . . .

Now it really came to the point Grawe felt anything but keen on the business. But Harald drove him on.

"Damn it, yes . . . I know what you're getting at . . . It isn't exactly a sentimental business. But d'you imagine one gun less will be made for them if you refuse? . . . Think of the advantages our ordinary production would get from having at the back of it an even flow of business . . . We'd have all the advantages of participating in a world-wide trust, and at the same time retain our independence. Instead of employing ten thousand men you'd give work to fifteen thousand . . . Didn't you observe how the great men just rubbed their hands together with joy at the prospects opened up by the extended plan?" And Grawe gave in.

Some days later he and Harald returned home. In conjunction with Herr Sager and other officials of the arms trust they had worked out a plan whereby, as far as human calculation could assure it, fifteen thousand Norwegians would be given regular employment even if market conditions were variable.

"With one foot in peace and the other in war, we'll stand for ever. That's our feeling about it," said Herr Sager when the plan was complete. Throwing out his hand and indicating the lines of factories visible from his office window, he added :

"As you see we stand pretty well."

When Grawe got back he attended a Government conference on the matter. The Government was delighted at the many humanitarian measures Grawe proposed to carry out in connection with the vast undertaking, and when Ola Tyrivolden came to discuss the recruiting of the labour required, he was deeply impressed by the plans of his former friend.

"There's something in you, Halvor, which I don't understand . . . One day you're ready to ruin yourself and thousands of people simply to get your own way . . . The next you play the part of the benefactor of the community in big style. I know, of course, that it's a nasty business to make these weapons. But if we don't make them, others will . . ."

It was almost a year now since the big banquet. It had been, Grawe felt, a richer and more varied year than many earlier ones . . . He had at length broken free of a whole crowd of notions which had disturbed his mind and blocked his powers of decision.

He was once more on excellent terms with the men at the works. There was nothing sentimental or romantic about his relations with them : all was realistic and definite. Only in one section there was still a little bother with the control instruments ; that was, of course, the section where Nils worked. He and the other old fellows seemed to be finding it difficult to get accustomed to the boxes for



there was always something going wrong with them. Harald often spoke to his father about it, and even suggested that in view of the long period Nils and the rest of them had been at the works, he should have the instruments removed. When Harald made this remark his father laughed.

"Have you gone sentimental, Harald? Hasn't the apparatus been doing its job?"

"Yes, completely."

"What's the matter, then?"

"I can't explain it quite. But since I've had the whole responsibility on my own shoulders I take a rather different view of a number of things."

"Watch out, my bonny lad. I wouldn't like you to have to go through the difficulties I've come through. The thing I've learnt in the past year is that seeking after happiness leads you on to the highroad to unhappiness, and that when we try to do good it simply leads to evil. Keep yourself away from people . . . Study your own interest and your work and avoid—well, you know all this."

Some days after the conversation Grawe attended a meeting of the Steel-Works Federation, where as usual lately he was abrupt and intractable; as he left the meeting someone said to him:

"Bit fed up lately? Is it this bother of the old workmen with the new control instruments?"

He made a casual reply, but shook with fury. Was there back-chat about the firm? It was on a Saturday that this happened. When he went down to the yard, working hours were just over and the men streamed past him. Some of them gave him good-day; most looked in other directions. He became still more angry at that. There go some of the people who'd try to make use of me, he thought. He would show them who was master of the house.

A few minutes after he had reached his office, his secretary came in and said that Nils wanted to have a word with him. Grawe felt inclined to tell Nils to go to blazes, but he let him come in. Nils asked for the control instruments on their machines to be removed. It was so hard to get used to them . . . For a split second Grawe recalled the first period when they worked together, the "battle time," as he had called it; no one then had controlled the far-reaching work they had done together; no Director Hørfeldt had sucked him dry.

The next moment however he remembered what the colleague had said at the meeting of the Steel-Works Federation. He forgot all else; Nils was again the enemy, coming to make use of him. He was the owner . . . Everything belonged to him . . . And he flew into a fury again. Now they'd see who'd allow himself to be exploited by others!

"The control instruments shall remain on the machines," he said, "and you're a prize idiot if you can't work with them when every operative in the world does. If you're not satisfied, you're free to leave . . . There are ten others who would take over your job. Anyway the whole blasted business can go to hell for all I care. I want peace . . ."

Nils went slowly out. Grawe could see from his back that it was a blow without any precedent to the old fellow . . . For a second he regretted what he had done . . . It wasn't the fault of Nils that Hørfeldt had ruined his life, and that there was a lot of blether in the Steel-Works Federation. Should he call him back and talk to him? . . . But then he recalled that Nils, like all the rest, was his enemy, and he let him go . . . Harald was somewhat distressed when he heard about the scene, and Grawe's annoyance switched to his son.

"Why did you teach me all this if you're not prepared to help me to follow out in the works the course you yourself decided upon?"

"Egotism is not the same thing as bad temper and brutality," Harald replied calmly. "By giving it such expression we merely damage our own position."

Grawe made no answer; he gave his son a brief farewell and went off home. When he arrived there he had only one wish. To be alone and in peace. But whilst he sat there he remembered a letter he had received from one of his lawyers, who had refused a case which Grawe almost thrust upon him. It was a question of compensation connected with the estate of a deceased man. Grawe was certain to win the case, but the lawyer had advised against the law-suit out of regard for Grawe's good name. Grawe had replied that he would look after that himself. Now the lawyer refused the case altogether; he regretted severing connections in this way . . . Well, he was only harming himself. The whole telephone book was full of lawyers.

Karen came in at that point and said that dinner was ready. She remained in the room and began to say that she felt unwell.

"That's only to be expected at your age," he answered.

She was a little startled by his voice, but admitted he was right. Then she complained about the housemaid. He knew that she did not really mean what she said about her illness or about the maid. It was simply the introduction to a conversation. But he wanted peace; he wanted to be alone, he wanted to be alone, alone . . . So he said roughly:

"You must accustom yourself to keeping on good terms with the rest of the domestic staff . . . And if you feel old and ill, it'd be as well if you went into a home for old folk."

She did not say a word; simply looked at Grawe and went off in



silence. When he had finished his meal, he went as usual and sat in his study, feeling pleased with himself for having put her in her place. Poor old girl, he thought, she was old and worn out and needed rest, and a comfortable home for old people was just the spot for her . . . He did not like to think of her eyes, of course ; but old people like her couldn't help finding life a bit hard now and then, and it was really almost comical of her to be so upset that she walked out of the room. He had similar thoughts when the maid brought in his coffee : Karen always used to do that herself . . . But all the while there was something deep down in him which he did not like, and when he had drunk his coffee he dressed and went out. As he shut the door after him, with a bang, the thought seized him that the echo of the bang in the great hall told how lonely he had become . . . No one ever awaited his coming any longer. Harald was absorbed in his own affairs. The only ties they had were the works and memories of Harald's childhood and of the time when Camilla was alive. That was why it was really best to do what he had done to-day : to cut all the ties that remained. The lonely had the least to lose. It hurt a little, of course, at the moment of cutting . . . Of the competitor and the lawyer he did not think at all.

In these days one has to be firm and unsentimental, he thought. People must adapt themselves to the spirit of the times. It was plain that they must adopt the new mentality created by modern technique and all the new machines. The old ideal of humanity was gone for good . . . He was so pleased with these ideas that on an impulse he decided to go and see Harald at Holmenkollen, to talk over the question of pensioning off Nils and the other old workmen. The machinery was modern enough. It was the men who needed modernising. Just as he had been. He rang up his home from a kiosk and said that he would be out until supper. It was the maid who took the 'phone. He smiled. Karen still in a huff, but she would have a nice room at the home. With that he caught a Holmenkollen train. He knew that Harald and Astrid were at home and as he got off the train up in Holmenkollen and saw the city lying below in the spring evening he was in a light-hearted frame of mind.

When the maid opened the door of Harald's house, he heard there were strangers in. The maid explained that the engineer and the lady were entertaining their bridge club ; and they had just sat down to play. But she would inform them . . . it wouldn't be any bother . . . If the Works-Owner would just wait a moment. He said, " No thanks." He would ring to-morrow instead. He went out, hearing how Harald's door too banged behind him. And there he was alone on the highway . . . As he stood there his new theories

of the greatness of loneliness collapsed. It was the loneliness of his home which had driven him up to Harald's . . . But there too he was superfluous . . . And he began to reflect that somewhere in the glittering sea of lights below him there were a number of people who probably were thoroughly unhappy because he had . . . Yes, what had he done in fact?

Used his power against people who wished him only well, and who were defenceless.

He began to walk slowly down towards the city.





## PART FOUR

### I

Halvard Fjellgard's family had owned their big farmstead, and held a powerful position in local affairs, as far back as church records and tradition went. Halvard's father, who was known as "the Young Sheriff," was well-to-do, and when he observed that his eldest son was intellectually inclined he decided he should study. He hoped that in Halvard peasant culture would unite with the new ideas spreading through the land from the university.

The Young Sheriff had long since abandoned Christianity, and he and his deeply-religious wife waged a silent battle for the boy's heart. She agreed that Halvard should study, but insisted that his education must not take place at the expense of his religion. When Halvard left home to become an undergraduate, her last words were: "Don't forget your prayers, Halvard. I shall be praying for you every day." She was glad when he promised her that.

In Oslo there lived a branch of the family who had married into one of the old upper-class families of the capital. Halvard did not always feel at ease with the people he met in their home. He was attracted by them; their swift, superficial wit appealed to his own quick mind. But he could not understand their absolute lack of respect for religious values. And in order to remain in sympathy with the rest of the company, it often happened that he kept his thoughts to himself.

One of his friends in the capital was Erik Pettersen, whose father, Hans Pettersen, was one of the biggest wholesale traders in the country. Halvard Fjellgard and Erik became bosom companions: one Easter Erik went off with Halvard to the mountains; and Halvard was often a guest in Erik's home, a large house in the new district out at Frogner.

One spring evening Halvard was invited to a men's dinner in the Pettersen's home. The party consisted of business men, lawyers, civil servants. Halvard and Erik were the only younger men present, and after the meal they all sat round in the smoking-room. The windows were open; fresh evening air, charged with the scent of flowers, wafted in. At first the talk was mainly about commerce and Halvard scarcely listened. All at once, the conversation took another turn: before he knew what was happening, Halvard was looking into a new world. First one, then another, of these gentlemen in their fifties and sixties—and they wielded, as Halvard was



well aware, enormous influence in the city's life—uttered sentiments which were like blows in his face . . .

They were discussing peasant culture :

“Simply rose paint and old cheese,” said one.

“You're forgetting the brandy, old boy,” said another.

One of them took up the language question . . . It was the cultural responsibility of the business men of the capital to refuse to have dealings with people who insisted on employing garbled dialects in business letters. The whole agitation for introducing new words into the language sprang from the narrow-minded, class egotism of the peasants.

“They're as inimical to culture as the Socialists,” one of them commented.

“Well, it's not surprising when they never cast their eyes beyond their own little parish boundaries : I've heard a lot of people say that it's perfectly incredible how much religiosity still survives in the country districts. I've no desire to run down Christianity, but it's surely plain for everyone to see that it's not suited to our times.”

“What you're saying is true enough,” said a lawyer, “but it seems to me that you're all keeping very much to generalities. The worst feature of the so-called peasant culture is the unbelievable self-righteousness of the peasants. I have a good deal to do with the new industrial concerns which are being formed throughout the country just now . . . And, my God, the pettifogging tricks the peasants get up to . . . As if their log huts and bits of ground were as important as businesses worth millions. The sheriffs are the worst . . .

The lawyer got no further. At that point Halvard Fjellgard stepped in. Each word spoken against the peasants hit him personally. The big sitting-room in the farm-house at home was decorated with rose paint—dating from the early eighteenth century. Neither he nor his father was a supporter of New Norwegian as a language, but for all that it had been constructed partly from their local dialect. And when the lawyer spoke of religion, wasn't it his mother he insulted ? . . . The log huts were his home . . . Upon the bits of ground his family had lived for hundreds of years . . . And the sheriff, who was worst of all, was his father ! . . .

It was a minute or two before he grasped it all. He did not understand it at first with his brain . . . Simply his heart winced. But then his mind joined in and his blood began to boil ; and when he heard the last remark he lost control of himself completely. He jumped up from his chair and gave the lawyer a slap on the cheek that rang through the room. Erik got up too, but before he could take a breath Halvard's fist was in his face and he fell backwards into a low Turkish table covered with bottles and glasses, knocking

it over with a frightful crash. Halvard ran to the door leading to the hall, and, standing there with clenched fists, told them what he thought of them all while they talked and who he was . . . The wholesaler tried to approach him, but started back when Halvard shouted : " One step further and you'll be lying there ! . . ." And when he had relieved his heart he went out . . .

In spite of his fury he smiled as he went and he looked at the lawyer, who sat bleeding from the nose and sniffing, and at the frightened faces of the rest . . .

When he came out into the spring evening he quietened down, and he did what he always did when he wanted to think . . . He went along the Smedstad road out to Røa and round by Sørke valley . . . He walked on for nearly five hours and when he came home the sun was up over Grefsenkollen.

As he walked he was horrified to discover how far he had drifted from his natural milieu and his own culture by adopting the fast, loose-living tone of the city. He had been on the point of feeling ashamed of things in his home and in the peasant culture . . . He had been fooled by the good-humoured sallies and the assured manners of these people, and many a night he had forgotten to say his prayers. Often too he had been silent when his comrades had talked about religious questions, and gay and blasphemous paradoxes sparkled forth. But not before this evening had he seen it all as a back-sliding in himself, and as an attack on his home and environment.

As he tramped home in the morning sun he thanked God that his eyes were opened, and he promised his parents that he would not swerve again. It was not as easy as his father had thought for a peasant to incorporate the city's culture in his outlook, and he could think of many people whose whole lives had been undermined because they had rejected the old in their eagerness to acquire the new . . . He began to see a programme for his life ; he would devote it to combatting the destructive effect of city culture upon rural life . . . Christianity was a natural part of the still indefinite programme which Halvard Fjellgard saw that spring night. Together with family pride and the peasant culture, it was one of the stabilising forces upon which the nation's life must be founded.

## II

During his last term as a student, Halvard Fjellgard was a member of a small club for provincial students. They met twice a month for social evenings : there he got to know a girl from Bergen, Antoinette van Huyjken. She was studying philology, and it was



not long before they were engaged. She belonged to an old Bergen commercial family, and Halvard's father did not at first approve of the match. But when he saw the healthy young woman he reconciled himself to the fact that she was neither a peasant girl nor the daughter of a university man . . . The knowledge that in time she would inherit a considerable fortune also helped.

Some days before the wedding Halvard Fjellgard told Antoinette of his religious ideas. Throughout his student years his Christianity had had no visible effect upon him. Especially during his first years at the university he had availed himself of all the good things life offered ; and he had not kept away from drink—or girls.

When he got engaged to Tony, Christianity at first shifted further from him, and he felt ashamed sometimes for having at certain periods completely stopped praying. A visit to his future parents-in-law's home in Bergen showed him that the van Huyjken family were even more de-Christianised than the families he had met during his student days, and Tony in that respect differed no whit from the others.

As the wedding approached, he felt that it would be betraying himself, his tradition, and his mother to hide it from Tony, so he told her where he stood as regards religion ; or where he had stood, or would have liked to stand—he did not himself know quite which.

For the first time there were exchanged between them discordant words. He told her first a little about his family's religious traditions ; about his great-great-grandfather and Hans Nilsen Hauge, the reformer ; about his mother and what she had said to him on different occasions. Tony listened to him with the attentiveness she always accorded him when he spoke of himself . . . Then she said :

“ But all this makes your whole background even more interesting that it was already. And of course I knew your mother must be religious. Hadn't all peasants of the older generation religious leanings, as far as that goes ? ”

“ You don't seem to understand that for Mother and my whole family Christianity was a real thing in life.”

“ My dearest boy ! I do understand it. But your father is quite irreligious, isn't he ? ”

“ Yes, he is ; but I don't know that I am.”

He said it quietly. The conversation took place during a walk among the foot-hills around Bergen. She stopped abruptly, and looked at him sharply :

“ You don't mean to say you're— ”

“ A Christian ? . . . ”

Halvard finished the sentence for her.

“ No. I daren't say that, Tony ; but I believe in a personal God,

even though he doesn't mean to me and to my life what their faith used to mean to my ancestors . . ."

They walked in silence for a bit. Halvard realised that Tony was faced with problems which she had not previously known existed. She did not even know what questions to put, and he did not know how to explain it all to her. At last the question came from her :

"You go to church, then? And you kept it a secret from me?"

"Unfortunately, Tony . . . I've not been to church since I met you. If I had been I'd certainly have told you."

She looked greatly relieved.

"Yes, and of course, I'm confirmed," she said. "And naturally we must be married in church . . . And if it'll make any difference to your position in your village, I can easily go to church up there if you want me to."

"Thank you."

But he saw there was still something she was not altogether clear about. To help her to get it out he said :

"Is there something that frightens you in what I said?"

"Not exactly that. But I'd like to know if you're thinking of converting me . . . Isn't that what it's called?"

As she saw a shadow cross his face, she took his arm and said :

"Forgive me if I say anything that may hurt you. I don't know how to express myself in matters like these, but I don't want you to put any sort of pressure on me. I'm terribly fond of you, Halvard . . . You know that . . . And I won't let go of you for anything in the world . . . But I too have my ideals and my background and my spiritual heritage. All of it is a part of me, just as your religious ideals are a part of you, and you mustn't take it away from me . . . Do you promise me that?"

Halvard saw how far she was from understanding what he had tried to tell her, if she seriously compared her humanism and the traditions of her trading world with Christianity. He decided not to try to explain the difference : whatever words he used would sound self-righteous in her ears. But as he did not reply at once, she became irritated and said :

"Halvard! I won't let you go . . . But I want to get this straight, so that I know what I'm taking on . . ."

She had stopped again, and they stood and looked down at the town, which lay below them, while the sun slowly sank towards the mountains in the west. What should he reply? He wouldn't risk losing her.

"I shan't ever put the slightest pressure upon you, Tony. If my relationship with you in life is not such that my belief in God begins



to take on significance for you, then I haven't the right, even, to constrain you in any way . . ."

Tony smiled, and took his arm :

"You don't know how you frightened me by not answering. I saw you unmasking yourself as a revivalist wanting me to forgo all pleasures in life. Thank you, Halvard . . . And in return I'll promise you that I'll never try to force you to believe in any of my things."

And with that she flung her arms around Halvard's neck, and he pressed her until she felt sore. But deep in Halvard's soul was something he was dissatisfied with ; he had a feeling that he had promised her she should not share the most precious thing he had.

A fortnight later they were married. They went south for a long honeymoon before going to their home.

Old Fjellgard moved into the dowager house, and Halvard and Antoinette settled into the farmstead. Shortly after the wedding the old farm building, with the rose-painted room, was burnt down. The fire gave old Fjellgard such a shock that he fell an easy victim to pneumonia. The new farm-house was designed by one of the best architects in the country and gave solid expression to his conception of a fusion of peasant culture and modern technique.

