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Thomas Mann

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Translated from the German by Kenneth Burke

I

THERE are some marriages, and not even an imagination fed up on novels can explain how they came about. They must simply be accepted, the way we accept a juxtaposition of opposing qualities on the stage, such as old−and−stupid over against beautiful−and−full−of−life—which are presupposed, taken for granted as the basis for erecting a farce with the proper mathematics.

As to the wife of Herr Jacoby, attorney at law, she was young and lovely, an unusually prepossessing woman. Let us say about thirty years ago, she had been baptized Anna Margaret Rose Amelia, but since then she was called nothing but Amra, from her four initials. This had an exotic twang which was peculiarly suited to her character. For although the darkness of her strong soft hair, which she wore parted in the middle and brushed on either side away from her low forehead, was only the brownness of a chestnut kernel, still her skin was southern in its subdued flat olive. And this skin was stretched over curves which likewise seemed ripened by a southern sun, recalling a sultana with their indolent and vegetative luxuriance. This impression, which was heightened by every one of her covetously sluggish motions, corresponded with the fact that in all probability her head was less master than her heart. To know that, you had only to be looked at out of her stupid brown eyes, while she wrinkled her almost astonishingly low forehead in a way of her own. But she was not too simple to realize this herself. She avoided exposing herself by the mere contrivance of speaking seldom, and making that seldom brief. And no one can object to a woman who is lovely and says nothing. No, "simple" was not the best word to describe her. Her expression was not merely stupid, but also had a certain eager shrewdness about it. And it was easy to see how this woman was not too restricted to create trouble. . . . Beyond that, perhaps her nose in profile was a littletoo full and aggressive; but her rich wide mouth was completely beautiful, even though it had no other expression than that of plain sensuality.

This disquieting woman, then, was the wife of a man about forty, Herr Jacoby, attorney at law—and whoever saw him was astonished. The attorney was corpulent; no, he was more than corpulent, he was the very colossus of a man! His legs, which stuck in ash−grey trousers, reminded one of an elephant's in their pillar−like formlessness; vaulted with bolsters of fat, his back was that of a bear; and over the vast bulge of his stomach was the queer jacket of greenish grey which he usually wore, and which was so painfully fastened with one button that it would snap back around his shoulders if ever the button was unloosened. But on this massive trunk, almost without the transition of a neck, sat a comparatively little head, with small watery eyes, a short compressed nose, and cheeks that hung down under their own weight. A tiny mouth with miserably drooping corners was lost in the cheeks. His round pate, as well as his upper lip, was sprinkled with hard little bristles, a light blond, which allowed the bare skin to shine through the way it does with an over−fed dog. . . . Ah! it must have been evident to any one that the attorney's corpulence was not of a healthy nature. His latitudinally and longitudinally prodigious body was all muscleless fat. And often a sudden excess of blood would pump up into his swollen face, to give place almost immediately to a sallow paleness, while his mouth was distorted with a sour expression.

The attorney's practice was quite limited; but since he and his wife together had a reasonable amount of money, this childless pair kept up a comfortable apartment in the Kaiserstrasse and quite a lively bit of social doings. This, of course, was due more to Amra than to him, since it is hardly possible that the attorney, who seemed at best to be only half−hearted in the matter, would be happy in such a state of things. This corpulent gentleman's character was of the strangest. Nobody could have been more polite, more considerate or compliant; but without realizing it clearly, perhaps, a person would be unpleasantly touched by the feeling that his flattering over−friendly manner was forced for some reason or other, that it rested on self−belittlement and some inner uncertainty. There is no eye so unpleasant as that of a man who despises himself, but who is nevertheless trying out of cowardice and vanity tobe amiable with people. In my opinion, this is exactly the way things stood with the attorney; he went too far with his almost grovelling self−belittlement to retain the necessary personal dignity. It was not beyond him to say to a woman he was about to escort to the table, "Pardon me, I am hardly an alluring sort, but would you be so kind . . ." And he would say this without any talent for self−despisal, with a sorry show of good humour, repugnant in its torment. . . . The following anecdote about him is also founded on fact. One day while out walking, a gruff chap with a pushcart ran one of the wheels over his foot. The man stopped his wagon too late, turned around—whereupon the attorney, quite beside himself, with his cheeks gone pale and trembling,

