

ALMA MAHLER WERFEL



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And the
Bridge is Love

MEMORIES OF A LIFETIME

ALMA MAHLER WERFEL

WITH E. B. ASHTON

And
the Bridge
is
Love

MEMORIES OF A
LIFETIME

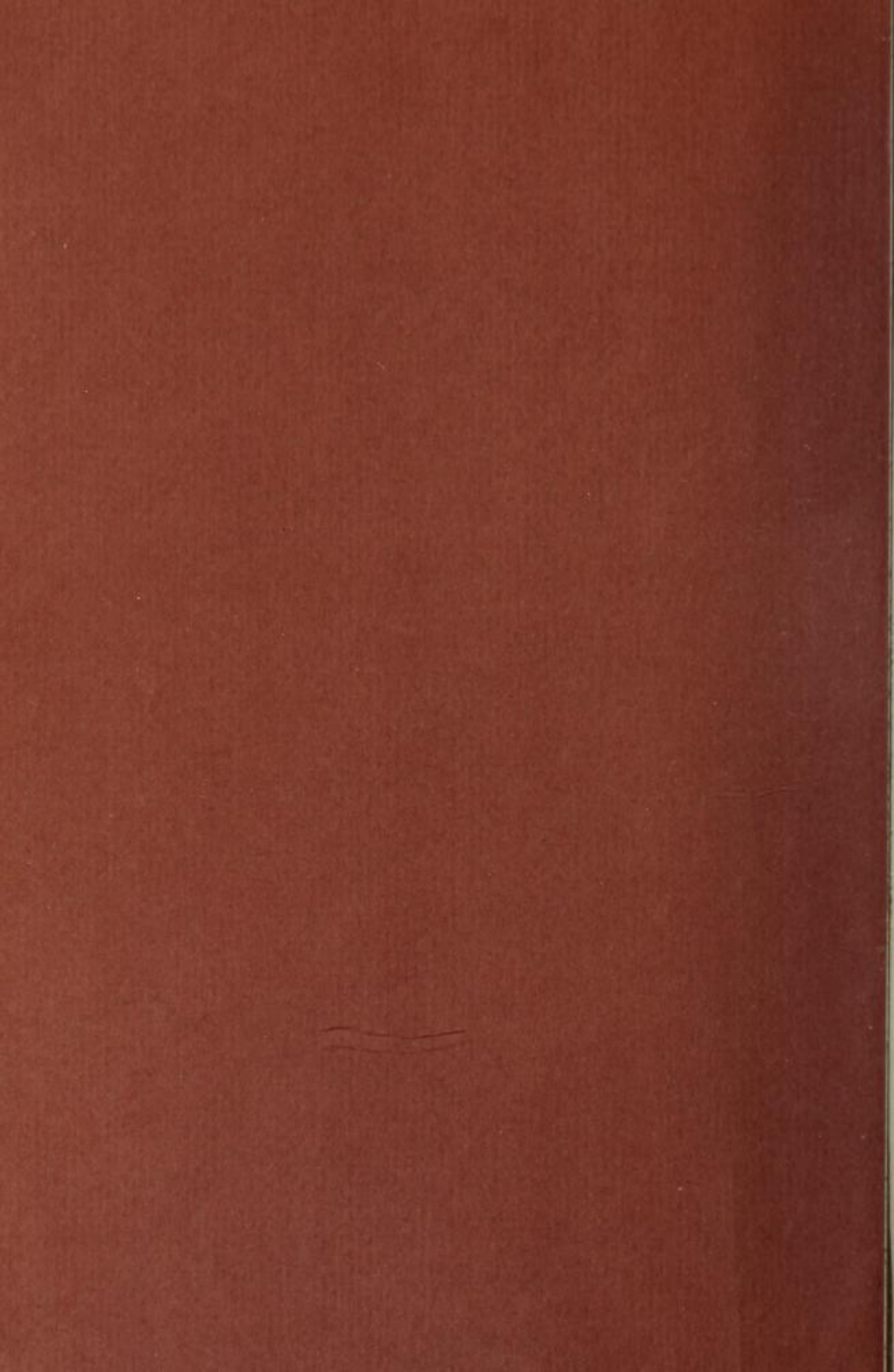
To become a legend in one's own time is a role granted to few. Seldom is the role played by a woman. And never has it been played by a woman like Alma Mahler Werfel.

The daughter of Emil Schindler, esteemed painter to the Austro-Hungarian court, Alma Schindler was often called "the most beautiful girl in Vienna." Married to the world-famous composer and conductor Gustav Mahler at the age of twenty-two, she left an old world of gracious but conventional traditions to enter a new one of turbulence, passion, and genius. It was a world she would never leave.

Few women have been as deeply involved with famous men. Four years

(Continued on back flap)

Barbara McClure Paillet



Barbara McClure

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AND THE BRIDGE IS LOVE

ALSO BY ALMA MAHLER WERFEL

Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters

ALMA MAHLER WERFEL

And
the Bridge


IS
Love

in collaboration with E. B. Ashton

“There is a land of the living
and a land of the dead,
and the bridge is love,
the only survival, the only meaning.”

—Thornton Wilder

The Bridge of San Luis Rey

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY  NEW YORK

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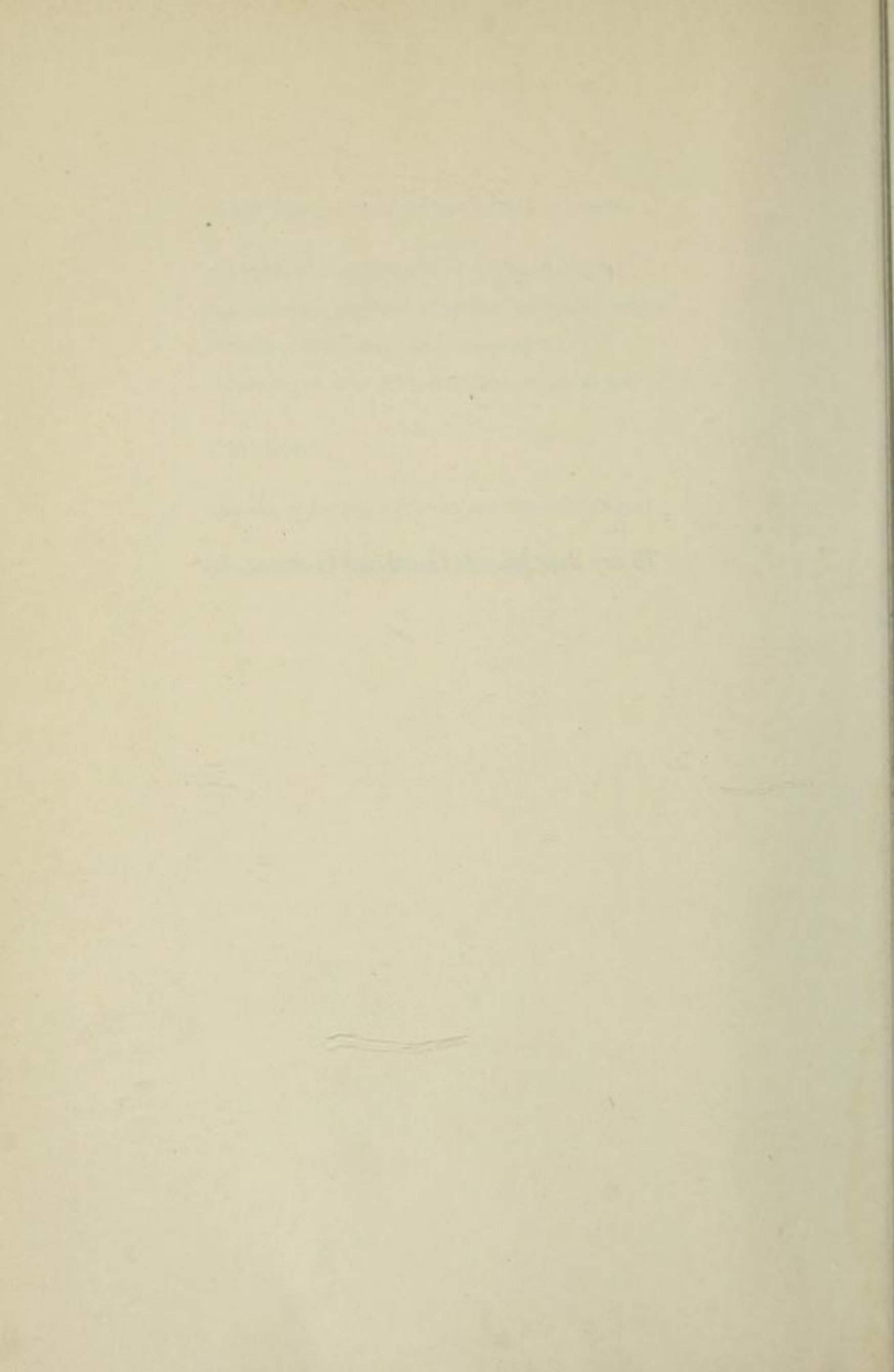
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first edition

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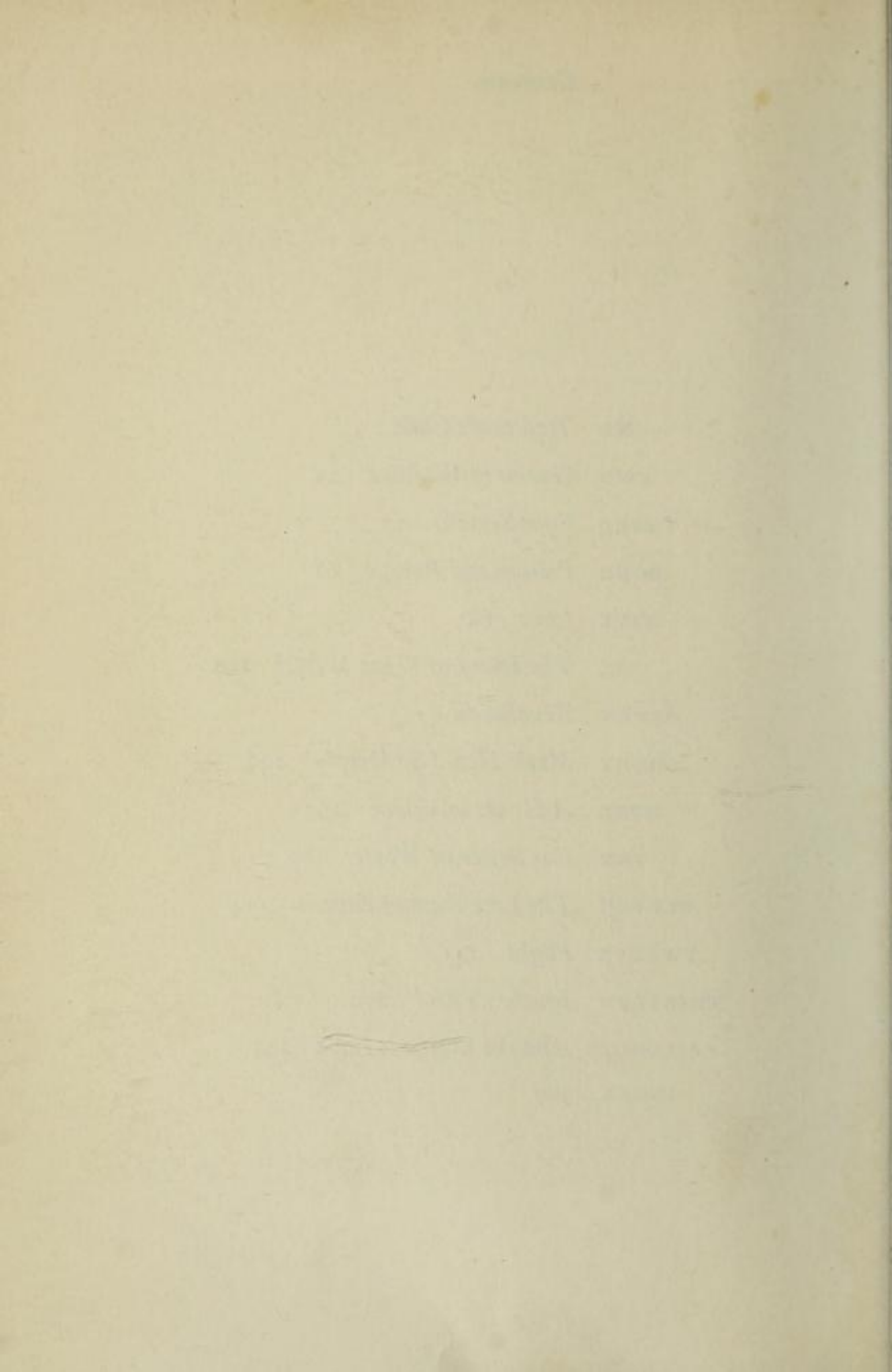
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To my dear friends Gusti and Gustave Arlt



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Alma Schindler



Father's studio



Schindler statue, Vienna

Plankenberg Manor





Adolescent

Dedicated to Alexander von Zemlinski

Debutante





Anna ("Gucki")



*With Gustav Mahler in Rome
Mahler at the Opera*



Alma Mahler



Family scene



Maria



Mahler and Gucki, Toblach, 1909



Mahler conducting in Strassburg



"Gustav Mahler" by Auguste Rodin



The last voyage





Hans Pfitzner



Oskar Kokoschka



"Facing life"



"Tempest" by Oskar Kokoschka (1914, Kunstmuseum, Basel)



*From "The Fettered Columbus"
by Oskar Kokoschka
(1913, lithograph)*

*"Portrait of a Woman"
by Oskar Kokoschka (1913,
Coll. Alma Mahler Werfel)*



Walter Gropius

Semmering, 1917

*Haus Mahler,
Breitenstein on Semmering*





Manon

With Franz Werfel



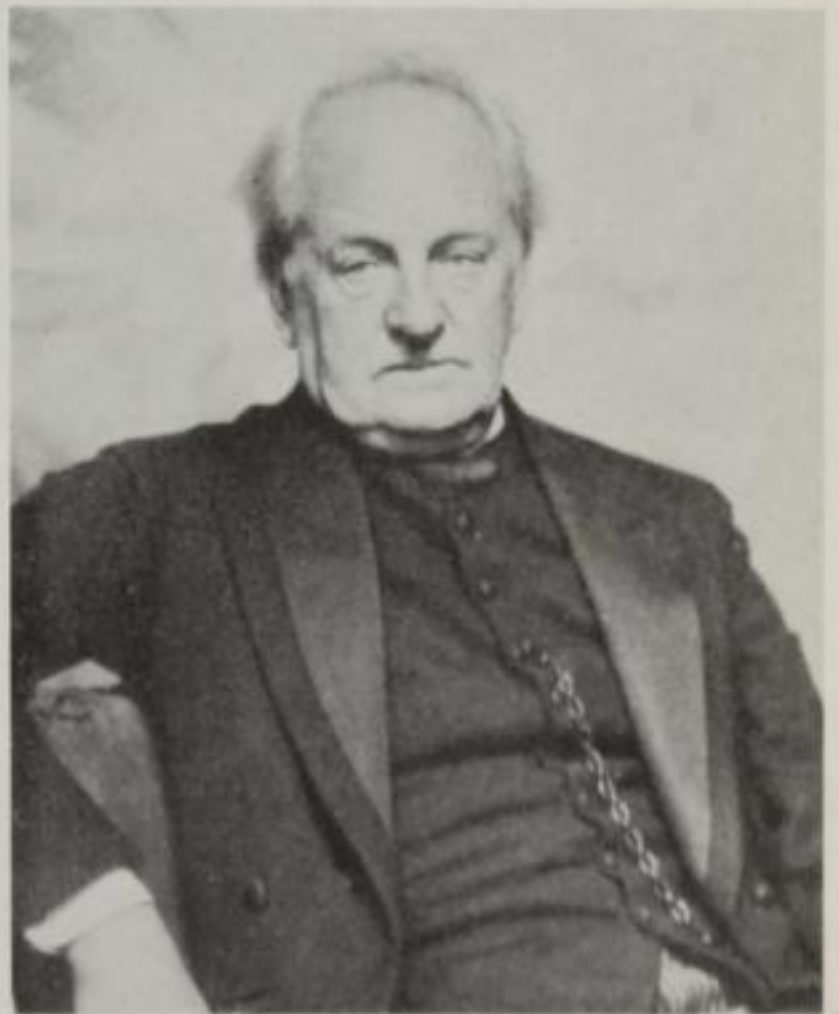
Gerhart Hauptmann



Together on Semmering



Werfel, Semmering, 1923





Casa Mahler, Venice



With Manon and Franz Werfel in Venice



Hans Pfitzner and Max Brod



Alban Berg



Werfel, Alban and Helene Berg



Werfel, Venice, 1926



Anna in Sicily, 1925



Manon



Anna



Anna Mahler with uncompleted relief sculpture of her father



*"The Eternal Road"—Kurt Weill,
Franz Werfel, and Max Reinhardt
in New York*

Visiting a Hollywood studio



Tusculum in Beverly Hills



an Alma
(nach dem Abschied)

Nie ich dich liebe, hab ich nicht gewusst,
Benn mich überhül dies rauhe Scheiden.
Ich bin ganz belüft um soviel Weiden.
Nimm wird man bewußt erst durch Verlust.

Nach gestern ~~dein~~ ^{du} ~~Hand~~ berührt hat, steht mich leer.
Die Dinge sind sie tief gekrümmte Tiere.
Mein Leben nicht das ~~deine~~ ^{deine} von das ihre,
Und demm haben sie kein Leben mehr.

Ich auf fernem, zusammengefaßt sind alle
Als Angst vor meines Herzen Überachwellen.
Im Haus versuche ich mich blind zu stellen
Denn Zeit ist trennlos, aber Raum list trenn.

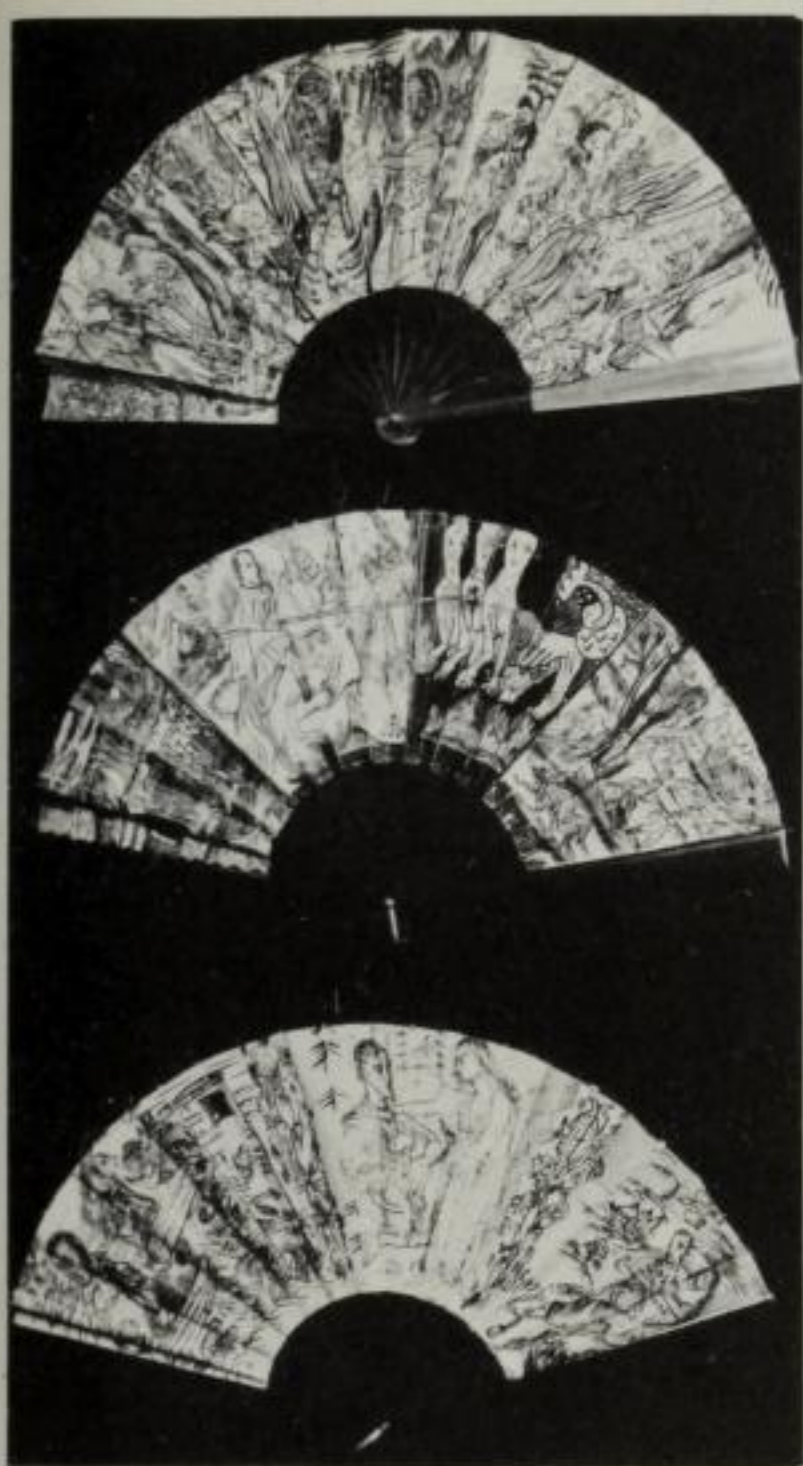
Im Raum hier nebenan dein Leben schweben,
Hier stehetst du müd, lachend sprechend;
Und ich hindich, - wie ist das herzzerbrechend -
Nimm an, nimm an und küßte mich nicht bang.



*Bruno Walter, Alma Mahler Werfel, Eugene Ormandy,
Dorothy Kirsten, Igor Stravinsky*



"Arnold Schönberg" by Anna Mahler



"Love story on folded paper"—six fans painted by Oskar Kokoschka for Alma Mahler, 1913-14

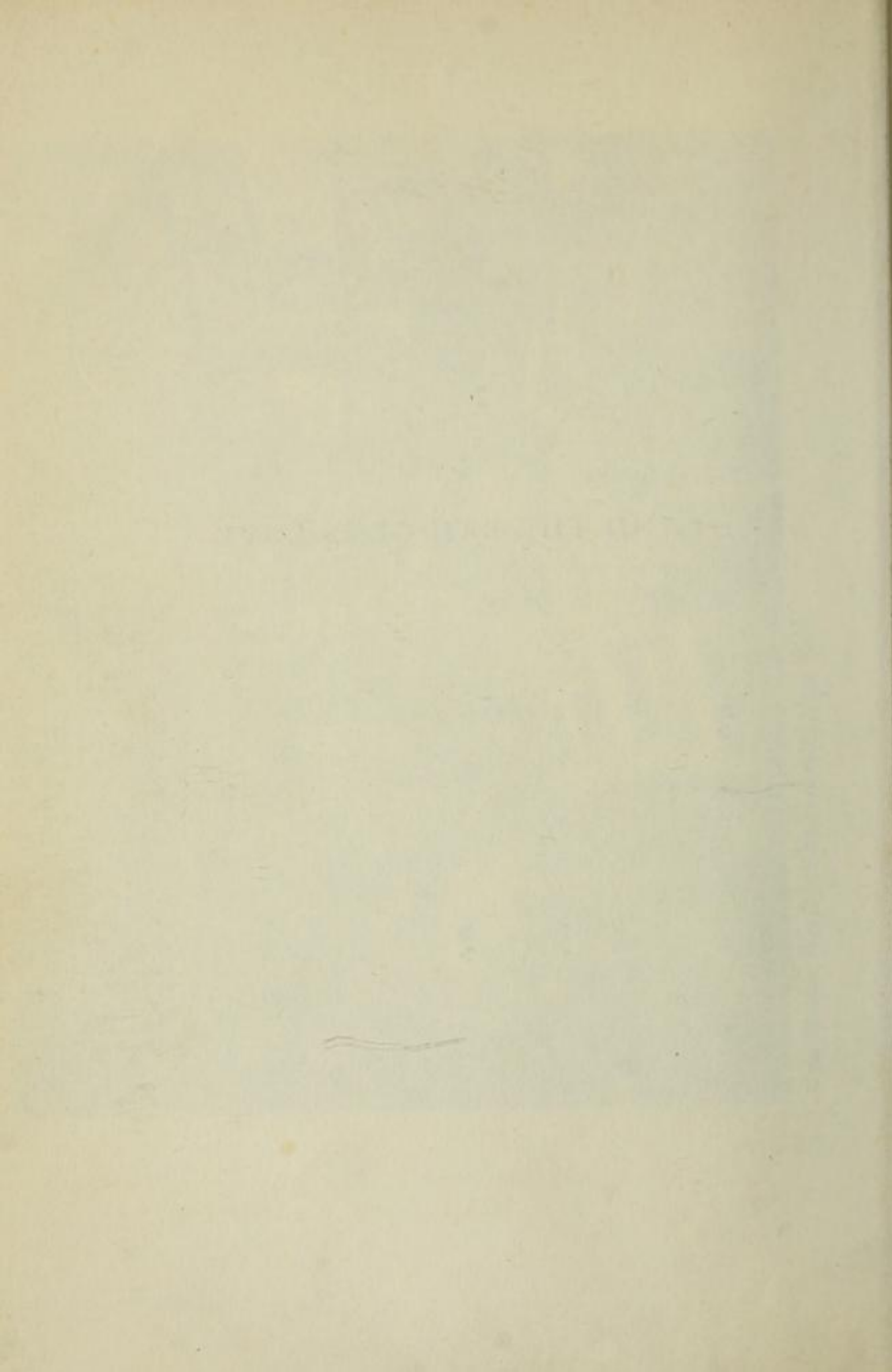


Alma Mahler Werfel



Alma Mabler Werfel's living room in New York

AND THE BRIDGE IS LOVE





An episode in the summer of 1915 was the first cause of an upheaval in my life. I sat in a horse-drawn cab, waiting, wearying as the sunlight poured down on me, until a bookseller's cart passed by and I revived at once. I bought the latest issue of a monthly called *Die Weissen Blätter*, and when I opened it I saw a poem: "Man Aware" (*Der Erkennende*) by Franz Werfel.

One thing I know:	[<i>Eines weiss ich,</i>
Nothing is mine to own;	<i>Nie und nichts wird mein;</i>
I possess alone	<i>Mein Besitz allein:</i>
This awareness . . .	<i>Das zu erkennen . . .]</i>

About Werfel I knew little more than that he was at the front. "One thing I know . . ."

The poem engulfed me. It has remained one of the loveliest in my experience. I was spellbound, a prey to the soul of Franz Werfel, whom I did not know.

At that moment I was mentally unfaithful to an admirable and quite unsuspecting man. Walter Gropius and I had been married only a short time, but when he rejoined me in the cab he found a changed woman, whose transformation he could not explain.

I set the poem to music, arbitrarily concluding halfway through the second stanza. Werfel himself later substituted my

ending for his, so that in all new editions the poem closes on its strongest note: ". . . this awareness!"

From childhood on I had been yearning for "the blue sky on earth" and I found it in music.

I am the daughter of an artistic tradition. My father, Emil J. Schindler, was the foremost landscape painter of the Austrian Empire—and always in debt, as befits a person of genius. He came from old patrician stock and was my shining idol.

My father's father died young, of tuberculosis. When he saw there was no hope left, he hired a four-in-hand coach and took his beautiful young wife for a ride through Italy and Switzerland. And when he felt the end coming he had her dress in her gayest evening gown and sit in it by his bedside until he died. Her portrait still hangs in the Gallery of Beauties of the Vienna Hofburg.

My father's uncle, Alexander Schindler, wrote novels and legal treatises under an aristocratic pseudonym. He played a major role in old Austria, served in parliament, and—to cite but one of his innovations that was widely felt—abolished the lash.

Alexander Schindler was a natural spendthrift. Creditors forced him to flee by night from Leopoldskron, his heavily mortgaged castle, but he turned even this ignominious departure into a pageant: his many servants, wearing silk knee breeches, had to escort him out in a torchlight parade. (Many years later, Max Reinhardt, the great modernizer of the European stage, met a similar fate at Leopoldskron; but our times are less romantic, and Reinhardt's exit coincided with the start of World War II, which ruined everyone and everything. Today the castle houses a school that explains America to European students.)

My father as a young man had shared a studio with Hans Makart. Makart was a Renaissance-type artist, but without the grandeur of the men of that age. He gave the most lavish parties, inviting the loveliest women and dressing them in his genuine Renaissance costumes. Rose garlands trailed from the ballroom ceiling, Liszt played through the nights, the choicest wines flowed, behind each chair stood a page clad in velvet, and so forth to the limits of splendor and imagination.

There were cracks in the soles of my father's one pair of shoes, but because they were unpaid for, he could not order new ones. What to do? He hired a cab for a month, to save wear, and "stretch" the shoes over the weeks it would take him to complete a picture. Thus he floundered through the world of affairs, getting along somehow, for every now and then he did manage a sale. If only his debts had not kept mounting in the meantime!

One ornament of my father's odd way of life at the time was a page boy, who emptied his pockets every night, stealing what little money he found. My father knew about it but did not mind—"because the lad was so handsome." Later, of course, when my mother took charge and saw what the lad had been up to, he was fired on the spot.

Marriage brought a narrowness into my father's life. True, he lived in a castle and called a park with baroque statuary his own, but in the depths of his soul he harbored unfulfilled longings for the beauty he sought to infuse into this crude, workaday world. My mother, a product of the middle class of Hamburg, had to catch up rationally with all that was in my father's blood. Not until after his death would she grasp his importance. The struggle for our daily bread must have been hard on her, for all he knew was his art, and when he got tired of problems he would just lie down—fall asleep—or write.

One of his pupils described his first impression of our home:

A fairly big room, light streaming through the windows, an 18th-century highboy, and in a huge armchair an exquisitely beautiful old lady with silvery curls, reading fairy tales to two children, blonde and brunette: Schindler's mother with her grandchildren.

The winter of 1884 brought Schindler the fulfillment of his most secret, unuttered, hardly acknowledged wish. He is a born aristocrat, lived as a youth with his uncle in Leopoldskron Castle—and has now been returned by chance to another castle, to live like a feudal lord, on practically nothing.

In an old park beyond the Vienna Woods—similar to the formal gardens he dreamed about—stands an old manor house belonging to the estate of Prince Karl Liechtenstein. A rectangular 15th-century building, two stories high and topped by a gabled roof. A baroque, onion-tip clock tower adorns the facade. Only a few traces of

planning remain visible in the three-acre park, chiefly a splendid baroque gate flanked by century-old lindens. Roundabout, other huge linden and plane trees; an avenue of old walnuts; vineyards running uphill behind the house; in front and below, the park is enclosed by a tiny village. There is a charming variety in the surroundings of Plankenberg Manor: rolling hills, broad vistas, forests and fields, poplar-lined country lanes, a quiet brook. Whoever lives on the manor is lord of the countryside. On one of our strolls we meet a peasant, and Alma indignantly asks her father: "Daddy, what's that man doing in our woods?"

I lived apart, like a princess, amid the beauties of nature which my father extolled. To know and understand the Austrian landscape, one needs but to see my father's paintings.

Most of my childhood was spent at Plankenberg Manor. For me it was full of beauty, legends, and dread. The house was said to be haunted, and we children lay trembling through many a night. Halfway up the great stairs there was an altar for which my father had found a wood-carved Virgin and some gilded baroque candelabra. The altar, decked with flowers, glistened at night. It was never used, of course; it was purely ornamental. When we children had to pass it after dark we shuddered and ran.

My father was profoundly musical. He had a magnificent tenor voice and sang Schumann lieder, for example, quite proficiently. His conversation was fascinating and never commonplace. I used to spend hours in his studio, standing and staring at the revelations of the hand that led the brush. I dreamed of wealth, merely in order to smooth the paths of creative personalities. I wished for a great Italian garden filled with many white studios; I wished to invite outstanding men there—to live for their art alone, without mundane worries—and never to show myself. I loved trailing velvet gowns, and I wanted to be rowed in gondolas with velvet draperies floating astern. It was the dross of the Makart age in me.

My father always took me seriously. One day he called me and my sister into his studio to tell us the story of Goethe's *Faust*. We were seven and eight years old and wept, not knowing why. When we were all enraptured, he gave us the book.

"This is the most beautiful book in the world," he said. "Read it. Keep it."

We went and read until my mother came and had a fit. There followed violent arguments between our parents; frequently their guests got into the fights, and we children listened behind closed doors, with bated breath. In the end the so-called sensible side won, as usual. But in my mind a fixed idea remained: I *had* to get the *Faust* back!

Our whole upbringing was like this, all experiment and no system. In our early years we were taught at home—by nasty tutors who were dismissed as fast as my father found they were torturing us, by nice ones who were ineffectual, and for one winter, on Corfu, by my mother, who was so inept that she gave us the entire multiplication table to learn by heart in a day. The end of the winter saw her under medical care for a throat ailment, contracted as a result of yelling at us. I was a nervous child, fairly bright, with the typical hop-skip-and-jump brains of precocity. But I could not think anything through, was never able to keep a date in mind, and took no interest in anything but music.

I did have one great travel experience, when my father was commissioned to make pen-and-ink drawings of all the Adriatic coastal towns in Dalmatia for Crown Prince Rudolf's work, *The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Word and Pictures*. On a freighter, which had to stop everywhere until my father's work was done, we went first to Ragusa, where we spent half the winter; then, again by freighter, we continued to Spizza, the southernmost Austrian port, and on to the Greek island of Corfu, for the second half. Ragusa, Lacroma—it all remains in my memory like a dream paradise. On Corfu, where Papa no longer had to work to order, we soon left the town for a small stone villa at San Teodoro, on a lonely mountaintop. There, at last, he painted beautiful pictures for his own enjoyment.

My mother, too, came into her own then, for without her foresight we should not have been able to stay. There was no lighting in the house, but our piles of luggage (carried because Mother always set up housekeeping everywhere) contained some oil lamps that were promptly put into use. Our landlord was a Greek and infinitely primitive. Frequently, we children were in

danger of our lives, for the Greek children loathed strangers and threw rocks at us whenever they caught us alone. Someone—Mother, Papa, or his pupil, Carl Moll—had to watch us all the time.

We had a pianino sent up from the town of Corfu, and there, at the age of nine, I began to compose and to write down my own music. As the only musician in the house, I could find my way by myself, without being pushed.

About this time my father's personality and genius endeared him to an archduke—Johann Orth, who later renounced his imperial rank—and won him a bid to join His Highness on a journey through Dalmatia and Bucovina. It was a grand cavalcade that set out to explore a fairyland and often found no decent food for days. Back home, Johann Orth and Papa kept up an intimate correspondence in which the archduke would express himself quite frankly about the imperial house. He was so enthusiastic about my father that Crown Prince Rudolf, who was then planning a trip to the Orient, asked the painter to go along. Papa was delighted with the prospect of new scenes; my mother was just packing his trunks when somebody burst in: "There's been an accident—the crown prince is dead!"

The dream was over before it had begun. This was the tragedy of Mayerling, which has done so much for the film and television writers of today. In 1889, when it happened, it marked the beginning of the end for the Hapsburg monarchy in Austria, for Rudolf had been a man of stature and promise, and what came after him was mediocre.

Then, in the summer of 1892, my father died on the first pleasure trip he could afford after his debts were paid off. Youthful at fifty, he was stricken without warning, and the severity of his condition baffled everyone. He came from Munich, where his host, Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria, an old friend and inveterate practical joker, had suddenly turned a hidden cascade on his guests. Luitpold thought it was great fun to see them tumble, but the impact of the crashing water made an old appendix ailment of Papa's acute. The doctors, as so often, fumbled in the dark. An immediate operation might have saved him; instead, they blithely allowed him to travel to Hamburg, to join us and

Carl Moll, who had come with us from Vienna, and to continue to the North Sea island of Sylt.

There, one day, we were called out of the restaurant. I knew instinctively that Papa was dead. In a howling wind we ran across the dunes, I sobbing loudly all the way. Moll met us at our cottage: "Children, you've no father any more!"

We were locked in a room. But somebody forgot one of the doors, so we sneaked out and found Papa lying in a wooden box on the floor of the next room. He was beautiful. He looked like a fine wax image, noble as a Greek statue. We felt no horror. I was astonished only by the smallness of this man who had been my father, now that I saw him in his coffin.

We traveled home and took him with us, for burial in Vienna. Hamburg was under a cholera quarantine, so the coffin was concealed inside a piano box and thus crossed the border unnoticed. What followed has slipped my memory. I was not fully aware of all that happened. I was proud of Papa's fine, gold-embroidered pall, and at the cemetery I was bothered by my mother's crying. But I grew more and more conscious of having lost my guide. He had been my cynosure—and no one had known. All I did had been to please him. All my ambition and vanity had been satisfied by a twinkle of his understanding eyes.

Death by the seashore, the cumbersome transport to Vienna, the Nordic gray, stormy hopelessness of nature on Sylt—all this, for me, has remained as part of the indelible memory of my father.

Somewhat later a handsome, romantic monument to him was raised in the Vienna Stadtpark. The unveiling—this coming-to-life in marble of my father's features, along with the sudden prominence of my small self—impressed me so much that I almost fainted at the close of the ceremonies.

I was thirteen years old when my father died.

At fifteen I began to build a library. My mother did not have much time for me, thank heaven, and I could go out by myself. My wide cape concealed the children's books I used to lug to a secondhand bookstore to exchange for modern literature. Soon I had a nice collection, of which no one was allowed to know.

At home the dominating influence was now that of Carl Moll, my father's pupil—an eternal pupil, who spent his life and wasted his small talent shifting from teacher to teacher, however incompatible. He used me to test his skill as an educator, but all he reaped was hatred. It was not in him to be my guide. He looked like a medieval wood carving of St. Joseph, doted on old paintings, and most obnoxiously disturbed the tenor of my ways.

In those years of adolescence I grew completely away from my surroundings. I became indifferent to them, engrossed in music. I studied counterpoint with a blind organist, raced through musical literature, and kept screaming Wagner parts until my beautiful mezzo-soprano had gone to pieces. I lived in a music miracle of my own making.

I was tantalized by all things mystical, fascinated by words such as "humans at play in the locks of the deity"—a phrase my father had coined, watching the bathers on the beach and in the surf at Sylt. I often used this and other lovely expressions I had picked up from him, but no one paid me heed.

My immediate environment was so prosaic I had to find out everything by myself. With my father in mind, I looked for help in maturing to older, knowledgeable men of our artists' circle—to Max Burckhard, for instance, the director of the Burgtheater. He taught me to read, in a deeper sense. Once, for Christmas, he sent me by two porters huge laundry baskets full of books: all the classics, in the finest editions. He was the first man to take an interest in my mercurial mind. As a man, though, he was not my type.

I was seventeen and very innocent; people called me beautiful; I read a great deal; I composed. Burckhard was forty-two, and his ardor sickened me. On my side, our relationship lacked any erotic tinge. We had some odd scenes when I was first intrigued by his strong masculinity, only to turn it aside with a heartless joke. This maddened him; he used to call me coquettish and disappear for a while. But he always came back, and the game would start all over.

His vitality was immense. He bicycled, rowed, sailed, climbed the highest mountains; today he would be a pilot visiting the stratosphere, perhaps. He had a hunting lodge in the Alps, high

atop an almost inaccessible crag, where he spent his vacations fancying himself as his own master. The local guides and he would climb carrying the same loads in their heavy rucksacks. He always took books, canned food, candles, but no change of clothes. Thus he lived for weeks, alone with himself and nature, with only deer and chamois for company, godless but lordly. He was his own god. To be able to bear such loneliness one must either have a god or be one.

"Death," he said, "does not exist. It's a human invention." Or: "I'd rather be with enemies than with friends. An enemy, at least, won't dare spout malice to your face, as friends are so fond of doing."

Once, he told me an amusing story about how he came to head the Burgtheater. He had heard by chance that he was in the government files as "Chief Presumptive of the Land Credit Institute"—he, who was a poet, not a money expert! In desperation at this bureaucratic lapse he promptly took a cab to the villa of Katharina Schratt, the Burgtheater star who was the mistress of Emperor Franz Josef. La Schratt, who liked Burckhard, sent him right back to a famous Vienna pastry shop, to order some nut and poppy-seed crescents. "Bring them here when they're ready," she said. "The emperor is coming to dinner; they're his favorite dish. When he gets that, he'll sign anything. Just imagine such a silly blunder!"

So, on the very next day, the Burgtheater got its new director, the man who introduced Ibsen and Hauptmann to Vienna—over the protests of the court—as well as the greatest Viennese actors of the period. He and I used to go bicycling together, trailed by a bulky landau in which my mother kept watch over Burckhard's food supply: a few bottles of French vintage champagne, partridges, pineapples—whatever was good and, accordingly, expensive. It was all perfectly innocent, for, as I said before, he was not my type.

When I was eighteen and my father had been dead five years, my mother married Carl Moll. The poor woman, I thought. There she went and married a pendulum, and my father had been the whole clock!

Moll was one of a group of painters, sculptors, and architects

who broke with the old Vienna Art Institute to found the "Sezession," which absorbed our thoughts and emotions for a long time. The first meetings of the insurgents took place in the house of my new stepfather, and their first president was Gustav Klimt, a painter of Byzantine delicacy who sharpened and deepened the "eyesight" I had learned from Papa. I was still quite childish when I met him at those secret sessions; he was the most gifted of them all, already famous at thirty-five, and strikingly good-looking. His looks and my young charm, his genius and my talent, our common, deeply vital musicality, all helped to attune us to each other. My ignorance in matters of love was appalling, and he felt and found my every sensitive spot.

He was tied down a hundredfold, to women, children, sisters, who turned into enemies for love of him. And yet he pursued me to Italy, where I was traveling with my so-called family in 1897. Wherever we stayed, Klimt would show up looking for me. At last, in Genoa, my mother cruelly killed our romance. Day after day she broke her word of honor, studied the stammerings in my diary, and thus kept track of the stations of my love. And in Genoa—oh, horrors!—she read that Klimt had kissed me.

Gustav Klimt was forbidden to speak to me. In Venice, in the bustle of the Piazza San Marco, we finally saw each other again. The crowd concealed us and his hasty whispers of love, his vows to rid himself of everything and come for me, his commanding request to wait for him, my fear of Moll's eye. Then the family and I left for Vienna, and for months I was on the verge of suicide.

What madness of parents, to presume to play Providence, simply separating us whenever things do not seem safe enough! All young people will understand what I mean, even though their problems now are not like ours were then. Our lives were so hemmed in and twisted by reservations that the concord, when it came, would only make us yawn.

Embittered, I took up the threads of life again. Klimt kept trying to approach me, but I was deaf to all pleas to visit his studio. I still trembled when I saw him, but I observed the moral code of the time. My first marvel of love was wrecked by my

so-called "breeding," which made me think I had "something of value" to shield.

I began to compose again, to seek some creative outlet for my grief. From one day to the next I would compose a whole movement of a sonata. I lived only for my work, and withdrew from all social activities, though I could have been queen of every ball I chose.

Eventually I found the man to lead my frenzied tune-smithing into serious paths. Alexander von Zemlinsky was one of the finest musicians and a magnificent teacher. When I went to him for lessons—usually he came to our house—I often met his favorite student, Arnold Schönberg. "He'll be the talk of the world someday," said Zemlinsky. And that is exactly what Schönberg, the composer, has become, aside from teaching and influencing others, such as Alban Berg, Anton von Webern, Ernst Krenek. To this entire musical generation Zemlinsky was the teacher par excellence. His technical brilliance was unique. He could take a little theme, take it mentally in hand, so to speak, squeeze it, and form it into countless variations. That he is not known as *the* master of our time, I thought, must be due to his rickety physique. A low shrub, no matter how precious, cannot grow into a tall tree.

He was a hideous gnome. Short, chinless, toothless, always with the coffeehouse smell on him, unwashed—and yet the keenness and strength of his mind made him tremendously attractive. The hours flew when we were working together.

After the successful opening of his opera *Once upon a Time*, Zemlinsky was in high spirits. Gustav Mahler, the director of the Court Opera House, had produced the work with loving care, personally revising the libretto and the music. Zemlinsky was big enough to admit the debt. We used to gossip maliciously about people, but this time we suddenly looked at each other and resolved to drink a toast to someone we could think no evil of. "Mahler!" we cried in unison.

This was the beginning of our love. To me it was a time of absolute music. He played *Tristan* for me, I leaned on the piano, my knees buckled, we sank into each other's arms. I was staying

with friends at the time, and their ghastly Turkish parlor almost saw me fall—almost, for I was too much of a coward to take the penultimate step. I believed in a virginal purity in need of preservation. It was not merely a trait of the period, it was a trait of mine. My old-fashioned upbringing and my mother's daily sermons had strapped me into a mental chastity belt. Zemlinsky and I embraced, that was all. I am still glad we did not go farther. That time was probably the happiest, most carefree in my life.

In the fall of 1901 I was asked to a party at the house of Berta Zuckerkandl, the wife of a famous anatomist. Her sister, married and living in France, was in town for a visit, and Gustav Mahler, usually averse to strangers, had agreed to come because of her. Among the others invited were Klimt, my childhood crush, and Burckhard, my mentor; I was going to be among friends. I accepted and went, feeling curiously apprehensive.*

Curiously, too, Mahler noticed me at once—not just my face, but my nervous, tart way of speaking. For a long time he examined me through his glasses. At dinner I sat between Klimt and Burckhard; we made a frivolous trio and laughed a good deal. Mahler, from the far end of the table, kept looking and listening our way. At last he burst out: "Can't we all get in on the fun?" His poor neighbor, the lady from Paris, was sadly neglected that evening.

Meanwhile, a late guest had come from a violin concert and started raving about it. His ardor was very obtrusive, and when he asked me whether I had heard the virtuoso, I said, "I don't care for solo recitals."

"Neither do I," Mahler said from the far end of the table.

After dinner the company split into smaller groups. There was talk about the relativity of beauty, and Mahler maintained that the face of Socrates was beautiful. I agreed and proceeded to call Alexander von Zemlinsky beautiful. Mahler, with a shrug, said this was going pretty far, and I became pugnacious and took up the cudgels for my teacher.

* Much of the text from here to the death of Mahler has been condensed and newly translated from Alma Mahler Werfel's *Gustav Mahler: Erinnerungen und Briefe*, published in 1946 by The Viking Press as *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*.

"Speaking of Zemlinsky," I said, "didn't you promise to produce his *Golden Heart* ballet? Why don't you?"

"Because I don't understand it," Mahler shot back.

The story of the ballet was a little confused in its symbolism, but I happened to know it inside out. I said I would tell him the contents and explain the meaning.

He smiled. "I'm curious."

"But not," I added, "until you have explained the meaning of *The Bride of Korea*."

This indescribably confused and stupid ballet was a fixture of the Viennese repertoire. Mahler guffawed, baring all his gleaming teeth, and inquired about my studies. When he heard I was a composition student of Zemlinsky's, he asked me to bring him some of the things I had done.

We had moved out of the group, or the others had withdrawn from us. We stood in the kind of vacuum that instantly envelops people who have found each other. I promised to come to the Opera sometime, when I had "something good." With a mocking smile that seemed to say, "I can't wait that long," he asked me to come next morning for a rehearsal of *Tales of Hoffmann*; our hostess and her sister would be there, too. I wavered—I still had an assignment for Zemlinsky to finish—but the lure was too great. I accepted. Then he offered to walk home with me, and I declined. I did not feel like walking. It was late at night, and I was tired.

"But you'll come to the Opera?"

Hesitantly, I said yes.

"Word of honor?"

The evening was over. I felt depressed and sure of having caused all sorts of misunderstandings. An unfortunate, innate shyness never let me be myself with strangers; either I lapsed into bewildered silence or I put up a false, brazen front, as I had that night. My stepfather and I discussed my new acquaintance at length and were not wholly pleased. Mahler had been talking as to a mass meeting: "Yes, but I tell you," and so forth. You felt that years of power and a helplessly submissive retinue had put this man on a road that was lonely and getting lonelier. I did not

think much about this impression at the time, but it probably flattered me that he had concerned himself with me alone.

Early next morning I called for Frau Zuckerkandl and her sister. At the Opera, Mahler was already waiting impatiently. He helped me out of my coat, rudely neglecting to do the same for the two ladies. With awkward gestures, my coat still over his arm, he invited us to step into his office. The women, both apparently insensitive to the submerged spiritual vibrations in the place, began to harangue him, while I stood by the piano rummaging in his music sheets. I was quite incapable of making small talk. Mahler kept stealing glances at me; not quite without malice, I disdained to rescue him. I was young, reckless, unimpressed by glamour and position. The one thing that would have humbled me was Mahler's inner importance, which I still failed to see. Even so, my merry nonchalance was slightly shaken by a mysterious respect.

"How did you sleep, Fräulein Schindler?" he asked me across the room.

"Fine. Why not?"

"I didn't sleep a wink all night," he said, and I gave some silly answer which I am glad to have forgotten.

I did not yet realize how much he liked me. I was impressed, but my work with Zemlinsky interested me more. The next day's mail brought me a beautiful, unsigned poem. My mother took it out of my hand, wondering severely about the sender. My guess that it might be Mahler made her laugh; men like Mahler did not write love poems to unknown girls. Someone was joshing me, said my mother.

I walked the streets as in a dream. Somehow I was sure that the poem was Mahler's; though not in love with him, I could think of nothing else. Two weeks later, Mother and I went to hear *Orpheus* at the Opera. I soon saw Mahler—which was no trick; any operagoer knew the director's box. What was more remarkable was that he also saw me at once and began a flirtation entirely out of line with his usual solemnity.

During the intermission he suddenly confronted us in the

lobby, asking to be introduced to my mother. He told her about the walks he liked to take in our neighborhood. "Why don't you call some day?" Mama suggested.

He was delighted. "When? Soon?"

"I suppose you'll have to set the date," said my mother. We had stepped into his office again, to avoid the many curious eyes, and he consulted his schedule. Next Saturday was found to be mutually agreeable. I was asked whether I was free, and though I had a counterpoint lesson that day, I promised to change it.

Afterward, Mother and I met Moll and Burckhard at a restaurant and she innocently told them of our experience with Mahler. Moll blew up. "You've let this roué take you into his office, with a young girl?"

Mahler, the ascetic, had the reputation of a rake, a corrupter of all the young females in his ensemble. Actually, he was a child and afraid of women. It took me, a silly, inexperienced girl, to bring down his guard. Max Burckhard, the expert on men and affairs, realized the truth that mystified Mahler and me. "He was pretty wild about you the other night," he said.

I said I had not noticed.

"Well, what will you do if he proposes?"

"Accept," I said calmly.

I advanced my Saturday counterpoint lesson to Thursday. On Thursday I was sitting through it, absent-mindedly, when our maid rushed in: "Gustav Mahler is here!" He was popular even in the servants' quarters.

My counterpoint studies ended then and there. We had just moved into our new house and my books were still piled all over my room, waiting to be arranged on shelves. Mahler walked around inspecting them. On the whole he seemed pleased with my taste, though my complete edition of Nietzsche's works shocked him. There was a fire going in the fireplace, and he abruptly asked me to feed Nietzsche to the flames.

I refused. If he was right about those books, I said, he could convince me easily enough; it would be more to his credit to let them stay, unread, than to have me burn them now and want them later. Mahler looked annoyed, but after a while he suggested that we take a walk together. In the hall we ran into my

mother, who asked him to dinner in her merry way: "We'll have paprika chicken, and Burckhard. Won't you stay?"

"I don't like either one," said Mahler. "Just the same, I'll stay."

We walked out into the crackling snow. Side by side, strangers and yet so close, we went down to Döbling, where he wished to call home from the public phone at the post office. Every few minutes his shoelaces came untied and obliged him to find a firm stand to retie them. His childlike clumsiness was touching. At the post office it turned out that he did not know his own telephone number. He had to call the Opera, and someone there had to call up his home and tell his sister that he was not going to be home for dinner. No such thing had ever happened in their nine years of living together.

Silently we climbed the hill again.

All at once he started talking. "It's not so simple to marry a man like me. I'm quite free; I have to be. I can assume no material obligations. My job with the Opera is from day to day."

I felt very ill at ease. Without consulting me, he dictated his will, his rules of living! "To me that is only natural," I said after a pause. "Don't forget, I am an artist's daughter. I've always lived among artists; I feel like an artist. I've never thought differently in these matters."

I still remember how the snow glistened under each lamppost, how we pointed out this fairy-tale beauty to each other, without a word. We did not talk much the rest of the way. Mahler seemed gay and at peace. As by a tacit agreement, we went straight to my room. He kissed me and started talking of an early wedding, as if it were a matter of course. The few words on our way up had settled everything, hadn't they? Why wait?

And I—I kept silent. In a state of curious enchantment we went down to join the others. Burckhard had come, and so had another guest, an architect who rather liked me and never came to our house again, after this evening of elemental force. Mahler dazzled us with the magic of his mind. We argued about Schiller, a poet he loved and I disliked at the time; he knew half of him by heart and was so scintillatingly ebullient that I—who had allowed myself to be kissed without really wanting to, who had agreed to a wedding date without considering my decision to

marry—knew for a certainty that everything was right and good and that I no longer wished to live without him. This, I felt, was the man to mold my life.

"Others are vulgar enough to give rings to each other," he told me. "I'm sure you do not want that any more than I do?" I replied at once that such a custom struck me as idiotic.

In December, he went on a concert tour to Dresden and Berlin. He wrote me often, racking his brains and mine and finally asking me to ask my mother for my hand in his behalf—since he desired to be welcomed as a son on his return. Before this return, however, we had our first major conflict. I once wrote more briefly than usual, explaining that I still had to work on a composition, and Mahler was outraged. Nothing in the world was to mean more to me than writing to him; he considered the marriage of Robert and Clara Schumann "ridiculous," for instance. He sent me a long letter with the demand that I instantly give up my music and live for his alone.

I cried all night. My mother heard me, came into my room, and quite seriously urged me to give up Mahler. Had she taken his side, she might have stiffened my opposition; as it was, her unconditional loyalty to me brought me to my senses. After all, I wanted him. I calmed down and wrote him a letter promising what he wanted me to promise. And I have kept my word.

His servant, Mahler had written, would call for my reply before we saw each other again. In my excitement I ran into the street to give my letter to the messenger. He also had one for me: apparently worried about my reaction to the first, Mahler had moderated his demands. In the afternoon he came himself, happy, confident, and so sweet that for the moment our skies were cloudless.

They did not stay cloudless. I buried my dream, and perhaps it was better so; I have been privileged to see the realization of my creative talent, what there was of it, in greater brains than mine. And yet, somewhere in me a wound kept smarting. . . .

"When Mahler came into the room," one of our friends told me later, "you were suddenly still as a sea that oil has been poured on."

Only my stepfather, Moll, was without an inkling. "Look

here, Alma," he said to me, "I think Mahler is interested in you. We must talk about that."

I was sitting on the piano stool, and I wheeled and stared at him. "Interested"! Was that really all he had seen?

He went on talking. "Of course, he's not exactly what I would have wished for you. He's old, and in debt, as far as I know, and his health isn't too good. He's certainly no beauty. He composes, too, and it isn't supposed to amount to much."

I laughed so hard that he shook his head and left, still without an inkling.

In January, someone we had confided in leaked our secret to the papers. The "engagement" burst into the headlines on a day when we were at the Opera. Mahler conducted. I was too worried and excited to see or hear a thing; I was ashamed to be seen in the streets, somehow, feeling all eyes upon me. The applause after Mahler's appearance lasted for minutes. He had to turn and bow again and again. It was like an engagement congratulation from the audience.

As the wedding drew nearer, he had to go to a mountain resort for a few days to recuperate. He sometimes did this in midwinter. He was nervous and sick and under fearful tension. One moment he wished for death, in the next for the craziest of lives. I had no wish but to sacrifice my happiness for his.

He was then rehearsing his Fourth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic. It was the first time I had heard a work every day from the reading rehearsal on—a work that was new and strange to me at first, and that I had to listen to several more times before I was familiar with all its beauties. Thereafter I was to live with each of his works from its conception to the last time he conducted it, and those would be my most thrilling, most unforgettable hours. At the time, though, I was reluctant to take his word for his music, for ever since our engagement his tone had changed: from an adoring lover he had turned into a tutor, and my blind faith had shrunk in proportion. He explained the Fourth to me on a stroll along the Danube; it ought to be imagined like an old painting on a golden ground, he said, and I resented an archaizing that had no relation to our time. I could not see that he composed this way

because he *was* so naïve—because he was a child, not a casuist, as one might think at first glance.

The Fourth was given its *première* at a matinee concert. I did not feel well at all. People stared at me as Mahler's fiancée until I thought I could not stand it any longer. My ears rang so, I scarcely heard the music. In the intermission an old family acquaintance, the president of the Society of the Friends of Music, waved to me from the director's box. I waved back, happy to see a familiar face, and the intermission was not over before some of Mahler's watchful "friends" had informed him that I had been flirting all through the concert.

Afterward his friends ignored me, and he treated me as a miscreant. The diva who had sung the vocal lead at the concert—she had spent years running after him and had not given up hope—lay draped over a couch in the artists' room backstage, feigning a faint. Mahler bustled about her, begging her not to overstrain herself on his account, and thanked her over and over. I felt as though a hammer had hit me on the head.

But we went home alone, and the pack vanished from our minds. We had a long talk; by the time we reached his house we were blissfully, inseparably reunited. It had been the last attack on me.

On March 9, 1902, we were married in the Church of St. Charles Borromeo.

Mahler came on foot, wearing rubbers because it was raining hard; his sister, my mother, and I arrived in a cab. We were all alone in the church with our witnesses, Carl Moll and the fiancé of Mahler's sister. It was early in the day. At the moment for kneeling down, Mahler overlooked the hassock and dropped to the stone floor; short as he was, he had to get up and kneel all over again. Everyone smiled, even the priest. After the ceremony we six had a quiet lunch. Then Mahler and I took our leave, packed our trunks, and drove to the station to catch a train for St. Petersburg, where he was booked for three concerts.

That evening—when the papers had said we were going to be married—St. Charles Borromeo's reportedly drew quite a crowd.



In Dresden, one sleepless night soon after our engagement, a thought had flashed through Gustav Mahler's mind: "What if I am too old, after all?" It was up to me to disprove this nagging fear. He had lived a life of austerity; with the possible exception of a few seductions by experienced women, he remained as virginal at forty as I was at twenty. "If only you were a widow," he moaned, "or if you'd had some affairs!"

We were baffled and sad and tormented, not by love but by the fear of love. In the end, the only natural thing happened. But when the consequences appeared—still before the wedding—I was in agony again. There is truth behind all civil law, we both discovered.

On the train to St. Petersburg we began to breathe easier. Mahler rebounded out of his gloom; alone with him, I no longer had to conceal my condition, either. We resolved to make this concert tour a real honeymoon. Unfortunately, we were not halfway to our destination when the steaming compartment of the Russian train gave Mahler a frightful headache—one of those self-inflictions that were to plague him for the rest of his life. I was aghast, watching him pace the aisle all day like a maniac, white-faced, unable to speak. And the Russians, carefully shunning drafts in their furs and bearskin caps, tittered at every stop

when he jumped off and ran up and down the tracks without hat, coat, or gloves—at twenty below zero.

He arrived in St. Petersburg with chilblains and a sore throat, running a temperature. I quickly caught the fever from him, but even so, those were memorable weeks. Unable to do more than whisper at rehearsals, Mahler made himself so well understood that superb performances resulted. In this strange world I heard the "*Liebestod*." Constantly ill and afraid to sit in the stalls, I got permission to stand in back of the orchestra, where I could see his face. That uplifted face, those open lips! There was divine beauty in his expression when he conducted. I trembled, and felt and *knew* it was my mission to remove all evil from his path, to live for him alone.

A Russian cousin of Mahler's, high in the czarist government, showed us the capital. We saw beautiful streets and vistas, the Hermitage and other palaces, an immensely strange life. The Neva was frozen over, and streetcar tracks crossed the ice. After dusk a merry bustle on skates set in along the river. Elegance, gaiety, luxury were all around. Now and then, of course, a few orchestra members would fail to show up for rehearsal, and Mahler's inquiries evoked eloquent shrugs: perhaps, or probably, they had been sent to Siberia. . . .

The piety of the people—which their new rulers have since tried to extirpate—was deeply moving. We always rode in the low, open troikas, and one icy night, in a snowstorm, we passed Our Lady of Kazan. Our driver stopped, got out, threw himself down in the snow before the church, and prayed, forgetting all about us. When we were frozen stiff and the only visible trace of him was a mound of snow, he calmly got up and drove on, without explanation.

On the return trip to Vienna we should have liked to have seen something of Warsaw, where we had a few hours between trains, but aside from the check for Mahler's concert fee, all we had was five rubles. So we ate some eggs at the station restaurant, and I gave the rest of the five rubles to an old Jewish match peddler. This poor old Jew, in one instant, made me see the whole of Israel's burden and suffering.

Mahler was happy about this small gesture of identification—and yet he had stood up for Jesus Christ in so many of our early arguments. He truly believed in Christ. He loved the Catholic mysticism, the Gregorian chant, the smell of incense; he rarely passed a church without entering. I had grown up virtually without religion. At home I learned only some primitive prayers that were drilled into us by our Catholic maids. At school, religious instruction struck me as play acting, and the one old priest who used to prompt me at inspections seemed far above it: a onetime African missionary, he demanded nothing and gave with angelic kindness. I left school without knowing the Ten Commandments. My voracious reading—of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and, above all, Plato—confirmed me in my agnosticism. Mahler fiercely combated this, and the result was the curious paradox of a Jew championing Christ against a Christian.

We had only a few weeks in our Vienna home before rehearsals for the first performance of Mahler's Third Symphony started in Cologne. My pregnancy bothered me considerably as we traveled to the Rhineland in the worst heat of summer. Mahler tried in vain to divert me with jokes. The concert itself took place in Krefeld, a nearby factory town. There was no hotel space, and the wealthy manufacturers we stayed with were visibly disturbed by our presence. They gave us the master bedroom, but we hardly dared to turn around in it for fear of knocking some hideous bit of bric-a-brac off its equally hideous perch.

Krefeld at large looked on Mahler as the great man from the Vienna Opera who had composed a monstrous symphony to please himself, and was now having it performed to displease everybody. In the course of the rehearsals, however, more and more people sensed the momentous grandeur of the trail blazed by this work, so the *première* was breathlessly awaited. After the first movement cheers rang out. Richard Strauss went up near the platform, applauding ostentatiously; it was really he who decided the movement's success. But each subsequent one cast a tighter spell over the audience, and at the end, when the whole mass of listeners rose from their seats and surged forward, Strauss was invisible. I sat somewhere among strangers, in a state which

I cannot describe; I laughed and cried to myself and suddenly felt my first child moving inside me. I was now fully convinced of Mahler's greatness, and that night I swore to him with happy tears that I realized it and would love and serve him forever.

A lasting benefit that I reaped from those days in Krefeld was the friendship of Hans Pfitzner.

Mahler and I were in our room, which contained a huge double bed in a black-curtained alcove, when a visitor was announced. Mahler read the card and asked me to hide in the marital cave for a minute—he had to see this man alone. Obediently I drew the curtain.

A thin, high-pitched voice began to importune Mahler on a subject that compelled my attention. How dreadfully poor and humiliating! Here was an artist—his first words had told me that he was an artist—begging Mahler almost on bended knee to perform his work, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*. And Mahler refused. Coolly, calmly, curtly.

Had he forgotten his own youth? “No singers—libretto too bad—symbolic content unintelligible—too long, much too long—”

And, in between, the other voice, pleading for a trial, imploring Mahler, “the only artist who could understand,” for a chance—a last chance—

The voices moved toward the door. I could not hold myself any longer. I ripped the curtain aside, ran to Pfitzner, and clasped his hand. I shall never forget the look he gave me; then he left. Mahler was not angry. Strange to say, he was not angry.

It made me think of an opening I had heard in Vienna, a few months back: *Feuersnot* by Richard Strauss. Pauline Strauss had attended in our box, fuming throughout: nobody could like this trash; we were liars to pretend, knowing as well as she did that there wasn't one original note in it—everything stolen from Wagner and a dozen others who were better than her husband . . . We sat looking stupid, and took care not to agree, for this shrew was quite capable of twisting the words in our mouths and suddenly screaming that we had made all those comments. After the opera we were to have supper together. Strauss, after innumerable curtain calls, entered the box in high spirits. “Well, Pauksel, what do you say to my success?”

She flew at him like a wildcat. "You thief! You have the nerve to show yourself? I'm not going with you. You're too rotten."

This was enough for Mahler. He pushed the two into his office, to settle their dispute while we waited next door. The shouting grew worse. Mahler knocked to say we'd go ahead. Then the door opened and Strauss came stumbling out, Pauline at his heels. "You go," she screeched. "I'm going to the hotel. I'll stay alone tonight."

"Can't I walk with you, at least?" Strauss begged humbly.

"All right—ten steps behind me!" And she stalked off, Strauss following at a respectful distance.

Rather subdued, we went ahead to the restaurant. Strauss came soon, looking exhausted. He sat down beside me and said, verbatim: "My wife can be pretty rough. But you know, I need that!"

In my eyes he revealed himself, too, that night. At supper, all he thought about was money. He kept pestering Mahler to figure out royalties in the event of a major or minor success, sat with pencil in hand all the time, even putting it behind his ear, half-jokingly—he acted just like a ticket agent. Franz Schalk, the conductor, whispered to me, "And the sad part of it is that he isn't joking at all. He's dead serious!"

Always weighing his advantage, Richard Strauss was, and remained, a speculator, an exploiter of opera, a materialist par excellence. My mental image of him shows him flanked by two musical pillar-saints, Pfitzner and Schönberg, the embodiment of Goethe's line: "A prophet right, a prophet left, the worldling in the middle."

From Krefeld, Mahler and I went directly to our country home at Maiernigg in Carinthia, on the shore of Woerther Lake, for a time of quiet and intensity. He had the material for his Fifth Symphony along, of which two movements were completed and the rest in draft. At first I tried to play the piano now and then, very softly, but he heard me even though his work-room was far off in the woods. So I changed activities and started copying all portions of the symphony as soon as he had finished them. We had a race to see who got through first, he scoring or I

copying. My pregnancy hampered me a little, but I overcame this weakness.

Mahler got up at six or six-thirty every day. As soon as he was awake, he rang for the cook, who promptly prepared his breakfast and carried it up a steep, slippery trail to his forest study, two hundred feet above the house. (She was forbidden to use the regular road, lest he meet her on his way up; before work, he could not stand seeing anyone.) The study was a one-room brick hut with a door and three windows, a grand piano, a bookshelf with the collected works of Kant and Goethe. No music but Bach's. About noon he came down, changed, and went for a swim. He used to swim far out and whistle for me to come to the boathouse. I would sit on the steps and he would climb out to chat, lie on the sun deck until his body was crimson, and jump in again. This procedure was repeated four or five times, until he felt reinvigorated. Then we walked back through the garden, whose every blessed tree and plant he knew, and sat down to lunch. The soup had to be waiting on the table.

Our afternoons were spent walking. Rain or shine, we walked for three or four hours, or rowed around the gleaming, heat-spewing lake. I climbed fences, crawled through hedges, and once shocked my mother, who came to visit us just as Mahler had dragged me up an almost vertical slope. Sometimes I felt too tired to go on; but whenever I was on the point of collapse he would take me in his arms and say, "I love you"—and suddenly I found new strength somewhere and the race continued.

Often he stopped and stood with the sun burning down on his hatless skull, drew out a notebook, wrote, thought, wrote some more. Sometimes he beat time in the air before writing the notes down. This could go on for an hour or more, with me sitting on a tree trunk or in the grass, not daring to look at him. From time to time, when an idea pleased him, he threw me a smile, knowing that nothing on earth made me happier.