Antoinette Fjellgard entered into the life of the district with all her powers of mind and will. Money streamed into her father's pockets during the war ; but she reflected that wealth which came so easily might disappear easily also and she asked her father to pay her the money she would inherit from her mother, "and if possible a bit in advance from you too," she added with a laugh. Which she got. It enabled her and Halvard to make the farmstead the cultural centre of the district. She was quickly liked by everybody ; she was kind to the poor folk and the peasants gradually felt confidence in her.

She focussed too her husband's powers. He entered politics, became a member of the county council and of the Storting. Fjellgard often said :

"I don't represent any party in the Storting : I represent my wife."

At that Antoinette Fjellgard would laugh, and there were those who said that Fjellgard was right.

They did not resume the discussion about Christianity which they had had before their marriage. Halvard kept his promise not to put any pressure upon her ; and, besides, they got on together so extraordinarily well that it was unnecessary, he felt, to create any sort of religious atmosphere in the home. They went to church on the chief festivals. Easter, however, they usually spent with her family at the old van Tuyjken's chalet near the Bergen railway.

When the oldest boy, Aasmund, was born, Halvard was afraid that Antoinette would not want to have him christened, and he asked her about it one day. But she was merely surprised :

“ Of course he shall be christened ! What d’you think the people in the village would say if your first-born was not christened ? ”

When they had been married for some years and he had entered the Storting, a religious question cropped up in their life in connection with the appointment of a pastor in the village. There had been several applicants, but only two were really considered. One had been in charge of the post for some time ; he was a university man and had become very popular in the district during the time he had been there. The other had studied at a training college and had been a curate in the diocese ; he too was liked and well known in the district. When the parish council’s nomination came it proved they had unanimously chosen the curate from the training college. The other man received no nomination at all.

When Fjellgard learnt of this he was upset, not because the man from the training college had been nominated as number one, but because the other man had been completely set aside ; and he travelled all the way back from the Storting to talk to the parish council. The council was not to be moved, however, even though Fjellgard pointed out what an injustice they were doing the other man whom everybody liked and whose only fault was that he had been to the university.

“ He’s done only good work here, and yet you say that you won’t on any account have the man . . . Well, in that case I’ll have to take the matter into my own hands.”

He did so, and used his influence with the Government to such effect that the university man got the appointment. Most people in the village were grateful to him, but a section of the parish council were very much annoyed, and it was just they who had been Fjellgard’s main support politically.

When he told Antoinette about the affair, she said :

“ Why did you involve yourself in this, Halvard ? There was no question of principle, and it was nothing to do with you . . . ”

“ But the man is suffering an injustice, Tony.”

“ Yes, of course he is. But what has it to do with your work as a Storting member that some pastor or other suffers an injustice ? Besides . . . Think what an injustice you are doing the parish council by forcing on them a pastor they don’t want.”

But Halvard maintained his standpoint and Antoinette, who had noticed that now and then it was impossible to get him to give in on some subject, dropped the matter after remarking that she hoped this trumpety question would not damage his chances of re-election.

He was of the opinion that an affair which concerned among



other things his religious convictions was no trumpery question ; but he said nothing. However, Antoinette said a day or two later :

“ Had the action you took about the pastor anything to do with what you said about your faith before we were married ? ”

She made this remark at the breakfast table just before he left for the Storting . . . It was the first time either of them had referred to that conversation, and after a short pause he said :

“ Yes, it had something to do with what we talked about then. Do you often think about that ? ”

“ Now and then . . . But I fancied you'd just about abandoned ideas of that kind. ”

She said it without intending any insinuation. She had often changed her own interests ; to get new opinions was in her eyes quite legitimate. Experience, reading, the passage of years : all these were factors which could make one change one's views, and she did not even notice what impression her words made on Halvard. He, however, was so upset by what she said that he sprang from the table and cried :

“ I've respected your view of life. I promised you I would . . . and you can just stop deriding mine . . . ”

And out he went. Antoinette was completely baffled. She resolved to steer clear of all questions bordering on religion. She made up her mind too to tell Halvard she was sorry she had said something which hurt him.

Halvard Fjellgard was unable to remain in the Storting that morning. He caught a Holmenkollen train and set off into the woods. It was the beginning of May. The roads were dry after the melting of the snow ; here and there dirty heaps of snow still lay in the ditches. The trees were beginning to come out, and the weather was so warm that the sweat was soon coming from him as he made his way through the forest . . . To begin with he saw how wrongly he had behaved towards Tony by flaring up as he had. She had not meant to hurt him, and she had good reason to believe that he had given up his Christianity ; how could she know that he clung on to something in the depths of his heart, or that he had said his prayers to himself almost every night after they had put out the light ? . . .

But she was right ! He had abandoned such ideas, as she had said . . . Or was in the process of abandoning them . . . He would have to tell her very nicely he was sorry. His violence had only been a sign of bad conscience.

When he had got as far as that he felt almost glad that he would have an opportunity to tell her he still believed in God . . . But gradually as he walked he began nonetheless to feel more downcast, for he saw how he had neglected his duty towards Antoinette in the

years they had been married. He had promised her not to put any pressure on her . . . And he had probably been right in doing so . . . But in what spirit had he kept his promise? Hadn't he kept it mainly because it would be difficult to live so that Antoinette could see in him the effect of God's love and omnipotence? It was easier to live as they did, in an even satisfaction with life.

He did not feel so pleased with himself when he came home for dinner. He was glad to see Antoinette again; he was afraid his boorishness might have wounded her. But she embraced him at once and asked him to forgive her.

"I didn't know that my thoughtless words would affect you so."

He asked her to forgive him too and told her what he had been thinking about during his long walk. She told him he was, and always would be, an incorrigible dreamer and idealist.

He liked hearing that. But it was not long before both of them noticed there was something between them which had not been there before. A hardness and self-assertiveness began to be discernible in his manner. He judged others more harshly, and signed every proclamation issued in the campaign against immorality; he spoke at big youth gatherings, and lost something of his infectious and unpremeditated joy. He suffered from a vague dissatisfaction with himself, and seized every opportunity to show Antoinette, indirectly at least, that he had by no means changed his view of life. Some years passed thus. He justified himself with a phrase he had once heard: the art of life is to achieve the possible. But he was never entirely content with it. He knew what was lacking. God was only a reserve in his life. Now and then affairs like that of the pastoral appointment would crop up. At these times he would be seized with a morbidity and self-recrimination before which she was helpless. The only thing which she felt helped him at all was to tell him he was a hopeless romanticist and idealist.

She hoped that this disunity between them would disappear, but when the years passed and nothing happened she began to fear sometimes that it would end in catastrophe. Similar thoughts crossed his mind sometimes, but always accompanied by the hope that in the end everything would turn out all right . . . How, he did not know; he dared not think of God in this connection.

Fjellgard became one of the big names in the country; his hardness in political life made him feared . . . He was particularly unpopular among those circles in the city with which he had been associated as a student. *Dagens Stemme* attacked him at every turn, and every attack served to sharpen the sword Fjellgard directed against the superficial city culture which he had once almost been deluded by.

Fjellgard's eldest son, Aasmund, was to be confirmed. During



the autumn he had visited the pastor and Fjellgard saw that he took his preparation seriously ; twice he was on the point of showing his son that he believed in God himself, but he let the opportunities slip by. A day or two before the examination Aasmund came to him.

"Father. I don't want to be confirmed."

"Why not, my boy?"

"I don't believe what the pastor tells us . . . No one else does either . . ."

Fjellgard expected the remark, but nevertheless he felt a wave of bitterness towards the boy. Yet how could Aasmund know that his father believed in God when all his life he had not seen or heard any evidence of it? Fjellgard said :

"I know I've been wrong in not talking to you about God. I believe in God and find it hard to conceive living without the bit of faith I have, even though you've seen nothing of it . . . Furthermore, I've seen in your grandmother's and great-grandfather's lives what a force Christianity can be . . . I ought to have handed on to you too that aspect of our family traditions."

Aasmund was amazed at his father's words.

"D'you want me to let myself be confirmed?"

"You must obey your own conscience, Aasmund . . . I think it would be good for you to be confirmed ; don't think about me, but about your grandmother . . . But if you won't be confirmed, you'll at least show respect for yourself and your idea of the truth, which will please me . . ."

"What would you do in my place?"

Fjellgard had never before received so difficult a question. And though he knew it was evading his duty towards his son just as he had evaded his duty towards his wife in the same manner, he said :

"I don't feel in a position to advise you, Aasmund . . . Have a word with your mother about it."

He felt horrified at his own helplessness in the matter. As a politician he was responsible for the nation's fate in vast and important affairs . . . To the outward eye he was the authoritative, prophet-like leader of men . . . At home he was unable to take the responsibility of helping his own son in a difficult problem, and he was so weak that he couldn't even provide evidence of his personal relationship with God . . . Some days passed, and then Antoinette came to him.

"Aasmund tells me that you won't advise him . . ."

"I daren't, Tony."

"I told him he *should* be confirmed . . . It's a nice custom for the young to be received into the community of their elders, I think, and it does a lot towards developing their serious side."

"But Aasmund doesn't believe! And I don't think it's right for me with my own attitude to force him."

"D'you realise how selfish you are on this particular point, Halvard? On account of you and your attitude Aasmund is to be set outside his circle of comrades . . . He only has difficulties himself because the pastor tries to make confirmation into something it no longer is . . . Use your eyes. For how many people does it mean anything? You daren't take the responsibility, you say? I have taken it. I said he should be confirmed."

"But if he doesn't believe . . ."

"You and your faith. The only thing your faith seems to do is to make you harder and more shut in in yourself . . . And I want Aasmund to make the slight sacrifice for the sake of you and your position, amongst other things. What d'you think the village would say if Aasmund wasn't confirmed? . . . What would happen to its confidence in you if you don't uphold in your own home the national and religious values you're always speaking about publicly? . . ."

"But it's just out of respect for those values, which I believe in and which he doesn't believe in, that I would rather he didn't make a profession of them . . ."

"Rot, Halvard . . . It's your own egotism and self-pity that makes you say all this. You feel sorry for yourself because Aasmund doesn't believe . . . Well, I just ask you this: think once more . . . Aasmund shall be confirmed, and he will do it because he sees his responsibility towards you and his family and the village. If he's to carry on the traditions, he mustn't put himself outside the pale in the village . . . He'd lose his standing by doing it."

"You think so? Look at Father. It was known to everyone that he was no Christian. And he had standing all right . . ."

"But he observed the right forms, Halvard. And he had you confirmed. I don't want my children to have difficulties in life on account of mistaken idealism; it could ruin them for ever. If they're strong personalities themselves, they'll work out their own salvation later."

It was as Antoinette had decided. Aasmund was confirmed.

Fjellgard knew that Antoinette was right in what she said. He did all he could to behave in such a way that there should be no disharmony in the home, and outwardly nothing untoward happened either between him and Antoinette or between him and the children . . . But as the autumn and winter passed the atmosphere of the home altered. He was unable to maintain the authority he had held. He asked God to help him not to become estranged from his wife and the children; but a morbid state of mind came over



him, which made the children begin to avoid him. The farm workers noticed too that his manner became heavier and more shut away, and the village folk began to visit the farm less.

Fjellgard saw no way out of his difficulties. He only saw that they had begun on the day he promised Tony he would not put any pressure on her. He was a coward who for years had failed God, his wife, his children, the people on the farm, and his family traditions . . . The whole Norwegian peasant community in fact for which he had taken responsibility. He saw the great failure his public life had been, though he had had more votes at the last election than ever before.

One day he talked the matter over with Antoinette. Her first reaction was what it had always been : she spoke of his idealism, his romanticism . . . He must face things calmly.

“ You’re in a crisis now, a bit exalted. Just wait, Halvard, and you’ll get back to your normal self. The work at the Storting when it begins in the new year will do you good.”

When he continued to reproach himself she became rather irritated :

“ What is it you want to do ? Be a missionary ? ”

He did not know himself . . . He asked her to help him.

“ Well, how ? Am I to tell you you’re all you reproach yourself to be ? It won’t help you, surely, to know that I agree with you that you’ve betrayed everybody and everything ? . . . Or am I to disagree ? Boast of you ? Acclaim you ? . . . You know I’m fond of you, Halvard. You know that I want to help you, but you must show me what I’m to help you with.”

He was utterly at a loss. Antoinette did not understand him ; he understood himself even less.

When he started work at the Storting, he became more balanced again. The work absorbed him completely. One day the Prime Minister asked him if he would join the Government. There was to be a cabinet shuffle, and he had considered Fjellgard as minister of agriculture. Fjellgard was on the point of agreeing immediately, but suddenly he felt terrified . . . He asked for time to think it over and spent a couple of days doing that . . . At the end of it he refused, for how could he, who took no responsibility for his home and his children, take responsibility for the nation’s peasants ? . . . It was the first time he had taken such an important step without discussing the matter with Antoinette . . . Shortly after that he was asked to seek appointment as provincial governor. Again he refused. As he had found that it injured Antoinette greatly that he did not discuss with her the Prime Minister’s offer, he mentioned the offer of the governorship to her before saying no.

She made a faint effort to get him to accept it, but gave up in face of his flat opposition.

“ But why, Halvard ? ”

“ A man who is afraid to stand by his opinions about the greatest question in life has no right to accept such positions.”

“ Who stops you standing by your opinions ? If I could understand one syllable of your doubts and worries . . . ”

He simply looked hopeless ; she shrugged her shoulders and did not mention the matter again. She had thought that she understood him pretty well ; his was not a complex nature ; but this abject attitude, this fear of the future and of himself, she had not seen in him before. This weakness in him was all the more incomprehensible when she compared it with his intense outward activity. His name had never stood higher than it did now . . . It became known what offers he had received ; which increased his prestige in many quarters . . . Only *Dagens Stemme* congratulated the Government on having escaped Fjellgard's collaboration.

When they returned home after the Storting session, Fjellgard's state of mind lay like a dark shadow over the life of the farm. The children avoided him and the farm hands, who had long since ceased to refer to him on questions of the farm's management, went to Antoinette or Aasmund, who under his mother's wise direction had developed into a steady and industrious youth.

“ Is Father ill ? ” he asked his mother one day.

“ No, what makes you think that ? ”

“ He's so queer and solitary,” the boy said, “ compared with what he was like before. In fact someone asked me about it in the shop yesterday.”

That gave Antoinette Fjellgard a shock . . . If her husband was really so bad that people talked about it, something must be done to show that his reputation was higher outside the district than within it. Without saying a word to Halvard, she went to Oslo and arranged for him to be decorated with the Order of St. Olav. And together with Works-Owner Halvor Grawe he was appointed to an important governmental commission. When she came home and told him this he said at first that he would not accept the Order.

“ If you don't,” said Antoinette, “ I'll take the children and leave the farm. I won't let them remain here and have their joy of living and abilities undermined by a father so absorbed with his own difficulties that he sets aside every other consideration.”

One day during the autumn Antoinette Fjellgard stood on the big grass plane before the house when the post came. There was a letter to Halvard from Director Georg Hørfeldt . . . What could it be ? Nothing but ill could come from that evil Oslo snob. For years he had persecuted her husband in his infamous articles in



*Dagens Stemme*. Once or twice he had actually made Halvard's own party believe that he was only an uncultured careerist.

The letter made her feel uncertain . . . Whilst her husband was in his present state of mind, it might have disastrous results. Should she open it? Or throw it away unread? . . . In the end, however, she gave it to him along with the rest of his mail.

When Fjellgard saw the letter from Hørfeldt, he sat still with it in his hand for a minute. What could that man want with him privately? He had heard rumours that Hørfeldt had left *Dagens Stemme* and given up political work; that he was dangerously ill . . . Antoinette sat at her sewing cabinet in his study and followed his movements with bated breath . . . Would he never open that letter?

At last he slit open the envelope and read the letter through . . . Once . . . Twice. Antoinette could not fathom whether it was good or dangerous things that he read . . . She only saw that her husband's face relaxed, and she found it difficult not to question him . . . Then he got up and gave her the letter.

Hørfeldt asked Fjellgard to forgive his personal campaign against him. He was sorry that he had not employed fair weapons against him and he saw that his articles, and the attitude he had induced *Dagens Stemme* to adopt towards Fjellgard, did not square with the standards which should be upheld in public life . . . Personal experiences had made him take this view of the position . . .

She could hardly believe her own eyes. Halvard too was utterly at a loss. Hørfeldt, the cynical and materialistic Oslo politician, whom nobody trusted but everybody feared . . . What could have happened to him that made him ask for forgiveness? And in such an unconditional manner? He took the whole blame on himself . . .

And the big, strong man laid his head in his hands as they rested on the desk and began to cry, quietly and from his heart, like a child. He did not know why; he was surprised himself by this unexpected reaction: it was as if, through this letter, he escaped from the tremendous tension of his efforts to hold his own through all his difficulties.

Antoinette was shaken. Was that her husband who lay there across the table, crying like a child because a political opponent asked him to forgive him? Her first feeling was one of sympathy . . . Had Hørfeldt's articles really affected him so much? She had never dreamt they did; on the contrary she had often rejoiced that her husband's clear conscience had enabled him to remain unperturbed by Hørfeldt's personal attacks. He, in fact, had helped her on that score, rather than she him . . .

"If you want to take part in the game you've got to take the knocks," he said with a smile.

And now he lay there and wept . . . She was on the point of comforting him, but then he raised his head and he regarded her with his tear-filled eyes. That in itself was enough to chase away all her pity . . . A man must not be so weak . . . And for the first time she felt hostility towards her husband . . . It increased when he said :

“ There you can see how I should have been.”

As he said that she regretted having ever let him have the letter. Her struggle to put him on his feet would be even more difficult. Whenever she began to hope that now he would recover himself, a new blow came which destroyed the good work she had done. All at once she lost her temper : she walked right up to him and said in a voice that shook with anger :

“ I can only see one thing ; that you're a person I must despise . . .”

She turned her back on him and went out . . . Fjellgard heard the words, saw her face, and saw that she went out. But could not comprehend what had happened . . . Was it his wife who had said that ? Was it she who despised him ? And was it she who had looked at him with those eyes ? And she had done it all at the very moment when he thought he saw for the first time how he had failed her and the children. Instead of feeling sympathy for him, she had felt contempt ; because he had felt wretched and because he had cried . . . The strange feeling that Hørfeldt's letter had given him went entirely and he did not know what to do. Thoughts came and went in his head without any rhyme or reason to them . . . He sat still for a long time. Then he heard her steps in the passage . . . It made him cool and calm, and when she came in again he felt quite unemotional . . . She too had calmed down in the interval. She seated herself in an armchair by the side of the desk. They looked at each other for a moment ; he withdrew his eyes before her strong gaze.

“ You must realise, Halvard, that this can't go on ?”

“ What can't go on ?”

“ Your simply abandoning all efforts to pull yourself together . . . Since the day I made that unfortunate remark about thinking you'd given up your religious ideas you've been a different person. The business about Aasmund's confirmation made it all worse. It's as though you've determined to go to pieces. You seem bent on perpetually torturing yourself with the thought of the wrong you've done. But you've done nothing wrong.”

“ You know that I think of the way I have deceived God.”

“ But do you for that reason have to make life unbearable for the rest of us ? I don't know anything about Christianity, and I don't know any Christian people, but surely it's not the intention that they should go about as you have done for several years



now? . . . My dear Halvard! . . . Others have their difficulties and don't crumple up under them . . . You're oppressed by your God, is that it?"