raised his hat and stammered, "I beg your pardon." Things of that sort are disgusting. This peculiar colossus seemed continually to be tortured by a bad conscience. If he appeared with his wife on the Lerchenberg, the main promenade of the city, he would keep casting tremulous side−glances at Amra as she sprang forward with her remarkable elasticity, and he would greet everyone with too much eagerness, with an air of anxious diligence. It was as though he felt called upon to bow humbly before every lieutenant, and apologize that he, he of all people, should be in possession of this beautiful woman. And the beseechingly friendly expression about his mouth seemed to be begging everyone not to laugh at him.

II

As has already been pointed out, there is no way of telling just why Amra married Herr Jacoby the attorney. But for his part, he loved her, and with a love indeed that was too fervent to be met with often in people of his build. He loved her with all the anxiety and humility corresponding to the rest of him. Late in the evening, when Amra had gone to bed in her large bedroom with its high, thickly curtained windows, the attorney would often come in so softly that his footsteps were inaudible, that she could hear nothing but the steady shaking of the floor and the furniture. He would kneel beside her heavy bed, and take her hand with infinite caution. At such times Amra would draw her eyebrows until there were little perpendicular wrinkles in her forehead. Silently, with an expressionof sensual malice, she would observe her prodigious husband lying there in the pale light of the night−lamp. He would stroke the cover back carefully from her arm with his plump, quivering hands, and place his miserably wide face against this full brown arm—there, where the tiny blue veins showed against the darker tint. Then he would begin speaking, the way a man of good common sense would never speak of ordinary matters. "Amra!" he would whisper; "my dear Amra! Am I disturbing you? Are you asleep yet? O God, I have been thinking all day long how beautiful you are and how much I love you! . . . Listen, what I have to say to you—it is so hard to express. I love you so much that often my heart seems to get tight and I don't know what to do; I love you more than I can bear! You can't understand all this, but you will believe me, and you must say just once that you will be a little bit grateful to me, for don't you know that such a love as mine for you is worth something in this world . . . and that you will never betray me or do anything underhanded, even if you cannot love me, but out of gratitude, simply out of gratitude. . . . I came here to beg that of you, as hard, as earnestly as I can. . . ." Such speeches usually ended by the attorney's finding everything unchanged, and breaking into a soft, bitter weeping. But then Amra would be moved somewhat, would run her hand over her husband's bristles, and talk to him in the drawled, encouraging, and teasing tone one uses to a dog that is licking his shoes, "Yes, yes, you're a nice fellow. . . ."

Amra's conduct was certainly not that of a respectable woman. Further, it is time enough that I unburdened myself of the truth which I have been holding back, the truth namely that she was not honest with her husband; yes, I will say it, that she actually deceived him—in the company of a young man called Alfred Läutner. He was a gifted young musician whose clever little pieces had already acquired him a reputation at twenty−seven. Slender, with a distinct snap to him, careless blond hair, and a sunny smile in his eyes that was quite aware of itself. He belonged to that cut of present−day lesser artists who don't ask too much of themselves, wish first of all to be happy and amiable, utilize their comfortably small talent to enhance their personal appeal, and play the naïve genius in society. Intentionally childlike, unscrupulous, beyond morality, enjoying everything, and contented with themselves as they are,they are healthy enough to enjoy their little illnesses; and their vanity is in reality quite delightful so long as it is not wounded. But woe to these lesser mimes and their amusements, if they meet with some serious misfortune, some sorrow that can't be toyed with and in which they can find no self−contentment! They will fail at being properly miserable; they will not know how to approach their sorrow; they will go all to pieces . . . but that is a story of its own. Herr Läutner composed pleasant trifles, waltzes and mazurkas for the most part. But their appeal, so far as I am a judge of such things, was a bit too popular for them to be counted as Music. Still, every one of these compositions had its little spot of originality, a modulation, a bit of accompaniment, an harmonic twist, some slight nervous effect which betrayed cleverness and ingenuity. All his pieces seemed to have been made for this one element, whatever it was, and became interesting to the more earnest connoisseur. Often these two simple rhythms had something remarkably far−off and melancholy about them which would rise out of the piece for an instant, and then vanish again in the general enthusiasm of the dance.