At the end of his vacation we moved back to Vienna. The Fifth was completed; throughout the winter he worked on the clean copy. His winter schedule was like clockwork, too: up at seven, breakfast, work, to the Opera at nine, lunch at one o'clock sharp.

The Opera called when he left; when he rang downstairs, the soup went on the table in our fourth-floor apartment; the apartment door stood open, so he would not have to wait. He stormed through the rooms, flinging superfluous doors aside like a hurricane, washed up, and we sat down. As at Maiernigg, lunch was followed by a foot race: four times around the Belvedere, or all the way along the Ring. Coffee and cake at 5:00 P.M. sharp. Then he went to the Opera and stayed for part of the performance. I picked him up almost daily, watching the opera if he was still busy in the office, but I never stayed longer than he had to. As a result, I have seen many operas only in part, never to the end—although he would occasionally tell me the end, saying that I had not missed much. He was often right; many operas are more interesting as fragments. . . . After dinner we lay on a couch, chatting, or I read to him.

I had to prepare myself for the impending birth of my child, which occurred on November 3. It was a cross birth—due, the doctor said, to overexertion during pregnancy. Nobody told Mahler, for fear of exciting him, but he saw the worry in the doctor's face, in the nurse's, in my mother's. He ran through the streets like a madman. A friend who asked about me was yelled at: "You ass, I forbid you to ask!" I heard him pacing next door until this dreadful birth was over. Afterward, he cried out: "How can men bear the guilt of such suffering and go on begetting children?"

He wept at my bedside. Later, told that it had been a case of pelvic presentation, he roared with laughter. "That's my child! Shows the world the part it deserves!"

The child was saved. It was a girl we named Maria, for Mahler's mother, and he worshiped her from the start. I recovered, too, very slowly.



Two years later I was again far advanced in pregnancy. This time we took a cab every afternoon and rode around the Prater. Once, coming back, we met my sister-in-law and her husband on their way to the Burgtheater. They urged us to come along; the play would be *Der Arme Heinrich* by Gerhart Hauptmann.

Having recently met Hauptmann and spent an unforgettable night with him and the great actor Josef Kainz, we agreed, and the four of us went in our cab straight to the theater.

Hauptmann's words are like music, and I drank them like wine. Kainz was playing; I was stirred profoundly, as was natural in my condition. Full of that glorious language, I came home and took the play to bed with me, to read it once more. I dreamed ringing verses and suddenly awoke as from God's touch: my time had come—and I kept hearing Hauptmann. Unwilling to wake anyone, I opened the window. It was June, and everything flowered, rustled, sang. I looked at trees, listened to birds, and felt no fear at all.

By five o'clock the pains had become quite severe. I went to Mahler. He dressed at once, ran for the midwife, and then, trying to relieve my pains by suggestion, he had the crazy idea of reading Kant to me. I sat at his desk, writhing in pain; the monotonous sound of a voice reading things entirely beyond my comprehension at this moment was maddening. It was too much! I rebelled. . . . Today I know that he was perfectly right: the only way to conquer pain is by mental concentration. But the object he chose was far too difficult to grasp.

This birth—at high noon, at the halfway marks of the week, the month, and the year—was like a symbol. The child, christened Anna, was a joy to us from the moment she opened her big blue eyes.

Later that day I dozed off and awoke to a scare. Above my head, inches away, hung a huge stag beetle. Mahler, beaming and mastering his aversion to insects, held it by one leg. "I caught it for you," he exulted, "because you're so fond of animals. . . ."

The children had a great effect on our lives. Mahler had more time for us; he could hardly tear himself away from the two little girls, with each of whom he had an intimate, oddly individual relationship. More friends were allowed to come, and he himself became more human, more communicative.

In our first years together I had felt very insecure by his side. Having unwittingly won him by my impudence, I had lost all physical aplomb by my premature pregnancy. And Mahler, from the moment of his triumph on, ignored me and did not begin to

love me again until I was free from his despotic spell. Meanwhile, he played the part of a teacher, relentlessly strict and unjust. He made the world appear unpalatable, a kind of horror.

That is to say, he tried to. Money—vain! Clothes—vain! Looks—vain! Travel—vain! Nothing counted but the spirit. I know to-day that he was really afraid of youth and beauty. “If only you were disfigured,” he used to tell me; “if you were suddenly pock-marked and no one else could like you any more—*then* I’d be able to show how much I love you!”

To render me harmless, he simply took away what living things he did not know how to handle. I was the little girl he had desired and was now going to educate.

One day I told him that what I really loved in a man was his achievement. “The greater the achievement, the more I must love him.”

“Sounds dangerous,” said Mahler. “What if one should come along who tops me?”

“I’d have to love him,” I said.

He smiled. “Well, so far I’m not worrying. I don’t know of anyone who tops me. . . .”

Here are some entries from the diary I kept in those years:

I shall reinforce the ground he walks on with my hard-earned calm. . . . In exchange, I have a wise guide and endless conversation. I am filled to the brim with my mission of smoothing the path of this genius!

I feel so often how little I am and have in comparison with his immeasurable riches.

[After the birth of my first child] I haven’t the right love for my child yet. Everything in me belongs to Gustav. Everything seems dead in comparison. And I can’t tell him!

I often feel as though my wings had been clipped. Gustav, why did you tie me to yourself—me, a soaring, glittering bird—when you’d be so much better off with a gray, lumbering one?

I told Gustav how hurt I am by his utter disinterest in what goes on inside me. My knowledge of music, for instance, suits him only as long as I use it for him. He answered: “Is it my fault that your budding dreams have not come true?” . . . Oh, to be so pitilessly

stripped of everything! He lives his own life—and I must live it, too! I can't occupy myself exclusively with my children. . . .

My children are sick. Maria is better, little Anna still in bad shape. Sad as it is, it's giving me my strength back. I have not been so cheerful in a long time. I suddenly know again why I'm here: my children need me. Mahler needs me, too. But I can't give him all of my love. Why can't I?

Our younger child was a year old when Mahler completed the *Kindertotenlieder*. Friedrich Rückert, the German romantic, had sobbed out the words on the way home from the funeral of his children; Mahler heard them in 1901 and was so moved that he intoned them as in a dream. He finished the first three at the time he started the Fifth Symphony. Then he married me, had a child he adored, and let the *Children's Death Songs* rest. Now, in 1905, he composed the last three. To my mind there was something eerie about it: in the garden, these two wonderfully gifted children were squealing with joy, and in his study Mahler could sing of their death. . . .

More diary notes:

In the past, when I seemed to be alone, I had so many people to serve me as lightning conductors! Now, I study Greek and translate Plato to fill the empty hours. Study? Why, without a goal? If he were only younger—younger at heart!

Just back from the Opera. I have such a horror of him, I'm afraid to see him come home. He fawns on Mme. X, dances around Miss Y—and here he is quite detached, the tired husband I have to care for. If he just didn't come home any more, ever!

[The following morning] We had a bitter squabble. He said he could feel that I don't love him—and at this moment he is certainly right! The latest scene has frozen everything inside me. I realize that the man who has to spread his peacock-train in public wants to "relax" at home. That, after all, is woman's fate. But it isn't mine!

Mahler did not feel me beside him as a living being. He had his peace, his carefully prepared meals, his warm home, and an opportunity to discuss art at any time, day and night. This was all

he needed, all he wanted. It never occurred to him that I might have expected something else of life.

I yearned for music—yes, for music! For our home was mostly hushed when Mahler came exhausted from the Opera, and because his music was alien to me, at first, I yearned for my own. My mother played the part of *Frau Operndirektor*; I was the wife of the misunderstood, debt-ridden, ailing musician. Night after night my mother and sister-in-law sat in the director's box, acknowledging applause, while I slaved in the nursery or at his desk, copying manuscripts. I had the brilliant idea of making them think I was pregnant, so I'd be allowed to take the armchair.

In our first five years of married life we rarely went out, never in gay company. We went seldom to the theater, only to the Opera, and that only when he conducted. It was my luck that I wanted nothing else anyway. One operetta that Mahler and I saw together was *The Merry Widow*; this we enjoyed so much that we danced at home afterward, reconstructing Lehar's waltz from memory. There was one passage in it that we could not remember, however hard we tried, but both of us were then too "high-brow" to consider buying such music. So we entered a music shop, Mahler talked to the manager about the sale of his works, and I stood thumbing absent-mindedly through stacks of *Merry Widow* potpourris and arrangements until I had the waltz and the missing passage. Then I joined him, he said good-by, and in the street I quickly sang the passage to him, lest I forget it again.

The director's job at the Vienna Court Opera in those days was completely totalitarian. The director was answerable to no one but the emperor and his first court official, in those days Lord High Steward Prince Montenuovo. Both men greatly respected Mahler's character and earnestness and allowed him free rein. One day, for example, an aspiring songstress brought a letter of recommendation from the heir presumptive, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Mahler took the letter and tore it up. "Now," he said, "sing, please."

Another time, the emperor demanded the recall to the active list of a diva who had once been an imperial flame and had un-

fortunately lost her voice in the meantime. "All right," said Mahler, "but I won't let her appear on stage."

But that was just the point, said the lord high steward. The emperor wanted her on stage. Apparently there was some ancient promise involved.

"Well," said Mahler, "then I must let her appear, of course. I'll just insert a note in the program each time: 'By order of His Majesty the Emperor.'"

The diva was not mentioned again. And in fairness to the old regime it must be stated that Mahler's position was strengthened rather than weakened by such effronteries.

On the other hand, the job was tremendously taxing. He had only two months in summer to compose his symphonies, and even then he was constantly interrupted by alarums from the Opera. He finally worked out a system of using one vacation to conceive a work and draft the parts, and the next to complete the score and orchestration. But all year round he would sit revising and polishing from 6:00 A.M. until he left for the office. Supremely conscientious as an official, too, he was the first man at the office every day.

It goes without saying, that in my obsession with art I had but one dream: to free Mahler from the serfdom of the Opera. The dream came true in 1907, which was a black year for us.

It began with a slight irregularity on the part of Alfred Roller, whom Mahler had brought to the Opera as production superintendent. Together they had staged all the masterworks of the classic repertoire, and Mahler invariably backed Roller to the hilt. To make a long story short: Roller had the sudden urge to write and stage a ballet. Mahler gave him permission to go ahead, and Roller called a rehearsal without telling the regular ballet master, Hassreiter, who had called one of his own for the same time. The ballet girls, aware that Roller had Mahler's support, flocked to Roller's rehearsal; Herr Hassreiter, up in arms after waiting an hour in an empty hall, went directly to the emperor, and Mahler got a summons to Prince Montenuovo. "Director Mahler," said the lord high steward, "this is the first time I find you covering up for misconduct. As an official I cannot and will not go along with that."

Two months later, after our return from a concert trip to Rome, Mahler's resignation was accepted. He received a generous financial settlement and a pension to which he would have been entitled only after serving several more years; in the event of his death I was to draw the pension of a privy councilor's widow. The lord high steward claimed the credit for persuading His Majesty to approve these terms, but he probably had little trouble. If they let Mahler go, the imperial authorities did not want it said that they had been treating him shabbily.

We went to Maiernigg, as every year. After two days there our older girl came down with diphtheritic scarlet fever. She never had a chance. Two weeks of worry, deterioration, and danger of suffocation followed—two horrible weeks. Nature contributed storms and red skies. Mahler loved this child so much that he started hiding in his room; during the last night, when a laryngotomy was made, one of the servants stood guard outside his bedroom, with orders to calm him if he was awakened by the noise. He was asleep all through that terrible night, while our English governess and I fixed up an operating table for the village doctor and put the poor, pitiable child to sleep. The doctor ordered me out of the room, and during the operation I ran screaming along the lake shore, heard by no one. It was five in the morning when the Englishwoman came and said, "It's all over." And I saw this wonderful child lying there, wide-eyed and *râling*, and all of us suffered for another day, until the end.

Fate was not through with us. Two days later I had a fainting spell. The doctor said it was a temporary cardiac weakness; he prescribed rest and quiet and did not understand how I had been able to get around at all in this state. Mahler tried to cheer us up a little. "Look, Doctor," he said, "why don't you take a look at me? My wife is always worried about my heart; she needs some good news today."

He stretched out on the couch. The doctor knelt down, examined him, and got up again. "Well," he said in the cheerful tone of most physicians diagnosing a fatal illness, "I shouldn't be too proud of that heart, if I were you!"

This discovery was the beginning of Mahler's end. It made us homeless, inside and out. Mahler rushed to Vienna, only to have

a specialist confirm the country doctor's diagnosis. I packed a few essentials, and we fled from Maiernigg, where everything was memory and pain. We went to the Tyrol; in its grandiose scenery we revived somewhat and tried to think of the future.

Several years previously, an old friend of my father's had sent Mahler a new translation of Chinese poetry. Mahler liked it very much. He had always intended to use the verses sometime, and now—after the death of our child and the grisly medical pronouncement, in fearful isolation, far from our house, far from his study—now, on his long, lonely mountain walks, those infinitely sad poems took hold of him, and he sketched the lieder for orchestra that subsequently turned into *The Song of the Earth*.

To me he brought a young friend and admirer of his, the pianist Ossip Gabrilowitsch, an ugly young man whose whole face seemed out of joint. "Gabrilowitsch," said our anatomist friend Zuckerkandl, "looks like a Russian Jew *after* a pogrom." (Of course, this may also have been what attracted Mahler, the perpetual grief-seeker, who kept telling me that there were not enough lines of suffering in my face.) Well, my idle emotions got entangled with the young man's. It was natural for us to fall in love, but we refused to admit the fact to ourselves and struggled valiantly. There was an evening when Mahler was at work; Ossip Gabrilowitsch and I leaned out of the window, looking on a moonlit glen, moonlight on our faces, slowly turning to each other. . . . Gabrilowitsch left the morning after this one kiss.

We met again before the year was out. Mahler and I were on our way to America—after the announcement of his departure from Vienna the Metropolitan Opera House had promptly offered him a contract for several seasons—and Gabrilowitsch awaited us in Paris. On the first evening, Mahler left him and me alone in a dark hotel room. "I have a dreadful confession to make," said Gabrilowitsch. "I'm on the point of falling madly in love with you. Help me avoid it! I love Mahler. I must never hurt him."

I was dazed and said nothing. So I was lovable, after all—not old and ugly, as I imagined myself. In the darkness, Gabrilowitsch groped for my hand. . . . Then the light flashed on, Mahler stood in the room, full of kindness and love, and the

spook vanished. Yet the scene stayed with me. It helped me to get over my inferiority feelings for some time to come.

We sailed from Cherbourg, on the *Amerika*. A small tender took us out from the dock, and Mahler had difficulty concealing his fear of the sea voyage, but at the moment the huge, glittering liner loomed suddenly close and the "*Marseillaise*" rang out, all misgivings were forgotten. Courageously, we all but danced up the gangplank. On the big ship we were welcomed, escorted to our staterooms, and served a fabulous supper in the *salon*. Soon I felt with joy that we were moving. Mahler scowled when I mentioned it; he did not want to know, now that the band was silent and fear had returned.

Storms, heavy seas, seasickness—which he fought by lying ramrod-straight on his bed like a marble cardinal on his sarcophagus, neither eating nor speaking until the trouble passed—these, rather than the marvelous sights of the voyage, were the enduring impressions of my first Atlantic crossing.

At last we arrived in New York, that overwhelming natural and human spectacle. On our very first morning there, Mahler went to the "Met" and was told to conduct *Tristan and Isolde* for his debut performance. Heinrich Knote and Olive Fremstad were cast in the title roles. For the first time in my life I would hear the second act sung cleanly! Mahler wallowed in musical raptures. I had accompanied him, and orientation in this divine metropolis is so easy that I walked back alone, with intentional detours, to the Hotel Majestic. We had a suite on the eleventh floor, with many rooms and, of course, two grand pianos. We felt at home; we were enchanted, intoxicated enough to forget our sorrow. But not for long.

THREE



Four Seasons

The business manager of the Metropolitan Opera took us to lunch with its reigning deity, Heinrich Conried, a paralytic who showed signs of euphoria. The lunch was pure comedy. That house! What abysmal taste! It was hard to keep from laughing. The smoking room, for instance, featured a knight's suit of armor illumined in red from within. In the center of the room a divan stood under a canopy upheld by spiral pillars—there the great Conried reclined when he received the members of the "Met" in audience. Dark draperies and glaring, colored electric lights were all over. And Conried himself, who had "made" the world's greatest stars and was now going to "make" Mahler! Out in the street we both laughed.

More comedy preceded Mahler's debut. In the hotel elevator he stepped on the train of my dress, and I had to go back to sew it on again. I was standing half naked when the phone rang. We knew it was probably the Opera. Mahler was much too superstitious to go without me, so we did not answer, did not get excited, and when we finally sat in a cab he said, "Serves them right; why didn't they send me a carriage?"

The audience was waiting impatiently by the time he grabbed his baton, but the result was one of the finest performances ever. His triumph among the Americans—whom we found very critical, and knowing a great deal about music—was complete.

He got down to work more easily and effortlessly than in Vienna, because at the Met his job was limited to music. The house, the orchestra, the singers were marvelous, and the staging was handled by Conried and did not concern Mahler. The artists and voices he had at his disposal were a completely new experience for him. There were stars for every part. For Italian opera and Mozart he had Caruso, Bonci, Scotti, Chaliapin, Gadski, Sembrich, Farrar, Eames; for German opera Burrian, Knote, Fremstad, Van Rooy, and others. For *The Bartered Bride* with Emmy Destinn, he had six pairs of dancers specially brought from Prague to rehearse the ballet in original Bohemian dances.

It was new and strange for me, too, to see theater people at work. One day I was backstage chatting with Olive Fremstad, an excellent singer. Suddenly she grew inattentive, restless, edged toward the wings, said, "Wait a moment"—and dashed out to sing a "*Liebestod*" of incomparable beauty!

Anton Van Rooy, on the other hand, was always Wotan. During the intermissions he stalked about ponderously with his spear, never speaking, never smiling, every inch a god. By contrast, Johanna Gadski cleared her throat and spat, made silly jokes, and pulled herself together only when the curtain rose and she became Fricka entirely.

I remember a *Don Giovanni* in Philadelphia, with Donna Elvira due for her great aria but unable to go on because the door in the backdrop had been forgotten. Mahler made *fermata* after *fermata*, exchanging glances and smiles of delight with me; we had a grand time at this precious minstrel show. At last, with the whole castle chamber shaking precariously, Gadski emerged from a corner; the audience had a glimpse behind the scenes; then the corner was shut in a hurry and the aria rang out—better, far better, than in our "Music Ministry," as I used to call the Vienna Opera, where every hallway was plastered with official decrees.

Mahler, in Vienna so intransigent as opera director and conductor, was a different man in New York. In Vienna he restored every last cut in Wagner's operas, imposing five- and six-hour performances upon the audience; he began on the dot and wheeled furiously to stare through gleaming spectacles at every

latecomer, until the hapless individual was seated. (Toscanini got that from him.) In later years he had the doors locked during the first act, and late arrivals were taken to a special box to wait for the intermission. "But," Emperor Franz Josef said when he heard of this, "but should the theater not be a pleasure?"

Now Mahler not only accepted all of the usual Wagner cuts, he even introduced new ones to shorten the operas. Sloppy staging, which would have brought down thunderbolts in Vienna, amused him in New York. It was not that he lacked respect for the American audience; on the contrary, he felt very well understood there. What had changed was his whole attitude toward the world, and toward life. Ours could have been beautiful if we had not been undone by our child's death. Unconsciously he blamed me for it, and for a time we became strangers to one another, estranged by grief. Besides, he knew now that he was a sick man, which made everything else appear much less important.

It was a sad winter for both of us. After sleepless nights I sometimes sat waiting for dawn on the stairs of the eleventh floor, just to hear an occasional human sound from below. My most harrowing time was Christmas Eve—our first without the children and in a strange country. Mahler did not wish to be reminded of Christmas, and I, alone and lonely, cried all day long. At dusk somebody knocked on our door: a silly, kindly German-American, who read the truth in my tear-stained face and would not rest until we both came along to see a Christmas tree, children, and friendly faces. The sight delivered us from ourselves. But after dinner a group of actors and actresses came, and we left when one of the women, a depraved wench, was called "Putzi." It had been our pet name for the dead child.

In January, the Met went to Philadelphia to do *Tristan*. There, sitting in the first row, I suddenly saw unveiled in Mahler's face such horrible new lines of suffering that in my mortal dread of losing him I fainted. Dr. Leonard Corning, Heinrich Knote's brother-in-law, had been watching me and pulled me out into the aisle and backstage, to Knote's dressing room. Mahler, who used to turn around to me frequently in conducting, suddenly saw my seat empty and had to go on without knowing what had

happened. In the meantime, Corning hurried to a pharmacy, and when Mahler burst in after the end of the act I was able to sit up again.

We returned to New York with Knoté and Corning. This famed neurologist, who invented spinal anesthesia, was a shy, reserved man; he talked little, but lightning flashed constantly in his dark, furrowed fakir's face. Corning was a millionaire, notoriously stingy, but at times capable of vast generosity, as when he dropped \$200,000 as a present into the cradle of Knoté's child. We quickly took to each other. Nobody had seen the inside of his town house, but a few days after the trip from Philadelphia he sent his car for us. The door was opened by a silk-hatted gentleman to whom we paid no heed; he rode silently beside the chauffeur, so we thought he was a servant. At the house he held the door for us again, bowed, and followed us inside. He was another guest, but was deaf and dumb.

Upstairs, we were greeted by Corning. He casually introduced his wife, who promptly vanished, and ushered us into his study. It was a medieval alchemist's den, crisscrossed by hanging wires, with steps running up to an iron gibbet and other old-fashioned apparatus. A small door led into an iron-plated cubicle where patients were put to sleep by inhaling compressed air. A bed, unmade, an open book on the floor beside it, still showed the impression of a human body. The place was eerie. The hostess, clad in black, swept through the rooms without speaking, without looking—a gimlet-eyed death mask. The host led the way to a music room, where three or four grand pianos stood side by side; visibly cheered up, he began to play the flute for us, pacing to and fro. Finally, there appeared a human being—or two, rather: Corning's brother and sister-in-law. Until then, we had felt as though we were in a haunted house, with this eccentric and the watchful deaf-mute.

Dinner was served in a square, tiny room. Tiny candles smoldering on the table were put out at once, and the air became stifling, opaque, hardly penetrable with the single electric lamp. On each small plate lay something small and undefinable. A half-bottle of champagne was uncorked in our honor, yielding a thimbleful for each of us. We were seven.

"How did you get here?" Corning's brother whispered to me. "My brother is a pathological miser. He never has company. What has come over him?"

But we were touched to see the little bronze emblems on the table in lieu of place cards—a little conductor's stand for Mahler, a piano for me—and to feel that this child with the features of grandeur had spent days preparing for the occasion.

Toward the end of our first American stay, we became friendly with another great physician. At the house of one of the Opera's financial backers, we met Dr. Joseph Fraenkel, who was to have a decisive influence on Mahler and me for years. Both of us fell in love with his human and medical genius. He was a dazzling wit, an infinitely bold thinker, somewhat bizarre, perhaps, but never banal. Mahler came completely under his spell, so that no matter what Fraenkel might have prescribed for him, he would have complied without question.

Ours had been a cloistered life that winter, with Mahler so upset by the prognosis of his ailment that he spent most of his days in bed, took his meals in bed, and got up only for rehearsals or in the evening when he had to conduct. As for me, I suffered from hallucinations, seeing my doomed child everywhere. We both felt wretched. Yet our return voyage in the spring was pleasant, for in the last few weeks Mahler had regained some physical self-confidence, and instantly my world brightened.

We disembarked in Cuxhaven. As always, I took care of all such things as luggage and customs. Mahler wanted to help, but he looked so old and feeble that the German inspector said, "Your father needn't bother; you can settle everything with me."

Unfortunately, Mahler heard him. But it hurt me more than him.

He stayed in Vienna while I took my mother to Toblach in the South Tyrolean Alps. In May, through deep snow, we drove from house to house until we found what we wanted: a large farmhouse outside the village, with eleven rooms and two balconies, a little primitive, but in a gorgeous setting. We rented it immediately, returned to Vienna to pack, and moved with every-

thing we had to Toblach. There Mahler spent the next three summers writing *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*), the Ninth Symphony, and the unfinished Tenth.

The distribution of the rooms produced a charming scene. We proudly led him through the house, and after much commotion he chose the two largest and best rooms for himself. Then the biggest bed in the house was picked out and moved into his bedroom, though he was shorter than I. He was completely naïve in his egotism and would have been shocked to realize it. My mother and I walked behind him, enjoying his harmless delight.

We had two grand pianos sent up, and a pianino for his study, a small, fenced-in summer house in a mossy forest glen. One day he came to lunch with tears of joy in his eyes: a warm rain had caused innumerable white mushrooms to sprout overnight, and he had walked both ways on tiptoe, lest he crush one of those tiny living things that seemed to him like children.

Another time, he returned in a rage, insisting that I fire the maid. What had happened? It turned out that a stranger had come to the house, asking for "Mister Mahler." The maid, under strict orders to admit no one, had said, "The Herr Direktor won't see anybody; he's working." In saying this, however, the silly girl had looked in the direction of the summer house, and the man—a representative of an American piano manufacturer—headed straight into the woods to offer Mahler his product. He walked up to the fence and called "How do you do!" in a loud voice.

Mahler, jolted out of the most intense concentration, stormed out, chased the fellow, tumbled back into his study, and collapsed. Sobbing, he came to tell me that he had felt as though flung to the street from the spire of St. Stephen's Cathedral. . . .

All summer he worked feverishly on the orchestra lieder he had sketched the year before, the songs based on translated Chinese poems. The work grew under his hands. He combined the several texts, inserted interludes, and the expanding structure drew him more and more toward his own basic form of expression: the symphony. Once he realized that it was again a kind of symphony, the work took shape rapidly and was finished before he knew it. And yet, he was afraid to call it a symphony. It

would have been his ninth—and neither Beethoven nor Bruckner had lived beyond their respective Ninths.

Later, when he wrote his Ninth Symphony, Mahler said to me: "It's really the Tenth; my Ninth is the Song of the Earth." He thought he had outsmarted our Lord. . . .

All of his suffering, all of his fears went into this work. As *The Song of the Earth* it would be known the world over. But his working title for it was "The Song of Sorrow on Earth."

Now and then we had guests, too. Gabrilowitsch came, so did other friends and musicians. In early autumn our crowded house made us think of escaping on a purposeless pleasure trip, the first in our married life. We took the newly opened Tauern Railway to Salzburg, found a hotel room facing on a garden, and made lovely, leisurely excursions, careful to avoid the slightest strain on Mahler's heart. I had often begged him to stop his excessive bicycling and mountain climbing and swimming under water; now all this was over and done with. He carried a stopwatch to count his steps and his pulse, and kept asking me to listen to his heart sounds. His life was torment.

Even so, we felt like people on a honeymoon.

In the fall we embarked for America again, from Cuxhaven.

Our three-year-old daughter Anna—familiarly called Gucki—came along for the first time, in the care of an old English nurse whose unvarying prescription for the child was Japanese stoicism. When the tender took us out to the big ship and the child clapped her hands for joy, the nurse held them fast. "Don't get excited," she warned Gucki, "don't get excited."

Mahler heard this, jumped up, grabbed the little girl, and set her on the rail with her feet dangling over the side. "Now," he cried over and over, "get excited! I want you to get excited!"

The child rejoiced.

In New York we stayed at the Savoy Hotel this time, along with most of the Metropolitan artists. We liked them, but our social contacts remained superficial—except with Enrico Caruso, a genius both on stage and off. In this strange New World we built up a world of our own that was more European than Europe. One evening we had five guests, and all five had come

over in steerage, for various reasons: one had fled from military service, another had been a beggar, and so on. We spent a fascinating night listening to their experiences. Mahler grew freer, more youthful. His suffering faded.

Another night, when Mahler had gone to bed, Ossip Gabrilowitsch and I bade each other a sad farewell. Each time we met, the struggle in us was rekindled; but we loved Mahler too much for any thought of infidelity to enter our minds. Once more Gabrilowitsch played for me, for the last time. He played a piece I love, Brahms's little Intermezzo in A major, and I was sure he would never play it more beautifully. We were happy to have conquered—but Mahler had been listening, and the upshot was a big discussion. . . . Having only just won over all my instincts and desires, I defended myself with spirit and conviction; soon my husband went back to bed with his faith in me restored, and I stood all night by the open window, praying for the strength to end my miserable life. Gabrilowitsch later that year married Mark Twain's daughter, Clara.

Physically, Mahler was now in fine condition. He conducted *Pique-Dame*, a work not previously heard in America, in which Leo Slezak made his debut; he conducted *Figaro* with Marcella Sembrich, Geraldine Farrar, Emma Eames, and Antonio Scotti in the cast; for *Fidelio* he had the Viennese sets shipped to New York and the great "Leonore" overture played before the last scene, as in Vienna. Yet for all that, he no longer felt happy at the Met. Conried was abroad, dying, and the golden age of German operatic supremacy was coming to an end.

To be sure, Mahler had his chance to direct the Met, but when he declined, Giulio Gatti-Casazza of La Scala in Milan got the job and brought Arturo Toscanini with him. We read the cables that were exchanged in signing up Toscanini, who insisted on a contract specifying *Tristan* for his first performance—Mahler's *Tristan!* Mahler was tired of fighting. He ceded the opera. He never heard a word of thanks, and was contemptuously ignored from the outset. At rehearsals Toscanini made him the butt of nasty remarks: Mahler was just not up to it, he told the orchestra; Mahler did not understand *Tristan*. . . .

Mahler was glad to seize a new opportunity that beckoned at

this time. His *Fidelio* had enraptured two New York society women, Mrs. Sheldon and Mrs. Untermeyer. They had an idea as they left the opera house together, discussed it on the way home—and a few days later they had raised \$100,000 to give Mahler an orchestra. A committee was set up at once, and we left for Europe with a new, unwearisome contract in our pocket. It had always been Mahler's dream to give concerts with his own orchestra, and he reveled in his freedom from the theater when we returned in October. His new schedule was simple: one week would be spent quietly in New York, rehearsing one or two programs, and the next week he would conduct these programs in New York and Brooklyn. Later, as its repertoire increased, he would take the orchestra on tours to Philadelphia, Springfield, Buffalo, and other cities musically nourished from New York.

The new committee, which now paid his expenses, gave permission for him to conduct one more opera at the Met: Smetana's *Bartered Bride*. It was a fabulous performance, but the Americans had little taste for folk opera in those days. The very last time he raised his baton briefly at the Metropolitan Opera House was in honor of another artist: at Marcella Sembrich's farewell to the stage.

On this occasion, with all singers and conductors vying for a chance to work once more with an incomparable star, the program featured no whole opera but a series of her big scenes. Mahler conducted an act from *Figaro*. La Sembrich sang all her parts youthfully and in wonderful voice, and took thirty or forty bows. Then the curtain rose again, showing the stage transformed into a laurel grove, the ensemble lined up, and a gentleman approaching the diva: he was the mayor of New York, and before the ceaselessly applauding audience he handed her a string of priceless pearls in appreciation of her art and generosity. Her colleagues followed suit. Afterward, we all carried armloads of Marcella's gold and silver trophies—it was the only way to get them offstage.

At the grand ball in her honor, the Met orchestra surprised her with a fanfare and stayed all night to play dance music. It was a gesture of thanks: when the musicians had lost their instruments in the San Francisco earthquake, Marcella Sembrich had gone

without salary until everything was replaced. She opened the ball with Paderewski, dancing a Polish mazurka; and Caruso drew his masterly caricatures behind everyone's back—he always showed them to others, never to the victim, because they were often caustic to the point of offensiveness. He made some of Mahler and showed them to me but could not be induced to let Mahler see them. "First," he said, "one says one doesn't mind; then one sees and is angry. It's happened to me too often."

My days were crowded. Our circle had grown so that I had a full schedule. Americans are not like the Latins, to whom a stranger will always be strange; they really take him to their hearts. He is made to feel at home. He shares their fun. They help him wherever they can, as I was to find out later. Mahler came along when he felt like it, which was surprisingly often. He never missed a dinner. But then, of course, these were not European dinners: one was invited for 7:15 or 7:30, ate excellently, much better than at the hotel, and the conversation was cleverer than in Europe, if otherwise just as shallow or as profound, depending on luck. We usually got home by ten o'clock, not tired out, but chock-full of new faces and new types, and we always sat up for another hour, chatting about our impressions.

We came to know some old patrician families of Dutch and *Mayflower* stock. On November 15, 1909—I remember the day because of its beauty—we went to Oyster Bay. The sky was marvelously clear; we had to take a little railway to a nameless station, where a pony cart met us for the ride over sandy dunes to Mrs. West Roosevelt's home. The cart pulled up by a retaining wall that was just level with it, and we stepped out to face the most beautiful gray, old frame house that ever topped a sea-girt hill. The view was so breathtaking that we forgot to greet our hostess.

The hall, the rooms, everything exuded culture and nobility. We instantly felt at home. Mrs. Roosevelt took us to her brother-in-law Theodore's house—he was just hunting lions in Africa—and, while less charming than the old frame house, this also stood superbly on a hill hemmed in by the blue sea. One could see all the way through the house; it was completely surrounded by glass porches. Mrs. Roosevelt called it a symbol of Theodore:

his whole life, she said, was as clear, as open, as transparent as his house.

Mahler and I often visited Mrs. Havemeyer, who lived in a Tiffany-built fairy palace and arranged musical afternoons. Naturally, these Haydn and Brahms quartets were not for us; we always headed straight for the gallery, which was replete with masterpieces: eight Rembrandts, many Goyas, and others. The prize exhibits were El Greco's "Toledo" and his "Cardinal." My stepfather, Moll, had shown us so many photographs of the latter painting and talked so much about the colors that Mahler made a ghastly *faux pas* when Mrs. Havemeyer showed us the original. "This I have seen somewhere," he blurted out.

The lady paled. There is nothing worse you can say to a collector whose sense of values rests not so much on beauty as on the fact that an object is unique. I reminded Mahler of Moll's descriptions—in vain; he stubbornly claimed to have seen this picture before. I had a hard time calming the poor woman's fear that she had been cheated, that somewhere, unknown to her, there might be another "Cardinal."

Shortly after the founding of Mahler's orchestra we received a card from Louis Tiffany. He wrote that he was afraid of people; could he attend rehearsals unseen? Mahler granted the request, and soon we were invited to a party at Tiffany's. We drove to his mansion with Mrs. Havemeyer, walked up a palatial flight of stairs, and up another flight between walls with complete Sudanese Negro huts built into them on each side. At the top at last, we found ourselves in a hall so vast it seemed boundless. Suspended in the dusk we saw luminous colored glasses that shed a wondrous, flowery light. An organist was playing the prelude to *Parsifal*.

We thought we were alone. A black chimney with four immense fireplaces, each ablaze with flames of a different hue, rose in the center of the hall. We stood transfixed.

A man with a fine head appeared, murmuring unintelligibly—it was Tiffany, who never spoke—and before we could get a good look at him, let alone answer, he vanished.

He seemed enchanted, like everything in that place. The chimney soared into infinity. No ceiling was visible, but high

above us there were Tiffany glasses set in the walls, transparent and illuminated from outside. We spoke in whispers. We felt as though one might fly into Paradise through those panes of flowery light. The organ fell silent; suddenly a hum of muffled voices indicated a large company. Servants passed soundlessly, carrying trays of beautiful, champagne-filled glasses. We saw palms, divans, lovely women in oddly iridescent gowns. It was a dream: Arabian Nights in New York.

Friends took me to the house of Charles Dana Gibson, the famed illustrator who gave the world the "Gibson girl." His wife, a beautiful but vacuous socialite, showed me pictures of her two sisters, each lovelier than the other; the three of them had always been her husband's only models. She showed me her exquisite bedroom, her carved, antique bed, the canopy whose bottom was a single mirror. I was not surprised at the question she put to me in her quaint, sumptuous automobile: "How can a beautiful woman like you marry an old, ugly, impossible man like Mahler?"

Nothing I could say of Mahler's genius, fame, and triumphs brought more than a disdainful smile to her lips. I wanted to mention love—but broke off, embarrassed by the realization that he ignored me daily in the transcendent sense of his mission. It would have been quite senseless to tell Mrs. Gibson that I was yearning in vain for my husband's love.

Unbroken, unreflective, she looked upon luxury and wealth as the only proper setting for her gold-spun beauty. Side by side and worlds apart, we rode about New York.



In April 1910 we sailed for Paris. Our last visit there had been wonderful, thanks to my stepfather, who had ordered a portrait bust of Mahler from Auguste Rodin. Our friend Sophie Clémenceau had arranged it as if the idea had been Rodin's, because of his interest in Mahler's head. Mahler, despite a few lingering suspicions, believed it and consented to sit, which he would never have done under other circumstances.

The sittings thrilled me. Rodin fell in love with his model; he called Mahler's head a composite of Franklin, Frederick the

Great, and Mozart. His technique was unlike that of all other sculptors I have had a chance to watch: he began with large planes, shaped approximately like the model, and then he laid on clay, of which he kept rubbing tiny balls in his fingers. In other words, he did not carve out of the rough clay but modeled over it. When we had left, he smoothed out the new rough spots, and at the next sitting he continued laying on. I hardly ever saw a tool in his hand.

While he worked, there was always one of his mistresses waiting next door. This curious arrangement was maintained in all of his many studios: everywhere a purple-lipped female would sit patiently for hours, although he paid no attention to them and did not bother to talk to them during breaks. His attraction must have been tremendous to make them keep their composure under such treatment—for they all belonged to what is called “society”—not to mention his wife, who spent a lifetime waiting for him in Meudon.

When we finally had to leave Paris, Rodin was quite unhappy. He would have liked to keep modeling Mahler forever.

Now, a year later, we went to Paris for the rehearsals of Mahler's Second Symphony, which was to be performed at the Châtelet. Mahler found the rehearsals very interesting. The chorus was lazy but immensely talented; nobody arrived on time, and the soloists walked off, too, when they no longer felt like rehearsing. But at the concert they sang flawlessly, with a beautiful, metallic timbre.

Before the concert, the composer Gabriel Pierné gave a party for Mahler, inviting Claude Debussy and Paul Dukas, among others. Debussy, who came with his wealthy second wife, impressed us with his personality and handsome features. At dinner, sitting on my left, he took, at most, a forkful of each course; the hostess's urging made him grimace as though in pain, although he was not thin, but a heavy-set, broad-shouldered figure. Dukas, on my right, whispered stories from their school days into my ear. All the boys had spent their lunch money on big slices of cake, only Debussy invariably picked the smallest and costliest. Even as a child, large quantities repelled him. At the same party we heard how his cruelty almost killed his first wife,

whom he had married when a poverty-stricken youth. Unable to live with him—or without him—she took poison. Debussy came home, found her on the floor, and calmly emptied her pockets of all money; only then did he call a doctor. But the woman had been conscious and seen everything; once recovered, she was cured of her love as well. She divorced him and spread the story all over Paris. No one knew how much of it was true.

Mahler felt uneasy and strange in this circle, and his feeling turned out to be right. The Second was performed at a matinee concert, which I attended with the Clémenceaus and my mother, who had joined us in Paris. All eyes were on the box of a countess escorted by a certain *abbé*; to the audience, their appearance together was by far the greatest sensation. Suddenly, halfway through the second movement, I saw Debussy, Dukas, and Pierné get up and walk out!

They said later they had found the music too “Schubertian,” and that Schubert, also, was alien to them—“too Viennese, too Slavonic.” Whatever their objections, they did make them plain. The enthusiasm of the audience could not compensate Mahler for the bitterness of being so grossly slighted and misunderstood by the leading composers of France.

I took him to Toblach, and then the doctors found that I had to “do something for myself.” I was really sick, utterly worn out by the perpetual motion necessitated by a giant engine such as Mahler’s mind. I simply could not go on. Mahler, with some old, reliable servants to care for him, stayed in Toblach and began to draft the Tenth Symphony while I went with little Gucki to Tobelbad, a small Styrian spa in a wooded, mountain-ringed valley.

In the sanitarium I lived completely withdrawn, as always when I was alone somewhere. Barefoot, clothed in a horrible nightgown, I meekly took the outdoor exercise in rain and wind that was the hallmark of the therapeutic faith adhered to at this institution. I lived on its lettuce-and-buttermilk diet, which made my little girl sick to her stomach. I bathed conscientiously in the hot springs—although the very first time, I promptly fainted and had to be carried back to bed.

The German doctor in charge of the place prescribed dancing! Well, it made more sense than the boiling baths. Feeling responsible for me and worried about my despondency and loneliness, he introduced young men to me; one was an extraordinarily handsome German who would have been well cast as Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger*. We danced. Gliding slowly around the room with the youth, I heard that he was an architect and had studied with one of my father's well-known friends. We stopped dancing and talked, talked all the rest of the night, until the sun shone through the window. . . .

Soon there remained no doubt that young Walter Gropius was in love with me and expected me to love him in return. I would have treasured his friendship; I felt that it could have been a more beautiful friendship than any I had known—but now I left Tobelbad.

Mahler met me at the station in Toblach and seemed suddenly more amorous than ever. Whether or not the young stranger's infatuation had restored the equilibrium of my self-confidence, in any case I was happier, looking forward to the future and not eager for any change.

A week or so later, a letter came from Walter Gropius—a passionate plea to me, in an envelope plainly addressed to "Herr Direktor Mahler." (I was never to find out whether the youth had gone mad or had subconsciously wanted his letter opened by Mahler himself.)

Mahler read it sitting at the piano. "What's this?" he cried in a choked voice and handed me the letter. He was, and remained, convinced that my admirer had addressed it to him on purpose—"to ask me for your hand," as he put it.

What came then defies description. At last I was quite free to unburden my heart—and he, for the first time in his life, felt that there was such a thing as an inner obligation toward the person with whom one has, after all, been joined together. He suddenly felt guilty.

For days we walked tearfully side by side, until my mother came to help us over the crisis. In this conflict, which we faced with the utmost honesty, I had the elemental feeling that I could

never leave Mahler. When I told him so, his face became transfigured and he clung to me every second of the day and night, ecstatic with love.

I began to find letters on my bedside table in the morning:

My breath of life!

I've kissed the little slippers a thousand times and stood by your door with longing. You took pity on me, glorious one, but the demons have punished me again, for thinking again of myself and not of you, dearest. I can't move from your door; I'd like to stand there until I've heard the sweet sound of your living and breathing. —But I must leave! My queen has sent me into exile below. I bless you, my beloved—whatever fate awaits me at your hands. Every beat of my heart is *for you*.

He was now jealous of everything and everybody—he, whose indifference to such emotions had been all but insulting! We occupied adjoining rooms, but now the doors had to stand open at all times: he had to hear me breathe. At night I often woke up with a start, seeing him standing before me in the darkness like a departed spirit. For every meal I had to fetch him personally from his forest study. I did it cautiously, for in his excessive dread of losing me—of having already lost me, perhaps—he often lay on the floor of the hut and wept. For thus, he said, he was nearer to the Earth.

We talked as we had never talked to each other. In fact, my infinite love had gradually lost its vigor and its warmth. I was terribly naïve, had observed no woman's fate but mine, and had now had my eyes opened by the tempestuous wooing of the young man in Tobelbad. All of a sudden I knew that my marriage was no marriage, that my own life was utterly unfulfilled. Yet I denied this truth to Mahler even though he knew it as well as I. To spare him, we both played the comedy to the end.

It was on a ride through the village that I saw Walter Gropius hiding under a bridge. My heart stood still—in fright, not for joy—and as soon as I returned home I told Mahler.

“I'll bring him here myself,” he said. He went to Toblach, found the young man, and said, “Come.”

Nothing more was said. Night had fallen in the meantime;

wordlessly they walked the long way, Mahler ahead carrying a lantern, the other following in the pitch darkness. I stayed in my room until Mahler came in, very serious, and asked me to see his rival.

Reluctantly I agreed to have a talk with him, but after a few brief minutes I broke it off in sudden fear for Mahler. I found him pacing the floor with a book in his hand. Two candles burned on his desk. He was reading in Holy Scripture.

"Whatever you do," he said, "will be well done. Choose!"

What choice did I have? In the morning I went to Toblach and put Gropius on a train. He wired me from every station on his way; for weeks I kept getting entreaties by mail, by telegraph, by telephone. Mahler wrote beautiful poems about it—and I, however desperate I may have been seeing my life go by, could not imagine it without him, certainly not with another. I might think vaguely of going away somewhere, of making a new start, but never because I wanted someone else, anyone else. He was and remained the pivot of my existence.

Mahler, on the other hand, was shaken to his depths. It was then that he wrote all the outcries and pleas to me into the draft of his Tenth Symphony. Realizing the psychopathic nature of his past life, he suddenly decided to talk to Sigmund Freud, who was then at Leyden in Holland, about his strange states and anxieties. Apparently Freud managed to calm him down by a stern approach. "How can a man in your condition tie a young woman to him?" he chided Mahler.

"I know your wife," he told him in conclusion. "She loved her father and can seek and love only his type. Your age, which you are afraid of, is just what attracts your wife. Don't worry about it. And you yourself loved your mother and are looking for her type in every woman. Your mother was careworn and ailing—and that, unconsciously, is how you want your wife."

How right he was! I really was always searching for the short, stocky, wise, superior man I had known and loved in my father. And Freud's analysis reassured Mahler, too, though he did not want to hear of his mother fixation. He shunned such concepts.

It was in those stormy days that I returned from a walk with our little Gucki and stopped near the house, petrified: I was hear-

ing my songs! My poor, forgotten lieder, the creatures I had lugged around on all our trips, to all our summer places, in a folder that served as their coffin. I still mourned for my music; it embarrassed me to hear it sung and played of a sudden. I walked in, slightly annoyed, but Mahler was so full of joy that I said nothing.

"What have I done!" he cried. "These songs are good. They're splendid! I want you to go over them, and then we'll have them published. I'm not going to rest until you start working again. My God, was I blind?"

And he played them over and over.

One of those nights I awoke, startled by an apparition. Mahler stood before me in the dark: "Would it give you a little pleasure if I dedicated the Eighth to you?"

A little pleasure! "Don't do it," I said. "You've never dedicated anything to anybody. You might be sorry later."

"I just wrote the publisher about it, by the light of dawn," he said. There ensued a lengthy correspondence with the head of the publishing house, who seemed unable to make the dedication page meaningful and striking enough to suit Mahler.

At his departure for Munich, where the Eighth Symphony was to have its first performance, we said good-by as if we were parting for years. He took my ring—his wedding ring—to put on his finger; we exchanged long poems by telegraph until I followed exactly a week later. In Munich he met me at the station, looking wretched after a bout with tonsillitis, and took me to a hotel suite filled with roses. On a table, waiting for me, lay the Eighth with the printed dedication page.

Mahler could hardly wait to see how his old friends would react to it. Self-centered as he was, he thought they could not but sense and share his happiness. But the friends who had come to Munich for the concert were the same ones who had been jealous of me from the start. They said nothing at all, and Mahler felt deserted. When his sister came to see me, he angrily turned her back at the door: "Alma has no time for you." And a lady who was then feuding with me for a silly reason—she blamed me for Mahler's coldness toward a certain diva—was brusquely sent

on her way, with the result that a golden bowl full of roses was delivered to my room within an hour, in token of her repentance. Mahler was no longer blind. On the contrary, he now watched feverishly whether or not I was shown enough warmth and respect.

In November, two months after the triumphant *première* of the Eighth, we sailed again. In America the concert tours were now extended inland, with each week of rehearsing followed by one of concerts in New York and Brooklyn and then a third of short trips to other towns. Many conductors would have found it an easy schedule, but not Mahler, who was a poor traveler.

Once we met in Buffalo—I from New York, he and the orchestra from Springfield. From the hotel we took a trolley to Niagara and then an antediluvian chaise to the falls. The winter sun glistened coldly on ice-coated twigs, and when the elevator had carried us beneath the falls, our eyes smarted in the intense green light. The thunder of the rapids under the ice, the trees on the shore sheathed in ice by the continuous spray were of a dreamlike beauty.

Then we tore ourselves away and sought a place to eat. Oddly, there was nothing cozy, nothing inviting. Tagging along with the rest of the sight-seers, we landed in a small tavern heated by a potbellied stove and smelling of a thousand coats and rubbers. An old waiter came shuffling to our table. Suddenly his face lit up.

"It's a pleasure to serve you here, Mr. Mahler—the last time was at Hartmann's in Vienna; but that's long ago now—"

It was not easy for a man like Mahler, known and popular all over Europe, to exist incognito all of a sudden. Having forgotten his poverty-shrouded youth, he found it irksome to be unrecognized in America, an undistinguished figure in the crowd. The old waiter's joy and reverence was balm for our souls.

We got back to Buffalo with frozen hands and feet. Mahler, who had to conduct that evening, went to bed, and got up after an hour, reinvigorated. I had heard the program four times already and had spent the previous night on a train, so I stayed at the hotel. He came back right after the concert, in high spirits.

"Today," he said, "it has become clear to me that articulate art

dwarfs inarticulate nature!" He had conducted the Pastoral Symphony, and the nature in Beethoven's music had seemed to him more majestic than the whole of Niagara Falls.

Next morning, not wishing to leave our little girl alone with the nurse for too long, I returned to New York. On the train I reread Dostoevski's *Brothers Karamazov*, at Mahler's request, and from New York I wired him: "Had a grand trip with Alyosha."

"Trip with Almyosha much grander," he wired back.

Shortly before Christmas he took his checkbook (which he rarely touched for fear of losing it) and went out with a solemn air. I knew he was experiencing the joy of giving, the anticipation of excitement—all the things I had missed so much for ten years. As always, I had a candlelit tree on Christmas Eve and presents for him and Gucki; but this time, just before the big moment, Mahler pushed me out of the room, claiming to have business there. After a while the child came to demand a lace throw for Papa. I was surprised but gave it to her. Then the door opened and father and daughter, arm in arm, called me.

I entered the bright, festive room—and was chilled to the bone by a horrible premonition. On a separate table lay Mahler's gifts for me, the lace spread over them, and the whole mound covered with roses! I snatched off the cover. In trying to calm down Mahler, who stood sadly by, I calmed my own ominous fear and began to enjoy all the lovely little things he had chosen with exquisite taste—most of them of a sort he generally frowned upon, such as perfume, which he hated and I loved.

The pink roses soon filled the entire room. We stayed all by ourselves that Christmas. We liked it that way.

Arm in arm we went for walks that winter, or I pretended fatigue and sent him out with Gucki. I wanted him to get to know his child. He fell more and more in love with her as they strolled together in Central Park, throwing snow at each other, and I watched them nearly the whole time from my window on the ninth floor of the Savoy.

As usual, he used the winter to score the past summer's work. (It was still the Ninth Symphony—the Tenth was not yet finished, and he was somehow afraid of getting on with it.) One

day Gucki stood next to him, gravely watching him erase note after note. "Papi," she said, "I wouldn't like to be a note."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because then you could wipe me out, too, and blow me away."

On New Year's Eve, Fraenkel was with us. We sat by the big window overlooking Central Park. Below us lay New York, an immensely vast, milky haze. At five minutes to midnight the sirens rang from all factories and all ships in port, and the bells tolled from all churches; it made an organ sound of such overpowering beauty that all three of us wordlessly clasped each other's hands and wept. None of us knew why.

In January one day, the hotel desk called up to announce Madame Alda, Gatti-Casazza's wife. I went to get Mahler, but Frances Alda said at once that she had come to see me: she had seen the published volume of my lieder and wanted to sing one of them at her next recital. Mahler was enthusiastic. He urged the singer to do all five songs from the volume, and when that proved impossible, because the program was set, he became quite angry. "Let her leave out something else!" he snapped at me.

I protested, and we agreed on one song, which Mahler himself would rehearse with her.

A few days later he painstakingly coached her in her suite at the Waldorf. "Is this how you want it?" he kept asking me from the piano, but I was almost too timid to open my mouth. I begged him to stop asking me, since he knew so much better. We were in close harmony then.

There was trouble brewing on the board of Mahler's orchestra, however, and he never suspected it. The ladies talked him into programs he did not like and took umbrage when he resisted. The orchestra itself was on the verge of rebellion against its supervisor, a sycophant who had been Mahler's choice and managed to keep his backing. It was Mahler's habit to shut his eyes to unpleasantness, so he did not see clearly until mid-February, when he was summoned to the chairman of the board, Mrs. Sheldon. At her house he found several gentlemen of the committee and was cross-questioned about various mistakes of which the ladies

held him guilty. He defended himself, but at a sign from Mrs. Sheldon a curtain rose and revealed a lawyer, who—it turned out later—had been taking notes all the time; a document officially defining Mahler's powers was drawn up, and he was so stunned and furious that he came home shivering. It was some time before he took pleasure in his work again, and he resolved to ignore all of these females but one: Mrs. Untermeyer, an angel, who would always help and ward off trouble. She had been away on a trip, or Mahler would never have been so humiliated.

On February 20 the chills and fever recurred, his throat hurt, his tongue was furry, but he insisted on conducting on the twenty-first. Fraenkel would fix him up, he said. Fraenkel cautioned against it, but Mahler claimed to have conducted with a fever so often that the doctor had to give in. Carefully wrapped, he was driven to Carnegie Hall. In the intermission he complained of a headache and weariness, but he overcame this and finished the concert. We drove home together with Fraenkel, who examined him at once. His temperature was back to normal, and Mahler joked about conducting as a cure.

In a few days the tonsillitis had disappeared. But the fever came back, slightly at first, then rising, with sharp ups and downs. To Fraenkel the nature of the disease was clear after a week. I called him one night, when Mahler had a kind of collapse; he reassured both of us, but when he returned in the morning his hair was gray. Later, he told me that that night he had buried Mahler.

I did not know the extent of the danger, otherwise I could not have survived the next three weeks. Often Mahler was convinced of his recovery; more often he was despondent and afraid of death. When he felt better, he would make jokes about his approaching demise.

"You'll be quite a catch if I die now. You're young, you're beautiful—well, who is going to land you?"

"No one," I said. "Don't talk like that."

"Now, wait. Let's see who's available." He went through the list: one was too dull, another too monotonous despite his wit, and so forth. He always ended by saying that, after all, it would be better if he stayed with me, and I would laugh through my tears.

Frances Alda's accompanist came to ask me about the tempi of

my song. Mahler, in bed in the next room, fumed about his unprofessional approach, and when we had finished and the pianist went on to play some of Moussorgsky's songs, he whistled for me and wanted the fellow thrown out. It was tactless to play something else right after my song, he said, in words too strong to bear repeating.

Whenever I left the hotel, the policeman on duty at the corner ran after me to ask, "How is Mr. Mahler?" Then he would escort me across New York's busiest square and wish me the best. In all my life I have never met so much true warmth and natural tact as in America.

Left to myself, I would probably never have stirred from Mahler's bedside, so our men and women friends frequently came to drive me around in their cars. Once—it happened to be the day of Alda's recital—Fraenkel came unexpectedly to take me for a walk, and I was glad to have a chance to hear my song. I had a ticket, for a seat way back in the balcony; Mahler and I exchanged a few whispered words; then Fraenkel took me to the auditorium. He was surprised to see me attend a concert, which had not happened for weeks. I told him nothing about a song of mine and left him before he could ask.

Mahler was tensely awaiting my return; he said he had never been so agitated at a performance of his own works. Having heard my report that my song had to be repeated, he said, "Thank God," over and over and became quite hilarious for joy.

He was now like a baby in my care. He no longer ate by himself; I had to spoon-feed him, and slept at night in his room, without undressing. We got so used to it that Mahler said more than once, "We'll keep this up when I'm well again. It's so agreeable, you're always going to feed me."

Servants bringing food came from every direction. Our table was filled with the delicacies of the globe, sent by friends as well as total strangers, and every day Mahler looked forward to what would come next. Since nourishment was all important, he ate at all hours. A blood test, made at Fraenkel's suggestion, yielded the verdict: streptococci. Mahler and I had never heard the word,

so we were not alarmed by the diagnosis. He called the bacteria his "little bugs" and joked about their "waltzing or sleeping."

"What couldn't we try," said Fraenkel, "if he were just anybody, not the famous Mahler! Blood transfusions, above all, or saline injections—but you can't experiment on Gustav Mahler. I couldn't take the responsibility if anything went wrong. We'll have to see whether nature is strong enough to pull him through."

Weekly consultations were held with the leading doctors of New York. They agreed with Fraenkel that Mahler must be sent to Europe—to Elie Metchnikoff or some other great bacteriologist in Paris or Vienna. When I heard of this decision, my strength failed and I fainted at Mahler's bedside. Fraenkel and another eminent medical friend of ours carried me to my bed and insisted on my cabling for my mother. Mahler delightedly looked in the newspaper: "She'll be here in six days."

We knew that Mama would leave Vienna on the same day and take the fastest boat. We knew she would spare no effort and shrink from no trouble if Mahler needed her. Their relationship was so close that in the early days of my marriage I had jested about it: if Mahler, I used to say, were to tell my mother, "I've had to kill Alma," she would answer, "I'm sure you were right, Gustav." It was a bad joke, for I was never happier than when the three of us were by ourselves.

My mother came on the expected ship, and I was able to take things more easily. She took over during part of the day; I kept watching by night as before. Three male nurses we tried were quickly fired by Mahler: one wore squeaking shoes, another snored. The female nurse who followed was forbidden to look at him; she had to avert her eyes while ministering to his needs. Meanwhile, I had to pack forty trunks without his knowledge. Every time I left his room I casually took some of his things with me. In the end he left a bare room, unaware that it had been emptied.

We had our cabin; we were packed; Mahler was dressed. A stretcher was waiting, but he rejected it. Deathly pale, he walked to the elevator, supported by Fraenkel. The elevator boy came—he had hidden, so Mahler should not see his tear-stained face—and took him down for the last time.

The huge hotel lobby was deserted as Fraenkel took Mahler to Mrs. Untermeyer's car, which was waiting at the side entrance. They drove ahead to the pier; I had to go back to the office, to pay our bill and to thank the managers for all the consideration we had been shown in those weeks. All of them came and quietly shook my hand. "We had the lobby cleared," they told me, "so Mr. Mahler would not be stared at."

Blessed America! In the whole subsequent time in Europe we were not shown such tact.

When I came aboard ship, Mahler was already in bed, with Fraenkel by his side. He repeated all his instructions once again, advised me against consulting the ship's doctor, and bade Mahler a brief, sad farewell. He knew he would not see him again.



The voyage went well. Mahler got up almost daily, and we helped him to the sun deck where the captain had a large area screened off for him, out of sight of other passengers. We dressed and undressed him, lifted him up, cautiously slid every bite of food into his mouth—he did not have to make a move of his own. He looked heart-rendingly beautiful with his shining black eyes, his white face, black hair, blood-red lips. “Today,” I used to tell him, “you’re Alexander the Great again. . . .”

In Cherbourg there was pandemonium on the pier. We sat quietly in the tender until it passed; then, slowly, we took Mahler to the train. An official of the Hamburg-America Line offered to aid him in my stead, since I was looking unwell. Mahler agreed, so I left him with Mama and this gentleman and ran to get our forty pieces of luggage through customs. Afterward, not knowing our compartment number, I raced through a long line of cars, all of them empty. Two drunken porters stopped me, claiming to have carried my sick husband and demanding money. When I drew my purse in my confusion, they made me give them all there was in it. I did not care. I ran on, and at last found Mahler comfortably settled in a bed that my mother had quickly made up.

We arrived in Paris late at night, having been joined en route by my stepfather, who adored Mahler. Our rooms at the Hôtel

Elysée were ready and waiting. Exhausted, we sank into bed—to sleep, to rest, to regain hope. . . . In the morning I awoke at seven and saw Mahler sitting on the balcony, shaved, fully dressed, about to ring for breakfast. I could not believe my eyes.

“Didn’t I tell you I’d be all right in Europe? Let’s take a ride this morning. In a few days, when we’ve rested up from the trip, you and I will start for Egypt.”

I sat in bed, staring at him. Was it a miracle? For months he had been unable to lift a finger. Yesterday we had half carried him off the ship—and now? I sent for Mama and Moll. All of us laughed and cried for joy. We thought Mahler was saved.

Over breakfast he talked excitedly of future productions. He outlined a brilliant plan for making a hit of *The Barber of Baghdad*. Then he jumped up—I nearly choked with fear—and abruptly ordered an electric automobile. He got into it like a well man, rejoicing in the beauty of the day as we set out for the Bois de Boulogne.

In the Bois he turned paler and paler. We told the chauffeur to drive back to the hotel as fast as possible. Mahler’s head dropped to my mother’s shoulder; he finished the ride with his eyes shut, not speaking a word. Put to bed, he had a fit of ague and then a collapse. A doctor was called and gave him a camphor injection—the first of many. This was the end of the glorious recovery in Europe.

While I stayed with Gucki, who had been sadly neglected during these calamities, Mahler and my mother had long talks that he did not want me to hear. Mama sat at his bedside, trying in vain to cheer him up a little. Tearfully he asked to be buried in Grinzing, beside his little daughter Maria. He wanted a simple funeral, no pomp or speeches, and a simple tombstone with nothing but the name “Mahler” on it. “Those who come looking for me will know who I was, and the others don’t have to know.”

I came in; he stopped talking at once. But I could see his tears.

We tried to reach the doctors whose names Fraenkel had given us, but nobody was available just before Easter. The only bacteriologist we could get hold of was Chantemesse. He made a culture of Mahler’s blood and appeared a few days later with a microscope, beaming. Had a miracle happened?

The famous man adjusted his microscope. "Look in here, Madame Mahler. Even I have never seen such marvelously developed streptococci. Look at these strands—like seaweed!"

He wanted to explain further, but I left the room.

I sat with Mahler, at an hour when he seemed better, talking of where we would go after his recovery. "To Egypt," he said. "Let's see nothing but blue sky."

"By the time you're well again," I said, "I'll be fed up with suffering. Remember when we met and you found me too happy? Let's have a good, cheerful life now. I've suffered enough. I don't want to get any more 'inwardly.'"

He stroked my hair and said with a gentle smile, "Yes, you're right. God grant that I'll get well. . . ."

But he continued to deteriorate. In my agony I wired for the most celebrated physician I knew, Professor Chvostek of Vienna. He arrived the next day. After a quick briefing on how to handle Mahler, he entered the sickroom with a bluff, blustering air.

"Now then, Mahler, what's all this about? That's what you get for working yourself to a frazzle. Now you'll have to take it easy for six months—for a year, maybe. You just can't abuse your nervous system like that."

Mahler listened with widening eyes. "Then I'll be able to work again?" he asked happily.

"Sure, why not? Don't mope, now; there's no reason. Tonight we're traveling to Vienna together."

To me, Chvostek spoke of the move in a different vein. "The sooner, the better," he said. "No telling what else might come into the picture and make him impossible to transport." He did not dash all my hopes, though.

I have never seen a man so overjoyed as Mahler was when I came back into his room. "That lovely man," he cried, "that lovely Chvostek! How soon is tonight? When can we leave?" Once again, joy seemed to improve his condition.

He could hardly wait for us to start. Moll ran to get sleeper reservations while Mama, who was to follow later with the child, and I were feverishly packing. Mahler, radiant, transfigured, was the first to be dressed.

Chvostek and I rode in the ambulance with him and walked

alongside the stretcher. His travel cap kept slipping—it made him look so helpless that I took it away. The stretcher was maneuvered into the narrow compartment. He was put to bed. Moll, Chvostek, and I took turns watching through the night.

“Are you here? You’re an angel,” Mahler said that night. And after a while: “Getting back to Vienna in bad shape, this time. It’ll be all right, though.” I sat on a suitcase on the floor, my head on his hand, kissing his hand.

In the middle of the night Chvostek sent Moll to relieve me. “Hopeless,” he said gravely, in the aisle. “I only hope it won’t take long. For if he should pull through—which I doubt—he’d be permanently confined to a wheel chair.”

“Rather in a wheel chair than not at all,” I said. “I can’t imagine a life without him.”

Chvostek shook his head. “His senses would be dulled, too. You wouldn’t want to wheel an ancient child around.”

I could not stand this talk and asked Moll to change places with me again. At every stop in Germany, and later in Austria, reporters came to the compartment for the latest news of Mahler’s condition. His last journey was like a dying king’s. Suddenly they all knew who he was; suddenly it was important how he felt at ten-thirty, at eleven, at noon. Mahler wanted to know each questioner’s name and newspaper and seemed to derive a certain satisfaction from it.

In Vienna an ambulance took him to Loew’s Sanitarium, where a huge terrace room was waiting. The corridor looked like a flowering grove. Mahler was visibly pleased. I had to bring all the floral gifts to his bedside and arrange them symmetrically. A white basket came from the Vienna Philharmonic. “From my dear Philharmonic,” Mahler said time and again.

For days he lay quietly. His senses were growing dull. His sister came, and Mahler’s eyes widened unnaturally: “Who is that strange lady?” The poor woman fled.

Little Gucki came to his bedside. “Stay good, my child,” he said, embracing her.

Did he know, or didn’t he? I could not tell as he lay moaning. A large growth appeared on his knee, moved down his leg, and vanished after an application of radium bags. The next eve-

ning he was to change beds. Two male nurses held his stark-naked body, emaciated to the point of death. No one felt any shame. All of us were struck with the same thought: the burial of Christ. . . .

An oxygen apparatus came, to help him breathe. Then uremia set in. Chvostek was called. Mahler lay with insane eyes, his fingers conducting on the bedspread. On his lips was a smile; twice he said, "Little Mozart . . ." His eyes grew immense.

I asked Chvostek to give him a large dose of morphine so he should feel no pain, and Chvostek answered in a loud voice. I clasped his hands: "Speak softly; he might hear you—"

"He doesn't hear a thing any more."

How terrible, at such moments, is the callousness of medical routine! And do we really know whether he did not hear or merely could not react any more?

The death struggle began. I was sent next door. The *râles* lasted for hours. At midnight of May 18, with a storm of hurricane proportions raging outside, the awful, ghastly rattle suddenly ceased.

Deadlier still was the new silence.

I lay in my mother's house on the Hohe Warte in Heiligenstadt. The bells rang incessantly. I had Mahler's picture in bed with me and continued to talk to him. Dr. Chvostek came out, unasked, to sit with me and tell me that my lungs were affected. "If you keep this up," he said in his gruff manner, "you'll soon be where your husband is now"—and he pointed at the Grinzing cemetery that ran from under my window toward the Kahlenberg.

Mama came in a few minutes later and was surprised to find me wreathed in smiles. Chvostek's warning had given me my first happy moments since Gustav Mahler's death. I *wanted* to follow him. . . .

But I was thirty then, and I recovered.

A strange existence began for me and my six-year-old daughter. Music was left to me and opened its arms; Gustav Mahler

surrounded me abstractly—which was all I wanted. Gucki and I simply made music all day long, and my old cook (whom Franz Werfel later immortalized in *Embezzled Heaven*) wondered what to think at mealtimes, when she had to call my little girl and me from the piano for each course. How was she to understand that our music tasted better to us than anything she could serve?

I was alone now, younger than my years. Time seemed somehow to have passed me by while I had been Mahler's wife and noticing nothing but him. I did not wear mourning. Mahler had forbidden it—he would not have me do anything for “the dear neighbors,” as he put it in his will. I was to “see people, hear concerts, go to the theater, etc.” That was his will, and it was done. Soon I was surrounded by outstanding men, as before.

For years, and during Mahler's illness in particular, Joseph Fraenkel had sustained us as a scientist and as a friend. We had seen him turn gray overnight, when Mahler's blood test indicated streptococci; he knew already that Mahler, with his inherited bilateral heart defect, could not survive a febrile disease. And Fraenkel helped, helped, helped tirelessly, until he saw us off in New York Harbor and had to leave us to our deadly fate.