"Yes . . ."

"But what about me then? Don't you think that the continual uneasiness I feel concerning you can be just as oppressive? And you don't have God sitting at the dinner table and looking glum when the whole family's together and ought to be enjoying themselves . . ."

He knew that every word she said was right. And he could make no answer . . .

### III

After this conversation with her husband Antoinette Fjellgard had the most difficult time of her life. She felt impelled to ask him to forgive her, but she had developed a resentment towards him which prevented her being able to do so, or wanting to. She was afraid, too, that she would lose her hold over him, and therewith the deep joy which their life together had given her. Not only did they suit each other as man and wife, but they had the same tastes. They liked the same people; they enjoyed the same pleasures during their many and long journeys abroad. And now the marriage of their minds was threatened because Halvard had got into a quagmire where it was impossible for her to help him because they had no common basis of experience. She was pleased to observe that after their conversation Halvard had become calmer and more balanced again, but he continued to keep himself to himself. He left the farm in her hands and Aasmund's; himself he was absorbed in political work which kept him sitting in his office most of the day. He went to Oslo twice in the late autumn, and on his return home he told her that he had tried to get in touch with Hørfeldt. When the time of the opening of the Storting approached, she asked:

"D'you want me to come with you to Oslo this year as well? Or would you rather go alone?"

He put his hand on her shoulder and said:

"There's always so much that draws us together that I wouldn't like to go without you."

At that she felt really happy for the first time for many weeks, and she said:

"Thank you, Halvard."

She did not understand what was on his mind, but she hoped that he would at length emerge from this period of depression and again

want the intimate companionship which had once existed between them.

For Fjellgard the letter from Hørfeldt had been a promise that he could once again feel secure in life and achieve the clear convictions which he felt he must possess if his life were to be bearable.

Some days after their arrival he rang up Hørfeldt. At the first meeting of the two men Fjellgard felt tense. He could not forget that this man, who now sat by his side in the restaurant, had persecuted and derided him for years. He asked Hørfeldt point blank :

“What made you so bitter in your attacks upon me?”

Hørfeldt explained :

“Quite simply, that one can most easily damage a cause by shaking people’s faith in the men who carry its banner.”

“But why did you want to oppose the cause?”

“I didn’t want your world, your dialect, your culture, to destroy mine . . . I regarded the strife between you and me as a cultural struggle, and in order to protect myself and my culture I saw no other way than to smash up yours . . .”

“And now?”

“I see both your culture and mine as raw materials from which can be fashioned God’s Kingdom in our country.”

“Strange words to hear from a person like you in a place like this,” Fjellgard said.

They met a number of times in the following weeks. And Fjellgard and Antoinette visited the Hørfeldts out at Bygdø twice. Antoinette Fjellgard closed up like a trap in Hørfeldt’s company. She did not like him : his aim was to extract Halvard from her life and get him into something in which she did not share in any way at all. Furthermore, it was most unnatural, she thought, to see Halvard associating in such a friendly manner with Hørfeldt. She could not understand how her husband could so easily forget all the evil things Hørfeldt had done to him for years past.

One day, some time before Easter, Halvard said :

“Might you consider inviting the Hørfeldts up at Easter?”

“No . . . I certainly mightn’t,” she replied without reflection.

“It’s far from my intention to insist that we do. But I feel I must have an opportunity for a real talk with the chap . . . If you won’t invite them to our home I’ll remain in town over the Easter holiday . . . But don’t make a definite answer immediately, Tony. There’s time enough.”

Antoinette Fjellgard did not know quite what to do ; but then she had an idea . . . If they came up at Easter she could demonstrate to Halvard the contrast between his own home and his own culture and these alien folk who wanted to pull him over to them . . .

“You can depend on my looking after them well,” she smiled.



On the afternoon of the Thursday Georg and Else Hørfeldt arrived at the Fjellgard's home. They were given a rousing welcome as they drove into the grass rectangle. The farmhouse which had been rebuilt was small in comparison with the vast buildings they had noticed during their journey, but it was beautifully proportioned and, like all other farms in the district, painted red. Its large porch seemed to extend hospitality to all, and in the entrance lobby a huge fire was blazing on the open hearth.

During the evening the two couples sat before the fire in the drawing-room and chatted on all manner of subjects. The Fjellgard's children were away, having gone off to a mountain hut as soon as their holidays began.

The following day Hørfeldt and Fjellgard went off into the mountains. They had with them good-sized packs, "because we'll be away the whole day," Fjellgard had said when he asked Antoinette for provisions for the tour.

There was a pretty steep climb to begin with through the pine woods, and Hørfeldt breathed heavily as he followed Fjellgard along the lumber trail. When they reached the birch slopes it became leveller, and Hørfeldt found to his delight that he could fairly easily keep pace with Fjellgard, who must have had far better chances of getting in training. It became very warm, and they could observe the sun and the light mountain wind making their faces browner and browner as the day wore on.

They ate their lunch sitting in front of a mountain hut in the sunshine. Whilst they ate they let their tongues run on about matters of no consequence; then they sat quietly for a time. It was so quiet that they could hear the sun melting the snow.

"You believe in God, then," said Fjellgard at last. "He really means something to you? And it's that that makes it possible for you to face life? . . . That's the position, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"I believe the same," Fjellgard continued. "But for me precisely that belief makes it almost unbearable to live. God is certainly real to me. But you He raises: me He crushes to the earth. Your home He has made heaven on earth: mine He makes into a hell . . . Look, you tell me first of all how your life has come to shape itself. Then you shall hear a little about mine . . . We've got the day before us, and I don't think anyone'll come and disturb us here . . ."

Hørfeldt told Fjellgard briefly his life's story, then Fjellgard spoke of his life and his difficulties.

"Your letter showed me that there's hope for me too, and that I can win back my self-respect which gradually disappeared as I discovered how thoroughly I had deceived myself. I'll be able to hold out for a bit yet, no doubt, but the perpetual feeling that I've

betrayed all I've been given here in life will be too much for me one day."

"Have you talked to your wife about this?"

"I've talked to her about it too much . . . We've drifted apart because of it . . . And I don't think there's any reason why I shouldn't tell you that she protested against my having you up here for Easter; she knew why I wanted you. But she gave way when I said that either you should come to us or I would remain in town for the whole holiday . . . Some days ago she came to me and asked what was on my mind. I said that I had no intention except to put things right. She asked me how I would do that, and I replied that that was the thing I wanted to talk to you about. I thought she was satisfied with this answer, but when we came back home here we had a further talk about it all: it was the most distressing talk I have ever had in my life!"

Fjellgard stopped again. Hørfeldt reflected for a minute; he recalled Antoinette Fjellgard's reserve towards Else and himself, and how she did not want them as guests.

"Are you sure you ought to tell me about this conversation? Up till now you've been telling me about yourself . . . Now you seem to be drawing in your wife, and is that loyal to her? Remember that it is towards her you have the greatest sin and the greatest responsibility . . . In her eyes you would increase your sin towards her by talking about your and her life together to a person who for the time being at least she considers has intruded into her marriage . . . And are you sure that there isn't a good deal of selfishness in your desire to speak about it? If you feel you've deceived her, talk to her about it; don't try to get out of it by indirectly blaming her . . ."

Fjellgard listened to Hørfeldt's words without moving a muscle, and he sat still for a long time after Hørfeldt had stopped speaking. At length he said:

"You're right . . . And as I've now told you about my difficulties perhaps we should move off again. There's still some time to go before sun-down, and the snow's in wonderful condition."

They put on their skis and set off. Then Fjellgard stopped again and said:

"If you knew how dear Antoinette is to me! I'm just as enraptured by her to-day as I was when I met her, and the more I see how cowardly I've been towards her, the more highly I love her . . . Yet I know that I must be prepared to lose her for ever . . . Lately I've asked myself again and again, had I ever any right to marry her? Weren't we too different? Wasn't it bound to end up in catastrophe, whatever I did? And I remember what my father said before he saw Antoinette and got to know her, 'Take



a peasant girl, Halvard. Or the daughter of a man who has studied. We can't understand business people . . ."

As they came up the avenue that led to the farm, the ladies came out on to the verandah to meet them. Antoinette was dressed in a black velvet costume, slightly flounced, with pink cuffs and pink lace around the flounces. She had an ivory-coloured shawl over her shoulders. As she stood there, alertly and smilingly regarding the two skiers, Hørfeldt reflected that she was exactly the type of woman who gets her husband on in the world. In the hall a big fire was burning on the hearth, and when the men had brushed off the worst of the snow clinging to them and were about to go up and change, she said :

"Fru Hørfeldt and I felt it would be interesting for townspeople like you to see a little of the real country customs . . . So we'll have dinner in the big room with all the farm people . . ."

#### IV

That afternoon the large room, the lights, the fire on the open hearth, and the laden table enraptured all the guests.

The big room reached from front to back of the house, and it had three windows at each end. Between the windows were brass bracket-lamps which exactly suited the walls, covered as they were with unplanned wood stained light blue. The floor was made of huge unpainted planks, freshly scoured. Round the walls stood white rococo chairs, covered with red woollen material. The table was wide ; at the ends three could sit easily ; it was covered with a brilliantly white cloth. In the centre of the table stood a seven-armed candle-stick, and at the ends of the table were other, smaller candle-sticks. When the meal was over the table was cleared and coffee, cakes, and liqueur were served on the bare top. Antoinette Fjellgard's attention never wandered from her husband throughout the evening. And slowly her delight increased as she saw how the whole atmosphere of the evening and the home affected him. She got him talking. To begin with he spoke of the things which were most occupying him at present : politics and the Storting. But by degrees she drew the conversation round to the subject of the past. She put in a word now and then which made him recall traditions and stories of his family and the village in the old days ; time and time again she produced little comments designed to show him the gulf that lay between the life to which he belonged and the life she knew nothing of . . .

Hørfeldt began to feel a warm sympathy for this wise and vital woman, who had done so much for her husband, and now believed

that catastrophe threatened the world she had created for herself, her husband, and her children. And the thought crossed Hørfeldt's mind : what had he and Else to do with this little closed community ? The farmstead where master and mistress and all the workers could live their lives outside the world if they wanted to ?

Antoinette asked Else Hørfeldt to sing.

" But only folk tunes and Norwegian songs ; opera and suchlike wouldn't be suitable up here in the country," she said.

At the same time as Antoinette did all she could to lead Halvard back home, as she thought, she endeavoured to show him how far he stood from Hørfeldt's world. Hørfeldt had had no home horizon such as she had in Bergen and Halvard in the village where his forefathers had lived for generations. Hørfeldt and Else belonged to shifting service families ; they were attached to a circle of people, but they belonged to no place. She made Hørfeldt say this . . .

" But there must be something very unstable about existence in that case ?" she summed up.

" Yes, there certainly was until Christianity came into my life."

A shadow crossed Antoinette's face . . . It was the first time during the visit that he had said anything so direct, and she realised that she should not have called forth this remark ; particularly as Fjellgard had said that the roots of his life were torn when he began to deny the power which lay in Christianity . . .

The farm people went off to their own houses as the evening progressed, and the Hørfeldts and Fjellgards sat on by themselves. Else expressed her gratitude for having had the pleasure of seeing such a picture of life in the country. It was new to her. And Hørfeldt said he admired Fru Fjellgard for the way in which she, a townswoman, had entered completely into the peasant life.

" Yes," he added, " once or twice as I watched how you managed everything it seemed as though it was you who had recreated the past here in this modern farmhouse."

" Well, you know, Hr. Hørfeldt," she replied, " when a person enters into a thing heart and soul, it's only to be expected that they'll succeed . . ."

When they had gone upstairs and stood outside their bedrooms, Fru Fjellgard said :

" Fru Hørfeldt and I had a little chat together this morning, and as far as I can make out you and Halvard had a talk during your skiing to-day. I realise perfectly well what all of us think and in my opinion it would be a good idea if we thrashed things out. I too have my view of life, and I've always kept it to myself . . . I haven't bothered even Halvard with it ; though, God knows, I've sometimes wanted his opinion about what was on my mind. But I've always felt that there are things which one doesn't talk about :



so I've said nothing. But now I believe it will be best for us all if we talk things out together : don't you ? We shall have ample opportunity. Shall we do it ? ”

After dinner on Easter Day as they sat round the fire with their coffee, Antoinette Fjellgard said :

“ You know that I don't believe in any God, and you'll understand that for that reason I'm not much in favour of what Halvard is interesting himself in lately . . . I've considered the matter deeply, and for my own sake and the children's I don't want to risk his doing anything over-hasty. I think you are all acting in good faith so I've considered it the best thing I could do to tell you what Halvard has . . . Yesterday you saw his background ; the children are away, of course, but like every other father he's fond of them. I propose now to tell you who I am, and when I've done that you'll be better able to judge whether Halvard has something worth living for already, or whether it's necessary for him to launch forth into something new.” She went straight to the point :

“ When I was still little I had a fear of being poor or rather of being ostracised from the circle of old Bergen commercial families to which I belonged on both my father's and my mother's side. I often heard, you see, of people who had become poverty-stricken ; they just quietly and unobtrusively disappeared. It wasn't good form to talk about them. There was a certain fear in the air ; to-day you, to-morrow me.

“ This fear grew when Father, after I'd taken matric, sent me to an expensive pension for girls in Switzerland—that was where I learnt my languages. During the years I was there, two of my best friends quietly disappeared from the pension ; their fathers, a Stockholm business man and an English financier, were ruined. And down there I decided that with every means at my disposal I would seek to prevent being thrust into oblivion like that. In order to avoid being ruined through a crash in the business world I refused two offers of marriage from young business men whom Father considered eligible. I protected myself too by learning a good deal, and began to study philology. I travelled a fair amount with Father and Mother, and one winter I stayed with a family in England. It was there I discovered that not all wealthy families collapsed in the second or third generation ; those families, in particular, which possessed land retained their position generation after generation. I began to day-dream of some English land-owner turning up. But luckily none did . . . ”

Antoinette Fjellgard looked at her husband with a smile.

“ Then I went to the capital to study. I had never been in eastern Norway before : the railway to Bergen was completed in the same year that I went to Oslo, or Christiania . . . There I discovered

that the world consisted of more than Bergen and foreign countries, and that there were other people in Norway besides Bergen business men whose fortunes rose and fell . . .

“As I sit like this, looking back at my childhood and youth, many things seem more understandable . . . You mustn't think I was an unusual sort of girl. These ideas about calamity and the assurance of my own future, and the notion that it was better to possess land, were not altogether clear to me . . . They were partly my own ideas, partly the natural consequence of the fact that in my home people were constantly talking about the hazards of all commerce connected with the sea. And it wasn't only in our home that people talked in that way. The whole atmosphere of the city was marked by it: the Bergen character, the weather, the dialect; all had something uncertain and changeable about them.

“Then there was another thing I took with me into life from my childhood years and youth in Bergen. We were so close to liberal England in my home . . . Free trade and democracy, peace and business, individualism and commercial freedom were part of the air we breathed . . . The whole progress of the nineteenth century lived in the business families to which I belonged on both sides. Father spent a lot of money on books: French and English literature and philosophy . . . I don't think he read many of them, but he would have them. When he was young he had looked inside some of them and he often held forth about the theory of evolution and the latest discoveries in astronomy.

“From this you'll be able to grasp that my family and all my associations were far removed from Christianity. We went to one church or another when events occurred in the family which needed the church's blessing, but I remember well Father saying once that divine service seemed to him a mixture of mumbo-jumbo and rhetoric . . . And that if there is a God he must almost be moved to laughter by the figures that parade round the altar in costumes fitted for the theatre rather than modern, free times. I didn't see all this clearly either, then, but naturally it helped to form my philosophy of life; if I have any.”

The last remark she made quietly, with an absent-minded air . . . After a pause she went on:

“Well, that's what the young Bergen woman who met Halvard Fjellgard was like . . .

“I fell in love with him at once . . . That wasn't surprising perhaps, because he was an impressive figure then too. But I was a bit alarmed when I discovered a day or two later that it was no ordinary falling in love . . .

“I had become enraptured by this tall stately peasant lad. He seemed to me to shed out light as he walked along. . . When he



began to make love to me I went mad at first . . . perhaps that was something to do with my Bergen blood. But it wasn't long before we became engaged, and not so very long before we were married. In fact it didn't take me many days after meeting Halvard to decide that if there was a person in the world suited to me it was he . . . I'm not romantically inclined ; I wasn't when I was young either, but I was quite convinced that Halvard was the only man for me ; yes, just like in the old-time novels. It wasn't just Halvard himself, but his whole background, his people, his talents : it all coincided with my longings and hopes . . . I entered an existence which was as secure and as founded upon tradition as any could be in this world . . . My terror of being thrust outside vanished ; and, when Father after we'd been married for a year or two again became fabulously wealthy, I seized my chance and asked for whatever money Mother had left me, in order to put the finances of the farm on a firmer footing : and when that was done we were just about as secure economically as anybody could be.

"It was not just egotism made me do all this. I realised that Halvard was a rich personality and I regarded it as my duty to help him forward. And I don't think any woman can have given herself more for her husband than I have done. And now I sit here in front of you to be judged . . . Don't shake your heads ; let's have all the cards on the table and be honest with each other . . . You *are* going to pass judgment on me . . ."

She stopped and bit her lips, and Fjellgard put his head on his hands . . .

"Is this necessary, Tony ? . . ."

"I'm not afraid of you . . . I'm not afraid of anybody or anything here in this world . . . And I'm not afraid to stand up without disguise in front of you . . . This conversation means to me everything I've got and everything I can ever have in life and not some dogma or other behind which I can hide my responsibility to life . . . I'm sorry if I hurt you . . . But when I'm fighting I sometimes take up weapons I don't like . . ."

After calming herself, she went on :

"What was I saying ? . . . Yes . . . If you people are to pass judgment on me, I can point out that I've never deceived Halvard about anything or, to use a ridiculous expression, been unfaithful to him . . . I've been true to him from the bottom up . . . I've been tempted many times, but I've stood my ground . . . I didn't want to . . . I wanted to be upright ; I didn't want to take chances. I had given Halvard my life, and he, and he alone, should have me. And the more I learnt to know him, the more I realised how he needed me, and you can't conceive the boundless joy I felt when I saw that bit by bit he was developing just the traits which I knew

were his most precious . . . I worked with him just as a sculptor works on his marble . . . Isn't that what showing a person love means? And that's what Christianity is supposed to be, isn't it?

"You must forgive me, Halvard, if I say anything that lies on the border of what you like me to say, but it often hurts to hear the truth . . . He liked to conjure up visions . . . I gave his visions an objective . . . All his ideals and dreams of doing something for youth and for the district took the concrete shape of planning for an agricultural college, and now he is the director . . . He liked to read and he used to come home with the most extraordinary collection of books and magazines . . . I thought out a system for his reading, and now he knows a good deal about the things he needs to know about. When we were abroad I always took the trouble to make sure he saw the things which would inspire his work here at home . . . One day I told Halvard that he ought to think about getting on to the county council. He was immediately elected with more votes than anybody else . . . It wasn't a big jump from there to the Storting; and when he got there, it wasn't long before he was counted one of the most promising of the new generation . . .