Amra, then, had burned with a guilty interest in this young man, and he for his part was not troubled enough with matters of morality to resist her advances. They met in one place, met again somewhere else, until by now they had been bound for some time in their unpleasant relationship. A relationship, by the way, which the whole city knew of, and which the whole city discussed behind the attorney's back. And as to him? Amra was too dull to betray herself with a bad conscience. It must be definitely established that the attorney could harbour no distinct

suspicion against his wife, however much he might be disturbed with his vague anxieties.

III

At present, spring had swept over the land to make everyone happy, and Amra had hit upon an excellent idea.

"Christian," she said—the attorney's name was Christian; "why not have a party, a big party, to celebrate the spring brewing? It could be quite simple, of course, just cold roast veal, but with a good many people."

"Certainly," the attorney answered; "but couldn't we put it off a while longer?"

Amra made no answer to this, but plunged on into the details immediately. "There will be so many people, you see, that this place will be too small; we'll have to hire some sort of affair, a garden or a dance−hall, in order to have enough room and enough air. The first place I can think of is that big hall of Wendelin's, at the foot of the Lerchenberg. It is off by itself; only a little passage−way connects it with the café and the brewery. It could be decorated up, provided with long tables, and we could serve the new beer. We could have music and dancing, and perhaps some sort of play, for I know there is a small stage there; in fact, that's one of the best things in its favour. Very well then, we'll give something that's quite original, and have a marvelous time."

During all this, the attorney's face had turned a pale yellow and the corners of his mouth began to droop. "It all appeals to me tremendously, Amra dear. But of course, I can leave everything to your management. By all means, go ahead with your preparations. . . ."

IV

And Amra went ahead with her preparations. She held several consultations, saw personally to the hiring of Wendelin's big hall, and organized a kind of committee of the people who either were asked or had offered of their own accord, to help get up the accessory entertainments. This committee was composed exclusively of men, with the exception of one opera singer, the wife of Hildebrandt the actor at the Hoftheater. Among the others were Herr Hildebrandt himself, an Assessor Witznagel, a young painter, and also Herr Alfred Läutner, besides a few students who were proposed by the Assessor and were to give an exhibition of negro dancing.

Within eight days of the time when Amra had made her decision, this committee was assembled for discussion in the Kaiserstrasse, in Amra's library. It was a warm little room, with a good many things in it, furnished with a heavy carpet, a divan covered with cushions, a large palm, English leather−back chairs, and a mahogany table with carved legs on which there was a plush throw and a number of ornaments. There was also a fireplace, with a small firestill burning; a few plates were lying on the black hearth, with some lightly buttered toast, glasses, and two decanters of sherry. . . . Her knees crossed easily, Amra was leaning back among the cushions of the divan, half in the shadow of the palm, and as lovely as a mild night. She had on a waist of a bright, soft silk, although her coat was of a heavy material, dark, and with large embroidered flowers. Now and then she would raise one hand to brush her chestnut hair away from her low forehead. Frau Hildebrandt, the singer, was sitting on the divan beside her. She had red hair, and was in her riding habit. In front of the two women the men had arranged themselves in a restricted half−circle. In their midst was the attorney; he had a very low chair, and seemed unutterably miserable. Occasionally he would draw a deep breath and swallow, as though he were fighting against some growing illness. Herr Alfred Läutner, in a tennis outfit, had renounced a chair altogether and was leaning contentedly and decoratively against the mantlepiece, claiming that he could not sit still so long.

Herr Hildebrandt was discussing English songs in a voice that rang pleasantly. He was a powerfully built man, dressed in black, with an assertive step and the head of a lion—an actor of culture, good taste, and knowledge well digested. He loved to pass serious judgements against Ibsen, Zola, and Tolstoy, who were all going in the same destructive direction; but to−day he was confining himself quite amiably to this minor matter.