It did not occur to me then that he loved me—not until he came to Vienna after Mahler's death and asked me to marry him, after a decent interval.

He phrased everything uniquely; I never heard a commonplace word from his lips. His life story was strange and touching. Vienna-born, he studied to become an army surgeon, a career that in Austria-Hungary was closed to Jews; about to be baptized, he turned back at the church door and emigrated to America, in steerage. In New York he was a newsboy and dishwasher, slept on rags in a closet, and in his spare time read medical journals at a Yiddish café. One day an old Jew asked him to lance an abscess for some relative; lacking instruments, Fraenkel successfully performed the operation with a pair of scissors, and when he was asked for the bill, he said he had enjoyed himself for the first time in months—if he weren't penniless, he would be glad to pay the patient. . . . Later, as chief of Montefiore Hospital and personal physician to many millionaires, he got huge

fees from the wealthy but went on treating the East Side poor free of charge.

In America he was a hero to many, a great name in medicine; in Europe he was an elderly, sick little man quite unheroically nursing a fatal intestinal ailment. I did not want to tie myself to him. Twice in that year he came across the Atlantic, but in the meantime I rebuilt my inner independence.

I did accompany him on a trip to Corfu, in the Adriatic, where I had been as a child. Feeling wretched throughout the voyage, Fraenkel lay in his cabin all day. An Albanian cabinet minister, who boarded the ship in Durazzo, became friendly with me at the captain's table. He told me much about the Albanian people; the best characterization he could find for these wild mountaineers was his favorite proverb: "Not the murderer, the victim is guilty." I liked the phrase and wrote it down at once. Over each meal the Albanian and I talked at length of the Dalmatian coastal regions I knew from my childhood, until the landing in Corfu brought my poor travel companion out of his stateroom.

I always thought of Fraenkel as sheer intellect, an embodied brain. He was one man for whom even I was too earthy; but he also was one of the few I ever wholly knew, and who wholly knew me. I wrote him so in a farewell letter:

The fate that parts us is the divergence of our own souls. Every fiber of my heart draws me back into true life, while you are striving for consummate de-materialization.

What is salvation to me is unthinkable to you, with your cerebral makeup; what is salvation to you strikes me as madness. That's how different we are!

My watchword is: *Amo—ergo sum.*

Yours: *Cogito—ergo sum.*

When it comes to living you're a miserable failure. At best, men like you are put between book covers, closed, pressed, and devoured in unrecognizable form by future generations. But such men never *live*.

Today I know the eternal source of all strength. It is in nature, in the earth, in people who don't hesitate to cast away their existence for the sake of an idea. They are the ones who can *love*.

I go on living with my face lifted high, but with my feet on the ground—where they belong.

I had moved on by then, for roaming in souls had now become my delight. Unwittingly, while looking for greatness in men, I was facing life—tempting, seductive life. The pension I received as Mahler's widow took ample care of my needs and those of my child; in a figurative sense I could now realize my childhood dream of filling my garden with geniuses. I continued to hear a great deal of music, and one day I chanced to attend a choir rehearsal by Franz Schreker, an immensely gifted composer. Told of my presence, he came into my box. For a while we saw much of each other, but he played no part in my life; I walked beside him for a stretch and left him at the right time.

He composed a series of fine operas: *Der Ferne Klang*, *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin*, *Die Gezeichneten*, *Irrelohe*—the last already on the downgrade. He had the heart and the talent for poetry, but he never reached the heights. (Later, meeting Franz Werfel at my house, he implored him to rewrite *Irrelohe*, but Werfel would have nothing to do with such hothouse fantasies.)

Schreker's frequently cruel imagination may have sprung from his hideous experiences. He was born in stark poverty. His romantic father had eloped with a beautiful young baroness; penniless, they fled from land to land together, ending up in Monaco where the debt-ridden dreamer shot himself in sight of his wife and children. The horrified boy saw his father grow lifeless. Later his sister died in his arms, of starvation. When the discovery of his musical gifts enabled him to support himself and his mother, they went back to live in a suburb of Vienna, in a cottage beside a garden decorated with the colored glass balls that were then so popular among petty bourgeois without taste. Once, amused by the changes the bulbous glass wrought in nature, Franz looked through one of these balls—and was shocked into rigidity to see the gardener chase his wife through the garden and beat her until she was dead! He saw everything through the distorting glass globe then and thereafter.

His career ran its course between two opera performances. The sudden success of his first, *Der Ferne Klang*, slightly impaired his genuine artistry; and after the failure of his last, *Der Schmied von Ghent*—a fiasco which I witnessed at the Charlot-

tenburg Opera House—he died in Berlin, still young, lonely, and broken.

I like to remember the time he came to visit me in Abbazia. We went for a ride to the top of Veprinaz Mountain, and Schreker rushed into the little church there to try the old organ that had not been tuned for years. Radiantly he came down from the choir to rejoin me. “Anyway, there was sound,” he cried—and both of us felt that this music that was no music had warmed our hearts.

Schreker once met Otto Klemperer at my house. They sniffed at each other and mutually disliked their smells. Schreker wanted to play one of his operas for Klemperer and started with an explanation of the whole.

He did not get beyond the first sentence. “And there is . . . and there comes . . . and there is . . .”

I tried to help, but his curious, constitutional illiteracy spoiled everything. Then he began to play. Klemperer sat behind him, and after the first act there was a dreadful, almost audible silence.

“Well—?” Schreker broke it.

Klemperer shrugged his shoulders. “Nothing.”

“What do you mean? There is theme after theme—”

“I don’t hear them.”

“And this transition—and this—and that . . .”

It was agonizing.

Later, Klemperer sat down at the piano and played a ballad of his. The text referred to a girl’s death from overeating. It was not attractive, neither was the music.

“I like that,” Schreker said dreamily. “I’ll play it at my next concert.”

He never did, of course, but the unsuspecting Klemperer was happy.

In December of the year of Gustav Mahler’s death I moved from my mother’s house to an apartment of my own. On the first evening there, before going to bed, I opened my safe-deposit box and once again read Mahler’s farewell to me: the notes for the Tenth Symphony.

They loomed before me like a manifestation, these huge words

of love from the beyond. I wished he might come back. . . . Instead, I went to Munich, where Bruno Walter conducted the first performance of *The Song of the Earth*. On the return trip, still profoundly stirred by Mahler's music, I happened to travel with the eminent biologist Paul Kammerer, one of the oddest individuals I ever came across. He had written to Mahler, some years earlier, a letter so striking that Mahler invited the sender and had a long, serious talk with him. The following summer, in Toblach, Mahler had long forgotten his casual, "Why don't you visit us in the country?" and we got piles of mail every day, addressed to "Director Gustav Mahler, for Dr. Kammerer." When he finally came himself, this obtrusive mail campaign had put us into a rather icy mood, but Kammerer did not notice. We thought we might learn from him and raised biological questions, but he wished to discuss music only. Soon he got so much on Mahler's nerves that the visit came to a natural end.

Now, on the train from Munich to Vienna, Kammerer unfolded *his* ideas about my immediate future. He thought I ought to get away from music for a while, and offered me a position as his assistant at the biological laboratory in the Vienna Prater. The job was unpaid, of course, but money was not what I needed. I liked the idea and accepted at once.

When I reported for work, Kammerer showed me a box full of squirming meal worms which I was to feed to his beloved experimental reptiles. I felt a twinge of nausea.

"What's wrong?" Kammerer asked, surprised. "They're not bad." And he reached into the wriggling mass, brought out a handful, and stuffed the worms into his mouth!

I kept the job—although for some time I could not touch noodle soup, because it reminded me of meal worms. Kammerer put me on a mnemotechnical experiment with praying mantes. He wanted to know whether sloughing deprived these animals of their memories or whether it was a mere superficial skin reaction. To this end I was to teach them a habit—a futile endeavor, since you could not teach the little beasts a thing. I was to feed them at the darkened bottom of their cage, but they preferred to eat high in the sunlight and firmly refused to change this sensible attitude for Kammerer's sake. I kept records, very exact records.

That, too, annoyed Kammerer. Slightly less exact records with positive results would have pleased him more.

Other experiments of his were more interesting: transplanting lizard eyes, for instance, or shifting salamanders to differently colored sands to study their mimicry. At last, instead of going to the Prater every day, I installed a terrarium in my apartment and made the experiments at home. The terrarium was too short, unfortunately, and my visitors in those days were often greeted on the stairs by reptiles—a startling experience for everyone but Paul Kammerer, who was at my place at all hours, washing sand and occasionally climbing up the break front after a runaway.

In the course of these months he fell seriously in love with me. He had little sense of reality and an utterly false picture of our relationship: I did esteem him as a friend, but as a man I always found him disgusting. Every day he wrote me the craziest letters; every other day he would run out of my house threatening to shoot himself—preferably on Gustav Mahler's grave. He frightened me several times before I got used to these antics.



“There’s a poor, starving genius around,” my stepfather told me one day in the winter of 1912. “If I were you, I’d let him paint me.”

And Oskar Kokoschka came. . . .

I knew his work from the Kunstschau exhibit and from his unusual, grandly conceived designs. But his shoes were torn, his suit was frayed. A handsome figure, but disturbingly coarse, I thought. He had some sheets of paper with him and started drawing at once.

His eyes were somewhat aslant, which gave them a wary expression; but the eyes as such were beautiful. The mouth was large, with the lower lip and chin protruding.

After a while I told him I could not stand being stared at like this, and asked whether I might play the piano. He started drawing again, interrupted by coughing spells. When he tried to hide his handkerchief, I saw blood spots on it. We hardly spoke—and yet he seemed unable to draw.

We got up. Suddenly, tempestuously, he swept me into his arms. To me it was a strange, almost shocking kind of embrace; I did not respond at all. And precisely that seemed to affect him.

He stormed out. In a matter of hours I held the most beautiful love letter and proposal in my hands:

My kind friend:

Please believe in this resolution, as I believe in you.

I know I am lost if my life remains as confused as it is now; I know I will lose the faculties I should direct toward a goal outside myself that is sacred to you and to me.

If you can respect me—if you want to be as pure as you were yesterday, when I knew you in a higher and better sense than all the women who could only demoralize me—then make a real sacrifice and become my wife: in secret, while I am poor.

I will thank you for your solace when I do not have to hide any longer.

I want you to keep your joyousness and purity for my refreshment, lest I decay in the demoralization that threatens me.

I want you to save me until I can really be the man who does not drag you down but lifts you up.

Since your plea of yesterday I believe in you as I have never believed in anyone but myself.

If you, as a woman, will strengthen and help me escape from the confusion of my mind, the beauty that we worship beyond our power to know will bless us both with happiness.

Write me that I may come to see you, and I will take it for your consent.

I remain in reverence

your Oskar Kokoschka.

I cannot describe my feelings. Was it a spell that he consciously cast over me? I had to see him again. . . .

Years have passed, but the sensations of that time will be equally strong in me as long as I live. On one stormy, agonized day when he loved me passionately but selfishly, torturing us both, the world around me suddenly melted away—and ever since, I have been convinced of a super-world to which we can rise by conquering the concrete world. It was my greatest metaphysical experience, no hallucination but an inner illumination. After such moments one really should withdraw from this realm

of vanities. But hanging above us are tons of visible sky that will not let our heads emerge from the fog of materialism.

Kokoschka wanted to marry me at any cost. We were inseparable. The three years that followed were one fierce battle of love. Never before had I tasted so much tension, so much hell, so much paradise.

He was jealous of all things in my life. Since the present was cloudless, the past had to be dug up—a past of which, despite his gift of divination and too much, too honest storytelling on my part, he never had any idea. He always saw everything differently from the way it had happened, and I began to curse his youthful innocence that gave him the right to sit in judgment. To justify my pleasure in my modest fortune, I explained to him that I, too, was an upstart—not culturally, as he, but financially. Without a cent from home I had made myself independent, and the mountain of debts I had married along with Mahler had not been easy to clear. I begged him to let me enjoy what I had struggled so hard for; I could not learn to walk all over again.

In the end we agreed that we were probably lucky. Having material and other ambitions behind me, longing only for peace and concentration, I could be a stabilizing force in his life—which his thirst for tangible success might otherwise have turned into a wild chase after fame and money.

I witnessed his rise. He had a studio with a tiny bedroom on Stubenring in Vienna, and I looked after him where it mattered. He painted me, me, me—he no longer knew other faces. I lived in a garden apartment at the periphery of Vienna, and he used to leave there late at night—not for home, though, but to pace up and down under my window until 2:00, sometimes until 4:00, A.M. Then I would hear a whistle: the longed-for signal to me that he was about to depart in the comforting knowledge that no “fellow,” as he delicately put it, could come to visit me. I was not allowed to look at anyone, to talk to anyone. My dresses had to cover my arms and my throat. He insulted my guests and lay in wait for me everywhere.

At the time we fell in love I was still working for Kammerer. The biologist once took me down to the laboratory basement where axolotls were being accustomed to feeding and light, with

the result that these blind animals regained their eyesight. When I came home and told Kokoschka about this, he snorted, "And then what do they see? Paul Kammerer!"

I laughed and quit as Kammerer's assistant. I stopped seeing him. When he kept writing, I asked his wife to come to see me. I asked her to watch him better, and, above all, to hide the gun he had been brandishing constantly, menacing me and himself. I advised her somehow to make herself indispensable to him—to take my job at the laboratory, for instance. "Thank God," I told her, "that he brought his lonely heart to me—for I don't want him, and so you have not lost him." *How good then! Typical!*

We promised each other to tell her husband nothing about our talk; then Frau Kammerer thanked me profusely and left. For a time her marriage really seemed to go better.

Kokoschka was a strange mixture as a man and as a human being. He had everything a person needs to be great; I loved him for that, and I loved the ill-bred, stubborn child in him. He and I were homogeneous to the last fiber of our being. Our Catholicism came from the same sources; our delight in holidays like Christmas and Easter was not delight in gifts and glitter but in the mystic events whose pervading radiance we would sense alike. Why, then, did it not work? Were we too similar?

I saw all the purity in the world confronting me in Oskar Kokoschka, but I could not stand so much light. He had to work; he had come into the world for that purpose; living did not interest him—but I was at the end of my so-called development. If I had only had the trained intellect to write down all he blurted out in a day, in his youthful, vigorous fashion!

He was tall and slender, but his hands were red, tending to swell. His finger tips were so congested that if he scratched himself in clipping his nails, the blood would spurt. His ears, though small and finely chiseled, stood out a little. His nose was rather broad and inclined to swell, too. His head was carried very high. He walked sloppily, as though shoving himself forward.

His clothes . . . Clothes were a problem. Someone gave me a present of flame-red pajamas which I disliked because of their blatant hue; he promptly took them to wear about the studio. He

wore nothing else for a long time, greeted his shocked visitors in the red horror, and spent more time before the mirror than before his easel.

The first great, unbalancing nervous crisis occurred when I played *Parsifal* for him, and he, standing in back of my chair, adroitly switched the words he hated. A new, eerie text was whispered into my ear, and I was to accompany it. I began to cry, to scream. He did not stop. I fled from the piano; like *Miracolo* in *Tales of Hoffmann*, he kept coming after me. With my last ounce of strength I dragged myself into my bedroom and swallowed a large dose of bromide. Now he was frightened, too, and got my doctor on the phone at four in the morning.

Trembling, he stood before my door. I did not let him in then, nor the day after. On the third day he came, both hands full of flowers which he strewed over my bed.

In summer 1912 I went to Scheveningen with my little Gucki and a woman friend who cherished me, but did not suit me. I seized the opportunity to leave when Kokoschka wrote and asked me to meet him in Munich. We met, loved, quarreled, saw a movie about Christopher Columbus that impressed us deeply and inspired O.K.—as Kokoschka signed himself—to give his side of our relationship in his lithograph series, "The Fettered Columbus." We pored over travel guides and decided to go on to Mürren in the Bernese Oberland.

In Mürren we took, naturally, the most beautiful rooms in the most beautiful hotel. A large balcony ran all along the bedrooms. There were powerful natural phenomena to be endured and explained, as on the evening when the whole Lauterbrunnen Valley was steeped in a fiery red light and we could not find out whether it was the reflection of the sunset, caught in the mists around the Jungfrau, or something else. The colors, the contours of the clouds, everything was mysterious. We yearned for the summit of the great peak that was always before us, the summit of the Jungfrau.

In our rooms O.K. painted my portrait. Much has been written and said about this picture: that it is not a good likeness (it could not be, since I was unable to sit still) and that it makes me look malicious and that O.K. took the idea for it from the Mona

Lisa. Nevertheless, it has a great deal of myself, and I think of it as *my* picture, whether or not others like it.

From Mürren I had to hurry back to Vienna. I thought I was pregnant and was afraid of what might grow in me; I feared it might inherit Kokoschka's ferocity, which in those days was often virtually murderous. (It turned out that I had been mistaken.)

We thought and talked often and earnestly about our future, and Mahler's death mask, which had come by then, made a powerful *canto fermo* for the grave choral chant of these discussions. Wherever I lived after Mahler's death I would put on his desk his music and his pictures from childhood through the last years. One day Kokoschka suddenly got up, picked up Mahler's pictures one by one, and kissed Mahler's face. It was an act of "white magic"—he wanted to combat the dark, jealous urges within him. But I cannot say it helped.

In that winter the Russian Ballet came to Vienna: Serge Diaghileff presented Nijinsky, in Igor Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*. I sat in the orchestra box at the Opera and all but lost my mind over this new music; I wept and heard and saw nothing but the orchestra. Kokoschka sat by my side, and at the end there were tears in his eyes, too, but he had heard hardly anything. He was crying for joy at the grace and beauty of Nijinsky's movements.

In the following spring we went to Naples together. We stayed at a small *pensione* on a high hill, and from the balcony—for he wanted no one to suspect that he was "only a painter"—Kokoschka painted a thrilling view of the whole dream city of Naples. I sat beside him, as I always did, and we talked of things profoundly experienced or yet to be experienced.

He once wrote to me:

My beloved Almi!

. . . I must have you for my wife soon, or else my great talent will perish miserably. You must revive me at night, like a magic potion; I know it is so. . . .

In the daytime I don't need to take you away from your circles. That's when you're gathering—and this, I know, is as it should be. I can work all day, spending what I have absorbed at night. . . .

Almi, believe me! Don't listen to the reasons and the ways of

ignorant people who cannot know what we are good for and capable of. You are the Woman, and I am the Artist. . . .

If you come, I renounce everything, just so I can work. Tonight, working on the red picture, I have seen how strong you make me and what I'll amount to when this force is constantly active. You revive useless people—and I, the one you are destined for, I should want?

You have time, Almi. Listen to your own voice, you my good spirit!

Your Oskar.

He was obsessed with the idea of marrying me. When he took away my birth and baptismal certificate and I found out by chance that the banns for our wedding had been posted in the Döbling borough hall and the wedding day had been set, I decided to leave town until the day was past. I went to Franzensbad in Bohemia, after promising Kokoschka that I would return and marry him when he had created a masterpiece.

He painted the masterpiece. It was "Tempest" (*Die Windsbraut*, now in the Basel Museum and world famous), showing the two of us together in a storm-tossed boat: I lying calmly, trustfully clinging to him, expecting all help from him who, despotic of face, radiating energy, calms the mountainous waves. . . . Meanwhile, he visited me, unannounced, in Franzensbad. I was out when he arrived at my hotel, and his self-portrait, which he had made me take along for my spiritual and moral protection, was not on the wall of my hotel room, as he had commanded. When I finally came, a storm broke, and he left, unreconciled.

On my return to Vienna I found the walls of his studio painted black. Two lamps, one red and one blue, illuminated the two parts of the room, and the black walls were covered with white crayon sketches. He himself was in so strange and dangerous a state of mind that—paraphrasing Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*—I insisted that we should see each other only once every three days. It was in self-protection that I gradually relaxed our bonds, at least the bonds of habit.

In August, we went to Tre Croci in the Dolomites. There was transfiguration in the summer sunshine on the glaciers, and deliverance for me; I could not get over the feeling that such grace

was undeserved. We lived for his work alone. In the mornings we went far into the woods, looking for the greenest spots, and in a clearing we found young horses at play. The sight enchanted O.K. We had his sketchbook and crayons along, and, despite his panicky fear of solitude, he stayed alone, to turn out drawings of incomparable beauty. The colts ate out of his hands and out of his pockets; they tried to show him their love by rubbing their beautiful heads on his shoulders and arms.

In the spring of 1914 my country house on Semmering was ready.

"Build me a house around a big fireplace," I had instructed the architect. He took me literally, broke massive blocks of granite out of our mountains, and shaped them into an oversized fireplace wall covering the full length of the living room. Oskar Kokoschka painted a mural above the mantel; it showed me pointing heavenward, in spectral brightness, and him standing in hell, engulfed by serpents of death. The whole was based on the idea of making the flames seem to continue above the fireplace.

My little Gucki watched him as he worked. "Can't you paint anything else but Mummy?" she asked.

He only looked at the child, who never took her great eyes off him when he painted, who had her own chair in his studio so as to see each of his pictures grow. "That child hasn't got any face," he said to me. "She's got nothing but expression. . . ."

No clouds marred the beauty of our days. Work was going on in every room; curtains were sewn on the machine and hung before the windows; my mother cooked in the kitchen. In the evenings we sat around the fireplace, read aloud, or made music. It was a happy, positive, forward-looking time that was cut short by the news of the assassination of the crown prince and his wife, followed by the Austrian threats against Serbia and finally by the all-destroying fact of war—a war imposed on the entire world.

Oskar Kokoschka soon went into the army. Everything was at an end.



Oskar Kokoschka had fulfilled my life and destroyed it at the same time. Where had I gone astray? I did not know. What

should I have done about all of this man's "tomorrows," about all his "maybes," at a time when I would have liked to be cared for in my great weariness?

"I must learn," I wrote in my diary, "to get along without this 'world.' . . ."

I wanted to go to India. Months before, I had written to Annie Besant in Benares, asking her to accept me as a student of Sanskrit. Her reply—delayed because she was in London at the time—had been surprised and surprising: she looked forward to meeting me; she was very proud to accept me; she asked to be informed of the date of my arrival in Benares, to which she would certainly have returned by then. I still have her letter. I have held it sacred. But I was not to go her way.

My preparations had been made in secret. The route was set; I was all ready to run off with my daughter, Anna—in secret because my so-called "family" on both sides would never have given its consent. Then the war interfered.

I wrote in my diary:

Roundabout me is night, but I feel happy. I know that whatever happens is good, that a great, all-disposing will is everywhere.

Today I was with little Anna in St. Stephen's. There was infinity—the lights all burning—heavenly music above. . . . I cried with emotion and blissful understanding.

I have no more need of India or of Hindu mysticism.

I see the yearning, the maniacal faith of the fakirs a thousand times more beautifully in the eye of each soldier who kneels, believing, on the stone floor. . . .

With a woman friend I went to the house of Karl Reininghaus, an art collector. Diffidently, I entered the crowded *salon*, but when I saw Gustav Klimt and an archaeologist friend of ours I felt safe. In the midst of bedlam I talked with those two until 3:00 A.M. I was almost happy that night, after my years of isolation by Kokoschka.

We talked about Mahler. "His every word," said the archaeologist, "was deeply human—never merely intelligent. But don't forget how much you helped him! With you he was brighter, somehow."

I trembled with the joy of hearing at last, from an outsider, what I had always felt. I had made him brighter—so my life with him had been a mission accomplished, after all! With Kokoschka I had been less successful. He always kept the upper hand, blamed me for it, and did not get ahead.

I wrote in my diary:

The subconscious is the link between all matter; it is the immortality of the daemons.

Consciousness is critique, life, movement, the outside world.

Our word for failure of the subconscious is dis-appointment. Such a failure can so enrage us that we start wishing the opposite—perverting the original wish. And such a perverted wish quite often leads to the original goal, having been strong enough to work even through the perversion.

I know today that I married Gustav Mahler because my subconscious had been dreaming him up for years. Consciousness swept me along through life, but the subconscious was faithful to the idea and irresistibly drew him to me. . . .

Hans Pfitzner wrote to announce that he was coming to Vienna. It made me think back a dozen years, to the dark alcove in Krefeld where I had been hiding, hearing an unknown plead in vain with Mahler to produce his *Rose vom Liebesgarten*. (Subsequently, I had achieved its production by the simple expedient of keeping the piano score always open on my music rack. My piano was, and is, never closed; so Mahler, sitting down there from force of habit, had involuntarily begun to play an opera he could not help falling in love with.)

Now Pfitzner wrote asking me to “be kind” to him in Vienna, so he could “do a good job” on his new opera. I was laid up with tonsillitis and fever and could not go to the station, but I sent some young musicians to meet the train. Pfitzner, furious, ignored them. He wanted to move to my house at once. I had reserved a room at the Grand Hotel for him, knowing that he would be well taken care of; but he was afraid of the waiters, of the noisy lobby—in short, the following morning he appeared at my door, unasked, with all his luggage, and I had to get out of bed to minister to his needs. I felt ill and shaky, but my entire household had to revolve around him.

He immediately played the new opera for me—the first draft of *Palestrina*, from little notebooks—and I forgot all about his egocentricity. He insisted that I play four-handed with him, sight-reading his illegible score. I was running a temperature, and the penciled notes and notelets flickered before my eyes, but like a stern taskmaster he ignored my inability to decipher most of his notations. Eventually, in the middle of the most strenuous sight-reading, he shouted, “And you can’t even play triplets!” Then he had to laugh himself.

In the evening we sat on the sofa, and he held my feet in his lap, stroking them. Above the sofa hung my portrait by Kokoschka. I waited until, at long last, he noticed it. His eyes strayed upward and quite literally stuck there. “What’s that?”

“A portrait.”

Already enraged: “Who’s it supposed to be?”

“I . . . Aren’t the colors beautiful?” I tried to divert him.

“That assassin! Such meaningless colors—such heartlessness . . . Where is your face?”

This was the first evening. On the next, his head came to rest on my bosom. I stroked his hair. What else should I have done? He wanted to be kissed, and in the end I took pity on the poor bundle of nerves and kissed him on the forehead, loftily outlining a path of pure emotion.

“Yes—and what do we do now?” this polished poet and musician said. “Am I supposed to make love to you now, or not?”

To me, at that moment, he was only funny. There you have the great artists, I thought. Dilettanti of life, each one of them. Everything flows into their work. Life won’t give them the right echo because they’re calling wrong. . . .

Aghast at the effect of his words, he called me “artful” and disingenuous, claimed I was toying with him, and so forth. He remained pale and upset, slept badly—as he reproachfully told me in the morning—and was anxious and intimidated throughout the day. In the evening we sat once more on the same sofa, this time in a cozily cool tête-à-tête, without embraces or seething passions, until the calm farewell.

Another outstanding German musician visiting Vienna at that time was the choir conductor Siegfried Ochs. I have never

heard Bach performed as perfectly as under him—one cantata program in particular was unforgettable—but his quivering passion for me disturbed my friends. He brought me magnificent presents: his retouched B minor Mass by Bach, an autograph of Goethe's. Once, tottering down the stairs after a horrible outburst of agony, he begged, "Look on the piano"—and there I found Dürer's "Christ," a beautiful copy that I had long wished to have.

He always wanted to see my house on Semmering, and I could not explain to him that in a day this was impossible. At last, trying to take me by surprise, he came early one morning to pick me up, with a small suitcase and some unspeakably comical mountaineering equipment. God knows where he had bought it all so quickly! Anyway, he was wearing yellow boots, Tyrolean knee pants, embroidered leggings that he seemed to have vainly attempted to stuff, and a brand-new green Alpine hat on his long, gray hair. He looked like a hapless old backwoods tragedian substituting for the indisposed romantic lead.

At his request we drove by his hotel, where he had a huge trunk brought out of the lobby. The porter grinned, so did the doorman; they all promptly became my fellow conspirators against the ridiculously vain old man.

"South Railway Station," he commanded the chauffeur.

"To the Prater!" I corrected, laughing into Ochs's startled face. "You didn't seriously think I would go up to Semmering with you?"

I had a hard time calming him down. But I spent the day alone with him in the Prater, giving him, if not an equivalent, at least a small compensation for the trip that had fallen through.

I wrote in my diary:

I am full of fear in the world. No man's hand in mine. I know nothing any more and am wasting away disconsolately. I long to offer my life, but my offering hand trembles with fear. So everybody goes his lonely way. . . .

Today I had an independent, happy evening full of music. Why do I need male tormentors?

For a long time, though, I will be sick of the artistic Bohemia. I'd

like to caution my soul: "Hide your emotional silver spoons—the artists are coming!"

Berta Zuckerkandl, in whose house I had met Mahler and who was now a newspaperwoman of international prominence and political influence, told me about the Werkbund Exposition of modern arts that was held in Cologne in that year of 1914. "There is a young architect in particular," she said, "who has had an enormous success, a certain Walter Gropius."

Walter Gropius . . . My brief, earnest friendship of Tobelbad had been lost in the gray fog of time; but I had made no mistake about his talent. I sat down and wrote him a letter of congratulations. "I am seldom alone," I wrote, "too much among people. I long for a will that would wisely guide me away from what I've acquired, back to what is inborn. I know I could get there by myself, too, but I would so much like to thank someone for it!"

I looked forward to his reply. Instead, I received the information that Lieutenant Gropius of such-and-such regiment was somewhere in a German field hospital, recovering from the shock of having been buried alive under rubble and corpses for hours.

Kokoschka, too, had been in the army since the beginning of the war, subjected to hateful drill, and suffering greatly. I felt terribly sorry for him, for he did not belong in the army, and its stupid officers had no right to make him a laughingstock. He wrote me often, not knowing how far I had conjured myself away from him. It was all over—something I had thought would last. He was lost to me; I could no longer find him in myself; he had turned into an unwanted stranger. He had isolated me so thoroughly that now I came to have the true, evil feeling of how little one is really needed in the world.

I knew he would go on living—better than with me, probably. We had rubbed each other the wrong way, had exhausted one another; now he could live calmly, undisturbed. Nobody would irritate him any longer.

"I want to forget him," I wrote in my diary. "We did not foster each other."

But all around me were his works and they reminded me of

him, every day, every hour. Before putting on the uniform, he had given me a farewell present of unimaginable beauty: seven fans. In glowing colors, with a delicacy of which the art experts would not have thought him capable, he had painted our love story on seven bits of folded paper. I kept them in the country, in the house on Semmering where we had spent our last happy days together, among his murals and crayon drawings. One morning I went to his studio in the city, and on the floor, trampled and torn, I found a sketch for a crematory that had been ordered from him. He had made me a gift of that, too. I took it along, had it ironed out and framed, and later sent it back to Kokoschka. As I walked out of the studio my heart felt heavy, as if burdened by a great wrong.

I wrote in my diary:

Three nights . . .

I once spent a night on an island under a blue, foreign sky. The window was open, souls spoke, bodies yearned—but then the bray of an ass rang out, so ridiculously common that the night became trivial. By my side was a brain on two legs, with the red heart missing and a gold watch ticking in its place. And that I saw only now. . . .

I once spent a night in the mountains, where everything was gruesome. It was an icy, milk-white night. Mists hovered outside the open balcony door; a candle burned on a chair. A child slept in the room. By my side was a youth who had not yet found himself. . . . The candle flickered as the mists caught the flame. But that night was joyless.

I once spent a night in a valley that was disturbed by the light of dawn and the sweet song of nightingales. But by my side was a beautiful young man—and in this night two souls found each other and forgot their bodies.

The year 1915 had begun when an answer came from Walter Gropius. He was in Berlin, on convalescent leave, and we decided upon a reunion. "I sense," I wrote in my diary, "that he means or will mean something in my life!"

In February, I traveled to Berlin to see him. In his early thirties he was still the perfect Walther von Stolzing, one of the most civilized men I knew, besides being one of the handsomest. I stayed for two weeks. Days were spent in tearful questions,

nights in tearful answers. He could not get over my relation with Oskar Kokoschka. . . . At last he fell in love with me again—at Borchardt's Restaurant, with wine and the atmosphere to stimulate the emotions, and the farewell mood doing its share, for in an hour he had to catch a train to Hannover, to see his mother. I went to the station with him, and there, overwhelmed by his ardor, Gropius simply pulled me up into the moving train. Willy-nilly, I had to go along to Hannover, without a chance to get back to Berlin until the next day. But I had to admit that I did not dislike it at all.

Back home, in Vienna, I found a letter from Kokoschka.

Dear Almi:

Today your memory is very much alive again. . . . The world grows kindlier since I have rid my heart of my own silly fears, working and sulking and laboriously enduring for a long time. Again and again the glimmer of hope—and then you suddenly were sure that it was all over!

I could not stay.

You did not know how I cried.

I could no longer stand the city where I had lived with you, and now I have renounced every claim to your heart without having to put out of my mind what God gave me. . . .

Every morning is a resurrection for me, in a country where my heart is glad to take communion. When I am on night duty in the barracks yard it may be the fierce, rosy little reflection of the rising sun that has this effect, because it stays in the direction of your house until the day is clear. . . .

I love you and keep you—what do you know who you are, and where? We do not carry our limits within ourselves.

Your Oskar.

I wrote in my diary:

Many things happen about me, often directly in response to my will; yet they never happen to me or for me, always only brushing the surface—and fatiguing. I wish I could escape from myself! I love a host of somber thoughts. . . .

Yesterday I went to church. It calmed me down a little.

May 18—the day of Gustav Mahler's death, and also the birthday of Walter Gropius. Are these things coincidences?

I feel quite uprooted. . . . I no longer comprehend anything. I lie in bed, weeping, and my child Anna is beside herself, not knowing what to think.

This little young person is a blessing to me. I should cling to her alone. But I know too well that such a young human being does not need one.

Who holds my life in his hands? I do not know. Walter Gropius, perhaps? If it were he, I would not be feeling so sad now. I would rejoice—but I cannot. . . .

Late one evening I became so disturbed that a woman friend who happened to be at my house telephoned Professor Julius Wagner-Jauregg, the great psychiatrist. He came at once and stayed all night at my bedside, talking to me.

“So you have claustrophobia? Don’t ever try to force yourself. Always take someone along, if it’s only a dog. I know all about your way of life, storming through thick and thin with the greatest of men. . . . I might tell you: ‘Take it easy; mix your company a little; rest your brain—it needs it.’ But I know very well, if you call me again at ninety, you will have lived in the meantime exactly as you’re living now. You can live no other way. . . .”

In the morning he got a good breakfast, took his leave, and said that he had never spent so stimulating a night.

On August 18, 1915, I married Walter Gropius.

“Nothing shall deflect me from my course,” I wrote in my diary. “My will is clear: I want nothing but to make this man happy. May God preserve my love. . . .”

Before my husband returned to the front I accompanied him to a military-equipment store. It was a hot, dusty day, and I waited while he carefully chose the leather for his riding boots. In contrast to my own way of buying quickly, unthinkingly, and not always wisely, Gropius took his time. The strong odor of Russia leather numbed my senses. I fled into the open, to the cab we had waiting outside.

Then it happened that I saw a book peddler’s cart, bought a magazine, and opened it to the poem “Man Aware” by Franz Werfel.



My marriage to Walter Gropius was the oddest I could imagine. So unmarried—so free—and yet so bound! No man attracted me. I almost came to prefer the company of women; at least they were not so aggressive. But at long last I would have liked to make port. . . .

For the time being our marriage was kept secret. At the year's end, however, my husband came home on furlough, and early in 1916 the secret had to be lifted. I was with child.

I thought, thought and learned, more and more about the mysteries of life and the world. All things seemed to have the same meaning: love. I pondered my strange state of pregnancy and longed for the delivery that promised a new revelation. It was bound to bring a new moment of enormous magnitude into my life, and the pains that women feel must disappear beside it. It could not be otherwise. "God," I wrote in my diary, "can only have conceived all things for joy."

On October 5, 1916, I gave birth to a sweet girl. The pains were cruel—but once she was there, I was glad. She was christened Manon. I fell in love with this creature.

Was I the woman who had taken wing with Gustav Mahler, or had I turned into another? Everything puzzled me now. I nursed my baby and did not understand any more the voluptuousness that life had taught me. . . . Walter Gropius was at the front.

We had been married for more than a year without having each other, and there were times when I feared that we might become strangers to each other.

Gropius, an immensely generous person, had the urgent desire to make me a large present after the birth of our child. He wrote from the front to Karl Reininghaus, who now and then would sell one of the paintings from his large collection, and asked to be allowed to buy one that I loved: "Midnight Sun" by Eduard Munch. On the day his request reached Vienna, two servants brought me the picture and a touching letter from Reininghaus. The picture, he wrote, had been mine for years—he just had not found the right occasion to send it. Now I kept looking at it day in, day out, submerging myself in its oil-calm and yet so restless sea; no picture ever affected me as deeply as this, for which I had paid with a smile.

But when Gropius came to Vienna for the first time after our daughter's birth, I stood in front of the swaddling table on which the baby was lying and refused to let him approach her. He had come from the French theater of war, traveling all night in a locomotive to squeeze a few hours in Vienna out of two days' leave, and had hurried home directly from the station. When I saw him, grimy, unshaven, his uniform and face blackened with railroad soot, I felt as though I were seeing a murderer. Only after long pleading did I allow him to glance at his child from a distance.

He told me later that I had been like a tigress, frightening in the defense of my maternal responsibilities. But the truth lay deeper. I was still unaware of it and had been acting instinctively, but there was more to it than notions of hygiene: I would not let him share possession of the child because my fears had come true—because my feelings for him had given way to a tired twilight relationship. I, for one, could not sustain a marriage at long distance.

"Soon," I wrote in my diary, "I'm going to be fed up with this provisional life. O.K. has become an alien shadow to me; I am no longer interested in his existence. And yet, I loved him once!"

Gropius, who had been so deeply appreciative of Kokoschka's

art before, suffered torments of distrust after we were married. Once, in a fit of rage, he broke one of O.K.'s most beautiful fans and hurled it into the fireplace. It was the last fan that Kokoschka had given me, inscribed "In thy midst a star is shining," and I was particularly fond of it. For a long time I could not forgive this act of jealousy.

I had wanted to know what it means to have a child from a beautiful, beloved man. I had my wish now. My curiosity was at an end.

Sometimes I thought everything was at an end. It was only when I looked at my little Manon that I knew I was still necessary. She was a fairy-tale being; nobody could see her without loving her. I would have liked to spend my days kissing her little hands and feet—for I hardly dared to kiss her little mouth. . . . My older daughter, Anna, did not seem to need me any more. She had wisdom.

One night she was in bed with me. "It's odd," she said, "how differently you and I see nature—you on a much larger scale, and I more in detail. We feel music differently, too. You remember what you have heard, I what I have seen. That's why Bach is easier for me to play by heart than Wagner. Bach or Reger—not the kind of art that appeals to you, who play Wagner and Schumann so well."

This went on ad infinitum.

"It's why I prefer blue, and you red. It's why I love Lao-tse, and you—?"

And she was thirteen years old!

In her childhood Anna was well-balanced but very taciturn. She could sit for hours in a treetop, motionless, or watch calmly, wordlessly, as Oskar Kokoschka painted. Every once in a while, though, she could get to chattering and telling everything, whether it fitted or not. She had great musical talent, never played the piano too well, but started early to experiment with piano arrangements, which she made not pianistically but very musically. As a child, too, she used to tackle the most difficult reading matter, and I could not tell whether she really digested the Bhagavad-Gita, which she devoured with such greed.

She loved Walter Gropius. She had loved Kokoschka, too—

her feelings, at that age, always reflected mine—but with Gropius she was really infatuated. What seemed to attract her in particular was his mustache; when he shaved that off he was suddenly much less beautiful in Gucki's eyes, and her romantic interest diminished. And yet, Anna and I never knew the kind of jealousy that often sours mother-and-daughter relationships. We would always be friends. And I loved her so much, even though in many ways she was already far away from me and apt to grow farther and farther.

As 1917 began, I was not well at all. My heart threatened to give out. I felt no regrets at the prospect of leaving this world that had given me so much true, genuine life. For what would come now? At best, an hourly repetition of all that had gone before. Should I become a housewife with all of the tricks and quirks of one—I, who dreaded possessions because they possess us?

I became afraid of people again. It was a fear I had conquered after it had repeatedly tortured my days and nights; now I started sending callers away again and bemoaning my loneliness at the same time. The temporary cure effected by Walter Gropius was offset by our constant separation. I could not really see myself living with him any more. "What I would need," I wrote in my diary, "is a great foreign joy."

Then I would look at my two girls and tell myself that they were now my happiness, that there was little chance of any other for me in times to come. No one, I felt, had the right to stay alive as an emotional parasite on mankind. I could see justification only for the existence of an externalizing human being, not of a weary, tired one that was no longer searching. "A creature like myself," I wrote, "should be ashamed and decent enough to disappear. But—it goes on vegetating. . . ."

A new member had joined my circle in that year: the writer Franz Blei. All of us liked him at first; when Gropius came on furlough again, he, also, fell in love with Blei's *esprit*. (*Blei* is the German word for lead, so we called this fascination *Bleivergiftung*—lead poisoning.)

A tall, white candle burning with a wasted light—that was Franz

Blei. Everything about him was bright, and yet so dark; there was not one pure sound in his throat. He knew much, but he would argue more. Finally he annoyed everyone. Tongue-tied Gustav Klimt, in particular, was jealous of Blei's superior knowledge, and we conspired to bring up a subject of which we thought he was going to be ignorant. We agreed on botany. But lo! Blei opened the pigeonholes in his brain and buried us under an avalanche of learned words and concepts of which *we* were ignorant.

It was always the same. He dominated every conversation, but in the end his monotonous brilliance grew tiring. He sensed that he was in danger of boring us. In summer, he came up to Semmering, but in the midst of nature he was even more out of place—as much as his unfeelingly rattled-off protestations of love. Unsure of his ground, he had a bright idea: “Franz Werfel is coming back from the front; may I bring him to you?”

And like an answer I heard my own music—my music for the poem that had struck me long ago, in a sun-drenched street of Berlin.

Nothing is mine to own;
I possess alone
This awareness . . .

That, of course, might be something to look forward to.

One afternoon in October I went to see Helene von Nostiz, the Saxonian ambassador's wife, who had just lost her lovely little boy. A doctor had prescribed a phenol enema for him and misjudged the dose, with the result that the child burned up internally in a few hours. I stood a long time outside the gate, wondering what to say to the poor mother, but when I finally went in she came toward me, black-clad, patrician, simple, and strangely untouched, and the words came by themselves.

Coming home, still wrought up by the talk with Helene von Nostiz, I found Blei and a colleague he had brought along, a stocky man with sensuous lips and large, beautiful blue eyes under a Goethean forehead. So this was Franz Werfel. . . .

My love for his poems made him feel at home instantly. Blei left soon; he was eclipsed, and he could never stand that very

well. He seemed threadbare next to Werfel, who kept growing in stature as he showed more of himself. His excessive humanitarianism, including such phrases as "How can I be happy while a single creature on earth suffers?"—phrases I had heard in the same words from Gustav Mahler, an egomaniac par excellence—became understandable later that evening, when Werfel confessed his sins to me, his desire for "good living," and so forth. "After all," I told him then, "we do not constantly think of our own death, either."

He read Arnold Schönberg's *Jacob's Ladder* aloud, very dramatically. "Now," he said after the first words, "I know the entire conflict of this man. He is a Jew—the Jew who suffers from himself."

He was eminently musical. He loved Mahler's music and said he had wanted to make my acquaintance for that reason. He had a beautiful speaking voice and a fascinating gift of oratory. He was the most extraordinary reciter, lecturer, and storyteller on any subject, light or serious, and the store of charming anecdotes that he remembered or simply made up as he went along seemed inexhaustible. As by magic, his triumphant temperament animated and replenished his words. He never failed to cast a spell over his audience.

Werfel was twenty-six at the time and had been in uniform almost throughout the war. After recruit training he was sent to the Italian front, and immediately got into trouble because he joined his regiment by traveling alone. (He had missed the train.) Later, as the Austrians advanced into Italy, the regiment was stationed for a while in Gemona, a small town not far westward from Caporetto, and there began Franz Werfel's lifelong love affair with the Italian people. He was billeted with an old peasant couple who would recite whole cantos of Dante's and Torquato Tasso's poetry for him, by heart. Wherever he went, he found himself warmly received. It was a quality of his radiant nature to generate warmth—except in his military superiors.

As a recruit, awaiting his first furlough, he once stood by a roadside stand that sold pastries to the soldiers. He bought a few, in order to smoke less. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a colonel ride past, but thought he had not been noticed. The

colonel reined in his horse and demanded to know Werfel's name and unit, and when Werfel, confused and embarrassed, gave the correct answers, the colonel barked an order canceling his furlough of that year for insubordination. Poor Werfel, who had been counting the hours to the happy day, fell out of the clouds.

On another day, sitting among the soldiers, he was summoned to the officers' mess. "I say, Private Werfel," the colonel addressed him, "I hear you get invitations to give poetry recitals in Berlin. Why don't you recite us something?"

"I—I know nothing by heart," Werfel stammered.

"Now, look," said the colonel, "if you can recite in Berlin, you can recite here. Just some little piece. Anything at all."

Werfel thought frantically. "I remember only one poem," he said at last; "that's 'The Cranes of Ibycus' by Friedrich von Schiller." And with soul-stirring pathos he launched into the time-worn ballad, the horror of generations of high-school boys.

Just then the door swung open to admit an officer, who had to be saluted. Werfel snapped to attention and stood with his hands at the seams of his trousers until the officer motioned to stand at ease; then he continued. After two lines another officer appeared, then a third, then several more. Each time Werfel jerked briskly toward the door, saluted, faced back to the colonel, and went on declaiming Schiller. Nobody would catch him failing to salute again!

Before Gemonia he was stationed in Bozen. There, on a free day, he rode up a mountain in a cable car, jumped out before the car came to a full stop, and hurt both of his feet. In the left one the main bone was crushed. He was taken to a hospital, lay flat on his back for weeks—and then, with his foot only half healed, was court-martialed for self-mutilation! (The foot injury kept bothering him until his death.)

Later he was sent to the Russian front as an artillery sergeant and telegraph operator. As he could muster no hostile feelings, however, he would let the enemy patrols sneak through the Austrian lines while he calmly conceived and wrote down a new poem.

The end of Werfel's military career had a mystical touch to

it. He sat in the communications dugout with his earphones on, jotting down Morse signals, when he suddenly thought he was dreaming. The message he had just taken down was this: "Sergeant Franz Werfel will return immediately from the front and report to the Army Press Section in Vienna for a special assignment."

His first thought was: "No one is going to believe this. . . ." At last, pulling himself together, he took the message to the command post. To his surprise, he was told to get ready to leave. He hurried to his quarters, gave away all that he had—books, underwear, a fur coat, even the gold pieces his mother had sewn into the fur coat—and ran all the way to the rail depot, to reach Vienna as quickly as possible.

Nobody knew who had sent the telegram, until it turned out that Count Harry Kessler, a great German aristocrat and patron of arts and letters, had wanted to save Werfel. His intervention seemed providential—for on the day after Werfel's departure the Russians scored a direct hit on his post, destroying all the installations, notably the field telegraph that he had been running for weeks.

In Vienna, at last, Werfel took off the uniform. He became a civilian again, lived at a hotel, spent some time at the Army Press Section—"the office," as he called it—but more in cafés frequented by young literati such as Franz Blei. And Blei brought him to me.

In December, Gropius came to Vienna on another furlough. Still jealous of Kokoschka, he kept demanding that I give away the portrait O.K. had painted of me, all of his drawings, and his fans—of which, unfortunately, only six remained. A new museum, devoted exclusively to modern art, had just been founded in Germany by Karl Osthaus, a rich industrialist of Hagen in Westphalia; he had sometimes been my guest when he visited Vienna to buy paintings and sculptures, and since his foundation stood in the foreground of discussion at the time, I thought of it in connection with my husband's wishes. Yielding with a heavy heart, I presented the new, modern Folkwang Museum with my

portrait and the drawings I had from Kokoschka. The fans I kept. The love they depicted was dead, yet I could not bear to part with them.

Many wonderful things happened in those days. There was a night, a night of beauty and bliss, with Werfel, Blei, and Gropius. We rejoiced in music: *Meistersinger*, *Louise*, and others. Werfel recited some of his poems, "The Enemy" and others. He sang and I played—and we grew unaware of the world.

We were so deeply united in this, our very own element, that we forgot all things around us and, in a manner of speaking, committed spiritual adultery before my husband's eyes.

At 2:00 A.M. Blei and Werfel wanted to leave, but there was a blizzard raging outside, in which one could not walk and would never have found a taxi; so I asked the two poets to stay overnight and hastily fixed up two rug-covered couches for them. "It will seem strange," Werfel said, "to wake up in this room full of books, music and pictures—and the room will make a face when *it* wakes up and sees *me!*"

Gropius stayed for Christmas. After the holiday, Willem Mengelberg brought the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra to Vienna for a concert series starting with a masterly performance of Mahler's *Song of the Earth*. Early on the morning of the concert, Gropius left to rejoin his regiment, and we said good-bye on the staircase outside my apartment. He was late, and as he rushed downstairs I strove to put on my brightest smile to help him over the sad departure. Then I went back to bed, to rest for the matinee concert.

All of a sudden the bell rang violently, and Walter Gropius burst in. He had missed his train.

Coming back is always a mistake.

Later, as I sat with Anna in a horse-drawn cab that slowly plowed through the deep snow, Gropius walked beside us for a long time, pleading with me to take him along to the concert. But I had no ticket for him, and my heart was hardened by my new love, of which I was still unaware. Besides, my knowledge of the gulf between our approaches—the difference in hearing and understanding music, for instance—paralyzed me.

To avoid discussions, I asked my mother and stepfather to join us for dinner. It was a very depressing meal, but of all those present only Gropius and I grasped the full measure of its hopeless tragedy. At the end he sobbed that he had neither the desire nor the strength to fight against my past.

In the evening, when he left, I had regained sufficient self-control to make the farewell bearable. From the border he sent me a telegram: "Splinter the ice in your features"—a quotation from a poem by Franz Werfel!

"My mind is full of Franz Werfel," I wrote in my diary. "The music I make with him has become the air I breathe. . . ."

On New Year's Eve my daughter Anna and I were with Mengelberg at his hotel, the Bristol. (It was Werfel's hotel, too.) The entertainment was innocuous and stupid; the Dutchmen swapped costumes, and Mengelberg, like a child, topped everyone in merriment and naïveté. And at midnight it was strange to see all the other guests shift from pique to mounting enthusiasm when one of the singers got up to intone the Dutch national anthem.

On New Year's Day, after a concert featuring Mahler's Fourth Symphony and *Ein Heldenleben* by Richard Strauss, I gave a party. After a small supper for Mengelberg seventy guests came in his honor, including every artist of rank, plus worthless moneyed people—in short, whoever had a superficial link with music. It was a successful evening, though it had been difficult to manage in my little apartment. Mengelberg went home at 4:00 A.M. My own glad moments came when I could talk unnoticed with Werfel.

On January 5, I was at another Mengelberg concert. My eyes did not leave Werfel's. In the intermission he came to my box; we went home together, and our eloquent silence carried us to the brink.

I wrote in my diary:

It had to happen. It was inevitable that he would take my hand and kiss it, that our lips would find each other and he would stammer words without rhyme or reason. . . . Where will this godlike ex-

perience lead me? I love my life. I can repent nothing. These few days, made so full by Gustav Mahler's music and Mengelberg, were a song of love—love!

I am out of my mind. And so is Werfel.

If I were twenty years younger, I would leave everything and follow him. As it is, I must watch mournfully as this darling of the gods continues on his way. . . .

It was neither easy nor pleasant for me to visit Werfel at the Hotel Bristol. Yet he asked me to come, and finally I went, for a definite reason. The war had made him quite unable to concentrate, and for weeks the galleys of his *Day of Judgment* lay scattered about his room, torn and dirty, because he could not bring himself to do serious proofreading.

So I came, and now he *had* to work, like it or not. He had to check line after line, with me by his side, as I pushed him back into the working habits the war had destroyed in him. Those were unforgettable hours, mingled with tenderness and yet profoundly serious—until mid-January, when he was ordered to Switzerland on what the officials called “a lecture tour in the framework of Austrian propaganda,” and I was alone once again.

In February 1918, Gustav Klimt died, taking along a large piece of my youth. How ardently I had once loved him! And I had never stopped loving him, though in a different fashion. Oskar Kokoschka was by far the stronger, and his talent won Klimt's profound respect, but Klimt was a painter of infinite delicacy, a man with a fine, if uneducated, mind, a product of the poorest of backgrounds, who always carried Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Goethe's *Faust* in his pocket. When I saw him lying quietly in state without a stir in and about him, I could not believe that he was dead.

I was alone again, several months pregnant, and not quite sure whether this was the result of a moribund feeling or the fruit of my new love. . . . Gropius was at the front. It was a German front, too far away for him to come to Vienna on short leaves; now and then he could manage a day in Berlin, and I would pack up our little Manon and meet him there. It was at the start of one

such arduous journey with the child that I heard a call, a distinct call to me as I boarded the train in Vienna: "Get your picture back! Get your picture back!"

I instantly saw my Kokoschka portrait before me—the one I had given to the Folkwang Museum—and as soon as I was settled in the compartment I took out pencil and paper and drew up a letter to Karl Osthaus, asking him to return the picture as quickly as possible, since I could not live without it. I hardly noticed the innumerable frontier chicaneries that time, and when I got to Berlin I instantly mailed this humiliating letter—humiliating because it is not customary to take back a present.

Osthaus answered from Switzerland. He wrote that he understood me perfectly, that the picture was on its way to me, and that the rest of my donation, twenty-four drawings by Kokoschka, was still the largest the museum had ever received. He added that he was on the way to Davos; he had not been feeling well lately.

The picture arrived only a few days before the papers carried the news of Osthaus's death. His whole collection was auctioned off and scattered to the four winds. I should never have seen my picture again without that mysterious "call"—it seemed like a miracle. Perhaps it was one.

The month of May brought Werfel back from Switzerland. He had been there, as my old friend Berta Zuckerkandl put it, as "a sample of Austrian quality: 'Look and see the kind of poets we have!'" As such he was brilliantly successful, and yet the official sponsors of his "lecture tour" scarcely thought they got their money's worth. Berta Zuckerkandl's Swiss diary contains a vivid description of what happened:

Zurich, May 8, 1918.

Our intellectual Austrian colony here is in a quiver on Werfel's account. Speculation is rife whether he has been hanged or beheaded on his return to Vienna. What I've been told, to be sure, is fantastic! In Zurich Werfel gave only one lecture, before young workers. He tried—probably in vain—to state his pacifist faith in a not too tempestuous form; at any rate, after this debut the relations between him and the Vienna authorities were broken off.

He subsequently spoke in Berne, and in Davos. In Berne he committed a *faux pas* that has tongues wagging still. His recital, consisting of his own poems only, was attended by the full Austro-Hungarian legation headed by the Minister himself, and by the German legation; but Werfel had unthinkingly included a poem lampooning diplomats in the program. The atmosphere in the hall is said to have been strained. But the climax of Werfel's adventure came in Davos. There, before a large audience, he spoke on the Austrian problem. A reporter took the speech down in shorthand, and it was published in a French-Swiss paper, whereupon Franz Werfel was denounced from Switzerland to the Austrian Army Press Section. He had, it is true, said only what many of the best minds had long pondered as the right policy (since best minds are never allowed to do more than ponder!)—still, it remained an oddly somnambular excursion on the part of a poet who never realized the danger of such talk while still under the jurisdiction of the Army Press Section. . . .

As a poet, Franz Werfel aroused enthusiasm in Switzerland. In the juvenile ecstasy of his idealism he may indeed—paralleling Don Quixote's eternal claim to fame—have made the very best Austrian propaganda. . . .

In any event, he was neither hanged nor beheaded upon his return, and the only unpleasant souvenir of the trip was a case of barber's itch which he brought home from Switzerland. He ignored it until the eruption spread all over the lower part of his face—and that, of course, doomed me; I acquired it, too, in the most legal and direct manner. Carl Moll, tactless as ever, noticed it on the evening of my biggest party of the season: "How is it that you have the same rash on the face as Werfel?" he suddenly asked.

It was a cruel discovery, after the pains I had taken to veneer myself with powder and cream.

About the same time Franz Blei came to see me one day and began a horrible lament about my life that was being "made a mess of" by Werfel. My reputation was jeopardized, he said; I would never make a "decent" person of Werfel; Werfel was using me only to "climb," and so forth.

I had already heard this nonsense, for Blei had discussed his "rescue operation" at length with the male and female prostitutes

he met at the cafés. Franz Schreker, who had heard the gossip, hastened to warn me against Blei.

One afternoon Blei was announced just as Werfel happened to be with me. I asked Werfel to wait in the music room next door, where he could hear what his friend had to say about him. Blei promptly started his harangue, and I let him go on for a while. Then I opened the door: "By the way, you can tell all that to Werfel directly—"

Blei paled. And the friendship of the two grew perceptibly cooler.



The summer of 1918 was the most fateful season of my life. It not only brought me to the edge of the grave; it also joined me inseparably and forever to the man who was to be my lover and companion until death parted us many years later. Therefore, I want those days to be described here by Werfel's pen, which has since brought joy to millions all over the world. I interrupt my story to let the diary of Franz Werfel tell about us.

DIARY

begun on the most important day of my life,

July 28, 1918

(the four times seventh day of the seventh month)

Diary! My effort to combat the lies that pursue me, my struggle against corruption even though new instances should arise beyond those I know of!

July 29, 1918

Day before yesterday I went to Semmering to visit Alma. Planned to stay the weekend, until late Monday; was happy and excited the two days before my departure. Bought presents

that looked pretty shabby when I brought them. In my case performance makes most things small, defective and a little messy; the conceptual energies are fine, the working energies drained off by devils of distraction.

I was looking forward, too, to Alma's love. Now I recall a remark that Blei dropped a few nights ago (when he was on duty and I stayed up with him on Bolzmannstrasse): with a pregnant woman, he said, only a knave would ignore the dictate of conscience that pleasure cannot be an end in itself. Was that an unconscious dig at me? If it was not, not even unconsciously, it was surely a portent for me. I felt it at once and instantly vowed to keep Blei's words in mind and curb myself, for Alma's sake above all.

Looking closely, I find every minute of my life full of mysterious signs that I don't face. I am too indolent, too scared, too shallow; for it takes courage—a courage undreamed of by our educational, informational, organizational blockheads—to see ourselves and our destinies in the great web of interrelations in time, to see the omen of each moment, forewarning, telling the future to every last fool. Astrology! One should encourage belief in this sheet lightning that illuminates our moral consciousness. It is a good superstition; it enhances our sense of free will to listen to our inner voice. For the sole aim of a free life is to excavate this inner voice, to break down the upholstered doors that muffle it in us. Fundamentally, I am convinced, there is no doubt that the apple which our archforebears ate from the tree of knowledge remains undigested—that if we just dare to see, and want to hear, we know exactly at each moment of our lives what is good or evil, right or wrong, or by whatever terms we may describe the alternative of wholesome or unwholesome.

I arrived at Breitenstein on Semmering Saturday noon and was welcomed with joy, drawn in by the good, warmth-giving hand that opened the door. There was company, due to stay a week: Frau R. and her eighteen-year-old daughter. My presence created space problems, but Alma and Gucki (who is getting more and more wonderful!) were happy to have me—if only to enliven the atmosphere, slightly depressed by Frau R.

I got the room next to Alma's bedroom and was thrilled by

this happy turn. While I unpacked we were alone for half an hour, both looking forward gladly to the night.

Blei's words and my good, considerate intentions were forgotten. Alma, seven months pregnant, had been overtaxing herself all day, besides playing almost the whole second part of Mahler's Eighth Symphony on the harmonium with Gucki.

At bedtime it took nearly two hours to get Frau R. out of Alma's room. Stirred by the music, she could not stop philosophizing. (On the next day, working and helping, she was in her place and made a better impression, despite some permanent "inability to rise above sea level.") Finally, after many half hours of waiting for everyone to fall asleep, Alma and I were alone.

She is the only person of genius I know here.

I think I love her more and more, as far as I can love—more, in some ways, than I know I can love.

Previously I had always only imagined women, months before. My enthusiasm created them; in reality they did not mean much to me.

Alma is real to me. In the first days after we kept looking at each other at the concert (Mengelberg and Schreker), she left me no time for imaginings.

After the concert she invited me to come with her. We declared ourselves, but although everything happened soon, my feelings for her did not ripen for some time. When I left for Switzerland (on January 18) and while I was there, I loved her with nostalgia—a feeling of which my love for her is never free.

This is not the time to discuss these developments. Today she is more real to me than a mere human being!

I had forgotten the sign and failed to control myself.

There is something suicidal in her climactic surrender. I know that now—having always been too irresponsible to admit it. This self-destructive urge at the climax is the living image of her Wagnerianism, justified by an erotic-musical nature that seems to me more encompassing, more *breathing*, more productive than the musical nature of the composers I have seen around her. Schönberg's, for instance. (Narrow-chested energy with fearful side glances!)

We made love.

I did not spare her.

At dawn I went back to my room.

The evil day—July 28! I slept when it broke, was awakened, did not understand at first what was said through the door: I should run quickly for the doctor from the village (an hour's walk)—Madame was unwell, and in her condition . . . I'll never forget the anxiety in the maid's voice.

Though only half awake, I realized my guilt. I struggled madly to dress. In the hall I met Frau R., who said the doctor would have to come at once: Frau Alma had suffered a terribly severe hemorrhage. I raced out through the garden, took the wrong turn, tried a shortcut, got deeper and deeper into fields of tall grass. Rain fell, had been falling all night. My shoes were soon waterlogged, my clothes as heavy as those of a drowned man, for I plunged into underbrush in my frenzy to reach the road.

I prayed and screamed in despair. I came out on the road, did not recognize it, ran in a direction that could not be wrong. I made two vows:

(1) to remain faithful to Alma always—never again to take the easy, ignoble way to sexual satisfaction—not to let my eyes rest on sexually exciting objects in the street; and

(2) not to smoke, if only God would let everything end well. This second vow was somewhat vaguely conceived; deep down in my heart I did not consider the possibility of giving up tobacco altogether.

Behind time, and hating myself for my clumsiness in practical things at such a moment, I finally hit the right road. Soaked and breathless, I came to the sanitarium where the doctor lived. It was 5:30 A.M. I roused the doctor myself; he got dressed; we started. He apologized for walking slowly at first—he had tuberculosis. At the same time he kept chatting nonsense about literature. I had to make sympathetic faces while my head was numb with fear and worry.

On the way we met Gucki (she is called Annie now, but to me she is still Gucki). She was coming from home, going to the village to phone for a specialist from Vienna. I let the doctor

continue alone and joined Gucki. I felt a close kinship with her. . . . She, whose attachment to her mother is almost antique in its deification and subservience, was the calmer of the two of us. Perhaps she cannot yet grasp it all deeply enough, at fifteen. Or did she hide her disquiet with a self-control nobler than mine? Not too much lamentation speaks well for a person.

After some difficulty we got a call through to the city.

We walked back.

My own fears and pangs of conscience had to be vented in continuous hopes and exclamations. Gucki hardly mentioned the subject; she was racking her brains "how we could cheer Mummy up." I made a few jocular suggestions, *e.g.*, stealing a cow from the meadow, or the tame deer that had entranced us the afternoon before. Whatever I casually mentioned had already been thought through by Gucki's active, planning love. Finding nothing at all, we picked some ugly flowers. But when we entered the garden, Gucki broke a beautiful rose for Mummy; later, she also gave her Richard Dehmel's collected works from her own library.

When she appeared at the top of the stairs and told me that Mummy was better, it did not occur to me that my vow—which took increasing energy to keep as far as smoking was concerned—might have helped. Thank God! If this, too, were only an omen, and everything stayed well and as before!

I felt my difficult, superfluous role in this house. I was a disturbing element now that there was a sick woman—sick because of me! Because of me!

I said I would leave at noon. It was the obvious thing.

Shortly before noon Alma asked to see me, pretending to want to hear my new poems before my departure.

Frau R. took me into the room. Alma lay in bed, very pale. I could not control myself, and in my nervousness I made false moves, though almost tearfully conscious of her great beauty. She spoke in a low voice, and in everything she said there was a glorious enthusiasm such as only great souls can have in suffering. She is a powerful creature, despite the hysterical obfuscations she mentions at times.

The doctor had ordered complete, protracted rest for her. She was in pain.

"If I can just keep the child," she said. In their deepest sense these words concerned me.

I said it was all over and all right now, and in my egotistical levity I tried to believe what I was saying.

She herself was doubtful. Her every word made her seem better, rounder. She is a complete human being; if I think of her, I really should throw out the whole "Day of Judgment" along with Laurentin's philosophy. She is unsqueamish perfection, but I am too untruthful in my work to delete things that life has corrected.

I spoke of bearing the guilt of this misfortune.

She said, "I'm just as guilty. Anyway, what is guilt, guilt! I don't know that word."

She held my hand. Her hands have the most womanly, the most felicitating warmth I know.

"When you leave now," she told me in the few minutes we had to ourselves, "we must consider that we may not see each other again. It might be for the best; then you would become a great writer."

She keeps playing with that idea: that suffering, this suffering, might give me the "experience saturation" (her word) that I lack for greatness.

She gets her insight from a sibylline core, by leaps of instinctive association that are pure genius. She is one of the very few magical women there are. She lives in a light (blond) magic that contains much will to destroy, much urge to subjugate, but it is all cloudy and moist—while the poetess Else Lasker-Schüler, another strong personality, practices a *black* magic that is incredibly helpful, comforting, brotherly and loving, but arid and lackluster for all its romantic enthusiasm.

Time and again, Alma's instinctive insight is concerned with me.

She conducts my defense as well as my prosecution.

For many hours I have been praying to God that nothing may happen to her. At her bedside we said little more. She asked me

to write often—and I hereby pledge myself to do so daily, regardless of any inner weakening.

I said good-by to her. It was hard for me to leave. My consciousness was and is shaken by guilt feelings. Tonight, going home, I said to myself, "It's just like hitting a pregnant woman in the belly." Yet all this time I allow myself to be hoodwinked by her own words about guilt—and indeed, there is guilt also in her recklessness, in her glorious will to self-destruction, for the pattern is always the woman's.

At the end she asked me to leave my trunk with my manuscripts. That helps to calm me now; I am glad I did it.

I walked to the station.

Thus far I had kept my smoking pledge (not to break the other was a matter of course). Now I lighted a cigarette, feeling that my prayer had been answered and my sacrifice accepted, that Alma was better and the sudden, unexpected turn seemed overcome.

The train was one and a half hours late.

I went into a tavern below the station, because it was too cold and wet to wait outside.

I had been sitting for barely fifteen minutes when Gucki came in, all out of breath, with a letter. I was to take it to her grandfather as soon as I got to Vienna. Mummy was worse, she said; she herself wasn't allowed to go in but could hear the moaning from the next room; it was terrible. Frau R. had written the letter to Gucki's grandfather because she could no longer be responsible for what was happening; and she, Gucki herself, had quickly run all the way with the idea that she might possibly catch me. First of all, though, she had to get the doctor for Mummy.

I had a cigarette in my hand and immediately threw it away. I felt that the beloved woman I had injured had been well as long as I refrained from smoking, and had taken a turn for the worse the instant I broke my vow. This realization was dictated by my innermost voice, the only one I know to be free from Satanic temptations.

Since throwing away that cigarette I have not lighted another.

It is hard on me. But it is the beginning of what I want to call "work on myself"—an atonement which also includes the resolution constantly to account to myself in a diary, and to learn how to emerge from all the mendacities, tensions, and superficialities which only put one in thrall to material things. An asceticism that is not an end in itself strikes me as madness. God does not want us to make sacrifices for his sake but for our sake, because he loves our freedom above all our qualities. By sacrifice we grow in freedom. And if we sacrifice to make gifts to others, we present them with the increase, with the added independence, of our being.

