Cornelli

by Johanna Spyri

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CORNELLI

By JOHANNA SPYRI

FOREWORD

Many writers have suffered injustice in being known as the author of but one book.

Robinson Crusoe was not Defoe's only masterpiece, nor did Bunyan confine his best powers to Pilgrim's Progress. Not one person in ten of those who read Lorna Doone is aware that several of Blackmore's other novels are almost equally charming. Such, too, has been the fate of Johanna Spyri, the Swiss authoress, whose reputation is mistakenly supposed to rest on her story of Heidi.

To be sure, Heidi is a book that in its field can hardly be overpraised. The winsome, kind-hearted little heroine in her mountain background is a figure to be remembered from childhood to old age. Nevertheless, Madame Spyri has shown here but one side of her narrative ability.

If, as I believe, the present story is here first presented to readers of English, it must be through a strange oversight, for in it we find a deeper treatment of character, combined with equal spirit and humor of a different kind. Cornelli, the heroine, suffers temporarily from the unjust suspicion of her elders, a misfortune which, it is to be feared, still occurs frequently in the case of sensitive children. How she was restored to herself and reinstated in her father's affection forms a narrative of unusual interest and truth to life. Whereas in Heidi there is only one other childish figure—if we except the droll peasant boy Peter—we have here a lively and varied array of children. Manly, generous Dino; Mux, the irrepressible; and the two girls form a truly lovable group. The grown-ups, too, are contrasted with much humor and genuine feeling. The story of Cornelli, therefore, deserves to equal Heidi in popularity, and there can be no question that it will delight Madame Spyri's admirers and will do much to increase the love which all children feel for her unique and sympathetic genius.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

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CHAPTER I BESIDE THE ROARING ILLER-STREAM

Spring had come again on the banks of the Iller-Stream, and the young beech trees were swaying to and fro. One moment their glossy foliage was sparkling in the sunshine, and the next a deep shadow was cast over the leaves. A strong south wind was blowing, driving huge clouds across the sun.

A little girl with glowing cheeks and blowing hair came running through the wood. Her eyes sparkled with delight, while she was being driven along by the wind, or had to fight her way against it. From her arm was dangling a hat, which, as she raced along, seemed anxious to free itself from the fluttering ribbons in order to fly away. The child now slackened her pace and began to sing:

The snow’s on the meadow,

The snow’s all around,

The snow lies in heaps

All over the ground.

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

All over the ground.

Oh cuckoo from the woods,

Oh flowers so bright,

Oh kindliest sun,

Come and bring us delight!

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

Come and bring us delight!

When the swallow comes back

And the finches all sing,

I sing and I dance

For joy of the Spring.

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

For joy of the Spring.

The woods rang with her full, young voice, and her song also roused the birds, for they, too, now carolled loudly, ready to outdo each other. Laughingly the child sang once more with all her might:

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

For joy of the Spring.

and from all the branches sounded a many voiced chorus.

Right on the edge of the woods stood a splendid old beech tree with a high, firm trunk, under which the child had often sought quiet and shelter after running about in the sun. She had reached the tree now and was looking up at the far-spreading branches, which were rocking up and down.

The child, however, did not rest very long. Over where the wind struck an open space, it blew as mightily as ever, and the roaring, high up in the tree-tops, seemed to urge her on to new exertions. First she began fighting her way against the wind, but soon she turned. Driven by it, she flew down the steep incline to the path which led down to the narrow valley. She kept on running till she had reached a small wooden house, which looked down from a high bank to the roaring mountain stream. A narrow stairway led up from the ground to the front door of the little dwelling and to the porch, where on a wide railing were some fragrant carnations.

The lively little girl now leaped up the steps, two at a time. Soon she reached the top, and one could see that the house was familiar to her.

“Martha, Martha, come out!” she called through the open door. “Have you noticed yet how jolly the wind is to-day?”

A small old woman with gray hair now came out to greet the child. She was dressed

in the simplest fashion, and wore a tight-fitting cap on her head. Her clothes were so very tidy and clean, however, that it seemed as if she might have sat on a chair all day for fear of spoiling them. Yet her hands told another tale, for they were roughened by hard work.

“Oh, Martha,” the child said, “I just wish you knew how wonderful the wind is to-day up there in the woods and on the hill. One has to fight it with all one’s might, otherwise one might be blown down the mountain side like a bird. It would be so hard then to get on one’s feet again, wouldn’t it? Oh, I wish you knew what fun it is to be out in the wind to-day.”

“I think I would rather not know,” said Martha, shaking the child’s hand. “It seems to me that the wind has pulled you about quite a little. Come, we’ll straighten you up again.”

The child’s thick dark hair was in a terrible state. What belonged on the left side of the parting had been blown to the right, and what belonged on the right side was thrown to the left. The little apron, instead of being in front, hung down on the side, and from the bottom of her skirt the braid hung loose, carrying upon it brambles and forest leaves. First Martha combed the little girl’s hair, then she pulled the apron into place. Finally she got a thread and needle and began to mend the braid on the dress.

“Stop, Martha, stop, please!” Cornelli called out suddenly, pulling her skirt away. “You must not sew, for your finger is all pricked to pieces. There is only half of it left with those horrible marks.”

“That does not matter; just give me your little skirt,” replied Martha, continuing her sewing. “This kind of work does not hurt me; but when I sew heavy shirts for the farmers and the workmen in the iron works the material is so rough that, as I push the needle in, I often prick off little pieces of my finger.”

“Why should you have to do that, Martha? They could make their own shirts and prick their own fingers,” cried Cornelli indignantly.

“No, no, Cornelli; do not speak like that,” replied the woman. “You see, I am glad and grateful to be able to get work enough to earn my living without help. I have to be thankful to our Lord for all the good things he gives me, and especially for giving me enough strength for my work.”

Cornelli looked about her searchingly, in the little room. It was modestly furnished, but most scrupulously clean.

“I do not think that God gave you so very much, really, but you keep everything so neat, and do it all yourself,” remarked Cornelli.

“I have to thank our Lord, though, that I am able to do it,” returned Martha. “You see, Cornelli, if I had not the health to do everything the way I like it done, who could do it for me? It is a great gift to be able to step out every morning into the sunshine and to my carnations. Then I thank God in my heart for the joy of a new day before me. There are many poor people who wake up only to sorrow and tears. They have to spend all day on their sick beds and have many troubles besides. Can you see now, Cornelli, how grateful I have to be to our Lord because nothing prevents me from sewing, even if I have to prick my fingers? But I believe I hear the bell in the foundry. You know that means supper time, so run back to the house as quickly as you can.”