"He made a lot of enemies . . . You know . . . I was glad, because it showed he was someone to reckon with . . . Fools never get foes . . . Ordinary people don't either . . . But the people who count, they get enemies; so I preferred him to have enemies, but at the same time I made sure that he remained popular in the district here . . . Oh, how thrilling it is! . . . I loved life as it was then . . . I was completely happy. A husband whom I myself had made one of the leading men in the land, whose abilities I had developed: a lovely home in a wonderful part of Norway: healthy, intelligent children. I was good-looking; I was spoken of highly both as a woman and as Halvard's wife, and often a rush of joy went through me when he was attacked . . . If only they knew I was behind it all! . . . They weren't all as infamous as you, Hr. Hørfeldt, by the way . . . You must excuse me, but I'm only using your own expression in your letter to us—to him, I should say.

"And you know . . . The thing I concerned myself most about in what I did for Halvard during these years was that he should begin to have just that quality of firmness, reality, and sternness which was really foreign to his nature when I met him. He was then the peasant-romanticist, the dreamer who wished to give himself for some undefined cause . . . I should have helped him more than I have done towards the undefined goal and his dreams, because all along I knew there was something deep down in Halvard's nature which I didn't understand and could not reach.

"The first time I came across it was some time before our



marriage . . . He told me then that he believed in God and that many of his family had been Haugianists ; and he told me too that his mother was deeply religious.

" I wouldn't have paid any attention to Halvard's beliefs if now and then in his character this deep-seated secret which I couldn't understand hadn't cropped up . . . It was a sudden knot in his mind which I couldn't explain : an abrupt transition from calm and happy optimism to black, abysmal pessimism on account of his mis-spent life, on account of his having deceived me ; oh, not physically, but by being otherwise than he had made me think he was. The next time I met it was shortly after we were married. We went for a walk one day up among the mountains and like all young lovers we talked about the future and raved and were thoroughly happy . . .

" ' Isn't life marvellous, Halvard ? ' I said. ' We're young, healthy, carefree and we love each other. '

" He replied harshly and violently :

" ' Oh there must be some damned filth underneath ? '

" I was so amazed that at first I was dead silent, and then I began to cry.

" I saw that there is more in a human mind than a young, newly-married woman realises, but every time I've come up against this self-contempt and abruptness in Halvard I've felt helpless. It was the unknown quantity  $x$  in my life and in my work for him and the home. It cropped up especially when he had expressed his opinions . . . Often I was really afraid of his violent outbursts, but as I didn't understand him I simply nodded and agreed and let it pass by. And when he'd finished I used to tell him how proud I was of his fierce and obscure idealism which made him attempt the superhuman . . . There was a fine anarchism in it . . . An urge to sacrifice oneself out in the blue, which is one of the most valuable qualities of the Norwegian character. "

Then Antoinette Fjellgard recounted the episodes concerning the pastoral appointment and her son's confirmation. She said how surprised she was by this unexpected attitude of her husband's . . .

" When Halvard quietly and seriously talked to me about the affair, in a way he'd never talked to me before, I saw for the first time . . . What shall I say ? . . . The rock bottom in him. I'd seen all the other strata of his personality and got to know them and like them. But he'd never shown me this before . . . It was so hard that I decided with myself that I would have to bid ' pass. ' I could never alter it. And if possible I became even fonder of him because I'd found in him something unshakable, even though I didn't understand what it was. But at the same time I thought, I'll keep right off that . . .

" Last spring the amount of work at the Storting was terrific.

I thought it was that which made him more thoughtful than usual when we were together at home or when we were out walking through the fields and woods. One thing I was glad to notice, and that was that his work in the Storting was more valued than ever before . . . But one day something happened which hit me very hard.

“On my way home one day I met the Prime Minister. We talked about the weather for a little, then suddenly he said it was a shame that Halvard wouldn’t accept the offer of the post of minister of agriculture when the Government reshuffle took place. It was the most painful surprise of my life . . . ‘Has Halvard . . .?’ I stammered and put my hand to my heart but controlled myself. I pulled myself together in a way that physically hurt—cramp of the heart must feel like that—and said that I thought it was quite in order . . . I don’t think the Prime Minister noticed my amazement, and after my uncommunicative remark he changed the subject at once. But when I got home I sat down on a chair in the bedroom, with a face that was quite new for me, faded and exhausted. It wasn’t that Halvard had refused to join the Government, but that he hadn’t said anything to me. We hadn’t so much as bought a book or a chair without discussing it! It was impossible . . . It had happened to-day! . . .

“Halvard said nothing over supper, and I was silent. I’d decided that even if I were to die I’d say nothing to him about it, and yet I’d never loved him as truly as I did then . . . After supper he told me about it . . . I listened . . . It had happened several days ago . . . I didn’t say a word. He glanced at me, questioningly . . . I just sat still, not even looking at him.

“‘Had you heard already, Tony?’ he asked.

“I couldn’t stand it any longer, and I broke down for the first and last time in my life . . . I collapsed completely . . . I just wept and wept . . .

“Some days before Christmas—we had gone our ways without saying anything to each other for several months—Halvard said: ‘Shouldn’t we talk the whole matter out?’ There was nothing I more wanted to do, but I was awkward . . . If he was silent, well I could be too . . . Nothing new came of the talk. I knew how he was feeling, and he knew well enough how terribly disappointed and wounded I was . . . He talked about his faith in God and letting me and everyone else down by not speaking of his faith . . . If he had done, it would have helped him and others and the school and the district and the Storting and the whole country . . . He talked about Christian values and asked me in the end if I wouldn’t try it out . . . What I replied I can keep for a moment because I replied exactly the same a few days ago, plus various additions . . . But



after we'd broken our silence in this way, something of the old intimacy returned to our life, and that's how things have been since . . . But the joy is gone . . . The delight, the greatness . . . I've simply become a piece of machinery . . . I feel set outside in a much worse way than if we'd become poor ; the dream which Halvard and I lived in for fifteen or sixteen years is shattered and will never come again . . . No, don't say anything, Hr. Hørfeldt . . . Halvard has tried many times with his Christian ideas, and every time I've replied the same, and you shall have the same answer now . . ."

She leant forward in her chair and laid her crossed arms on her knees. She was pale, very pale, and the large blue eyes were deep and hard. She addressed her words to Hørfeldt :

"I am perfectly ready to believe that what you and Fru Hørfeldt believe in has helped your marriage and given you a more philanthropic view of life, and your letter to my husband is a proof of that. I by no means deny that religion means something to people, or that it's of cultural importance. But I don't want to have anything to do with it. What I've seen at close quarters of its effect has frightened me . . . I've seen it break down what I've built up in Halvard. From the very first day I became aware of it in his life I fought against it and feared it, and look at him now ! It's destroyed one marriage . . . It's blown up one home . . . It's well on the way to fuddling the brains of a sane and talented politician who was becoming a realist . . ."

"But now I'm ready to sacrifice Halvard to save the children from following guides who'll only take life from them and give nothing in return . . . But I protect myself and those near me against personal Christianity for other reasons besides that. I believe in a human fellowship . . . The liberalism, the respect for human freedom and culture, and the humanitarianism which I absorbed in my childhood and youth are values which I've carried with me through life. It's my experience that if I cherish the humanity in myself I live ; if I cherish the humanity in others they become as free, as vital, as happy as Halvard was until these things happened and he slipped through my fingers and disappeared . . . And d'you think he's kinder than before ? Far from it . . . Education and to cultivate humanism, the right to think freely, are the way out of chaos for the individual and society . . . I believe in love as an active factor in life, but it must be love directed by the will and the intelligence. It's unavoidable that some should fall by the way in the struggle for existence . . . For that reason one must first and foremost assert oneself and win a place and security for oneself and those who stand nearest to one, and the more we win the better it is for everybody, because every conquest is the result

of work which benefits all. But this conquest must be combined with love . . .”

There Antoinette stopped for the moment. It had grown dark during the long conversation. During most of it Fjellgard had sat without saying anything. He had moved sometimes and now and then his expression changed. Else had simply listened. How long they sat in silence and thought over what Antoinette Fjellgard had said they did not know. Now she began again.

“Perhaps you’d like to know what it was I said which especially made such an impression on Halvard and which I believe he hasn’t told you? . . .”

Hørfeldt nodded and said a quiet “Thank you.”

“I said that there was an uncrossable gulf between him and me . . . It would be more accurate to say perhaps that we’re moving away from each other without any hope of meeting again. I wish to direct myself. You wish to be directed by something outside yourself. I wish to give myself to myself in order to develop. It’s my simple duty to my own personality and those I live with . . . You want to give yourself to something outside yourself and to vanish. I want to use all that is in the world for my own development, you want to surrender everything. I love humanism. It’s my religion: it’s the fostering of *Homo sapiens* and his possibilities . . . Of me, and my possibilities. This is materialism maybe? Well, if it is, it’s the highest form it could have . . . I despise all the modern mass movements with their perverted humanism and their worship of the masses, the race, the nation . . . You worship God . . . Something outside you . . . What does it lead to?” She looked at her husband now. “A recluse’s existence, self-torture, self-despising . . . When the human being forgets himself he falls . . . Think what’s happened to you since that unfortunate confirmation. If I hadn’t held you up, what would have happened to you and all of us? . . . You were wrestling with God! I fought like a lioness against his terrible effect upon your mind.

“What was the word I used about you? Oh yes, the rock bottom . . . Well, there’s a rock bottom in me, too. But the rock bottom in you brings disaster to others, mine is a blessing for myself . . . Since I’ve stripped myself completely naked before you and your wife, and said things which even Halvard hasn’t heard before, I might as well let you have my conclusion as well. It’s hardly necessary that we should separate. It would be better if we live together as friends, but we can hardly have any married life in the deepest sense of the word . . . It would be too humiliating after leaving the paradise, where we once knew a full relationship, to try to content ourselves with the physiological processes . . . What



Halvard will do I don't know. I don't expect he knows himself, but time will bring its counsels, I suppose . . .

"Well, I don't think there's any more ; so shall we after this strenuous evening permit ourselves a little relaxation ?"

Antoinette Fjellgard got up and stirred life into the remnants of the fire on the hearth. She threw on a couple of big pine logs and it soon blazed up so strongly that they had to push their chairs back because of the heat. And again Hørfeldt was forced to admire her. It was now the elegant, well-informed, and alert hostess who spoke, and by the time the maid came in and announced that supper was ready she had contrived to set afoot a lively, even light-hearted, conversation. Only Fjellgard found it difficult to join in.

## V

When Halvard and Antoinette went up to their room that night they did not say a word to each other. She was tired after her wearing account ; in his mind entirely new ideas and conceptions were taking shape . . .

They scarcely said good-night to each other. Simply put out the light and lay and stared into the darkness whilst they heard the big clock in the hall strike each half-hour . . . Half-past ten, eleven, twelve, one, half-past one . . . Fjellgard thought about the day. As Antoinette had talked he had had the feeling of being publicly whipped, and he saw how all these years he had simply thought of himself and his difficulties and never given her difficulties a thought, although it was he who had caused them. He had fled away from reality . . . As she talked, too, he had been offended many times by the way in which she had spoken of him.

In her eyes he was just clay . . . She had moulded him as she would, she had said. But it was not her fault at least that he had not used his ability and powers according to the dictates of his own conscience . . . How had he thanked her ? Perhaps she was right in contending that he had refused the high positions in order to pay her back for not believing as he believed.

He could tell that she was lying awake too. Both of them felt how almost moment by moment as they lay there they were getting further away from each other. The break between them became more serious every second. Sometimes it had occurred to him that they might finally drift apart, and now the distance between them was getting so great that if he did nothing it would be hopeless for him to try to retrace his footsteps. After what had just taken place they had emerged from a frozen-up phase of their relationship . . . They had begun to move, and both could feel as they

lay awake side by side that they were moving in the wrong direction.

He must choose. Not between her and God, for if that had been the case he would not have hesitated. But between her and himself.

"Are you asleep?" he said.

"You know quite well I'm awake."

He asked her to give him her hand, and shortly afterwards he could tell she was crying.

"I don't know what'll be the end of this, Tony, but I know one thing, and that is that I'll never let you go."

He asked her to forgive him for all the things he had done to her to force his faith on her, and for the way he had failed to keep his promises to her. He had put pressure on her indirectly by being sorry for himself, and by consciously repressing his own good spirits in order to make her miserable too. And whilst he spoke to her in this vein the old warmth of his mind returned.

"I wanted God to do everything for me," he said. "He must give me a new wife . . . a new joy . . . a new hope . . . a new purpose in life. Myself, I did nothing for him and for other people. I wanted simply to receive. And if God and people did not do as I wished I became depressed and shut in. I forgot that the instruments of Christianity are joy and love."

"I understand a little of what you say," said Antoinette after a time. "And you're right . . . I've always done my best to keep us together, and I'll continue to do so. I don't think life can be so evil that it would part us who, in spite of all, are fond of each other."

With that remark she took her hand out of his. Halvard stroked her hair and said good-night.

"Good-night, Halvard, and thank you for what you said, and for everything."

When Georg Hørfeldt woke, a grey light was seeping in through the curtains. Wind wailed round the corner of the house, tugging heftily at the icicles on the eaves. He looked at the clock; it was quite early, and he got up gingerly so as not to wake Else and peeped out of the window. A snowstorm had blown up in the course of the night, and big drifts had formed on the rectangle. Fjellgard's pride, a clipped elk-hound, would find it difficult to dig his way through the drift which had blown up around the entrance of the kennel.

The whole landscape was wintry again. The suggestion of spring, which the previous days of good weather had given, was gone and the brown muck heaps which had dotted the fields the day before were one with the ground again. Where, on the morning of Easter Saturday, he had seen the sunrise and a red stripe on the horizon, he could not now distinguish mountain from sky. Everything was lost in one white smoke. There was little life in the



sparrows. Some of them sat, frozen and buffeted by the wind, under the roofing stone of one of the out-houses, eyeing dismally a world whence all possibilities of nourishment seemed to have vanished . . .

After breakfast the men went out on their skis again. As they went through the heavy, new snow, Hørfeldt said :

“ Won't you come along with us ? Didn't you say you had various things to see to before the Storting meets ? . . . ”

“ That's true . . . But I decided in the night that my place is at home here beside Antoinette and the children . . . For the time being any way.”

“ What do you propose doing ? ” asked Hørfeldt.

“ I'm asking for temporary leave of absence from the Storting,” replied Fjellgard, “ and I'll stay at home to give back to Antoinette and the children what I've taken from them during the past years. Whatever she may say, Christianity should unite a family, and if it doesn't, then it's the fault of the Christians . . . In this case, of me. It's painful to reflect that my self-love has been so great that it's taken me years to discover that Christianity that means anything begins in the home. It doesn't help much wanting to be a leader in the nation if one isn't a servant at home.”

During the afternoon the Hørfeldts left and Antoinette was rather sorry when she saw the sledge disappear. She could feel that the visit had helped both her and Halvard, and was pleased that her husband had asked for leave from the Storting for some weeks.

## VI

Momentum and purpose came back into Halvard Fjellgard's life. He strove to behave in such a way that life at the farmstead was sound and happy and took a far greater part in the work of the farm, no longer contenting himself with sitting in his office, poring over Storting documents. The midnight talk with Antoinette formed the dividing line in his life.

He still had difficulties with Aasmund.

One morning Fjellgard was going up into the forest where a lot of timber had been stacked during the winter, and at the breakfast table he asked Aasmund if he wouldn't come with him.

The lad grunted a reply which was neither yes nor no, and hardly looked up from his paper : it was a Monday's paper with a great deal of sport. Fjellgard was filled with a wave of self-pity.

“ Didn't you hear your father speak to you ? ” Antoinette said suddenly in her deep, calm voice.

Fjellgard looked at her with warm gratitude. He himself had

been on the point of addressing to Aasmund some such remark as "When God calls me away you'll realise how badly you've behaved towards me."

Aasmund replied that he could easily go with him into the forest. When they had finished the bit of work Halvard wanted his son's help with, they continued on their skis up to the mountain top, where the sun shone across the hard snow and grouse were beginning to take delight in life once more on the southern slopes where the snow had melted. There Halvard Fjellgard told his son he was sorry for having laid such a dead hand over the joy of the home.

To begin with Fjellgard found it quite difficult to say this, for his son was inaccessible as a mountain crag when he began to speak. He had a feeling that Aasmund wanted to make a bee-line for home. Now and then he glanced at his father to see if he was making fun of him, but most of the time he marched on looking down at the tips of his skis. Fjellgard began to think that he had made bad worse. Then he saw his expression change; and Aasmund suddenly said :

"Thanks, Father. I realise now that you mean something with what you've sometimes called your new life. And I'll tell you this, I'd almost decided to go abroad and be an engineer, because I couldn't stick living at home on the farm with everything so heavy and dismal . . ."

They continued to talk together until they reached home again, and Antoinette, who had realised what was afoot when Fjellgard asked the boy to go with him, had prepared a festive meal for supper.

Some days later Fjellgard sat in his study with the window open. Aasmund and the head-man stood in the rectangle discussing some question; they were in disagreement, and the boy said :

"No, neither you nor I can decide it."

"Well, go and ask your mother," said the head-man.

"I think it'll be better to ask father," Aasmund replied, "because it's he who really knows about it . . ."

"All right, if you want to," answered the head-man, "but you've always asked your mother before . . . It doesn't matter to me though; I'm packing up work here next month."

He looked somewhat contemptuous and sidled across to the cow-sheds, but Aasmund brought the matter to him.

The episode made Fjellgard very happy, and he began to think about the head-man's giving notice. When he had done it, both he and Antoinette had been sorry, for he was an exceptionally good worker and he had given no particular reason for wanting to leave. Fjellgard began wondering what lay behind it. He had a good wage; he was given a pretty free hand; and as far as they knew no one on the farm had done him an injury. Antoinette was liked by



everybody ; he was sure of that ; and the children had grown up while he had been at the farm, which made it improbable that Aasmund or any other of them had said anything which might offend him . . . Himself, he had never been unpleasant towards him, but . . . But had he ever done anything to make him happy ?

And Fjellgard went over to the cow-shed and told the head-man he was sorry for his unfriendly behaviour. Anders was not a man who could express himself well, but Fjellgard knew he was pleased, and the next day he went to Antoinette and withdrew his notice. He got even more to think about when she referred him to Fjellgard.

Two or three days before the date fixed for Fjellgard's return to the Storting Aasmund came to Fjellgard and said that their neighbour had one day shouted after him :

" And you lot who're supposed to be so much better than other people drive and take your animals over other people's land . . . "

The reason for the remark was as follows :

Between two of Fjellgard's fields was a wedge of land belonging to his neighbour's estate, and to get at the field which lay farthest from the farm—Church Meadow—Fjellgard used to drive over the wedge. The farm owned the legal right to drive across it and no one at the neighbouring farm had raised any objection before. But that spring the farm had changed hands ; the new owner had protested against Fjellgard's men driving over the field, but he had been informed what the position was and obliged to withdraw his protest. Now the spring had come however he regarded with a resentful eye the carts which went across. Fjellgard was annoyed that he should be on bad terms with a neighbour, but had no mind to give up his rights ; they belonged to the farm and meant a great saving.