Say what you will: the connection between my cigarette and the worsening of Alma's condition may be a coincidence—but why does my inner voice say so unequivocally that they are linked?

I accompanied Gucki to the doctor's office and waited until she came out with him. She gave me a kind, affectionate glance tempered by the shadow of her reserve and unsentimentality. I am very happy that she likes me. In this hour my despair and sadness must have told her that I, unbelonging ghost that I am, belong to them.

Before saying good-by, I once more implored Gucki to send me a telegram as soon as possible. It was terrible for me to leave just now, to be unable to hear more; but staying here was impossible, going back to the house even more impossible. I had to leave.

Ahead of my train, an unscheduled military train brought Alma's German husband, Lt. Gropius, with the physician who had been called by telephone. I saw them too late, and they did not seem to see me, either.

Back to Vienna on a platform of the overcrowded train. A howling wind that made my tired head swim; worries, and always the same thoughts—and yet I kept dozing off on my feet, into dreams unaware of this day. After four hours I got to Vienna, completely exhausted. I turned my eyes away from every female, to keep from breaking my vow, and did not smoke.

Immediately on my arrival I took a streetcar to Gucki's grandfather, who lives far out at the end of the line. This errand em-

barrassed me very much, but I undertook it for Alma's sake and as an act of penance. From the closed shutters, and from neighbors, I learned that Herr Moll was out of town.

I returned to the city, intending to go to the Hotel Bristol and phone to Semmering, to the doctor at the sanitarium, so as not to remain in uncertainty. First, however, I decided to have dinner at a café, which delayed my arrival at the hotel until nine o'clock—when I heard there was no phone service to Semmering after eight.

So this dinner had cost me what I wanted above all else: to know! Another hint not to let material things govern.

Yesterday I resolved not to let myself go any more. I expanded my vows of celibacy and nonsmoking to include temperance, not looking in the mirror, and seeing as few friends and acquaintances as possible.

Today I strictly observed these vows; if I went astray, it was done unconsciously, found out promptly, and punished.

A strange thing happened. I passed an automatic scale that returns a card with your weight printed on it if you drop a coin into the slot. I deposited two coins, and both times a blank card fell out. My inner voice understood the hint at once: I had forgotten that weighing yourself is in the same category of vanities as looking in the mirror. It was a clear sign that pointed this out to me now.

In the afternoon I began to write this diary. I wrote for three hours and am writing now for three more hours, at night. I have to forget my literary narrative style and get accustomed to recording only; later, if I add nothing, this will be self-evident.

This notebook will help me, too, to learn to work regularly. Day by day!

All these plans for self-improvement come from a feeling that by penance and self-abnegation I can help her, whom I now know so little of—that I can suddenly, instantly help her.

Tonight I got the doctor in Breitenstein on the phone. He said he had no detailed information; as far as he knew, the specialist had operated.

Does that really mean that she carried her child in vain for seven months? That her fondest hope is lost? I don't know what

that means: "operate"—whether removal is the only possibility it can refer to.

The doctor also told me that she refused to travel to Vienna. (Who, what specialist, could think of such a thing?) That was why this operation had to be performed out there.

In the country, in a lonely house! I am weak now, no longer in the depths of life as yesterday, when I could keep concentrating on the same thought. Nor am I quite sure—or want to be quite sure—what the word "operate" means. "If I can just keep the child," she said yesterday. . . .

No form on earth has more of a goddess than her profile in moments of rapture.

She was white and hardly able to talk for exhaustion when I was in her room—the same room which a few hours earlier had been full of our strength and our life. This was my doing, even if it was not all my fault. I am the brutal cause of this transformation. What if anyone else in the house should suspect?

If "operate" means what I fear it does . . . My one trembling thought is that she may be left to me, that nothing should happen to her!

Tomorrow, in addition to my other renunciations, I will fast—except for an early breakfast and perhaps a late supper.

Perhaps I'll get some word.

July 30, 1918

The word was there last night, while I was writing these pages. The telegram, which I had overlooked, lay in the mailbox at my door; my cleaning woman brought it in this morning. (Had I discovered it yesterday, I would have been unable to write the story in my diary—and for some reason, perhaps, it was meant to be written.)

The telegram read: BEING MOVED TO VIENNA. REGARDS. ALMA. So everything is worse and more serious.

I instantly called the hospital where I suppose she will go. They expect her this afternoon. I sent flowers and wrote on the card that I am praying for her. To let her know I am fasting for her recovery would be vainglorious.

Today I have taken nothing but my breakfast tea and two cups of coffee at noon. It is really a way to freedom.

It is 4 o'clock now; for the next two hours I am going to proofread "Day of Judgment." Then I'll go to the hospital to find out what I can.

I was at the hospital. She hasn't come.

The ambulance had been waiting for her at the station, in vain.

I thought at once of the enormous difficulty of transporting a patient now, in a packed regular train; yet I was also afraid that her nonarrival might be due to a change for the worse. I decided to call the doctor in Breitenstein again, from the hotel.

I could not get the connection. In the evening I was handed another telegram: DOCTOR NURSE HERE AS TRANSPORTATION IMPOSSIBLE. ALMA.

It is wonderfully kind of her, in her condition, to think of letting me know!

I wrote her a letter at once. Reminded her of a poem I wrote for her on the day before the disaster, calling her "the mother of my rebirth." I tried to console her by suggesting that the child had to be lost for my sake, since she has yet to bear me.

And still I don't know what has happened to her in the past sixty hours.

I fasted till 8 P.M. and then had a bite at the café. No smoking! That vow has now been defined as follows: I won't smoke again until her condition is stabilized and recovery in sight. (It is dreadful not to hear a thing! If only Gucki would write!)

I avoid all my acquaintances. Today, by chance, I had to talk briefly to someone or other. I have become quite estranged in these two days.

I try to keep track of all the motivations of my actions, and the self-evaluation I arrive at is rather depressing. Today I also tried to go over my stock of childhood memories. I could not think of many. The experiences I recall must have been on the sleepy side. What I lacked, and am lacking, is real participation in life with others.

There lies the danger of a basically false perspective, of sentimentality.

"Day of Judgment," the third part (Phenomena) especially, strikes me now as utterly barren, threadbare, even unmusical. Nothing holds together. Much of it is forced and journalistic. Windy coquetries! Yet I have to let it go to print, if only on Wolff's account. I am not strong enough now, after two or three years of silence, to suppress this proof of my existence (although, *sub specie saeculi*, the book won't furnish it).

My ear for my own shortcomings has become much more acute—and this book discomfits me in almost every line.

Today, walking along Vienna's Spitalgasse in the Ninth District, I recalled the hospitals I know in Prague, Hamburg, Leipzig, Berlin—the strange feeling they always gave me.

I thought of writing a major, nonsubjective poem; just as I felt two weeks ago that the wildest Sunday evening hour in the Prater—merry-go-rounds, crazy roller coasters, tunnel rides, and the vast crowds, the abandonment of the ego, the self-dissolution that occurs in every individual—might come out in a major poem. It would be very educational for me to get away from the word splitting in "Day of Judgment," from the sterility of this self-confrontation in pathos.

If I only had some good news tomorrow!

July 31, 1918

5 P.M. Orders came today that I have to go to the office in the afternoon, too. But I won't let it get me down.

Today, unfortunately, my material nature is stronger than for two days past. I have not broken my vows; but today the devil of phlegm and compactness thickens my blood now and then. Tomorrow I'll fast again.

My concentrated absorption in Sunday's experience is beginning to wear off—and that must not happen.

I stepped into a church for a moment, to pray for her. Not that I have turned Christian; but the church is the place where many are praying to avert cruel fates. Praying in need! Upon close scrutiny we find an almost administrative significance in institutions we used to regard as atavistic and eccentric. People really pray when they have a reason. The power of prayer! I

think of the Talmud story of the dying Moses whose prayer routed God himself.

It is by fasting, mortification and penance that this power is obtained, the mystics teach us.

The point is not to free ourselves from the body but to animate it, to transform it into a tension-powered arrow on the bow of the spirit. I must strip off the dead body, the meaningless cell. Reduce the carcass! That is really no anti-Hellenic asceticism. Besides, the worth of matter certainly depends on its being more durable, less corruptible, etc. That is the difference between good and bad matter.

Bad matter is full of constant death and decay. It looks well-fed and regenerated because its cells change ceaselessly from death to death.

Good matter is more static. It has a good recollection of itself. It knows better how to heed life. It is more stubborn, slower, and it suffers more, though it complains less.

Now I want to think of Alma!

Called up Dr. T. in Breitenstein. Today—and I had no idea!—Alma was brought to Vienna. They did not have to operate; everything is said to be all right. As I write this, she is lying in a hospital not far from here.

Thank God! Thank God, for this great mercy.

I am calm and happy. I permit myself a little music. Tomorrow morning I'll go to P.-Strasse, to the hospital.

After this good news I went to the Café Herrenhof for dinner. Met some people I know. At first I was quite disaccustomed and frightened. Then I got into a discussion and was glad to note my inability to talk on any base, unserious subjects. Perhaps I am getting ahead.

Wolff offered me a cigar. Since I feel that Alma has weathered the crisis, I smoke again.

However, a thanksgiving fast is set for tomorrow.

August 1

Early this morning I was at the hospital. Sent my letter in to her and waited for a reply. Received a letter that was beautifully

written. I enclose it in this diary. She has no hope for the child. She says, "If I pull through . . ."

I dare not believe that her life might be in danger. That cannot be.

At 3 o'clock I will call.

I called and talked to her. Her voice very faint. Was greatly wrought up before. She said the excitement of waiting made her ill.

She said, "It is so dreadful, what lies ahead of me."

My brow was damp with the effort to find words, to express what is in my soul. I love!

"I can't go on," she suddenly said over the phone. "I must stop now."

I was frightened. Should the strain of talking have harmed her? I hung up. Earlier, when I asked whether she was certain she would keep the child, she said no. There was little hope, she told me; the doctors would come tonight and make the decision.

I walked down the street. Was sexually irritated once or twice, but quickly looked the other way.

On the streetcar a poem began to grow in me. I wanted to conjure—to save her, as I had told her. The poem: "Alma's Blessing."

I thought, too—shameful confession!—of including the poem in "Day of Judgment" under the title: "Blessing for a Woman in Labor." I felt an urge to invoke the secret forces of the universe, to get the angels of these forces to protect the sufferer.

I went to the office, laughed, and was an ordinary person. I am still not mature, still too inclined to lapse into the world of defilement.

When I came home from the office it was 5 o'clock.

Here I found a visitor who bothered me, looking at me with horrified eyes and seeming fearful and guilty. Why?

At 5:30 I became very restless. I felt an obligation to write the Blessing, but no real poetic compulsion.

I talked conventional chitchat. My visitor looked all gray and somewhat harrowed. He left.

I wanted to work. Took off my coat. Felt inwardly dull, very tired at this, usually my freshest, time. I lay down on the sofa

with E. A. Poe's poems, to read. It was unnatural for me to get so tired at this unwonted hour. I had a cigar in my hand (since the seemingly good news yesterday I smoke again). Suddenly I was dozing, dreaming a single, ceaselessly reiterated sentence: She takes him for herself—she takes him for herself. . . . An insult to my sense of style. I had the sensation of having a hair in my mouth (the word "him") and being pleasantly tickled as I pull it out between my lips.

Then I woke up briefly and put out the cigar, lest I drop it in my sleep.

In the next moment I fell into a sleep that was unquestionably hypnotic. I know, because this sleep fell upon me—not metaphorically speaking, but in fact. The very nature of this sleep tells me that it was not in the regular order of things. The dream events cannot be put in sequence and exist only as episodes. In the first of which I am conscious I stood on the bottom step of a flight of stairs leading into a back yard. Suddenly—not dreaming now, but lying awake on the sofa—I felt I was dying. Life was more and more rapidly drained from the back of my head; from a dizzy height of animation I plunged lower and lower without being able to resist or to awaken. But all this time I never lost the sense of lying on my sofa, paralyzed, unconscious, yet awake. As I know now, and can check from memories, this description exactly fits the condition of artificial unconsciousness induced by a general anesthetic. The next few episodes of the dream are no longer in my mind, but I know that my sister Hanna, who had a baby a month ago, played a large part in them. So did a festive gathering in a beer garden.

Despite my leaden coma I heard the clock strike the half-hour. I dreamed I was sitting at a grandly set table, feeling hungry. I heard the word "chocolate soup" and found it quite appetizing, although I am not too fond of chocolate and can't imagine chocolate soup as a delicacy. (On the other hand, I know that Alma is mad about chocolate.) The following dream sequences I can feel but not visualize. A tremendous weight oppressed me, but it was not a nightmare. Unconsciousness, chloroform! From time to time I found myself in my room without shaking off the paralysis. Then, suddenly, I dreamed that a nicely dressed cham-

bermaid was coming hastily into my room, telling me to get up; Herr T. was outside. Stefan T. was a childhood acquaintance of mine who both attracted and repelled me from my eighth to my twelfth year (we used to spend our summers at the same resort). This relationship surely exerted a formative influence on my life, insofar as it is dimmed by neurasthenic touches. The maid called me impatiently. I rose and followed her through a second room. It was no longer my apartment. We had to pass through many rooms, including a lengthy, very comfortable bathroom redolent of warm, sudsy water, a female body and fresh towels. Wonderfully redolent. Suddenly I wore a bathrobe around my shoulders and was very tall. A breeze chilled my body. I was standing in a great hall with huge, pillared doors opening on a moonlit garden. The bathrobe feeling transposed itself into a dramatic rhythm inside me. I was holding a roll or a staff of white plaster against my hip. I was the Commander from "Don Giovanni." My magnificent spectral strides filled me with that sorcerer's delight I know from many dreams—of swimming vertically upward through the air, for instance, with the proper strokes, or having magical command of space in some fashion. I was now the Commander—a stone image—thump, thump—giant steps, lightly clad in a bathrobe, hence the sleeves full of wind and the soul full of power and freedom. I was going to her, to Alma. I knew the way. She must be separated from me by many rooms resembling this domed hall, with huge squares broken through the walls, opening on the garden.

A wave of moonlight engulfed me. I walked, thump, thump. . . . In the garden I saw myself, the marshal's baton on my hip, striding forth in my white cloak, as though the garden were a mirror. . . . I woke up before I got to Alma's room. The clock struck. The room was in twilight. For an instant I had a feeling of "Don't get up; it isn't over yet." Then I was sitting on the edge of the sofa, trying to collect myself.

My numbness was incomparably greater than after normal sleep. It bordered on nausea. I was filled with fear and strangeness. The clock showed nine. I had been asleep for three and a half hours, at a time of day when I had never slept before. My sleep had begun with a distinct back-of-the-head feeling of being

anesthetized, or perhaps hypnotized, and it had been preceded by a strange nervousness during a conversation and a more and more congealing fatigue.—I knew at once that something must have happened; that's also what made me feel as soon as I awoke that my getting up might break a telepathic connection. The room grew steadily darker. With a far-off, groggy feeling I walked out and headed for a telephone.

And now I heard what I already knew, deep down inside. "The lady from 190 (Alma) has been in the Labor Room for quite a while. Professors Halban and Pineles are with her. We can give no information. . . ." So, at the time when she took a turn for the worse—when the doctors decided to operate and had Alma taken to the Labor Room and chloroformed, perhaps—at that time, when her soul needed me, I had lapsed into a telepathic sleep and remained spellbound for three hours. I went down Währinger Strasse to the café, to find a human being, someone who would stay with me tonight—for I could not have borne the solitude of my large apartment after this experience.

I found Otto Pick, who sits in the library reading as I write this. At 10 P.M. I called the hospital once more. "Nothing yet," I was told. "The doctors are still with Madame."

How many hours they have been there! What peril, what great peril of life, that implies! And I sit here writing!

It is half past two at night.

August 2

At 8:40 A.M. I called the hospital and was connected with her husband, Herr Gropius. "It was a bad night," he said in a deep, shaken voice. "The child is alive. Alma is doing well, under the circumstances. We'll have to wait and see for a few days."

God, God, God, Creator of all the stars and of what suffers on the stars—good Father, out of whose agonized heart we come and and who knows us all—I thank you!

At noon, seduced by Otto Pick, I broke my fast. It is a meatless day, though, and I ate nothing that was animal and had come into the world through a mother's pain.

At 2 o'clock I had the hotel operator call the hospital doorman for information. "Doing all right," he said. "It's a boy." A son!

I wrote a poem, "The Birth of the Son." I'll send it to her tomorrow—she may enjoy my excitement about the child.

I remember that at my first visit to her country home we both heard a strange bird ceaselessly clacking or sawing for hours in front of her window. It worried me then, as a bad omen for her, but I did not tell her.

If we want to be superstitious: the premature birth may have averted a doom that hung over the timely one.

She once told me of a prophecy that her mother would die at approximately Alma's present age in giving birth to a boy; and it struck me that Alma seemed to regard herself as the heiress to this curse that had failed to work on her mother. Perhaps the merciful kindness of a guardian angel spotted this hole in the web of predetermination (the inducement of a premature birth) and rescued her thus.

Or is this fairy-tale notion just an attempt to shift my responsibility?

God help us over the days of peril!

August 3

Early today I talked to Herr Gropius on the telephone. She is doing relatively well; but the crisis is not yet past, as the threat of a new hemorrhage continues. They hope to pull the child through. (In writing yesterday's poem I did not think of the danger of nonviability.)

I have scheduled a fast for today. Had only black coffee at noon. Feeling pretty weak. Read yesterday in Bischoff's *Kabbala* that fasting and mortification are the premises of magic prayer.

Fasted until 7 P.M. Called the hospital. Doorman says she is doing well today. If only she were out of danger!

This afternoon I expected Pick, to work on Brezina. Couldn't do it. Read Jacob Boehme and later Lucian, the "Philosopher's Auction." Very funny. Then (9:30) I went to the café. Won't go again, if I can help it! Instantly I was caught up in a deluge of

incomprehensible, poisonous things. (Incomprehension may be my weakness, my vanity, my unsubstantiality!)

With Alma I can live. She is gloriously honest and unsnobbish, knows *my* tragedy, is wonderfully straightforward in her policy of living. May an angel help her!

August 4, 1918

At 9 A.M. a messenger of hers came from the hospital and brought me a letter. It cheered me up, and I allowed myself a lot of music, sang Verdi, and forgot about the danger to the child. Ate lunch!

Then, at the Café Central, I looked for Blei. "Have you heard about Alma?" he promptly called out to me.

I'm sure he knows nothing of our love. I got restless, went to call up. Herr Gropius answered and told me that the child is in poor shape. It has contracted a disease (I couldn't get the name over the phone, asked three times, still didn't get it). Gropius is afraid for Alma, too, because of excitements to come. The condition of the child is very serious and alarming.

This poor, weak little creature, prematurely torn from its warm abode! Will it live? And will survival be good for it? (Debility, disease, seven months—!)

Is it my child?

Her letter says it is. And bearing her out, to my mind, is the fact that it's a boy. I could not imagine my seed producing a girl.

I believe her!

And yet, this certainty of its being my child was an emotional necessity for her, because it reduced the seemingly mounting conflicts.

I pray for whatever she prays for. I feel love for the little one. I have begun to wonder what he'll be like years from now, have pictured myself as his mentor and accepted father.

If he lives, if he grows up healthy and unhandicapped, there will be a great happiness and a new hope in the world, as I sensed it in my poem. If he does not stay among us, she will suffer a vast, inconceivably heavy loss—she, of all women!—but I also feel that a tragedy will leave the world with him, a tragic fate of his and ours.

For the sake of the little child's life I will do penance.
Blei has gone to the hospital. I expect him at six.

Blei did not come.

At night I found a card from Herr Moll under my door: Gucki is down from Breitenstein, and Alma asks me to take her back there tomorrow.

Am on duty at the office.

August 5

I went to see her and saw the child. It is well-developed and has an incredibly finished face; I felt at once and distinctly that it belongs to my race. It was breathing quickly, looking lively even while asleep, and very expressive. . . . The rhythm of its substance seems strongly Semitic.

I lack experience and may be deceived by a typical infant's appearance, but the mother's letter speaks from instinctive knowledge. It contains a passage which I do not understand: "Now I live for nothing else." The resignation in it alarms me.

She herself was beautiful and does not look as worn out as I expected. I have the feeling that she is happy.

At first I hesitated to enter the room.

August 6

Last night I left the café together with Herr Weiss. It was late and he spent the night with me.

I am slowly beginning to realize that the moral suffering of "Day of Judgment" is shared by a whole generation, even though under other signs, names and colors.

It is actually barren suffering. In the last part, therefore, I want to point upward again. The diagnosis of wilderness, vacuity and guilt is as much a state of affectation and evasion as moral hair-splitting and the most refined inner conflict of "If-then." Wherever we are, we can come to life!

A letter from Alma. Thank God, all is well.

I wrote a long letter at the office, at 6 A.M.

She herself writes today about the little one's resemblance, and

that a nasty, ugly music set in as I entered the room, and thunder rolled as I left it.

All that sounds as from "Inferno" or "To Damascus."

August 7

Tonight I wrote a poem. "Not We." Still under the impression of my son.

Writing poetry has more and more pitfalls for me. The battle against egotism improves us neither ethically nor aesthetically. Perhaps there can be no true productivity without intense interests and strong possibilities of misjudging ourselves.

August 26

Yesterday Walter Gropius found out everything.

When Alma phoned me in the morning, he heard us calling each other by our first names. He came in and heard her say, "Franz." Then he asked—she remained silent—and he knew.

In the afternoon he came to see me, but I was asleep and did not hear him knock. He left a card for me. It says:

"I am here to love you with all the strength at my command. Spare Alma! The worst might happen. The excitement, the milk—if our (!) child should die!"

The very nobility of this card unnerved me. I felt faint, strengthless, although I had always expected this to happen. Only for her I felt fear and anxiety—and sorrow for him, this true gentleman! All day, all night I was beset by doubts whether my love was great enough, whether it had the right to inflict so much pain.

Against these vexations I have no other argument than the good will to do right.

I wrote him at once and sent the letter to the hospital. In the evening I called and talked to her. She is crushed, mainly because the child suffers from it.

My sister Mizzi arrived. I spent the evening with her at the Café Herrenhof. Was tired and all wrapped up in my experience.

At night I worked.

This morning I called.

She says, "The child is tired, as after a long, long walk."



Franz Werfel was the only son of a family of wealthy Prague industrialists. His father was a glove manufacturer. When I met him, Werfel had a strong family phobia; in his first play he described his father as a cold, miserly man, and his mother, who was never close to him, he characterized as extravagant and superficial. His true filial sentiments were reserved for an old Czech cook who cared for him until he left home. Her name was Babi; he wrote many poems about her and finally glorified her in his novel *The Pure in Heart*.

After Franz finished school, his father got him a job with an export firm in Hamburg. He was to learn about business, for the time when he would take over the glove factory in Prague. Before his departure he had to complete his "masterwork," a hand-sewn glove—but this, as he told the story, was largely the work of a foreman who did it when no one was looking.

In Hamburg he was soon so sick of it all that he would sit for hours just watching the hands of the clock move toward the position that meant delivery. The work on bills of lading was sheer torture to him, and one day he threw the entire pile of shipping documents into the toilet, flushed them down the drain, and enjoyed the idea that all the ships would now have to stop at sea. The ships did not stop, of course—but Franz was fired from the hated export firm as soon as his employers learned of his mal-

feasance. He fled to Leipzig, where Kurt Wolff promptly hired him to read for his publishing house. The delight of Werfel's father can be imagined.

Then the war broke out. Werfel went into the army, and the manifold chicaneries of his superiors rid him of all bourgeois inhibitions, which in his case may never have been very strong anyway. He came out of the war a revolutionary, and he had not long to wait for a chance to show it.

I had been too preoccupied with myself in that summer of 1918 to notice what was going on in the world. We spent the summer on Semmering without funds, almost without food, eking out a scanty existence. Having moved into my house only about the time the war broke out, I was not so well known to the peasants that they would have shared with us; we lived on old seedling potatoes, polenta, ersatz meat made of powdered birch bark, mushrooms which my daughter Anna brought daily from the woods—everything fried in ersatz margarine. But Werfel and I continued to live our dream.

The similarity between us was incredible. He found a word for it: "panerotic." It was true. I did not need the consummation at all; I felt its ecstasy in everything. "How shall I get away from this man?" I wrote in my diary. "He does not hound me like others; he is restlessly calm like the sea, as unpredictable, as vacillating, as universally dirigible as myself."

I loved him more than my life. And I proved it, unfortunately. In those days his noble face was compassionate but not sorrowful, knowing that we two would never leave each other. "Things will take their historic course," he used to say on such occasions.

Things took their course: my hemorrhage; our farewell when my draconic house guest sent him packing; the futile wires that went to all Viennese physicians we could think of, and the unspeakably stupid man who came at last and wanted to perform one of the most complex obstetric operations on me, by candlelight. (I looked at his butcher's hands and forbade him even to touch me.) Walter Gropius came and directed the awful preparations for my transport to Vienna. I had to be carried with my head down, and when I lay on the cart at last, as on a bier, my

English nurse brought me my little Manon to say good-by. An icy wind blew down the mountainsides, and I was going to say, "Put something warm on her," but I let it go. For who would tell her tomorrow, and the day after, and maybe all the days after?

Then came the trip by rail, in an army car that usually carried corpses, with Gropius refusing to budge from my side and his well-intentioned presence making me feel so much worse. After the artificial birth came the baby's illness: from the third day on he had convulsions. I nursed him as best I could, but he was too weak to drink, and an incubator in the midst of war was out of the question. And the gray Sunday when Gropius—who had deserved a better fate—learned the truth and crumpled as though struck by lightning; and the agonizing weeks that followed . . . Things took their historic course.

On November 4 I got a letter from Gropius, asking me to give him his child, Manon, and to go on living with Werfel and Werfel's child.

I was so upset I cried all day until Gropius and Werfel came. Then I told them my decision: to give up both of them, to keep my children and go my way to the end, alone. Gropius fell on his knees to beg my pardon; Werfel said a few thoughtful, unpretentious words that calmed us all. But in me there was deep loneliness.

I wrote in my diary:

A year ago a sensation freely suspended in space, and today I am holding my child in my arms. "And the word became flesh."

Any touch, be it ever so trivial, ought to bring a child into the world. . . .

On November 12 I sat with some people in my red music room when the so-called "revolution" broke out. It was both ludicrous and gruesome. We had seen the proletarians march to the parliament building: ugly types, red flags, nasty weather, rain, slush—everything gray in gray. Then shots rang out, and now the once dull, orderly procession came streaming back as a noisy, undignified tide.

I had to go out that evening, but the streets were full of hoodlums, youngsters with fiercely twisted faces. We fetched my pistols, and I went, leaving a friend to watch the baby.

On the thirteenth Werfel came to me in his old uniform—horrible to look at—and asked for my blessing. I did not quite understand his purpose, but I felt, “False Revolution!” My heart was against it. But he kept pleading, refusing to go away until I took his head in my hands and kissed him. Then he ran off.

I waited anxiously. When he came back at last, late at night, I had a worse shock. His eyes were red and bloodshot, his face bloated and filthy, his hands, his uniform—there was a blight on everything, and he reeked of tobacco and cheap liquor.

Revolted, I sent him away. “If you had done something beautiful,” I said, “you would be beautiful now.” I locked my door. He had to go and spend the night with some friend of his, for no hotel would have accepted him in his condition.

The literati had been founding the “Red Guard”!

I thought of an evening at Blei’s, before I knew Werfel, when plans had been laid for a magazine to promote “the reconstruction of the Catholic Church in league with Communism.” The staging had been mystical, with three candles burning in beer bottles on a table full of paper-wrapped foodstuffs—for it was a “picnic” and you ate with your fingers. Blei’s mistress, decked in diamonds and furs, held the center of the world-improving conversation. Doubtful of this party, I had my cab wait outside, causing the lady to remark that she could never be so cruel as to let the poor cabbie cool his heels in the snow. I had left after an hour.

Now, a year later, the same characters screamed, “Revolution,” in the cafés. I remember one in particular, a doddering, toothless, retired professor who kept wheezing, “I must see blood flow—”

But the monarchy fell without bloodshed. By chance, I happened to see the last trooping of the colors in the Hofburg; there were tears in the eyes of everyone there, and in mine. An imperial aide-de-camp, the poet Albert von Trentini, told me how the situation was communicated to the emperor at the summer palace of Schönbrunn: “Herr Hapsburg,” said the Socialist chief,

Karl Renner, "the taxi is waiting. . . ." And I heard of Werfel delivering wild, socialistic speeches in the city streets and climbing on benches along the Ring-Strasse to shout, "Storm the banks!" and other inane revolutionary slogans.

His so-called "friends," the café talkers who pushed the naïve Werfel into this adventure for sensation's sake, had nothing to lose! In the end, nothing happened to him, either, but he had been in considerable danger. The police knew of his ranting and looked for him all over town. For days he could not go near his apartment. What saved him was the help of Walter Gropius: hearing Franz Blei gleefully predict that this time Werfel would "catch it," Gropius made the round of all places where Werfel might be, to warn him to stay out of sight.

On November 21 Berta Zuckerkandl wrote in the *Neues Wiener Journal* about "the Werfel case."

For weeks, Franz Werfel the revolutionary has been discussed with a more passionate interest than people ever took in Franz Werfel the poet. The questionings and scribblings have not ceased since he was reported to have joined the "Red Guard." I admire Werfel as a poet, love him as a person, and have the strongest reservations about him as an "activist thinker"—because his thinking wells up from the elemental font of emotion. There is a utopian in him, who will always outstrip the cosmic idea in poetry but will always founder in action.

This is why "the case" did not interest me much until things took a sad turn. Today—when even diametrically opposed intellectuals ought to be protected and united—the hue and cry is raised against Franz Werfel as a moral personality. . . . The politician Werfel may justly come under attack; whoever plunges into chaos nowadays cannot afford to be squeamish. But Werfel's human value must be upheld, for he is one of the morally untainted.

Three days later, on November 24, she wrote another article.

The old Austria did not bother much about her poets and thinkers; yet even under Franz Josef, who was always easily irritated by such things, nothing happened to Franz Werfel. Today, however, the purest voice of this land, our greatest poet, is constantly summoned to the police. They accuse him of being a communist. Is it prohibited to have opinions? Formerly that used to be up to the individual. . . .

On the same day, Gropius took me to Werfel, who was back in his apartment. (I had not seen it before, and I suspect that Gropius wanted to give me a good look at it.) He lived in a furnished atrocity unequalled in my experience. A huge, square couch, devised by Franz Blei's mistress for her festivities with Blei and his friends, was where Werfel rested after meals, and it would not have surprised me if he had asked me to sit on it. I was petrified. The room reeked of vices. Poor, innocent books—Swedenborg, Kierkegaard, old Fathers of the Church—had to submit to the touch of depraved fingers. In these rooms the *Summa* was founded, a high-brow magazine that did not last long; otherwise orgies were held on the premises, which Werfel had to make available.

A weird storm sang up there. Everything was wild and angry about the violated laws of the spirit. There was a poor iron bedstead on which he slept; it mollified me but could not remove my misgivings. I did not feel as though I had entered a room destined for the creation of immortal works.

Gropius called for me, and the three of us went down the stairs together—wordlessly, each somewhat disappointed. In the street we said good-by, and we drove off to the right, Werfel to the left.

"Is this how it will be?" I wrote in my diary. "I'm sure I could never live with a loose individual. The more I love him, the less I could live with him." (It took me years to find out that Werfel was only thoughtless, not immoral or loose, in all the externals of life—that he quite simply failed to see his environment.)

Three weeks later I wrote:

A glorious night! Werfel was with me. We clung to each other and felt the deepest oneness of our loving bodies and souls. He is the resolving chord of my life. . . . Beside me, he told me his idea for a play: "Mirrorman." I like it enormously and will not rest until he finishes it. I will invite him into my house at Breitenstein, make everything warm and cozy for him, and hope for an outpouring of productivity from him in so much peace and quiet. Never before has he been alone with nature and himself!

He did write the first act of *Mirrorman* up there, in a week. Then, lured away by his longing for people—and for me, perhaps

—he suddenly arrived in Vienna (which is why the play's second act is not so much of one piece as the first).

Walter Gropius, meanwhile, had gone to Germany to build us a new life.

A strange thing had happened the first time Werfel came to see me in the hospital. I was waiting feverishly. He knocked, opened the door—and at the same time the terribly mournful music of some funeral procession rang out before my window. Both of us stood transfixed, not daring to approach the cradle in which Werfel's son lay with clenched little fists. At last, deeply perturbed by the ghostlike brasses, we sneaked over, and Werfel said, "A most familiar face—!"

He had recognized his own. To complete the Strindberg setting, a black thunderstorm suddenly rose and silenced the music.

("But perhaps," Franz Werfel wrote twenty-seven years later, "I did not have enough moral courage to conjure up that moment—when I entered the hospital room of the beloved woman who was another man's wife, and the doomed child, my child, was lying in its little bassinet, and a distant, funereal music fell as from nowhere through the open window, like a shadow without substance. . . ." He wrote this passage for his last novel, *Star of the Unborn*. It did not fit in, however, and he instructed me to cut it in his manuscript. I now include it in mine.)

On a Tuesday, January 28, 1919, my poor boy underwent his first cephalic puncture. My sole support was Werfel; his composure and full realization of my suffering gave me strength to bear it. "I love him devotedly and critically," I wrote. "If only the child can be saved! Then all will be well."

On Saturday, February 1, a performance of Mahler's Second Symphony touched me as never before. Shaken to the depths of my heart, I came home determined to do away with myself. God had to help me, I thought. It would solve everything, leave Anna free and at ease, Manon comforting Gropius, Werfel unburdened. If I could just find the courage to end my life and that of the infant who was my one worry, my great, if hopeless, bliss! Several times that night I had my avid fingers on the edge of the window. I plainly saw Gustav Mahler beckon to me. . . .

I could not do it.

A few days later Johannes Itten, the painter, came and told me that he had been sitting alone Sunday night, and suddenly a deep sadness had come over him; he tried to reason it out and could think only of some great harm that would befall me. It was the night I had not wanted to live!

Itten was a rare human being. "One does not feel he is a painter; I'm sure he's more of a philosopher than anything else," my daughter Anna said after meeting him for the first time. He had a finely modeled face, an eloquent, somewhat Egyptian mouth, and a hard history: as a boy, herding cattle in the Swiss Alps, he had been beaten with logs of firewood whenever his presence annoyed his stepfather. Eventually he ran away, and strangers helped him to study.

There was an oddly fraternal and unerotic bond between him and myself. Itten sensed the gravity of my conflict; he knew me without knowing anything about me. "Your extraordinary life," he said before he left me that day, "calls for an extraordinary ending. Not suicide, though!"

By mid-February I knew that there was no hope for my son. It was the curse of our recklessness that this little child had to perish. On the twentieth I had to leave him at the hospital. The night before had been so frightful that in the morning the decision was inevitable. Now his life lingered, but my hope was dead.

Previously, I had him christened Martin. To what end? I wondered. Yet the baptism touched me strangely, as if now nothing could happen to him any more. These strong, eternal symbols! "Take this white garment and bring it unstained before the Judgment Seat. . . ."

Somewhere lies an unknowing child and stares out of unseeing eyes. And I go on living and begin to forget. . . .

I loved Franz Werfel, though the powers of light and darkness were ranged against us. Our punishment was hard—and deserved.

March 17 was an evening of pure music once again, the first time since the birth of my child that I had company. Werfel, Blei, Johannes Itten, and another painter were there. I played a great deal: Wagner, and more Wagner.

Werfel stayed after the rest; he was still there when Berta Zuckerkandl dropped in late at night. Despite her presence he continually held my hands and kissed them, and such a current of warmth flowed between us that all mankind could have been watching and we would not have noticed. Frau Zuckerkandl was touched by Werfel's love. He begged her to help us into Switzerland, out of this mousetrap—her sister's marriage to the brother of Georges Clémenceau gave her considerable influence abroad. (She used it for us, but we did not get a chance to travel for a long time.)

A week later I invited Werfel, Blei, and a Baron Dirzstay, who also wrote. Werfel read Goethe poems very impressively and discussed them with inspiration and such intensity that tears of enthusiasm welled up in his eyes. Then he and Blei went home and left me Baron Dirzstay.

He had come at the request—at the bidding, rather—of Oskar Kokoschka, to tell me that Kokoschka loved me as much as ever and longed to resume human relations with me, no matter of what sort. In the baron's view I owed this much to Germany's greatest painter. O.K., he said, was now living with a woman but being faithful to me. He could paint no one but me. Each time he started on the other's picture it would turn into mine.

I told Dirzstay how hard it had been for me to make the break, that I had accomplished it only to save myself. During the war, O.K. had been seriously wounded in the head, at the Russian front, and sent to Vienna for treatment. On the day the hospital train was due, the architect Adolf Loos telephoned to ask me to accompany him to the station and welcome O.K. I said I was no longer interested in O.K.

"For heaven's sake," Loos stuttered, "why don't you give the poor fellow the pleasure?"

I hung up. I was far removed from Oskar Kokoschka and, above all, irritated by the intermediary. Later, Loos accosted me at a concert. He said I must return to Kokoschka because he was unable to work without me. This disturbed me until Loos went on: "He's tried it with models and with society ladies, but he just can't. It's your duty to go back to live with him!"

I was so angry I dropped Loos a line that very night. Just one

line: "I beg *my* pardon for shaking your hand." And within twenty-four hours O.K. heard of my letter (which Loos bragged about in the cafés) and traded Loos one of his own pictures for it.

Kokoschka's head wound healed, but the aftereffects left him unfit for military duty. In 1917, he went to Germany, settled at an artists' colony near Dresden, and after the revolution was appointed a professor at the Dresden Academy of Art. In 1918, he sent me a new play of his: *Orpheus*—still dealing only with our experience. It was bizarre but important. A man had been humanized by those years.

Soon after, I started hearing rumors of his crowning eccentricity. He had a life-sized doll made: a female figure with long, blond hair, and painted—so I was told—completely in my image. The doll always lay on the sofa, and his visitors thought they were seeing me there in the flesh. For days on end O.K. would lock himself in and talk to no one but the doll. At last, he had me where he wanted me: helpless in his hand, a docile, mechanical tool.

"You're his ideal," Baron Dirzstay insisted to me. "The thought of you brings out all that is good and noble in him. When your name is mentioned he becomes a different person."

I was glad to hear that my time with him had not been wasted.

"What may I write him from you?" Dirzstay asked.

"That I've landed on another shore," I answered.

He asked to be shown a picture of Walter Gropius. "This," he said, having seen it, "is the second death blow to the poor unfortunate in Dresden. The first was Werfel's presence. When I heard of that I started worrying for O.K.—for ethically Werfel is his superior."

Actually, of course, it was all very different.

Franz Werfel was growing jealous, ranting, manifesting a Bohemianism I had not noticed in him before. A man of his sensitivity turned suddenly into a beast of prey that held me in its clutches—and this I could not stand! Was it not just what I resented in marriage?

We were talking, walking along the Volksgarten, completely

happy in that lovely, springlike spot, when it struck me what peril this sense-intoxicated young man brought into my life. I could not tame him; I would not, should not, tame him. But why should my entire future be a fearful trembling over his fidelity? Everything glittered around him, everywhere he sought—and found. He was so easily tempted. He wanted to marry me; but then what? He insisted that I make the break on my next trip to Berlin, thereafter to mend and beautify his life alone. And I wondered whether I would not be better off in America, in some quiet corner of this mad, blessed world—letting these young ones go their straight and crooked ways, sympathetically watching them run amuck from afar, instead of being trampled.

I loved—but “nonobjectively.” Even now, with my senses enthralled by the sunniest of men, my love reached out beyond him, for all greatness and creativity in all men. And besides, my most dangerous and indispensable lover still was music.

I felt like going to Berlin, asking my husband on bended knee for Manon, bidding him farewell, and looking for the nearest transatlantic port. There I would embark on a round-the-world steamer, turning my back on the coming cultural decline—cruising for years, now and then going ashore in distant, silent spots of the globe, resting a while, going on—and so, perhaps, living a rich, happy life, devoted to art and yet close to earth, while stupid, sterile humanity got into each other’s matted hair.

And I went to Berlin. . . .

Twice a year I had agreed to take Manon to Gropius. The war was over, but the railways remained in chaos, and the emergence of the new Czech state astride the Vienna-Berlin route added to the annoyances and delays, the vicissitudes and discomforts of the journey. It was quite a strain for me, carrying the child all the way.

While I was in Berlin, on the first of these marital visits, my infant son died in his Viennese hospital. This poor, tortured little flame was snuffed out. “If only I had died instead,” said Walter Gropius as he brought me the news.

He was touchingly kind to me, as always, but he could give me no help. Through no fault of his, I was lost to him forever—

and this despite my own feeling that no one nobler, more generous had ever come into my life.

In June, I accompanied him from Berlin to Weimar, the small town that had seen Goethe and Schiller write immortal works of German literature and was now seeing politicians write a constitution. Weimar in those days was both a political and a cultural magnet, the obvious location for Gropius's grandiose plan for a new form of art education. During the war, the art-conscious Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach had asked him to head both the Grand Ducal Academy of Fine Arts and the Grand Ducal Crafts School; now, after the revolution, Gropius had signed with a somewhat paradoxical partner—"the Court Chamberlain's Office, acting with the consent of the Provisional Republican Government of Saxe-Weimar"—and unified the two schools under the name "Bauhaus."

"Synthesis of technology and art" and "cultural co-ordination of art and economics" were the ideas of the Bauhaus. In each subject, students were instructed by two teachers, one an artist, the other a master craftsman. Another principle, from the beginning, was internationality. Two of the first three artists brought into the faculty were Lyonel Feininger, an American, and my Swiss friend Johannes Itten; next came Wassily Kandinsky, a Russian, László Moholy-Nagy, a Hungarian, and Paul Klee, another Swiss. Walter Gropius guided the whole in a spirit of clarity and deep humanity.

There was a new artistic courage abroad in those days, a soaring, passionate faith. I noticed it even in Gropius, whose own work was alien to me, whose charts and graphs and calculations left me baffled. To me, the month I spent in Berlin and Weimar was a race through the new art. I saw beautiful earlier pictures by Marc Chagall and the very latest by Paul Klee and Franz Marc. Klee gave me two pen drawings as a present, and I bought a lovely bronze statuette by Aleksandr Archipenko.

In Weimar, while the German National Assembly argued whether or not to ratify the peace treaty, Gropius and I had frightful arguments and scenes over Manon. I wanted to leave

him at any cost but giving up Manon. One day I fainted, and he was unable to revive me. An old doctor was called; he lived in the same house and had already heard plenty of gossip about us. "Do you want to kill her?" he asked Gropius earnestly. "She can't stand much more."

The doctor left. Gropius sent a telegram to Werfel in Vienna, asking him to meet me in Dresden. Emma Mahler Rosé, my dear friend and former sister-in-law, took the child and me to Dresden. I was half dead when Werfel arrived from Vienna and took me off her hands.

Werfel's first act was to get a nurse for the child. Her name was Ida Gebauer; we called her "Sister Ida." Manon started watching her warily out of the corner of her eyes, but they were friends before the evening was over. We took Sister Ida right along to Berlin; she understood us immediately, lived with us as though she had always done so, and became our most loyal friend, one who stayed with us for many years.

Now that I was in Berlin and far from him, Walter Gropius suddenly became the gentleman I always knew he was. He not only agreed to the divorce, but he did everything necessary to co-operate in obtaining it.

Why had this marriage with Gropius not worked out? He was strikingly handsome, a highly gifted artist, a man of my kind, of my blood—we even had some common relatives in Hamburg. I had liked him so well, had fallen in love with him, had loved him dearly. Was it Lady Music, not his element, who drove us apart? Or was it my indifference to his mission, my lack of interest in his architectural and human goals?

But what homogeneity means—this I would see in my child from Walter Gropius. The miracle of sameness—which I would shun otherwise—was born in her. She was the most beautiful human being in every sense. She combined all our good qualities. I have never known such a divine capacity for love, such creative power to express and to live it.

"Mummy, you bother the grass," she told me one day when I crossed the lawn in a long, trailing skirt.

And she was my child, and I knew all hiding places of her soul.



Another summer on Semmering—a summer of complete harmony and peace. Not for one day was the life with Werfel tiring or “too little.” He worked on a novel, “The Black Mass,” in which he tried to depict his boon companions of the revolutionary days in Vienna. He felt somehow betrayed by them now, or at least neglected; he was no longer so fond of this great coterie of literati, artists, and would-be artists.

He worked every day of that summer, in the attic, which I had turned into a beautiful study for him. There he was entirely undisturbed, and I spoiled him like a child. And every evening we made music or read aloud from Jacob Boehme or Goethe, or from Werfel’s works. “I can fear only that something may change,” I wrote in my diary.

I climbed the Rax mountain with him, pleased to be able to take the strain after my many illnesses. I kept busy digging potatoes, storing apples on straw in the cellar, pulling beets—in short, playing farmer’s wife. It was fun, but my heart was not up to such physical exertions. Werfel was a dear, but very young—too young, I thought at times. I loved my little Manon, and my big Annie, who now spent much of her time with friends of ours named Koller, whose young son had been in the war and impressed her as a hero. She was drawing away from me, and I knew she would seek me when I would be hard to find.

In July, we went to Vienna, Werfel and I, because he was at an impasse with his novel. The Austrian revolution was still too recent; he could not get enough distance. (“The Black Mass” remained a fragment, published only in Kurt Wolff’s art magazine, *Genius*.)

On our first evening in town we went to the Wurstelprater, the amusement park, which Werfel loved but curiously did not know well, and I looked for a booth I had discovered, long ago, with Oskar Kokoschka. It had been a strange experience. Behind a barrier, ghostly masks of everyday life went up and down—top-hatted figures, soldiers, and others—and the audience threw wooden balls at their heads. The figures moved irregularly and

were hard to hit. They were life-sized, and they all wore cynical expressions. A small boy was watching the customers and running to pick up the wooden balls; we heard he was the proprietor's son, who thus looked at the slaughter of dolls, day in, day out. "It would be a miracle if that boy didn't turn into a murderer," Kokoschka said thoughtfully.

Now, years later, the memory drew me to the same spot. I could not recall its location and asked a woman in one of the stands along the way to direct us to that eerie booth.

"Just follow the crowd," she said. "Everyone's going there now—after last night, when the son killed his father!"

She knew all the details: how the father, with the son after him, had come running from the booth in mortal fear, and directly in front of his fierce, ghostlike figures the son had split the father's skull with a hatchet, killing him instantly.

Dazed, Werfel and I stood before the booth for a long time. The dolls moved up and down, despite the tragedy, but there was nobody throwing at them that day.

We went to one of the restaurants in the Prater, and I asked Werfel to write a letter to the district attorney, pointing out the background, with a view to mitigating the boy's punishment. He never wrote the letter. Once we were back at Breitenstein, however, he tore off a novel for which he chose the title, *Not the Murderer, the Victim Is Guilty*—the Albanian proverb I had brought home from Corfu, from my trip with Joseph Fraenkel.

The summer's end found me once more in a Viennese hospital, but this time I was not the patient. It was Anna, who had contracted a severe inflammation of the ear. I brought her down from Semmering crying with pain, with a temperature of 104°. A stranger on the train got up to ask what was the trouble. He fixed his eyes on her—and in a few minutes the pain was gone and she laughed gaily until we reached Vienna.

On the steps of South Station the man came after us. "I'll give you fifteen painless minutes more, at long range. That's all I can do," he said, and vanished. It was not until much later that we found out he was a famous hypnotist.

At the hospital Anna was instantly shaved and put on the operating table. But one of the doctors who had been called in,

a relative of the Koller family, opposed the operation; the famed laryngologist who was to perform it also counseled delay. We waited a week, but Anna's temperature dropped only to rise again. I slept in her room, by her side, and one morning I woke up and saw with horror that one whole side of her face was paralyzed. I immediately phoned all the doctors, but the routine operation had now turned into a life-and-death one. The bone had to be trepanned. The facial paralysis lasted for a long time, and we could not be certain that she would ever get her own face back.

"It's no use," I wrote in my diary. "Everything must be drained to the dregs—everything!"

Anna was heroic and very beautiful. A few days after the operation, I came down with her original tonsillitis, and lay beside her, running a high fever of my own.

I had a dream: I was going home, leading my little boy by the hand, but out of my house flowed streams of mud and dirty water which we had to cross. My boy's head was covered with shining blond hair. Both of us were dressed in white. Around my shoulders I had a white fox fur, which threatened to slip off. My feet were bandaged, and one of the bandages came loose, trailing in the mud behind me. I was too tired to go on. My English nurse and some other girls came running down the street and caught me as I fell.

I woke up in tears. In the adjoining bed, Anna lay propped on her elbow, looking at me with large, pitying eyes.

We returned to Breitenstein to convalesce. One night, late in October, Anna suddenly returned from the Koller estate in nearby Oberwaltersdorf. She was sweet and bashful, and I could not quite make out what was the matter with her. I took her into my bed, for she had come back on foot, on an icy evening. While warming her, I teased her about her flirtation with young Rupert Koller, as I had done many times. But she grew serious.

"It's more, Mummy," she said with an effort.

"Why," I asked, "what more?"

"We've been secretly engaged for a week."

And she told me everything, more and more fully and happily as she saw that I had no objections.

I cannot understand parents wanting to hamper their children's love, however foolish. My child's happiness is my own. I was so glad, wishing only that their love might last, that the two of them might live their pure, beautiful fairy tale to the end, in purity and beauty.

Anna was barely sixteen, childishly awkward as she related her story. She had been out walking with him, and he had wanted to speak but could not. Later, at home, he had spoken, emphasizing, above all, that he could not ask her for anything, because they were much too young. "You can ask me for everything," she had interrupted him encouragingly.

I felt close to these two. I wired him, and next day he came. Anna met him; I stayed in the living room. He was profoundly embarrassed but forthright as he came in, took my hand, and kissed it.

"I can't think of anyone better than you," I told him. His head came so close that I had to embrace him. I did it gladly. Then I said, "Make something beautiful out of it; it's up to you," and left them alone.

Suddenly I had become a sort of mother-in-law! I was just beginning to feel old when the mail came and brought me two love letters at once: one from a musician and one from a poet. And at once my gaiety returned, as did my self-confidence before Franz Werfel.

In mid-November, we moved back to the city, and with my senses purified by the heights we had come from, I felt its full, baneful effect. Life in Vienna was one perpetual telephone call, a succession of visitors handing my door to each other—people I had ceased caring for in the months of living solely for one kind, sublime human being. Life no longer made sense to me without Werfel, without looking after him steadily, sharing his joys, instantly knowing each bit of work he had done.

He was with me, one day, when I had to receive a lady of fashion who was strongly opposed to our relationship. She never understood Werfel, but like many others she wished to "protect my reputation."

Werfel, fuming, went to lie down on my bedroom couch while I listened with a bored face to her more or less intelligent

conversation. After some time I glanced into my room but found him so deeply absorbed in thought that I tiptoed out again. When the lady left, at last, he came back refreshed and cheerful: he had used the time of her call to conceive his *Goat Song*. All that men repress had suddenly materialized to him; the frightful primitiveness of this play was so clear in his mind that he went right up to Breitenstein and wrote it down as from dictation.

There was another day, in January 1920, when Werfel had hurt me or I had hurt him; it was doubtful which, and the result, in any case, was disaffection. Once again my lust for freedom and independence awakened, accompanied, as it always is, by a touch of persecution mania, a sense of being utterly unwanted and, accordingly, worthless. I took a streetcar out to Schönbrunn and sat in the sun on a park bench for a few hours, reading. Then I went to see Johannes Fischer, a futuristic painter, and his wife.

Coming unannounced, I found them in their natural habitat. It was a genuinely pure life these two people were leading—I might almost call it disembodied. They had books and pictures around, no real beds, but cots with colored blankets thrown over them, and lying on one was the sick woman. She wore a yellow scarf, a black dress, an amber necklace. Her eyes were large and magnificent. A black cat lay twisted about her. A chord, I thought.

And I saw him, Johannes Fischer, in a brown jacket, sitting on a red stool or box of some kind, before a mandolin on yellow cloth. I looked at his furrowed face and saw the misery and grief in it, and the luminous spirit. I have great respect for such people. When I left, I gave him a fairly large sum of money—all I had with me—and he ran off to the pharmacy, first of all, to get his wife the medicines for which they had been unable to pay.

Next, I dropped in on my closest friends, the composer Alban Berg and his wife. Our contact dated back to shortly after Gustav Mahler's death, for in his lifetime they had been too shy and modest to approach me. Now we were together almost daily. Alban and Helene Berg were difficult people, oversensitive, self-sacrificing to the nth degree, and both so beautiful! Alban looked like Oscar Wilde, youthful to the day he died, and Helene was a creature of seraphic loveliness, inside and out.

Both came from overbred, slightly degenerate families. Helene was the daughter of Emperor Franz Josef and a little basket-weaver's girl, some fifty years his junior, whom the emperor once met by chance in the park of Schönbrunn. He was in the habit of taking a walk in the park at four o'clock each morning, and so, it seems, was this girl. . . . "If she were not the emperor's daughter, she'd still be a princess," a Viennese poet of the turn of the century said of Helene Berg.

At the Bergs' Franz Werfel found me on that January evening, having alarmed half the city in his search. But all day long I had been miserable in my loneliness.

At the winter's end, we took a trip to Italy. Werfel, my little Manon, Sister Ida, and I were among the first to undertake this venture after the war. We traveled "first class," in filthy, lice-infested compartments with cracked or missing windows, carrying our own soup and other victuals. We were supposed to be in Rome by nightfall; we arrived at 4:00 A.M. Our friend the composer Alfredo Casella had been waiting all night at the station to tell us that the city was so overcrowded that he had had to make our reservations in two different hotels.

Thus Manon and Werfel slept together in an elegant marital bed, and the nurse and I each occupied a mattress under a dining-room table. This was the distribution I immediately decided on, much to Casella's surprise. After climbing over dozens of indignant tourists to reach our dining room, Sister Ida and I were locked in for the rest of the night; and in the morning we all took the train to Naples—a trip that was supposed to take three hours. It took all day, since the conductor kept halting en route, wherever he knew members of his large family, and we were left to shiver in the unheated cars until he had warmed himself.

Naples greeted us with a downpour of sleet and freezing rain. I knew it differently, but it was a shock to Werfel, who saw it for the first time. Manon promptly caught a cold. Being short of money, we mostly stayed in our small hotel rooms, and I did something I had wanted to do for a long time: I bought a tuning fork, made a sketch of the well-tempered clavichord, and with these two aids taught Werfel the musical interval system. Soon

he could read music and distinguish and sing a third, a fifth, and so on.

When Manon was well again, we returned to Vienna.

I wrote in my diary:

Another March in Weimar—a month of longing for Werfel! I am all his. . . . I have Manon, the sweet child whom Walter Gropius may claim—but that's unthinkable! What will happen? I know only now what Werfel means to me, now that I live by looking at his picture. On the morning after a bad night I have to look into his eyes, and I feel better.

If only I were already free!

Werfel, meanwhile, saw his *Trojan Women* open at the Burgtheater. And I could not be with him, where I belonged.

Gropius and I had settled into a harmonious friendship. "Thank God," I wrote, "we can now talk calmly about everything." He was a great soul, knowing much about art and giving much of his knowledge, and, since my last visit, the Bauhaus had made giant strides. It came to be one of Weimar's outstanding features, a thorn in the side of every staid, old-fashioned Philistine among the good burghers of the town. I saw posters in the streets, calling "German men and women" to protest meetings against the "degenerates" and "culture bolsheviks" at their venerable academy. It seemed pretty ridiculous. Politically, the Bauhaus was on the left, but it had room for people like the Kandinskys, who had escaped from the real Bolsheviks with nothing but their lives. Frau Kandinsky would still literally faint at the sight of a red flag.

It was true that in their impassioned modernism the Bauhaus people sometimes overshot the mark. Every new fad was certain to attract them. The latest was Mazdaism; I arrived in Weimar to find my bedside table stacked with books and pamphlets about this "Persian-Saxonian *Weltanschauung*," as Franz Werfel called it. I read them through overnight, noticed the obligatory diet of uncooked mush smothered in garlic, and knew that my sensitive gall bladder would react to any such meal with a bilious attack. In the morning I told Gropius of my misgivings.

He was indignant. "It's the healthiest food there is," I was informed. "The whole Bauhaus eats it."

In the course of the day I found Bauhaus disciples recognizable at a distance, by the garlic smell. I saw Kandinsky, Klee, Feininger, and others, but not my friend Johannes Itten. I asked for his telephone number.

"You can't see him now," said Gropius. "He's had one of his bilious attacks."

Later, I saw Itten. Nothing was left of the glow that had intrigued me in Vienna, and I concluded that it must have been a borrowed radiance. Now he impressed me as a typical Don José. I saw his wife, too; she was his second (a sister of the first, who had died) and an utterly inhuman creature, who styled herself to resemble the Negro sculptures that were the rage at the Bauhaus in those days. The child she was expecting underwent "instruction" in her womb. I found her seated in a high chair; an old witch was sneaking out as I came in. Frau Itten had just finished an hour of "suggestive education": she had been "relaxed," required to stare at a crystal ball for minutes on end, and then to answer questions "from another plane."

On March 13, a nationwide general strike was called in Germany, in reply to the rightist Kapp *Putsch*.

I lived through this *Putsch* as through a scene from a medieval play, one with elements of a teen-agers' game or a musical-comedy flop. There were corpses. There was revolution and reaction, noise and fear—and nobody knew to what end.

We lived in the Hotel "Zum Elephanten." Dusk and excitement filled the market place under our windows. Workers spat on the helmeted, motionless young men of the Kapp forces, and the mob howled.

Out of the ministry across the street came an emissary of the government, waving a white towel in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other. It was a compromise offer. He climbed on the balcony of the Town Hall and started reading aloud.

A roar of outrage split the breathless silence.

The man promised to negotiate some more. Reluctantly the crowd let him back into the ministry.

Night fell. There were no lights anywhere, and in the darkness the masses looked even more menacing than in daylight. Here and there a match flared up, approaching a cigarette. We closed our shutters and hung clothes over the edges, because the workers had forbidden any light being shown. Fear of looting put lumps into our throats, and we hardly dared to talk normally.

On March 20, we moved into Gropius's new, still unfinished apartment. The general strike was not so strict any more; besides, we had almost grown accustomed to the situation, horrid and immoral as it was. No sewage was being disposed of, and a noisome odor blanketed the streets. Water had to be fetched from far away. The worst thing was the workers' interference with the burial of the dead. Bodies were simply dumped along the cemetery walls, and the students who went at night to dig graves under cover of darkness were driven off by pickets. The unburied corpses were left on the ground for days.

On the twenty-first we watched the funeral of the workers killed in the fighting. An endless procession, carrying banners with inscriptions such as "Remember Liebknecht! Remember Rosa Luxemburg!"—the Communist leaders whom a rightist mob had killed a year back, in Berlin—passed under my window.

The slain officers were buried like mangy dogs. "Yes," I wrote in my diary, "the world is full of 'justice'!"

No newspaper could publish. Even neighboring towns knew nothing of the Weimar riots. We were cut off from the world, and sending telegrams anywhere was, of course, out of the question. For days Franz Werfel did not know what had happened to me.

A week or two later we were together in Berlin. Max Reinhardt invited us to his home on Kupfergraben, and though Werfel was unwell, having undergone a dental operation in the morning, he did not want to call it off under any circumstances. He read *Mirrorman* to Reinhardt and some of his aides. They all went wild with enthusiasm.

"Why," I wrote, "are our views always colored? We see now too red, now too black. . . ."

Werfel and I went to Reinhardt's Kammerspiele theater, to see *Dame Goblin* by Calderon, and our psychic vibrations were so intertwined that no greater intensity seemed possible. We were one soul.



In May 1920, I was invited to Amsterdam by Willem Mengelberg, who had transformed his twenty-fifth conductor's anniversary into a Mahler Festival. Anna, Manon, and I left Vienna on Friday, May 7. Werfel saw us to the train, and we said good-bye. He, too, should have received an invitation to Amsterdam, but it never arrived.

I felt lonely at once. At the German border Gropius was waiting for us, with Sister Ida. I left Manon with them and had at least one worry off my mind.

In Amsterdam there was the harbor, there were ships' masts, ropes, movement, cold, foggy air—in a word, Holland. We stayed in an old mansion with an incredibly aristocratic old lady, Myfrouw Marez de Oyens. My rooms all but burst with flowers. The house was near the Concertgebouw, so in the evening we walked over and back—no very pleasant procedure in the dreadful weather—to hear Mahler's Second Symphony performed with matchless brilliance. The old lady, wearing a tall diamond tiara, led the way, and Anna and I sloshed after her through the mire in tiny shoes and trailing gowns. In the hall I found orchids on my seat. I saw people from all over the world, old acquaintances and new ones, in a nice but unexciting bustle.

On Sunday morning a gigantic celebration took place at Mengelberg's home. It began with a serenade that was played

under his windows by the entire orchestra and that had the square and the adjoining streets jammed with people. Mengelberg appeared on the balcony and waved to the crowd, and the thousands waving back, the bright handkerchiefs, the bright dresses of the women, made a most colorful picture. My present for him was the manuscript score of Mahler's Seventh Symphony—a gift he had more than earned already by his efforts in behalf of Mahler's work during Mahler's lifetime.

Then I ran to meet Arnold Schönberg and his wife at the train and to bring them to the Mengelbergs', where a still larger company had gathered in the meantime.

At the evening concert I moved with Anna and the Schönbergs to a secluded box in the rear of the hall, so we might listen in privacy.

After this concert a suggestion was made, and instantly taken up, to found a "Mahler Society." Next morning, at a preliminary discussion, I was asked to serve as patroness. I accepted. Then I was asked about my choice for president. As far as I was concerned, there was no choice: it could only be Schönberg.

I said so. A stunned silence followed. Minutes dragged by, endlessly, before the gentlemen realized that only their assent could save us all from an embarrassing situation.

Most of my time in Amsterdam was spent with Schönberg. His intellectual fascination was enormous. We talked of many things—anti-Semitism, communism, music of the Latins. "They lack," he said, "what the Germans have every hundred years: a musician whose hands reach into heaven. . . ."

I thought back five years, to my first wartime trip to Berlin, when I had left Gropius in Hannover and gone to see Schönberg about a plan of mine. He was then living in the suburb of Zehlendorf, and, by the simplest means, he had made his flat into something rare and special. Extremely handy—he used to bind his own books and music—he had run partitions across the large rooms, covered them with burlap, put bookcases alongside, and hung his own very interesting paintings on the walls. Each room was done in an individual color and had its own intellectual aroma.

My visit seemed to delight Schönberg and his wife. He was

almost speechless with excitement as we discussed my plan to have him conduct a symphony concert in Vienna. This was an old dream of his; he passionately loved Beethoven in particular and had long wanted to show that he could do it. A wealthy woman friend of mine was ready to finance such a concert, so we agreed that Schönberg would come to Vienna to conduct "Beethoven's Ninth with Mahler's emendations."

Unfortunately, it turned out that this intensely concentrated musician could not concentrate on conducting. He took it as a lark. He neglected rehearsals. Accustomed to Mahler, who would lock himself in his room with a score and forbid disturbing him for any reason whatever, I was shocked. I had given Schönberg my score, Mahler's corrected score of the Ninth, but instead of studying it, he spent his time until the last moment in Socratic dialogues with his disciples and arrived at the conductor's stand without an inkling of his task. The orchestra, like a horse that senses the holiday horseman, promptly set out to unseat him. There was back talk; there was invective. I truly sweated blood during those rehearsals.

The public response was feeble, to put it mildly. The dress rehearsal was empty, the concert well papered. I was so nervous that I left my box and went off somewhere alone, to await the outcome. I did not want my restlessness to affect Schönberg and to rob him of the rest of his composure as the concert jogged and jolted to its conclusion, like a runaway coach.

In a manner of speaking, I had held out Beethoven's Ninth to Schönberg as a straw: "Hang on, if you're strong enough—or you will fall!" And this strange, strong man fell.

Some weeks later, Schönberg came to me with his wife and Berta Zuckerkandl, who was trying to arrange a concert abroad for him. He was to conduct his own works *and* Ravel's. And I wrote in my diary: "Schönberg's face grows harder and weightier. It used to be a ball with huge, burning eyes, but now his features are becoming unforgettable. . . ."

Since the end of the war Arnold Schönberg had lived in Vienna. I remembered his coming to lunch with his wife and daughter, early in 1919. While he was there his friends and students kept dropping in all afternoon, and two young pianists

played Mahler's Sixth Symphony for me, four-handed, better than I could have heard it from any orchestra. Throughout the performance I felt I should throw my chests and closets open and beg them all to take whatever they liked; I had deep guilt feelings because I was better off than they, and better looking than they. I gave Schönberg's daughter a platinum bracelet, and I resolved to give them more—much more.

I listened to Schönberg often in Amsterdam, thrilled again and again by his powerful mind. He loved Beethoven and found Bach slightly monotonous; he ridiculed Puccini as an avant-courier of Franz Lehar's, and then again he would call him greater than Verdi, superior to Verdi in skill. I could not agree—I thought Puccini was only nearer to us than Verdi—but the marvelous thing about Schönberg was that one could argue with him.

There was an afternoon tea on an ocean liner to which all the festival guests were invited. When I picked up the Schönbergs, I was alone with her at first and could mention an old wish of mine: that we should call each other by the familiar "*du*" and by our first names. "Now," she said when Schönberg joined us in the car, "you must call him Arnold, too."

I looked at him, and he at me. Without a word we shook hands, embraced, and kissed each other on the cheeks. I kissed his right hand, and he kissed mine. Then we both sat silently for a long time, staring out of different windows, until our eyes met again and we found that all three of us were in tears.

"That's all we needed," Schönberg said, at last. "Now we can't talk—and it used to be so easy!"

On the big liner we were royally welcomed as guests of the Dutch government. The whole ship gleamed festively; music blared on the top deck; there was a horde of photographers milling around, and every minute you had to sit with another group to have your picture taken. I resented it more and more visibly. "I'm getting off," I kept muttering to Schönberg.

It was a silly thing to say, with water all around us, but suddenly Henry Marez de Oyens, our hostess's son, came and bent down to my ear. "There's a launch ready for you," he whispered. "Do you want to take a ride?"

The Schönbergs and I went on a grand tour of the harbor,

twisting our way past the big ships' hulls toward the open sea, and were enthralled by so much beauty and life. The three of us fused into so close a unit that none wished to be anywhere without the other two. We did not thereafter accept separate invitations.

The festival closed with an official dinner that was attended—very much so—by Prince Consort Henry. When we were presented to him, Mengelberg introduced Anna: "This child already makes piano transcriptions, Your Highness—"

"How do you know?" Anna challenged him pertly.

His Royal Highness looked amused. So it had been funny. . . .

The room filled slowly. I had been asked beforehand where I wished to sit, and had answered unthinkingly, "Between Mengelberg and Schönberg." Now, going in to dinner, I found my place between these two but directly across the table from the prince—and I talked with him almost exclusively. He was witty, intelligent, and probably glad to have escaped for a while from his strict spouse.

The opening speech was made by the mayor of Amsterdam. "What party?" I whispered across the table, and the prince pointed silently at the huge red flower centerpiece.

A famed but homely music critic spoke about Mahler, stressing the element of love in Mahler's music. The prince looked at the speaker's bearded face. "The gentleman talks about love," he murmured to me. "What can he know about it?"

We had a really gay time during the speeches. But when Mengelberg rose to make one about me I felt rather embarrassed, especially because I was then urged to say a few words myself. Being utterly incapable of this, I had to refuse, and I sensed that people minded.

Schönberg muttered to me that he could not eat his way through twenty courses without smoking a cigarette in between. I hushed him, but the prince consort had noticed. "What does he want?" he asked me.