Martha knew well enough that she had to remind her little friend about returning, for often time had been forgotten and Cornelli had had to be sent for. But now the little girl began to run swiftly down the incline beside the rushing stream. Soon she came to the large buildings from which the sound of hissing fires, loud thumping and hammering could be heard all day. The noise was so great that only the roaring of the stream could drown it. Here were the works of the great iron foundry, well known far and wide, since most of those who lived in the neighborhood found employment there.

Glancing at the large doors and seeing that they were closed, Cornelli flew by them

with great bounds. In an isolated house, well raised above the stream, lived the proprietor of the foundry. Beautiful flower gardens were on three sides.

Cornelli approached the open space in front and was soon inside. Flinging her hat into a corner, she entered the room where her father was already sitting at table. He did not even look up, for he was holding a large newspaper in front of him. As Cornelli's soup was waiting for her, she ate it quickly, and since her father made no movement behind his paper, she helped herself to everything else that was before her.

While she was nibbling on an apple, her father looked up and said: "I see that you have caught up with me, Cornelli. You even seem to be further along than I am. Just the same you must not come late to your meals. It is not right, even if you get through before me. Well, as long as you have finished, you can take this letter to the post office. There is something in it which concerns you and which will please you. I have to go now, but I shall tell you about it to-night."

Cornelli was given the letter. Taking the remainder of her apple with her, she ran outside. With leaps and bounds she followed the rushing Iller-Stream, till the narrow path reached the wide country road. Here stood the stately inn, which was the post office of the place. In the open doorway stood the smiling and rotund wife of the innkeeper.

"How far are you going at this lively pace?" she smilingly asked the child.

"I am only coming to you," Cornelli replied. She was very much out of breath, so she paused before adding: "I have to mail a letter."

"Is that so? Just give it to me and we'll attend to it," said the woman. Holding the hand the child had offered her, she added: "You are well off, Cornelli, are you not? You do not know what trouble is, do you, child?"

Cornelli shook her head.

"Yes, of course. And why should you? It does one good to see your bright eyes.

Come to see me sometimes; I like to see a happy child like you."

Cornelli replied that she would gladly come again. She really meant to do so, for the woman always spoke kindly to her. After saying good-bye, she ran away again, jumping and bounding as before. The innkeeper's wife meantime muttered to herself, while she looked after Cornelli: "I really think there is nothing better than to be always merry."

The contents of the letter, which the little girl had taken to be mailed, were as follows:

ILLER-STREAM, 28th of April, 18—.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

My trip to Vienna, which I have put off again and again, at last has to be made. As I must leave in the near future, I am asking you the great favor of spending the summer here to superintend my household. I am counting greatly on your good influence on my child, who has had practically no education, although Miss Mina, my housekeeper, has of course done her best, with the help of our good Esther, who reigns in the kitchen. Old Martha, a former nurse of my poor dead wife, has done more than anybody else. Of course one can hardly call it education, and I have to blame myself for this neglect. As I am so busy with my affairs, I do not see much of my child. Besides, I know extremely little about bringing up little girls. There is no greater misfortune than the loss of a mother, especially such a mother as my Cornelia. It was terrible for my poor child to lose her at the tender age of three. Please bring a good friend with you, so that you won't suffer from solitude in this lonely place.

Please gladden me soon by your arrival, and oblige

Your sincere cousin,

FREDERICK HELLMUT.

That same evening, when Director Hellmut was sitting in the living room with his daughter, he spoke of his hope that a cousin of his, Miss Kitty Dorner, would come to stay in Iller-Stream while he was on his trip to Vienna. He also told Cornelli to be glad of this prospect.

After a few days came the following answer:

B——, The 4th of May, 18—.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

To oblige you I shall spend the summer at your house. I have already planned everything and I have asked my friend Miss Grideelen to accompany me. I am very grateful that you realize how monotonous it would have been for me to stay alone in your house all summer. You do not need to have such disturbing thoughts about your daughter's education. No time has yet been lost, for these small beings do not need the best of care at the start. They require that only when they are ripe enough for mental influences. Such small creatures merely vegetate, and I am quite sure Miss Mina was the right person to look after the child's well-being and proper nourishment. Esther, who you say is very reliable, too, has probably helped in taking care of the child as much as was necessary. The time may, however, have come now when the child is in need of a proper influence in her education.

We shall not arrive before the last week of this month, for it would be inconvenient for me to come sooner.

With best regards,

I am your cousin,

KITTY DORNER.

"Your cousin is really coming, Cornelli, and I am certain that you are happy now," said her father. He had read the letter while they were having supper. "Another lady is coming, too, and with their arrival a new delightful life will begin for you."

Cornelli, who had never before heard anything about this relation of her father's, felt no joy at this news. She did not see anything pleasing in the prospect. On the contrary, it only meant a change in the household, which she did not in the least desire. She wanted everything to remain as it was. She had no other wish.

Cornelli saw her father only at meals, for he spent all the rest of his time in his business offices and in the extensive works. But the child never felt lonely or forsaken. She always had many plans, and there was hardly a moment when she was not occupied. Her time between school hours always seemed much too short and the evenings only were half as long as she wanted them to be. It was then that she loved to walk and roam around. Her father had barely left the room, when she again ran outside and, as usual, down the path.

At that moment the energetic Esther was coming from the garden with a large basket on her arm. She had wisely picked some vegetables for the following day.

"Don't go out again, Cornelli," she said. "Just look at the gray clouds above the mountain! I am afraid we shall have a thunderstorm."

"Oh, I just have to go to Martha," replied Cornelli quickly. "I must tell her something, and I don't think a storm will come so soon."

"Of course it won't come for a long while," called Miss Mina. Through the open door she had overheard the warning and had stepped outside to say: "Just go to Martha, Cornelli; the storm won't come for a long time, I am sure."

So the child flew away while Esther passed Miss Mina, silently shrugging her shoulders. That was always the way it happened when Cornelli wanted anything. If Miss Mina thought that something should not be done, Esther always arrived, saying that nothing on earth would be easier than to do that very thing. Or, if she thought that Cornelli should not do a thing, Miss Mina always helped to have it put through. The reason for this was a very simple one: each of them wanted to be the favorite with the child.

Cornelli, arriving at Martha's house, shot up the stairs and into the little room. Full of excitement, she called out: "Just think, Martha, two strange people are coming to our house. They are two ladies from the city, and father said that I should be glad; but I am not a bit glad, for I do not know them. Would you be glad, Martha, if two new people suddenly came to visit you?"

The child had to take a deep breath. She had been running fast and had spoken terribly quickly.