"Do you perhaps all of you know that corking song, That's Maria!" he was saying; "it is a bit daring, but quite surprisingly effective. Then perhaps the famous . . ." and he proposed other songs which were finally agreed on, and which Frau Hildebrandt was willing to sing. The young painter, a gentleman with pronouncedly drooping shoulders and a blond imperial, was to give a magician act, while Herr Hildebrandt intended to imitate some celebrities . . . in short, everything was going along excellently and the programme seemed to be already complete, when Assessor Witznagel, who had the advantage of a flowing gesture and a good many fencing scars, suddenly renewed the discussion.

"Very good. All that certainly promises to be entertaining. Still, I might add one more word. It seems to me there is still something lacking, and that something is the big number, the drawing card, the feature, the climax . . . something quite unique, quite startling, something funny enough to bring the amusementto a point . . . but to be brief, I confess I have no definite idea; yet, to my way of thinking . . ."

"That is radically true!" Herr Läutner let his tenor be heard from the mantelpiece; "Witznagel is right. An opening and a closing number would be just the thing. Let's see if we can't . . ." And pulling his red belt into place with a few quick tugs, he looked about him searchingly. The expression on his face was indeed lovely.

"Well," said Herr Hildebrandt; "if you don't think the celebrities could be taken as a climax . . ."

Everyone agreed with the Assessor. An exceptionally amusing number was needed. Even the attorney nodded and ventured mildly, "Quite right . . . something overpoweringly funny . . ." They all set to thinking.

And at the close of this pause, which had lasted about a minute, and was interrupted only by little cries of deliberation, a peculiar thing occurred. Amra was lying back among the cushions of the divan, chewing as busily as a mouse at the pointed nail of her little finger, while her face took on an unusual expression. A smile lay about the corners of her mouth, an absent, almost insane smile, which bespoke a lasciviousness that was at once pained and cruel. Her eyes, now glazed and wide open, traveled slowly to the mantelpiece, where they rested for a moment on the young musician. Then with a jerk, she turned the whole upper part of her body toward her

husband, the attorney; her hands resting in her lap, she stared clinchingly and suckingly into his face, while she herself became visibly whiter. Then she spoke in a voice that was full and measured, "Christian, I suggest that for the final act you appear as a little girl dressed up in baby−clothes, and sing and dance for us."

The effect of these few words was enormous. Only the young painter attempted a good−natured laugh. Herr Hilderbrandt [sic] brushed something from his sleeve with a face as cold as stone. The students coughed, and used their handkerchiefs with unnecessary loudness. Frau Hildebrandt blushed painfully, a thing which didn't often happen. And Assessor Witznagel simply moved away, to get himself some toast. The attorney sat in a pained heap on his low chair; he looked about him with an anxious smile and a yellow face, stammering, "But my God . . . I . . . hardly capable . . . not as if . . . but I beg pardon . . ."

Alfred Läutner had lost his carefree expression. He looked as though he might have blushed a bit; with his head stretched forward, he was staring uncomfortably into Amra's eyes. He was bewildered, and questioning.

But as for Amra, without changing her point of attack in the least, she went on speaking in the same heavy accent, "Herr Läutner could compose a song for you to sing, Christian, and he will accompany you on the piano. That would certainly be the feature of the evening."

A pause arose, an oppressive pause. But then, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, Herr Läutner became infected likewise, excited and carried along with Amra. He took a step forward and began speaking hastily, while he trembled with some sort of violent inspiration, "By God, Herr Jacoby, I am willing, I declare myself willing, to compose something for you. . . . You must sing it and dance to it. . . . It is the only conceivable climax. . . . You will see, really—it will be the best thing I have ever done and ever shall do. . . . In red silk baby−clothes! Ah, your wife is an artist, a true artist, I insist! Otherwise she could not have hit upon such an idea! I beg of you, just say that you are willing! I'll do something worth while, you'll see if I don't. . . ."