"Smoke," I said under my breath.

"Schönberg," the prince said suddenly in a loud voice, "do you happen to have any cigarettes on you? Yes? Let me have one."

Schönberg passed an indescribably battered tin case across the

table, and the prince took out a cigarette and lighted it. The courtiers watched with alarm and some annoyance, but once the prince was smoking contentedly, everyone followed his lead and all constraint vanished. Later I was told that if the queen had been present, no such liberties could have been taken. "But then," I wrote in my diary, "she's governing all the time!"

The only day I spent by myself in Amsterdam was May 18, the anniversary of Mahler's death. I went to the Rijksmuseum and saw the Rembrandts, the Vermeers, the Ruysdaels. I was glad, for once, to be alone, and yet I would have liked to discuss the pictures with someone. Why was I so alone? Had all of them withdrawn just to be tactful?

I did not miss Mahler, and my attempts to put myself into a mournful mood failed miserably. I have no feeling for dates, so days of remembrance have no reality for me.

I wrote in my diary:

It is only by myself or with Franz Werfel that I feel quite myself. With him, too, all reflections fall away. It was the same with Gustav Mahler; but he has been dead for almost ten years.

I felt I no longer had the right to hold court as "the Widow Mahler." I was getting tired of it, too.

In addition, I was not always in full accord with his music. It frequently seemed alien to me, insufficiently architectonic and often too long. The Sixth and Seventh symphonies and *The Song of the Earth*—yes, those affected me deeply. From the Fifth Symphony on I had heard each idea at the beginning, had lived with each draft, had copied and thus completely absorbed all of the later works. But at the moment I was yearning for Werfel, for his total proximity and for the phraseless candor of our relationship.

He was with me in June, back in Vienna, when I heard the first performance of Schönberg's *Gurrelieder*. This work enchanted me; it would have enchanted me even if I had been unwilling—and I was ever so willing. I had long understood Schönberg the man, now I fully grasped the musician. And though, at first, Werfel's presence hampered me in yielding to

the music, it was not long before it moved him, too, and forced him to give in.

In the intermission I had the great good fortune to renew my acquaintance with Giacomo Puccini. I had met him years back, in New York, and thought him one of the handsomest men I knew. Now Alfredo Casella took me to the director's box, where Puccini sat like a shadow of his own self, wretchedly sick-looking, with a deformed nose, the object of Casella's zealous and obtrusive ministrations.

He talked to me about the *Gurrelieder*, which had failed to impress him. He said he had come to hear something radical, but he was hearing Wagner. That did not interest him; he had come to be convinced, perhaps, but what he heard here did not command respect; all this he knew already. He was quite angry.

I told him that the second part was much more daring—but Puccini left before the second part. (Later, he told me that he had come to admire Schönberg's work!)

Schönberg and his wife sat in another box with their unlovely daughter and their gawky son. At the end I went over to them. The applause was slowly dying down. "You've suffered much for this hour," I told Frau Schönberg.

"Surely no one here can feel that as you can," she answered, between sobs.

I wrote in my diary:

"Fame," says Rainer Maria Rilke, "is the sum total of the misconceptions gathered about a name."

These words apply to Werfel, to Mahler, to Puccini, to Schönberg. They always apply.

And Werfel and I, in that month of June, went to the Prater to hear a stupid operetta, and had a long talk afterward about the future of opera.

"This trivial art form," he said, "reflects the old Austria, with all its rhythm and wit. In fact, nowhere else could the whole old grand-opera style maintain its purity and popularity. Perhaps the operetta will be the starting point for some sort of operatic revival."

We were sitting in the Eisvogel restaurant, with soft, inarticulate music all around us, and the two of us were entangled in our great love.



In the summer I wrote in my diary:

June 1920

My Anna is sinking into love. . . . I cannot help her.

My divorce has been put off until October. A person shouldn't marry! Had I borne Manon out of wedlock, my right to her would be indisputable. But her future would be clouded by a kind of Bohème despotism that would be bad for her, and for myself. I am free, and I'll stay free. I will not deliver myself into the hands of any law, reactionary or radical-futuristic.

July

We worry a lot about Anna, who is starving herself—one might say she has gone on a kind of hunger strike.

We have learned part of her secret: Rupert Koller, her bridegroom-to-be, has confessed it to Franz Werfel. In Frankfurt (where we had Annie with us, and he visited her), he was in bed with her all night and did not touch her, having no idea of the technicalities of love. And to Anna, herself not far removed from puberty, it seems to have given an inferiority complex.

What I had thought of as a fairy tale has turned into a farce.

At last she is beginning to draw and to paint. She is gifted—and escaping into art, poor girl!

We're having all sorts of difficulties with Anna. A letter came from Rupert Koller, indicating that she has complained about me and Werfel, and thus betrayed us.

Though much has turned out to be a misunderstanding, I am no longer the same, and neither is she. The harmlessness between us is gone.

I am too depressed to make music, but she is running amuck on the poor piano downstairs. She has become a stranger to me. Her manner is cool and superior.

Joseph Fraenkel is dead. I forgot to note it. . . .

August

Do I have the evil eye? I suddenly feel that all harm that ever came to me or my loved ones was my fault. I suspect that whoever touches my aura comes under my spell, that whatever happens is due to an involuntary wish of mine!

And now I am full of fear, for something in me has been wishing ill again—this time to someone I love as dearly as Anna. She took my music away from me, this summer; she would not yield the piano—I had to yield. Now the harm is done, and I am in despair. . . .

When I was Gustav Mahler's young, lonely wife, I once went with him to see our daughter Maria at my mother's—she was there because Anna had scarlet fever and I nursed her. Mahler and I stood under Maria's window; the lovely child pressed her dark curls to the pane, and he waved up to her like a lover.

Was it that? I don't know. But I was wishing ill of a sudden.

And instantly: Stop that thought, for God's sake! Stop the accursed thinking!

Freud interprets these abysses as perverted fears. Today I know I was exhausted from nursing Anna and deathly afraid that Maria might catch the disease. Subconsciously I knew that she was doomed—for she *had* caught the fever and was dead in a matter of weeks.

On a New Year's Day I once had a letter from Joseph Fraenkel, hinting that he was married and unhappy. And without wanting to, I wished: if he's married, he should not live! Now he is dead. . . .

In wartime, somewhere at the front, Walter Gropius had a gig he loved to drive. I was pregnant then, living on Semmering in poverty and isolation; perhaps I envied him. Anyway, he returned to the village where he kept his little chaise, climbed in, drove off—and turned over. The horse ran away, Gropius was hurt, the gig in pieces. The fun was over. Was it my fault?

Anna has gone to Vienna for a few days. The house is breathing peace. I have a sense of delivery.

Berta Zuckerkandl is here. She does not disturb us. Our gaiety would be divine if I still had my old vigor, but I cannot play the piano or do anything else properly.

Werfel's sister is here, too. An interesting, beautiful, gifted, rare little human specimen, if a little neurotic, like all these young females who have no contact with life. And what is behind it? Somewhere,

there is always a MALE key that will unlock the door—usually to a living room with antimacassars.

Now I wish Anna were married and this agony at home would end! She is tormenting herself and us to excess.

Franz is touchingly kind to me. Maybe we'll get married. We belong together. . . .

In September, Joseph Fraenkel's brother came to call. "Joe asked me to come," he said. "He told me on his deathbed that he had loved only you, that the separation from you was the tragedy of his life."

Fraenkel had died of the disease he had been watching in himself for years, knowing that it was incurable and fatal. According to his brother, he had been quite unbalanced by the news of my marriage to Gropius and in consequence had married a prima donna. She was Ganna Walska; I knew her and could well understand that men would fall madly in love with her.

I went on another of my trips to Weimar in October. They seemed so senseless! The divorce was put off again. Gropius maintained that he needed me, and perhaps he did need me. "But this," I wrote in my diary, "would bring too many dissonances into my beautiful life."

And every time I got back to Vienna from these German visits, Werfel had a feast prepared. The big table in my apartment on Elisabeth-Strasse would groan under the costliest delicacies of the globe. He personally carried everything home—and each time the same thing happened: nothing was paid for, and in due time the bills came fluttering in.

He loved to run up debts; he did it always and everywhere. He took unlimited delight in giving pleasure, and one was always in his debt, because he himself would accept nothing.

A new year began—1921. On February 1 a telegram arrived from Oskar Kokoschka in Frankfurt: "Will you seize the greatest moment of your life and come to heavenly performance of Orpheus despite earthly difficulties Wednesday the second? Alma be my heart's beloved!"

How could I go to Frankfurt, away from Werfel, without him? It was impossible, and Kokoschka knew it was. I had felt and known that something like this would happen, for I had been plagued by thoughts of him. But my love of Franz Werfel was stronger than all demons.

Meanwhile, Anna had married Rupert Koller. For her sake, the young country squire tried to become a musician and went conducting in the hinterland. The sad part of it was that he had no talent.

In September 1921 I wrote in my diary:

Today my Anna left, having stayed with me for over a month. I have a strong feeling of loss; everything now is empty.

I love her passionately; this is why I was so disconsolate last summer. She is unhappy, suffers, is finished with her husband. He had been her choice, not mine! If she left him and came back to me, I'd be happy beyond measure.

My heart is aching with love. . . .

Anna left her husband but did not return to me. She went to Germany—first to Walter Gropius, of whom she was always so fond, and then to Berlin, to live—and I felt at peace. Since she was not longing for me, I was not longing for her.

I had a house guest at the time: the wife of Arthur Schnitzler, the great Austrian writer and dear friend of ours. She was about to divorce him, and I wanted to mend this marriage. But there is no glue for the cracks in human hearts.

Every day I played hostess to the whole family. When they came, I would retire for a couple of hours, to let them talk privately. They would ask me to take sides, which I did not want to do—though inwardly I was all for him.

My example seemed to have wrought havoc in many brains. For the freedom I chose presupposes an inner freedom—and this was lacking in Olga Schnitzler and the rest of them. Finally I withdrew from her. I withdrew upon myself, to devote myself to Werfel and to music and musicians.

I involuntarily caused a small comedy of errors in which my old friend Hans Pfitzner played the lead. He was most unhappy in Berlin and eager to come to Vienna, where I had some influence

and was able to wangle a job for him—as master professor at the Academy of Music—for which he was well suited. I wired him to come incognito, because nobody must know about the pending appointment. Pfitzner arrived, took a cab to my place, did not find me in, and was outraged. Werfel attempted to comfort him—in vain.

I came home late at night and immediately told Pfitzner that he would stay at my mother's, on the Hohe Warte. Furiously, he slipped into his topcoat and condescended to let Werfel carry his bags down to the street. Werfel found a taxi, into which he thrust the bags and Pfitzner. "You can't let me go all alone," Pfitzner wailed. "I don't even know where it is—"

The kindhearted Werfel went along to the Hohe Warte, and there Pfitzner scurried into the house with his luggage and left Werfel with the taxi on his hands. Werfel had little money with him; he paid the fare, and then, with no more streetcars running so late at night, he had an hour's walk home.

The first thing next morning, Pfitzner appeared at the Opera, where everybody knew him. Having heard of it by the time we met again, I asked why he had lifted his incognito.

"I regarded your wire as quibbling," he said. "I thought you were offering me the opera director's position."

"But, Pfitzner—Franz Schalk has that!"

"Never mind; I ought to have it."

Such was his egomania. But since he had shown himself in the corridors of the Opera, the press got wind of his presence, and as a result the "far too insignificant" Academy appointment for him did not work out either.

Among my musical house guests in those years were Alfredo Casella and Maurice Ravel. Casella came only for Ravel's concert and then had to rush back to Rome, where he had a leading position at the Conservatory; but Ravel stayed alone with me in my little apartment for three weeks. He even used the place for concert rehearsals.

As a guest he was remarkably interesting. Food was still so scarce in that early postwar period that we mostly ate our frugal meals by ourselves, and I had occasion to study him at leisure. He was a narcissist. He came to breakfast rouged and

perfumed, and he loved the bright satin robes that he wore in the morning. He related all things to his bodily and facial charms. Though short, he was so well-proportioned, with such elegance and such elastic mobility of figure, that he seemed quite beautiful.

Maurice Ravel took a strange delight in "sophisticated *kitsch*." This perverted mask was then worn by the young avant-garde musicians of Paris—by Darius Milhaud, for example—but only for amusement. Probably it was the same with Ravel, who was as sensitive and cultured as Milhaud and all the friends of the French moderns.

Their attitude toward other people's music remained the same I had seen in their reaction to Gustav Mahler, ten years back. During Ravel's stay in Vienna I induced him to accompany me to a Schönberg concert—it was the Chamber Symphony, if I am not mistaken. Ravel was very nervous throughout the performance. "No," he said when we got up at the end. "That isn't music; that comes out of a laboratory!"

It was about that time that I had Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* performed in my red music room. My purpose was to bring this alien work closer to my friends, the Viennese musicians; besides, I wanted to use it for a comparative demonstration. It was played twice in succession: first with a dedicated Schönberg devotee named Stein conducting, and then under the baton of Darius Milhaud. In the first version the vocal part was spoken by Erika Wagner, who had been personally coached by Schönberg; in the second it was sung by Maria Freund, coached by Milhaud.

To me, two entirely different works seemed to be played on that evening. Schönberg himself hardly recognized his own in Milhaud's conception—which was favored, however, by a majority of the audience. Schönberg's rhythmicized version of accentuated speech was unquestionably more original as well as, of course, more authentic; in the sung one it was much more noticeable where he had been leaning on Debussy and others. The small orchestra's performance in my room was very effective, and some eighty persons listened with more or less of an effort to the austere wonders of atonality.

Milhaud and his friend Francis Poulenc extended their stay in Vienna, and we arranged a second afternoon, without an audience. I had only the Schönbergs, the Alban Bergs, Cyril Scott, Steuermann, who played his masterly piano arrangement of Schönberg's Chamber Symphony for us, Stein, and some other radical Schönberg devotees, and the two Frenchmen.

The gulf between them turned out to be unbridgeable. Each camp negated the other. If Schönberg was atonal, Poulenc and Milhaud were polytonal, and between them—considering himself tonal—stood Cyril Scott.

Personally, I thought Milhaud was the most talented of the lot. Scott was too refined for me, too anemic; he ate nothing but grass and went to spiritualist séances. When Steuermann was playing and Schönberg and his phalanx stood about the piano, Scott retired to another room, and after the end of the Chamber Symphony he asked me whether there was going to be "more such painful stuff."

And indeed, there was more "painful stuff"—for Scott himself played his whole opera for us, an endless work of desolate British tedium, with a boring Hindu text.



One day Werfel read the first act of *Mirrorman* to Albert von Trentini, the poet and former imperial aide-de-camp. And all of a sudden Trentini jumped up and ran out, down the stairs and away.

For a long time Werfel and I sat looking helplessly at each other. Then Trentini came back, his face tear-stained, and got down on his knees to beg Werfel to read on. I had to fight my own tears; never in my life had I seen a man surrender so completely to another man.

Mirrorman was first presented in Leipzig in the winter of 1922, with a cast led by Ewald Schindler (no relative of mine) in the title role, Lutz Altschul as Thamal, Margarete Anton as Amphéh. The staging by the brilliant Alwin Kronacher was as youthful and alive as the work itself. It was certainly the best performance we ever saw, and a tremendous hit with the audience.

The play was shown on every German stage. Werfel and I went to its opening in city after city. Only a week after Leipzig we saw it open in Stuttgart, to an empty house, because the Leipzig reviews had not yet appeared; Anna came to meet us in the theater, and our worry about whether she would find us proved needless, because we were about the only people there.

In Munich, Gerhart Hauptmann heard that I was in town and phoned for me to come to dinner. I said I could not very well; I was not alone, but with Werfel. "I want to meet him," Hauptmann called into the telephone. "His writing interests me. Bring him along, of course!"

He awaited us in the street in front of his hotel, and we all had a marvelous evening of which I remember only Hauptmann's energetic stand against futurism and cubism. "These flowers may be quite beautiful," he said, "but I don't like them. Their smell offends my nose."

Manon traveled with us. I took her along to the *Mirrorman* rehearsals, and the play worked so strongly on her imagination that she soon spoke only in Werfel's verses and stalked about in self-draped trailing gowns. After our return to Vienna I once took a visiting opera singer to the nursery, where we found Manon pacing the floor in a flowing robe, declaiming to herself. The stunned visitor asked about the meaning of the costume. Manon looked up, disturbed. "Can't you see I'm Ampheh?" she answered in a grave voice.

In the summer of that year of 1922 I bought a house in Venice.

During a horribly cold spell of rainy mountain weather my resentment boiled over and I wanted to get down from Semmering at any cost, into warm country. I called my mother in Vienna to ask whether she would go to Venice with me the next day and help me buy a house. I had never thought of settling there before; it was purely the fault of our endless cold wind and rain.

On the morning after our arrival in the lagoon city the hunt began. There were many people who knew this or that object for us; ceaselessly we crossed little bridges and tramped through narrow streets, until at last some salesman we knew took us into a lovely blind alley. The address at the end was San Tomà 2542. It had a garden, it had a magnificent old gate, under government

protection as a historic monument, and the corner ornament, high up, was a huge ball of stone.

The salesman started talking up the price as if a hundred buyers were waiting in line, so I made up my mind to buy the house and garden on the spot.

On the return trip to Vienna, thinking about how little money we had, I came to regret my decision, and from the Austrian border station at Villach I sent a telegram to stop the deal. Then, of course, I regretted my telegram, for I had fallen in love with the house already. At Breitenstein, Werfel awaited me and almost burst into tears when he heard the story. For a day we were disconsolate; then my Venetian crook wired that I could not back out any more, and we rejoiced.

I paid the price that had been agreed upon—but then the former owners absolutely refused to vacate the house. No appeal to reason availed; it became clear that I would have to go to court to get them out. I had bought an Italian lawsuit!

I wrote in my diary:

It is December, and I am back on my merry-go-round: with Gropius in Weimar, then in Prague with Werfel's family, again in Weimar, on the way to meeting Werfel in Berlin. The glimmer of light in the past weeks was a Mengelberg concert in Berlin. . . .

The year 1923 began, and I wrote:

It was last summer that I bought my house in Venice, but for the time being I still live in Vienna with many intellectuals, poets, musicians and such, all wearing their invisible pedantic wigs.

Dostoevski, Kafka, the atonalists, cubism, communism—it is all one disease. Mange of the heart, and of the soul. Franz is kind but indifferent. He will achieve his goal of identification with himself.

Anna is living with a cannibal, out there in Berlin. He is Ernst Krenek, a highly gifted musician and composer. . . .

Is it my fault that the world blames me for everything around me? All I do is share the suffering. I am chided because Krenek is cold, and resented because Werfel is a communist (he never was one!)—and everything happens against my will. But I can't help it.

I was visiting in Berlin when Anna and Krenek suddenly informed me of their decision to marry the following day. I had

a serious talk with Krenek. I made it clear to him that the income I could provide for Anna was enough for one to live on, but certainly not for two. Krenek realized this, we canceled the wedding, and I gave them an "un-marriage dinner." He also promised to look for some kind of a job, but he was too young and could find nothing.

In the spring of 1923 my lawsuit took me to Venice. I had to appear in court and personally defend my purchase. The trial was as funny as a Goldoni comedy, but until it was over I could do nothing about remodeling my house.

One day I accidentally ran into Kokoschka, whose Dorian Grayish face had become still younger and handsomer. His paintings at the Venice International Exposition made a strong, lasting impression on me, and I was more than ever convinced of his importance.

We sat together at a table in the Café Florian. "Well," he said, "we've done enough to hurt each other even at a distance. You think I didn't know that you had the officers in my barracks egged on to badger me? Your will was done; they tortured me unmercifully. But then I've bothered you plenty, too. . . ."

Not a word of it was true, of course. I had known none of his officers and would never have done anything of the kind.

He mocked me because of Werfel. "You'll become narrow-chested," he said, "having always to look down on such a midget. You should associate more with big men—look upward, rather!"

He stretched himself. I sat crying quietly. We got up and went for a stroll in the sun-drenched square.

"Odd," he said, "how unrecognized one walks around here!"

"Hm," I said.

He looked at me. "Well, is there anyone kneeling down, perhaps?"

"You can tell me such things," I said, "but you'd better not say them to others. They might think you're serious."

"And you," he said, "you know I'm serious!"

We both felt the strangeness of talking together, so near and yet so far, in the city where we had once been so happy. But we continued our "friendly chat" until Mama, as the jealous guardian of Franz Werfel's rights, came to fetch me.

Werfel came down to Venice after Kokoschka left. He had remained in Vienna to see *Mirrorman* open there, but the attendance had been poor, the reviews wretched, and he was all broken up. I heard of a virtual collapse he had had at Berta Zuckerkandl's, and I deeply regretted letting the trouble with my house draw me from his side at this time. It took him weeks to recover from the debacle.

Kokoschka wrote me soon after his departure, asking me to send him photographs of myself, Anna, and Manon. His post cards were dated from Morocco.

I finally won my lawsuit and set about having my house remodeled and modernized, including enlarging one room and putting in two bathrooms. Werfel and I, meanwhile, lived at a small hotel on the Grand Canal and often took a motorboat over to Giudecca, the outlying island where the British had their well-kept gardens. Our favorite garden was named "Eden." There we frequently found a deathly pale, feverish-looking young man in a wheel chair, with a young woman taking care of him. A rust-red blanket covered his legs; his anguished, hopeless eyes glowed at the evening sun. We often talked about this poor young couple, and, without knowing it, both of them were resurrected in Franz Werfel's next work.

It was a work dealing with music and musicians. The central figure was Verdi, who had fascinated Werfel from childhood on. He wished to show the great Italian and his problems in a novel. Luckily, he did not have to work in our cramped hotel quarters: friends had obtained permission for him to use the magnificent study in Gabriele d'Annunzio's house next to Santa Maria della Salute.

I went out a great deal, heard concerts, made new acquaintances. It was at a Toscanini concert in Venice that I met the composer Italo Montemezzi. He saw me shed tears of happiness over the prelude to *Die Meistersinger*, and, because he loved that piece as much as I did, he began a half-hour flirtation in a hotel lobby, with people standing around and passing by all the time. Yet it sufficed to make Werfel fiercely jealous.

When we were back in Vienna, Montemezzi came to visit us there with his new, rich American wife. He told amusing stories

of a tour that had taken Toscanini and his orchestra to Fiume, to honor Gabriele d'Annunzio, whose "legionnaires" had just seized the town for Italy. When the artists' ship came in, d'Annunzio had every gun in the harbor fire a salute, to honor them, in turn—and the din almost made Toscanini faint, said Montemezzi, chuckling. He did not look too happy otherwise, because his opera *L'Amore dei Tre Re*—the best he ever wrote—had just suffered a first-class fiasco at the hands of a Viennese audience.

Our next musical visitors were the Ottorino Respighis. We had met him in Rome and liked him; in Vienna he seemed less effective. He really came on behalf of his young wife; she had been a student of his, and now the aging Respighi was touring Europe to promote her amateurish compositions. It did her no good, and it harmed him, because involuntarily one identified him with her work.

"Right now," I wrote in my diary, "my house is full of Italians. But to me something very important gets lost in the shuffle: contemplation."

We spent the summer on Semmering, as usual, and Werfel became more deeply involved in the theme of his novel through a visit from my daughter Anna's lover, Ernst Krenek. He was a musician of vigor, and carnivorous where people were concerned. The musical-political sparks flew at our daily arguments and squabbles—and thus Werfel came to complement his original conception of the all-but-divine Verdi with his antipode, Fischboeck, the modern musician who does not build on melodies but on mathematics.

Anna had gone to Switzerland earlier that year, to study with the painter Kuno Amiet, and there Krenek had happened to meet a music Maecenas who resolved to help him with a gift of ten thousand Swiss francs. Thereupon they both came straight to Vienna; Krenek reminded me of my promise to give them my blessing as soon as he could support a wife, and though this was not at all what I had wanted for Anna, I no longer had an excuse for withholding my consent.

When I was alone with my daughter for a moment, she said, "Mummy, invent something else so I don't have to get married." But I was not inventive enough.

Certainly Krenek had no hint of the hell he made of our lives that summer. He filled the entire house. Werfel would lock himself in his small wood-paneled study, and I would lock myself in my bedroom—these were the only two rooms in which Krenek's screen-sized music sheets did not cover every chair, table, and bed. On the other hand, we did appreciate his unwitting service as a literary model, the fact that his presence made it possible for Werfel to observe and write Verdi's opposite. Now and then there were some funny moments when Werfel and Krenek joined in ad-libbing opera parodies.

After Krenek's departure, our summer grew harmonious, gay, and full of love. It saw Werfel finishing a great novel, presenting splendid perceptions in their natural and necessary form, though the work as a whole was perhaps a little too broad. (Like Balzac, Werfel had a tendency in that direction.) Twice in the course of the summer he suddenly burst into my room at dawn and thrust his unfinished manuscript on me, for burning. Of course, I carefully guarded it until he had calmed down.

I absolutely disagreed with the views he expressed in the novel—to me, Richard Wagner had been and would always be greater than Verdi—but I felt I had no right to influence him. "I hope," I wrote in my diary, "that this book will be a hit. He needs some success."

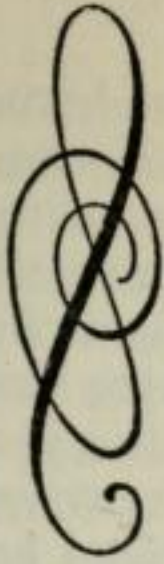
It was a much better summer than the one before. We lived alone in my dear house at Breitenstein, without other guests after Krenek, and with little money in spite of our many needs. The inflation had climbed to its dizziest heights, the alterations I had ordered in the house in Venice grew more and more expensive, and there was a great deal of trouble with my mother's husband, Carl Moll: behind my back, he had two extra rooms built on the roof top, so his daughter could stay there at any time without having to ask me. But the old house was not equal to this new load, and, as a result, large cracks appeared in my bedroom ceiling, endangering life and limb. To pay the bills, I finally had to sacrifice the only diamond solitaire I ever owned.

One day I had a talk with Paul von Zsolnay, a wealthy young friend of my mother's and Moll's, who had transferred this friendship to Werfel and me. He took us out to his castle some-

where along the Hungarian border, and I complained of the inflation, pointing out that all the royalties due to me from Gustav Mahler's works over the past year had become worthless by the time I received them. This was outrageous, he agreed—and so we came to talk of publishing matters.

Paul von Zsolnay knew nothing about the business, but he was Parnassian by nature and loved literature. He knew that Werfel had written a novel and that his present publisher, Kurt Wolff, had an option on it. "If you could bring me Werfel's new novel," Zsolnay exclaimed at last, "I'd found a publishing house on this one book!"

And so it happened. Kurt Wolff was appeased, somehow, and the Paul Zsolnay Verlag, the outstanding Austrian house and one of the best and greatest ever to publish in the German language, was built upon Franz Werfel's *Verdi: A Novel of the Opera*.



"I dream of living alone," I wrote in my diary, "in the seclusion of my little house in Venice, of living and dying detachedly behind its stone wall. I just don't know yet whether I can bear the last great solitude. . . ."

In April 1924, I moved into my own house, with its walled clematis garden. It was a paradise. Everything had turned out exactly as I wanted it. I spent an entire month there with Franz Werfel—alone with him, at last. We were happy. Nothing remained to be desired from the outside world, and I thought it was sinful of me now and then to feel undefined longings.

"It's odd," I wrote. "I go on pleasing, I could be seductive—but I recoil from the sin of it. Franz is touching. . . ."

Summer found us back on Semmering, and Werfel, a year after his unremitting labors on the Verdi novel, took just three weeks to complete a powerful drama: *Juarez and Maximilian*. Night after night we heard him pace above our heads until dawn. I disliked his way of working through the night, keeping himself awake artificially with strong coffee and too much smoking; sometime, I knew, he would have to pay the price. I thought that a trip would do him good—but until the actual departure Werfel never liked the thought of travel. I had to trick him into it every time, make all preparations in secret and confront him with the imminent fact.

I decided upon the Near East. Ever since he had become well known, Werfel had been urgently invited by the Zionists to visit Palestine. He had never been able to make up his mind to accept, but at the end of that year, while he was in Prague with his family for a few days, I got tickets, started to pack, and welcomed him back with the news that within a week we were leaving.

First, we went to Egypt. We landed in Alexandria, and, in the dining car to Cairo, Werfel tasted all the hors d'oeuvres and arrived at Cairo's Hotel Continental a very sick man. I had to sit up with him all night. But he recovered, and in the morning we set out to conquer this unique city by ourselves, without any guide. We strolled through mosques and bazaars and bought attar of roses, of which Werfel was inordinately fond; we went almost daily to the Opera and heard *Aida* in the spot where its première had taken place in 1871, during the festivities accompanying the Suez Canal opening; we moved to the Mena House, the hotel that faces the Great Pyramid, and spent whole days in the museum. "By now I could serve as a guide to Cairo," I wrote in my diary.

We took a trip up the Nile, to Luxor and Karnak on the site of Thebes, capital of the Ancient Empire. We stood in four-thousand-year-old temples, among tokens of the agelessness of civilization; we were overwhelmed by the abundance of nature, by the living fantasy that was Egypt. The only thing we could not stand was the food, which either smelled fishy or was cooked in the monotonous English fashion.

One night while I was still reading, Werfel called to me across the large foyer between our rooms. He came over to sit on my bed, and we had gourmet's fantasies: "Would you like some venison steak now, with cranberries and potato pancakes? Would you like a little roast pork with sauerkraut and dumplings? Or a beef stew with mushroom sauce?" It went on and on.

Finally he got up and went to bed, and we felt well fed and satisfied with our imaginary meal. It was almost as when we were hearing music together, clasping hands and simultaneously feeling the electric shocks of sound. The source of what beauty there is in life does not matter as long as we strongly receive it, feel it, and pass it on!

From Cairo we went to Palestine. Our train reached the border at El Cantara about midnight; it was icy cold, and a gale blew us along the platform as we got out for the strict passport and customs inspection. The Russian Jew who was to help us looked gloomy. We asked why. "Only five Jews today," he explained. "You two, and three others."

I said this meant that only four Jews had arrived—because I was a Gentile.

"Never mind," he said severely. "You're coming here with Herr Werfel, so you're Jewish." My attempt to talk him out of his chauvinism failed.

Near Jerusalem a gentleman boarded the train who said he had been sent to our assistance by the Zionist Executive. He introduced himself as Herr Seligmann from Germany and rebuked us for arriving later than announced; the "Executive," he said, was pretty angry. Then he sat between us and told us all about his family.

We chatted cozily until the train pulled into the Jerusalem station. Then Herr Seligmann jumped on the seat, hoisted our suitcases off the rack, and turned out to be a porter of the Palestinian railways.

Awaiting us at the station was the wife of the dean of the university, who wanted to drag us directly to a children's festival. I said, not without a touch of malice, that Werfel could go—had to go, in fact—and I would take our luggage to the hotel and start unpacking.

Werfel's face fell, and, tired as he was, he had to watch five hundred Jewish children plant little trees while I took a cab to the Allenby Hotel, the only possible one in those days.

Our room was wretched. It had no bath, of course, and was lit by a single small electric bulb on the ceiling. With the help of an Arab houseboy I undertook to civilize it a little—which was no easy task, with traces of the last occupants noticeable everywhere. When the last of the dirty handkerchiefs, collars, hair-pins, and so forth had been swept from underneath the bed, I went out into the magical Old City and bought a supply of candles and candlesticks and a few Persian rugs, to beautify our pitiful abode.

The gentlemen of the Zionist Executive became our friends. They were intelligent, superior, and not responsible for their hot-blooded young followers. With Dr. Bergmann of the university as escort, we went on guided tours of all the settlements. The *kibbuzim* and farms of those first years were insufficiently planned: the birds ate the young trees, the haystacks were unprotected—there was room for improvement in most of what could be seen. But we did perceive a strong impetus.

One day we headed for a Czech *kibbuz* in the Emek Valley. The sun burned down fiercely; the road got worse and worse, until we were mired. We got out of the car. A young Jew on horseback saw us, raced over, and pulled up so close to us that the excited animal foamed all over our clothes. His feat of horsemanship first scared and then annoyed us, so our rescuer turned and galloped off again.

We would have done better to cling to him, for the next offer of aid, after a long wait, came from the driver of a manure cart, whose gradual approach we could smell from far away. The cart had only just been emptied, was still wet inside, and I firmly refused to get on it, even though Werfel and Dr. Bergmann set the example. During my clamor of protest, however, our driver somehow got the car going, and the two gentlemen descended from their throne, exuding evil odors.

Dust-caked and fatigued, we reached our destination, where Werfel was instantly drawn into a political argument, carried on half in Czech and half in German. The women of this communist farm were unkempt and slovenly; everything was still *en négligé*, so to speak. Tea was served, in rusty iron bowls, before we were shown the whole place—the nursery, above all, which was the settlers' pride. It was drafty, and the helpless infants lay covered with flies.

I did not see much beauty in any of this. In the yard we were shown the spot where a tent would be put up for us to sleep in; then we returned to the smoky, debate-filled main room.

I fled, to ask our driver whether we could still make Nazareth that night. He said we could, but there was danger from the Arab bandits, who often attacked single cars. He seemed rather afraid of them. At the moment, however, I considered even

bandits preferable to sleeping in a tent on the ground and being eaten by vermin, and since Werfel, also, had had enough of the discussions, we escaped to Nazareth, to a British hotel that was clean and appetizing and safe in every respect. The bandits left us alone, but our driver endangered our lives by taking curves along a precipice with his head turned around, lest he miss a word of our conversation.

We went to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, eating the progeny of the fish that flopped in Peter's nets and fed Jesus Christ two thousand years ago; for in those waters there are always the same fish, flounders with both eyes on the same side. We sat on the rocks that had listened to the Sermon on the Mount if they have ears to hear—and I believe they have.

We spent a night in a Franciscan monastery where we had to pray before and after dinner and got nothing but greasy fish without a drop of liquor. Both of us were sick that night, with complications due to the fact that the two wooden outhouses were far away and all but undiscoverable in the darkness. Our experience in that place, where a blond-bearded monk held iron sway, and in the following night, which we somehow survived in Tiberias, at the indescribable nadir of primitivity, taught us that in Palestine one could live only in the realm of British colonization.

But I was enthralled by the country. I promptly wanted to buy a remote little house there—and it was my good luck that Franz Werfel invariably opposed my imaginary house purchases, which came, and went, out of my mind more than out of my pocket-book. There on the Sea of Galilee both men and nature were deeply romantic, utterly unawakened, and momentous. Rembrandt would have rejoiced!

Back in Jerusalem, we met and became friendly with the German consul and his wife and with her brother, who was a musician. He worked in the Palestinian concert department and arranged for a Mahler concert to be given in my honor; but first, unfortunately, we resolved to make a joint excursion to the Dead Sea.

Everything went well on the way out, but when we came to the banks of the great salt lake, hundreds of feet below sea

level, the broiling sun began to addle our brains. Cautioned not to drink water, we quenched our thirst with the strong red wine of the country, and in no time we were squabbling. The consul's brother-in-law confessed an addiction to a certain Viennese writer; Werfel, who happened to loathe the man, lashed out at the unsuspecting musician, and the fight was on. The consul and I parted the angry battlers. We were walking a few steps from the Dead Sea, its shore line gleaming with salt and saltpeter in the terrible sun, but no one paid attention to the strangely beautiful landscape. All of us were strained and sullen. Wordlessly we got into the car, and thus, the musician sitting with the driver and the consul's wife refusing to glance at Werfel, we returned to Jerusalem. We shortened our stay, so I would not have to attend the Mahler concert.

Late in March 1925 we sailed back from the Holy Land. I took along two deep impressions: the dramatic nature of the country, and the titanic clash of the world's great religions. Both together made one feel carried back over a thousand years, forgetting one's own time.

I had written to Anna to meet us at Syracuse in Sicily, and on the pier we recognized her shabby cat's-fur coat long before the ship docked. In those days Anna never cared about her appearance. The three of us toured Sicily together, but Werfel and I were worn out. We had seen too much to enjoy seeing more. Even Taormina, for all its beauty, left us unmoved. We returned home; and in Vienna—where Max Reinhardt, meanwhile, had been rehearsing *Juarez and Maximilian* at his Viennese theater—we saw the opening, and reaped the triumph.

Later that year, Werfel lectured in Germany, and I went with him. Though these tours were always a great strain, they widened his popularity, brought him much human success, and gave us some amusing things to remember.

There was the poetry recital at Mühlhausen in Thuringia, for instance, where the vagaries of the provincial railway schedule deposited us a scant half hour before the show was due to start. Two youngsters stood waiting on the platform and quickly threw our few pieces of luggage on their shoulders; there was

no car, so we valiantly marched to the hotel, from which a three-wheeled vehicle conveyed us to the lecture hall. It was located somewhat out of town and seemed to have been dedicated to the Muses for a short time only, for the entrance was still blocked by newly cut trees. Being late, we climbed over them and got in barely in time to prevent disaster.

With fiery gestures the manager waved us up to the platform of the sparsely populated hall—and we found ourselves on the set of the wolves' ravine from Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*. On a table in the center, flanked by two chairs, stood a lamp with a pink lace shade. We looked at each other, and at the manager. He explained that I would sit with Werfel on the platform, of course.

I replied with a loud, rude laugh before ducking into the front row of the audience. A desk lamp replaced the lace shade, but the wolves' ravine stayed.

Franz Werfel read poetry of matchless beauty.

At the end of the first half of the program a dignified gentleman rose, said, "Phooey—that's cubism!" and withdrew in a huff.

In the artists' room stood the two youths from the station, who urgently begged to be allowed to recite some of Werfel's own poems by heart for us during the intermission. Werfel declined the honor and plunged back into the wolves' ravine.

By then, however, a rehearsal for *Lohengrin* had commenced on the top floor, and we could hear the chorus bellowing ceaselessly, "*Fluch ihm! Curse him! Curse him! Curse him!*" This kept up through the second half of the program.

Franz Werfel, with the word "cubism" echoing in his ears, wiped his glasses, put them on his nose, looked down the hall and said, very distinctly: "Sheep."

Then he read his poem, "Sheep," with pious mien and inflection. But the audience got nervous. They felt that he might be referring to them.

After the recital the artists' room was empty, the boys were angry, and the manager resented our criticism of his wolves' ravine.

We climbed out over the tree trunks, and after some search-

ing found the road to town. Suddenly we noticed someone following us. We started running; so did the pursuer. We did not know our way in the deserted streets; it was pitch-dark and quite frightening. When two specks of light approached and turned into the headlights of a private car, we yelled until the driver stopped and took us to our hotel. It had been just around the corner.



On Semmering we spent a summer that was quiet and tense at the same time. Werfel drafted and wrote a drama, *Paul Among the Jews*. Our Palestinian journey had inspired it, but it still took immense research. On this austere fruit I merely nibbled—tasting the lighter, historical items such as Suetonius, Josephus Flavius, and Giovanni Papini—but our days and nights were filled with talk of the tremendous subject.

I wrote in my diary:

Franz has grown so serious, so full of deep responsibility to himself, that it is a joy to watch him live! The joy is not without fear, for he lives entirely on his substance. When I think what a young rascal he used to be!

A year later he wrote *Class Reunion* on the Italian Riviera, where Gerhart Hauptmann had a house and a small colony of German writers and artists was forming. Werfel and I traveled from Genoa along that lovely coast line in the fall of 1926, with no other plan than to get away and stay, perhaps, wherever we liked it. After a good deal of looking at dirty little towns and hotels we finally arrived in Nervi, which pleased us so much that we rented rooms for the next day and returned to Genoa only to move our belongings.

We stayed for a while in Nervi, meeting many old friends and making new ones. Among the guests at the excellent hotel were two who aroused our curiosity: he seemed to be British; she was Italian, much younger than he, with charming eyes of which one was blue, the other green. Apparently they also found us to their liking, and soon our every encounter was accompanied by smiles.

Although Werfel loved Nervi, he was bothered by the small-

ness of our hotel rooms. He always had a yearning for large rooms—due, he said, to the cubicle he had occupied as a boy in Prague, which had made him feel constricted. We decided to find a large room for him elsewhere, and so set out on another tour of the coast. We found what we wanted at the Hotel Imperial in the mountainous setting of Santa Margherita. He moved at once, into a palatial room with a huge terrace. On every ceiling were sumptuously, sensuously painted allegorical scenes, for the hotel was a converted old castle of entrancing beauty. Werfel found it hard to get up in the morning; his eyes moved pensively over the ceiling and his mind was lost in pensive dreams. He was happy there and worked well. I remained in Nervi for the time being; *Class Reunion* was almost finished before I joined him at Santa Margherita.

Not long after my arrival there we were surprised to discover the intriguing couple from Nervi at the far end of the dining room. They saw us, too, and our quadrilateral greetings warmed visibly. At times, now, we would lift our glasses and drink to each other. Still, not a word was exchanged.

Then, one night, Werfel went to the opera in Genoa, but I felt too tired for the long, strenuous ride. I went alone to the dining room and found the young woman at her usual table, also alone. When she saw me she dropped her head to one side, indicating that her husband was sick. I finished dinner and got up; so did she. Meeting in the doorway, we talked to each other for the first time, and I invited her up to my suite.

She accepted with pleasure. I went ahead to set out some Benedictine and a few snacks, and when she came and unsuspectingly drank the heavy cordial as if it were wine, her reticence vanished. Without a break she talked of her sad childhood and youth, her despotic father and the rest of her family—and in my mind the picture of a great novel began to appear. Every element was there: the father's bankruptcy, the help rendered by an Englishman, the girl's love, her brother's forced emigration to America. By the time my visitor departed, I was a huntress on the trail of big game and could hardly wait to hear Werfel's familiar steps outside my door.

I first let him tell me about his evening, as was our custom;

but once in bed, when he had calmed down, I began to talk. We talked all night. He was beside himself with joyous expectation.

In the morning, of course, we sought out our new acquaintance. Once more the young woman was our guest, but this time she would not take a drop of liquor and her confidences dried up. Werfel learned only a little more about the fate of her brothers. He already had sufficient inspiration for his novel, however, and ecstatically started drafting *The Pascarella Family*. (Later, we were often asked how he had come by his profound knowledge of an Italian "good family," in which some Italian friends of ours claimed to recognize their own. But we never told.)

In my 1926 diary there is a gap of months—months we spent in Latin countries, in Paris and Beaulieu and on the Riviera—followed all at once by an unchronological farrago of entries. "Yesterday," I began, "we were at Gerhart Hauptmann's for the fourth time. . . ."

Each time we felt closer to each other and in a freer mood. Hauptmann's stammerings when he had had a bit too much to drink were delightful: "Yes, yes—when one thinks about it, one ought to . . . you understand me, and so on . . ."

And everyone understood him. His poise was Olympian, and his blue eyes were deep as the sky in a mountain pool.

"It's a pity," he said to me, "that the two of us don't have a child together. That would have been something!" And: "You, you my great love . . ."

And I sat listening reverently, happy that my miserable self was still capable of kindling joy in features I worshiped as much as Gerhart Hauptmann's.

"In another life," he once told me, "we two must be lovers. I make my reservation now."

His wife heard it. "I'm sure Alma will be booked up for there, too," she said flippantly.

He and I only smiled. . . .

The course of his days was as follows:

He got up daily at six and went for a walk, making notes in a tiny notebook, stopping to stare at stones he did not see, working

in his head and in his heart. How well I knew all that from Gustav Mahler! Then he came home for his wife, and both of them went down to the beach for a swim, at all seasons. This was Grete's wish more than his. Breakfast followed, and then he disappeared in his study, not to emerge until noon.

After lunch he took a nap, dividing his day into halves. In the afternoon he would dictate, read, and experiment with a microscope (reminding one—a little too strongly, for my taste—of Goethe). But then he always grew cheerful, ate, drank large quantities of the light Italian champagne, and was the gayest among his guests until 2:00 A.M. He often lay awake nights, which did not keep him from rising again at six in the morning.

One night the composer Eugen D'Albert was there with us. He got roaring drunk, and when Werfel casually used the word "Hollywood" in conversation, D'Albert banged his fist on the table and shouted over and over, "In Gerhart Hauptmann's presence one does not speak of Hollywood! That's sacrilege!"

He raged on, too drunk to notice that everyone there agreed with him. Earlier, he had argued with Werfel in more civilized fashion about Verdi and the Germans, about the "undramatic" Beethoven, the "uneconomic" Wagner, the "impotent" atonalists, and the "music factory" of Bach, whom he quoted as "lamenting the end of the Plague in Leipzig, which meant fewer deaths and fewer orders for cantatas."

And D'Albert, the little gnome, chuckled and rubbed his hands, blinked his small, shrewd, weary eyes, and was quite entranced with himself.

Werfel was slightly drunk, too, but full of *élan* and paradoxes and, again, of truth and candor. He visibly delighted Gerhart Hauptmann. When a dozen bottles of champagne had been emptied and signs of physical restlessness appeared, Hauptmann rose. "I'll go and see," he announced, "whether the piano is really not good enough for D'Albert."

D'Albert jumped up to join in the reconnaissance. The other male guests also professed interest. I released Werfel with a glance, and he overcame his shyness and left with them. They returned soon, in excellent humor—but the piano was not mentioned again.

Werfel told me later what Hauptmann had said in the garden, while they all stood facing the moon, absorbed in the pleasant business of relieving themselves: "Tycho Brahe died of modesty. He burst his bladder because he was ashamed to do his need before Rudolf II. It was the result of his good manners. Let us not emulate him."

Thus, in this house, all things became natural, festive, and wise.

A new friend we had made in Nervi was Hermann Sudermann, an outstanding German novelist of the time and an arch-enemy of Hauptmann. Neither man would mention the other's name, though Sudermann knew that we were seeing Hauptmann, and Hauptmann knew that Sudermann was living in the same hotel with us. We were introduced to him by a young woman admirer of his, and in a matter of weeks we grew so fond of each other's company that we would take regular walks together. In his vivid and drastic manner Sudermann told us stories of his dismal youth. Before succeeding as a writer, he had made puzzles for newspapers and magazines—and it was surely he who gave Werfel the idea of selecting this odd job for the hero of *Class Reunion*. In fact, it may well be that the idea for the entire novel unfolded from this tiny root.

His puzzle-making, Sudermann told us, had enabled him to save enough money to visit his mother in East Prussia for the first time in years. He traveled third class, of course, and with him, wrapped in a newspaper, he carried the manuscript of his first novel, because he had no place to leave it in Berlin. The trip seemed endless. When the train halted in a larger town—it may have been Königsberg—he got off. "Where is it nice here?" he asked the policeman at the station.

The policeman named a cheap whorehouse, and Sudermann, his manuscript under his arm, trotted off to find the address. After a few drinks and other pleasures he fell asleep.

Waking up in bright daylight, he rushed off to catch the train that was to take him home to Mother. On the train he dozed off again and felt in a dream that something important was missing. He sat up with a start: his manuscript was gone!

Anxiously he waited for the next stop, and then for the next train back; panting, he arrived at the house. But no one there knew anything about a manuscript.

At last, desperate and tired from his long search, he went to the privy—"to think," as he put it. And lo! there on the wall, suspended by a string from a nail, he beheld his perforated novel.

A good many pages had already been torn off—and because he had no other copy, the whole beginning had to be rewritten from memory, or newly invented. This was the secret story of *Frau Sorge*, Sudermann's first big success.

There was a third eminent German writer living nearby: Fritz von Unruh. I had met him years ago, having written him an enthusiastic letter about a play of his and having received a beautiful poem from the front in reply. After the war ended he had come to Vienna, where Werfel and I had greatly enjoyed knowing him. Later, there had been some silly misunderstanding, and now, when Gerhart and Grete Hauptmann invited all of us for New Year's Eve, Unruh declined because he did not wish to meet Werfel.

I resolved to settle the matter. I put Werfel into a car, sat beside him, and in a few minutes we were at Unruh's door. He was "out"—but the next morning he and his wife called on us, and we soon saw much of each other. His house at Zoagli was an old fort, high-walled and built on rocks that fell off vertically into the Mediterranean. He was very proud of the fact that he owned the rocks. The house was flanked by vineyards and olive groves, and he had done wonders with the interior. The rooms, accessible only with difficulty, over little black stone steps, were all furnished with antiques, in the most exquisite taste; an old Chinese tearoom with yellow and pink drapes was particularly beautiful. Almost every room opened on a terrace, and we used to sit outside until far into the night.

Unruh, the scion of one of Germany's most ancient noble families, had been one of the first to preach the new "revaluation of human values"—the pacifist rebellion against the authority of war. He had expressed these ideas in a play written in wartime, as an intimate of the Grand Duke of Hesse and as the son of a

general who was a friend of the Kaiser; his kith and kin had ostracized him, and his present friends—or, rather, those who should have been his friends—feared the renegade in him, who might always relapse again. But he never relapsed.

He told strange stories of his youth, which must have been a sad one. (Or did it only seem sad to him? It matters little.) From his days at a Prussian military school he recalled beatings, hunger, cold, incredible exertions. He recalled a Young German Brotherhood festival where he had been obliged to make a speech beside a bonfire, nearly burning to death himself. He was a master orator, whose narrations always featured Nature as a necessary prop.

He would casually pick up a book, and it would be the family chronicle of the House of Unruh. It seemed odd, on the part of this inveterate republican, until his wife, a pretty, emphatic, definitely intelligent creature, would beg with shining eyes: "Won't you read us something from the chronicle?"

And he would read: that he was really a Duke of Friuli . . . and that he was a lineal descendant of Charlemagne . . . and that . . . He would go on and on. But who wants to know so much about somebody else's great-grandfathers?

It was a happy day for me when Alban and Helene Berg arrived. In the hope of bringing Alban close to Gerhart Hauptmann—whose play *Pippa Dances* he wished to set to music—I had paid for their trip and asked them to be our guests in Nervi. Both of them were in Italy for the first time, and each agave plant was a discovery.

We went to Venice for the music festival and saw Arnold Schönberg, whom Berg worshiped, rehearse his *Serenade*. He rehearsed at length, far overrunning his allotted time. Eventually Mr. Dent, the festival chairman, came over. "Herr Schönberg, you'll have to stop now. The next gentleman, Herr Grünberg, is waiting to rehearse."

Schönberg calmly replied that he would not stop.

"Now, look," Mr. Dent said, irked, "you're not the only composer here!"

"I think I am," said Arnold Schönberg. . . .

Years before, seeking a teacher, Berg had wavered between

Schönberg and Hans Pfitzner. About to travel to Strasbourg, where Pfitzner taught at the time, he had missed his train, and called on Schönberg instead. An accident? I do not believe in accidents.

The result, of course, was that Alban's path had since meandered and curved in accordance with the master magician's directives. He had been working for a long time on his opera *Wozzeck*, had played the music for us, too, on occasion—but this thoroughly orchestral music could not impress on the piano. Besides, Alban was no pianist, for the master frowned on "playing the piano to make composition easy for yourself."

Now the opera was finished. Alban and Helene Berg came to me, showed me the score, and asked me to accept the dedication of the work. They were in trouble: a friend who had lent them money to have the score printed was pressing for repayment. The matter weighed heavily on the Bergs, and having taken up collections in the past for Schönberg and others, I went on another begging tour and raised the missing sum in short order.

Once in print, the opera was quickly accepted. The brilliant Erich Kleiber of the Berlin State Opera assured himself of the right to conduct the first performance, and when Werfel and I arrived for the final rehearsals I found a big, beautiful folder on the table of my hotel room: the manuscript score of *Wozzeck*, with the names "Alban" and "Alma" engraved in the two top corners.

From Berlin the Bergs went to Prague, where Alban was to supervise rehearsals for the opening there. Werfel and I remained in Berlin a while longer. Hans Pfitzner also happened to be in the city and came to see us repeatedly, this time in a particularly bitter mood. On our last evening he was again sitting sullenly in my hotel room when Werfel came in, laughing, to read us a news story. Alban Berg's music drama, it said, had so infuriated the mayor of Prague that he had suffered a stroke during the dress rehearsal.

Pfitzner cheered up visibly. He almost beamed. "He hates even rivals who are not rivals at all," I wrote in my diary. In the morning we left for Prague.

In Pilsen, the conductor had already blown his whistle when

we looked out the window and saw Alban, in evening clothes, climb on the train, which was beginning to pull out. Out of breath and obviously tipsy, he entered our compartment and informed us that we would have to drive straight from the station to the Opera. Everything had been arranged, he assured us.

I drew the curtains of the compartment and ordered the two men to stand guard before the door while I opened my trunk and hastily dressed for the Opera. Next, Werfel came in and beautified himself with my assistance. The gently swaying Alban remained in the aisle; when we let him in, he told us that he had been in Pilsen for hours, waiting for us and drinking beer to pass the time. "Finally," he said, "I just kept carrying my glass from my table to the gents' room and back." To see him was to believe it.

At the Prague terminal our luggage was flung into my sister-in-law's waiting car, and we sped to the theater. It was curtain time when we arrived, but instead of the festive suspense of an opening night we found the house in a grim, silent mood. The news story about the mayor, it turned out, had been quite true, and the *Wozzeck* première had tactlessly been allowed to take place as scheduled, on the day of the poor man's funeral.

Alban Berg had placed a huge flower arrangement on the rail of my box, and I was enthroned behind it. Werfel sat beside me; the lucky Bergs remained half hidden in the background. I felt at once that something was bound to happen. The staging of the opera underscored its revolutionary tendency. When the curtain rose and the scene showed nothing but some dirty, ragged army cots, I knew: Now it comes . . .

My heart stood still as a roar went up from the audience. All those innumerable faces seemed livid with hate. The conductor, Ostrčil, fled from the orchestra pit.

Our gaudily marked box became a red rag, a blatant challenge to the crowd that howled beneath it and shook threatening fists. Alban and Helene Berg had vanished. "*Hanba—shame!*" we heard from below, and, "*Jew rabble!*" Alban Berg was not Jewish at all. But Werfel was, of course.

Police had to escort us to our car, through screams of wrath.

Later, *Wozzeck* was performed in Prague without a disturbance, and eventually on all German operatic stages. Even conservative Vienna had to swallow it.



"It is sad," I wrote in my diary, "but the political gulf between Werfel and me keeps widening. It comes up in every discussion, and our religious difference bodes ill for the future. . . ."

I, for instance, had the wish to see Gandhi, of whose God-willed mission I was convinced—and already I feared Werfel's skepticism. Nevertheless, I prepared for a voyage to India. I hoped to succeed in taking him by surprise, as with the Palestine journey.

I failed.

We went to Karlsbad, instead, where the unbearable tedium of life at a spa was broken only by some meetings with Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the standard bearer of the Pan-European idea. He spoke little, mainly because his actress wife, Ida Roland, talked all the time; but when he did, there was in his words a strange beauty such as I have heard only from the truly great. This reticent man's language was as concise as if he were reading a text, and it was hard to fathom the depth of his knowledge, his prophetic insight into the future of nations: Germany's, England's, the East's—and Russia's.

On Friday, July 15, 1927, the seed of radicalism came up in Vienna: rioting in the streets, a hundred killed, a thousand injured, the Palace of Justice burned down, the mob unleashed. Our literary ideologists were thunderstruck. "Mass murder of ideals!" one of them wailed in a letter to me. Why had he not known what I saw so clearly coming?

"It is madness," I wrote, "to think the machine would serve us as an outward means to inner freedom. The more we rely on it, the more surely will the worker become our Czar. . . ."

I had seen it on July 15, in my newly electrified house. A general strike had been called, and every night we expected to sit suddenly in darkness. As long as our work was done by candle-light it had not been so easily disrupted!

I wrote:

What do you earth-bound morons know of the vast happinesses I derive from my imagination, in the intoxications of love, of music, of wine—and of my strong religious feelings underneath?

With iron claws I claw my way up to my nest. . . . Any genius is the right straw for me to clutch at, the right prey to feather my nest!

In October, I was in Venice. "Today," I wrote on the eighth, "I saw O.K. in the Teatro Fenice. . . ."

I went to St. Mark's and was able to pray again for the first time in years—to do what I mean by praying: to have things out with my God. I asked to be led on the right way, and not to be allowed to do wrong.

And God answered.

I emerged into bright sunlight and went to the Café Lavena, where Anna was waiting for me. A literary acquaintance, clever but slight, sat with us and told us abstruse anecdotes of Kokoschka. "If only my nose would fall off," Kokoschka had been saying. "Well, by next year I hope I'll no longer have it!" And so forth. How well I knew these affectations!

Every night he was playing the man about town, sitting around the various bars; in the daytime he painted. I felt far away from him, recalling the thousand small tortures I had suffered at his hands and realizing that this glimpse of the past had almost made me unjust to the present.

The next Sunday I saw him again. Anna and I were unsure whether he had seen us. We let him pass, without making ourselves noticed. But in the afternoon a deluge of flowers came and filled my house, with this card:

I am still too myopic to see farther than ten paces, but unfortunately I sensed your presence at once, regardless of distance.

Greetings to you and Gucki.

Oskar

And all my hatred seemed to melt before this scrap of paper.

That night, however, I again ran into the literary man whose head was awl with Kokoschka's visit to Venice. "He's an odd

mixture of the sacred and the profane," he said. "A pity there is so much bombast involved in it."

God had wanted me to hear those words.

In November we were back in Vienna. On an evening with Arthur Schnitzler we discussed the odd fact that women, unlike normal men, are often turned away from their own selves by marriage. I told of my marvelous talks with Mahler during our secret courtship, and how from one day to the next I had ceased understanding his language as the wedding day was set and "the world" knew of our relationship. On our daily walks through Belvedere Park I had remained silent for hours, until at last it astonished him. "You were talking Chinese," I would explain; "I did not understand."

And Franz Werfel heard me tell this to Schnitzler and did not understand, either.

In December, we went to the theater with the angelic Richard Coudenhove and his wife, to see a third-rate gutter play called *Broadway*. ("It must be New York as some Hungarian imagines it," I wrote in my diary, "and as it isn't.") Unnerved by the cynical brutality of this product, I wanted to sneak out; but Werfel had one of his tantrums and publicly insulted me in the street. I ran to a taxi while he spewed billingsgate after me: "Just remember I'm not coming home tonight! I'll fix you!" And so on.

At home I fell on my bed, fully dressed, teeth chattering, and thought . . . and thought . . .

Had I come thus far for this, that a man should treat me like common baggage? Had I surrendered my independence of judgment, my freedom of action? Did I have to stand for ranting and abuse? No—I was filled with tremendous protest against the sudden senselessness of my life, the perversion of my years to a level I had long passed. I was fed up with the slavery called "man," I thought, and burst into tears.

After two weeks I still had not recovered. I was at a more advanced stage than Werfel. Seeing red might give him a thrill, but it chilled my blood; I would see black, and despair of life. Brutality had made me part with Kokoschka; brutality would alien-

ate me from Franz Werfel. I felt that a string in me had snapped and would never sing again.

From Zurich, Werfel sent me telegrams full of love while I sat in Vienna, recovering from "man as such."

He rejoined me a few days before Christmas, in Santa Margherita, where divine Nature burned the unrest out of my heart. Outside my window the sun stood over the sea and made the house fronts shine pink and yellow against the greenish-brown mountains. A bright, pale blue sky spread above, and the poor children of the village waded through the snow with frosted lungs at two below zero.

My Christmas Eve was a sorry one. Paul von Zsolnay was with us. A week before, in Vienna, I had decorated a tree, and now I tried to tell myself that I had already had "my" Christmas—but it did not work. Everything was empty and unfestive. Werfel and Zsolnay, however, were quite content.

Neither of them felt with the thirsting woman who longed for her childhood dream. In their way, I wrote in my diary, "life becomes simple indeed—a life without fairy tales!"

On Christmas Day the Hauptmanns came to visit. I was feeling so miserable that Werfel called them both into my room, and at first I could hardly speak. Then I talked with Gerhart Hauptmann only, in the main about his *Till Eulenspiegel*; I was just reading the epic, and my unqualified responsiveness delighted him. We talked of new word forms and of the sad decline of religiousness in the world, and Hauptmann mourned the Protestant deterioration that had brought on the German Catholic revival.

Finally, I confessed my heartache of the past evening. The corners of his mouth drooped suspiciously; then he, in turn, confessed that without a carp or a goose—I forget which he set such store by—Christmas was spoiled for him, and that today he had awakened from a childish Christmas dream.

He became quite sentimental as he told me about it, and in his buttonhole he wore one of the pink carnations I had sent to him and his Grete for Christmas Eve.

Werfel, in those days, wrote some wonderful short stories. The first, "Estrangement," was inspired by a dream of mine,

about my grandmother. My father's mother was a beautiful old lady with white curls and bright blue eyes, who used to tell me fairy tales while I sat at her feet on a little footstool, and now I dreamed that I wanted to run out during one of her stories and she called me back: "Stay, so I can tell you your own life!"

In the morning I told this dream to Werfel, who liked it and used it verbatim for the ending of his novelette, linking it with a story from his own youth and several discussions and experiences of ours—including my old catechism teacher, who would prompt us at every inspection, and a private joke of mine about men's dangling suspenders, which seem to me to prove their descent from the apes.

Another story was "Saverio's Secret," which we had lived through from beginning to end. In reality, "Saverio" was a certain Tolentino, a mystery man whose true nature and existence we never discovered; and the main factor in the plot, the art forgeries perpetrated by the notorious Dossena, had touched us more closely than was good for us. My stepfather, Moll, had been one of those taken in by the grandiose forger. He believed in the many authentic old paintings and sculptures that were turning up of a sudden; he believed in the buried monastery where they were supposed to have been found; and he screamed and ranted at our skepticism and made my house a bedlam of hate and contentiousness.

Then there was "The House of Sorrow," one of Werfel's strangest stories, probably based on some trivial reminiscence of his youth. And the idea for a fourth, "The Staircase," came from our hotel in Santa Margherita, where an unenclosed, freely suspended elevator rose in uncanny fashion to dizzying heights.

It was late in January 1928 when I heard of Kokoschka again. Our house guests, Alban and Helene Berg, said he was planning to go to Africa. I was thrilled. "It's exactly what I've always wished for him," I wrote in my diary. "Those strange, strong colors!"

A day or two later, Werfel picked up the mail—and a post card from Africa almost fell into his hands. It came from Kokoschka. He wanted me to write to him. But how could I, with my mail open to inspection? And—did I want to? "O.K.," I

wrote, "can no more forget me than I can forget him. But I no longer need him to live."

That evening we were at the Hauptmanns', with Paul Zsolnay and his mother. Gerhart Hauptmann surprised us by talking much about himself (which was not his habit; in fact, one was forbidden to discuss his works at his home), and finished by reading us his essay on Jehovah, the God of the Jews.

"An anti-Semitic affair," he said with a smile.

Werfel, slightly "under the influence," like all those present, kept intervening to defend his God—who was indeed getting much the worst of it. Gerhart Hauptmann's Scripture-quoting critique more or less divested Jehovah of all divinity and made him a confused, paradoxical crank. But Werfel's constant interruptions became such a bother that the reading was cut short.

We saw the Hauptmanns almost daily until February 6, when I said good-by to them because I was to meet Anna in Rome on the eighth. I had been so upset by Kokoschka's post card that a trip to Rome and on to Sicily seemed like the only way to escape from myself, and from an estrangement from Franz Werfel. I wired Anna to come at once from Berlin to accompany me. It was quite probably a necessary step and only seemed to be unfair to Werfel. I dreaded any thought of being unfaithful to him.

The trip was strange.

In Civitavecchia I saw hundreds of candles burning in a cemetery. It was dusk, and I thought I could see the souls of the dead bending over their own graves. I had been so torn inside, in the past weeks; Werfel and I had not had a minute to ourselves, with Oskar Kokoschka standing between us like Banquo's ghost. Werfel sensed him, perhaps. But I saw him.

In Rome I went to a hotel and wrote:

I'm a different person since I'm here. I haven't said a word in ten hours. . . . I am unalterably committed to my present life. It is a marriage, a marriage of beauty and significance. May the mirage be in the desert—and stay there!



Unknown to me, Anna had been in Rome for two days before my arrival. On receipt of my wire she had taken the next south-bound train from Berlin, without awaiting further word from me and without any idea where I might be staying. She met every train from the Riviera, except the one I came on, and I, of course, had no better luck looking for her.

Early on the morning after my arrival I wrote a telegram in reply to Kokoschka's appeals and took a cab to the post office to send it off. I went as far as the telegraph window with it, but there I snatched it back, pocketed it, and walked out. I had conquered myself.

Feeling quite pleased, I continued in my cab to the Café Aragno, where I got out to buy Viennese newspapers. Suddenly, at the corner, a pair of arms closed on me from the rear—Anna's arms! She had recognized my fur coat in the throng and had jumped off a moving bus, to catch me. It was the hand of Providence, for how else should we have found each other in that vast city?

Later in the day we embarked for Palermo, via Naples. The night was windy, and the sea rocked us like children in a cradle.

In Palermo we took a horse cab straight from the dock to Monreale, without realizing how long a ride this would be. But the impression that rewarded us was overwhelming: an entire

church adorned with Biblical representations, superb, perfectly preserved eleventh- and twelfth-century mosaics. How did it happen that there, for once, men's vandalism halted? We lost ourselves in adoration and forgot the bitter wintry cold.

Palermo itself was thoroughly unappetizing.

At the Capuchin monastery we saw eight thousand embalmed corpses—some prone, some seated, some hanging on the wall, all seeming less like dead men than like Gothic art objects. We saw San Giovanni degli Eremiti, an early Christian church oddly attached to a former mosque, and many others. On the slopes of Monte Pellegrino we passed a carnival parade far superior to any French or German one in grandeur and imagination. And late at night, on the Corso, we saw the famed *puppazetti*, marionettes so exquisitely carved that when we held them in our hands after the show we all but shuddered at the perfection of these stylized and yet strikingly natural representations of man.

The squinting "Orlando Furioso" was the hero and main figure of the play; the ancient legend still has a strong hold on the Sicilians. "Ruggiero"—Roger the Norman—was another character one met again and again, on all carriages and carts and in all folk plays. "He is closer to them than Jesus Christ," I wrote in my diary.

But at Segesta, on the westernmost tip of the island, we saw a lovely Greek temple in an even lovelier setting, and an incomparably placed amphitheater with a breath-taking view of the sea.

After five days in Sicily we sailed back to Naples, disembarking at 5:00 A.M. In anticipation of a hearty breakfast we trotted to the Galleria; but it was not yet six o'clock when we got there, and no Italian would dream of opening shop at such an unearthly hour. In short, we left with empty stomachs to watch day break over that incomparable town.

I wrote in my diary:

Seeing nature and art with Anna is sheer bliss. She has an un-failing sense of quality in these matters. Men are something else again; there she tends to go wrong because she does not seek—and therefore will not find—the superior type.

She had been working in Rome with Giorgio di Chirico, the eminently gifted constructivist and architectural prospect painter; but once again, as will happen to women, especially if they are attractive, her apprenticeship was interrupted by romance. Anna was twenty-three, had been married to Rupert Koller and Ernst Krenek, and had divorced them both. She was presently in love with a young Italian nobleman, the scion of a great, now impoverished family—as she was herself, after all, on her grandfather's side. From him she learned a good deal about things that had been alien to her before.

From Naples we continued to Genoa by hydroplane, and because we had a bottle of excellent wine from Palermo along, one of the two pilots was always back in the passenger cabin to help us empty it. After a refueling stop at Ostia we flew over Elba, seeing flocks of white sheep graze peacefully below, and landed at high noon in Genoa, where Werfel, green with envy, was waiting for us. He had tickets for a matinee of *Nerone*, so we hurried to the Opera, then to Ferrari's for a champagne dinner, back to the Opera for *The Masked Ball*, and home at night in an automobile. My head swam. Where did it all come from—all this money?