"Just sit down here with me, Cornelli, and get your breath again," said Martha quietly. "I am sure that somebody is coming whom your father loves, otherwise he would not tell you to be glad. When you know them, I am sure you will feel happy."

"Yes, perhaps. But what are you writing, Martha? I have never before seen you write," said the child, full of interest, for her thoughts had been suddenly turned.

"Writing is not easy for me," answered Martha, "and you could do it so much better than I can. It is a long time since I have written anything."

"Just give it to me, Martha, and I'll write for you if you will only tell me what." Cornelli readily took hold of the pen and dipped it into the bottom of the inkstand.

"I'll tell you about it and then you can write it in your own way; I am sure that you can do it better than I can," said Martha, quite relieved. She had been sitting for a long time with a pen in her hand, absolutely unable to find any beginning.

"You see, Cornelli," she began, "I have been getting along so well with my work lately that I have been able to buy a bed. For a long time I have wanted to do that, for I already had a table and two chairs, besides an old wardrobe. Now I have put them all into my little room upstairs, so that I can take somebody in for the summer. Sometimes delicate ladies or children come out of town to the country, and I could take such good care of them. I am always at home and I could do my usual work besides. You see, Cornelli, I wanted to put this in the paper, but I do not know how to do it and how to begin."

“Oh, I’ll write it so plainly that somebody is sure to come right away,” Cornelli replied, full of zeal. “But first of all, let us look at the little room! I am awfully anxious to see it.”

Martha was quite willing, so she led the way up a narrow stairway into the little chamber.

“Oh, how fine it is, how lovely!” exclaimed Cornelli, running, full of admiration, from one corner to the other. Martha had in truth fixed it so daintily that it looked extremely pleasing. Around the windows she had arranged curtains of some thin white material with tiny blue flowers, and the same material had been used to cover an old wooden case. This she had fixed as a dainty washstand. The bed and two old chairs were likewise covered; the whole effect was very cheerful and inviting.

“Oh, how pretty!” Cornelli exclaimed over and over again. “How could you ever do it, Martha, or have so much money?”

“Oh no, no, it was not much, but just enough for the bed and a little piece of material. I got the stuff very cheap, because it was a remnant. So you really do not think it is bad, child? Do you think that somebody would like to live here?” Martha was examining every object she had so carefully worked over.

“Yes, of course, Martha, you can believe me,” Cornelli replied reassuringly. “I should just love to come right away, if I did not live here already. But now I shall write, for I know exactly what I shall say.” Cornelli, running down stairs, dipped her pen into the ink and began to write.

“But do not forget to say that it is in the country, and tell the name of the place here, so that they can find me,” said Martha, fearing she had set Cornelli a very difficult task.

“That is true, I have to say that, too,” remarked Cornelli. When she had written the ending she began to read aloud: “If somebody should want a nice room, he can have it with Martha Wolf. She will take good care of delicate ladies or children and will

see that they will be comfortable. Everything is very neat and there are lovely new blue and white covers on everything. It is in the country, in Iller-Stream, beside the Iller-Stream, quite near the large iron works."

Martha was thoroughly pleased. "You have said everything so clearly that one can easily understand it," she remarked. "I could not have said it myself, you see, for it would have seemed like boasting. Now if I only knew where to send it for the paper. I do not know quite what address to write on it."

"Oh, I know quite well what to do," Cornelli reassured her friend, "I shall take it quickly to the post office. Sometimes when I have taken letters there, I have heard people say to the innkeeper: 'This must be put in the paper.' Then he took it and said: 'I'll look after it.' Now I shall do the same. Just give it to me, Martha."

Once more the woman glanced through what had been written. It seemed very strange to her that her name was going to appear in the newspaper, but, of course, it was necessary.

"No, no, my good child," she replied, "you have done enough for me now. You have helped me wonderfully, and I do not want you to go there for me. But your advice is good and I shall take the paper there myself."

"Oh yes, and I'll come, too," said Cornelli delightedly. She knew no greater pleasure than to take a walk with her old friend, for Martha always discovered such interesting things and could point them out to Cornelli, telling her many, many things about them. In many places Martha would be reminded of Cornelli's mother; then with great tenderness she would tell the child about her. Martha was the only one who ever talked to Cornelli about her mother. Her father never spoke of her; and Esther, who had been in their service for a long time, always replied when the child wanted to talk to her about her mother: "Do not talk, please; it only makes one sad. People shouldn't stir up such memories."

"So you are coming, too?" Martha said happily. It was her greatest joy to take a

walk with her small, merry companion. Cornelli hung on her arm, and together they wandered forth in the beautiful evening. The storm clouds had passed over, and towards the west the sky was flaming like fiery gold.

“Do you think, Martha, that my mother can see the golden sky as well from inside as we see it from the outside?” asked the child, pointing to the sunset.

“Yes, I am quite sure of that, Cornelli,” Martha eagerly answered. “If our dear Lord lets his dwelling glow so beautifully from outside, just think how wonderful it must be inside where the blessed are in their happiness!”

“Why are they so glad?” Cornelli wanted to know.

“Oh, because they are freed from all sorrow and pain. They are also glad because they know that every pain or sorrow their loved ones on earth have to bear is only a means to bring their prayers to Him who alone can guide them to Heaven.”

“Did my mother pray to Him, too?” asked Cornelli again.

“Yes, yes, Cornelli, you can be sure of that,” Martha reassured her. “Your mother was a good, pious lady. Everybody should pray to be able to go where she is.”

The two now reached the post office and gave their message to the innkeeper and postmaster. When twilight had come and the evening bell had long ago rung, they wandered back along the pleasant valley road between green meadows.

CHAPTER II UP IN THE TOP STORY

One bright morning in May, a portly gentleman, leaning heavily on a gold-headed cane, was walking up the narrow city street. The houses here were so high that the upper windows could scarcely be seen from below. A steep rise in the street caused the gentleman to stop from time to time to get his breath. Scrutinizing the house numbers, he said to himself several times: “Not yet, not yet.” Then, climbing up still higher, he at last reached a house beside whose open door six bells were hanging.

The gentleman now began to study the names under the bells, meanwhile gravely shaking his head, for he did not seem to find the name he was seeking.

“Oh dear, at last! and the highest one up, too,” he sighed, while he entered the house. Now the real climbing began. At first the steps, though rather high, were white and neat. But after a while they became dark and narrow, and in the end the way led over worn, uneven steps to a narrow door. The only standing room was on the last small step.