Now, when Aasmund came and told him what the neighbour had said, Fjellgard was even more annoyed. A quarrelsome devil ! . . . A shadow crossed his son's face at that remark : Antoinette saw it and asked what he was thinking. Aasmund replied :

" Well . . . I'd like the farm to be what Father said up in the wood . . . A centre for peace and reconciliation and culture . . . And I remember that once when Father was talking about the rights we've got he said they belonged to both the farm and the family, and he hadn't any right to give it away himself. But it'll be me who gets the farm sometime, won't it ? Well, I'm ready to give up the rights."

Fjellgard's study, where the three of them were sitting, became quite still. Antoinette looked at her husband, who had become red for both shame and joy, and she herself felt a gratitude fill her which was unlike any feeling she had ever had before . . .

" It's true that the rights we have, put up the value of the farm,"

said Aasmund further, "but it lessens the value of the other place, which means it's no better than theft on our part."

Fjellgard gave the lad authority to settle the matter with the neighbour, and some days later he set off with Antoinette for the Storting.

On their arrival in Oslo, Hørfeldt rang up and asked if they would like to come out to Bygdø for dinner. Fjellgard did not know how Antoinette would receive the invitation. He was inclined to think that she would prefer not to see the Hørfeldts again, but when he told her she was pleased by the invitation; and when they met again there was quite a different tone to the conversation. Antoinette Fjellgard told of their son's taking the initiative in settling the quarrel with the neighbour.

"There are decent people in our home, too, you see," she added with a smile.

Hørfeldt thought she had become another person, more open and trusting towards both him and Else, and Halvard Fjellgard was carefree as a boy the whole evening, with a twinkle in his eye when he looked at Antoinette.

"We had an interpellation debate in the Storting to-day," said Fjellgard, "on the vote for the expenses of the Greenland case. I had to speak; simply to give certain figures. But I added that when I surveyed the unrest in the world and recalled the language I had used against Denmark at the time of the Greenland question, I felt ashamed as a Christian and as a Norwegian. God hadn't protected the northern peoples from the miseries which had hit the rest of the world in order to let us Norwegians, who count ourselves a Christian nation, increase strife and opposition. That was the first thing I wanted to tell you. The second is that I've an invitation for you."

"From whom?"

"I'm on a committee which is sorting out certain questions about workmen's compensation. We had a meeting yesterday. The atmosphere became somewhat heated: a number of remarks of a personal nature were made which were very much on the bitter side. As a farmer I hadn't any particular knowledge of the particular questions under discussion, so I kept my mouth shut, but I didn't feel at all comfortable. It occurred to me that I should calm down the tempers, and I heard my own voice saying: 'Shouldn't we try and solve this problem in Christ's spirit?' It was absolutely still around the conference table for a moment, and afterwards we acted rather differently. As we broke up a man came over to me . . . And it's from him I've an invitation for you . . . Works-Owner Halvor Grawe . . . He said you were friends of long standing . . ."

Hørfeldt sat up amazed. Grawe . . . Since the scene in his



home, about which he had told only Else, he had not seen the Works-Owner. And now Fjellgard brought an invitation. His friend continued with a slight smile.

"Yes, Grawe told me you'd be surprised. But, to complete the story, we walked home together from the committee meeting . . . We talked about general subjects, but half-way across Palace Park he said: 'It was an unusual thing you proposed. D'you really believe that such problems have anything to do with Christianity?' And I explained to him that I did believe that. I can't remember quite in what connection I came to mention your name. But he was at least as surprised as you were when you heard his. So I told him the whole story of how you'd written to me, and how we'd become friends.

"'If I don't remember wrongly,' Grawe said with something of a smile, 'you didn't get on particularly well before.'

"I said: 'No. You're right there, and I believe that if I'd met Hørfeldt some dark night, and been certain that no one could see what I did, I'd have socked him one pretty hard.' You should have seen his face when I said that!

"'Did you hit him?' he said, and pulled up with a jerk and gave me a most puzzled look."

It was late on in the night when the Fjellgards left. Hørfeldt and Else followed them down the path through the garden. The moon was full and brilliant in the April sky, which was dark, dark blue, but in the north there was just that faint hint of light which heralds the coming of the bright nights.

On the way home from the Hørfeldts', Fjellgard said:

"Isn't it wonderful that one can enter into such a quality of fellowship with people with whom one was bitter enemies a few months ago?"

And she felt a stab in her heart . . . Not of jealousy towards the Hørfeldts, but because she knew something bound Halvard to Georg and Else Hørfeldt which she had no part in; she realised too that that bond was stronger than any which bound her and Halvard together.

Next morning, when he had gone off to the Storting, she went into the living-room and sat down by one of the south windows. She could see out over the whole fjord from Ekeberg Hill in the east to Skaugum Hill in the west. It was a wet day, late in April; the weather was changeable and a strong south-east wind drove the clouds across the sky. It was about a year since Halvard had refused to accept a governmental post, and life had seemed finished as far as she was concerned; now she sat here and life seemed brighter than it had for years. The maid came in with a letter. It was from Aasmund, who began by saying that he and the neighbour

had become good friends, and many people in the village had told him that the neighbour had said how well Fjellgard had acted towards him . . . He went on to say that since their departure he had given much thought to the question of his own and her attitude towards his father . . . He hadn't realised how difficult he had made life at home for his father by constantly being awkward and thereby increasing his tendency to solitariness. Moreover, he had never realised his father's great responsibility in the Storting. The little incident with the neighbour had shown how difficult it must be for his father to work in the spirit which he felt was the right one, unless those who were closest to him helped him.

When Antoinette Fjellgard had read her son's letter she felt glad that the boy wanted to get rid of the differences between himself and his father. But her gladness was soon replaced by great irritation. He hinted that *she* hadn't helped his father, and if there was one thing she had done all these years it was that. That she had often been unpleasant to her husband during the past years was true ; however, she had been sorry for that and apologised for it . . . But she was certain of one thing : *she* had nothing to reproach herself for as regards her efforts to develop his talents and character.

When Fjellgard came home at dinner-time, she showed him Aasmund's letter.

"It's some son I've got!" he declared.

The irritation Antoinette had felt all day increased. She said tartly :

"You forget that he's my son as well . . ."

"Yes, naturally, you gave him birth . . ."

This made Antoinette even more angry and she said :

"Stop talking that sort of rubbish . . . I'm glad that Aasmund wants to help you . . . But you needn't for that reason forget that ever since we've been married I've done for you what Aasmund's just beginning to do . . ."

Halvard was amazed. What had he said? He at once asked her forgiveness for his thoughtless remarks which had hurt her. Nevertheless, she was not really happy about it, and one day she went to see Else Hørfeldt, who told her how she had become more and more dissatisfied with her husband because he never developed into what she wanted, and because he began to have qualities she disliked . . . In the end she fled from him and from life into day-dreams.

Antoinette Fjellgard did not understand. She had never been dissatisfied with her husband in that sort of way . . . What she had disliked in him was religion . . . And she had never fled away



from him or from life ; on the contrary."

Else began to explain how differently Hørfeldt behaved towards her now.

"In what way? Has he become more considerate?"

"Well, that as well," said Else. "But not just in such small things as finding my glasses, and being chivalrous as he used to be in our younger days. The big thing is that he develops me spiritually . . . I both liked and disliked that. I liked it because it deepened the quality of fellowship between us. I disliked it because I realised how often I failed to live up to it . . . It wasn't by any means a case of his telling me what to do . . . He didn't nag, and he left me completely free to choose what I did . . ."

"And I should just think so!" Antoinette broke in.

"Yes, that's true . . . He simply got my thoughts moving. He directed my thoughts towards objectives outside myself I hadn't thought of."

"You see, that's what I've done for Halvard."

"Yes, I think it is . . . But did you do it for his sake or for your own?"

Antoinette was knocked completely off her balance by the question and could not answer it. Viewing it from a distance, later, she felt as angry with Else Hørfeldt as she had been with her son . . .

But for the first time a doubt entered her breast . . . Had it been right to use both her mind and body to shape Halvard according to her own wishes? She had made herself his master: she had done the same with the children . . . Halvard was "my" man. He had to be what she wished. The honour fell to her. And when he triumphed as the strong man, ruthless, belligerent, she was filled with joy, self-love. That was what the man must be who was allowed to love *her*. But was this belligerent peasant chieftain the real Halvard? Was not his deepest instinct to make peace, do deeds of kindness, build bridges between man and man?

"D'you know what has made the strongest impression on me lately?" Halvard asked her one day.

"No . . ."

"The thought that, whether I want to or not, I influence other people for good or ill, and thereby affect the fate of the world. I can't entirely isolate myself . . . And, my God, what a responsibility life becomes when one regards oneself in that light!"

This remark sank in. She did not remember in what connection he made it . . . That night she lay awake and thought.

She shuddered as she lay there at the thought that women like her were partly responsible for the plight of the world. She had moulded Halvard . . . Other women moulded other men. And

for what reason? Her desire for power, for recognition, for pride in her husband, had driven her to develop Halvard into a ruthless chauvinist. She took no interest in his ideas, but she drove him forth into ever fresh warfare: she undermined peace in the nation, peace between the classes . . . In order to satisfy the changing shapes of her own egotism, she sacrificed her home, her children, her husband, and in the final resort herself as well. Everybody had to suffer for the conflicts, great and small, which resulted from her self-love and vanity.

She began to cry . . . She lay still in the black night whilst the tears rolled down her cheeks. The last time she had cried was when her plans were upset by Halvard's refusing to enter the Government. Halvard woke after a time . . . He could hear that she lay sobbing, and asked what was wrong, and she crept into the curve of his arm and told him with remorseful tears . . .

Some days passed, and she wondered where to apply herself in order to put right what she had done wrong. Somewhere she had read that as women are, so are a nation's homes, and as the homes are so is the nation. So the idea came to her to do something for homes. But what? So many other people were working for homes, for waifs and strays, to alleviate social problems, that she could find no room. And as the days passed the feeling of release which had filled her when she discovered her egotism, vanished. She felt almost desperate, though at the same time she was more and more grateful to Halvard, whom she began to depend upon.

This was something new for her. She discovered that the more she sought Halvard's help the stronger he became. Was she completely superfluous then? This thought too was something new for her. It had proved that what she had done for him had rather been harmful to him. And the children were alone at home on the farm, month after month; it seemed that they managed equally well whether she was at home or not. A feeling of bitterness sprang up within her. No one had any use for her and her strong will, which before had borne both her and Halvard and the home and much else besides . . .



## PART FIVE

### I

The day after his conversation with Halvard Fjellgard, Grawe received a visit from a man who owned larged tracts of forest in the part of the country he came from himself. The land-owner wanted to know what reduction he would be allowed if he bought in bulk the barking machines which Grawe was putting on the market. Wages were going up fantastically, he said : the lumbermen had organised themselves and it was incredible the wages they now demanded.

"They're already getting as much as we can pay. But we have it on good evidence that they don't intend to relax their demands until they get as much as industrial workers. And we just can't pay it . . . Either we must close down on all work in the forests . . . Or, if human labour's so expensive, we must get machines to do the job."

Grawe knew that it was all true. This man and the other owners of the forests were good enough fellows, and yet they were compelled to throw men out of work . . . After the land-owner had gone, Grawe sat and pondered. In the middle of the afternoon his secretary knocked and came in.

"I'm afraid something tragic has happened," he said.

"Not an accident in the works ! " Grawe cried, springing up.

The secretary quietened him . . . One of the sons of Grawe's old friend and workman, Anders Olsen, had attacked his parents while in a state of drunkenness. They were now in hospital, while the son, Halvor, was at the police station . . . Grawe drew a breath almost of relief. He had an eternal fear of accidents in the works . . . Ander's wife was one of the women in whom Camilla had taken an especial interest, because Anders was a dolt as regards bringing up children. She had continued to visit Ragnhild Olsen long after she ceased going to see the others . . .

He had not for many years now reflected that Anders had a family . . . Yet they had been friends as boys. The first few years after Camilla's death he had asked Anders mechanically how things were going . . . Later on he had dropped that too, and Anders had become part of the machine . . . Now it appeared that he had a son who drank and knocked him and Ragnhild about . . . The secretary told him further that the boy had been one of the ring-leaders during the conflict, and he had worked in the section containing the machine that had exploded. For several weeks now

he had spent his time in idleness and drunkenness. He had attacked his parents because they would not give him any more money to buy gin . . . He was only eighteen and had been a paper-boy from the time he had left school until he came to the works as an apprentice . . . Anders had been pleased that the boy had been given an apprenticeship. Without that chance he would have had no skilled training. After the strike he had not shown up, and since then had simply idled. He couldn't obtain another job as a paper-boy ; he was too old now . . .

Grawe felt his sympathy for Anders grow ; but strictly speaking it was no fault of his that Anders was a block-head who couldn't bring up his children properly. Camilla's failure to help the family seemed to show that they were doomed to these difficulties . . .

He gave orders that Anders should have full wages as long as he was ill, and he was about to go home when there was a call from the hospital. It was a nurse, who said that Anders Olsen had asked her to ring up and request the Works-Owner to come immediately . . . Grawe's first impulse was to refuse . . . He couldn't be bothered. He wanted to go home to his stamps and books . . . Was he a children's nurse ? . . . But then he remembered Camilla, and drove up to the hospital . . . Anders wanted to put in a word on the boy's behalf . . .

"You mus' take 'im again, Halvor," Anders said, "'cos if 'e don't get a fix' job now he'll jus' be a drunkard the res' of 'is life . . . The lady'd of put in a good word for 'im . . ."

Grawe agreed to what Anders asked. And Anders thanked him . . . But Grawe was irritated as he went. Would he never cease to be bothered by the shadows of the past ? . . . He walked slowly back towards the town from the hospital . . . It was a still, moonlit night. As he drew near his home he reflected that it was a long time since he had seen the works by moonlight, and he decided to take a walk around them.

The street in front of the great buildings was empty of people; in the day-time it was one of the busiest in the city . . . He rang the bell at the big gates in the nine-foot fence, topped with barbed wire, which ran round the whole works. The watchman who opened to him was surprised when he saw his employer standing there, an absent look on his face.

"Good evening, Hansen."

"Good evening, Herr Works-Owner."

The door in the gate clanged behind him. Here he was in his own works, which he loved, and of which he was the master. To his left stood the big machine-shop ; before him, the long, low office building . . . Then came the stocks, and beyond he could make out the great new floating-dock : away to the right lay a



whole cluster of buildings and store sheds, and beyond them again the site for the new extensions. That was where the buildings for arms manufacture were to be erected ; also the new ship-yard . . . How quiet it was at night ! . . . He hardly knew himself again in his own works, where by day the din of steam-hammers filled the air. The only sound he heard now was the throb of the motor-boats out in the fjord. He shouted to the watchman and asked him to let him into the machine-shops . . .

“ Yes, Herr Works-Owner.”

Inside it was almost dark . . . The huge shed was lit only by tiny electric lights ; which gave the over-head cranes, the wheels, the belts, and the scaffolding a fantastic appearance in the night. The shop was the oldest part of the works ; it was an extension of the first corrugated-iron shed in which he and a few others had founded the works. The little cubby-hole over there in the corner, which was now used by two of the foremen, had been his office. It was during the first reconstruction of this shed that the scaffold had crashed, almost killing one of the workmen. The wife's pale face, and her wild eyes as she shouted “ Slave-driver ! ” at him, stood before him to this day . . . Yet at that time he had been innocent . . . And now . . . He couldn't help the scaffold falling down ; or that Ander's son was a young lout.

“ Just lock it again, will you,” he said to the watchman, who had been following him.

“ Yes, Herr Works-Owner.”

What on earth did the chief want ? . . . Grawe went up to his office, whence he could see out across the fjord and the docks. He did not put on the electric light ; the moonlight was enough . . . He sat down at his desk . . . Why exactly had he come down here ? . . . Wouldn't it be better to go home and sleep ? . . . He wanted to be a precision instrument, didn't he ? . . . Sleep, eat, enjoy . . . Satisfy the sex-instinct . . . That was all he had done that night in Copenhagen . . . Or had it not been he at all who had done that ? . . . The moonlight made the office, which he knew so well, unreal. He got up and went to the window. The silence of the big sheds, the cranes, and the heaps of scrap iron which lay blanched by both moonlight and the beams of powerful flood-lights made this familiar picture also appear unreal.

Yet this was his kingdom. This was his reality. Except for him it would not have been there. All that he saw around him was the result of his will . . . He had made it all as he wanted it to be . . . What was it Fjellgard had said ? . . . He had found a plan for his life and an inner freedom which he had not believed existed . . . But he—Grawe—had had a plan for each day of his life. It was systematic work which had built up his position . . .

On the other hand he had no inner freedom . . . Fjellgard had also said that for him life had become a series of choices between good and evil, and it was the choices which gave him the freedom.

He too had chosen : all his life he had chosen. But, if Fjellgard's daily choices brought freedom whilst his own brought bondage, had he made the wrong choices all his life? Was it wrong to leave his home village? Was it wrong to go to Pittsburg? Did he decide wrongly when he asked Camilla to be his wife? And had they both decided wrongly when they settled down in the city instead of going to his home village? . . . Grawe knew perfectly well as he stood there at the window that he had not chosen wrongly on these occasions . . .

All these decisions had benefitted other people. He had learnt a lot, he had found an outlet for his talents. He had built up a firm which made spades, axes, ploughs, rails . . . Steamships . . . All of which made for well-being and peace and gave employment . . . It all served mankind . . . Which was what he and Camilla also had done . . . He had not made wrong choices only . . . But as he stood there he had not the courage to bring to mind the occasions on which he had chosen wrongly . . . He shied at the prospect, defended himself . . . He had left home because he wanted to give men and women a more secure livelihood than his parents had had. To free them from the threat of unemployment. And now? . . .

He clenched his fist and thrust it towards the works . . .

"It's not my fault . . . I never wanted this . . ."

Was it he who had created modern technical science whose greatest advances were now turned to the service of death? He was no scientist; something of an inventor perhaps. Yet it was firms like the one he had built up which caused much of the misery.

But the environment he had not made . . . "Have I? I've had no part in forming society. Have I? . . ." He did not know whether he spoke the question aloud or merely in his heart . . . "It wasn't I who knocked Anders down, and it wasn't I who wanted to buy a whole consignment of barking machines . . ." Who had created the social environment then? . . . The works, the machines? . . . Steel? . . . Heartlessness? . . . Yes, who was it who'd sooner go home to his stamps than visit a man in despair? . . . Who had amassed money? . . . "It's all your work . . ." And now who wanted to build this arms factory? . . . Though of course the idea was Harald's.

Harald, yes, Harald, who wouldn't even allow himself the sentimentality which a holiday in a mountain hut might smuggle into his soul. But who had laid the foundation on which Harald had built? Harald simply carried on his work. Himself, he had



abandoned his home village . . . He had flung his own son into the cold world which he had created ; and without warning him. And what ought he to have warned him against ? . . . The evil deeds he had behind him, around him, and before him . . . The loneliness he had built up. The fear he himself had called into being . . . Harald's logical egotism was merely a rationalisation of the philosophy his father had developed . . . Now Harald wanted to have Astrid's ability to procreate removed so that nothing should come between them and their enjoyment.