The next day passed in equal style. Another lavish champagne banquet in Santa Margherita, another ride into Genoa, to see the opera *Werther* and back—but on the way home Werfel said, "Now the money is gone." And I heard what had happened: because the Zsolnays, like many wealthy people, never carried enough cash, I had lent them a substantial sum, several hundred lire, which they had returned in my absence. Werfel had "embezzled" and spent the whole amount with us, in two days!

Early in March we were back in Vienna and spent another evening with Arthur Schnitzler, discussing Paul Graldy's play, *Robert and Marianne*. I told Schnitzler that I had been reading my old diaries and found them more adequate than the more recent entries, and how they bore out Graldy's view of marriage.

The talk of marriage pained Schnitzler. He changed the subject. "Yes," he said, "I, too, have made daily notes from my fifteenth year to this day, and I can't make up my mind to have

them copied by a stranger. They're too honest, and I am not a great writer."

We protested.

"No," he said, "not a really great one. There are many greater ones. . . ."

At the end of March I flew again, from Vienna to Venice. Manon was on Easter vacation from her boarding school—the same school I had attended as a girl—so I took her along. The day was stormy; now and then we seemed to have the choice of crashing on a white ridge or plummeting 10,000 feet into a gorge. At Klagenfurt the weather reports were so bad that the pilot did not want to continue, but a director of the airline forced him to. So we took off again. Later, we heard that it was a test flight for a record, on which bets had been made.

I made vow after vow. I pledged myself to return to the Catholic Church—to do anything, anything at all—as we skimmed under black cloud banks and plunged through shreds of fog that veiled the landscape for minutes at a time. There seemed to be no end to the Alps. The plane kept lurching and dropping, lurching and dropping. Those air pockets! When the Italian plains appeared at last, I was still too thoroughly frightened to feel relieved.

My child behaved splendidly, and all the Italian officers on the field applauded her when we landed, seven hours overdue.

Yet two weeks later I was flying again. I had gone to Rome for two days, with Anna, and we took a plane back to Venice. Even the take-off was ominous: three runs were needed before we left the ground. Then all went well until we passed the Sabine Mountains, when the engine began to sputter and soon quit entirely.

From 5,000 feet we glided to an emergency landing on the airfield at Foligno. While repairs were being made, Anna and I took a walk through the charming old town, found a cozy tavern, ordered wine, and had a lively chat with the beautiful girl who served us—the innkeeper's daughter, probably. We were not pleased at all when our pilots discovered us, after having searched the whole town.

For the rest of the flight I sat tensely and resignedly in the cabin, certain that my last hour had come and indifferent to the

grandiose North Italian landscape. I drew my first deep breath when my feet touched the ground again and I set out for my own house, which was full of guests, as usual.

Early in May we moved up to Semmering for the summer.

In that summer of 1928 Arthur Schnitzler's only daughter shot herself in Venice. The wound itself would not have been fatal, but a rusty bullet led to infection and death. "What have I done?" Lilli Schnitzler moaned after firing the shot. "Why did I do it?" She never expected to die. "Don't cry; I'll recover," she said to her husband, an Italian army captain, as she lay in a gondola.

They surely were the most disparate pair one could imagine. At eighteen, in the Piazza San Marco, the sophisticated Jewish girl had first laid eyes on the proud, primitive, and handsome Captain Cappellini. She became so infatuated that she kept way-laying and pursuing him until one day he stopped to ask, "What do you want of me?" Lilli replied that she loved him, and from then on there was no checking her. She called on him at the barracks at all possible and impossible hours, and when her desperate mother tried to forbid these visits, Lilli scraped the phosphorus off match tips and drank it in her coffee. The mixture was too weak, though; she only got nauseated. Finally, her father was called and badgered into consenting to the marriage—which now, a year later, came to so tragic an end.

My daughter Anna stayed at Lilli's side all day, until she died. It was Anna who cleansed the body, put flowers around it, and then went to the airport to meet Lilli's parents and inform them of their daughter's death. Anna has always been heroic when her fate required it.

Arthur Schnitzler listened to her, without speaking, as they went along the narrow pathway from the airport to the lagoon. He walked slowly, and suddenly pitched over on his face. He did not even know that he had fallen.

Neither parent wanted to see the body. And except for them, Anna was the only human being to see Lilli laid into her grave.

I heard all this when Schnitzler, back in Vienna, asked me to come down from Semmering. I came at once and found a faded, seemingly extinct old man and a fashionably black-clad mother

whose sole worry was the handsome son-in-law. Cappellini talked incessantly; perhaps it was his way of mourning. Switching from French to Italian and back, he dwelled on his misfortune with many gestures and ejaculations. (Nor was this the last of his troubles, for Mussolini frowned on scandals in the army and had him transferred to southern Sicily by way of punishment.)

Olga Schnitzler was the first to collapse in my arms, in tears; Arthur embraced me and wept bitterly; Cappellini kissed my hand and delivered a speech to thank me for something or other. The only one who stood by calmly, decently, and composedly, and who seemed to be taking care of everything, was young Henry Schnitzler, the dead girl's brother, who struck me as one in a thousand.

We went into the garden, sat on upholstered benches, and talked. "In 1907," said Schnitzler, "I saw Gustav Mahler sitting alone on a bench in Schönbrunn, his head bowed in mourning. Your daughter Maria had just died, and I asked myself: How can the man survive that? If I could have looked into the future and seen his other child ease the last moments of mine!"

I was glad that Anna had been tested, for the first time in her life, and had come through with flying colors.

But the gaunt, *condottiere*-type son-in-law kept baffling me; he could furnish the alibi of a marriage that had been happy to the end, and yet I could not imagine Lilli Schnitzler as having found real happiness with someone so unlike herself. Nor was my mind set at rest by the passages from her diary—some very private indeed!—which were read and recited and discussed in this family circle.

I wrote:

There are weird bonds of magic between me and Lilli Schnitzler. She visits me every night. Last night she appeared much older to me, full of a sorrow she wished to tell me about. But no matter how hard she tried, I could not understand her. . . .

About that time I decided not to get married. This new estrangement was due to a poem Werfel had written then, about Lenin's death. ("Lenin was the arch well-poisoner," I wrote in

my diary.) The poem was rhythmically beautiful, but its meaning repelled me. When Werfel read it to me one afternoon, I felt painfully lonely, desperately in need of one who thought along my lines.

I started rereading old letters from Oskar Kokoschka. He had frequently disturbed the tenor of my life, but I had always been the focal point of his interests. Who cared about my life now? Who was concerned with my secret sorrows and joys? For ten years now I had been unbalanced, playing the part of a recognized writer's great and, in a manner of speaking, happy love, yet feeling neither like his mistress nor like his wife. He did want us to get married, the sooner the better. But something in me was unwilling.

By September, however, in Venice, I wrote:

The summer has been beautiful and fulfilled. Perhaps I will marry Werfel. He is the kindest, most loving person in my life. . . .

The cessation—any cessation—is dreadful. And how much more so that of the female functions, where there is no new beginning!

Never again to toy with the fear of conception. . . . And what do you get in exchange? Quietude? Not a chance. A wiser view of life? Not a chance. An end to desire? Not a chance. You keep desiring all you ever desired.

Late in the fall, in Vienna, we saw Schnitzler again. After a report on Lilli's grave in Venice, which filled his kind blue eyes with tears, we discussed faith, religion, and, finally, Christianity. Arthur Schnitzler, rigidly based on the natural sciences, denied the notion of "a state of grace," while I defended the God-obsessed human being and the concept of "illumination." And we talked of the skeptics who believe just the same, and of the faithful who doubt just the same.

I wrote:

I could not live without Jews—after all, I live with them constantly—but they often make me want to burst with anger. Why can we never be happy, never content to enjoy what we have? Why do we keep seeking "the other"?

Right now I long to escape to some quiet place, to hide out, to be alone—and so I secretly want to buy Comologno. It's a seventeenth-century castle near Lugano, high in the mountains of the Swiss-Italian frontier, and I want to live there as superior in the convent of my own fraternity. . . .

In that summer Werfel had begun a new novel: *The Pure in Heart*, a reflection of the residue of our revolutionary period. He wrote the first two sections at Breitenstein, and because he had begun late in the season, autumn came too soon. The first bitter cold snap drove us down to Vienna, where he could never work well. His gay senses were so quickly tempted!

He finished the book in the late fall, at Santa Margherita. Manon and I were with him in those weeks, and he would work with joy, reading the chapters to me right after he wrote them down, and then discussing them with me for hours. *The Pure in Heart* was a powerful novel. But I was alarmed to see him work through the nights again, overheating his physical engine with tobacco and coffee, and when he was through, I managed at last to persuade him to travel again.

India had remained the goal I longed for; I already had steamer tickets and all other reservations, but when Werfel objected on the ground that it was too far and too strenuous, I exchanged everything for two passages to Alexandria, and buried my dream.

Of this, our second journey to the Near East, I'll have more to say later.

After our return, we went to Paris, where Anna was then staying, and on to Santa Margherita. And I wrote in my diary:

Another post card from O.K., from Cairo, has turned me inside out. Why does he do it? It's as if we were linked by a mental umbilical cord. It certainly isn't physical—it never was!

Phrases kill people today, and probably did at all times. O.K. had other patterns of life laid out for him than Franz Werfel, but he can follow them no more than Werfel can. It is purity which O.K. strives to attain, somewhat too consciously. But for me, this self-glorifying urge is easier to take than the bleary-eyed monster of the class struggle—which is none of Werfel's business, anyhow, be-

cause by virtue of his birth and class he is incapable of understanding it, much less waging it. So, it remains a phrase!

July 5, Semmering

Tomorrow we are to be married. . . .

I could not sleep. I was too restless. I did not know whether I, with my love of freedom, was doing the right thing.

I was not doing it for "the neighbors" and certainly not for myself. For Manon, perhaps—to let her grow up in orderly, Western circumstances. I had heard of her innocent talk in school about "Uncle Werfel, who is living with us."

My freedom, which I had preserved in spite of everything, would receive a jolt. My love had already given way to a close, intimate friendship. I had read Kokoschka's post cards of the past months over again and found him quietly at rest within me.

Physically I was not in good shape. I was failing everywhere. My eyes would no longer keep up; my hands slowed down on the piano; food did not agree with me, standing did not, walking did not—nothing did but drinking, perhaps. It was often the only way to control the chills and shudders in my body, since I had a vagotonic disposition, a weak heart, and a slow pulse.

In a few weeks I would be fifty. And Franz Werfel was young.

I had to keep in step, to feign youth. I had to devote all my interest in life to his growth; I could not remain objective about things, as I should have liked to. I could not afford the great attractions of aging, of withdrawing upon oneself, of gradually refusing to play the game. Frequent separations, as we had been having recently, would be my only escape.

"I am ready," I wrote.

On July 6, 1929, we were married.



Sholem Asch, the Yiddish writer, had come to Vienna with his wife. "I can't tell how important he is," I wrote in my diary, "but he thrills me every minute. Politically, we are poles apart, of course; but such foes I love. They are my kind, though they be Australian bushmen."

The Aschs visited us on Semmering with the director of the

Burgtheater and his lady friend, and together we went for a marvelous drive to the formerly Hungarian Burgenland on Neusiedler Lake. It offered everything: steppe, reedy shores, herons, Liszt, gypsy villages, Wild-West atmosphere, and, in conclusion, a minor adventure. We were in two cars, and on the return trip, which Asch somehow arranged to make alone with me in one of them, we lost sight of the others in the hilly countryside. By the time we hit the Vienna-Semmering highway, I was eager to get home and Asch wanted to find another car that would take him straight to the city. We stopped in a small village. Asch, always the gentleman, got out to address the local *jeunesse dorée* of Social-Democratic factory workers thus:

"Ich muz haben a auto. . . . Ich vel bazolen far das. . . ."

That did it—Yiddish rather than German! The populace glowered menacingly, and I, fearing a pogrom, got him back into the car in a hurry. To the whinnies of the village youth we fled, into the teeth of a thunderstorm that obliged us to make more detours before we caught up with the rest of the party and some suspicious looks.

Already I began to feel constricted in my new marriage—more so than I had expected. I would have liked both to leave and to remain; it seemed sinful to me to spend fifteen years lingering in the same places that you knew inside out. I felt my life drawing to a close, and though I had devoured people aplenty, I had seen only a small part of the world. Why could I not just say I wished to travel by myself? Of course, I could not. It would have clashed with every marital concept.

Earlier in the year we had virtually retraced our own steps in the Near East, again going first to Egypt and continuing to Palestine—a Palestine that had strikingly grown, developed, and become far more interesting in the five years since our earlier visit. A new, clean, modern hotel welcomed us in Jerusalem; the first-class King David Hotel was still being built nearby. We felt so completely at home that my "oecomania" broke out again and I absolutely wanted a house in Jerusalem.

The Jewish settlements had done much to enrich the city. There was a pulsing cultural life which we could understand and sympathize with, while that of the Arabs was to us, of course, un-

intelligible, though quite a few of them gave at least the appearance of having excellent minds. The Jews in those days tended to ignore them, and yet the wiser ones among the Arabs knew that Palestine had gained immensely in value. Electrification was in progress, swamps were being drained and forests planted everywhere (mainly eucalyptus groves, against the insect plague), roads and sewage systems were under construction—in short, the country had become civilized in five years, and very good painters, poets, and philosophers were striving to re-establish its culture. "The present crisis," I wrote in my diary, "cannot vitally harm this progress. It can hamper it for a time, but it can't stop it. . . ."

Werfel had long talks with the manager of our travel agency. He insisted on visiting Syria—Damascus, Baalbek, Mount Lebanon, and Beirut—although he was feeling feverish in the evenings, and people warned us against the trip through the desert because Circassian bandits were making it unsafe. At home, Werfel was ponderous and slow in making decisions; once abroad, however, in another country or continent, he was the one who would hatch the most reckless plans. Now, aroused, he wanted to see everything. So the trip was mapped out, and with a detective hired to serve as our guide and bodyguard, we departed for the Syrian border.

The Circassians did give us an uneasy time. They would come galloping up on their splendid horses, drawing suspiciously close to look us over, and then would race off again—probably after concluding that the game was not worth the candle. They were handsome fellows, dressed in embroidered costumes gleaming with jewels and pearls, and armed to the teeth with rifles, daggers, and broad cartridge belts. But our detective was armed, too, and perhaps that was what saved us from attack.

It was a hot day. We breathed easier when we got to Damascus.

Our guide led us through some magnificent old mosques, but there "everything smelled of mortality." Everything was dilapidated, gray, and very dirty. He took us to sumptuous bazaars and finally to the largest carpet-weaving plant, where the owner appeared and conducted a personal tour of his establishment for

our benefit. In passing the rows of looms we saw emaciated children with El Greco faces and enormous eyes roll around the floors, pick up spools and threads, and wield a broom now and then.

"What strange children are these?" Franz Werfel asked the owner.

"Those poor creatures? I pick them up in the street and give them ten piasters a day, so they won't starve. They're the children of the Armenians killed off by the Turks. If I don't take them in, they starve and nobody cares. They can't really work; they're too feeble."

We walked out in a daze. Nothing seemed important or beautiful any more. Shocked and wearied, we went to a coffeehouse, where Werfel was intrigued by the narghiles, the Turkish water pipes that were being smoked all around us. He bought a mouth-piece for one and started smoking pensively, unable to get the Armenian children out of his mind.

After a rather terrible supper we turned in, because he was running his nightly fever again—which a doctor in Jerusalem had called quite harmless, however.

The next day brought us to Baalbek, the Palmyra of antiquity, into surroundings that looked purely Greek. The temple was small but improbably beautiful as it rose above the landscape, silhouetted against snow-covered Mount Lebanon. At the town gate lay a rough-hewn boulder large enough to defy the biggest bomb of those days.

All afternoon we climbed over the temple ruins. It occurred to us that they might be more beautiful now than in the days of Palmyra's greatness, when these buildings had been shining in full splendor—for do we know whether the Temple of Karnak, for instance, which seems so huge and beautiful today, may not once have been too regular and symmetrical? The little sphinx avenue leading down to the Nile is unimpressive now; is that in spite of or because of its excellent preservation? It often seems as if all man-made things were too human for divine greatness, as if a twitching of God's will had to make temples fall before they could really be divine.

Werfel had contracted a touch of malaria. He would feel well

all day but run a temperature in the evenings; so he ate in bed, and I helped him smoke his narghile by fishing embers out of the heat-spewing iron stove in our room, lest the pipe go out. Piling up on his bed were notes on the Armenian massacres.

The awakening of Baalbek, this small town with the great past, was as petty bourgeois as any in the East. Donkeys pulled carts with fruit, baskets, and bread through the alleys, and the owners melodiously cried out their wares. Looking down from my balcony, I saw some fabulous knitted gloves covered with flower and animal *décor*; I used my fingers to ask for the price, got my answer in the same fashion, threw the money down, and had the peddler throw the gloves up to me. The sun plunged town and countryside into a rose-colored light. The temple shone in delicate hues. Mount Lebanon seemed aglow.

It was still early in the morning when we set out again, passing Armenian villages built by survivors and easy to tell from Turkish settlements by their cleanliness and beautiful gardens. Then the road climbed the slopes of Lebanon and the snow fields expanded to undreamed-of size; the ride across the mountain range, on snow and ice, was one long delight for eyes and lungs. It was bitterly cold up there, with a gale sweeping the passes, and we were thankful for the woollen gloves I had bought in the heat of Baalbek. There was a breath-taking view from the highest point, spreading from fields of glittering snow to the blue ocean and the city of Beirut, gleaming white-hot in the distant haze.

Unfortunately, it only gleamed from afar. The ugliness of this half-baked port, without a tree to ward off the heat, drove us right out again. A fair-sized harbor, a few filthy, banal, ill-kept houses, dampness and heat—that was Beirut, and we hurriedly decamped for Haifa, via Acre. We followed the seashore for hours, then we had to cross the border several times, and each time the entire car was searched and every passport stamped. The atmosphere was hostile.

We spent the night on Mount Carmel, at Herzliya House, where we found the innkeeper playing chess with his porter and both resenting the arrival of guests at their deserted hotel. The place was gloomy and run-down, no door lock worked, the food was indigestible. We stayed awake all night and fled at dawn.

Back in Jerusalem our strolls around the city took us to the Mount of Olives, topped by a magnificently tall Greek Orthodox cathedral. Organ music wafted through the open doors; we longed to be inside, and ignoring the amazed and curious stares, we tiptoed into the church.

Everything there was ritual and predestination. High before the altar stood the priest in white and golden vestments, flanked by altar boys robed in bright-blue velvet and wearing blond, curly wigs. We found the Greek Mass much more complicated than ours, and much more beautiful. Women in black gowns and trailing lace veils knelt behind the priest, awaiting Holy Communion. He made the sign of the cross over their foreheads with a long crystal wand, and we were charmed by the accompanying music.

We emerged from the cathedral just as the sunset lapsed from glaring yellow through gaudy red into the deep purple that Dürer divined and painted in his "Crucifixion." We would never forget this effect. Nowhere does the sun go down as in Jerusalem. It is as if there, in the one place where it happened, the light-years carried you back to attend once more the loftiest moment in the history of man.

What stayed in Franz Werfel's soul, however, was the tragedy of the Armenians.

He heard that a documented record of it had been assembled in the French Ministry of War, and on our return to Vienna he broached the subject to the French ambassador, Count Clauzel. The Clauzels were friends of ours. The attractive countess was devoted to her Siamese cats, who were free to sharpen their claws on the embassy Gobelins, and the count was devoted to Werfel: he got the complete Armenian file from Paris and turned it over to him, with permission to keep and study the mass of facts for years.

They were worse than all the horror stories we had heard.

Another gap in my diaries . . . for almost a year I recorded nothing. I knew the reason: it was the loss of my last diary in Santa Margherita. There was a touching telegram from Gerhart Hauptmann in it, begging me to forgive a quarrel we had had

about Catholicism and affirming that he loved, that indeed he worshiped, me. I grieved for this, and even more for the diary, which contained dangerous truths. I found myself unable to start a new one, to return to this sort of confessional. I was suddenly less fond of Hauptmann, too, after losing his telegram.

The unrecorded year was not uneventful. It began when I sent Anna, who had come back sick from Paris in the spring, to the sanitarium on Semmering to recuperate. Paul von Zsolnay happened to go up there at the same time, so I gave Anna fair warning. "Leave this flower standing by the wayside," I said.

It did no good, of course. They promptly fell in love. For a while we knew nothing about it; nor did we want to know, since Zsolnay was Werfel's publisher and this was bound to cause trouble. Inevitably our business relations would suffer if we became the publisher's in-laws, feared at the office, hated for our private influence, and used as intercessors by all the literati we knew.

Anna, as always, meant to break off the affair at her pleasure, but this time she didn't. She was caught in a vise; for once, she faced another will. After a period of rather traitorous play acting, which I could not hold against them, Zsolnay came to Vienna to ask me for my twice-divorced daughter's hand.

His own father moved heaven and earth to prevent the marriage. There were ugly scenes and squabbles about marriage contracts and such, but by the time I started another diary Anna had returned from an Oriental honeymoon and seemed to be regarding wealth as her proper element—much more so than my own suppressed ascetic longings would have allowed me to do. Duly pregnant, brimful of protest, she sat in her beautiful castle. "If only she could find real happiness now," I wrote in August 1930.

By then, too, our new relatives were urging Werfel and me to buy a large house. I was reluctant; I would have wished to reduce my standard, never to increase it. The mere thought of thus saddling myself with so much property made me tremble—but eventually, of course, we bought the house. It was a mansion on the Hohe Warte, not far from my mother's, and I promptly ordered a music room built in for me, and every partition on the top floor ripped out to make an ideal study for Franz Werfel.

On March 29, 1931, I was alone at 22 Elisabethstrasse, for the last time going to bed in my dear old apartment. Werfel was working in Santa Margherita; to spare him all everyday cares, I had picked a moving date on which I knew he was going to be far from Vienna. I was too excited to sleep. What would the new house bring me? It would take strength to fight the deaths there had been in it: two young people, children of the previous owners, had died there not long ago; many tears had been shed there. Could I be cheerful enough to dry those tear-soaked walls? "It is no accident," I wrote, "that I'm so dreadfully lonely today. Is it the end of the past, or the beginning of the future?"

Thus, on the morning of March 30, I moved out to the Hohe Warte. The big house seemed to welcome me warmly, with open arms, and when I went to sleep there in my own bed it was as if I had never slept anywhere else. I had brought Manon home from boarding school, and we felt so far from each other, so lost in all that space, that we both crawled into my huge bed and stayed together all night.

In breathless haste I furnished, decorated, and arranged our mansion. The hall was marble-paneled, with large, built-in wall cabinets which I filled with manuscripts and autographs. The *pièce de résistance* was the manuscript score of the Third Symphony by Anton Bruckner, which had a strange history. Bruckner had given the first three movements to Gustav Mahler, to make a piano arrangement; Ferdinand Loewe was to arrange the fourth. Mahler, then in Hamburg and overburdened with work, gave the manuscript to his brother Otto. Otto committed suicide, and for thirteen years Gustav Mahler did not have the heart to open the black trunk that contained Otto's possessions, to see whether the manuscript was still there. After Mahler's death I sent for the trunk. It had been looted thoroughly; all of the dead man's clothes, underclothes, and so on were missing—for which I was grateful. But among his schoolbooks and mediocre music I found, just as Mahler had expected, the first three movements of Bruckner's Third.

The strain of fixing up the house was indescribable—especially after I had dislocated a shoulder in the process—but with elation I saw it grow more and more homelike. It was still quite unready

when Felix Salten, the author of *Bambi* and literary editor of Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse*, forced me to give a party. Salten and his wife, Georg Reimers of the Burgtheater and his wife, Conrad Veidt, the film star, and some others came and drank and danced until the break of dawn. My first chance to catch my breath came when I sat in the train to Venice.

Werfel met me at the station, and we felt as one. Unfortunately, this harmony was soon disturbed again by the arrival of Albert von Trentini, who was ill with cancer and had not long to live. Out of pity I took the job of nursing him, cooking his diet, or at least supervising it, all day long; I virtually relinquished my own existence. But I did not want the tenderhearted Werfel to share this torture, so we agreed that he should go off to Bologna and give Trentini his room. Trentini did not stay long, and Werfel returned from Bologna with some vividly dulcet poems he had written there.

One day we took the *vaporetto*, and Werfel suddenly asked, "Do you want to see Shaw?" And indeed, sitting two steps ahead of us was old, young George Bernard Shaw, all by himself, carefully observing the operation of the ship's engine. He was exceedingly tall, carried himself ramrod-straight, and never glanced at the people; apparently he knew them well enough. "There is something of a mystery," I wrote, "about a man of seventy-six who towers above all others, shows no sign of aging, and imperiously goes his own way."

In May, we returned to Vienna, where Werfel delivered his great lecture on "Realism and Inwardness." Afterward, all our friends came to a reception at Anna Mahler Zsolnay's, and then festivity followed festivity until, just before Whitsuntide, I collapsed. Too exhausted to talk any more, I took to my bed, was "out" to all callers, and thus, at last, had peace and quiet in Vienna. But the quiet out there on the Hohe Warte was a funereal quiet, and I could not take it for very long. Monotony, too, made me ill. The house was finished, and one thing I did not want was to be bored in it!

Werfel had the huge room he had always wanted to work in, but in fact, after starting out there, he usually went on writing in some little hotel room in the environs of Vienna, or in Italy,

where he worked best of all. He only liked to *live* in the study on the Hohe Warte.

I had made him a present of a small portable piano, and there he would sit laboriously picking out Verdi melodies with one finger. Then he would go to sleep on the enormous couch—for no room could be too large, no bed too wide, no sofa too spacious for him. An iron door shut off the top floor from domestic noises. Yet his supersensitive ears caught every sound in the house, and when he realized that I had company he would show up of a sudden, drawn partly by curiosity, partly by jealousy. To me he was always welcome; but had I told him beforehand who was coming, and when, he would have voiced disinterest and annoyance and would have either remained upstairs without working or gone out to read the papers in one of his beloved cafés.

In the autumn of 1931, I took Manon out of school again and went with her to the hot springs of Abano near Padua, to take mud baths. My shoulder was still too painful to let me move my arm freely, and Manon had been having pains in her back for years. I hoped the baths would help her. Of course, with nothing else to do in that little spa, we read all day—I, for instance, starting with some trash by Comrade Ilya Ehrenburg, who struck me as another case of Communism serving to camouflage failure in everything else. But then I read a brilliant book: *The Counterfeiters* by André Gide, who had been one of my favorite authors for two decades. I thought I could well do without the present-day Russians, but never without smiling, elegant France and her great spirits—Gide, Paul Valéry, Roger Martin Du Gard, Romain Rolland (whose *Jean Christophe* had stirred me to the depths), and the abundance of others.

In December, I accompanied Franz Werfel on a German lecture tour, merrily gadding about from East Prussia to the Rhine, where he read "Realism and Inwardness" over the Cologne Radio and his convinced, convincing eloquence evoked excitement and joy. In Berlin we suddenly received the bad news—by telephone from Vienna to Manon, who was staying with her father,—that Anna was sick.

A second call followed: Anna was physically well but emotionally sick.

Finally, a third, from Andy Zsolnay, Anna's mother-in-law, came: Anna and Paul were going to be divorced—the papers had been signed—there was another man—Anna had taken sleeping pills—I had to hurry home. . . .

Manon and I were on the train within an hour.

The situation in Vienna dripped with ugliness, vulgarity, and slander. I fought fiercely to extricate Anna from the clutches of an erotomaniac who avenged himself by going to her father-in-law, showing her letters, and accusing me of wanting to save her marriage only so as to hang on to the Zsolnay money. The old man was justly enraged, and I had to swallow the dirtiest vilifications because my own child had impugned me in her love letters! I blamed myself: "I have made the colossal mistake of giving her an unearned freedom. Freedom has to be fought for and won. . . ."

Anna and Paul separated. For a while Anna stayed with us, then I sent her to Werfel's sister in Zurich. Later, Zsolnay brought her back and hid her for months in the vicinity of Vienna. There she took up sculpture, and, being much alone, she plunged into this work in deep earnest and, it turned out, with real talent.

Thus, for the time being, happiness came both to her and to Paul Zsolnay, who could not live without her. Her birthday in June saw them formally reconciled and Anna reinstated as wife and mistress of the Zsolnay household. "By her mere existence," I wrote in my diary, "she expiates what would bring dire retribution upon others! I rejoice for her—for this beautiful, gifted, young creature."



The Burgtheater put on *The Kingdom of God in Bohemia*, Franz Werfel's play about the Hussites, amid nerve-racking excitement. Those fights, those emotional crises! Embittered rehearsals; indifference to Werfel's cries of woe; then the malicious faces at the opening, the rabble, the press . . . My feelings told me that the play was good despite all the hostility. The objections

were stupid; no one really understood this work of art. It occurred to me that Gustav Mahler had in his lifetime encountered the same objections—"and today," I wrote, "the mob will cheer, but it understands him no better."

This was in the winter of 1930-31, when three of Mahler's symphonies were performed in Vienna within less than three weeks. Bruno Walter conducted the Second, which I had not heard in a long time. I found it transparent in spots, painted too much *alfresco*, but grandiose in its conception, textually brilliant, truthful and sincere in its religiousness. "If you hear the symphonies one after the other," I wrote, "you may be a little unnerved by what I call the constant 'getting the Lord on the phone.' Otherwise it will grip and move you."

After the concert, Walter and his friends were with me and stayed till dawn. Walter talked much about Mahler, in a vein that was new for him and pleasant, describing Mahler's malicious temper tantrums, his shouting, stamping his feet, treating people like dirt—things that ten years earlier could not have been mentioned aloud in Bruno Walter's presence. To me, on the other hand, it always seemed essential to keep great men human and not to let them congeal into legends and become insufferable plaster saints.

Anton von Webern conducted Mahler's Sixth. I could hardly bear listening to the final movement, I felt so near him again—and the time in Essen, with Mahler's dreadful agitation before the first performance, came back to mind in cruelly bold relief. How he had agonized over this work! My little Anna had been with me then, and her sweet little hands had calmed me when the pain became excruciating. Now I was alone—"lying in state," as I called it, in the first row center—and after twenty years the pain was still the same.

Clemens Krauss conducted the Seventh. The torn, analytical first movement saddened me, but I thrilled at the rest and was confirmed in my complete faith in Mahler's genius. "There is no clear-cut choice," I wrote in my diary. "Whose way is right—the gloomy Mahler's or that of the lucid Richard Strauss? And what about Pfitzner? And Schönberg? Probably all four are right, each in his way."

May 18, 1931, was the twentieth anniversary of Mahler's death. I gave his portrait bust by Rodin to the Vienna State Opera, demanding only that it be unveiled on the date—and thus, in a way, compelling the authorities to have a commemoration they had by no means intended. I asked for the Adagietto from the Fifth Symphony, which Clemens Krauss conducted after the new director, Schneiderhan, had paid an impressive tribute to Mahler's work at the Opera. "Only the bust is too small for the large room," I noted. "My mistake!"

Plans were afoot to erect a monument to Gustav Mahler. I had to think of Felix Salten's Mahler essay, with its comment on the Viennese: "Now, of course, they are singing Mahler's praises. But only because he is dead. . . . Over the dead they become enthusiastic; for the dead they stand up ardently, as if they needed protection. The dead enchant them. But by the living they are 'not taken in.' . . ." Gustav Mahler had been dead twenty years, long enough to rate a monument in Vienna.

The idea came from Guido Adler, who had written the first critical appreciation of Mahler's work; a committee was formed and joined by all sorts of notables; the necessary money was raised in short order. A fitting site was chosen, and a block of marble cut. Yet for each obstacle that was surmounted, two new ones rose in the path of the project. My diary contains a note on a committee meeting—the hundredth, perhaps—in the City Hall office of Welfare Minister Julius Tandler; the former federal president, Hainisch, was in the chair and announced that the reigning Prince Schwarzenberg had withdrawn his previously granted permission to erect the monument on the ramp of his park—and that after the city had already approved the plan and appropriated funds for the pedestal! "Dejection was general," I wrote. "But Tandler, that magnificently frank fighter, conquered them all, and we, the inner committee, will now battle to the end!"

I did not always feel that way about Julius Tandler. I had known him since I was a girl—he had studied under Zuckerkandl, my friend Berta's husband, and become a world-famous anatomist in his own right. Without a doubt he was a man of true importance, but I regretted the waste of his gifts on Socialist party

politics. I was fascinated when he talked about his anatomical discoveries, about constitutional factors in disease, pelvic muscles, secondary sexual characters, and the like, but I rather pitied his ambition, his self-intoxication with power. He spent Christmas in 1931 with us on Semmering; we were snowed in, but our big radio, a gift from Andy Zsolnay, linked us with the world. Suddenly a news flash issued from the loud-speaker: an enormous quantity of radium—five grams—had been purchased for Austria, which was now third among all radium-owning countries. Tandler had accomplished this strictly secret coup, and now, with his hands in his pockets and his belly pushed forward, he gloated. "Well, what do you say? How'd I pull that off? Sure, a fellow's got to show them. . . ."

His political harangues could be downright ridiculous. In the fall of 1932 I invited him to a small party for Gerhart Hauptmann, and a singular conversation ensued. We had champagne, and after dinner, over black coffee, Hauptmann told us some animal stories, mainly of dogs, with consummate artistry; it is a pity no one took them down in shorthand. After the coffee there was more champagne. Hauptmann drank on merrily, and I offered Tandler a glass with the facetious question whether his Socialist principles allowed him to continue.

That started it. Hauptmann told of a Socialist leader, also a natural scientist, who had been a friend of his—up to a point: their ways had parted when the man began to give him temperance lectures of an annoyingly sour, pedantic sort.

Tandler, put out, undertook to defend his Marxist ground rules. He argued aridly, with an excess of erudition, and became more and more insecure. I had great fun listening.

"Excuse me," said Gerhart Hauptmann, "but I know my Silesian coal miners and glass blowers. If you take away their liquor, what's left for the poor devils?"

"The worker," Tandler replied, "spends a week's pay on liquor, goes home, beats his wife, and lights into her. Then he begets a child that is bound to turn out a moron."

"Or a Beethoven," Hauptmann roared. "Beethoven's father was a sot, and his mother a tippling spitfire."

"I bow to genius," Tandler said. "But that's no standard—"

Hauptmann laughed with his whole face. "Look," he said mischievously, "why can't you leave people alone? They get so much fun out of it!" And he lifted his glass, nodding to Tandler, who slumped brokenly in his chair.

He was not the only member of the Social Democratic high command who came to our house on occasion. There was the well-fed, bourgeois party leader Karl Renner and there was the Catholic prelate Drexel, whose heart was on the Left—as was that of old Monsignor Engelbert Müller, the cathedral priest of St. Stephen's. One day we were sitting in the living room with Renner trying to inveigle Werfel into some party affair when the doorbell rang and my little Italian manservant called me out into the hall. "Signor Starhemberg" had to tell me something of importance. I knew at once that this was Prince Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, the leader of the fascist Heimwehr. Renner had no idea that his arch-enemy was so near! I forget what he wanted, but in any case I quickly got rid of Prince Starhemberg, whose radical rightist attitude was not mine—though the red sparks simultaneously flying in my living room were not mine, either.

"Today," I wrote in July 1932, on Semmering, "we had a little political fight again. . . ."

It dealt with the conception of the hero, and of heroism. I championed the active, Wagnerian heroic type of Siegfried, and Werfel bristled, thinking that my every word was aimed at him and his *Weltanschauung*. He resented my loyalty to my old idols, Nietzsche and Wagner, and their continuing influence on me.

He had been depressed for some time, having no work on his mind; he was tinkering with old poems and dissatisfied with himself. I had no easy time with him, in the great solitude on Semmering. I, too, had my worries. Our income had dropped; Mahler was no longer played in Germany, Werfel's books were not selling there, and our budget was overstrained by the house in Vienna. I thought we should rent the house. But Werfel took this suggestion as a personal rebuke and racked his brains for another way out.

On the morning after our argument he came to me. "Something went through my head tonight," he said. "It actually pursued me. I did not want to think of it; it wanted me to."

And he told me that he was now going to show a hero as *he* understood the term. He would illustrate Turkish nationalism and tell the story of the anti-Armenian atrocities, based on the authentic data he had received from the French after our trip to Damascus. There, in Damascus, he had seen the infamous works of nationalist oppression at close range: the poor children at the looms—or under them, rather, for they were still unable to operate them—that pitiful offspring of massacred parents, whose picture had never been out of Franz Werfel's mind.

He had felt an immediate urge to write about this, but the spark had not yet been struck. The revival of the idea was occasioned by the increasing chaos in Germany, the imminent threat of a political victory for Hitler and resultant persecution of the Jews; and now the final impulse was provided by the clash of our personalities, by Werfel's wish to convert me by presenting an "involuntary hero." Our frequent political differences were good for him; a woman of the café literati type would long since have turned him into an abstraction—a danger to which he was prone.

From July 1932 to March 1933 he wrote *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*.

In between, in November 1932, we spent two beautiful, richly impressive weeks in Germany. Werfel lectured, reading, among other things, the fifth chapter of Part One of the new novel, with the historic conversation of Enver Pasha and Pastor Johannes Lepsius. He did not read as well as he usually did; I wondered whether his theatrical delivery might be my fault, because I judged him with too much loving blindness instead of criticizing at once. We tend to be cowed by our men, but we help them more if we are not. I described in my diary the people we encountered: Wilhelm Furtwängler, "finest of all these vacillating conductors, an artist to his finger tips"; Otto Klemperer, "the common man"; Erich Kleiber, "the little man with the Napoleon hat—an overcompensated complex, groundless, since he is a splendid musician." We met Fritz Stiedry, the ex-

plosive musician and gifted composer, and I wrote, "If he'll just finish his opera!"

At the home of Socialist Prussian Minister Hilferding we met a seraphic, utterly modest man who liked to listen: Heinrich Bruening, ex-chancellor of the Reich. I had the good fortune of sitting next to him. We discussed unemployment, a burning issue which he called "actually nonexistent, with a standing army of 800,000 who are fed for three years. And the women the war brought into all offices, where they flirt and will not make room! Mussolini realized this in time. He gave women back their womanhood. It's their most beautiful feature anyway—a bit of earth, since Heaven is beyond us and our dreams!"

He was convinced that Hitler would win: "A man who can wait so long and hold so vast a following is bound to win." (I called Bruening "the Catholic Fräulein.")

On our last day in Germany we saw Hitler.

It was in Breslau; the whole town was in an uproar. Instead of attending Werfel's lecture, which I knew by heart, I spent the evening in the dining room of our hotel, alone with a novel by Thomas Hardy. At last the waiter, whom I had previously bribed, came to fetch me, and I joined the crowd awaiting "him."

By then Werfel was back from his lecture. Both of us felt that there must be something to a face that had enthralled thirty millions. Werfel stood behind me; the SS men who suddenly lined the stairs wanted to make me step down, but I promised to stand quietly in back of one of them and thus got him to protect me.

Then I saw the face I had been waiting for: clutching eyes—young, frightened features—no Duce! An adolescent, rather, who would never mature, would never achieve wisdom.

When it was over, when Hitler had bounded up the stairs and vanished through an open door, I asked Werfel for his impression. He did not reply.



Some time after World War I Hans Pfitzner met Franz Werfel at my home. At first he kept signaling to me, asking whether the intruder would not leave soon; I pretended not to understand. With our frugal dinner I served a few bottles of Tokay, which did not fail to take effect: the two started arguing fiercely about things to come. "Germany will win yet," Pfitzner shouted, shaking his fists. "Hitler will show you!"

In 1928, he came to Venice with his daughter and got on better with Werfel. But when we ran into Max Brod, the Jewish poet, he and Brod each whispered into my ear, "Funny for such a nationalist to be so humpbacked!" The funny part was that they both were right, except that Pfitzner wore his hump on the chest.

He despised all things Italian. I made reservations for him at a hotel with a fine view of the Grand Canal, but when I called I found the shades drawn. "I don't want to see the Grand Canal," he snorted. His twenty-year-old daughter was not allowed to go anywhere by herself, not even to a museum, lest she be robbed or raped; anything could happen in that "beggar country." He would come home fuming—"Not even the pigeons are tame here"—as he struggled out of his overcoat.

He tormented me—and I took it. I revered him. The enduring fact was that he, along with Richard Strauss, was Germany's most musical composer; everything else would pass.

Later in 1928 I myself grew restless in Venice. Yearning for some powerful sensation, I got Anna to go with me to Rome for a few days. There I went to see the uncrowned queen of Italy, Margherita Sarfatti, who received me with a curious, not too encouraging smile and did not warm up until our talk turned to her famous lover. "At last," she exclaimed, "we have a leader! It was almost too late. But even more important than his genius is his character. . . ."

She was reclining on a chaise longue, with hundreds of small sheets of paper in her lap, on which she scribbled incessantly. We agreed that the world must be reorganized, but she pointed out that Italian fascism required sacrifices which other people might not be capable of. "There can be no international fascism," she said, "unless the fascism of other countries is as wise as Mussolini's and stops talking of the Jewish question." It was the very question I had come to talk about!

She said Mussolini did not intend to adopt alien policies. He would never introduce Hitler's anti-Semitism in Italy. "The Jews have brains, and we need them. They must at last be accepted on an equal basis. History shows that the Jew has often been more national-minded than the native," she said, and invited me to come again. I was to see much of her in Paris ten years later, when she was no longer Mussolini's mistress but an embittered refugee; when her hero was swallowing Hitler's dust, and all that she had found so lovable about him appeared despicable.

Many minds were changed by Hitler's rise to power. Hans Pfitzner, one of his earliest adherents, renounced Nazism in 1933. Arnold Schönberg, also in 1933, wrote to Anton von Webern:

I—though with difficulty and much wavering—have cut my ties to the West. I have resolved to be a Jew; you may have heard me mention a work of which I could say only that it would point ways to a Jewish national activity. . . . I intend to take an active part in this movement. I think it matters more to me than my art, and if I am fit for such work, I am determined henceforth to do nothing else but aid the Jewish national cause. . . .

As for me, I had returned to Catholicism the past summer, after years of feeling expelled from the communion of the saints. Con-

fession came hard, after so long a time; I almost fainted with the excitement of it. My dear friend Father Engelbert Müller of St. Stephen's was surely baffled by my violent tears.

Franz Werfel was completing *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* in March 1933, while the Nazis were taking over in Germany. I visited him in Santa Margherita, where he had been working for weeks. I stayed only ten days, afraid of distracting him in his vehement effort—for whenever we were together after a long separation we would talk, and talk, and talk. With utter delight I listened to two-thirds of the novel. Then, praying that this would be the great work of our dreams, I returned to Vienna and my close companionship with Catholic leaders.

At last, I felt that I had found my natural place. I attended Cardinal Innitzer's enthronement as prince-archbishop; the unique ceremony disappointed me only in one respect, and that was the choice of music. It occurred to me that Mahler's music could be—in fact, had to be—played on such occasions: the last movement of the Second Symphony, for instance, and the first of the Eighth. Through a friend I invited some important men to lunch, among them Father Müller, Professor Weissenböck, the cathedral organist, and Father Johannes Hollnsteiner, Professor of Theology.

Hollnsteiner called on me at once, and I felt almost as quickly familiar with him. After his third visit all others around seemed like gray phantoms. "Johannes Hollnsteiner is thirty-eight years old and thus far has not met Woman. He is the essence of a priest," I wrote in my diary.

I wished to profit from him, from his intellect, his solid knowledge, his noble, unostentatious way of communicating his knowledge. He explained the Mass to me as the perpetual commemoration of Christ in the world: at every hour of the day or night Mass is being read somewhere around the globe. He explained the indulgence—Luther's point of departure—as the old Germanic custom of wergild. He cited the Council of Constance to show how Luther had intensified and exploited the conflicts between individualism and the communal idea. To Hollnsteiner, Hitler seemed a kind of Luther, though a very minor one.

After Werfel's return we had some English and American

visitors. H. G. Wells came with his mistress—"surely a man of mark," I wrote, "but a foxy, unprepossessing one." Sinclair Lewis followed, with his wife: "he either mad or pretending to be; she a warm-blooded, bright and beautiful woman; both very interesting and important." Dorothy Thompson Lewis had the honor of being the first foreign journalist to be expelled from Hitler's Reich. They came to see us on Semmering, and we went to see them. Each meeting was lucid, gay, unhampered by sentimentalities.

One evening we took the Lewises to a fashionable hotel on the Ringstrasse. Lewis drank a lot and became reckless. He went up to the bandstand and joined the musicians, beginning with the drum, which he handled masterfully, moving on to the saxophone, taking the fiddle out of the first violinist's hand and playing it—it was a joy to watch a man of such great gifts expressing his strong ego.

The year was reflected in notes scattered through my diary:

March

This afternoon Franz finished his great book, "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh." The whole house waited breathlessly for his descent from his study. It is a titanic achievement for a Jew to write a work like this at this time, exposed to such animosities. Both of us were unspeakably happy. . . .

May

Franz makes mistakes now. Today he would not let me go to church! It is the wrong kind of jealousy; there I am not unfaithful to him. Or perhaps precisely there—?

September

I worry for Franz. He has a run of bad luck.

For over forty years he was a born child of fortune. Nothing could go wrong. He was lucky in his parents, in his sisters, in the family's wealth, in his own increasing fame. And now, suddenly, comes the German persecution of the Jews!

His books are burned; he is not wooed any more; all at once he is a nosy little Jew with no great talent for the masses, which dictate success now. It makes me just so much more determined to stick to him!

I worry about the impending death of his father, who is seventy-

six and psychologically unfit to cope with the political situation. May this second blow not come now; Franz is so deeply depressed, anyway. . . .

November

Today Franz is politically calmer and therefore closer to me. As Gustav Mahler used to say: "Nothing can get into a closed circle."

Later in November

I had a long talk with Franz over the telephone. He is in Prague, where they already call him a Nazi—just because he tries to look objectively at this elemental occurrence. "The Jews," he told me, "ought to refute the others by dignity and achievement, not by yelling." How right he is!

In February 1934 the Austrian Social-Democrats paid the price of their stupendous blunders. Julius Tandler, for instance, had ordered every crucifix removed from the hospital rooms of Vienna and priests admitted during visiting hours only; if any patients presumed to die at other times, they had to do without the comforts of religion. The crowning folly of this power-mad crew was to undermine the influence of the village clergy, and thus to pave the way for the "ersatz religion" of Nazism.

I was alone in Vienna, that month; Werfel was at work in Santa Margherita, and it was as well for him to be spared the monstrous excitement. Manon and I used to go into town to read the papers, feeling too constricted in the ominous atmosphere of our neighborhood. The Socialist press kept agitating for civil war, assiduously provoking the government, which took no steps in reply. Suddenly we read in a conservative paper that a cipher telegram containing the Socialist battle and general strike plans had been intercepted at the post office in Linz. This was a week after Prince Starhemberg had told me that if Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss failed to move against the workers' continuing aggression, he and the other vice-chancellor, Major Emil Fey, would go ahead without Dollfuss.

And so they did. Dollfuss was in Budapest when the Linz telegram gave Starhemberg and Fey a welcome chance to mobilize the Home Guard, which they controlled. On February 18 they struck, occupying the City Hall.

In the morning I was with a friend whose son was in the militia. When he phoned to tell her that the general strike had begun, I left at once to buy candles and hurry home. I found the telephone already out and the electricity cut off. A messenger came from Kurt von Schuschnigg, the minister of justice, asking me to move with Manon to his family's house, since mine was in a zone of imminent danger. But I could not desert my servants and Manon's French governess, so I declined with thanks.

For two days both sides fought desperately. The Socialists had turned their "housing projects" into veritable fortresses and armed their huge Republican Defense League with live ammunition. To me the firing in our immediate vicinity was terribly exciting, almost thrilling; I packed a suitcase for the eventuality of flight and sent the governess to the cellar for a bottle of champagne, which we emptied standing, constantly on the alert.

Before our house the mob surged up and down. The workers tried to take the government guns from the rear, firing from all windows, but when a Home Guard bullet strayed in their direction, the crowd screamed murder. Later, a government member showed me through these famous "developments," where the walls hid ammunition dumps and a whole children's playground was built on a dynamite foundation.

What happened may have been fated to happen. The government emerged from the fight deeply scarred; Dollfuss himself developed a virtual persecution mania, seeing an enemy in everyone. The only one to benefit was Hitler. The Nazis trained their propaganda guns on labor, and labor, embittered by the February events, sank blissfully into their arms. Dollfuss was assassinated by the Nazis, who would have seized Austria then and there except for Mussolini's intervention. And Kurt von Schuschnigg became chancellor after refusing the office for five days. "I am a first-rate second, but not a first-rate first," he said.



Some years earlier, in the late twenties, the head of Simon and Schuster, Franz Werfel's American publishers, had come to Vienna. He rang our doorbell—we were still living on Elisabethstrasse—and Manon, then twelve or thirteen, went to answer. I was out, but I heard later that Mr. Lincoln Schuster stared

at her in bewilderment. "Why, Kathy Scherman, what are you doing here?" he asked the child, in English.

Manon did not understand English. I first heard about her double in America when Mr. Schuster visited us on Semmering. We sat on the big porch, the mountain chain before us, watching the deer that came out of the woods at dusk to graze and play on our lawn. When Manon appeared, herself as frail, graceful, and shy as a young deer, our guest told us of his friends in New York, Harry and Bernardine Scherman, whose little daughter looked so much like mine.

Manon's photograph crossed the Atlantic; a charming one of Katharine Scherman came back. The girls began a lively correspondence. I never read their letters, but I know they wrote in French, having no other language in common. They wrote much about their cats—they both adored cats, and in some way identified themselves with them—and, among other pictures, they exchanged some showing Manon with a Siamese and Katharine with a Persian. They made an effort to tell each other what it was like to be a girl in Vienna and in New York, with the result that they came to know a good deal about each other. It warmed my heart to see these two beautiful children make friends over three thousand miles of land and sea.

I had never quite overcome the feeling of awe with which I first regarded Manon as an infant. How we are born determines our lives, in my opinion; it certainly determined my children's lives. Maria, my oldest, began her short and dramatic existence under frightful agonies and dangers to me and to herself; afterward, she lay there all blue, as if dead, for hours. Anna arrived at high noon, on a calm summer day; birds sang outside, and before doctor and midwife came she was there—very forward, very independent, whimpering softly when she was laid on a pillow, but needing no further attention. Manon, many years later, was born altogether differently. I carried her ten months and eventually injured myself on purpose, to make the doctor think I was hemorrhaging and to prod him into a surgical delivery. It was a slow, difficult process that brought my beautiful, dark-haired child into the world; her whole asthenic personality, her hesitancy, her exaggerated quiet were contained in this birth.

She always was a miracle to me, and yet she never seemed a stranger, as Anna did at times. It was symbolic that at thirteen Anna would let no one call her by her pet name, "Gucki," any more, while Manon remained "Mutzi" forever.

Her adolescence did not affect our relationship. She was not yet sixteen in September 1932, when I spent ten days with her at a hotel in Carinthia and rejoiced to see how greatly she pleased everyone. On the last evening of our stay an admirer of mine arrived, a prominent politician who was instantly in love with me again, followed me to my room, drew me out on the balcony, and courted me as passionately as a stripling. I felt very remote, however.

He seemed to ignore Manon completely, but when we saw him again in Vienna, his attitude changed. By the time she was seventeen he was madly in love with her. He was in his forties, brilliant, good-looking, powerful—but Manon was proof against his ardor, as I had been. Every meeting with him became a huge joke for both of us.

In March 1934, we met him at the airport in Venice, where we had joined Werfel after the February outbreaks. I remember an evening when our inconstant swain expounded his program for Austria to me and Manon and another, younger politician, who loved her as much, and as hopelessly—an evening that was politically illuminating and privately titillating. We ourselves, Werfel, Manon, and I, were in total harmony in Venice, that loveliest of cities. "I have scarcely a wish left," I wrote in my diary.

On April 6, Werfel and I went to Milan to hear *La Forza del Destino*, an opera which he and I had jointly adapted for the German stage. It struck me again how well we understood each other and enjoyed music together, although he approached it more from the vocal, and I more from the purely musical, side. I was heartsick only not to have Manon along, who had been in Dresden with us for the first performance of our German version; but she insisted on staying in Venice.

On our return we found her looking pale. She ate hardly anything. (Later, I found out that painful headaches had made her swallow four aspirin tablets at once.) We were visited by Ernst

Lothar, a Viennese author whose daughter had died of polio months before, and when Manon crossed the square, slender and gentle as always, I saw a shadow of pain in Lothar's eye. I felt sorry for him and left, unable to hide my misgivings at seeing Manon by the hapless father's side.

Max Pallenberg, the actor, came in the afternoon and was fascinated by her. We went to the Ristorante Fenice, but the food sickened Manon. Later, sitting in the Piazza San Marco, I suddenly missed my emerald cross, a keepsake I always carried. We searched the square, the alleys—in vain. Uneasily I sensed an evil omen.

On April 13 we had to leave for Vienna, to hear Bruno Walter conduct *The Song of the Earth*. Manon implored me to let her stay in Venice a few days longer, and though our train left at 5:00 A.M. and it always nauseated her to rise early, she insisted on seeing us to the station. Before the train pulled out, however, she told me she was not feeling well and thought she had better go home. From the end of the platform she waved her slim, beautiful hand to us in farewell.

It was the last time I would see her well, standing, walking, in her incredible beauty.

In Vienna we were caught in the usual bustle. I wired Manon, asking her how she was, and received the answer, "Indigestion nearly gone." It was Sunday and no flights were scheduled, or I would have flown right back. After the concert we were joined by the Walters and the Schuschniggs, and I bothered everyone with my irrational fears. At home—Schuschnigg was along because he liked to talk to Anna—we found the maid waiting up to tell me about a call from Venice saying that "Miss Manon wasn't well; something in her head. . . ."

No one could imagine what that might be. I telephoned for two reservations on the morning plane, and on Monday Sister Ida and I flew to Venice. Before the take-off I got a call through to Manon's French governess, who kept shouting the same word over and over, in a tear-choked voice: "Camphor—camphor—"

I knew enough.

The nurse and I sat staring out of the plane window, afraid to look at each other. On the Lido we were met by a friend,

Prince Urach, who told us in despair that Manon had meningitis. He was wrong. She had poliomyelitis.

I do not remember how we got home. Manon clasped me in her arms, sobbing, "It's all right now that my Mummy is here. . . ."

The doctors came shortly after and gravely decided on an immediate lumbar puncture. The nurse assisted. I paced the next room like a crazy woman, with a volume of Angelus Silesius in my hand, reading a line now and then but unable to grasp a word. The afternoon plane brought Werfel, Anna, Paul Zsolnay, and a Viennese specialist, Dr. Friedmann, to Venice. "I never knew that you're all so fond of me," Manon said.

Paralysis of the legs, which she herself recognized at once, set in two days later, and in a few more days her entire body was paralyzed. Respiratory paralysis began after a week. It was only Anna's quick, energetic action—she went, in a downpour, for an oxygen apparatus and finally located one in an outlying pharmacy—that avoided this earlier death. Dr. Friedmann administered twenty-one injections.

To enable us to get the doctor quickly at any time, friends of ours kept their motor launch at our landing twenty-four hours a day—especially touching since they had small children of their own. Eventually we decided to take Manon home. The transport to the station was very difficult in Venice, where every move had to be made over swaying planks, and the poor child was repeatedly in peril of being dropped into the water. We rode to Vienna with her in a special car, the former ambulance car of Emperor Franz Josef, which the Austrian government had put at my disposal.

At first Manon suffered a great deal; later, her nerves calmed down. The condition became stationary. The doctors agreed that any risk of contagion was now past, and I had them give me this assurance in writing before I would let people see Manon, especially young people. Everyone wanted to visit her. The playwright Carl Zuckmayer became so infatuated with her that he said he wished to live with no one but Manon, paralyzed or not. Werner Krauss, the great actor, came every day to rehearse his parts with her, in full reliance on her fabulous artistic

instinct. "I'm really desperate," he once told me when I came into the room. "I've read the soliloquy four times now, and Manon still isn't satisfied!"

In the summer Werfel took time off from his own work to coach Manon in the leading role of *La Forza del Destino*, in his German version. She looked quite regal in black tights, doublet, and hose, and spoke from her wheel chair like a consummate actress. Werfel played opposite her, and I had to provide the music. It was a charming little performance that we put on for our friends.

During her illness Manon studied acting with our friend Franz Horch, then Reinhardt's play editor and later a New York literary agent. There was something unspeakably touching about her reading parts chained to her bed, unable to move and hardly able to gesture. She could not write any more, but she loved the letters that came from those who loved her. Katharine Scherman kept writing from America, and one of the joys of that terrible year was the news that she would pay us a visit.

Katharine and her parents had been mountain climbing in the Caucasus in the summer of 1934. On their way home they came to Vienna, and from there Mr. and Mrs. Scherman took a short trip to Hungary, leaving their child with us. When I first saw her, I gasped, even though I had expected a striking resemblance. It was not merely a matter of looking alike; this shy, soft-spoken American girl acted and reacted like Manon. Along with Manon's beauty she had Manon's reserve, her serious way with people, her withdrawals into art. She had great musical talent and spent hours at the piano in the room next to Manon's, and I saw tears in her eyes when she played the last chorus of the *Passion According to St. Matthew*.

I thought of Ernst Lothar in Venice, when he had seen Manon a few days before she was stricken and a few months after his daughter had died. My situation was comparable, but I did not feel the pain I had seen in Lothar's eyes. To me, looking at Katharine was a relief from pain; I loved her not because of her friendship with Manon, but because in her I was seeing my poor, bedridden, dying child walk through my house again, lovely and healthy and strong. I identified her so completely with Manon

that it frightened me to see how thin she was. I had my maid bring her a glass of cream and some *pâté de foie gras* on white bread every morning at seven. Katharine, I am afraid, did not appreciate being wakened like this every day, but she bravely submitted to my fattening regime and always went back to sleep until breakfast time. As for me, I had the satisfaction of seeing her gain some much-needed weight during her stay.

Between breakfast and lunch I would invite her, for the same reason, to have a "morning schnapps" with me, some mild, high-calory cordial. I heard only later that she had never touched liquor before, having grown up under Prohibition, and that she rather disliked the taste but was too shy to refuse. We had a small chauffeured car in those days, in which I had her go sight-seeing in the city and in the Vienna Woods. In the evenings I invited English-speaking guests for her, or she accompanied us to the Opera, or we played bridge in three languages. Once we took her to a gypsy restaurant. Katharine was a splendid dancer, and because Werfel felt unable to do her justice, I retained one of the professional partners provided by the establishment. He danced several dances with her; it was a pleasure to watch them, but apparently they exchanged not a single word, although I had made sure that the young man spoke English.

Whether Katharine had any real contact with Manon during her stay I do not know. She did not speak German, and Manon was now usually too tired to talk much in a foreign language. Also, both of them were shy, and Manon's illness must have lain as a blight over their chats at her bedside. Perhaps Katharine was rather relieved when the return of her parents put an end to her visit. I was sorry to see her go, but the lasting result was a wonderful friendship with the Scherman family, a friendship that has grown closer over the years.

Nothing that we thought might cheer Manon was left undone. One day I read an advertisement in the paper: a Viennese family had a musically gifted Negro child at home, but no means to provide for musical training. I asked Manon whether she wanted to look at the child. Her eyes lit up, so I got into our little car and drove out into the suburbs, to the address given in the paper. It was a tenement house in a remote, noisy, unlovely street. I

climbed the dingy stairs and rang a bell. A young girl answered, a daughter of the people who had put the ad in the paper. Their name was Weinzinger.

Behind a chair stood the little black boy, showing a large number of white teeth in his big, woundlike mouth. The whites of his eyes shimmered in the dusk with a phosphorescent glow. I gave the girl my name and address and asked her to tell her parents that I wanted the boy for my paralyzed Manon, who was already looking forward to the little fellow.

The next day they brought him to lunch. He started dancing around Manon's bed and then racing all through the house; we never knew where he was. He made us all so nervous that we had to banish him to the kitchen.

It was an odd story that the Weinzingers had to tell. The man, a university graduate, had spent some years in Addis Ababa as tutor to Haile Selassie's crown prince. His daughters were pious churchgoers, and for a few days in a row they saw a naked Negro baby, all festering skin and bones, draped over the shoulder of an old hag who was begging in the church door. It reminded Werfel and me of a similarly dreadful experience we once had in Cairo: stepping from the elegant, brightly lit Opera House into the darkness of the park outside, we saw a woman squatting on the ground, and across her knees a beautiful dead girl. Pointing to the corpse, she begged for alms. We gave hurriedly and fled toward the street lights.

The Weinzinger girls, weeping with pity, ran for their mother, and the merciful woman bought the boy from the old crone. She told us how she carried him home in a blanket, bathed him—probably the first time this had happened to the poor creature—and watched the empty skin float about the starved-out body. Installed in a box, fed well and properly cared for, he gained weight and seemed on the way to full recovery until it became evident that he had suffered some brain damage. All his reactions were abnormal. He would befoul everything, in every way, and the only means of keeping him halfway quiet was music or dancing, or both. He never took a normal step, but danced all day, wherever he was, in the house or in the street.

I knew at once that I could not keep this child in my house.

We were frantic, anyway, with fear for Manon. I made arrangements for placing the boy in a missionary hospital—and a year later Franz Werfel, who had been greatly amused by his antics, immortalized him as “Ebedmelech, the child with the dance-tossed limbs,” in his novel about the prophet Jeremiah.

The year of 1934 went by, and 1935 began. One day our old friend the cathedral pastor of St. Stephen’s came to Manon’s bedside: “You know, my child,” he assured her, “you’ve suffered enough now. Once you are well again, you can sin all you want, and the good Lord won’t mind. You’ve done penance beforehand.”

On Easter Monday, April 22, Manon’s voice was all but extinguished. “Let me die,” she said. “I’ll never get well; and my acting, that’s just what you make up for me out of pity. . . . You’ll get over it, Mummy, as you get over everything—I mean,” she corrected herself, “as everyone gets over everything. . . .”

Those were her last words to me.

No one who knew her will forget her. Alban Berg came to ask me whether he might interrupt his work on a new opera to compose a requiem for her, a violin sonata called “In Memory of an Angel.”

We were left behind, impoverished. Hollnsteiner was a great help; he beautified the hideous aftermath of death and delivered a wonderful speech at her grave. She was buried like a queen, as she had lived.



I wrote in my diary:

When I see a child, I see in its features the rapid ripening, growing, passing of life, and the nearness of death. When I see an animal—death. When I see plants—death looks through them, at me. It is frightful.

I feel a desperate longing for Manon. . . .

We went to Venice in July, to sell our house. We had been so happy in it—too happy, perhaps—but the horrible end would never again let us laugh there. The past was constantly before our eyes; in every corner I saw Manon, and burst into tears.

With Anna's and the nurse's help I packed and emptied the house in twenty-four hours.

On Semmering there was rough, inclement weather. I was sick most of the time until we moved to Vienna in September. "I have stopped caring about my life and that of others," I wrote in my diary. "Why bother, in view of the pitiless, illogical grin of death?"

In November, we sailed to America. Max Reinhardt, a year before, had ordered a Biblical cavalcade from Werfel, "a kind of St. Matthew's Passion," as he put it, encompassing the whole Old Testament. The play, which Werfel called *The Eternal Road*, was to be produced in New York, with music by Kurt Weill.

To me, the voyage was like a retracing of the curve of my ascent that had begun with Gustav Mahler. I liked New York, but what I had loved lay entombed, decomposed, alone, stripped of itself. Werfel's new American publisher and friend, Ben Huebsch, was at the pier and took us to the royal suite that had been reserved for us at the Waldorf-Astoria—at our expense, of course. Uneasily we walked into the splendor. We were exhausted and unhappy after the trip; besides, some bad whisky had made Werfel really ill.

"This road," I wrote, "is truly eternal. . . ." The play was to open at the Manhattan Opera House. When we arrived at the theater I knew so well, the old seat cushions lay piled three feet high, caked with cement dust and ready to be thrown away rather than sold. Workmen were busy tearing off the boxes, leaving the holes to gape in the walls like huge mouths. It made me cry to look at such vandalism. The man in charge of raising funds for the production stood around jingling coins in his pocket and telling everybody who would listen that there was much too much money on hand.

He had figured without the building management, which had not been consulted before removing the boxes. As a result, besides the \$30,000 it cost to tear them off and plaster over the holes, another \$30,000 had to be deposited as security for their restoration after the run of the show. Half a million dollars was gone before there were any sets or any costumes. The unions

contributed their share of trouble. The show was constantly on the brink of abandonment, and we frequently had to go begging to wealthy people; once we went together with Albert Einstein. The saddest part was that many poor Eastern Jews had put their life savings into this project—little people motivated by a high idealism—and never saw a cent of it again.

Werfel reached the end of his strength. So did Reinhardt, who forced his collaborators to adopt his awful habit of staying awake nights. Rehearsals, conferences—everything took place at night; Werfel generally got to bed around 5:00 A.M., after endless discussions, always in despair. One night I awoke to find him hanging over the edge of his bed, in tears. "It grieves me," he sobbed, "it grieves me. . . ."

At the same time, he received ovations elsewhere. Our arrival had followed shortly upon the American publication of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, and the New York Armenian colony honored him at immense feasts with fiery speeches. On Christmas Eve they invited us to a catacomb banquet—very solemn, subterranean, and mysterious—and to services in an Armenian church. "We were a nation," said the priest in his sermon, "but Franz Werfel gave us a soul." And after the service the entire congregation filed past to shake hands with us.

Over the holidays we were house guests of a son of the late Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Friends, noticing our condition after Manon's death, and worried lest we spend a lonely Christmas, had arranged for the invitation. Our host's wife was born an Astor; we occupied not one guest room but a flight of them. Rising early, as always, I found the morning paper in the hall outside my door. I picked it up: on the front page was a picture of Alban Berg—and underneath it, cabled from Vienna, a report of his death.

I did not wake Werfel; I was afraid to break the news. Quietly, by myself, I wept for Alban, whose last work had been a requiem for my child. Now it had become his own. . . .

We returned to Europe in February 1936. By then the opening of *The Eternal Road* was assured, but we could wait no longer. The play was beautiful and very successful later, from all accounts, but we never saw it.

In Paris we were received by Anna and a crowd of young Armenians, who sang a hymn as the train pulled into the station. Anna thought some foreign potentate must be arriving. Getting off with a few pieces of hand luggage, I was about to greet her when we were driven apart. "Where is Franz Werfel?" the crowd roared, stampeding into the car. When they recognized me, they tore the suitcases out of my hands and the porter's; we had a hard time reassembling them.

Some days later, a big dinner was given in Werfel's honor and attended by a retired rear admiral who had been the captain of the *Jeanne d'Arc*, the ship that plays such an important part at the end of *Musa Dagb*. Alternating with the festivities were minor mishaps, such as the party to which an Austrian gourmet invited us with Anna and another couple. It began at a place on the Left Bank, where truffles were fried in the embers and vintage brandy was drawn from the keg and served in water glasses. Then we went on to Fouquet's, and finally to a night club. The ladies wanted to dance, but I was watching Werfel, who suddenly looked strange. I began to press for departure. A taxi was called; Anna went and sat in it, waiting for Werfel and me, but Werfel had disappeared. After a long search I found him at last in the ladies' room, letting cold water run over his head, neck, and face. I dried him as well as I could, under the circumstances, and we left the establishment. He was gay, swaying gently. At our fastidious Hotel Majestic, Anna and I took him between us and thus got by without attracting the stern night clerk's attention. I spent the rest of the night in Werfel's room, worrying about him even though he slept excellently.