“Is this a cage?” said the climber to himself, breathing hard and holding fast to the railing. The thin and creaking steps seemed to him extremely unsafe. After he had pulled the bell-rope, the door opened, and a lady dressed in black stood before him.

“Oh, is it you, kind guardian?” she exclaimed with astonishment. “I am so sorry that you had to come up these winding steps,” she added, for she noticed that the stout gentleman had to wipe his face after the great exertion. “I should have been very glad to go down to you, if you had let me know that you were here.” The lady meanwhile had led the gentleman into the room and asked him to seat himself.

“As your guardian I simply had to come once to see you,” he declared, seating himself on an old sofa and still leaning with both hands on the golden knob of his cane. “I have to tell you, my dear Mrs. Halm, that I am sorry you moved to town. You should have followed my advice and lived in a small house in the country. It would have been so much more practical for you than to live in this garret lodging where you have no conveniences whatever. I am quite sure that the country air would have been much better for both you and the children.”

“I could not think about conveniences for myself, when my husband died, and I had to leave the parsonage, Mr. Schaller,” replied the lady, with a faint smile. “The country air would naturally have been much better for my children, especially for my older boy. But he had to come to town on account of school, and I could not possibly have sent him away from me, delicate as he is. Besides——”

“There are boarding places in town where such boys are well taken care of,” the visitor interrupted. “What other reasons did you have?”

“My girls, too, are old enough to learn something which they can make use of later on,” continued the lady. “You know that this is necessary and that it is very hard to get such opportunities in the country. I hope I have persuaded you that coming to town with the children was not a foolish undertaking. I am extremely glad that you have given me an opportunity to explain why I did not follow your advice.”

“What are your daughters going to learn?” the gentleman asked abruptly.

“Nika, the elder, paints quite well,” replied the lady, “and Agnes has a decided talent for music. If both girls are earnest in their studies, they hope later on to be able to teach; indeed, they are very anxious to do so.”

“These arts do not bring good returns, even after years and years of study,” said the gentleman. “It would be much more sensible for the sisters to busy themselves with dressmaking. They could quickly begin a business in which they might help each other and make some money. This would really help both you and your son a great deal. If your boy is going to study, it will be a long time before he can be independent.”

The parson’s widow looked sadly in front of her without saying a word.

“Please do not misunderstand me. I am only speaking in your and your children’s interest,” the gentleman began again. “I am very sorry not to have met your daughters, for they would soon have agreed with me, if they had heard my reasons. Nowadays young people understand quite well what it means to make one’s way easily and advantageously. You can be sure of that.”

“My children may still be a little backward in this knowledge. They may, through the influence of their parents, still care for the things which you call the breadless arts,” said the lady with a sigh. “But I shall make my children acquainted with your ideas and I shall try to speak to them according to your views, at least as far as I am

able."

"How old is the eldest? She ought to be old enough to understand my reasons," remarked the gentleman.

"Nika is in her fourteenth year. Her education is, of course, still incomplete in many ways," replied the lady. "Dino is twelve and Agnes eleven years old. The latter must first of all complete her compulsory school years."

"Still rather young people," said Mr. Schaller, shaking his head. "I am sure of one thing, however. The longer their education will take, the shorter should be the ways to the goal. I am more and more convinced that my advice is right. If you give your little daughters into the hands of a clever dressmaker, your moving to the city will have been of some real use."

In his great zeal to convince his silent listener, the visitor had not noticed that a small boy had entered. This little fellow had at first hidden behind his mother, but, at a sign from her, approached the gentleman. He noticed the child only when a small fist pushed itself forcibly into his closed right hand.

"Please forgive the rather aggressive greeting of my small son," begged the mother.

"Oh, here is another, still. I knew there was a smaller one," exclaimed the dismayed visitor. "Well, boy, what is your name?"

"Mux," was the reply.

The gentleman looked questioningly at the mother.

"That is the name his brother and sisters have given him and the one which seems to have remained quite permanently," she replied. "His name is really Marcus and he is just five years old."

"Well, well, and what do you want to be when you grow up, my young friend?" asked Mr. Schaller.

"An army general," unhesitatingly replied the small boy. After these words the

gentleman got up.

“It seems to me, my dear Mrs. Halm, that all your children have pretty high-flown ideas,” he said impressively. “I can only hope that before long they will learn that in this world it is not possible for everybody to do what he pleases.”

The mother approved this good wish, but added: “I have to tell you, though, that Mux has gotten this idea from his favorite book, where the picture of a general on horseback interests him more than anything else. This, of course, is a passing impression, like many others.”

“One can never urge proper and successful work too soon nor too often; please do not overlook that, my friend!” With these words the guardian ended the interview and, saying good-bye, carefully descended the steep staircase.

Just then a child was running up the stairs so quickly that it actually seemed as if she had no need to touch the steps at all. As the gentleman was taking up all the room, the only space left for a passage was under the arm with which he held the railing. Here the lithe creature tried to slip through.

“Stop, stop! Do you not belong to the parson’s widow, Mrs. Halm?” asked the gentleman, making a barrier with his arm.

“Yes, I belong to her,” was the quick answer. And stooping down still lower, the small person again tried to pass.

“Just hold still one moment, if you can,” the gentleman now demanded. “You probably know that I am Mr. Schaller, your guardian. I have just given your mother some advice, which was meant for your good. You do not look in the least stupid, so you can help to persuade your mother. I am sure you can understand what is good for you. Are you the elder?”

“No, the younger one,” came quickly back for answer.

“So much the better. Then the elder will be still more sensible. If you take my advice

you can both contribute to the prosperity of the whole family." With these words the gentleman gave the little girl his hand and went away.

Agnes flew up the rest of the stairs and into the narrow hall. Her brother Mux was standing expectantly in the open doorway. He did this every day at the time his brother and sisters were coming home from school. He loved the change that their coming brought after the quiet morning.

"A fat gentleman was here and mother said afterward: 'Oh God!' and you can't play the piano any more," he reported.

Agnes ran into the next room and as quickly out again. "Where is mother? Mother, mother!" she called, opening one door after another.

"Here I am, Agnes, but do not be so violent," sounded the mother's voice from the kitchen.

Agnes ran to her. "Mother, what is Mux saying? Is it really true? I know that Mr. Schaller has been here and that he can tell us what we have to do. What did he say? Is it really true what Mux has said? Oh, I'll never eat again! I don't want to sleep or do anything any more. Everything, then, is lost!"

Agnes was frightfully excited. Her cheeks were dark red and her eyes seemed to shoot forth flashes of lightning.