Had he any right to expect anything else of his son ? He had been hard to the boy always. And now the lad turned back upon him . . . He had been hard towards Camilla in order to hide up his sin towards her . . . Towards the workmen . . . Towards society he had been hard in order to show his power. Towards Karen, Nils . . . And when everything had threatened to crash around his ears he had sought counsel from Harald in order to be even further hardened. And he had been . . . And he would have to continue to be. Harder and more lonely . . . There was only one road ahead of him . . . The way of complete callousness. The way of death. Of egotism . . . And in order to go that way he had to demonstrate to all the world that there were no other ways. This was where life had brought him. Or was it he who had brought life to this point ? He had had a free choice all the time . . .

He heard cautious steps in the outer offices, and saw through the half-open door an uncertain, swaying light. He jumped up nervously. There was a cautious knock, and the watchman came in with his lamp.

“ D'you want something ? ” asked Grawe.

“ Yes, Herr Works-Owner . . . Or rather no, Herr Works-Owner . . . I was simply afraid you might have done something to yourself . . . You were so long.”

Now he saw the faint light in the sky in the north-east which showed that day was breaking. He was tired and he rang for a taxi and drove home to Parkveien, leaving Hansen standing deep in wonderment . . . What was the matter with old Halvor ? . . . He had never seen him like that before . . . Things couldn't always be so easy for him ; it was sad for him that his wife had died . . .

When Grawe reached home he went straight upstairs and lay down . . . But sleep did not come. His tiredness had vanished. He became restless . . . Tossed to and fro . . . Went and had a cold shower. Tried to read but got more and more restless. It was light now outside ; he could see that from the gap around the black blinds, and he could hear the birds twittering in the Palace

Park . . . Open-eyed he lay on his back and stared out into the room.

His head hummed. Calculations to do with machine-guns . . . There was the bandaged head of Anders with the pleading eyes . . . He had pleaded for his rotter of a son. Muttered some muddle-headed rubbish about the boy having to pick up the crumbs under the table. Extraordinary expression! Had Anders got it out of the Bible? . . .

“Why in the Devil’s name did I go up to the hospital!”

He raised himself up in bed and hissed out the words. Stamps calmed the mind . . . The lady would have put in a good word for him . . . The lady would have been certain to let our boy have a job . . . “’Cos ’e’s good ’nough lad really.”

The lady . . . Always going back to Camilla. Always back to the decision in Copenhagen . . . To the damned whore who fooled him into accompanying her from the dance hall. And why had she become a whore? . . . Because people like him were egotists . . . Precision machines . . . A functioning of hunger, thirst, sexual instinct which blindly went round and round . . . It was just under four seconds between the cracks the belt made on the shining wheel as it hummed round . . .

He heard the sound of steps on the stairs; he had awakened old Karen who peeped in frightened and enquired if he were ill. When she heard that he could not sleep she fetched a little veronal for him. After a bit he sank off to sleep . . .

It was well on in the forenoon when he woke up. When he went down into the dining-room he found Harald sitting there . . .

“Are you unwell, Father? Karen rang up this morning in a great to-do. She said you’d been walking about the whole night . . .”

“No . . . It’s over now. I couldn’t sleep. That damned business about Anders upset me to such an extent that my head went round and round.”

And he proceeded to tell his son about his agitated thoughts.

“You need a rest, Father,” said Harald, who took the matter seriously and was not a little exasperated by his father’s relapse, as he called it.

“And don’t worry about me. I get on fine on the basis Astrid and I are on now. Don’t worry about Anders either . . . What d’you imagine the world would be like if we stuck our noses into each other’s affairs in the way you seem to think it’s your duty to do? Who worries about you?”

Grawe reflected that he was nearing sixty. He had never given a thought to his physical state. Maybe it was just rest he needed? And at Harald’s prompting he decided upon a car trip through south Norway.



“ Take some friends with you . . . Fill the car with good wine and delikatessen and ask Guttormsen to drive you wherever the whim takes you. You’ll come home like a boy . . . ”

“ If only I didn’t feel responsibility weigh on me as it does.”

Harald looked across in amazement at his father who was seated at the breakfast table . . .

“ That’s exactly what you don’t feel. You think in a sentimental way about various small fry from your village but you don’t see what you owe to yourself and your great works. You still continue to imagine that the same small town laws which were valid where you came from retain their validity for you and the things you’ve created . . . Where would you be to-day if in actual fact you hadn’t put yourself above them? . . . You’d probably be in hospital and I in prison . . . But you’ve ignored every scruple in order to get on. Ask your competitors, ask the Government, ask the Employers’ Federation if they notice any of this love you suddenly say you’ve got for Anders. Oh no, Father . . . They’ve seen precious little of it . . . Cultivate your philanthropy to Anders and Nils and Karen as a little private amusement in addition to stamp-collecting. But don’t make these sentimental feelings towards them the basis of your evaluation of modern life . . . There’s a difference between those old ditherers and modern iron and steel workers . . . ”

Harald went shortly afterwards. Grawe admitted again that he was right. He must once more break out of emotional disharmony . . . Again Fjellgard’s idea of getting a plan for life stood before him. Should he get in touch with him to learn a little more of what he meant? If Fjellgard had anything to tell him which might help him towards getting a plan for his life, a new unity in his thought life, it was worth while considering fixing an opportunity for conversation with him. And above all he wanted to have a greater degree of contact with other people, for although the solitude he had practised during recent months had its attractions he would have liked at the same time to have been able to feel that there was someone he could depend upon . . . He did not care to have too many nights like the one he had just passed . . . They represented the seamy side of solitude . . .

No, the thing he needed was the society of modern and matter-of-fact men of the world who valued him for his own sake and did not want simply to make capital out of him . . . He looked at the clock . . . It was well on in the day and he had to go off at once to a board meeting at the Industrial Bank . . .

As he turned a corner down in the business quarter he came face to face with Georg Hørfeldt.

"Hallo ! Welcome back to town ! I rang you up the other day but heard you were out of the country."

The sudden meeting upset Grawe's self-possession. He went red. But Hørfeldt continued in a natural enough tone :

"You can't think how glad I was when Fjellgard told me you wanted to meet me, and that was the reason why I rang."

Grawe remembered his idea of talking further with Fjellgard. Perhaps he ought to take Hørfeldt along too ? After all they were friends of long standing. And without more ado he suggested a motoring holiday at Whitsun with both of them.

"In fact, bring along your wives ; there'll be room in the car."

Hørfeldt was pleased by the invitation and walked with Grawe down to the bank.

"Everything gone well since our last meeting ?" Grawe asked.

"Yes . . . You know, when one emerges from a life of isolation and enters into an existence where one is a friend of former enemies, such as for example Fjellgard, well everything does go well with one."

This idea of society again ! But Grawe blushed, recalling how he and Hørfeldt had parted at their last meeting. After some hesitation he said :

"I think I rather forgot myself last time we were together."

Hørfeldt simply smiled :

"If you knew what a lot of good that punch did me . . . After all the people I'd humiliated, I deserved a little ducking myself."

They parted, agreed upon spending Whitsun together . . . At the board meeting Grawe's colleagues were amazed how absent-minded he was. As a rule hardly a single detail escaped his notice, but to-day he sat there and allowed one important matter after another to slip past without paying attention . . . Had he got some extra devilment up his sleeve ? wondered the competitor whom he had once forced to agree to participation in the planned sympathy lock-out . . .

But Grawe was far, far away . . . What was it Hørfeldt had said ? . . . "Not to mention the new fellowship I now experience with my wife . . ." Last night he had thought bitterly of Camilla and felt like removing the big painting of her which hung in his study . . . Hadn't he better admit that when he chose the girl that night in Copenhagen he set himself beyond fellowship with her ?

"Is the Works-Owner ill ? You're so absent-minded." It was one of the bank-managers who thus suddenly reminded him where he was.

"Excuse me : I'm a bit nervy and short of sleep lately."

When the meeting was over he again noticed what he had often before remarked with pride : he was regarded with such fear that no one would accompany him . . . But to-day it filled him with



self-pity. He noticed besides that as he walked through the great public room, where the cashiers operated accounting and adding machines, he was scrutinised with hard, inimical eyes.

When he reached home again Hørfeldt rang him up. He had discussed the idea with Fjellgard and with his wife, he said. They were delighted at the idea of spending Whitsun with him, but they felt that a holiday spent motoring would give little opportunity for doing things together, so Hørfeldt had thought that the five of them could have a comfortable and congenial holiday at his home on Bygdø. Grawe agreed immediately. It was a long time since he had been with other people, and it was hardly thinkable that those who now sought his company had any plan to make use of him.

That night he slept soundly, as he was accustomed, and the first thing he did on reaching his office was to find out how things stood with Anders. He had recovered sufficiently for them to be able to drive him home that afternoon: he did not wish to remain in the hospital an hour longer than was necessary, and Ragnhild, whose scratches and bruises had not been serious enough to put her to bed, wanted to have her husband home. Their son was still in prison.

When the secretary had told him this Grawe remembered the remark made by Harald. If he hadn't broken away from all the laws which applied in his village, what had happened in Anders's home might have occurred in his own . . . Grawe tried to shove away that unpleasant train of thought, but without success. For though he had sometimes sought to do good, he had actually accomplished evil things, and now it had gone on so long that he didn't really wish to do good . . . Provided his actions furthered his own interests, he hardly cared whether they benefitted or harmed others: but on such a basis perhaps it would be difficult to savour any real fellowship with people?

Hørfeldt's smiling face stood before him. The last time they had been together he had felled the director to the floor because his vanity had been wounded. The idea now occurred to him that Anders's and Ragnhild's son had gone for them and felled them because he wasn't given money to buy gin . . . And now Anders pleaded on behalf of his son and Hørfeldt wanted to be with him to help him out of his isolation into fellowship with people . . . He felt completely bewildered by the independent and uncontrolled life his thoughts had developed. He sat there and passed judgment upon himself, compared himself with drunkard sons. ■

But was the son a drunkard? No one had said so. He was of a rebellious nature, but perhaps more on account of the peasant's blood in him than because he was evilly inclined. He recalled his own rebellious feelings at that age when day after day he had stood

in the dark and grimy factory and longed for his home, the woods, and the river and the familiar faces . . . But it was quite certain that the lad might become a drunkard if he wasn't treated with a kindly hand now. Grawe decided to call in one of the lad's brothers and send him up to the prison to say that he should have a job when he was released. Then it occurred to him that he could go himself.

He got out his small car and drove out to the prison where he was allowed to see Halvor Olsen. When he entered the cell, the lad sprang up from the bench he was on and rushed to the wall.

Grawe did not know what to say : for a moment they stood looking at each other. Grawe could see how the boy hardened under his look, and suddenly a flash of hate shone in his eyes :

"If Dad's dead it's your fault . . ."

"Your father's not dead. He's already back at home. I've simply come to tell you that I saw him yesterday and promised him that if you're willing you shall have your apprentice job at the works back when you get out of this place."

When he had said this he remained standing still for a moment : but as the boy did not move he went. The little incident left a very good taste in his mouth, Grawe thought, and for the next few days he had had a calmness of mind which he hadn't experienced for a long time.

## II

Whit Saturday became more and more lovely, the longer the day lasted. The sun shone as it had not shone for years. The ash was further out than the oak, which meant that the summer would continue as it had begun. The birch was pale green . . . An intenser pale green than anyone could remember, and the lilacs had never smelt so sweet on the Palace Hill.

Halvor Grawe, Halvard and Antionette Fjellgard, Georg and Else Hørfeldt sat on the terrace in front of the Hørfeldts' villa and sipped coffee whilst the warm afternoon slipped into the fresh coolness of the evening. They talked on at random, about politics and the theatre, about the harvest prospects, and Fjellgard rubbed his hands with delight at the good growing weather.

Hørfeldt asked if there was anything in the rumours of a Government crisis, but Fjellgard thought there wasn't. Gradually a silence fell on them, as though there was nothing more to talk about, and they simply sat and waited . . . Then Else Hørfeldt said :

"A few months ago I didn't think the fellowship with other people, which I've begun to have lately, was possible."



“What does it consist of?” said Antionette Fjellgard.

“I feel one with people in a way I never did before. When I met people before I always tried to hide myself away as much as possible. I was afraid of them being hostile to me and making double-edged remarks to hurt me. I was afraid even of those nearest to me.”

“And now?” It was Grawe who asked.

“Now there’s something which unites me to all the people we meet.”

“D’you have the feeling towards everyone? Or only towards those who believe as you do?” asked Antionette Fjellgard.

“It’s difficult to answer that. Now as before I feel I’d like to shut myself away in a narrow little circle of people who I know wish me no ill and whose company I know I will enjoy. But this intraversion is wrong in me. I haven’t any right to shut myself away. The vague feeling of general affection for everything and everybody, which I’ve really always had, in spite of my fear of meeting unknown people, I must canalize, if you know what I mean. I must let it be of benefit to somebody . . . If I followed simply my own inclinations I’d limit my fellowship to those I picked out myself. But my deepest feeling tells me that I’m united to all people whether they believe as I do or not. And when I regard people like that I feel I’m living in the fellowship which we human beings are meant to live in with each other.”

“How did this idea begin to grow in you?” said Hørfeldt.

“I came to see that if I were to live in a fellowship with other people I’d have to accept people as God had formed them and not I . . . The first person I accepted in this way was Georg. In my relationship with him I used to direct a wave of sentimental feeling towards an idealised husband and had no real love for the living one, for the Georg Hørfeldt who went around the house here.”

Hørfeldt said to Grawe :

“Do you know these haphazed feelings that Else’s speaking of? I recognise them . . . They were my great bug-bear, and they still are to-day. I launch a bit of day-dreaming into space and follow it with my eyes—excuse the rather tenuous mataphor—until it either vanishes of its own accord or something practical takes my attention. But to translate such a feeling of general good to all into a definite course of action has always been difficult to me.”

“Yes,” replied Grawe. “I know the sort of thing you’re talking about but I don’t think that feelings have occupied my mind so very much. As you know, I’m a man who acts, and I’ve got a pugnacious will. As I understand it, you have managed to establish a sort of control over erratic emotions. I’ve got more need of controlling the peregrinations of the will . . .”

"None of us can control erratic emotions or evil intentions by himself. At any rate, it's my experience that it's no good fighting in one's own strength against these expressions of one's egotism. On the other hand, I've established by my own experience that God can regulate my wandering emotions and turn my thoughts from evil when I ask him for help. The first time I let him do this for me I didn't believe in him at all. The decisive factor is my willingness . . . Then God gives both my emotions and my will the content he wants them to have. And for me it was intellectual proof of God's existence that before I believed in God he cleared up the jungle of my emotions and will."

"Was the letter you sent Halvard a test of it, because you must have had pretty evil intentions and emotions about him?" Antionette Fjellgard said.

Hørfeldt nodded.

"The letter was certainly something of a test. And it stood the test My evil thoughts and hate of you—" he said this to Fjellgard "—were simply a small part of the hate and evil thoughts I had towards life. When I wrote the letter, it was the first time I let God take hold of my vague feelings for good and direct them practically towards a person. It was the first time I let him turn a thought or my will from evil to good."

Antionette sprang up from her chair and ran towards Hørfeldt, and before he knew what was happening put her arms around him and kissed him.

"I wanted to thank you," she laughed. "I know this is a bit comical . . . Else looks as though she understands me . . . I can see something I never saw before; and that's why you shall have another kiss . . ."

But Hørfeldt protected himself.

"Why not think about your own husband? He looks as though he needs it."

Antionette turned towards Halvard who also looked as though he understood his wife, and she embraced him and kissed him too and said:

"I haven't been so happy since, since . . . Not since the last time."

Then she sat down again, tears came in her eyes and she said:

"Excuse me for being so stupid . . . But it's so wonderful to be rid all at once of a whole weight of heavy and difficult thoughts, that you must let me cry a little. But I'll explain myself. I've seen what Halvard's received in the Christian life. Else has told me what she's received . . . And I got to the point where I wanted to join in it. I made an effort to . . . Prayed, after my own fashion, but didn't get anywhere. When Halvard spoke to me



about this Whitsun holiday I thought, Now or never. I told Halvard that, but he said, 'Don't make any conditions. It's God who must guide your life.'

"What made you so suddenly see something new?"

It was Grawe who put the question.

"What Else and Hørfeldt said about letting God have one's will and emotions. I made the experiment as I sat there . . . I was as honest as I could be . . . Prayed inside me . . . I gave myself to God . . . And I felt the conflict and resistance of days and weeks dissolve . . . It was like one of those wire puzzles coming out. I'd tugged about fruitlessly with my reason. With my will. But it all remained as chaotic as ever. And then I let go of will and reason and emotion and whispered to God, 'Take me as I am.' And my strange behaviour was due to my being so overjoyed at seeing the way and being willing to take it. I said, 'Use me,' and it happened . . ."

The sun had gone down, but the clear sky arched huge and bright over the summery scene before them. A star or two blinked in the north-east . . . From a large sailing ship which was slowly gliding up the fjord came the notes of an accordion . . . A white-clad youth sat at the furthest extremity of the stern and played *The Coster's Waltz*.

"Is that how it happens?" said Grawe after a time.

"For some," replied Fjellgard.

"And how d'you think God will use the new will and the new life he has received to-night?" asked Else.

Antionette put her long, slim arms behind her neck and leant back in the chair.

"I think I should do for Halvard what he has done for me lately. Develop the best in him and continually point to the new tasks that lie before him."

"Do you see any such tasks as a Storting-member?" Grawe asked of Fjellgard. "Because so far as I can see this surrender of the emotions and will must paralyse the power of thought."

"Do you believe in a personal God?" asked Fjellgard.

"Yes." The response was a little tardy. "Yes, I do . . ."

"And that this God has a plan for the world he's made? . . ."

"Yes, if he's personal, and has made the world, it's clear that he must have a plan . . . But what?"

"I don't know that. But I've found that God can give me a plan for my life, and he does so through my thoughts, my intelligence. I've never used my thoughts so much as I have done lately. When I discovered that Christianity means giving one's life, losing it for others, by degrees I saw a line of development for my life which led on from my relationship with Tony to God's

kingdom here on earth. And I've *thought* forward to that idea . . . God has given us the marvellous instrument known as thought, and he develops our thinking powers when we put our life in his hands ; he doesn't paralyse them . . ."

"God's kingdom here on earth. Is that possible?"

"God's kingdom is already on earth. It consists of the people who do his will . . . Who are actuated by Christ's love . . ."

"Can it also include the works over there?"

Grawe pointed across the fjord where they could plainly make out the great buildings through the light summer evening.

"And if it can, why hasn't it arrived before now?" he added . . .

"Because good and honourable people like you and me and Fjellgard have thought we could save the world by our own efforts ; whilst all our doing simply brought it nearer to catastrophe," said Hørfeldt.

"You must include the women," said Antionette Fjellgard. "When we learn to love people because they're God's children and not because they're ours, we'll put right the wrong we've done by rejecting God in daily life. I may be a little new in this life to say such a big thing, but it was a thought that came to me."

"And I've seen the same thing myself," said Else.

"God's kingdom isn't anything outward. It isn't a social system, it's a life which individual people live out. And it doesn't consist of works or farms or newspapers, but of people who do God's will and manage their property in such a way that it becomes as much God's and full of goodness as nature itself."