Such incidents were rare; as regards alcohol he was sobriety itself. Not so where coffee and tobacco were concerned. When I first met him, Werfel's finger tips were nicotine-stained, and in his family it was the custom to smoke between courses at dinner. Later, despite medical prohibitions, he would chain-smoke cigars, cigarettes, and pipes as though in a perpetual suicide attempt. In retrospect, I see that in our life together we were always trembling for Werfel, never for me—and I was so much the older!

From Paris we went to Zurich, where we met Johannes Hollnsteiner and took him along to Locarno. On April 22, the

anniversary of Manon's death, he read a Mass for her and suffered with us. If possible, the calamity had brought Werfel and me closer together. Manon lived with us. Not a day passed without talking of her, weeping for her.

In Locarno I wrote in my diary:

And then the room crumbles—and then the town crumbles—and everything is past—past! The miserable, terrible day is past, and one goes on living in desolation. . . .

In Vienna, in June, I wrote:

My heart is parched. . . . I no longer love anyone, or anything. At most, my own little bit of life. The works of the men who were close to me no longer strike me as of paramount importance. They no longer need me, either.

Over the summer, Werfel wrote his Jeremiah novel, *Hearken unto the Voice*. Not only the Weinzingers' black boy showed up in this book, but Manon herself, with her own words and gestures, with all of her beauty, was resurrected as "Zenua."

In the following spring we left another house. There have been guilty and innocent houses and homes in my life: wherever a beloved died there was guilt. The villa at Breitenstein was guiltless; so was the little apartment on Elisabethstrasse. It had seen illness and emotional conflicts, but nothing irreparable. Buying the mansion on the Hohe Warte was a mistake for which I paid with Manon's death.

From the beginning we were not really happy in that house. Werfel still could not work in the large top-floor study, and would escape to villages in the environs of Vienna, to work in hotel bedrooms. At last, we resolved to get out of that ill-starred house. I had ten thousand books to pack, five thousand sheets of music, pianos, paintings, valuables of all sorts. "Junk, from the viewpoint of eternity," I wrote, "and dead weight in everyday life. Yet we toil like beavers to protect our possessions. Why? To what end?"

Before moving out, we gave a party that lasted from 8:00 P.M. until 2:00 P.M. the next day. The *Neues Wiener Journal* of June 11, 1937, took a full column for the names and titles of those it did not dare omit from "among those present." There were three

cabinet members and the wife of a fourth, three ambassadors and the wife of a fourth, two chargés, several ministers in retirement. There were princes and princesses, counts and countesses, barons and baronesses. There were a dozen Burgtheater stars, including one who was Countess Thun in private life and another who was waiting to become Princess Starhemberg. There were the Burgtheater's director and its director emeritus, the director emeritus of the Opera, the publisher of the *Journal*, the former publisher of the *Neue Freie Presse*. There were the ranking musicians, of course: "Generalmusikdirektoren" Bruno Walter and Artur Rodzinski, Professor Dr. Lothar Wallerstein, Wilhelm Kienzl, Alexander von Zemlinski. There were the writers, from Karl Schönherr, the aged folk dramatist, whom Gerhart Hauptmann classed with himself, to young Ödön von Horvath, whose genius required another world war to be appreciated.

There were incredibly comical moments, as, for example, when Frau Kienzl kept pulling her old master near the minister of education and both of them barely missed landing in the pond; and when Werfel drew some young countesses before a statue which he had stripped of the ivy I had painstakingly trained to cover the danger spot. Their excited giggles carried far. Carl Zuckmayer bedded down in the dog basket after midnight, "to get closer to nature." Our dear guests slept on every couch in the house, only to return refreshed to the festivities.

Franz von Papen, the prominent Catholic who had been sent as envoy by the Nazi Reich, chatted with an Austrian monarchist leader. "If we were living three hundred years ago," he said, "I would have Hitler and his men burned at the stake. Since that isn't done any more, we must wait for him to burn in his own fire."

I dreamed I was at a railway station. My ailing mother was to come up to Breitenstein, and I had gone to meet her. Next to me sat a musician. Suddenly the door opened, and Oskar Kokoschka, entrancingly beautiful, came in with somebody else. He did not recognize me at first, but then he greeted me with his eyes and with his hands, approached without speaking, walked away, turned back once more. . . .

Wide awake, I got up and stepped out on the balcony. A giant rainbow vaulted the mountain, linking our valley with the infinite. I had never seen anything like it. "So I'm forgiven," I murmured, and opened my arms, and I felt his forgiveness.

On July 23 I wrote him a letter.

Now you are fifty years old—without me—and I feel as if we had spent the time together, after all, though separated in space.

I know much about you, and you about me. You know of the death blow I have been dealt by the loss of my child, Manon—but you hardly knew this wondrous creature. In her suffering she far outgrew us all. She really became the "angel" to whom Alban Berg's last work was dedicated.

I have known no joy since, and any remaining appearance of hopefulness or expectancy is deceptive. Now you know all about me; so please let me know about yourself.

Seeing all of your pictures together made me very happy. You "bestride your frontiers," are always the same and yet always another.

Today I awoke at dawn and saw a globe-girdling rainbow curve over the mountain, from my valley into another, distant one. It was like a sign of your forgiveness. I beg you now to drop all unkind feelings, to take my hand—all I want of you is to know that we are one again, as deep down we have never ceased being.

Alma

In the same month, July 1937, Werfel traveled to Paris. The Organisation de Coopération Intellectuelle de la Société des Nations had invited him to speak there on a panel discussing "The Future of Literature."

"It takes no outspoken pessimism," he began, "to view the future of the literary art in our modern world with misgivings." One might give a hundred reasons, but they could be summed up in three words: "barbarization of life." He cited the "liquidation of the educated social strata" and something "even more alarming for the future of literature":

I mean the claim to totality which modern technological implements of power have enabled certain states and their national ideologies to enforce in previously unimaginable fashion. We have witnessed a complete reversal of values. In the classic era, literature and philosophy would influence political events, ceaselessly pressing

their ideas upon reality; now, in our dark age, it is the new political-party dictatorships that proclaim the inviolable, unalterable dogma of what they euphemistically call their "idea content" and defend by force of arms against the slightest opposition. The primacy of politics destroys the spirit. It enslaves what ought to dominate. The intellectual life of more than 200,000,000 Europeans suffers this nameless indignity—suffers without hope, for the awareness of the armed ideologies' technical superiority paralyzes even the strength to revolt inwardly. There have always been times of oppression; but the cruelest of them left free thought with sufficient solitude and silence for an occasional home-coming to its own truth. Today it is different. The steady roar of propaganda avalanches loosed by press, radio, and film makes it impossible for thought to hear itself. It wavers, weakens, and ends up in resignation. And the worst of it is that the evil is not confined to the "totalitarian" parts of Europe, that it is spreading and infecting the intellectual life of all nations with a strange anarchy mixed of doubt, discontent, and confusion.

The speech, however temperate it seemed to us, occasioned violent debates; the Lion Feuchtwangers, among others, found it most objectionable. I had not gone along, that time. The affair was an official one, scheduled to last six days only, and Werfel, eager to get back to work, did not want to stay longer in Paris. He spent all his evenings there with James Joyce, who was almost totally blind and had to be led, so that pleasure jaunts together were out of the question; the two sat in little *bistros*, which they had to change daily because their loud singing of Verdi arias did not tend to make them popular anywhere. Joyce loved Verdi as much as Werfel did, and Werfel was entranced with this new musical friendship. After a week, annoyed by the brawling in the Organization for Intellectual Co-operation, he returned to Vienna.

Later that year I went to a palmist. He was delighted with the artistic vigor he saw in the lines of my hand, beside a deeply religious feeling; he told me that mine was "a catastrophic hand" and marveled at my strength in having survived and surmounted so much. Then he talked about the future.

In my early sixties, he said, I would move to another country, to stay—it might even be another continent, but that he could not be sure of. I would be with the man I had lived with in my

late thirties. Our life together would be a calm friendship and there would be no more disasters. After six years nostalgia would bring me back to Vienna, but I would not like it and would quickly leave again.

I went home and told Werfel exactly what I had heard. He reflected on it. "But where am I going to be then?" he asked suddenly. "Didn't he say we would move there together?"

And he kept pressing me about whether there really had been no further mention of him. But there had not been—and, indeed, by the time I returned to Vienna from our joint exile, he was not fated to be with me any longer. . . .

In December, Anna came from Paris, where she had been very successful that year. One of her sculptures, a seven-foot female figure, won first prize at the Paris World's Fair of 1937—her first triumph as an independent artist. Her marriage to Zsolnay had finally ended in divorce; her lovely child—named Alma, for me—was growing up with her father. All of Anna's great energies were now concentrated on what would become a notable career.

She spent Christmas with us—"a horrible Christmas," I wrote in my diary. It was Manon's unfathomable faculty of love that had opened my eyes to "the world's feast of joy"—and without her I could no longer celebrate it. True, she was always around me; but on such days I felt strangled by pain and despair. Werfel did not sympathize with me, nor, strangely, did Anna. "One day is like any other," they said. What did they know about it?

I was glad when Werfel's bronchitis cleared up and we could travel. I should have liked to spend Christmas abroad, as we had the year before, when we had been in Milan. I wanted to be away on New Year's Eve, at least—on that stupid, senseless night of pretending to oneself that the next year might bring better, more beautiful things. "What should it bring me?" I wrote. "What should make me happy, without this child who has taken my soul along with her? And in a world that is rejecting Franz Werfel?"

We were in Milan again, in January, staying again at the Grand Hotel, in our usual apartment, which had once been Verdi's. Again we made our daily pilgrimage to his parlor-study next to our bedroom, to touch his little old pianino at its final resting

place—for no one was allowed to occupy that room. We went to La Scala every night, and everything was as it had always been. And yet, how different now, with fear and worry smoldering at the bottom of our hearts!

Werfel felt the urge to work, and we continued, via Naples, to Capri. We had reserved wonderful rooms at the best hotel, with a large corner room with balcony for Werfel, who started writing poetry for the first time in years, inspired by Capri's unique natural beauty. We felt quickly at home and made new friends, as everywhere, especially with a writer who had been fired from an important newspaper job because of some disagreement with Mussolini and was now doing his own work on Capri.

On Capri we also found an old friend again: the Italian lady with the blue and green eyes who had told me her story in Nervi and inspired Werfel's *Pascarella Family*. Her husband had recently died, but she still occupied the mansion in which they had lived together. We met her whole family now, and Werfel immediately thought about writing a sequel to his novel; he was particularly fascinated by our friend's little niece, Franca Maria Contessa B., aged nine, who performed a play of her own for us in which a magician cooked microbes and wrought other evil.

Several times we took the boat to Naples to attend its splendid opera. Every day we took hour-long walks, studied the ruins of the palace of Tiberius, and enjoyed life, a life mingled with fear—until the bomb exploded and Werfel burst into my room with a newspaper in his hand: Schuschnigg had gone to Berchtesgaden!

I got up and started packing.

We went to Naples together, but there was no doubt in my mind that Werfel must not accompany me to Vienna. He was vulnerable, and we knew that Austria itself was now in deadly peril. At a party, some Italian friends suggested that he ought to look up Benedetto Croce, the eminent historian and philosopher, who had long interested Werfel. I strongly urged him to stay a few days longer and visit the great man. Loving Naples, he was persuaded without difficulty. He enjoyed his talk with Croce, and going to the opera night after night helped to drown his fears.

I left Naples on February 28, 1938, the day of Schuschnigg's

report to the Austrian parliament. It was a restless journey, dragging on and on as if it would never end.

I had asked no one to meet me at the station—not Hollnsteiner, not the Molls, not anyone. For two days I remained incognito, looking at my Vienna, which stared back at me with utterly strange eyes. I met Frau Pernter, the wife of the minister of education, in the street, looking distraught and disheveled. She promptly told me that her husband was appalled by the government troops' inability to cope with the Nazis; fighting had broken out in Innsbruck and Graz; there had been casualties; no one abroad knew the facts. She ran off, this usually so calm, composed woman, and left me in consternation.

I called up Hollnsteiner, who refused to believe a word of what I was saying. He radiated optimism. In his opinion—shared by my daughter Anna—I had been “overexcited by the foreign press.” Then I saw my so-called family. They knew the truth. Flushed with victory, they laughed at the capers that Schuschnigg cut in desperation: release of all the Nazis he had locked up before Berchtesgaden, legalization of the Nazi salute, repeal of the ban on the swastika flag as hostile to the state, and so forth.

I went to the State Bank, cleared the mortgage on my house, and withdrew the balance of my account. I had to take it in hundred-schilling bills, since the banks had orders to withhold larger denominations. We spent a day sewing that pile of banknotes into the girdle of our good Sister Ida, who had offered to smuggle it to Zurich.

Anna and Hollnsteiner chided me for my unpatriotic conduct. To me, all my Viennese friends seemed like a bleating flock of sheep, unable or unwilling to see what was in store. I found Carl Zuckmayer and his wife celebrating their newly acquired Austrian citizenship. “What—now that Austria is lost?” I asked them, and was laughed at.

My last seemingly happy evening was spent with the Zuckmayers, Ödön von Horvath, Franz Theodor Csokor, and the daughter of Italian Ambassador Salata. I had invited the lot of them to Neugröschl, a popular Jewish restaurant that was now all but deserted and whose owner wept for joy when she heard

someone laugh again. "You don't really think Mussolini wants the Germans on the Brenner pass?" Maria Salata answered my anxious query about Italy's reaction. "Didn't he send Papa here to back up Schuschnigg?"

I could not believe her. Daily, driving to my mother's house on the Hohe Warte, I passed the German Tourist Office on Kärntnerstrasse. Daily I saw the banks of flowers grow before the window with Hitler's huge picture. The sidewalk was impassable; the flowers began to overflow into the street. Kneeling, the women laid down their floral burdens before the Führer's image.

A new paper, the *Wiener Beobachter*, came out and outdid Germany's *Völkischer Beobachter* in ruffianism. The anti-Jewish caricatures and gibes exceeded all bounds. I called up Minister Pernter: could he do something? He told me that he was powerless. At Berchtesgaden, Schuschnigg had been obliged to give up his four-year resistance.

Schuschnigg called a national plebiscite for Sunday, March 13. Anna plunged into frantic agitation for it, running from one Socialist and Christian-Socialist politician to another. It was not until years later that I heard the full story and perceived the enormity of the risk she ran and what would have happened if the Nazis had caught her.

On Wednesday, March 9, Zuckmayer phoned to ask Anna and me to come to a downtown bar. Everyone was drunk, he said, but the real fun was waiting for our arrival. The party had been going on since 10:00 A.M., when Zuckmayer had seen Egon Friedell, the actor and cultural historian, walking the street so sadly that he had taken him along to cheer him up. Friedell was pretty far gone when we arrived, but he sobered up when I mentioned my feeling that Hitler was at the gates of Vienna. "I won't survive that, but I'm not running away," he said, and showed me a phial. "Here's some cyanide; I'll take it when he comes. . . ."

We soon had enough and departed. Friedell, somewhat unsteady on his feet, ushered us out to the car, and as we got in, assisted by my chauffeur, he quickly pinched each one of us in the buttocks. I never saw him again. Two days after Hitler's

entry he jumped out of the window, thinking the storm troopers who had rung his bell were after him—although in fact they had come for someone next door.

Early on Friday, March 11, the journalist Anton Kuh phoned to ask whether I could arrange for him to see a member of the government before noon. I called up Pernter, who agreed immediately to meet us at Anna's studio. He came at half past ten, and Kuh proceeded to demonstrate just how Schuschnigg ought to talk to the workers, how he could wrap up Renner, and so on. His performance was so brilliant that we burst out laughing despite the gravity of the hour.

Suddenly someone rapped violently on the broken window-pane: Minister Pernter should come at once to a cabinet meeting. He paled, and we all realized that dreadful things were afoot. It was the last I saw of Pernter; three days later he was en route to Dachau.

I fled from Anna's cubbyhole. The streets were strewn with handbills advertising Schuschnigg's plebiscite. They carried an impossible text: "Vote for a free, German, Catholic, social, etc., etc. . . ." Before the concluding "Austria" came many more such adjectives, a miscellany of national aims. It sounded fearful and unfree. Nobody picked up the leaflets; only the wind played with them, showing no mercy.

In the afternoon I was sitting with Csokor in my little hotel room when a woman friend of mine and Pernter's burst in: she could not get the Ministry of Education on the phone. . . . I called up Hollnsteiner, to ask what had happened. He knew of nothing, but said he would call the Chancellery at once and try to reach Schuschnigg himself. Minutes later he called back: "The plebiscite is called off!"

We sank into each other's arms. Austria was lost—and so were we. . . .

Hollnsteiner remained optimistic. In the evening he came to my hotel room, and I asked him to destroy all his politically incriminating papers. "Why? I haven't done anything" was his childish reply.

Anna would not hear of leaving, either. On Saturday morning I begged her to accompany me to Prague the next day. Now that

she was all alone, she agreed at last and came to the hotel at noon, carrying an overnight bag. I sent her back to get at least her jewelry and some underthings. It was already quite risky to drive a car without a swastika flag. She returned with a small suitcase that held no more than the first. She stubbornly expected to be back in Vienna in two days!

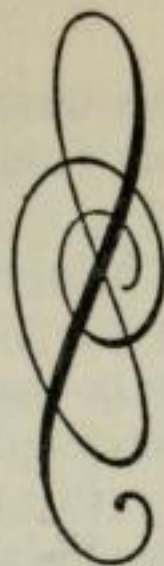
Once more I drove to the Hohe Warte. On the way I saw complete strangers blissfully embracing one another, each of them already decked out in swastika badges and armlets. It was a sickening spectacle. Fists were shaken at me; but nothing could have induced me to fly that flag from my car.

I said good-bye to my mother, whom I knew I was not going to see again. I let her think that I would return in a week. Her Nazi environment nurtured her illusions: that Hitler himself desired no brutality, that this was just a transition on the road to Paradise, that in no case would anything happen to me. But my Nazi brother-in-law, seeing that I had no swastika on my car, was worried enough to have my nephew, a long-time Nazi party member, escort me back into town.

Anna and I kept Hollnsteiner in the hotel with us, talking all night. The sky was filled with the drone of planes heralding Hitler's arrival. Early Sunday morning we drove to the station while Hollnsteiner calmly stayed at the hotel—a bit of folly that was to cost him a year in Dachau. At the station we ordered breakfast and acted innocent. An old Austrian policeman came to our table, and whispered to Sister Ida that I'd better take no valuables along; everyone was being searched at the border. I got out my money and left it with the nurse, except for the allowable trifle.

My luggage consisted of two suitcases. I had not wanted to be seen near my house, which was rented, so I could take nothing with me. All I had in the world now was what I had had on Capri.

Moll appeared at the station, gazing dolefully at us with his sad hound's eyes. Having never believed a word of his, I could not believe in his sorrow. He had always been my enemy, and in showing me this man now, as my train rolled out, Vienna bade me a fitting farewell.



At the border we first had to show our baptismal certificates. All Jews were sent back. Then, one by one, we were taken behind the drawn blinds of a compartment and stripped naked, down to our stockings. Hours passed before the train was allowed to continue to Prague.

In Prague, Werfel's sister awaited us, helpful, sympathetic, shedding honest tears at our fate, but unwilling to believe my warnings. "I always wanted you to move to Prague!" she kept telling me. "Here you would have been safe." A year later she, too, had to flee—from Prague.

Anna and I traveled on. Werfel was in Milan, normally a one-day trip from Prague, but to get there without touching Hitler's newly extended domain we had to go halfway round the Balkans. On Monday we arrived in Budapest, and had to rest a few hours, having sat up all night in a crowded railway compartment. The Austrian consul found hotel rooms for us and sent roses but did not dare to show himself in our company. He was entirely right; the streets of Budapest were full of the white stockings that were the insignia of Hitler's Austrian rabble.

At night, once more jammed eight into a compartment, we went on to Zagreb, Trieste, and Milan.

For the first time we did not like Milan so well, although, thank God, Werfel was now with us. We accepted an invitation

from his younger sister, Marianne Rieser, who was married and living in Zurich—and that, whether it was her family's fault or ours, became a sad stage of our exile.

From Zurich, I wrote a farewell letter to a beloved old friend of mine: Gerhart Hauptmann. In the fall of 1937, Hauptmann had come to Vienna and behaved in somewhat cowardly fashion. Previously he had been in the habit of announcing himself well in advance and asking me to have a feast ready; that time I heard nothing. And when I finally phoned him at his hotel, he offered us a half hour in the afternoon, the time of day that I knew was his moodiest. Deeply hurt on Werfel's behalf—for he was the target, of course—I had declined for the two of us.

Now, from Zurich, I wrote to Hauptmann that our long, long friendship had been so singular and great that I desired to end it—"because from now on it might perhaps be less beautiful, and what was right in the past need not necessarily be right for the future. . . ."

Now we were refugees.

We could not stand Zurich very long, and after endless passport difficulties that required the intervention of a number of lawyers, we managed to get across the border to France. On the French train I drew my first happy breath since the flight from Vienna. Stopping at a little petty-bourgeois hotel named Royal Madeleine, we stayed in Paris until May, when Willem Mengelberg invited us to a Mahler festival in Amsterdam. Holland, at that time, was still happily ignorant. I told the story of my escape to the Dutch minister of education, and he replied, "A lady like you shouldn't use such words as 'escape.'"

I was interviewed about Mahler, and the reporter asked me why I would not write the reminiscences I related to him. I said I had long since done so. As a result of these words in the interview, the representative of a Dutch publisher, Allert de Lange, came to me and so urgently asked me for my Gustav Mahler book that I gave it to him, though I had already promised it to Paul Zsolnay—but then, of course, Zsolnay had no publishing house in Vienna any more.

Our next stop was London, where we rejoined Anna, who had not come to Amsterdam with us.

In London I had a veritable nervous breakdown. "An absolutely frigid city," I wrote in my diary. "No one here comprehends the Austrian fate—it is unbearable!" It was easier for Werfel. He talked with publishers, took an interest in the new city, had a gift for languages—in no time at all he was reading the London papers, easily and excitedly. My uncontrolled despondency baffled him, and, of course, he could not help. Many dinners were given in his honor. Most of them were boring. From one he came home pretty drunk; he was still unaccustomed to whisky and unprepared for its effect. "I want a piano," I wrote, "and books, and a little house somewhere, or an apartment—and to write. . . ."

I wanted to write all the thoughts I had been thinking and giving away in my life. We were moneyless, in London; far from a house or an apartment or a piano, I had not even a German book to read, and no one around who spoke German. "I have to lift myself up by my own bootstraps," I wrote. "I must jettison everyone I loved in Vienna. By now they will have changed, anyway. I must forget. I will forget. . . ."

After three weeks we returned to Paris. Summer had begun in the meantime, with a heat wave. I lodged Werfel in the most beautiful hotel in the vicinity of Paris, the Henri Quatre at Saint-Germain. He had a room as large as a riding school to himself, while I stayed a while in our poor little Royal Madeleine and spent most of my time at the Louvre. Apart from its beauty, it was the only cool spot in town.

We got to Paris just in time for a new, wholly bizarre tragedy. In the last few years in Vienna, Ödön von Horvath had become our close friend and my favorite among the younger writers. This tall, dark, easygoing man, who drove women crazy—there was one waiting for him in every city—sent me all his sketches and ideas for new plays; he had absolute faith in my judgment but seemed not to care whether he was produced by Max Reinhardt or in some little basement theater, or not at all. My "trio," as I called Horvath, his inseparable friend Csokor, and Zuckmayer, often had gone with me to drink Heurigen, the new wine of the vineyards near Vienna, and before my big party in June 1937 the four of us had made the round of the Grinzing taverns,

sampling the wines and picking out the best. In Salzburg, where we met for the Reinhardt Festival that summer, not suspecting that it would be the last of these glorious occasions, Horvath stayed at the Zuckmayers' old peasant house in a nearby village and told us how from his window he watched the ghosts every night, doing their wash by the well.

He left Vienna when the Nazis came, visited friends in Czechoslovakia and his publisher in Amsterdam, and went to Paris to meet the translator of his latest book and a producer who was interested in a movie version. In Amsterdam he saw a fortuneteller, who told him that his destiny was waiting in Paris and that on a certain day he should be careful. Horvath was very superstitious. He took all possible precautions in Paris, looked out especially for cars at street crossings, and got a friend to accompany him everywhere on the day that he thought was the fateful one.

The next morning he saw the film producer, who gave him tickets to the theater where Walt Disney's *Snow White* was then the sensation of Paris. It was a fearfully hot day. Not a leaf stirred. When he had left the movie and was walking up the Champs-Élysées, a sudden gust of wind hit one of the old trees on the avenue and toppled it. The tree crashed on Horvath's head, killing him instantly.

"It was no thunderstorm," I wrote in my diary. "It was quite simply murder from on high. . . ."

This death moved us deeply. Werfel, ignoring my pleas to stay away, attended the funeral in the blistering heat. He talked with Horvath's mother, with his father—formerly a high Austrian officer—and with his brother; he saw Ödön himself lying dead, his head bandaged with tape; he followed the casket on its heat-spewing way to the grave in the rear of St. Ouen Cemetery. The grave was located under a railroad viaduct, and there were painful shocks each time a train rolled over the ceremony.

Hot, tired, and saddened, Werfel came to the Café Weber, where I was waiting for him with Paul Zsolnay. We went home hand in hand, as always, and he mentioned the idea of using this experience for a philosophical novel to be entitled, "Earth, a Place of Punishment."

Three weeks later he ended a preface to Horvath's posthumously published novel, *Child of Our Time*, with a thought he had voiced at the grave:

This death was no accident. Why did Ödön von Horvath have to die? Was it, perhaps, that he already had the word on his lips, the sentence in mind, that must not be spoken or written before the time is fulfilled?

At the end of June I went to the Riviera in search of a summer home for us. In Sanary-sur-Mer, a fishing village between Toulon and Marseille, I found an old watchtower which a painter had remodeled with good taste and few conveniences. I rented it and was just chatting with a friend, the widow of the art historian Julius Meier-Graefe, when the phone rang. Paris was calling: I should come back at once. Franz Werfel was seriously ill.

I took the next train to Paris and on to Saint-Germain. Werfel had had a heart attack. The local doctor, an Englishman, had told him that his condition was critical, and now it took him a long time to get over the fear of death. We moved to Paris; but the highly recommended doctor I got there proved equally stupid. For weeks I had to sleep in Werfel's room, on an uncomfortable wooden divan. Recovery was slow. He got daily injections to lower his blood pressure, which had risen to 250. His furious smoking had to be stopped. "For how long?" I wrote in my diary. "How is this creature of intoxication to be 'normalized,' since intoxication is his normal state?"

One of the first times he went out again was to lunch with a friend of my mother's. The old lady asked me about a servant of mine she had known, a Czech cook named Agnes Hwizd who had worked for me twenty-five years, and whom Gustav Mahler had jokingly called "my butterfly" in his letters and pinched in the legs to get his meals on time. She used to play the zither at night, in secret, spreading the music before her, although she could read neither sharps nor flats and everything came out wrong. But Mahler enjoyed her playing, and after his death Agnes put her zither away.

She had once fallen victim to a pious fraud, which Werfel knew all about but thus far had not been interested in. At that

lunch in Paris, however, I was apparently in a good storytelling mood, for this time a spark was kindled. The glow that I loved came into Werfel's eyes, and I pushed myself into recalling more and more details. He questioned me; I answered; our hostess was forgotten. We reached the street with Werfel still asking, asking. "This I am going to write," he said at last.

July was almost over when he felt well enough to travel to the Riviera and move into our watchtower at Sanary. The round tower room with its twelve windows made an ideal study for him, and on the floor below he had a fine bedroom. I slept in the living room, which adjoined the kitchen and was unbearably hot; but at that time I was healthy enough not to mind.

Werfel tried to work but could not. The doctors had maddened him. At last—after a tragicomic scene when he sought to relieve his aching head by pouring a bottle of Patou perfume on it and stumbled into my room, screaming, "I'm going blind!"—I secretly called up another physician: Dr. Friedrich Wolf, a poet, who came and in an hour talked Werfel out of his fears. We were saved, and soon he began to draft his new novel. He thoroughly changed the basic facts, of course, as always; I have never seen a true artist do otherwise. But my old cook miraculously came to life again, as well as my household on Semmering and Manon's death, in altered form but recognizable for us, the knowing. It became a wonderful book, this *Embezzled Heaven*—despite illness, despite exile, despite everything.

I wrote in my diary:

It's a gray, eerie world. . . . The meeting of the four government chiefs in Munich on September 29 will not calm our nerves on this remote, lonely seacoast. For three weeks we have been dangling between war and peace. And that here, homeless, in a foreign language, among the strangest of strangers! I long to go "home"—but where is that?

Peace has broken out. At what price? It adds to Hitler's prestige and makes the German Reich swell up like a bullfrog. . . . And yet we breathe easier, now that there will be no war. We would not have known where to turn.

Both of us have come to grief, Werfel and I. As a youth he believed in world revolution; he couldn't know what would become of it. I believed in world salvation by Mussolini's work—and I could not know, either, what Hitler has made of that!

I'm inescapably tied to the fate of the Jews, yet I haven't lost my objectivity. Hitler has no opponents now; they're puppets. He states the fact, and it makes him a megalomaniac.

Now I must wander to the ends of the earth with this strange people—there is no road back, although I'll never see my homeland again, my material and spiritual possessions, the people I love, my mother. . . .

My mother was dying, and I could not see her again. I tried to call her from Paris and heard, "She's still breathing." I heard that Moll had to be watched all the time, lest he kill himself. I thought: Why don't they let him? He's right.

I had lost my mother a long time before this, to Hitler, who had robbed me of everything but Werfel and Anna. My mother was never a Nazi, but having the worship of this monster drummed into her day and night was bound to sap her resistance once I was no longer present as a counterpoise. At the news of her death, in November, I felt for the first time that I was flesh of her flesh—that the heart that was congealing in Vienna made *me* freeze in Paris. "Blood," I wrote, "means so little to me, and yet it speaks now in a loud voice!"

In December, Werfel had to go to Zurich, and I joined Anna in London. It was so chilly and damp there that we almost froze to death; whatever we touched stuck clammily to our fingers. My friend Rudolf Olden, the writer, came from Oxford to see me at Anna's; his anti-Nazi eloquence thrilled me and caused several explosions, that afternoon, for in those days few people shared his opinions. (A year later poor Olden was lost when an America-bound children's transport hit a mine; a son-in-law of Thomas Mann drowned with him, and Monica Mann clung for hours to a lifeboat, watching her husband and Olden and most of the children gradually weaken and disappear in the deep.)

Back in Paris I had a joyous surprise: my score of Bruckner's

Third Symphony came from Vienna! The manuscript from my marble room on the Hohe Warte had had strange adventures. With Austrian politicians going in and out there, it had come to the attention of State Councillor Glaise-Horstenau, who was later given a cabinet post by Hitler and must have told him of my prize possession. Hitler was a Bruckner fanatic. He sent word to my brother-in-law that he desired to buy the score from me for \$7,500, and my brother-in-law, quite certain that it was still in Vienna, obediently transmitted the Führer's wish.

Meanwhile, however, our good Sister Ida had given a package for me to the wife of a Viennese music critic who was about to emigrate. She had not told the lady what was in the package, in order not to make her nervous, and when the unwitting courier opened it in Paris, her husband cried out, "Why, that's Bruckner's Third!" So I got my treasure back, and in Vienna my perfectly innocent Nazi brother-in-law was stripped of his party rank as a result of Hitler's disappointment.

It was in January 1939, too, that I met Margherita Sarfatti again in Paris. The uncrowned queen of Italy had turned into the crowned beggar of exile. She was as valiant as ever, still full of *esprit*, but her witticisms were now getting very bitter. She often came to the gatherings in my little hotel room, where our French friends—Paul Géraldy, Georges Duhamel, Count Clauzel, and others—met the Franz Léhars, the Fritz von Unruhs, the Erwin Piscators, the Bruno Walters. Margherita Sarfatti's vivaciousness animated the refugees, who badly needed this. "For all of us," I wrote, "are facing a great question mark: Where to?"

One day, a lady asked me to go to Mainbocher with her, after lunch. She had a fitting—"just a couple of dresses, but quite nice"—and the Duchess of Windsor bought there, too, she told me. Her new, expensive lap dog came with us. "I couldn't go without Pipi," she said. "They're all so fond of the darling!"

We were ushered into a *salon*. Madame undressed. A tulle slip with strategically placed black roses fluttered about unfleshed legs. She tried on eight dresses, each priced at 5,000 francs, while her dog sat on the fine fabrics, worried the gowns, licked the hands of the seamstress, and sniffed at the models' rears. Nobody could cope with his importunities. Feeling sorry for the poor

women, I took him on my lap and pinched him when he forgot his manners. Not being in Mainbocher's employ, I could afford this.

In the adjoining *salon*, other ladies squealed with delight at "creations" they would shortly pay for and never really wear.

Annoyed by a display of so much wealth and ignorance, I left. I got into a cab, but when I gave the driver the address of a refugee pastry cook I had heard about, he thought I must be mistaken. "You wouldn't have any business in that street," he said.

I told him to drive there anyway. In the heart of the city we came into a neighborhood that even Alfred Kubin never painted in his most somber dreams. The alley we entered was filthy and just wide enough for the cab; a noisome yard appeared behind the house we stopped at. I went in. "We have no pastry cook here," growled the concierge.

Leers, rags, noises from behind each door—a house of misery! Under a blind window I finally spotted a visiting card with my man's name on it and entered a dingy hall in which two little new, white electric ovens looked utterly out of place. The man smelled evil, his trousers hung down, he slavered, his eyes ran, so did his nose. We communed haltingly in bad French until I said, "You're German. Why do we struggle?"

Wagging his head, he told me his tale of woe. He had owned a pharmacy in Dresden until 1933, when he had been obliged to flee because of his association with an Aryan woman; now he was baking rolls, chocolate dates, and, on Saturdays, German coffeecake. We moved from the hall into the room, which was filled with old boxes and a dirty working table and did not look too alluring, either. The door to the yard opened, and in came a poor, careworn German woman with features that must have been pretty once and eyes that were ready to die. I spoke to her, but she dared not answer. I asked whether the delicacies were her work, whereupon the man brusquely declared that she never touched them; he did everything by himself. Though horribly disgusted, I placed a large order, told him my name—which he recognized—and left.

The man who had given me the address was shocked to hear that I had actually gone there.

In March, Hitler swallowed Czechoslovakia. It happened on the fourteenth; on the day before, hearing from a diplomat that the move was imminent, I made a long-distance call to Prague to tell Werfel's sister that "the uncle" would arrive next morning. She understood me, but the poor health of Werfel's father made it impossible for the family to leave at once. The next morning they were turned back at the border, and had a good deal of trouble before they finally got out. Werfel and I spent an entire day at the station, worrying when they did not come on the expected train.

We returned to Sanary in May, to the myriads of mosquitoes which made the place hell for me. And the people! Charming outside, brutal inside, and extremely pro-Hitler at the time. I sensed what was coming and wanted to leave that pest-ridden country, but Werfel, stubbornly clinging to the notion of a "last shred of Europe," refused to leave. It was to cost us dearly, for in September the war broke out.

Our situation changed from one day to the next. We daily had visits from police or gendarmes, inquiries into our papers, or searches of the house from cellar to roof. To the gendarmes we gave money and, on cold days, hot punch; they were easily satisfied. The mayor's office took larger sums. But one day Werfel was stopped in the village square and subjected to a search of his pockets, with accompanying dialogue.

"You are a Communist!"

"No."

"You write for the poor, don't you?"

"I write for everyone, rich and poor."

There was more in this vein. He came home deathly pale and sick with rage. His coat was torn, dirty hands had pawed all over him. The villagers, at any rate, had had their fun.

On another occasion we were summoned at eight in the morning to police headquarters at La Seyne, a town some miles away. With chattering teeth, Werfel and I and Susi Kertes, a little friend of Manon's who was staying with us, drove there in the only car that was available. Files were checked and we were cross-examined at length, only to be sullenly informed that everything was in order. There had been a mistake; we could go

home again. On the way down the grand staircase Werfel nearly fainted, and Susi Kertes and I had to support him between us.

"His condition is getting worse," I wrote. "He is completely enfeebled, senescent, in fact—and very hopeless. Exile is a terrible disease!"

A telegram called us to Vichy: Werfel's father was dying. Prying travel permits to Vichy out of the French bureaucracy was hard work and required days of shuttling between Sanary and Toulon in the blistering heat. On the train we had to stand; in Lyon we had to wait six hours for a connection. We sat in a restaurant, talking softly but still too audibly, perhaps, in German. A plain-clothes man appeared and told Werfel to come along.

I sat waiting fearfully. People were being arrested in the street then, for no reason at all. Austrian and German refugees were sent to concentration camps; what had been saving us was the Czech citizenship that Franz Werfel owed to the accident of his birth in Prague. At last he returned. It had been the same old game of making him show all his papers again, for the hundredth time.

In Vichy we found that his father had suffered a stroke. The old man could not articulate any more but became furious when one failed to understand him. He lived like this—if it can be called living—for another year.

We returned to Sanary, but life there was getting to be unbearable. I had a pistol in my possession, and, since this was prohibited, Susi Kertes and I got up at 4:00 A.M. one day to bury it in the garden, behind a tree. We did not want to take the cook into our confidence, but we later told Werfel, who objected to the place we had picked. The roots of a tree, he said, were in constant motion and would bring all buried objects back to the surface; the only proper burying place for a pistol was alongside a wall. So Susi and I crawled out of bed again the following morning, dug up the gun, which we had a hard time finding, and reburied it elsewhere. We must have looked funny enough, doing all this in our nightgowns.

The house was blacked out, and every window taped over. In the big tower room there was no way of doing this, so Werfel

now had no place to work in the evenings. One night he went up with a flashlight to look for a manuscript, and was reported to the police. "So you're a spy!" they shouted at him. "You give light signals to the Germans!" He was reprimanded and warned that a second offense would make him liable to heavy punishment.

We fled to Paris and met crowds of people again—"above all," I wrote, "our dear friend Berta Zuckerkandl, who is younger than all the rest of us." There were Darius Milhaud and Annette Kolb, the German novelist; Rudolf Hilferding and Guido Zernatto, former German and Austrian ministers of state; Emil Ludwig, the biographer, Otto von Hapsburg, the pretender to the Austrian throne, Louis Gillet, art historian and member of the French Academy, and others.

From Paris, Werfel went to Vichy to visit his father again, and rejoined me in Lyon. Together we stayed in Marseille for a short, relatively amusing period of time, going to the opera and to art exhibits, visiting a studio where a modern art magazine was turned out and making friends with the editors. Back in Sanary, Lion Feuchtwanger came to call several times; he owned a house there and was by far the most interesting of the many people we saw, though we could never agree with him. I once asked him why, with his views, he was not living in Moscow. "Am I crazy?" he replied.

In February 1940 I wrote in my diary:

A few cold, sad days in Paris, and more cold, sad days down here. A brief holiday in Marseille—a whisper of spring—and now back to this desolate fishing hole. And why just here? Just where we have the least resources? Just where one must get most homesick?

On Easter Sunday I went to church. "But does it really concern me?" I wrote. Utterly unuplifted, I sat in a crowd that was moved as little as I was. Why then had they gathered? Would salvation come from this poor, harried old priest in the soiled cassock, sad and surly as his wretched life had made him? I found no answer. Merciless was the sky, merciless the sea—and the poets who would like to help us were themselves so pitifully small and

earth-bound. "One thing is certain in the ceaseless flux: despair. . . ."



The real war began in April. Denmark and Norway were invaded; Paris was no longer Paris, Marseille no longer Marseille. At every corner people were standing in line for a drop of oil, for butter, for soap. All these things had practically vanished. Searches were the order of the day, even in our Parisian hotel, where everybody knew us.

On May 10 we had our first air-raid warning. At 5:00 A.M. the sirens called us out of bed; disheveled, in crumpled nightclothes, we all had to go down into a foul-smelling cellar. Such alarms recurred. The Germans were driving through Holland. Suddenly French government representatives approached Franz Werfel with a plan for large-scale radio broadcasts to Germany. ("A little late, one must say," I wrote in my diary.) He had some meetings with Jules Romains about this, but the project was much too haphazardly conceived and far behind the times.

After a last visit to Werfel's father in Vichy, where, too, fear was rampant, we had to return once more to Sanary, because Werfel, incapable of reaching any decision, had asked me not to pack! On May 28 the King of the Belgians surrendered. Hastily I finished packing, and we went to Marseille.

On June 13 Premier Paul Reynaud made his famous radio speech. People in our hotel listened to the broadcast standing, with tears in their eyes. He appealed to America, for "clouds of airplanes. . . . The situation is grave," he said, "but not desperate. . . ." It *was* desperate. Marseille, also, had daily alarms; we spent our nights in the cellar and our days in consulates, seeking French exit visas and visas to enter the United States. We got neither.

A loud-speaker in the hotel room adjoining ours woke us in the middle of the night: Hitler had entered Paris; the French army was in full flight to the south. Werfel, always the doubting optimist, discounted the report. He actually thought our next-door neighbors were Nazis, blaring out this lie just to hurt our feelings!

The French government was at Bordeaux. We thought that Marshal Pétain, who took over on June 16, would not let the Germans get to Bordeaux, so we decided to go there, and then to Biarritz, and on to safety over the long bridge at Hendaye that separates France from Spain. How little we knew—we and the Frenchmen who advised us!

We found a car to take us to Bordeaux, for 8,000 francs. On the eighteenth we departed. Our driver, an arrogant individual, insisted on detouring to Avignon, where he had friends. There were rumors that the Germans were heading for Avignon, but he did not mind that. We had to yield. After a hurried lunch at Avignon, we continued, Werfel sitting with the driver, where he was more comfortable. I sat in the rear with the luggage and had some narrow escapes from my large steamer trunk, which fell on me at every curve. The road was deserted, the countryside frozen with fear.

Turning westward, at last, we breathed easier. At a snail's pace we headed for Toulouse, which we were supposed to reach that evening. No such luck! A few motor defects, flat tires, road-blocks, and wrong turns brought us circling into Narbonne twice, the second time at 11:00 P.M. We had to stay overnight. Turned down by hotel after hotel, we finally found two old women in the street who took pity on us and directed us to an infirmary whose former children's ward was now a refugee shelter. It was a long walk in inky blackness to the dilapidated building.

Musty stairs led to a small anteroom, where a nurse slept on a cot. Not having eaten since Avignon, we asked her for bread; Werfel also ate some rancid garlic sausage. I saw a bottle of red wine and asked for that. The bread was too hard to dissolve in the wine.

The w.c. was a fetid hole without water or anything but a pair of footrests somewhere on the floor. And this had been a children's hospital!

Werfel had to sleep in a room with men and boys, I with women and small children. We were asked not to make light. I was nauseated by the cot, without mattress or blankets, by the

dirt and the impossible discomfort, but we were half dead and fell asleep. Soon we were roused by the bone-chilling screams of a woman who thought she was back in a bombardment. Everyone came running—the men, too, in dubious pajamas—to calm the crazed one. A man kept telling Werfel that we should stay in the place, because we would at least have a roof over our heads. The children began to bawl in concert.

Aching all over, we awaited the dawn. For breakfast I asked for another glass of wine, in which to try to thaw my stony bread; Werfel was unable to gulp down what passed for coffee. Downstairs, our driver was knocking on the gate, but we were locked in and had to wait until the nurse came to open it. She had gone elsewhere to sleep, and I could not blame her.

Our obstacle race continued. Every fifteen minutes there was a roadblock, as on the day before, with close inspection of our safe-conducts. How exacting the French are in trivia! At Carcassonne we were told we could go no farther. Our driver exulted. With his circling and zigzagging he had run up considerable mileage—6,000 francs' worth.

We were stuck in Carcassonne, which looks pretty on postcards but in reality is a rathole. We had lost two days, and the word was that no trains were running. From the window of the miserable railroad hotel, however, where we had dumped our trunks for the time being, I could see people coming out of the station. Werfel went to inquire and found that a last train was due to leave for Bordeaux at 2:00 A.M. He was so happy that, over my objections, he checked all our luggage through to Bordeaux except for a few suitcases with essentials.

Dead tired, we went punctually to the station, only to hear that the train would be two hours late. We sat on our suitcases, waiting. The train arrived toward dawn, so crowded that no compartment door could open. The toilets were crammed with luggage from floor to ceiling. But we got on, and either stood like sardines or huddled on our suitcases, under the seats of some malodorous army pants. Often—and gladly—we gave up our places to a pregnant woman.

The soldiers were gay. The war was over; they were rid of

their guns and hurrying home, loudly berating the impossible regime that had left them without air defense, without supplies, and so on. France did not figure in their discussions.

Dawn grayed, tiring and terrible. There was nothing to eat, and no way to do the opposite. Children howled constantly. Every ten minutes the train stopped in open fields. Instead of arriving at 5:00 A.M., we got to Bordeaux at 6:00 P.M.—and encountered half the populace at the station, trying to get away to Dax, to Biarritz, to Pau, or to the places we had come from. Had Bordeaux been bombed? Were the Germans coming? Everyone said something different. The mile-long station was a sea of people swirling around luggage castles. Nowhere was there a porter, or other help. The situation was out of hand. An old acquaintance of ours suddenly appeared, whispering, "Get away from here; Bordeaux is hell!"

Get away, yes—but how? And where?

I ran to redeem our checked luggage, but there were so many others trying to do the same that I could not even get near the windows; nor, of course, could I get tickets to any place.

Werfel, meanwhile, found a simian creature with arms hanging almost to the ground, who understood no human language but took our suitcases. That is, he flung them over his shoulders, alternately dropping and picking them up and tossing one or the other to me or to Werfel. Through the milling, huddling, sprawling thousands we pushed our way out of the station. We gave the luggage to the doorman of the Hôtel Terminus—all railway hotels in France are called Terminus—and were warned not to think of spending the night there; they had guests sleeping in every bathroom and toilet. In vain poor Werfel and his ape man moved from door to door.

I was waiting quietly by our hand luggage. A heavily made-up girl stood next to me, carrying a small bag, and I asked her whether she had no place to stay, either. She replied that she lived in Bordeaux and might be able to help us find a room, or even two. I offered a thousand francs a night. She thought a moment, then she gave me a card. When Werfel returned, we took a streetcar downtown, with our gorilla groaning under two overnight bags.

It had begun to rain when we found the address. It was a little whorehouse. "We're closed for the moment," the madam told us immediately, explaining that the staff had fled in fear of bombings. A sweetish smell pervaded the rooms. The girls had left their baggage behind; washstands and dressers were still strewn with the essential utensils of their trade. We were each given a candle and asked to climb down into the cellar, to familiarize ourselves with it in case of need. Everyone was waiting for a bombardment, which did not come, thank God.

We went out to get something to eat—we had not had a bite in twenty-four hours—but the shops were bare, and the restaurants all had signs on the doors reading "*Occupée*" or "*Fermée*." It was raining hard. At last we came to a *bistro* that was open. The crowd inside regarded us with cold hatred, but we were sold some bread, a few eggs, and a small bottle of wine. On this we dined at our merry abode and then slept well and undisturbed.

In the morning the question Where to? came up again. Our goal was Biarritz, or any place near the border where some consul might be merciful. We did not dare go back to the station. Eventually, Werfel found an old cabdriver who lived near Biarritz and was willing to take us there for 6,000 francs. Our checked luggage remained in Bordeaux; clothes, books, everything had to be given up for lost. Above all, I grieved for Gustav Mahler's manuscripts and my score of Bruckner's Third.

All hotels in Biarritz were closed or filled. Some Parisian fur dealers I knew helped us find a room for the second night; the first we spent in the bed of another acquaintance. In the morning Werfel went early to Bayonne, looking for visas, while I moved into a room of sorts—with only one narrow bed, of course—at a dreadful hotel.

In Bayonne Werfel spent hours standing in line before consulates, without success. On the second day I went to pick him up, and on our return to Biarritz a total stranger ran up to us: "Did you see the Germans in Bayonne?"

We had not seen them, but they were there all right. Some friends of ours from Prague, Vicky von Kahler and his lovely wife, came that evening and suggested that we go to Hendaye together; Biarritz was apt to be occupied any minute, they told

us. By then it seemed routine to have the Germans on our heels.

Once more we packed fast, slept little, listened to the surf roar and to the rain fall in buckets. In Hendaye a shabby hotel gave us another single room with one narrow bed for two, but we did not mind any more. Werfel and Vicky Kahler went in search of consuls. We had heard that the Portuguese was a kind man who issued visas on the spot. He was not in Hendaye, however. He was in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, where the two men went at once—only to hear that the consul had lost his mind and thrown every passport entrusted to him into the sea!

On the second of those desolate days—it was June 26—we were sitting with the Kahlers before a horrid dinner when a little Polish Jew who had attached himself to Werfel burst in, beside himself, shouting that the Germans had arrived at Hendaye station, and the word from the mayor was to take care of ourselves. (*"Faut se débrouiller,"* that worthy put it. No other word was heard so much in France.)

We really were in a predicament. Werfel threw himself on the bed, sobbing convulsively. Kahler ran around until he found a taxi with enough gas in the tank to make Saint-Jean-de-Luz. Shortly before midnight we set out on our new flight, inland this time. I worried so much about Werfel that I could not take my eyes off him.

"And the rain it raineth every day. . . ." Clothes and shoes were soaked, but we had no changes of either. In Saint-Jean-de-Luz the old cabdriver who had brought us down from Bordeaux was less than overjoyed to see us again. He was asleep; we pleaded with his wife to wake him, and after a while he ambled up grouchily and agreed to take us to Pau. Because there were five of us now, the cab had no room for our remaining suitcases. We had to leave them with the chauffeur's wife, in the rain-swamped ditch by the roadside. A horde of old crones showed up all at once, shrilling demands for the removal of any written or printed matter from our things. They were deathly afraid of the Germans.

Over sleeping back roads we sped on without lights, in total blackness. When I remonstrated with the driver, he said he had forgotten his head lamps in the hurry. Pressed tightly together,

the five of us sat in the little taxi, unable to see where we were going—until we came to an abrupt stop.

An officer raised a flashlight. "Now they've got us," I whispered. But it was a Frenchman—dressed, for once, in a well-fitting uniform—who let us pass after inspecting our papers.

He had thrown quite a scare into us, on that darkest of nights. In Orthez we wanted to stop over. We knocked on every door, but none would open; it was a ghost town. A man stepped out of the dark: "The Germans," he said, "will be here before sunrise. Orthez is the border point of the occupation zone."

On we went, toward the first, faint gray of dawn. Another halt: a policeman demanded to know whether we had a permit to travel at night. We did not, of course, so he made us pull over and wait by the roadside until 5:00 A.M. We coughed and shivered in the cold rain, but if the man at Orthez had known what he was talking about, we had shaken off the Germans. At last, fatigue overpowered us. Leaning against one another, the five of us fell asleep.

The sun was rising when we got to Pau, so cramped after the night in the small car that we could hardly stand. Only a few people were up and around at that hour, and they were unfriendly. Everything had been requisitioned for the government, which was partly in town, partly due to arrive from Bordeaux. Our driver did not want to go farther, but he looked for and found a friend who gave us a letter to a hotelkeeper in Lourdes. We ran into a painter we knew, who with his wife and others was in the same situation. Some of them promised the sky—to wit, gasoline—but failed to deliver. Hollow-cheeked, homeless people without a country, we sat around a table and gulped some animal fodder, vowed to aid each other, and scattered like adders that have burst their shells.

On June 27, 1940, we arrived in Lourdes, exhausted.

The letter from the chauffeur's friend availed us nothing. In vain we tried hotel after hotel, and at the last, rather ungentle rebuff the tears ran down my cheeks. I must have looked quite miserable, for all of a sudden the innkeeper's wife came after us. "No," she said, "I won't let you go on. We'll put some young couple out of a room and give you that."

The sense of relief that flooded me was indescribable. So, to be sure, was the room. About the size of a closet, facing a glass roof on which garbage was dumped from the upper floors, it gave us a foretaste of a show place of Lourdes: *Le Cachot*, the abandoned jail cell where Bernadette Soubirous had spent her childhood. We slept in that room for a fortnight, in a single bed again, stabbing each other with our knees. But we were so run-down that even if sleep was imperfect, a roof over our heads seemed like a heavenly invention. After weeks in the same clothes, unable to wash properly, much less to bathe, we buried our vanity and lapsed into general indifference.

On the first morning there Werfel went to get a shave, and I went for a stroll along the bookstalls. I found a small book on the little saint of Lourdes and felt that, since we were there now, we ought to know her. I gave Werfel the book with the remark that this was something extraordinary, and he read it with a great deal of interest.

As time went by, I also bought all the devotional tracts about Saint Bernadette. Her grotto at Massabielle made a deep impression on us; with all due emotion we bravely drank the water from her spring, waiting for some stroke of luck to help us to get out of town. We were imprisoned in Lourdes, as in all of France; we not only needed visas to get out of the country but safe-conducts from the authorities to go from one village to the next. I do not know how many hours we spent at the police station of Lourdes, trying to wangle those precious slips from the men whose precursors in office had harassed the child Bernadette.

I wrote in my diary:

Franz Werfel's possible rescue, my rescue—everything lies in a clouded future that we know nothing about. The grotto of Lourdes has a healing effect on our souls while we are here; once we go away, this effect will cease, and our hearts will be burdened again. . . .

What matters, if I understand it right, is to cast out the galling criticism in ourselves. Today I was twice at the grotto—to morning Mass, and to an afternoon service with a sermon, music, and innumerable little Bernadettes (costumewise, at least). Suddenly I

was so moved I had to cry and hide my face. It tore at my heart-strings for no visible reason—and that is what matters!

After two weeks at our Hôtel Vatican we were moved into a better room with—thank God!—twin beds. Two more weeks passed, and the post office advised us of the arrival of our suitcases, which we had left in the ditch at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, with the chauffeur's wife. We felt enriched, though not much so. Meanwhile, the hotel manager, whom we had told of our lost trunks, remembered knowing a friend of the Bordeaux stationmaster. He wrote letter after letter, but got no reply as long as we were in Lourdes.

On August 3 we finally got our safe-conducts back to Marseille. With troop trains shuttling incessantly between the occupied and unoccupied zones, there had been no civilian rail travel in three weeks, and we were more or less the first to venture it. Once again, God's staging was perfect, with the heat near the boiling point. Food parcels with white bread, ham, hard-boiled eggs, and pastry were tied with string and stowed in the horse-drawn cab with our few pieces of hand luggage. We rode out the Avenue de la Grotte, passing all the little *bistros* and the post office on our way to the station, where we had to stand at the ticket gate for two hours before the train carried us off through the green mountain country.

It was dark by the time we reached Toulouse, where we were greeted by a stench of army boots and Armageddon. Senegalese soldiers lay sprawling on the tracks, fast asleep. We settled down in the grimy station restaurant and began to eat enormously, for no reason at all. There are no adjectives to describe the sanitary facilities at that railway station. The restaurant closed at ten. Ejected from its hospitable premises, the four of us, the Kahlers, Werfel, and I, sat on the platform on our suitcases, faithfully playing our parts in this supercolossal spectacular, "World's End," until a train left for Marseille at dawn.

Marseille . . .

The Cannebière was sun-baked early in the morning. We walked from the station, carrying our suitcases ourselves. In front

of the Hôtel de Louvre et de la Paix six brand-new cars stood gleaming in the sun; a long time had passed since we had seen a polished, shiny automobile. In the lobby we saw officers in field gray, with pistols and shaved heads. The Germans were in Marseille!

Our old friend the hotel manager told us under his breath that the German commission was going to leave in two hours; in the meantime we should use the rear elevator and stay in our rooms. Had we spent seven weeks on this "Tour de France," as Werfel termed our flight from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and back, only to run right here into the jaws of the Germans?

The next few weeks in Marseille were unbearable. Daily there were new rumors, every week a new commission to plunder and ship stocks of supplies to Germany—rice, noodles, oil, sugar, and so forth. Hunger had come to Marseille in our absence. It was a poor city to which we returned: food was scarce and bad, soap and fat virtually unobtainable, butter a memory. And the daily pilgrimages to the consuls, where those gentlemen would let everyone feel their full power!

The city swarmed with refugees. They had been Germans, Austrians, Czechs, Poles; now most of them were stateless, many without passports, some without any papers, all wanting only to get out, to go far away. "Far from where?" was a joke of those days, when it seemed likely that Hitler would conquer the world.

Werfel was unnerved by the confusing rumors he brought home daily from the Czech consulate. The armistice signed by the French obliged them to "surrender on demand" all Germans (which then meant also all former Austrians and Czechs) named by the German government. Werfel would hear from someone that he was "first on the list," and would collapse in tears. I thanked God for letting me keep my head, at least, so I could calm him.

Despite our own fears we saw many others in the same distress. They helped to distract us from our troubles. Werfel's name was not supposed to be mentioned, but some refugees kept shouting it over the telephone: "Good morning, Herr Werfel! I can't tell you my name . . ."

The telephone was in the lobby of our hotel, where everyone could hear it. For a while the Gestapo occupied rooms on our floor; when they came, we were warned by the manager to keep out of sight. He would not let them see the hotel register, either.

When we did not have to stand in line at some consulate, we would take a cab out to the beach. There the sea gulls screamed, the salty smell of the haze over the water carried far, and good ideas came to mind. In those blessed hours we forgot that there was evil in the world, lying in wait for us.

The French had promised us exit visas, but when time passed and we did not get them, any more than others did, we began to think of leaving without them. Crazy escape plans were hatched. One—to travel to a small border village, spend the night there, sneak up to a cemetery at 5:00 A.M. and meet someone who would be waiting behind a shack and would smuggle us through the cemetery and across the border—was rejected as too vague. Another plan was to seize a ship, man it with Czech refugees, and dress it up as a Red Cross vessel, with me as head nurse.

There was talk of a man being sent from America especially to help us all. We waited; the man did not come. But what came one day, out of the blue, alone, orphaned and tattered, was my little trunk with the scores of Gustav Mahler's symphonies and Bruckner's Third! The efforts of our kindly host in Lourdes had not been completely in vain, and I did not mind losing the rest of our possessions as long as I had what was most important to me.

A telegram came from New York, advising us that our American visas had been cabled to the American consul in Marseille. The taxi ride to the consulate cost a small fortune. The waiting room was full of excited people; once again we sat around for hours, and when we got to see the consul, he knew nothing of a cable. It was only at our vigorous insistence that he managed to locate it.

No ships were sailing from French ports, and to embark for the United States in Lisbon, you needed Spanish and Portuguese transit visas. With the American visa in a Czech passport like ours there was no trouble about getting them; you just had to wait your turn. The refugees stood in line before the consulates

from sunrise until closing time, if they did not faint in the glistening heat or leave, to keep from fainting. A man with Werfel's heart could die on the spot. But all applicants had to appear in person.

At the Spanish consulate I bribed the doorman to take our card in, and we were promptly called up out of turn and issued visas. I tried this on the Portuguese doorman, too, but there it did not work; the man returned the card to me as undeliverable. We went to the end of the line. It inched forward with maddening slowness. At high noon the pavement seemed to melt under our feet. Werfel kept mopping his brow. His eyes burned in his dripping face; he suddenly looked ashen. I was desperate and ready to give up when a young Austrian acquaintance of ours approached. "That's impossible," she said indignantly. "Why should Franz Werfel stand in line like this?"

We knew Hertha Pauli from Vienna, where she had been one of Paul Zsolnay's promising authors, and had met her again in Paris and recently in Lourdes. She had just happened to pass by; she could not hope for a visa herself, because she had no passport.

I explained to her that our card had failed to go through. "Wait a minute," she said, and disappeared.

In two minutes she was back, beaming. "Come," she said. "You'll have to sit down, first of all. The consul expects you at four."

I really had to sit down. Werfel kept mopping his brow. "How did you manage that?" I asked.

"I called up," she said simply. "When I mentioned your name, the consul came right to the phone. He is an old admirer of yours," she told Franz Werfel. Then she turned back to me. "I hope you'll forgive me, but I had to call as Madame Werfel."

We laughed aloud, for the first time in weeks, and headed for the nearest *bistro*. "That calls for champagne," I declared.

Punctually at 4:00 P.M. we got the visas. In exchange, Werfel had only to autograph the consul's Portuguese edition of *Musa Dagh*. (Subsequently, through the Czech consul, an angel of a man, Werfel got Czech passports for a score of stateless refugees, including Hertha Pauli, who had aided us.)

Soon after we got our visas, the much-talked-about American

came to Marseille. He was Varian Fry, the representative of the Emergency Rescue Committee, which had been formed in New York for the purpose of bringing the political and intellectual refugees out of unoccupied France before the Germans got them. Mr. Fry did the job, but his laconic manner and expressionless face made him appear to be doing it gruffly and grudgingly. He came to our hotel, had dinner with us, and then dragged out our departure for two more weeks in a wild-goose chase after a ship. This, of course, fell through, and on September 11 he finally told us to be ready to leave by rail the next morning at five, together with Heinrich Mann and his wife and nephew, Thomas Mann's son Golo.

There was no time to lose. From Mr. Fry's hotel we rushed back to ours, where Werfel burned all his writings and drafts in a small ash tray while I was busy packing—for, as by a miracle, the rest of our lost luggage had also caught up with us. Our friend Frau Meier-Graefe stayed up with me all night until it was time to leave.

Mr. Fry and another young American got on the train with us. In Perpignan we waited several hours for another train, which took us to the border town of Cerbère by nightfall. The two Americans hoped that our American visas would get us through on the train, even without French exit visas. This gambit failed, unfortunately, so we took rooms at an otherwise deserted inn and waited for orders.

In the morning I rose early. Unable to stand it long at the eerie, empty inn, I went to the station, where we had arranged to meet. There was no breakfast to be had, just tea. We held a war council. The police, the Americans told us, had repeated their refusal to let us cross the border on the train, so we came to the decision to try on foot, although Heinrich Mann was seventy and Werfel had a heart ailment. Mr. Fry, the only possessor of an exit visa, would go on the train with the luggage and await us at the Spanish border town of Port Bou, while his young colleague would guide us over the hills. We had to go soon—the Spanish sun was infernally hot at six o'clock already—but Golo, usually a most reliable young man, was nowhere to be found. Two valuable hours passed before he came back, refreshed, from

a swim in the Mediterranean and we could set out to climb the Pyrenees.

In the village it suddenly struck Nelly Mann that it was Friday, the thirteenth. She wanted to turn back. Werfel and I walked ahead, to put an end to the hysterical squabble; we were supposed, after all, to be innocent excursionists. The village scarcely lay behind us when the young American turned off the road and uphill, on a steep, stony trail that soon vanished altogether. It was sheer slippery terrain that we crawled up, bounded by precipices. Mountain goats could hardly have kept their footing on the glassy, shimmering slate. If you skidded, there was nothing but thistles to hold on to.

After a two-hour climb the youth bade us farewell and hurried back to show this "road" to the Manns. We stood alone on the mountaintop. In the distance we saw a hut shining white on the white rock. This was the Spanish border post, where we were to present ourselves.

Laboriously we crawled downhill; trembling, we knocked on the door, which was opened by a dull-faced Catalan soldier who knew Spanish only. His understanding was somewhat improved by the packs of cigarettes we slipped into his pocket. He grew friendlier and motioned to us to follow him. At last we could walk on a passable road—but where was this idiot taking us? Back to the French border post!

We were brought before an officer. I was wearing old sandals and lugging a bag that contained the rest of our money, my jewels, and the score of Bruckner's Third. We must have looked pretty decrepit, surely less picturesque than the stage smugglers in *Carmen*. After the march in the broiling sun we felt utterly wretched. In a sudden burst of kindness, the officer waved us through.

Tired, perspiring, we unsteadily retraced our steps, clambered over the dramatic iron chains that separate France from Spain, and continued our descent after the soldier had telephoned down to the customhouse. On the road I found half a horseshoe and picked it up; we took it for a good omen and walked more cheerfully. It had grown late in the day. The heat was unimaginable. In Port Bou we did not see any officials; they were probably tak-

ing their siesta. But the customhouse porters—whom we had approached with deference at first, mistaking them for government functionaries—were oddly amiable, promised us good luck, brought wine, and cursed Franco and Mussolini. Catalonia was apparently still antifascist, and we took courage in spite of our great weariness.

At last, our travel companions arrived. We pretended to be mere casual acquaintances, though I hastily whispered to Golo to tip the porters, who had already been discussing the fact that there was a son of Thomas Mann in our group. When we had given them virtually all our French francs, they could not do enough for us, telephoned for the best rooms in town, and fought over our bags when we were finally summoned to the customhouse.

Then came the dreaded moment: the passport control. And, as always, it turned out that the really dangerous situations have to be faced quite alone. There was no American in sight, no one to help.

Like poor sinners we sat in a row on a narrow bench while our papers were checked against a card index. Heinrich Mann, greatly endangered because of his leftist tendencies, was traveling with false papers, under the name of Heinrich Ludwig; Werfel, traveling under his own name, had heard in Marseille that Hitler himself had put a price on his head; Golo Mann was in danger as his father's son. Yet Golo sat quite calmly reading a book, as if the whole business did not concern him. Nelly Mann had half carried her aged husband over the thistly mountainside, and her stockings hung in shreds from bleeding calves.

After an agonizing wait we all got our papers back, properly stamped, and were free to continue through Spain. When I think how many killed themselves up there on the hill or landed in Spanish jails, I see how lucky we were to have our American scraps of paper honored by the officials at Port Bou.

Discharged, we found Mr. Fry, who had our luggage, and in the gathering dusk we walked together to the hotel where the porters had reserved rooms for us. It had been almost completely bombed out in the civil war; only a primitive dining room and three or four shabby bedrooms were still standing. The house

looked like all of Spain, like one bleeding wound. Late that evening the mayor of the town performed a marriage ceremony in the dining room of the hotel, because the courthouse, also, had been pulverized.

We slept as if never to awaken. Then, with a shock, we were aroused at 4:00 A.M., for at six our train was to leave. I still do not know why all trains throughout our flight always left between three and six in the morning.

We rattled to Barcelona, a war-devastated, starved, impoverished city that must have been beautiful once. In the afternoon Werfel and I sat before a café, and poor children licked the melted ice cream off our plates. We paid with tattered old stamps. Everything was crumbling and desolate. But we began to breathe easier in the two days we spent in Barcelona, waiting for the first plane on which two seats to Lisbon were to be had. The seats went to the Heinrich Manns, as the most endangered, and we, with Golo Mann and Mr. Fry, traveled fifteen hours by rail to Madrid, once more jammed eight in a compartment.

From Madrid, Werfel and I flew to Lisbon. It was evening when we landed there at a new, unfinished, unlighted airport; as everywhere, we were kept standing around, senselessly, for hours. The passport examiner scrutinized a list of Werfel's works which had been added to a letter of recommendation by the Duke of Württemberg, a high-ranking cleric. When he came to the title *Paul Among the Jews*, the official frowned. "I see—you're of Jewish descent?"

Werfel did not say yes or no. In his confusion he merely pointed at me, and the official sneered, as if to indicate that Werfel's descent was obvious to everyone. Then he gave us the stamp that meant admission to Portugal.

I can never forget those first days of paradisiacal peace in a paradisiacal country, after the torment of the previous months!

Two more weeks had to be spent waiting at a hotel near Lisbon, until we got passage on the *Nea Hellas*, the last ship to make a regular run to New York. On the day of embarkation, when I went to pay our hotel bill, the clerk seemed to sense that it would leave me short of cash. "Never mind paying the bill," he said.

"I'll advance it for you, and you can send me the money from New York."

"The kindness of a perfect stranger," I wrote in my diary, "has reconciled me with mankind. . . ."

The sea was dull. It always is; only the coasts are interesting, and those only if they are inhabited. We hardly went on deck. We spent most of the time in our cabins, reading and talking, took no part in the lifeboat drills, and wearily dragged ourselves to the shabby dining room. On this voyage we were really "lost to the world." Nothing from outside could touch us. We were overwhelmed by the pressure of past experiences and the anticipation of freedom.