"But, child, you must not speak this way. Do not get so terribly excited," the mother calmly admonished her. "There is no time now to discuss a subject which we have to talk over quietly. We shall do so to-night. You know perfectly well that I have the greatest sympathy for your wishes and ambitions, and that it means as much to me as to you. As soon as we have a quiet hour together we can talk it all over."

These words quieted the child. She knew that her mother always shared every experience with them. In coming to town, mother and daughter had hoped to be able to carry out their most fervent wish, namely, the completion of Agnes' musical education. Agnes could count on her mother's help. It was for the happiness of both

of them. So Agnes went out to the kitchen to do her work as usual. Both the sisters always helped to lighten their mother's work, for their only servant was quite a young girl, who did not do much besides run errands.

Mux went back to his former place. He was intensely pleased with the great effect and excitement his words had produced on Agnes. Hearing somebody else coming upstairs, he prepared to repeat his speech.

When Nika was near enough to hear him he said: "A fat gentleman has been here, and when he was gone mother said: 'Oh God!' and you are not to paint any more trees and flowers."

Nika, not having seen Mr. Schaller, did not understand these words. Unruffled and silent, she passed Mux and went into the other room, which disappointed Mux terribly. So when he heard Dino coming up the stairs, he unloaded his disappointment on him.

"We are not going to have them to-day," he announced.

"What do you think we will have? What am I supposed to be thinking of, little guesser?" Dino called out.

"Oh, I know. Whenever you think we are going to have green peas for lunch, you run up very quickly. You can't even wait, you love them so," Mux asserted. "But we won't have any to-day, for we are going to have cabbage instead. There, now you have it!"

"Now come in and we'll see who makes a worse face about it, you or I!"

With these words Dino took his little brother's hand, and together they ran into the room. Very soon afterwards, the family all sat down to their mid-day meal. On most days the children would be telling their mother about the happenings of the morning. They would all talk at once until it was quite hard for her to do them all justice. But to-day it was different. It seemed as if a storm was in the air; everybody was silent, and on all faces, except one, heavy clouds seemed to be resting. Nika sat brooding

and staring in front of her, for Agnes had interpreted to her their little brother's words. She swallowed very hard on every mouthful, because she had to swallow a great deal more besides. Agnes was frowning so that her whole forehead was like one huge wrinkle. The mother, too, was busy with deep thoughts, as one could see from her worried expression.

Mux, who generally was extremely talkative, was quietly nibbling on his dish of cabbage, with many a deep sigh. Dino alone was merry. He glanced with great expectation from one to the other, and his lunch did not keep him very busy.

"I am expecting a thunderstorm," he said, while the quiet was still unbroken. "Nika is going to let loose the lightning which is flashing under her lashes, and Agnes will follow with the thunder. After this I predict a heavy rainstorm, for Mux can hardly keep back his tears about this cabbage."

"But you have eaten much less cabbage than I have," Mux cried out.

"I do this only from moderation, my little man, so that nobody will get too little."

"I would answer you about the thunder and the cabbage, Dino, if I had time," Agnes at last exploded. "But I have a music lesson at one o'clock and I have enough to swallow without this horrid cabbage."

"I only wish you could be more moderate in other things instead of in eating, Dino," said the mother with a melancholy smile. "You have hardly eaten anything, and I heard you cough all night. Your health worries me dreadfully, Dino. Did you cough much in school this morning?"

"Certainly, mother. But that is nothing to worry about," Dino replied merrily. "It always goes away again. My professor said to-day that it would have been better for me to remain in the pastoral fields of my native village, than to have sought the dust-laden corners of town. But I answered: 'Unfortunately the Latin language does not sprout from the pastoral fields, professor.'"

"Oh, I hope you did not answer that," the mother said, quite frightened.

“Oh yes, but only in my thoughts! Please, mother, don’t worry about me,” Dino implored.

“I am afraid that your professor is right,” the mother said with a sigh. “But I have a plan which we shall talk over to-night. I shall also talk over our guardian’s proposal, girls. Please try not to look so terribly unhappy, for everything is not yet lost.”

“Oh, it will come to that in the end,” said Nika, leaving the room.

“Yes, and much worse, I guess,” said Agnes. Violently pushing her chair in place, she departed, after thrusting her music into a folder.

“What can be worse than when all is lost?” Dino called after her. “I know what,” responded Mux knowingly, while Agnes looked back at Dino as if to say: If I had time I certainly would give an answer to you.

“What is it, wise little man?” asked Dino.

“If she had to eat nothing but cabbage all the time,” replied Mux, full of a conviction which he seemed to have acquired from his own experience.

Dino, too, prepared to depart. With a sorrowful look, the mother passed her hand over the boy’s thick hair. “Please be careful, and do not run too fast,” she begged. “It’s very bad for you to sit in the cool school room when you are so overheated. I can scarcely ever see you go, without anxiety.”

“But I am surely not as sick as that, little mother,” Dino said, tenderly embracing her. “When somebody has a cough it always goes away again after a while. That is the way with me. Be merry and everything will be all right in the end. But I have to go now, it is late,” he exclaimed.

“But do not hurry so terribly, Dino, there is time enough yet, and remember what I told you,” she called after him. Then stepping to the open window, she followed the running boy down the street with her eyes.

Dino gave Mrs. Halm great anxiety, for he seemed more delicate every day. Her

watchful eye had detected how poor his appetite had been lately. Despite that, the boy had a very sweet disposition and was always full of fun. He was always anxious to have everybody in a good humor, and above all, his mother. Of all the burdens she had to bear, the trouble about her son's health was the hardest. One could see this by the painful expression on her face when she left the window and sat down beside her work table.

Mux was just repeating a question for the third time, but his mother did not hear him. Loudly raising his voice he said once more: "Oh, mother, why does one have to eat what the cows get?"

"What do you mean, Mux? What are you talking about?" she asked.

"I saw it in my picture book. The leaves the cows get are just the same as those in the kitchen," he explained none too clearly, but the mother understood him directly. She remembered how interestedly he had looked at the cabbage leaves when the girl had brought them home from market. She also bore in mind a picture in his favorite book, where a stable boy was shown giving a glossy brown cow splendid green leaves to eat.

"So you still have the cabbage in your head, Mux?" said the mother. "You must not be dissatisfied when there are so many poor children who have to go hungry. While you get bread and good vegetables, they may be suffering."

"Oh, can't we send them the rest of the cabbage?" Mux quickly suggested.

"Come and work on the embroidery I have started for you, Mux. We shall see who can beat to-day. Perhaps that will clear away your thoughts about the cabbage. Come and sit beside me, Mux."