It was Fjellgard who made the last remarks. All five of them sat in deep thought and followed the life on the fjord which now slowly diminished. It got more chilly and it was not long before they broke up and said good night. As they parted to go to their rooms, Grawe said :

"I don't know quite where this is going to lead, but my feeling is that I've looked into something which might be called the promised land."

During the night it clouded over and towards morning it began to rain. When they met for breakfast the clouds lay low over the whole of Oslo. It was impossible to see the hill-tops and the dense rain blurred all the contours. The air was quite still, the landscape so wet that it seemed it could never be dry again, and that the wind would never succeed in getting rid of the layers of cloud. Hørfeldt hauled up the flag nonetheless. It was Whit-Sunday after all ; but it remained hanging close in to the mast and was soon wet through.

"What church shall we go to?" asked Else. Grawe suggested one, Hørfeldt another ; Antionette had not thought about it at all,



and at first Fjellgard said nothing . . . After the others had discussed the matter for a time, he said :

“ Else’s a singer, isn’t she ? And you’ve got a Bible in the house ? ” He looked at Hørfeldt.

“ Yes, of course.”

“ What d’you mean exactly ? Surely it’s right to go to church on Whitsunday ? ” asked Grawe.

“ Of course it’s right,” said Fjellgard, “ and to be with the congregation . . . But can’t we have a service in here when we’ve finished the meal ? And we be the congregation ? When I woke up to-day and heard the rain I was really glad ; the weather won’t tempt us to break off the service we began yesterday . . . ”

“ It’s Greek to me.”

Grawe looked at Fjellgard, afraid that he was pulling his leg, but at the same time realising that Fjellgard wanted to show him something new.

“ Oh no,” said Fjellgard. “ What is the term ‘ divine service ’ used to convey ? ”

“ A sermon, hymns, prayers . . . and Bible reading and various other things.”

“ Else can sing, I’ll preach, and you read the Whitsun lesson. Isn’t that divine service ? Hørfeldt and Tony will be the congregation . . . The point of a service is to bring people to God . . . And didn’t Tony decide out on the terrace yesterday evening to live under God’s guidance ? Isn’t it the purpose of a service to strengthen the bonds of fellowship between Christian people, and assist each other to get greater faith and more love ? My faith was strengthened by hearing what Else and Tony said yesterday.”

“ And mine was a good deal when you told us how God uses our brains and sharpens our wits,” smiled Grawe. “ I get the idea all right, and when I spoke of the promised land yesterday I had in mind, first and foremost, fellowship. But I thought the fellowship was in a church.”

“ It’s everywhere where two or three Christian people are gathered together, and if you want to go to church to-day by all means do. I believe I’ll have more benefit from the day by staying here with the others and talking about the path ahead of us than by sitting passive in a church.”

When breakfast was finished the two ladies straightened the rooms: the men cleared the table and washed up, for Else had given the household-help Whitsun off. When the work had been done they assembled in the sitting room. Else sat down at the piano and sang several of the Whitsun hymns, and Grawe read the Whitsun lesson.

Fjellgard gave an account of how the church had become living for him.

"I used once to shudder at the thought of the great stately institution with all its traditions. I had a twinge of conscience every time I shook hands with the pastor at home. The bell-ringer too inspired in me a mystical respect because he had official connection with the whole thing. Now I look at the matter differently. I too have my responsibility for the church and its work. And now, when I see a pastor I know, I get a bad conscience, not because I dodge service in church, but because I'm not helping him to be a better pastor. All have responsibility for all . . . That's one of the secrets of the Christian fellowship. It was frightening to me to discover what Christianity really is. I still only just grasp what Christ wants of me. Daily I have to plough through thick layers of preconceptions and historical traditions which hide his nature from me. When my religious anxieties awakened some years ago I knocked off drink. Or rather I took just a drop now and then. And I thought about giving up tobacco. I chained up my good humour and thought it was a sin to go to the theatre . . . I thought of forbidding the kids to dance and of sacrificing bridge. But nothing came of all this . . . Then when I made a decision in dead earnest these questions just disappeared. All of them . . . I discovered that God must direct my life, and he shows me what to do from day to day. I feel I come nearer the core of Christianity through activity for God instead of by simply avoiding sinning . . . My Christianity was nothing less than sin."

"Can Christianity be sin?" Grawe looked somewhat bewildered.

"Mine was anyway," said Fjellgard, "because it led me to judge and condemn a whole lot of people, and to live in a way that meant I led people away from God. Just ask Tony and she'll tell you. For that matter I think a lot of the virtues modern men and women pride themselves upon are sins."

They sat round a long mahogany table which stood out from a wide window overlooking the fjord. The rain still came down steadily and stubbornly, but now and then there were light patches between the clouds, showing that the sun was somewhere in the offing and was trying to get through. The flag still hung motionless against the pole, and there was not a soul to be seen down in the open-air restaurants. Fjellgard remained the spokesman. Hørfeldt, Else, and Antoinette Fjellgard followed the battle between Fjellgard and Grawe in silence. . . . Because this is a battle, thought Hørfeldt. . . . The eternal battle between evil and good. . . . Between God and devil in human beings. . . . And the ego always fights against God. . . . Not for the devil so much as for itself.



"I'm thinking of the things which I made the guiding rule of my life and my public work," said Fjellgard. "The fatherland, the nationalist movement, my love of the farm, my own welfare. . . . It never occurred to me that the way in which I worked for all these ends was egotism. It never occurred to me that I had any responsibility for my wife, or that I ought to help her to develop. Nor that together we ought to develop the kids. I didn't see my farm as a link in the great fellowship of Norwegian peasantry. . . . And I didn't see that we peasants ought to give ourselves for the nation. . . . And I never saw that my people and my nation ought to give itself for the world."

"What d'you mean, giving?" Grawe sounded slightly irritated.

"Serving. . . . I serve Tony by being loving towards her in every detail, and by showing her through my actions the responsibility she has for the children and the neighbours and the people on the farm. . . . I serve the Norwegian farmers by giving them my experience as a farmer and as a man. . . . We serve the Norwegian fishermen and workers by working for them. As a people we can serve the world by helping nations in need. . . . By putting right the wrong we did to Denmark. . . . By showing that we stand for right in the world."

Grawe got up from his chair and began to pace the floor.

"We must as a nation, without thought of ourselves, we must help other peoples who're in need? . . . And you say this as a Storting member, belonging to a middle-class party . . . Now when even the Labour party is for closed frontiers and the greatest egotism, and constitutes the biggest threat to peace."

Fjellgard said:

"When I saw my selfishness and its effects upon the life of the world, it made me ready to follow God's guidance in my life . . . It was my unwillingness to make the final step which was my personal difficulty, and not theories about what Christianity is . . . People can discuss such things until doomsday. But when I live as a Christian, or try to, the theories disappear as far as I'm concerned."

"I won't act on your conditions . . ."

"I make no conditions for you. But *you* make conditions for *God*."

Grawe had sat down again and was stroking his head with his powerful hand and did not reply. Antoinette Fjellgard had followed the scene with the closest attention, and when silence reigned once more she said quietly:

"What Herr Grawe says might almost have sprung from my own heart . . ."

"I'm glad there's one normal person here," said Grawe.

"I could have said the same myself," she continued. "I've thought it many times and I know I'll think it many times yet."

Grawe was more and more gratified by what she said, and looked across at her husband rather triumphantly.

"All my life I've smiled at the supernatural element in Christianity, the incomprehensible, the impossible demands . . . The paradox about loving one's enemies alone showed me how far removed from all human conceptions the teaching was," she said in her clear voice which was as soothing as the deep, limpid tones of a cello after the trumpet bursts of Grawe.

"But when I saw from Halvard's everyday behaviour that he seriously intended to exceed the human and achieve the incomprehensible, the impossible; and when I discovered that he had begun to love his enemies . . . Well then, my idea of the whole thing changed . . . And I've seen so much, and realise so much, that I'd never have launched out upon this adventure if it hadn't been more than I was capable of. I can't say what I believe or don't believe, and I'd most certainly fail at any Christian exam . . . But I do know that since yesterday I've come into contact with something outside myself which I can live for . . . When I woke up this morning I was a little surprised that I didn't at once begin to tense myself up ready for living . . . I've always done that . . . I wanted to *live* . . . Now I simply had a new peace in my mind. I lived . . . quite simply, without strenuous effort on my part."

After thinking for a moment she added:

"Halvard said that his sin was his virtues . . . His Christianity, his patriotism, his love of the soil . . . My sin was my own will, and my constant struggle against Christianity, or rather against my inner urge to reach the thing outside myself which I now know exists and which I realise is what we call God."

During these remarks Grawe cooled down. He sat and looked out of the big window and drummed lightly on the table top with his fingers. Then he said:

"But these personal things are something different from what Fjellgard overwhelmed us with. That was world politics."

He looked questioningly at Fjellgard, who said:

"Christianity is world politics. Its final effect upon human life will be races, nations, classes, and marriage partners living in harmony. Christianity is the only form of world politics that leads forward and upward. Everything else leads backwards and downwards. And Christianity can succeed because it's the only power which does what is needed to lead the world forward and up . . ."

"What's that?"

"It changes human nature . . . That is the only thing in the world which can be changed. You remarked yesterday that you'd



felt you'd seen into the promised land . . . It's in the changing of your own nature that the promise lies."

"The theory's all right . . ." Grawe replied. "That Hørfeldt has become a different person I can see readily enough. But you, Fjellgard . . . And your respective wives . . . What do I know about them? . . . What they said last night about their emotions and wills was fair enough, and I can see that big things can happen when the will and the emotions get an objective other than the self. But I'm a man who deals with realities, and I want realities. Can you give me them?"

Fjellgard smiled and said:

"You can have as much as you want."

Else interrupted:

"It'll soon be dinner-time, and if you've nothing against it I propose we do this: Tony and I will get the meal ready, and as it seems to have cleared up you men might benefit from a walk in the fresh air . . ."

They fell in with her suggestion. Antoinette and Else got busy in the kitchen. Grawe, Hørfeldt, and Fjellgard put on their rain-coats and went for a brisk walk around Bygdø. The roads were muddy and wet, but the air was fresh and sharp. It had got considerably brighter, the flag had begun to move, and there was movement in the cloud layer, which, moreover, had risen so high that they could see the entire range of hill-tops round the city. The sparrows had not yet recovered their humour; they were unkempt and miserable, but from the coppices they passed they heard a song-bird or two cautiously try out their voices in the damp air. And from the open fields there floated towards them the scent of flowers so strong that it made them open all their senses to draw in the strong, youthful summer.

### III

And Whitsun passed. Grawe felt united to the other four in a way that he had never felt united to human beings before. Several times he had felt he wanted to clear out. But he was determined not to. He knew that if he broke away from the fellowship of which he had become a part, his one desire would be to get back again; for behind the accounts the Hørfeldts and Fjellgards had given, lay what he dreamt of entering . . . Or re-entering.

And what did this strange fellowship consist of? . . . He saw of course that Christianity was the driving force of it, that for these people God was a living reality who enabled them to accept victories and defeats otherwise than other people did. He had also got over

the intellectual difficulties he had fought with . . . There were a number of arguments which told against the existence of God . . . But there were just as many and just as weighty arguments for it. Nor did he doubt that there was sin in the world . . . Countless things he had done stood between him and most of the people he had had anything to do with. And could he doubt that belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus freed people from their sins and changed their nature, when he looked upon Georg Hørfeldt to-day and compared him with what he was a year ago when he arranged the banquet? . . . And Antoinette Fjellgard had become different before his very eyes, although she was quite unable to explain to either herself or others what had taken place in her soul . . .

They had given themselves to God, they said . . . Well, dash it! He could give himself and the works and Harald to God . . . But this phrase did not alter his mental processes in the slightest, although he repeated it over and over again as he lay in bed on Whit Monday morning, staring at the ceiling . . . Hørfeldt had told them how he had said this at the hotel up among the mountains and had felt something definite . . . But Grawe felt nothing as he lay there. The whole day he had been on the alert for something coming . . . But nothing came.

But the fellowship was there, for all that. And he saw too that it was all connected with giving . . . He perceived pretty quickly that Georg and Else Hørfeldt had had their marriage revitalised because both of them had ceased demanding anything from the other. Halvard and Antoinette Fjellgard had done the same, though it seemed to him that the radiantly lovely and sparkling Fru Fjellgard would be justified in making big demands upon her husband in return for what she had helped him to be . . . He saw too, that the relationship between Camilla and himself had become so flat and grey because he had demanded everything of her without giving her faithfulness and truth . . . The lack of confidence between him and his workmen he could trace back to the simple circumstance that he had once lied to them and cheated them of wages. That, too, had been due to a demand he had made upon them.

It was the same with his relations with the village. It had to give him peace, fellowship, the joy of living, but what did he give it? And society? . . . He demanded his rights. But did he give anything?

In spite of all this, he was deeply disappointed by his Whitsun when on the evening of the Monday he went home to Parkveien; he had expected to get something more than simply companionship. He would have liked to remain with them all much longer, however,



for he saw that the cause of his disappointment lay in himself somewhere. He had come to like all four of them . . . He had never seen people behave towards each other as they did ; no one had ever behaved towards him as they had done. It was not simply that there was a courteous and considerate atmosphere ; there was no self-assertion among them. Their personal pride and self-love was gone, or rather transformed to something noble . . . They were freed from a whole string of pestering considerations . . .

When Grawe got home again on the Monday evening he walked to and fro in the rooms on the ground floor . . . He was not free . . . Of that, at any rate, he was pretty certain. He was certain of another thing besides : that he would not go the way Harald had wanted him to go. It led to a kind of solitary and benumbed peace ; but it was like a living death . . .

As he walked to and fro in his rooms, he could feel things coming clearer . . . He still had high hopes . . . Would God come soon ? . . . But God did not come . . . Next morning the thought presented itself to him that God would come if he went up to the little chapel in Kirkeveien. He drove over there before going to the office, and sat in a corner and waited. But nothing happened.

And from day to day Grawe waited for God to come into his life. He got almost jumpy with it. He had a sensation which reminded him of his state of mind when he awaited replies to big tenders . . . He had tendered God his life , but had had no reply.

One day, just before he was due to go home, his secretary came in and said that Halvor Olsen was in the ante-room and wanted to speak with the Works-Owner.

“ Have they let him out already ? ”

The secretary said that the father had waived his right to prosecution, and had pleaded strongly for him. Grawe was overjoyed when he heard this, and felt that here he had done a good deed. He told the secretary to show the lad in at once . . . He was coming to thank him. Grawe sat up straight in his chair.

But the boy did not look as though he were going to express gratitude . . . He walked half-way across the big room . . . And there he stood, turning his cap round in his hands, fixing Grawe with a look so charged with hatred that Grawe stood up and said uncertainly :

“ What is it ? ”

The youth was unable to get a word across his lips . . .

“ What do you want ? ”

Then he burst forth :

“ I don't want no job in this bloody works. You've let my dad work hisself ter the nail and you've begun ter suck out the guts o' two o' my brothers an' all. That's enough for one family . . . I

know that I shall go to hell . . . I know that I shall drink myself an' others to death . . . But I won't be a blasted blinkin' slave here . . . D'yer hear that? An' I damn' well ain't afraid of yer either . . . You can shake yer fist at Dad and make all the others dance, but you won't break me . . . D'yer hear that? I'd sooner land up in jug than I'd take your bloody orders in this works . . . If yer want ter know, it was me who put a nail inter the machine that broke down that day . . . No one can hear wot I've said in here . . . But if yer report that ter the police I'll say it's not right and swear myself into hell saying yer a liar . . . ”

The youth had been speaking like a torrent . . . He had taken a pace or two forward, and Grawe looked into clear blue eyes that shone with hatred. His voice was intense, but he made a big effort not to speak too loudly. It was obvious that he had thought the whole thing out beforehand . . . Grawe thought to begin with he was drunk, but he did not smell of drink and he did not stumble over his words . . . Then Grawe became so amazed that he couldn't think at all. For a second a fury seized him, and he was on the point of rushing at the boy and hurling him out. But before he had taken a step, a thought flashed across his brain like lightning :

“ Choose again . . . ”

And for the next fraction of a second he asked God for help . . . Good will never come out of this unless you help me. I will. I will.

Peace descended at once upon Grawe's mind. A new feeling seemed to be almost bursting him ; he felt how, right in the face of this youth who hated him, he was filled with love ; how he, too, entered the promised land of freedom . . . And without listening very carefully to the stream of words which poured over him from Halvor Olsen, he took a breath of the new life which he accepted when he had decided to conquer himself . . . He asked in a friendly and natural voice :

“ Why don't you want to have a job here, Halvor ? . . . As far as I remember you applied to get your job back after the conflict, and if I'd heard about it in time you should have had it . . . Has anything happened since ? ”

The boy had expected anything else but just that question. The lesson he had prepared so carefully was thrown out of gear, and he stood there for a moment without being able to speak . . . Grawe could see how he was thinking . . .

“ Well, I'll tell yer. I'm a Communist. But a man's got to live an' 'ave money for gin and girl-friends, w'ich are the on'y pleasures the poor 'ave got in a capitalist society. I thought I could jus' as well work for you as for anyone else . . . Then I read in the paper that you're goin' ter start making armaments, an' then



I thought I'd sooner starve ter death than let anyone get me in here . . . .”

Again a thought flashed through Grawe :

“Choose again . . . .”

He did not know what to reply . . . . The youth had calmed down during his last speech . . . . Grawe thought . . . . I can hardly say straight out of the bag to this kid that I won't make arms. I haven't even given the matter consideration . . . . Grawe went over to the window. He turned his back to the boy, who remained standing in the middle of the room bewildered . . . .

Grawe was dominated by the thought :

“Choose again . . . .”

He tried to reason . . . . Nothing helped. He felt how a new power guided his thoughts along : his will was no longer a gleaming knife which sheared and destroyed, but something living and warm and active. And he turned to the boy and said :

“If that's the only thing that stops you working in these works you can put your mind at rest . . . . No arms will be made here . . . . If there are other reasons why you won't work here I'll pay for a course at the technical college for you. We shan't do anything about your damaging that machine. When you're able to pay for the damage you can give the money direct to me . . . . But remember that things like that seldom harm anyone except the workers . . . . Was there anything else you wanted to tell me ? . . . .”

The youth did not know which way to turn . . . . He stared crest-fallen at Grawe, who had turned towards him and was looking at him with friendly eyes . . . . Then he made an effort to find words . . . . Grawe waited a moment but, seeing he was incoherent, he said simply :

“All right, goodbye then . . . . You must think over what you'll do . . . .”

The boy pulled himself together, threw a helpless and frightened look at Grawe, turned and went slowly from the room . . . . Grawe sat down again at his desk and smiled . . . . Was this how it happened ? . . . . Yes, for some people . . . . He remembered the question and the reply in Hørfeldt's sitting-room when Antoinette Fjellgard had experienced her change . . . . Who was it who'd said that if he did God's will he'd see that God existed ? And now he had done God's will, and he knew that God existed. He got down on his knees beside his desk and prayed :

“Almighty God. I ask you to forgive me for all I've done wrong against you and Camilla and everybody. Help me to live in such a way and manage the works in such a way that I'm a blessing to the people who meet me . . . .”

Then he went home to dinner. Karen came to meet him in the

corridor. He remembered his decision ; he had entered a new relationship with all people : and he knew he must tell her that. He did so, and the old woman naturally shed a tear . . .