Now everything was unloosened, everything broke into motion. Out of either malice or politeness, they began storming the attorney with coaxing. Frau Hildebrandt even went so far as to say quite loudly in her Brünnhilde−voice, "But Herr Jacoby, you are such a funny man, and so amusing!" But now the attorney found words, and began speaking, still somewhat yellow, but with a strong front of determination, "Kindly hear me a moment, ladies and gentlemen—what should I say to you? Believe me, I am not fitting. I have no gift for being funny at all, and besides . . . no, unfortunately that is impossible."

He insisted obstinately on this refusal. Since Amra had dropped out of the conversation and was lying back with quite a far−off look, and since Herr Läutner began staring at a design in the carpet without another word, Herr Hildebrandt contrived to give a new turn to the conversation. Soon after this the company broke up without having reached a decision on this last question.

In the evening of the same day, however, when Amra had gone to bed and was lying with her eyes open, her husband entered heavily. He drew a little stool over to the bed and sat down. Thenhe spoke softly and with hesitation, "Listen, Amra. To be open with you, I have been very much disturbed. If I was too curt with those ladies and gentlemen to−day, if I insulted them to their face, God knows it was not what I intended! But tell me, do you really think . . ."

Amra was silent a moment, lifting her eyebrows slowly. Then she shrugged her shoulders and said, "I don't know what to tell you, my dear. You acted in a manner I never expected of you. You refused flatly to do your part in making the plays a success, even though they all felt that you were needed, which ought to have been downright flattering to you. To put the thing mildly, you have greatly disillusioned everyone, and you have put a crimp in the whole party with your crude unpleasantness, while it should have been your duty as a host . . ."

The attorney had let his head sink; he was breathing with difficulty. "No, Amra, believe me, I didn't want to be unpleasant. I shouldn't like to hurt any one's feelings or be thought poorly of. And if I have acted ugly, I am ready to make everything right again. The whole affair is simply a joke, a bit of buffoonery, an innocent amusement—why shouldn't I? I don't want to spoil the evening. I am willing. . . ."

The next afternoon Amra drove out once more "to tend to some matters." She stopped in the Holzstrasse, Number 78, and went up to the second floor, where someone was waiting for her. Tightened and relaxed with love, she pressed his head against her breast, and whispered a passionate, "Do you hear me, make it for two pianos! You and I both will accompany him, while he sings and dances. I'll see to the costume. . . ."

And a queer shudder, a suppressed, cramped laughter, went through their two bodies.

V

To any one who wishes to give any sort of festivity, especially an open−air entertainment in the grand style, Herr Wendelin's establishment near the Lerchenberg is to be most highly recommended. From the street with its agreeable suburban element, the entrance to the parklike garden is through a latticed door. In the middle of this garden runs the extensive hall. This hall is connectedonly by a small passage with the restaurant, the kitchen, and the brewery. It is built of a gaily coloured wood in a clever mixture of the Chinese and Renaissance. It has large folding doors, which can be opened in good weather to admit the wind as it blows from the trees. And it offers accommodations for a great many people.

This evening the approaching carriages were greeted even at a distance by the shimmer of coloured light, since all the lattice, the trees of the garden, and the hall itself were decorated with variegated lanterns; and as to the interior of the hall, it was a really appealing spectacle. Thick streamers were fastened along underneath the ceiling with numerous paper lanterns fastened to them. In addition, the room was brilliantly illuminated with electric lights, scattered in among the decorations on the walls, the flags, shrubs, and artificial flowers. At one end was the stage, with ferns on either side of it, and a red curtain on which a guardian−angel was painted with outspread wings. But from the other end of the room, the long tables extended almost to the stage. They were trimmed with flowers; and here Attorney Jacoby's guests were gathered to enjoy the spring beer and the roast veal. Jurists, officers, merchants, artists, prominent officials with their wives and daughters—easily more than a hundred and fifty ladies and gentle− men in all. Everyone was dressed quite simply, dark coats with some element of a brighter spring outfit, since ease and enjoyment was to be the law. The men carried their pitchers themselves to the large kegs lined along the side−walls. Throughout the wide, cheerful, and well−lighted room with its thickly sweet smell of pines, flowers, people, beer, and food, the noise buzzed and mumbled. An over−loud conversation without pretension was kept up, and the laughter of all these people was shrill—polite, lively, and unconcerned. . . . The attorney was sitting in a helpless heap at the end of a table near the stage. He was not drinking much, and directed a laborious word now and then at his neighbour, the wife of the minister Havermann. He was breathing painfully, the corners of his mouth drooping, while he looked steadfastly out of swollen, watery eyes at all this brilliant commotion. He observed it with a sort of unhappy estrangement, as if this festivity, this noisy amusement, contained something unspeakably sad and incomprehensible. . . .