The mother put a little chair beside hers and placed the work in the boy's nimble fingers. Now a race with stitches began, and in his zeal to beat his mother he at last forgot the subject that had troubled him so much.

The late evening had come and the children's work for school was done. Mrs. Halm

put the big mending basket away and took up her knitting. The time had come, when, clustering eagerly about their mother, the children told her all the troubles and joys of the day.

It was the hardest hour of the day for Mux, for it was his bedtime. His mother always took him by the hand, to lead him to bed, before she began to talk with the three elder children. Every evening he put up a fight, for the wily youngster always thought that by obstinate resistance he could break the rule. His mother, however, knew well that his success would only result in dreadful yawns and heavy eyes.

This evening he found himself ready for bed before he had had time to prepare for his fight. His mother seemed anxious to have him in bed punctually that night. The boy was always reconciled to his fate when she sat down a moment beside his bed to hear of anything that might be troubling him. Mux, knowing that all conversation was irrevocably closed after his prayers were said, would try every night to prolong this period.

After Mux had climbed into bed, he said thoughtfully: “Don’t you think, mother, that if people planted cherries where cabbage now grows everybody could eat cherries instead of cabbage?”

“We simply have to stop now, Mux,” Mrs. Halm replied to his astonishment, for he had hoped to start a long conversation.

“Well, Mux, you don’t seem to be able to get over the cabbage to-day. Go to sleep, for you have talked enough about it.”

Mux knew then that nothing could be done that day, After his evening prayer and a kiss from his mother, he lay down and was fast asleep before his mother had even shut the door.

Agnes had just finished her last task and was throwing her books into a drawer, each more violently than the other. She was still terribly excited, and as soon as her mother came back to the room, she burst forth: “Oh, mother, if I am not allowed to

study music any more, I would rather stop learning anything. Why can't I become a servant girl? I could do the work well enough. As soon as I have earned enough money, I'll buy a harp and then I can wander from house to house, singing and playing. I can easily live like that. Nobody needs to be a dressmaker. People can wear petticoats and jackets. That is enough, and those can be woven. All other children are better off than we are. They can learn what they please and we can't learn anything!" An outburst of tears choked all further words.

During her sister's speech Nika had been quietly drawing, but she was holding her head lower and lower over her work without once looking up. She continued her studies, but her eyes seemed to be filling. Pushing her work away, she held her handkerchief before her face.

"Oh, children," said the mother, looking sadly at them, "do not be so desperate right away. You know that your good is my good as well, and that I am doing and shall keep on doing everything in my power to fulfill your ambitions. It would be my happiest joy to have your talents developed, so that you could devote all your lives to music and painting. If we should find it impossible, however, dear children, we must firmly believe that it would not have been for the best, had we succeeded, for God alone knows which way to lead us.

"Do not lose your confidence in a kind Father in Heaven, for that is our greatest consolation. He won't forget us, if we do not forget Him, and we must remember that He can see further than we can, for He knows why and where He is leading us. We cannot look into the future, but later we shall understand it all and realize why we had to bear our troubles. Out of them will come the greatest blessings."

"Now let us be happy again and let us sing a song," said Dino, who loved to be gay and who liked to see everyone about him merry, too.

"Let us sing:

If winter's storms are wild and long

We know that spring is coming.

To Agnes, whom I hear rebel,

This consolation I here tell."

"Yes, Dino, it is easy enough for you to laugh," Agnes exclaimed. "You would probably whistle another tune if you had to become a tailor. But you can learn and study everything you want to."

"I shall certainly not study everything," Dino informed her. "But your singing is much nicer than your arguing, Agnes, so please begin, and if you don't like my song, you can start another."

"We shall all sing together later on, children," said the mother. "I have to speak to you, too, Dino. I am troubled about your cough and your health. I have looked about for quite a while to find a suitable place in the country where I could send you. Of course, there are plenty of places, but I want you to go into some modest house where you can be looked after. I found a notice in the paper to-day which might be just what I am looking for. Read it yourself, Dino."

Dino began to read. "Yes, yes, mother, I must go there," he said, shaking with merriment. "I must go to Martha in Iller-Stream. I am sure that it is very cosy in Martha Wolf's house, where everything is so neat and the covers are so fresh."

The sisters now wanted also to see the notice that made Dino laugh so heartily. He read the paragraph aloud about Martha Wolf in Iller-Stream and they all agreed that it would be pleasant there. The mother decided to write to the woman at once and to take Dino there as soon as possible.

"Now we shall sing a song to end the day," she said, sitting down at the old piano. Every day the children sang an evening song to her accompaniment. Opening the book she herself started and the three children took up the song with their pure, fresh voices:

When bowed with grief,

Go seek relief

Of God, our Lord above.

UP IN THE TOP STORY

Thy need has grown,

When left alone,

For great and helping love.

Before thou’st said,

Before thou’st prayed,

He knows thy inmost need.

And by His care,

His love so rare,

From sorrow thou art freed.

CHAPTER III NEW APPEARANCES IN ILLER-STREAM

In the Director’s house in Iller-Stream reigned great excitement. The day had come when the two ladies from town were expected to arrive for their lengthy stay. To celebrate the coming of his guests, the master of the house had ordered a festive dinner for the middle of the day. He had been longing for this day, so was in a splendid humor. It was very important for him to start on his journey right away, and he had waited only to be able formally to receive his visitors. Also he had promised his cousin to give the reins of the household into her hands himself, after which event he had planned to start on his journey.

To Cornelli the preparations for the arrival of the new members of the household

seemed very annoying, everything being different from usual. She commonly very much enjoyed the prospect of company, for on such occasions she paid frequent visits to the kitchen, where Esther was always busy cooking.

As soon as Cornelli appeared in the doorway, Esther would call to her: “Come and see which you like best, Cornelli; I am sure they are not so bad.” A small yellow apple tart and a round purple plum cake were ready for the child to taste, for her visit had been anticipated. Cornelli always assured the cook that the apple tarts were excellent and the plum cakes even better.

Then Cornelli would go into the pantry, where Miss Mina was fixing fruit on the crystal platters. Here many a raisin and almond would drop beside the plate, and from there find its way into Cornelli’s pocket. It was pleasant to have a supply whenever she felt like eating. The housekeeper dropped many nuts on purpose, for she did not want to be less sought after than her rival in the kitchen.

To-day Esther was flying around the kitchen violently rattling her pots and pans, and when Cornelli appeared, to see what was going on, the cook called to her: “Off with you! I have nothing for you here to-day. The ladies from town must not think that they have to show me how to cook a good dinner. I’ll show them. Go away and make room here for me. Make room, Cornelli! I have to fix the vegetables.”