At sea we heard that the war had come to Greece. The report proved to be three weeks early, yet we felt that in all probability our old Greek ship was making her last crossing.

Then we began to get radiograms from New York. America was drawing near, and our strength returned.



On the third of January, 1941, Franz Werfel started working. "Thank God," I wrote in my diary. "How wonderful that he can concentrate again! It's Bernadette churning in his mind. . . ."

Five months earlier, on our last day in Lourdes, he had disappeared for a while. I did not ask where he had been, but he told me himself. "I've made a vow," he said frankly. "If we get to America all right, I'll write a book in honor of Saint Bernadette."

Since then, the *Nea Hellas* had brought us safely to New York. Feeling young and courageous, we disembarked on October 13, 1940. (Yes, on the thirteenth—!) At last we set foot on soil that was really free. If I had not felt embarrassed before the others, I should have kissed the American earth.

The landing in New York Harbor was as grandiose an experience as ever. A mob of friends awaited us on the pier; all of them were in tears, and so were we. We spent close to ten weeks in New York—a time of rather too much commotion, but also of love, friendship, excitement, and blessed freedom. Two days after Christmas we left for the West Coast.

In Chicago we had a stopover. To get some rest, Werfel took a large room at the Drake, a beautiful hotel; then we drove straight to the Art Institute, with its fine collection of French Impressionists, and back to the hotel for lunch. Later, in the

room, I was horrified to find missing my traveling bag with all our papers, my jewels, and what little money we had. I had been so proud of having lugged everything around with me for three years, to every theater and opera, without losing a thing—and now this! I was too ashamed to say a word to Werfel. Besides, it would have overexcited him. We could not have continued our trip, however, for I had not another cent on me. Neither, of course, had Werfel.

I raced down to the lunchroom, to the table under which I had put my bag, and started searching regardless of the guests who then occupied it. A waiter came up at once. He ushered me to the desk—and there, promptly and without asking for identification, the hostess gave me my bag.

I'll never forget those minutes. Werfel had noticed nothing. He would never know.

We arrived in Los Angeles early on December 30 and were met at the station by some old friends of ours, who drove us to a lovely little house they had found for us. They had taken care of everything. The kitchen was stocked with all necessary supplies, and they had hired a butler, who stayed with us for years. Four days later, Werfel started working.

He wrote the new novel in a state of rapture, without tiring once. He brought me each finished chapter and often said, "I'm sure this can't interest anybody." Just the same, he kept writing with joy. At the end he said it had been like taking dictation. We celebrated the completion of the first draft like a great holiday, and he was hardly through with it when he began to revise.

Franz Werfel was at his peak then, physically and mentally. He never worked as easily as on this book, inspired by Lourdes and the great experience we had there. He titled it *The Song of Bernadette*.

We lived from day to flowering day, praising God.

It was in those days that I got a letter from Europe, from a malicious woman. It concerned Johannes Hollnsteiner, the human symbol of my return to the faith, the man who had explained the Mass to me, who had never known woman, whom I called "the essence of a priest." My correspondent informed me that Holln-

steiner had had himself laicized, had joined the Nazi party, and had married.

The lady thought she was breaking my heart. As a matter of fact, after five minutes of wonder, this news as well as Herr Hollnsteiner himself meant less to me than anything on earth. Whatever influence he might have had on me was washed away by his betrayal of what had been sacred to *him*.

In retrospect I saw this whole man differently. He had always been a schemer—it was the quality I used to exploit when I wanted him to help others. I had always been aware of his selfishness, his vanity. And yet, there had been a wall of faith, which I considered him incapable of scaling. He called it “the Idea,” and he would talk sagely and loftily about it. Now he climbed the party ladder; God hurled no thunderbolts; the wall turned out to be scalable. A man returned to the good life, took a wife—well, perhaps his God had never existed. Perhaps it was all just a cry, a phantasmagoria, a once-upon-a-time, far from his present life. An uninteresting bourgeois.

But there was one thing I could not forgive him: he made me waver in my Catholicism. And Franz Werfel said, “I’m angry with Hollnsteiner. He has shaken my faith. . . .”

In September 1941 we left Hollywood for New York, a \$50,000 film contract in our pocket, with the likelihood that the Book-of-the-Month Club would take *The Song of Bernadette*.

In February 1942 we were back in Hollywood and I wrote in my diary:

Everything has gone wrong. The movie producer is broke, the Book-of-the-Month Club is scared of the Catholicism in FW’s book—an utter misconception, as he wanted to show only the strength and effectiveness of *any* faith!—and we have sold our old car and can’t get a new one, now that everything is taken over for the war. And if we do get a new one, it will again cost a fortune—or, rather, *the* fortune!

In May 1942 I wrote:

Things have changed. The Book-of-the-Month Club has taken Bernadette, after all; so we’re a little more carefree, for the time being. The film is hanging fire. . . .

Franz is tired and does not feel like working. He's shut off, dead. He would need a new love—or a romance, at least. It would be very painful for me, of course; I've completely lost myself in him and have nothing else that I wish for, or might wish for.

In December 1943:

Première of the Bernadette film!

Franz and I were all alone, having sent all our friends and the doctor to the movie—alone as on a green, strange island. The radio chattered about the arrival of the stars. . . . It was no thrill. We missed nothing by not being there. We were in another world. . . .



Our life is so provisional that every word seems too stable.

"There is no safety here, either," I read in my diary of 1941. "It's almost as terrible as in France. *Again* the people, defeatist throughout, ignore the rising danger. Hitler can't stop now even if he wanted to. The world revolution—from right or left—*must* run its course no matter whether England and America crack up on it. . . ."

In New York we met an expert in the course of revolution: Alexander Kerensky, the onetime head of the provisional government of Russia, and his loquacious wife. They asked us to visit them. It was a trivial hour, dominated by the woman; although she constantly emphasized being a poetess, she had really nothing to say.

"What doomed Czarist Russia?" I asked Kerensky point-blank.

He answered verbosely, circuitously. "The Czar was astute but weak. The Czarina was astute and strong. Rasputin was very astute and immensely, demonically strong. Both were under his spell. He wanted peace only—and in the last analysis he was right. All his prophecies came true. War was bound to finish the imperial family and czarism."

He gave me the impression of repenting everything he had done. I felt as if I were talking with a ghost.

In Hollywood, at the home of the actor Oscar Homolka, we met Erich Maria Remarque. With him, too, contact was warm and instantaneous. I found him strikingly handsome, tall and slim (he was a racing driver in his youth) with enormously expressive

features and a way of raising his black, bushy left eyebrow that gave a satanic touch to his smile and laughter. We talked and drank together like old acquaintances, and Remarque, halfway through the second vodka bottle, started calling both of us by our first names and addressing Werfel as "Brother." The morning after, a letter from him arrived, in a sea of flowers. It offered us lifelong friendship—or honest enmity! By then our choice was made.

A few days later he sat at a table near mine at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. I was having dinner with another gifted writer I loved—and love—like a brother: Thomas Mann's son Golo, of whom Franz Werfel and I had grown so fond in Portugal. Golo is shy, and his personality tends to isolate him; I wanted to draw him out a little. But Remarque no sooner saw me than he came over to join us, had a bottle of old cognac brought from his room, and monopolized the conversation—which dealt, moreover, with a subject so sensitive that the inhibited Golo promptly withdrew into his shell.

A diary note I made of the argument tells more about my own feelings:

Golo spoke most disrespectfully of Gerhart Hauptmann. I rebuked him; to me, his views on political matters are alien. He does not realize it, and regards Remarque and me—we both took Hauptmann's side, of course—as half-Nazis, simply because we refuse to condemn old men like Hauptmann and Strauss for remaining in Germany.

This abuse of the aged geniuses who had to stay makes my blood boil. I thank God that Hauptmann has not had to live on charity in this country, where he could not earn a cent! After all, he is eighty and known here only by name, not by his works, of which few have been translated.

Richard Strauss would have two *Rosenkavalier* performances at the Met each year—not enough for a beggar to live on—and that would be all. . . .

Franz Léhar, another octogenarian, would not be able to support himself for a month. . . . He is much too old and sick and tired for traveling, suffering on concert tours. And yet he wanted to get out of Germany at all costs.

Poor Oscar Strauss, being a Jew, *had* to get out. That makes all the difference, whether a man left on his own or of necessity—and I know few who had no grounds, open or secret. And how many collections have since been taken up for Oscar Strauss, how hard did he labor for pin money—and he, too, an old, old man!

The poetess Annette Kolb, asked how she felt in America, replied, "Grateful and unhappy."

We went to New York for a week once, to relax. Who could have foreseen that Werfel's family would ruin our whole stay? The poor man spent his nights writing letters to the various relatives, all of whom were at odds with him and with each other. Never, nowhere, have I seen such feuding, bickering, and gossiping.

It all struck me as another trial, another ordeal for the Jews. When the young ones fled to America, the old ones had stayed, expecting to live out their lives in familiar surroundings. But Hitler disposed otherwise, and now the young Jews had to make the greatest sacrifices to get the old Jews, inwardly so far removed from them, over to America. It was fascinating to see them both long for and dread their arrival—and at the sight of Werfel's mother, self-obsessed, gesticulating with innumerable hands, I could imagine the suffering of the rest.

She was a poor, feeble creature, clinging now right, now left, unable to stand alone. True, she was old; but she had been old at our first meeting, almost thirty years before.

Not even Werfel's work escaped the blight of the sickness emigration. He had not been in a creative mood for some time after finishing *The Song of Bernadette*. With our friend Friedrich Torberg he wrote a movie script about Zora Pasha, an evil woman whose life and adventures had intrigued him in Egypt. I read the script and found it "full of imagination—probably much too good for those film jackals, but just as probably not facile enough for Hollywood, where routine is everything."

My premonition was unfortunately correct. Nothing came of the script. So, with the tragedy of his beloved Europe still foremost in his mind, Franz Werfel next wrote *Jacobowsky and the*

Colonel, against the dark background of the fall of France and the plight of the refugees.

It was a play—a farce, rather—about the joint flight of a Polish officer and a little Polish Jew. The man who really got it written was Max Reinhardt, the indestructible genius, who had been one of the first people we saw after our arrival on the Coast. I had found him aged but beautiful to look at, side-tracked and sad, but not embittered. “If I were you,” he told us, “I should live here.” But it was he who lived there, although for him it was all wrong—he belonged in New York.

When Franz Werfel told him the theme he had in mind, Reinhardt was so carried away that there was no rest until Werfel sat down to write it. He did not write with his usual *élan*, however. The spark had come from outside, had not been kindled within him. Reinhardt and Sam Behrman—picked to adapt Werfel’s comedy for Broadway—acted as godfathers.

The comedy was funny but took endless time getting done and caused endless trouble. Max Reinhardt wanted to stage it but found no backers; it was lying around while others wanted to produce it and didn’t. At times I was reminded of an automobile, idling noisily. Clifford Odets was brought in as the second adapter, and Werfel himself rewrote the whole manuscript three times. It was the part of writing that he enjoyed least of all, to which he devoted a great deal of effort and time he might have used for something new. He had begun a utopian novel, but the play remained in the way. On top of everything, it involved him in a lawsuit.

As a matter of fact, there were three suits hanging over his head. Gottfried Reinhardt threatened first; then the manager of a lecture tour which Werfel had called off because of illness; finally a character he had picked up in Lourdes, who had brought us his mistress and stayed with her in the room next to ours at the Hôtel Vatican. The fellow was a good storyteller, although too vain to be as good as Werfel thought he was, and the self-satisfied, interminably reiterated tales of his flight from Paris kept ringing in our ears.

They had included some anecdotes about a colonel, who later

modeled for Franz Werfel's "Stjerbinsky." I have forgotten his real name; apparently he was a haughty individual who got his companion into all sorts of trouble. He said he knew how to drive, for example, after the other bought an old car in Paris—but it turned out that he could only drive straight ahead, not around curves. The two shared many a wretched French room on their flight, but the little Jew usually sat outside waiting while the colonel locked himself in with one of the ladies he would pick up in the street. At night, in bed, the colonel used to get religion, whispering long, penitent prayers under his blanket, while a strongbox with his money and papers was firmly lashed to the mattress on which he lay.

These little yarns had helped to inspire Franz Werfel, along with our own émigré experiences: the Royal Madeleine, our petty-bourgeois hotel, had a gay resurrection in his play, as did the rare occasion of his getting drunk, when Anna and I had to rescue him from a Parisian ladies' room. It was he who made a comedy out of these trifles. Yet now the raconteur of Lourdes demanded to be cut in on the receipts, and Werfel, thoroughly fed up, turned the matter over to an attorney.

In this country, we learned, the experiences of others, even though shown in quite a new light, may not be used as literary material. (How lucky was Goethe! Where would his *Werther* be if he had been unable to draw on other people's lives?) The whole thing was ridiculous, but it spoiled our trip to New York in the spring of 1943. We were surrounded by an army of lawyers, by mountains of bills for the cost of settling the suits. I had a horrible time and fled to a sickbed.

Summer found us back in our Californian Tusculum, Beverly Hills. Franz Werfel went to Santa Barbara for a few weeks, to rewrite the play a fourth time. "I can't turn an onion into a rose," he moaned over the telephone.

"You'll just have to make the onion as fragrant as possible," I answered.

He no sooner had one fight over the play behind him than another would arise. A certain movie figure suddenly had his hand on it and kept throwing dust into the eyes of Werfel—who cared

nothing about the production, only about a chance to get back to his work on the new book.

In the fall, while Werfel was recovering from a heart attack, *Jacobowsky and the Colonel* went into rehearsal. Lawrence Langner staged it, with our Viennese friend Oskar Karlweis playing the little Jew, Louis Calhern the colonel, and Annabella of Paris and Hollywood the French girl. They came to the Coast for conferences with Werfel, and Langner promised to bring the whole show there for tryouts, but the expense proved prohibitive.

In February 1944 I wrote in my diary:

Weeks have passed, weeks of clashes and excitement—just what Franz should most strictly avoid. He was perfectly right to break with his two adapters. Drafting telegrams in fits of rage and making hour-long phone calls throws him back again and again. He wants to save what can be saved. . . . They all refuse to believe how completely Behrman has misunderstood him. His nerves are shot. It is a pity. . . .

The play became a hit. It was still running on Broadway a year later, when Franz Werfel died. He never saw it performed.

Our life is so provisional that every word seems too stable . . .



To get our "first papers," late in 1941, we went by car from Hollywood to Tucson, Arizona, and on to Nogales on the Mexican frontier. There we had to take a half-hour ride into Mexico. We saw the cleanliness of the United States vanish with the crossing of the border, but the dirt, the singing children, the universal signs of talent pleased us as in every Latin-Catholic country.

For nature here is empty and monotonous. Nature is formed by its inhabitants, and the people of this region have only been around for some two hundred years—doing what? Destroying what there was of Indian culture; building gasoline stations and beauty shops in streets that you have to pass at high speed if you do not want to get sick . . . Yes, the birds and flowers warm your heart. But even the trees grow planted and poor by the wayside.

"I know California very well," said FW. "I have lived there. It is justly called an Eden, though certain snobs like to knock this beautiful plot of earth. They call it a desert cloaked in artificial luxuriance, its painted roses, bougainvilleas, poinsettias, and other flowers odorless, its fruits and vegetables tasteless, its people shapely but, in a way, lemuroid. . . ."

Strictly speaking, the "FW" who quoted California's critics was not Franz Werfel but the hero of *Star of the Unborn*, Werfel's new utopian novel. He was the author's picture of himself transported into the world of some hundred thousand years hence. As Werfel confessed in the first chapter, he wrote this "travel story" in place of another he was expected to write in those days: a story of the enormity of our time, a written record of "roaring bombers and chattering machine guns, of the moans of the mortally wounded and the screams and death rattles of the degraded, the tortured, and the massacred. . . ."

He wrote: "I have not forgotten that I, too, am a victim of persecution. . . . The enormous reality, this swarm of visions dreamed up by a daemon of agony, clutches my throat day and night, standing and walking, in the street and in my room, at work and at play. . . . But I shrank back: will this enormous reality not grow more real from day to day, and perhaps most real, most true, when it is no more?"

So Franz Werfel took the advice of an ancient Greek writer who said it was the task of poets and storytellers to visit "the fabled creatures on the islands, the dead in Hades, and the unborn on their star." The second and subsequent chapters of his last book dealt with his trip to the "Eleventh World Cycle of Virgo"—the age when civilization would have conquered not only poverty, disease, and war, but, in a manner of speaking, death itself.

Curiously, the first and foremost memories accompanying him across the gulf of time were views of California. He saw himself telling the people of that distant, leveled-off future about the huge, snow-covered Sierras and the weathered, crumbling sandstone hills along the ocean-gnawed shores; of endless orange, lemon, and grapefruit orchards, ever-blooming and overpoweringly fragrant; of the desert, pink and purple with its hundred-

fold flowering cacti. "Wherever you walk," FW fondly recalled after eons, "you can see blue mountains far away. . . ."

I bought a house in Beverly Hills for us—the smallest I could find, knowing that servant trouble and high taxes made large houses impossible to keep. It was a dear house, built by a great actress, May Robson. We moved in on a Friday in September 1942. I had taken great pains to make it as homelike as possible, and it really turned out to be enchanting. Even Werfel, grumbling at first about insufficient dimensions, was finally content. I had to buy the house at an hour's notice, for many others wanted it, too, and we had to outbid them all.

I had a new Steinway piano in this little house, and Franz Werfel a marvelous new radio. The whole place was attuned to us, to the two of us only—and in his "travel story" Werfel gave the return address for dropping him on the way back from the thousand-and-twentieth century A.D. as "corner of North Bedford Drive and April 1943." He even mentioned our landmark: the pretty Mexican church of the Good Shepherd, with the cactus garden, across the way.

At North Bedford Drive we lived in a small, select circle.

There was Arnold Schönberg in Brentwood, seventy and not very well at that time, with Trude, his dear, gifted, beautiful, overstrained, self-sacrificing second wife and their fine children, the youngest three years old. Schönberg had been asked to compose for the movies, but the deal fell through when he demanded too high a fee. "If I do commit suicide," he told me, "I want at least to live well on it."

There were my friends Gustav and Gusti Arlt—more truly brother and sister to me than the Bergs had been, for Alban's passion for Karl Kraus and Schönberg could be trying, while the Arlts belonged entirely to us.

There was Fritzi Massary, once a great artist, the queen of German light opera, and now dignified and still fascinating in abdication. There were the two Manns, deliberate Thomas and his energetic little wife. There were the Byrnnes—he was a young musician I worked with, enjoying both his musical bent and mine—and Erich Korngold and his lovely wife. We rejoiced whenever he sat down at the piano.

There were the Franks: Bruno, a sensitive, highly civilized writer of attractive books, and Liesl, Fritzi Massary's charming, iridescent daughter. And quiet Alfred Neumann, the novelist, and his forceful wife. And the Hungarians . . .

At North Bedford Drive, too, we had a sweet Siamese kitten. It died, and this little cat's death reopened all of my wounds. Everywhere I saw my dying Manon. On the eighth anniversary of her death, Franz Werfel suddenly, quite unexpectedly, brought me a beautiful orchid; he had not thought of the anniversary—he never remembered a date—but I felt at once that Manon had been guiding him, wanting to give me pleasure. It was a melancholy pleasure, of course, but she was near me, as at all hours since her departure from us.

Dying is a contagious disease. This is why I never put pictures of the living beside pictures of the dead.

One who had recently died, in his early forties, was Guido Zernatto. Death made him a calm, clean being with a face of gravity and authority, no longer concerned with worldly needs and affairs. There was one friend less in the world. I felt chilled—and he felt no warmth any more. Of the great hopes with which he had fled from Vienna, none had materialized; their failure may have helped to kill him. His former high office was like a suit of clothes now, discarded without a trace.

When Riccarda Zernatto came to see us after her husband's death, Franz Werfel said, "Her eyes are like the melted snow in March, reflecting the sky. . . ."

In the summer of 1943, as I said, Werfel had to put aside his new novel, to rewrite the play once more. He went to Santa Barbara for the purpose, and late in August I joined him there. It was a paradise. We went for beautiful rides, saw princely estates amid dense forests, and visited mansions that were as full of culture, expensive simplicity, and boredom, as befits the very rich. I saw Ganna Walska again, my old friend who had married Joseph Fraenkel; she kept us waiting and then flew into my arms in an abbreviated swim suit, talked little but chased us up and down her vast garden—she had a swamp with genuine lotus blossoms, for instance—chanting plant names in Polish and English. Then back to the house, and from one old Hindu or Chinese

carving or painting or drapery to the next. At last, dead tired, we said we had to leave, and she took us to the car with a smile of triumph, without having offered us anything or invited us to sit down.

She was then living, in a cottage near the main house, with a Dr. Bernard, an Indologist who had spent years in Tibet. She took us to his bedroom—"He sleeps on wood," she whispered—and then to hers, next door, where an immense four-poster, that could easily have slept three, shimmered with lace and white satin. She also showed us his picture: a handsome youth in the red, flowing garb of a lama. He called himself "Theos." He also had disciples who called him "Oom the Omnipotent."

At the time, Ganna Walska and he were secretly married, but she soon divorced him, and he returned to Tibet. As a memento, Ganna kept the divine castle in the Santa Barbara mountains, where he had withdrawn whenever he wanted to meditate—or to be rid of her.

In September, we went home to Beverly Hills, to celebrate Franz Werfel's birthday. Two nights later, he had a heart attack.

"Without him," I wrote in my diary, "I will not go on living."

He was stricken on September 13. Friedrich Torberg, the young Austrian novelist, had been with us the evening before. Werfel, always an excessive smoker, had smoked a heavy, pitch-black Havana. He threw it away, at my request, but immediately lit up another, lighter cigar, followed by several cigarettes. About midnight, I had gone to my room; not much later, Franz Werfel came after me, his face completely changed.

I half carried him to his room, where he lay in great pain. I stood by in mortal fear, unable to help. The attacks were convulsive, diminishing and recurring; he was bathed in cold sweat. I called Dr. Wolff, his physician, who came and gave him digitalis, but the spasms did not cease for hours.

I was terribly worried. The doctor—out of kindness, I assume—called it a bad case of nicotine poisoning. I knew that Werfel could not stop smoking. When he was sitting at home with Torberg and other friends, he would entertain the lot of them and

smoke incessantly. Dr. Wolff tried to scare him, but he laughed it off.

Remarque arrived that week, but I felt neither eager nor strong enough to see him. I suffered too much with the suffering Werfel. Remarque, I knew, was preoccupied with the will to live; he once confessed to me, "I don't know what to do with sick people." The wind had turned a new leaf in the book of my life.

On the doctor's advice we went to Santa Barbara, a few days after the attack, to have more quiet. On the second day there Werfel took a turn for the worse. We returned home. He still did not seem dangerously ill, until a new, nearly fatal heart attack occurred on September 29, after we had made a little music in the evening. Three doctors came, late that night, and decided that the singing had exhausted Werfel—although he had done little more than hum with us.

He was running a fever and fighting for breath. The doctors gave him injections, but in his agony he kept crying, "Morphine! Morphine!" After three days he had not yet passed the crisis. The fever went down at last, but the heart still needed constant support. Oxygen was administered for hours daily.

This time he, too, was frightened. He was touchingly patient, longing to live again and doing all one asked of him, without a plaintive word. For over a month he lay motionless in the bed that was wheeled out on the patio each morning, into the sunny garden. He should have been X-rayed, but he could not be transported.

Here are some notes from my diary.

November 3: Today FW said quite simply, "I hope it will pass—or I'll pass—"

He stands above things, and yet he is afraid of death, and of God. I try in vain to convince him that he never thought, let alone did, anything wicked. Underneath it, I think, is a profound Catholicism, but he would never admit that either to himself or to others.

November 23: The X-ray examination was begun, but they had to stop after the first few exposures, because he suffered a frightful attack which greatly alarmed the doctors.

December 14: At 3:30 A.M. this morning FW had another violent heart attack. He was suffocating, more dead than alive, but grand as ever. "I'm so happy with you," he said to me. . . .

He was unhappy because during the attack he could not hold his water. Again and again he told me in the sweetest words how ashamed he was of these little human failings during the attacks!

December 17: Today Franz asked for paper and pencil and wrote down a poem, "Dance of Death," which he had complete in his head. . . . He could barely breathe and immediately had to create again.

This was the poem:

Dance of Death

Death waltzed me in a merry round.
At first I did not lose my breath,
Stepped smartly in the Dance of Death
Till he changed to a faster bound.

Ah, then I was disjoint apace,
A jumping-jack, a scarecrow—naught
But a despairing cry to God,
No longer hopeful of God's grace.

Death lifted me and swung me to the skies,
To satisfy God that he would obey
And would not take whatever God denies.

All of a sudden, though, he dropped his prey,
For HE, in a primeval, silent wise,
Had spoken two words only:
"Not Today."

*[Der Tod hat mich im Tanz geschwenkt.
Ich fiel zuerst nicht aus dem Trott
Vom Totentanz und steppte flott,
Bis er das Tempo hochgelenkt.*

*Wie rasch war ich da ausgerenkt
Zum Hampelmann, zum Vogelspott—*

*Ich war nichts als der Schrei zu Gott,
Der nicht mehr hofft, dass Gott gedenkt.*

*Da hob der Tod und hielt mich hochgedreht
Zum Himmel auf, dass Gott sich seiner freute,
Weil er nicht nimmt, was Gott nicht zugesteht.*

*Doch plötzlich liess er fallen seine Beute,
Denn in des Ersten Schweigens Alphabet
Sprach ER zu ihm zwei Worte nur:
"Nicht Heute."]*

December 31: We spent a sad New Year's Eve in my music room—without Franz. The Arlts were with me; I felt very much alone, and yet united with Franz, who was lying in bed nearby—not beyond hope!

He heard every word we spoke. If there was anything Professor Arlt did not know at once, or not exactly, he promptly called out the data. . . .

Those months were a permanent torture. I wept through many days and nights. Torberg—a real friend—came daily, bringing wit and gaiety, and after Werfel's most serious attack he shared my night watches. I had taken a vow: for a week I did not go to bed at all and remained fully dressed. Torberg knew this and came each evening armed with a huge thermos full of strong black coffee, which he drained, mixed with brandy, to keep himself awake.

Suddenly, after eight or nine months, I pulled myself together. I realized that I had to live on in any case, no matter what happened. I began to care for my looks again; I regained my joy in music—always the best medicine for me—and worked very seriously, studying Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and learning it by heart.

In July 1944 Torberg moved to New York. We were to miss him greatly. Before his departure he brought me a photograph of Oskar Kokoschka. I recognized the features—and did not recognize them. I did not regret that we had lost each other—even though I had since been sighing for him now and then.

Before Kokoschka, I had been married to an abstraction when I was still half a child. But with Franz Werfel, everything I might have wished for on earth had been fulfilled.

We were back in Beverly Hills. Werfel felt all right again, but he knew that one of his heart chambers did not function properly. It secretly worried him as well as me. Despite this, his sexuality revived, and when my fear for his life made me try to put him off, he became irritated.

"I'll go to a whorehouse," he kept repeating for two days, to provoke me. His eyes hung greedily on every woman's figure. He had always been like that—but of course his art, its vigor and imagination, flowed from the same sources!

I had made a new, eminently gifted friend in Ludwig Bemelmans, a modern humorist in word and line, with melancholy depths beneath a merry, clowning surface. He had brought me a girl friend of his, a tall, pretty scrag who looked extremely funny beside the short, stockily built Bemelmans. In time he brought some real beauties to our house, and Franz Werfel and I invariably had fun with him and his companions.

One day, early in April, he asked us down to Malibu Beach for dinner. With exquisite taste he had made an old beach house livable and beautiful. The cook, that night, was lovely Joan Fontaine, and it was a joy to watch the brisk activity and marvelous grace of her quick hands and feet. The dinner was mediocre, due to no fault of hers—for Bemelmans had told her that all needed foodstuffs were there, and actually there was nothing. She sped off and returned with a chicken, but it was still fairly raw when it was served.

Heroically we ate the tough bird. At home, Werfel came toward me with outflung arms, exclaiming, "You alone! You alone! You alone. . . ."

Somewhat later, Bemelmans asked Werfel and me to come to another gay party. He would provide the drinks; we should bring the tidbits, which were still rationed and difficult to obtain. The Arlts were invited, too, and brought all they could get. Altogether we had enough for a crowd.

We arrived at the beach with our butler, and found the door to Bemelmans' house open. The butler rang the bell. When no one answered, he went into the big living room. No trace of Bemelmans, but the butler returned upset.

"There's a strange man lying there," he reported. "Drunk, apparently. He looks awful—some Turk or Romanian with a long, black mustache, covered up to the chin and sweating—"

Cautiously we proceeded to the couch where the mystery man lay. It was Bemelmans, of course, with a weird mask over his face. His voice was low and blurred; at first, we thought this was part of his role for the evening. He asked to be entertained. "I didn't want to scare you," he said, "but I'm a sick man."

We were alarmed. "For heaven's sake, what's the matter?"

"My temperature is a hundred and five," he said calmly. "Pneumonia, the doctor says. An ambulance will come for me at midnight, but I didn't want to lie here alone and depressed. I wanted to be gay, that's all. Make yourselves at home; there's plenty of champagne on ice. Be merry—I need it."

Gusti Arlt constantly fixed cold compresses for him. He asked, "Take the mask off me, please," and his face appeared, glowing a purplish red. He did not talk much, and we tried hard to look as cheerful as possible, until he was picked up.

His life hung by a thread, and I have never seen a similar conquest of the fear of death!

More notes from my diary:

April 28: Today Mussolini was shot near Milan, at close range, by a ten-man gang. It was not a hero's death; he first promised the killers a kingdom if they would let him go. . . . How do such men cling to hope until their dying hour? For him, as for Hitler, all was lost long ago. What more did he want out of life, an old, poor, sick man, outlawed the world over?

May 10: The first news from Vienna!

On June 3rd, Gustav Mahler's First Symphony will be performed again in Vienna, after seven years.

Before the start, a memorial tablet will be unveiled in the Konzerthaus, with the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF THE HISTORIC DATE OF
GUSTAV MAHLER'S RESURRECTION IN VIENNA.

May 20: Our dear friend Bruno Frank died today—a sensitive poet and a man of infinite kindness and nobility. I was called up and immediately drove over. His wife asked me to have another look at him, and I, who always shunned the ultimate, suddenly felt a desire to see him. I went to his bed; he was lying on one hand, with a completely calm expression, like a child, or like a fine man who dies suggesting words of relief to his family: “He died without a struggle . . . he must have felt nothing. . . .”

But I am done for—and now I have to tell it to Franz, too, knowing that he will instantly sense a parallel, see himself as the next in line. . . .

In June we had a visit from an outstanding man in every sense: Jan Masaryk. We had met him in New York, on the occasion of a Mahler cycle which Erno Rapee was broadcasting. At Rapee's request, Werfel had written a little speech about Mahler. Rapee wanted me to read it, but I am completely unfit for that sort of thing. Then he had an inspiration: Jan Masaryk! He ran to the phone, over our protests, and returned in a few minutes with Masaryk's acceptance. A few days later, having read the speech beautifully, Masaryk told us in the broadcasting studio: “It's the first egg that I've eaten and not scrambled myself.”

We were delighted to see him now in California. His was a brilliant, charming, extremely sensitive mind, unobscured by any trace of nationalism. We had some worried political discussions. On that last afternoon he spent with us, he talked at length about Stalin, who had been his host in Moscow for some weeks. At one seven-hour banquet in the Kremlin, Stalin had said, among other things, “Well, what my soldiers are now doing in Vienna and Berlin is, of course, not my responsibility. All soldiers are beasts if you let them loose. I don't doubt that they'll rape every pretty girl and steal all the gold and silver they can get their hands on.”

Masaryk told us that if Czechoslovakia should go Communist he would immediately resign as foreign minister and come to

America. Instead, not three years later, the Communists killed him and called it suicide. Dr. Juray Slavik, Masaryk's friend and physician, who had planned to flee with him, saw the body the morning after. There was a bullet hole in Masaryk's temple, and his chest was crushed. Dr. Slavik fled alone.

Jan Masaryk was a citizen of the world. In Communist eyes that is a crime.

On July 10 I drove again to Santa Barbara. Werfel was there with one of his physicians, Dr. Spinak. Finding him much, much better, I returned to Beverly Hills on the thirteenth. I did not want him to see how sick I was. For months I had been running a fever; two penicillin cures had been to no avail. I knew I was paying for my constant worry about Werfel—two years and more of it—but no doctor had the sense to see that. They sent me to the dentist to have seven perfectly good teeth pulled, which was no help at all. I felt cold in the world.

On August 3, still feverish, I went to spend a few more days with Werfel in Santa Barbara. I found him looking splendid. He had then been working on his great new novel for over two years, and on this visit I read the finished parts of the manuscript with deep emotion—especially a scene in which FW, exploring the distant future, was shown the most important moment of his past, twentieth-century life. It was his visit to my room in the Viennese hospital where I had borne his child.

I had known this novel since its initial conception, and thought it was the strangest and strongest that Werfel had ever written. He himself was beset by doubts—as always—but then again he would suddenly see the full grandeur of his *Star of the Unborn*. To me it seemed a *Divine Comedy* of our time.

I did not stay long in Santa Barbara. I wanted Werfel to go to the movies again, with Dr. Spinak; he never went when I was there, because I don't, and we did not want to part even for an hour. So, on August 11, I drove back to Beverly Hills. On the next morning I found an enchanting poem, which he had written right after my departure and sent to me by special delivery:

To Alma
(after saying good-by)

How much I love you	[<i>Wie ich dich liebe, hab ich</i>
was not known to me	<i>nicht gewusst,</i>
Before the onset of	<i>Bevor mich überfiel dies rasche</i>
these quick good-bys.	<i>Scheiden.</i>
I'm drained of blood by all	<i>Ich bin ganz blutarm von so</i>
the agony.	<i>viel Erleiden.</i>
Why must we lose so as to	<i>Warum wird man bewusst erst</i>
realize?	<i>durch Verlust?</i>
What yesterday you touched	<i>Was gestern du berührt hast,</i>
stares empty now.	<i>starrt nun leer.</i>
Things are like animals,	<i>Die Dinge sind wie tief ge-</i>
aggrieved and sore.	<i>kränkte Tiere.</i>
Your life, not mine, was theirs—	<i>Mein Leben nicht, das deine</i>
and that is how	<i>war das ihre,</i>
They're only things today,	<i>Und darum haben sie kein</i>
alive no more. . . .	<i>Leben mehr. . . .]</i>

I was terribly afraid for him; I knew how he, too, suffered from our separations. But the complete quiet in Santa Barbara was surely good for him, physically and mentally. He occupied a four-room bungalow in the large park of a hotel, with dear Dr. Spinak in readiness day and night. Since Werfel liked variety, a taxi came every day to take the two gentlemen to the club for lunch, which they took beside the swimming pool. The sight of the many young bathers pleased Werfel. Evenings the two went to the movies or to concerts.

On August 17, Werfel called up radiantly: he had just finished the novel. The ending, he said, was quite unlike his original idea; he had found an altogether different solution. Now he wanted to get home as fast as possible.

I asked him to come in the evening, because of the murderous heat, but he insisted on having the butler come up for him early the next morning.

In the morning—it was a Saturday—I called once more and

begged him to rest after lunch and put off the ride until nightfall. All in vain . . .

It was 3:00 P.M. when he struggled up the few steps from the car to the door of our house, tired and gray with the heat and the exertion in the broiling sun.

He went to bed at once. I did not like the way he looked, nor the slow, ponderous way he walked. He smiled at my fears; I concealed them as best I could. He was only glad to be home again—and to have finished his work.

I had arranged for Dr. Wolff to come Sunday morning. Now I called his office, and he came at once and administered a dehydrating injection, to relieve the heart. For the evening he prescribed morphine.

That night, after a short sleep, Werfel broke into sweat after sweat. I had to keep changing the bedclothes; his hands were ice-cold and finally lost all sensation. He weakened steadily, approaching a state of collapse.

I was alone in the house. (We had sent Dr. Spinak home to get some sleep, for once.) It was a weekend; no doctor could be reached. Werfel wanted me at his bedside—and I had to make ten telephone calls trying to get a doctor somehow!

At last, after I had massaged him and warmed his hands and feet with hot towels, I reached one of Dr. Wolff's consultants, Dr. Julius Bauer. He came immediately; the others followed soon. Werfel was almost well again by the time they all went into consultation at 1:00 A.M.

Werfel continued to perspire all night. Dr. Spinak, summoned by telephone in the meantime, did not stir from his bedside. In the morning the temperature was up inexplicably. By then, Dr. Wolff was on vacation; we were left with Dr. Bauer, who prescribed three days of rest in bed. All that Werfel worried about was the loss of working time.

I begged him to do no dictating, so he confined himself to polishing his poems, which were to be published by Pacific Press. He improved visibly in those three days.

During the night of the twenty-fourth he had a dream:

"I was a soldier in uniform. I walked with strangers through

an old Austrian gateway, up some crumbling stairs. Above my head there suddenly was a shelf full of dust and dirt and ugly bric-à-brac. Someone said, 'Take the dog down.' The dirt revolted me so I did not want to touch it—but then the dog changed to a tiny, live white horse, about a foot high, that leaped off the shelf and galloped past me downstairs."

He could not get the little dream horse out of his mind.

"In Hermann Broch's 'Death of Virgil,' " he told me, "a white horse is the omen and symbol of Virgil's death." And I remembered that it was the same in Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*—it must be an ancient myth.

On the twenty-fifth—it was Saturday again—we went out to dine with Bruno Walter and his daughter, Lotte. It was Walter's habit, whenever he was a bit early arriving at our house and had to wait for us to get ready, to sit at the piano and play. This time he began with Smetana's *Bartered Bride*. Werfel rushed out of his room, merrily humming the tune, and took a few timid dance steps. I rushed out of my room to restrain him.

We went to a restaurant and had a gay, pleasant evening.

On Sunday morning Werfel awoke full of confidence.

In the afternoon he took a nap, dressed, and went to work revising an old poem. I stayed with friends in the living room. After a while I went to look in on him, as I used to do from time to time. I opened the door to his study but did not hear a sound.

I called his name.

No answer.

I rushed in.

Franz Werfel lay on the floor in front of his desk, a smile on his face, his hands limp, unclenched.

I screamed—screamed as loud as I could scream. The butler came running. He saw what had happened, but I refused to believe it. The body was still warm. Against my own better knowledge I kept hoping that it was only a fainting spell; I put the oxygen mask over his mouth and massaged his heart, hands, and feet. . . . Then I helped the butler carry him to his bed. The Arlts, too, were there within minutes, doing everything that was possible. But we knew it was too late.

It must have been over by the time he slid down from his swivel chair. The last change he had made in his poem was penned in a firm, clear hand—without agitation, without pain, without foreboding.

Slowly turning to stone, his beautiful face grew more and more sublime, more and more monumental.



Why am I still alive?

A week ago I lost my sweet man-child. I still can't grasp it. I keep thinking that he must come home from Santa Barbara. But he will never come home. . . .

(Diary, September 2)

My hands held his poor old wallet. There were little medals of the Virgin in it, some of his mother's letters, many of my letters and notes. For my private obsequies I read the ending of his last novel. It was new and came as a complete surprise. He had worked to the last, as though aware of the need to hurry—and yet, what he told me on his dying day proves that he had no premonition.

We joked about his dentist, whose income would drop now that Werfel had had all his teeth fixed: "Well, they ought to last another ten years," he said cheerfully. When I called him into the garden, because it was such a lovely day, he forgot to put on his slippers; going back to bed, his soles were black with soot, and I washed his feet, over his violent protest. "I'll soon be well enough to bathe alone," he insisted. And an hour before the end we discussed whether to take a boat or a plane to Europe, and decided to fly.

His body was taken away the same evening, as is customary here, and I felt as though my life were carried out. I had been

given a sedative and lay down in his hospital bed, the one place where I hoped I might find rest. My days passed under drugs, all but unconsciously. In lucid moments I reread the chapters of the book he had not finished dictating; on the second day I began to dictate them to Werfel's secretary and friend, Wilhelm Melnitz, in his stead. Much of the manuscript was virtually illegible, and the strain of deciphering it through my tears helped me over the hours of the funeral.

Though deeply religious, he had not wished a religious burial. I avoided all rites. The casket stood in a flower-laden chapel; Bruno Walter played the organ, Lotte Lehmann sang Schubert's *Sunset*, our friend Reverend Moenius spoke. I had Werfel buried exactly as he himself had described it in *Star of the Unborn*: wearing a tuxedo and a new silk shirt, with his glasses in the breast pocket and a spare silk shirt and several handkerchiefs in the coffin—everything just as requested. On the next day the Arlts drove me to the cemetery, where Father Moenius, with special permission from the archbishop, blessed the remains of Franz Werfel, an unbaptized Jew.

For seven weeks of torment I lived in his room and slept in his hospital bed, until the novel was dictated. The Arlts never left my side. Late in October they brought me to New York. I wrote in my diary:

New York is changed without Franz. I must reconstruct my whole being, to be again what I was before his time.

The human emanation—the individual scent—is as beautiful and characteristic as the scent of a flower; but the spiritual fragrance of man is indestructible.

Werfel's spiritual aroma was intoxicatingly sweet—and that's why he had to fade so soon, to live forever.

In New York I stayed at a small hotel, seeing people but locking my door in the evenings, though I loathed the solitude. I had never been alone, always with my children and their nurses, and with the man I loved. Now there was no one. I lived in the past. From Vienna, Sister Ida wrote that our house had taken four direct hits; the top floor, where I had stored Werfel's desk and that of Gustav Mahler, was destroyed. Somehow I could

not believe that Werfel's letters and manuscripts should have gone up in flames.

I decided to write down all I knew about this favorite of the gods, whose way on earth had paralleled mine.

In December I was sick in bed when I heard a broadcaster predict that I would marry Bruno Walter. Next day, my "imminent fifth trip to the altar" was in all the papers, and I was boiling with rage at the ghouls who could think of nothing better than to marry me off while I lay heartbroken over the loss of Franz Werfel. And yet, my rage at this stupid lie dulled my sorrow a little.

My friendship with Bruno Walter had been a purely intellectual one for almost four decades. In Beverly Hills he had become our neighbor. In January 1946, I heard him conduct a magnificent performance of Mahler's Fourth—and then had to stand alone in front of Carnegie Hall in snow and ice, looking for a cab to take me back to my lonely hotel room. Franz had never left me alone.

I got a letter from Oskar Kokoschka, the second since Werfel's death, and thought: If I've regained his friendship, I'll no longer be just a faltering, black-craped top.

A visit to Fritz von Unruh impressed me immensely. The poet had taken up painting, with passion and skill; I saw five self-portraits and two heads of Christ, each perfect in its way. He had been at the end of his rope, poor, debt-ridden, with his last book rejected everywhere, when he suddenly started a painting. And from that day on he had been painting to save himself—and destined, I felt, to save others.

Through blizzards I flew back to California. The house, the closeness of awful experience, the daily presence of Franz Werfel—all this was hardly endurable in waking hours. But I endured it each day and clung to his proximity.

I dreamed: he and I were walking on a mountain ridge. Suddenly he vanished. Some of his friends barred my way: "Don't worry," they said; "he's having fun with a woman who looks like death and decay." I ran back to a little house I had bought, and Werfel came, changed, beaming, to tell me that he meant

to install the woman there. "You look like a happy husband," I said, and he replied, "I am."

I awoke in tears, with flying pulse. "I'm glad," I wrote, "that things are as they are!"

From my diaries and from memory I started putting down the story of my life. Its unconsciousness was really fantastic. As a girl I had been beautiful and unaware of it. I had known much about Mahler but ignored his essence, which is now known to the world. What I had known about Kokoschka was not the basis of his present fame, and what I had known about Werfel was unrelated to today's encomiums. I even read his love poems otherwise than I would now.

A letter came from Margarete Hauptmann, dated June 14, 1946.

Dear, dear Alma!

Your letter reached us on June 2. I had to read it several times to Gerhart, though he was ill, and both of us relived hour-long memories of you and our beloved departed friend, Franz Werfel.

On May 27 we reread his essay, *Gerhart Hauptmann's Human Traits*, in the birthday issue of the *Neue Rundschau* 1932. The motto that runs like a melody through his words, I put under a drawing, made after his death. It reads: "A handful of God's light has descended into a noble man."

Alma, I want you to know that I'll soon be able to leave Wiesenstein for good. In a few weeks Gerhart's remains will be moved to Hiddensee for burial, and I'll go with him. He said once, "If I didn't fear to offend my good Silesian friends, I'd like to sleep my eternal sleep in this little village graveyard in Kloster." As he can't rest in Silesian earth now, I can fulfill that last wish of his. I have placed a little bag of earth from his garden over his heart.

"Where my home is, I am not at home.

Whose mind can grasp this word?

It is a weighty word.

It sounds like rain, falling in icy drops
upon the roses:

Where my home is, I am not at home."

(from GH's notebook)

God be with you.—

Margarete

This letter ended our misunderstanding of years past.

In the fall I had to leave Beverly Hills. "It looks to me," said a friend, "as though you're trying to run away from yourself." How right she was! On the train I read Werfel's last book. "It's only natural," I wrote, "that the public can't understand it; every word in it calls for thought! It is his legacy to the world. . . ."

In New York my room was filled with flowers, but I saw and heard nothing. I went to the Opera, to hear *Tristan* under Fritz Busch, and was overwhelmed. Tristan's death reminded me so much of Werfel's and of my feeling that he could not be dead—I also thought that he was still smiling, still breathing. Tears ran down my cheeks, and I felt him close again.

Diary notes:

I made a radio talk about Franz. It was hard to bare myself in public.

Back in California, where capricious fate has cast me. Climate, landscape, people—all are alien. Franz loved them; I never did. I'll keep the house for the present, but once the transfer of his study to the University of California is completed, I'll rent it and go away.

Franz has appeared to me. Half asleep, at first, but then fully awake, I saw him standing outside my window, cheerful, smiling, radiant. "Why don't you let me in?" he called. "I want to come home." He looked as young as he did years ago, and ever so handsome. He must have had a lovely experience in eternity and wished to tell me about it. I feel free now, and happy.

I'm getting old. I'm to take it easy, not to walk too much, not to play the piano too long at a time. . . . The job of arranging Werfel's writings, which I do every day with a secretary, gives me a great deal of satisfaction. Of his manuscripts many are scribbled in pencil, some all but illegible. It is hard work, but it keeps me near him. Some day, unfortunately, even this fount will run dry. . . .

In the fall of 1947 I took a trip to Vienna.

It began with an emergency landing in Newfoundland and a twenty-hour wait for the next plane. I was offered an army cot, looked at it, faced about, and retired to the waiting room. A pocket edition of Plato's *Republic* and a pocket flask of Bene-

dictine helped me pass the time. The delay cost me a day of rest in London, where I saw Anna again after eight years. My daughter looked heart-rending, haggard and gray, as though coming from hell.

I arrived in Vienna worn out, with swollen feet. When I realized that I was the objective of the news cameramen lurking about the ramp, I pulled myself together for a dignified descent; but I had to hop up and down the steps ten times before they were satisfied. My house on the Hohe Warte was uninhabitable—the roof gone, the top floor collapsed, the interior in ashes, heating plant, water, and electricity ruined, the marble paneling torn out, used for officers' bathrooms in the neighboring villas. I shared a hotel room with a colony of rats and lived on the canned food I had sent ahead from California.

Vienna was hell for me. The Opera, the Burgtheater, St. Stephen's—everything lay in ruins. Rodin's bust of Mahler was rumored to be safe, hidden somewhere pending restoration of the Opera. There were few friends to remind me of the past. My good Sister Ida had married during the Nazi era and was no longer the same. Csokor had returned from a nine-year odyssey with tales of flight, internment, partisan fighting, and prisoner-of-war camps. Helene Berg had survived in the backwoods, trailed even there by the Gestapo for questioning about me and her long-dead, "culture-bolshevistic" husband.

My private affairs, which I had come to untangle, were unpleasantness itself. Mahler's and Werfel's desks, with their priceless contents, had been burned to cinders on the Hohe Warte; all I recovered was a couple of the small notebooks Mahler used to carry with him. The manuscripts of my songs, the joy and grief of many years, had fed the flames that consumed the wretched house. My pictures—my father's pictures which he had left to me—hung undamaged in the Modern Gallery, but the whole, Nazi-infested Austrian bureaucracy seemed in league to prevent me from getting them back. "How could you, a daughter of our great Schindler, marry a Gustav Mahler and a Franz Werfel?" I was asked by an old judge in the Justice Department.

The legal weapons against me had, of course, been supplied by my stepfather, Moll. He had induced my mother to let him

administer my father's estate for me and my sister, until I would return, and after my mother's death he had simply willed the paintings—which had never been his—to the Modern Gallery. The rest of the estate had vanished in the pockets of his daughter and her high-ranking Nazi husband. Fortunately, I was not obliged to face this trio: Carl Moll, his daughter, and her husband, like a good many Viennese Nazis, had killed themselves as soon as the Russians marched in.

Returning to America, I thought of the palmist I had consulted in my last year in Vienna. "In your early sixties," he had told me, "you'll be moving to another country, or another continent, to stay. You'll be with the man you were living with in your late thirties. After six years you will come back here, but you won't like it and will soon leave again."

It had taken me seven years to come back; otherwise, events had borne out the prophecy, which at the time had so upset Franz Werfel. "But where will I be then?" he had wondered. Yes—where?

The year 1948 began with a visit from Anna, who spent four harmonious weeks with me in Beverly Hills before flying back to England. "She is a wonderful creature," I wrote in my diary; I found her both physically and mentally attractive and in full accord with me. As a sculptress she was working hard, and I wished her the success she deserved.

Later, I read Thomas Mann's new book, *Doctor Faustus*, and thought back a year to an interesting talk we had had at his home. Beginning with Furtwängler, whom Mann admired as much as I did, we had discussed a number of conductors and composers we knew, their virtues and their weaknesses, and music and musicians in general. Now I had his novel about a musician before me and could not help noticing a little flaw that had the gravest consequences. Mann set out to show an artist, and showed a scholar. He meant to tell the story of a Mahler or Hugo Wolf, and he told that of Nietzsche. His "musician" thinks up mathematical exercises—modulations, for instance—and then begins to compose. But no musician ever began like this. A real

songbird by the grace of God has a melody or a musical idea in mind and tries to put it on paper.

It was immediately clear to me that Mann had drawn extensively on Arnold Schönberg's twelve-tone system, which he appeared to regard as commonly known and in use. When I saw him again, I praised the beauty of the novel and discreetly remarked that it had surprised me to find Schönberg's theory so popularly and yet recognizably presented.

"So you recognized it?" Mann was slightly put out.

I said no musician could fail to recognize it.

"Do you think Schönberg will mind?" Mann asked, and I shrugged, not wanting to set off a general discussion.

In fact, Schönberg was outraged. Next morning, he asked my help in getting Mann to print a note in the book to the effect that the theory was Schönberg's invention. I called Mann's home. His wife answered, and at first resented the idea. I called again and again, always consulting Schönberg in between, and after dinner Katia Mann finally promised that "Tommy" would insert an explanation in future editions and have it pasted into copies already in print. And although the wording did not quite satisfy Schönberg, that settled the matter.

In July I heard Eugene Ormandy conduct Gustav Mahler's Eighth Symphony in the Hollywood Bowl—a uniquely appropriate setting for the stupendous work that requires about a thousand performers. At the first rehearsal, when I was introduced to them, I remembered Maiernigg in 1906, the dense pine woods around Mahler's study where the old hymn, "*Veni, Creator Spiritus*," had suddenly come into his mind; he knew just the beginning by heart and had to wire to Vienna for the complete text, but in his impatience he started composing at once, intuitively sensing the right rhythm and dynamics. I attended every rehearsal and frankly gave my opinion whenever Ormandy asked for it. Though he had never conducted the work before, he handled it with sovereign assurance. At the performance, an audience of twenty thousand sat spellbound for two hours and then applauded for minutes on end. It was the greatest triumph of the symphony since its *première* in Munich in 1910,

and I saw once more how instinctively right I had been to cast my lot with Mahler at a time when people thought of him as just a conductor and opera director and would not believe in his creative genius.

Earlier that summer I had felt concern about Max Brod, who had emigrated to Palestine. A war was raging there since the British had withdrawn in May, and I wrote to Brod that I hoped he was not in danger. His reply was dated Tel Aviv, Israel, August 25, 1948.

My dear Mrs. Alma Mahler Werfel:

Your good letter reached me via Switzerland only a few days ago. I was moved to find you thinking kindly of me—as heiress, so to speak, to the eternal friendship that linked Franz and me from childhood on. You know that the only obstacle to perfect harmony between us was Franz's attitude toward the Jewish question, which I could never accept. It was a fundamental issue, but our agreement on all other human and artistic matters always reconciled us. In fact, after a sudden, surprising break our correspondence had been revived during his last year. Last summer, while vacationing on Mount Carmel, I read *Star of the Unborn*, Franz's last and, I believe, greatest book; it has brought me very close to him, and therefore also to you. I was enchanted by this great novel.

Now to your letter: I have been back home since May 30, and there is no cause for worry. I feel that this is an oasis of purity amidst the unrest of the world. Despite war and the many excitements I have experienced since my return from Switzerland, I feel unspeakably happy. My lifelong dream, the independence of my people, is not yet fully realized, but the first decisive steps have been taken and I supplement them with my hopes. Yes, there are moments when I venture to think that even Franz would now modify his conviction that the Jew is the eternal patsy of world history. I may be wrong, though; in this point he was hard to convince.

Please, let us keep in touch. Write to me again, and remember me to Franz's family when you have the chance. With best regards and in constant memory of Franz, the great man and great poet, I am ever yours,

Max Brod

My birthday, that year, was celebrated in style. At least thirty well-wishers called before noon; in the afternoon the Arlts gave

a party for me, and when they brought me home and unlocked the front door we found the house brightly lighted and some sixty people gathered. Some of my young friends had rearranged the whole place and set up a gigantic buffet in the dining room. A chamber orchestra played a "birthday fugue" composed of Mahler themes, followed by the Adagietto from his Fifth Symphony. Erich Korngold brought me the proofs of a violin sonata he had dedicated to me, and Thomas Mann brought his latest book, inscribed, "To Alma, the personality, on her birthday, August 31, 1948, from her old friend and admirer." It was an odd feeling, to be feted on my own account after a lifetime of hiding behind my distinguished husbands!

I wrote in my diary:

Gustav Mahler and Franz Werfel were the essence and the substance of my life. The rest were clouds—some mighty thunderheads, others mere curls on the horizon.

The year was drawing to a close when Erich Remarque visited me on his first day out after a serious illness. My heart was heavy for him. . . . I wrote:

For some time I have felt age sneaking up on me. It is no pleasure. I bite my tongue at night and it hurts. Functions that recently seemed in order fail suddenly. Wishes and desires cease—but that's no satisfaction!

In May 1949 my beloved, admired, dreaded friend Hans Pfitzner died in Salzburg. I asked his wife to send me details of his last months and pictures taken after his death. They were the pictures of a man of forty; the harshness was gone, the mouth generous and beautiful. His death mask reminded me of Chopin's, or Napoleon's. I wrote:

Gradually, inexorably, my loves turn into gray shadows. But if they were strong, their shadows loom larger and larger. By now, Gustav Mahler's shadow has completely devoured his small human form, and it is growing still. Franz Werfel's shadow has not yet reached such dimensions; but his also is growing fast. Their stately advance is an epic. . . .

I started copying the letters Werfel had written to me in the course of twenty-seven years, and now and then I would sit at the piano playing the last of my printed songs, which had been sent to me from Vienna. How beautiful my world had been then! It seemed empty now. Yet Werfel's letters brought joy to it, and a purpose.

"You," someone said to me, "saved the young and undisciplined Werfel who entered your sphere; now he saves you by his letters—by the work of reading and copying them, and by their reverent love that will restore your self-confidence. . . ."

Time and again my songs recurred in his letters. He had loved them so much, and in music we had understood each other perfectly. But I had loved him as much in every other facet, despite the currents that now and then might tend to sweep me away; after a while these currents invariably turned out to be placid brooks in which I was reflecting my own image. Werfel knew that well. He was never jealous of an individual, only of the influences that might be exerted upon me by any strange environment.

In August 1949 a letter came from Oskar Kokoschka.

My dear Alma,

You're still a wild brat, just as when you were first carried away by *Tristan and Isolde* and used a quill to scrawl your comments on Nietzsche in your diary, in the same flying, illegible hand that I can make out only because I know your rhythm. Ask your friends, who are preparing to celebrate your birthday, not to tie you down to a silly, accidental, ephemeral calendar year. Tell them instead to give you a living, imperishable monument, by discovering a real American poet with a sixth sense for language, implication, rhythm and timbre—one who knows the emotional scale from tenderness to the most vicious sensuality, can extract it from my *Orpheus and Eurydice*, and will translate it into American (not modern English)—so we may tell the world what the two of us have done with and to each other, and may pass the living message of our love on to posterity. There has been nothing like it since the Middle Ages, for no couple has ever breathed into each other so passionately. So, there's a fine prospect for you, and as it will take time, you may as well forget calendar time. I don't even know when I was born, and I don't

want to be reminded. I look forward to staging the translated *Orpheus* and at the same time kindling the lives of young generations with the fire that we two have set. We'll always be on the stage of life, we two, when disgusting banality, the trivial visage of the contemporary world, will yield to a passion-born splendor. Look at the dull and prosaic faces about you—not one has known the thrill of playing with life, of relishing even death, of smiling at the bullet in your skull, the knife in your lungs. Not one—except your lover whom you once initiated into your mysteries. Remember that this love play is the only child we have. Take care of yourself, and spend your birthday without a hangover.

Your Oskar

So, on August 31, 1949, I became a septuagenarian. On September 15 I finished the five-month job of copying Werfel's letters and returned to my own memories. I wrote:

All I have ahead of me now is the completion of this book. The process of aging was not invented for people like me, always moving on and upward. I'm not a woman to sit in an armchair and hand out wisdom.

In my house, which now was much too big for me, I had Negro servants who decamped after dinner and reappeared in the morning, hours late, with easy consciences. Some were eccentrics. One, an elderly gentleman named John, was an inveterate horse player. He went out only in full-dress uniform with a chestful of combat ribbons—God alone knows where he got them, for he was gentle as a lamb. One evening, when I had asked a group of artists to supper after their performances, an impenetrable fog closed all roads until the small hours. My phone rang constantly till half past one. John, meanwhile, sat calmly in the kitchen, making notes on his racing form. But when the guests came at last, one by one, he whipped up so tasty a hot meal that Ben Britten went to the piano at 4:00 A.M. to improvise a banquet song which Jan Peerce sang with consummate artistry.

In 1950 Anna moved from England to California. Another visit of hers in the past summer had intensified our new harmony—a gift from heaven that I hoped never to lose. Anna had remarried, had another child, and later taught sculpture at the University of California at Los Angeles; but mainly she created

works of strength and beauty, including two striking busts of Werfel and Schönberg. My headstrong daughter had mastered her art and found her way.

In 1951, at midnight of July 15, Arnold Schönberg died. His wife called me at once. Anna and I dressed hastily and drove to Brentwood at sixty miles an hour. He lay under snow-white blankets, his chin strapped up, and Trude Schönberg, herself looking withered and hollowed like a corpse, sat stroking the stilled heart and the hands that were still warm. The two scantily clad older children kept approaching the bed and staring, dry-eyed. Nuria, the lovely daughter, walked barefoot about the house, to protect his peace.

In 1952 I moved to New York. Several times before, I had given my soul a holiday and fled to that city of light. Now I decided to sell the house on North Bedford Drive, and with the proceeds bought an old one in the heart of New York and began a new, rich life. I went to concerts with the Schermans, and my name, as well as my evident delight in music, won me new musical friends. Thanks to them, I have been privileged to attend Philharmonic rehearsals and hear the outstanding performances of old and new masterworks in an empty concert hall—like mad King Ludwig of Bavaria, who used to have Wagner's operas performed for himself alone.

From New York I traveled again. In the fall I would fly to Europe, stay in one place for about two months, and return by ship. I went to Paris once, and twice to Rome—to my mind still the most beautiful of cities. Vienna did not see me again. I declined invitations to the gaudy reopening of the State Opera; but I did correspond, with the officials in charge, about Gustav Mahler's bust by Rodin. It had been restored to its proper place in the foyer, but the uncommonly beautiful base that belonged to it had been put under the bust of Richard Strauss! It took some vigorous protests on my part to reunite Mahler with his own pedestal.

Great men somehow continued to cross my path. On my last return voyage from Rome I sat alone on the deck of the liner, reading, when a tall, Apollonian figure of a man stood suddenly before me. "I'm Thornton Wilder," he said. I had been aware of

his importance for many years, ever since I had first read *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. We began to talk, and we seemed to go on talking until the ship docked in New York. The days passed like minutes. His every word was a joy—and so, later, was his every letter. Since Franz Werfel's passing I have treasured nothing more than Thornton Wilder's friendship.

I live on the third floor of my old house in the heart of New York, in two rooms. One bespeaks the power of words, the other that of music. "I have two firms to administer," I say when I am asked why I keep so busy at my age.

But I still have champagne for my friends when something calls for a celebration—and something always does, for I believe in joy as the sovereign remedy for sickness and the sole preservative of youth.

From May to November my living room faces the green tops of great trees. Books line it from floor to ceiling: the German classics that Max Burckhard gave me as a girl, Werfel's works in all languages, the works of all the friends I have made over the years and of the great spirits I have admired over the centuries, from Plato to Bernard Shaw. Between the bookcases hang paintings by Oskar Kokoschka: my portrait, the colts of Tre Croci, and the six fans that remained after Walter Gropius burned the seventh in a jealous rage. And among the photographs in this room are two of my daughter Anna's portrait heads of Schönberg and Franz Werfel.

My bedroom contains my desk, which is never "clean," and my piano, all of my music, and in the corner a steel safe with the manuscripts of Mahler, Bruckner, and others. On the mantel and on the walls I have the exquisitely carved baroque figures I brought back from Vienna in 1947. One of the pictures in this room looks slightly incongruous: it is Ludwig Bemelmans' scene of his novel, *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*, which he brought me after Werfel's death. There are the photographs of my children, and there is a drawing of Thomas Mann's head, which he gave me on one of my birthdays. And there are my father's paintings of the Dalmatian coast and the Austrian mountains, and of the Vienna Woods.

Someone asked me what I loved most in my rooms. "Everything," I had to answer. For these two rooms, if one looks carefully, hold all my life.

My life was beautiful. God gave me to know the works of genius in our time before they left the hands of their creators. And if for a while I was able to hold the stirrups of these horsemen of light, my being has been justified and blessed.

Everything, I feel, is simultaneous. Time does not pass. My father's death is as alive in me as Gustav Mahler's, or as Manon's, or Franz Werfel's. There is to me no past apart from the present, but, as the poet has written, "there is a land of the living and a land of the dead, and the bridge is love."

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—WOMR 'S—
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(Continued from front flap)

after Mahler's death in 1911 she married Walter Gropius, who was soon to establish the influential Bauhaus school and go on to become one of the world's leading architects. It was shortly thereafter that her chance discovery of a moving poem led to a romance rarely paralleled in fact or fiction. The poem was by Franz Werfel and the transformation his words provoked was, in time, matched by a love affair and a marriage of equal intensity.

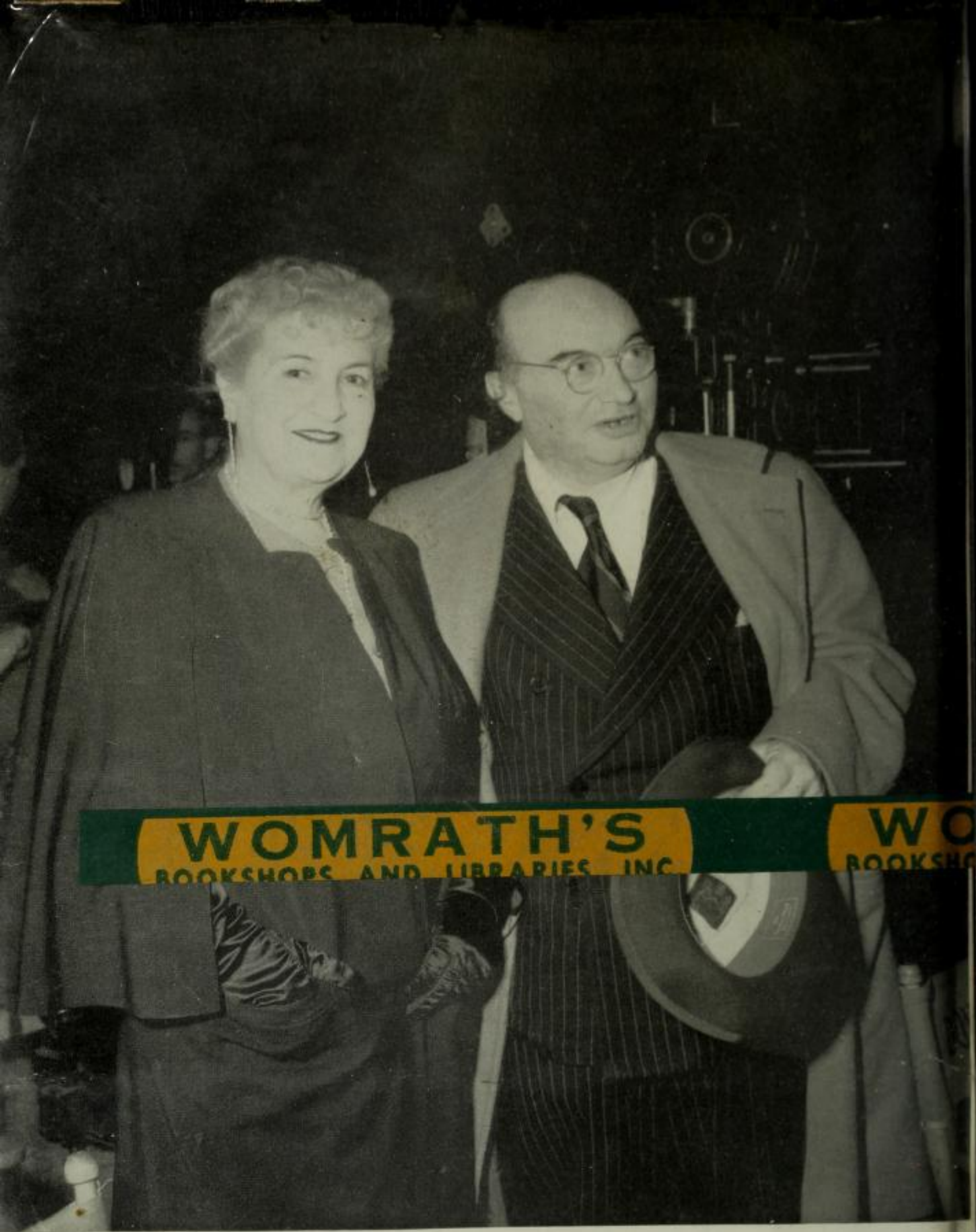
Alma Mahler Werfel's memoirs illuminate not only her fascinating marriages and the hitherto mysterious parts she played in the lives of other great artists; they also form an intimate picture of creative life in Vienna between the wars, and they tell the dramatic story of the dissolution of a rich culture. But, above all, this is the personal story of one woman's deep gift for living.

Before Franz Werfel's death in 1945, he and Madame Werfel lived in Beverly Hills, California. Now Madame Werfel lives on the third floor of an "old house in the heart of New York, in two rooms. One bespeaks the power of words, the other that of music."

Illustrated with 16 pages of photographs

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Alma Mahler Werfel and Franz Werfel
visiting a Hollywood studio
during the filming of *The Song of Bernadette*