Soon the large tarts were handed around, whereupon everybody began drinking sweet wine and the speech−making commenced. Herr Hildebrandt, the actor from the Hoftheater, commemorated the spring beer in an address which consisted almost entirely of classical quotations, yes, even from the Greek; Assessor Witznagel employed his most flowing gestures and his most delicate manner in toasting the women, taking a handful of flowers from the nearest vase and comparing some woman with each of them. But Amra Jacoby, who sat opposite him dressed in a thin, yellow silk, was named "the more beautiful sister of the tea rose."

She immediately brushed a hand over her soft hair, raised her eyebrows, and nodded earnestly to her husband—whereupon the heavy man arose and nearly spoiled the whole flavour of the thing by stammering painfully a few meager words with his ugly smile. Only a few artificial bravos followed, and for a moment there was an oppressive silence. Then the general good cheer regained the upper hand. Smoking, and reasonably unsteady, everybody began shoving the tables noisily out of the hall, since it was time to dance.

By eleven o'clock the carefree spirit was at its height. Part of the guests had streamed out for fresh air into the gaily lighted garden, while others remained in the hall, standing about in groups, smoking, chatting, drawing beer and drinking it where they stood. Suddenly a trumpet−blast rang out from the stage to assemble every one in the hall. Musicians—violins and brasses—had already appeared, and were arranging themselves in front of the curtain. Rows of chairs had been brought in, each with a red programme lying on it. The women took seats, while the men ranged behind them all along the walls. There was an expectant silence.

The little orchestra played a rousing overture, the curtain opened . . . and lo! there was a number of hideous negroes, in shrieking costumes and blood−red lips; they began grinning and setting up a barbaric howl. . . . These plays were certainly the biggest success of Amra's entertainment. Enthusiastic applause broke loose as the cleverly arranged programme progressed number after number. Frau Hildebrandt appeared in a powdered wig,

knocked on the floor with a long cane, and sang overly loud, That's Maria! A magician came on in a dress−coat covered with medals, and managed to do wonders. Herr Hildebrandt impersonated Goethe, Bismarck,and Napoleon frightfully well, and the editor, Dr Wiesensprung, undertook at the last moment a humorous essay on the theme Spring Beer and its Social Significance. But towards the end, expectancy ran at its highest, since the last number was now due, this mysterious number which was framed on the programme with a wreath of laurel and read simply: Loulou. Song and Dance. Music by Alfred Läutner.

A movement went through the hall and a number of glances met as the musicians put their instruments aside and Herr Läutner, who had been leaning in silence against a door with a cigarette hanging carelessly from his lips, took his place alongside of Amra Jacoby in the middle of the stage before the curtain. His face was flushed, and he kept turning the sheets of his score nervously. Amra, who on the contrary had become a bit pale, supported one arm on the back of her chair and was looking critically out at the audience. Then the sharp little signal rang out, and everyone stretched his neck to see. Herr Läutner and Amra played a few bars of introduction, the curtain slid back . . . Loulou appeared . . .