Cornelli ran to the pantry.

Mina was just building up a splendid pile of cookies and almond rings. “Don’t come rushing in like that, or it will all tumble down,” she objected. “Don’t come so near to the table; this plate is all ready and nothing must be missing from it. I won’t have it said that one can see there is no mistress in this house, and that nobody here knows how to set a table.”

“If you are all so stingy to-day, I won’t bother you any more,” said Cornelli, and with these words she turned around and marched indignantly out of the house.

That moment, hearing the sound of approaching wheels, and looking down the road

through the open place in front of the house, she spied the expected carriage with two ladies sitting in it.

“Matthew, Matthew,” she called out, in the direction of the large stable and the barn. These lay a little distance from the house, and were hidden by trees.

Matthew was the gardener who looked after the horses, and had also to superintend all the work done by his assistant in the garden and the stable. He was Cornelli’s special friend, whom she had known ever since she could remember, for he had served her grandfather.

He now came from the stable and mysteriously beckoned to her: “Come here quickly, run fast!” he said. “We’ll still get to the carriage in time. Only come for a moment.”

Cornelli ran to him, and looking into the stable, saw lying on soft fresh hay a tiny, snow-white kid. It looked like a toy, but was really alive.

“Oh, where did it come from, Matthew? Oh, how cunning it is! The white fine fur is just like silk! Can it walk alone? Can it stand, too, if it wants to? Oh, just see how friendly it is and how it is rubbing its little head against me.”

“Yes, but come, now; the carriage is driving up,” Matthew urged. “Come quickly, you can see it every day. Just think! It was only born to-day.”

The carriage had just driven into the court and Matthew was there the moment the horses stopped. The Director was there, too; not to lose any time and yet not be tardy, he had put a watcher at the door to let him know when the carriage was approaching. The Director was very polite and lifted his cousin out of the carriage, greeting her heartily. Then he helped Miss Grideelen to dismount, thanking her warmly for coming. He told her how glad he was that she had been willing to follow his cousin into this solitude, for otherwise it would have worried him to leave her alone so long. He appreciated their great sacrifice in coming and he hoped that his trip, which was very urgent, would not keep him away too long.

“Where is your daughter, Frederick?” asked Miss Dorner now.

The Director glanced about.

“I saw her just a moment ago. Where are you, Cornelli?” he called towards the house.

“Here I am!” It sounded from very near, for Cornelli had hidden behind her father, so as to inspect the new arrivals without being seen herself.

“Come forward and speak to your cousin and to Miss Grideelen!” ordered Mr. Hellmut.

Cornelli gave her hand first to her relative and then to the other lady, saying to each: “How do you do?”

“You can call me cousin, and this lady is called Miss Grideelen,” said the cousin, hoping that the child would repeat her greeting and would call her and her friend by the names she was just told to use in speaking to them. But the child did not say another word.

The Director now turned towards the carriage, giving Matthew instructions for the horses. Then everybody stepped into the house and soon the whole company sat down at the richly laden dinner table. Miss Mina earned many praises for the deliciously planned meal. When the afternoon came the host took the ladies around his place, for his cousin was anxious to become acquainted with everything she had to take care of.

“Oh, what an abundance of fruit!” Miss Grideelen exclaimed over and over again. “How many cherry trees and what enormous apple trees! Oh, what a row of pear trees! You must be able to fill your bins with fruit in the autumn, Mr. Hellmut! Where do you have room for it all?”

“I do not know about it; my servants take care of that, for I have no time.”

“It is a great shame, Frederick, that you do not have half a dozen children. They

would help to look after these matters," the cousin remarked. "By the way, I wonder where your child is. She does not seem to be very sociable."

"I do not know where she is," replied Mr. Hellmut. "I am generally at work about this time and Mina probably knows what she is doing. Perhaps she is busy with her teacher. Cornelli has been alone so much that she could not get very sociable. That is why I am so grateful to you both for coming. I am so glad she can at last be in the environment I have always wanted for her. But what could I do? I have twice taken governesses into the house, to supply her with proper intercourse and opportunity for study. The first ran away because she could not stand the solitude. The second wanted every servant to leave who had been here before her; Esther was to go, and even Matthew. She told me that I had to choose between her and the 'old house-rats,' as she called them.

"I showed no desire to send either of them away, and said to her: 'It is better for you to go, for when the two have departed, it will probably be my turn next, as I shall be the oldest house-rat left.' After that she departed and I had no more courage to go through another experience. But I knew that it was time for Cornelli to have a lady of refinement and culture with her. I am sure, dear cousin, that you can give me some good advice as to her education, as soon as you have become acquainted with her."

"I should like to know whom she resembles," said Miss Dorner; "she does not seem to resemble either you or your late wife."

"Do you think so?" replied the father quickly. "Do you really think so? The child certainly does not need to resemble me, but I have always hoped that she resembled her mother. I always hoped that this would increase with the years and that she would grow up to be my wife's image. Do you not think that she has Cornelia's eyes? I think that my child's rather straggly mane will in time resemble my Cornelia's beautiful brown hair; the child's hair is very thick and has just the same

color."

The Director looked imploringly at his cousin. He seemed anxious for her to agree with him.

Shrugging her shoulders, she replied: "I certainly see no resemblance between the tousled looking small savage and Cornelia. The latter always was so lovely in her exquisite neatness. Her eyes always glowed with happiness and seemed to smile at one from under her beautiful, wavy brown hair. I am sorry to tell you that your child is not exactly engaging; she resembles a wild and furious little kitten with bristling hair. She seems to me to be always making a round back; she looks as if she wanted to jump at one and scratch."

"No, no, she does not do that," the Director assured "The child is not in the least ill-natured, at least, I do not think so. But I am afraid that you are right in saying that she does not resemble her mother in the least. Her education, I mean her lack of education, may have something to do with it. That is why I am so grateful to you both for coming here. I am sure that with your influence the child will change and gain much, and I do not think that it will be hard for Cornelli to learn.

"I can travel now with a light heart, cousin, for I know that I can leave my child, the house and the servants in your care. You do not know in what a difficult position I am sometimes. I ought to go away frequently, and am not able to do so because there is nobody to take care of the house for me. The servants have to be kept in good humor, and the house has to be ruled with authority and judgment. I cannot thank you enough for making this trip possible for me."

When they had returned from their walk they separated. Mr. Hellmut had still plenty of preparations to make for his journey, and the ladies retired to their rooms to get settled there. At supper everybody met again. The ladies and their host appeared punctually and dinner was served at once.

"Where is your daughter? Does she not come to supper, too?" asked Miss Dorner.