“ The Works-Owner has been so restless lately that I could have expected it,” she answered. “ Oh, my word, my word, I’m so glad ! . . . Camilla should have known about this . . . ”

He went into the study and looked at the picture of his wife . . . He could not ask the picture for forgiveness. But from the whole of his being arose a cry to God to be free from the weight of his deception and the lies he had told his wife, and as he stood there he felt the weight of it go . . . A strange process had gone on in the core of him. He did not know what it was. He simply realised that the ice which had lain in his breast was melted and that life and warmth filled his mind ; that he was taken into fellowship with the whole of mankind . . . He stayed at home all the afternoon and evening ; he thought and he did not think . . . He realised that God had led him on to a path which he had not known existed. The test was whether he was ready to do a positive and good action towards someone who hated and cursed him. And, having passed the test, he had acted, and then the rest followed by itself.

He woke early next morning : before he had had time to reflect he felt the new attitude he had to life. He did not have to compel himself to get his teeth into a new day. Life began of its own accord, and the first person he thought of was Halvor Olsen.

Before doing anything else he must tell Harald what had happened to him . . . But every effort he made to form an idea of Harald’s reaction failed . . . He was so far removed from his son . . . He only knew that Harald had followed his spiritual life during the past months with greater interest even than he had shown ; he had often felt Harald’s sagacious eyes resting on him . . . They reminded him of Camilla’s.

“ Something’s happened to me,” he said as Harald came into his office. “ I’ve become a Christian,”

Harald Grawe looked sharply at his father, who noticed that his words made Harald’s hand begin to shake so that the paper he held rustled ; but his voice was as calm as ever as he replied :

“ What d’you mean exactly by that ? ”

Grawe was at a loss to explain . . . Yes, what did he mean exactly ? . . . It was more difficult to tell Harald than Karen.

“ Well, you see,” he tried to explain . . . “ I was so divided in my thought life and emotional life, that I longed for harmony. And I felt so removed from all human fellowship that I couldn’t bear my loneliness any longer. And at Whitsun I was out at Director Hørfeldt’s with Storting Member Fjellgard and their



wives, and there I heard so much about what Christianity meant to them that I was completely carried away . . . ”

“By what?” Harald asked quietly.

Grawe lost the track again. And did not know what to reply . . . But he proceeded to recount the whole violent scene with Halvor Olsen the day before. He repeated the boy's words and described his own reaction as well as he could, and he saw how his son became more and more uncomprehending.

“That's how I experienced,” he concluded, “God's helping me in the most difficult situation I've ever faced . . . And I believe that if I'd accepted Hørfeldt's apology in the same spirit I'd have been spared a great deal of what I've been through since.”

Harald still looked all at sea.

“I can't say that the information you've given me has made it all clear to me, but I understand that you feel something. Relieved . . . A better person because you let yourself be slanged by an apprentice who was in a wild state of mind . . . Is that what you want to say?”

“More or less.”

“Then I ought to congratulate you . . . That you prefer God and Christianity to me and my egotism is a matter of small moment. But how did it happen? . . . You were at the Hørfeldts', you said? . . . Wasn't it him you knocked unconscious at home in Parkveien? . . . ”

“Yes . . . ”

“And now you're friends, I presume.”

“Yes.”

Harald smiled slightly . . . And Grawe went on to give the details, to speak of his new scruples of conscience . . . How he had created material well-being around him, but not happy people . . . How his life had been at sixes and sevens because he'd had no definite aim . . . How he'd never taken full responsibility for his workmen, but contented himself with paying them and assuring their future by means of the pension scheme.

“I don't quite follow. D'you think that an employer ought to be a sort of clergyman? . . . ”

“If you like. Anyway, I've lived so far from our workmen for years that we're in two different worlds.”

“D'you propose to mix up Christianity with the management of the works?”

Grawe did not know what to say. He did not know what he had thought of doing; rather dubiously he answered:

“I'd thought of paying more attention to what my conscience tells me is right, both as regards the management and extensions.”

“But say something definite, Father . . . That's just a way of speaking. Conscience, you say? . . . But you weren't a criminal

exactly . . . Let's keep our feet on the ground. If you've changed your point of view in practical questions, say so and don't let's play blind-man's-buff any longer. What are you going to do? . . . Give higher wages? Lengthen the holidays?"

Grawe could not make any answer to this; he simply had not thought about these things, and did not know himself anything definite. Then he suddenly remembered the trouble about the apprentices and the control mechanisms . . . He mentioned both cases . . .

"In such circumstances I think I'd take the men into my confidence."

Grawe went on to say that he could hardly make armaments for any foreign firm.

"I guessed something like that . . ."

After that they talked of purely practical matters, and Grawe was rather relieved, for again he felt afraid of his son's razor-sharp intelligence, which made him unsure of himself in such conversations. A day or two later Harald asked his father if he had anything against his taking his summer vacation immediately.

#### IV

Harald Grawe went abroad with his wife. He would be away for three or four weeks, he told his father.

One morning, contrary to his habit, Grawe woke early. He remembered that now Harald was abroad there was no one who did a proper round of the works. Why shouldn't he do the rounds as the day's work began? . . . He arrived just in time to enter the gates with the big crowd as the hooter went.

He pulled on Harald's overalls and set off.

The tour was a revelation to him. He could not remember the last occasion he had been there and seen and heard the machines start up and the overhead cranes hum forward under the roof. There the pneumatic hammers got going. There started the drills. There the blue flame of the riveting machine ate into the steel.

He was so intrigued by all this that only after some time did he notice that most of the men regarded him with sullen and suspicious looks. Many of them omitted to give him any greeting, and it would have taken no more to make Grawe begin to lose his good humour, but then it flashed through his mind, how should they know that his attitude to them was changed? And he continued his rounds in the same cheerful frame of mind. When he came to the section where Nils worked, and where he had triumphantly



discovered the fault in the new machine, he stopped and asked how it was going now . . . Oh yes, it was all right . . .

“Is there anything special the Works-Owner wants to know, seeing you're here so early?” asked one of the foremen. The workmen pricked up their ears for his reply, and he realised why he was being followed by such sour and suspicious looks. They had thought that he was planning something new to be forced on them.

“No,” he answered, with an open and friendly expression which reassured the foreman, who had been a shade apprehensive after asking his question. “But my son is abroad, so I wanted to see how you're getting on . . .”

As he said that, did an invisible signal pass from man to man? Grawe thought so, because as he passed through the shops on his way back there was a different tone throughout the whole concern . . . None of them were sullen, it seemed to him. There was a more cheerful ring in the hammer blows, the faces were brighter, and no one avoided him in order not to have to touch his cap . . . He decided to do the rounds every day . . . Next morning, as he went in through the big gates with the men, only cheerful faces surrounded him, and as he went from section to section in his own new overalls the suspiciousness of the previous day was gone. Several days passed in this way; his round took longer and longer, for the foremen began coming up to him to point out things which they felt could be improved.

“How're things going as regards the control instruments?” he asked a week after he had begun these morning rounds. The foreman he had asked paused before replying . . .

“The instruments are all right, but the men don't like them . . .”

He felt inclined now to give orders for the removal of all the control instruments. But in that case he'd have no exact data for assessing the value of the costly machines. He decided to wait a few days and then see what to do; for though he was a Christian, it was his duty, surely, to see that the work was as good as possible? And it was quite certain that the control instruments had increased the capacity of the works. That there had later been a struggle for authority, and that he had used the instruments to assert himself, was another matter . . . One day he button-holed the branch secretary of the Union, and explained to him first the reason why he was taking the question up . . . Told him he had become a Christian and regarded himself as the steward of God's property . . . Then explained all the arguments in favour of the control instruments, and finally said that not until the last day or two had he realised there was any solid substance in the men's opposition . . . He drew out statistics for the costly machines and demonstrated to



the man that they increased capacity when they were correctly handled.

The secretary was at first suspicious, but Grawe made him understand that he wanted objective advice, and that he was speaking to him as a fellow-worker . . . Suddenly the man's face brightened, and he said :

" I got yer . . . And the best way to get us to see that you've got ter 'ave them instruments is ter tell all the men what you've told me now . . . "

The next day Grawe assembled all the foremen and shop stewards at the works and informed them what the position was. He put up notices with a detailed explanation . . . In the notice he expressed, too, his regret that he had not explained before he obtained them the importance of the control-instruments to the firm. He told the Union committee that in future no big changes in the management of the works would be made unless the shop stewards were first consulted.

It gave him great satisfaction to settle these minor pieces of business ; he could not recall having been met with such openness on the part of the men for a long time. He felt on a new footing of fellowship with them when he began to think of them as people and not just machine-minders . . . But it was his big plans for the future which took most of his thoughts. He was quite determined now not to collaborate with the arms trust. He was rather surprised that he had not heard from them, for he had already overshot the time for his reply by several days.

One day Fjellgard mentioned to him that he had heard rumours that property for the erection of a new large-scale industrial plant had been purchased somewhere up-country, and he asked Grawe if he had heard anything about it : but the plan was unknown to Grawe . . .

Some days later Harald came home. Grawe was a little embarrassed when he met his son in the office after his morning round through the shops. He had wondered a good deal what Harald would say to the notices about the control-instruments, and he had dreaded telling him that he had completely abandoned the idea of collaboration with the international arms trust. But Harald made it all easy for him. He was calm and good-humoured as usual, and he said where he and Astrid had been . . . He listened with a faint smile to his father's account of his conversation with the shop-stewards, and was not in the least surprised by his father's attitude to the arms trust . . . But he would not discuss it.

" Can't we talk the matter through at our leisure ? " he suggested. " I've got large and weighty things to discuss with you, Father . . . Why not come up to-night ? "



Grawe could see from his son's manner that something unusual was afoot, and he accepted. He'd love to come. "Might I ask you? . . . How are things going with you and Astrid? Are you going to be divorced?"

A smile crossed Harald's face . . .

"No . . . Not for the present, anyway . . . She's given up the romantic notions which you've got in another form . . . But we'll look forward to seeing you to-night."

Harald Grawe had determined to have things out with his father that night; for during the weeks that had passed since his father had told him of his decision a mass of bitterness had collected in his mind.

When during the afternoon he told Astrid what he had thought of saying to his father in the course of the evening, she said:

"Now, go easy, Harald. Don't push things to extremes. I quite agree that this abandonment of reality by your father is one of the worst things that could have happened to you and me. But it's his form of egotism. And just as you want me to respect yours, and I demand respect for mine, we must respect his."

Harald said that naturally he wouldn't make a scene . . . Grawe came to supper. There was a very friendly tone during the meal. Harald and Astrid both talked about their travels; and now they sat with their coffee and watched the sunset from the big closed-in verandah.

"Was it something important you had to say to me?" said Grawe after a pause.

"Yes. To go straight to the point: I'm going to start up a works of my own and I'd like the money Mother left me paid out to me now. That shouldn't raise any great difficulties should it?"

Grawe had expected Harald to have something very important on his heart. He had also expected that the struggle between him and Harald would concern the works, but he had not thought that it would take this form . . . He sat for a long time and let Harald's words pass through his head again and again . . .

"You must excuse me if I've expressed myself rather abruptly, but there was no point in using a lot of superfluous phrases."

"Don't you worry, my boy," said Grawe. "But, why?"

"I might as well explain to you the reason for my plan," said Harald. "As you know, I've always disagreed with you about certain points of the management. That you've a creative brain of the first order I am fully aware, and no one could evaluate better than I can the things you've achieved down there . . ."

He pointed with his cigarette to the huge buildings of the works which lay in the sun's setting light, the giant windows just then catching the last rays so that they glittered.

“ And I'm quite certain that only you with your intuition can manage a works like those on such remarkable principles as you have always followed . . . Or rather absence of principles. Because first you're a realist who pays no attention to anybody . . . Your old playmate Nils you treat one day like a cur . . . The next day like a friend . . . One day you're ready to let the works stand idle till they collapse on account of a trifling matter ; the next day you pay out a small fortune in wages to the men who've struck illegally . . . Realist to-day. Sentimentalist to-morrow. Only you and your intuition could steer the old ship through all that . . . When you began to talk to me some months back I was glad, because I realised you'd begun to be aware of the dualism in you, and gradually I began to feel I needn't be so anxious for my future as I had been . . . ”

Grawe had followed his son's words without knowing how to take them . . . Now, he asked :

“ Were you anxious for your future ? . . . With all that free from debt behind you ? . . . ”

“ Yes. It may sound strange. But I was afraid because I knew that one day you might hit on some fantastic idea which would send the whole apple-cart into the ditch. It's happened before that imaginative geniuses of your type have lost everything overnight. When you produced your big plan I thought at once, here was the catastrophe ; and the thought flashed through my head that now was the time to break away . . . ”

Grawe sat with bowed head and heard the speech as though it had nothing to do with him . . . Astrid gave now and then a terrified glance at her husband.

“ You remember what we talked about some time ago, Father ? You know my philosophy of life ? . . . ”

“ My dearest boy . . . Just speak your mind. For goodness sake don't let's act a comedy together.”

“ But then I began to think. Why not combine your fantastic plans with realism ? Your urge to create something for the community with my urge to do something for myself ? . . . And you came half-way to meet me by asking me to help you ' modernise ' your philosophy . . . ”

Grawe raised his head and looked at his son . . . With deep scrutiny . . .

“ So you wrote off to Sager ? ”

Harald blushed slightly . . . Astrid too bent her head and looked ashamed.

“ I've told you all along, Harald. You ought to have spoken to Father-in-law about it.”

Grawe gave a rather melancholy smile :



"My dear Astrid. We're realists . . ."

He was silent for a long time and the others saw the struggle going on within him . . . Then he turned to his son.

"I'm infinitely grateful to God that I can listen to you saying this without feeling sorry for myself and without the slightest bitterness . . . But continue . . ."

Harald blushed again.

"Thank you, Father. I hadn't dreamt that you'd be able to take my behaviour like this. It isn't very honourable . . . I know that . . . But everyone puts number one first . . . Yes, I originally wrote to Sager and told him our plans and hinted at the idea of arms manufacture. They cottoned on to it . . . And the rest you know . . ."

Again all three of them were silent. Then Harald went on :

"But Whitsun arrived, and you went off to the Hørfeldts and came home and announced you'd become a Christian. What you've said about factory management and Christianity and your hint about dropping arms collaboration made me once more begin to fear your weird whims, and I reverted to my old plan . . ."

"Your old plan? I never knew you had any plan . . ."

"No . . . I've never mentioned it to anybody. It was my reserve escape line. The idea was to start an out-and-out modern works and produce first-class special-purpose machines with highly-trained, precision labour . . . I'd prepared all the details against the possibility of your one fine day coming a cropper. And when you'd spoken to me that day I made my decision. I don't propose to go to the bottom with your monster concern. I've got to earn big money to live as I do . . . I've promised Astrid luxury . . . And my friends among the gay public of the city have expensive tastes . . ."

Astrid became more and more ill-at-ease as he spoke . . . At last she broke out :

"Harald ! Haven't you any shame at all ?"

Grawe looked at her with a smile.

"It's better to paint things worse than they are than to have to remove ornamentation from the truth later . . ."

"That's my opinion too," said Harald, as coldly as though they were discussing something of little importance. He went on :

"So I went off to the arms trust . . . I told them how the land lay. Asked if they were interested in my project . . . They were, and the other day I bought land for the erection of a factory turning out special-purpose machinery, machine-guns, and aeroplane cannon."

"So it's you who's starting the big industrial concern Fjellgard had heard about . . ."

“Yes . . . We have in mind at present a plant employing a thousand operatives . . . The capital will come largely from the trust, but only provided the Government and the party leaders whom I talked with to-day agree to the conditions . . . Now you know why I want Mother’s money. To put it briefly : it’s not absolutely essential for me to have it, and I won’t kick up any fuss to get it, but . . . You see ?”

Grawe nodded . . .

“I see . . . And I think we can reach an agreement there. There’ll be a certain amount of difficulty, I suppose . . . But only yesterday I thought again about my first idea of gradual extension of the works, instead of erecting the monster factory all in one go . . . Are you going to set to work immediately ?”

Harald nodded . . . Then he got up and, going over to his father, took his hand . . .

“Thank you . . . You don’t know how I dreaded this conversation . . .”

Grawe gripped his son’s hand tightly . . . He did not know what to say ; it occurred to him that now he had been made use of once more . . . Again someone had spun their web around him . . . Once Hørfeldt had exploited him. Now it was his own son who had played with his money and his soul, as with chess pieces, in order to obtain his own ends. The first time he experienced this humiliation he raged like a wild beast . . .

They sat in silence, all three of them. Astrid looked at her father-in-law as she had never looked at him before. Amazing men, these Grawes.

Grawe felt in an almost physical way how God helped him to see these things as unimportant, and at the same time he felt new forces growing up within him . . . What was it Camilla had once said ? . . . That she was sad to think she had been unable to keep alive the dreams in his mind . . . And yet that was just what she had been able to do . . . Far, far past the grave her faith in his determination to reach out into the infinite had given him stimulus . . . Her unspoken indictment of him through these years had prepared the way for what had happened to him now. God had used her faith and her indictment as his instruments : she had helped him to find himself.

For a moment he toyed with the idea of explaining this to Harald and Astrid ; but he dropped it. They probably think I’m mad enough already, he thought. On the other hand he did try to explain to them what he saw as his task now at the works . . . To make himself and the three thousand men servants of the Norwegian people . . . To manage the buildings, the machinery, the stocks as God’s property. But he soon stopped . . . He saw



it was going over their heads. And again they relapsed into silence.

Astrid looked across at her husband every now and then. Afraid he would continue the conversation with his father . . . Harald said suddenly :

"You mustn't think I like doing this. I've always enjoyed working with you and felt very much one with you . . ."

"I understand, my boy," Grawe smiled. "I suddenly swing about and enter what must seem to you the worst unreality. But what for me has become reality."

It was late. The sun had sunk, and Grawe rose to go . . .

"If there's nothing else you want to say? . . . We can take up the question of the money to-morrow. We haven't any ready cash, you know, but I'll be able to fix it by means of a debenture issue on the works. There's nothing more then?"

Astrid looked beseechingly at her husband.

"Thanks very much, Father. Shall I drive you down?"

"No thanks. It'll be very nice walking down, this lovely evening."

Harald and Astrid stood on the verandah and watched the lithe figure setting off towards the city. At the bend he turned and waved his hat. When they were inside the house again, Harald said :

"I'll be damned. He's changed. Debenture on the works . . . The man who'd never borrow an øre."

Astrid put her arms round her husband.

"Don't make yourself harder than you are, Harald. Admit you've never seen anything like that before . . . And thank you for not saying all those other things. Why didn't you, by the way?"

Harald Grawe looked rather embarrassed.

He did not know why himself.

"Dash it all. It wasn't necessary. He said it himself. The most important things anyway. But I'm tired, and I don't know what you'll do, but I'm going to bed . . ."

They had separate bedrooms. When she reached hers some time later she heard by Harald's steady breathing from his room that he was already asleep. She remained sitting by the window for a long time, looking out into the dimness of the summer night, while she recalled all that Harald had said to his father and the way his father had taken it . . . A wild longing sprang up in her heart, and she put her hands against her breast and clenched them together and a tear rolled slowly down her cheek . . .