A start of astonishment and fascination went through the crowd of onlookers, as this miserable, hideously dressed up mass danced across the stage with the painful effort of a bear. It was the attorney. His formless body was covered with a broad, smooth dress of crimson silk which reached to his feet. This dress had been cut to expose his unpleasant neck with its coating of powder. Also, his sleeves were pulled back in a puff around his shoulders, although he had long, light yellow gloves over his fat and muscleless arms. There were light curls the colour of wheat rolls standing out from his head, with a green feather waving back and forth. But from underneath this wig a yellow, swollen face looked out. It was plainly miserable, but was smiling desperately. Its cheeks were shaking up and down pitifully, and its small, red−rimmed eyes were staring steadfastly at the floor without seeing a thing. The heavy man was shifting himself laboriously from one foot to the other, while he either held his dress with both hands or held up two index fingers with his helpless arms—he knew no other gestures. In a strained, wheezing voice he sang his stupid song to the tones of the piano.

Could it be true that some cold breath of misery flowed out of this wretched figure and killed all spontaneous enjoyment, cameinevitably down over the whole audience like some disquieting and oppressive discord? The same horror lay at the bottom of all these countless eyes; as though a spell were on them, they kept looking at this picture . . . the two here at the piano and the husband up there. The silent, unheard scandal continued for fully five minutes.

Then the moment occurred which no one who was present will forget as long as he lives. . . . But let us get everything straight, just as it happened in that frightful, complicated little space of time.

The trifling quatrains that pass under the name of Loulou are quite well known, and no doubt the lines can be recalled which run:

"Den Walzertanz und auch die Polke
Hat keine noch, wie ich, vollführt;
Ich bin Luischen aus dem Volke,
Die manches Männerherz gerührt . . ."

these rather bald and facile lines which form the refrain to the three reasonably long stanzas. In the re−setting of these words to music, Alfred Läutner had attained his master−work. Here he had brought to the highest perfection his method of illuminating a vulgar and amusing bit of hack by a sudden trick of the best music. The melody, in C sharp major, had remained reasonably pretty and thoroughly banal all through the first stanza. At the beginning of the refrain quoted above, the tempo became swifter, and there occurred a sequence of dissonances in which the continually growing emphasis on B led on to expect a change of key to F sharp major. These disharmonies became more involved up to the word vollführt; and after the Ich bin, which brought the development and suspense to a finish, there should have followed the resolution to F sharp major. Instead of that, there was a great surprise. With a vicious twist, a freakish abruptness that was almost a bit of genius, the key changed here to F major; this new element, which developed out of the use of both pedals for the long drawn out second syllable of the word Luischen, had an indescribable, an unheard of effectiveness! It was a complete astonishment, a rough shaking of the nerves that made chills go down the spine. It was a marvelous piece of work, a discovery, a denudation that was almost terrible in its suddenness, a curtain that is snatched away. . . .

And with this chord in F sharp, the attorney stopped dancing. He stood still, stood in the middle of the stage as

though he were rooted there, both index fingers still held up, with one a little lower than the other. The i of Luischen died in his mouth; he was silent. Almost at the same time the accompaniment broke off sharply, and this picturesque, detestably ridiculous apparition stood up there with its head shoved forward like an animal, and staring with blazing eyes. He stared out into the lively, brilliant hall with its mass of people; scandal seemed to float on the air almost, like some emanation from the audience. He stared into all these lifted faces, saw them distorted and strongly illuminated; he looked into these hundreds of eyes that were all turned with the same knowing expression on the two down there in front of him and on himself. While an unbroken silence rested over everyone, he let his widened eyes wander slowly and inhumanly from them to the audience, and from the audience back to the two of them. . . . Suddenly a look of understanding seemed to come over his face; the rush of blood made it as red as his silk dress; then he was left a waxen yellow—and the big man fell, so that the floor groaned.

For a moment the silence continued. Then cries were heard, an uproar started, a few courageous men sprang from the orchestra up to the stage, among them a young physician; the curtain was drawn.

Amra Jacoby and Alfred Läutner were still sitting at the piano, each turned away somewhat from the other. With his head down, he seemed to be still listening to his transition into F major. She, incapable of grasping with her sparrow−brain what was happening in front of her, sat gazing around emptily.

Soon after this the young physician appeared in the hall again, a slight Jewish gentleman with a serious face and a black pointed beard. With a shrug of his shoulders, he answered the men and women that had gathered about the door: "Done for."