“Yes, of course. Do you know where she is, Miss Mina?” the father asked.

At that moment the door opened and Cornelli, with cheeks aglow, ran into the room. She sat down quickly at her seat.

“Did you creep through a hedge?” the cousin asked her.

“No, I was in the hen house,” replied Cornelli.

“That is no reason to look the way you do. Go to your room first and have your hair combed by Miss Mina. She will also give you some soap, for this is quite necessary.”

Cornelli glanced at her father. This was something new and she waited for his approval.

“Quickly, Cornelli! Why do you hesitate?” he admonished her. “You have to obey your cousin absolutely, for she is taking my place now. I hope that everybody here understands that clearly,” he added with a glance at Miss Mina.

The latter wanted to follow the child, but Cornelli called back: “I can do it myself.”

When the child came back her face and hands were washed very thoroughly, but her hair looked most peculiar. She had combed it in such a way that one could not tell what belonged to the left and what to the right side, what to the front and what to the back.

The cousin laughed and said: “Your head looks like a wind-blown hay field. To-morrow Miss Mina will part your hair properly for you.”

Cornelli frowned so deeply that her eyes came quite close together. She did not look up any more from her plate.

Next day quite early the Director departed.

The village of Iller-Stream, where the church and the school house were, was quite a distance from the iron works. Cornelli could not go to school there every day because it was much too far. She therefore had lessons at home, and the teacher her

father had chosen came every morning and taught her in all the necessary subjects. In the afternoon she was free, except for the work which she had to do for the following day. That took little time and till now the child had really had a very free existence. She had always found time for a daily visit to Martha and a long conversation with her old friend. She could also wander freely about the lovely beech wood and along the mountain side. Her time was never parcelled out for her.

There were many wonderful things to find in the fields and woods, and Cornelli never tired of them as long as the sun was shining. If rain or snow prevented her from her strolls, she spent her afternoons in Martha's cosy chamber. There she had the most pleasant times, for the old woman's conversation and tales were for Cornelli a never ending source of enjoyment.

The teacher had just left the house. Owing to her father's departure, there had been plenty of material for sentences in her grammar lesson. All the child's answers to his questions had come so promptly to-day that the teacher had ended his lesson on the stroke of the hour. He also gave Cornelli special praise for the excellent work she had done. Then he heartily shook her hand.

The two were the best of friends and the teacher knew his pupil well. Whenever she was very bright and lively, he would work very hard with her and in a short time accomplish three times more than usual. In order not to spoil their mutual pleasure he would let her off most punctually. But whenever Cornelli was absent-minded and unwilling to work, he progressed slowly and carefully, treating her as if she were the least bit weak minded.

He would keep up this procedure till the hand of the clock showed a quarter, a half, or even three-quarters of an hour more than the set time for the lessons. Then Cornelli had hardly more than a quarter of an hour's time before lunch to run over to the garden, the stable and the hen house, something she always planned to do. The teacher would finally stop and say in his most friendly manner: "I had to stay so

long to-day because we did not do half of what we should have done. You were a little slow in understanding, Cornelli. I hope it will go better to-morrow, otherwise your lesson might last still longer."

It always went much better after that, for Cornelli had no inclination whatever to have such a tiresome performance repeated. After such a lesson many days went by before she was lazy again. To-day Cornelli had worked quickly and well, for she wanted to have lots of free time before lunch. She had not had time to see the little kid since yesterday. The lesson over, she flew to the stable. Lunch was set for one o'clock, so there was a whole hour left. Matthew spied the approaching child and called to her: "Come here, Cornelli! It is just jumping around."

Cornelli ran into the stable, where she saw the snow-white kid, hopping merrily over to its mother and then back again to the hay. It looked so cunning in its gambols that Cornelli went into perfect raptures.

"Oh, you darling little thing!" she called out, patting its spotless fur; "I shall fetch a red ribbon for your neck and then we'll take a walk together." The child accordingly ran back to the house, and hunting about among her things, soon returned with a bright red ribbon which she tied about the little kid's neck. Cornelli was perfectly delighted, for she had never in her life seen a prettier object than the little creature with its snow-white fur and the red ribbon round its neck, skipping lightly about. The next moment it lay down in the hay and looked up happily at Cornelli.

"Can I take it out for a walk, Matthew? Can I harness it to a little wagon and drive around with it?" asked the child. She had many plans in her head, one following on top of the other.

"Wait, wait; we have to let it grow first," replied Matthew thoughtfully. "The most important thing for it is to grow, for it is like a baby that has just learned how to walk. It has to stay near its mother and can only run about near her. When it is bigger, it can take walks, and when it is strong and big we can harness it and you can

drive it about with two reins in one hand and a long whip in the other."

Cornelli shouted with joy and patted the kid with new tenderness. She already pictured to herself the lovely drives that they would have together.

"Did you hear the bell in the foundry? I am sure it must be time for dinner. You will have to be a little careful now, Cornelli. Remember that strange ladies are in the house," said old Matthew with foresight. "You can come again this afternoon."

Cornelli had really heard nothing, for she had been absorbed in her new pet. She knew that she ought to appear punctually at her meals, so she left right away. She had also noticed that the ladies were not buried behind big newspapers, like her father. While running to the house, she passed a hydrant. There she remembered that she had to wash her hands, so she held them both under the pipe and rubbed them hard. Then dipping her face in, she rubbed it, too. She had nothing to dry herself with except a very small handkerchief.

"Hurry up! The ladies are already at table," she heard Esther's voice urging her from the kitchen window.

Cornelli ran in and saw both ladies already seated at the table. In front of her was a full soup plate.

"You have to come punctually to your meals. I am sure that you can hear the loud bell out in the garden," said the cousin. "But how strange you look! Half wet arms, a soaking apron and damp feet. Have you been in the water, or what have you done?"

"I washed my hands under the water pump and I got splashed," Cornelli answered.

"Naturally," remarked Miss Dorner. "There are arrangements in the rooms for washing hands, which involve no splashing. Go, now, and put on another apron. You have to be orderly and neat at mealtimes."

Cornelli departed.

"The child certainly obeys you—that is something," said Miss Grideelen. "Since

you told her to, she always comes to table properly washed."

"That is true. But she has the most unheard-of manners," replied Miss Dorner.

"How shall one get rid of those and start the child on the right path? I must ask you to help her in the morning, Miss Mina. Please comb her hair smoothly and part it the way I told you to."

"I did it, Miss Dorner, and I do it every morning," she answered, quite hurt. "Cornelli's hair is just like bristles and it is very hard to braid. When she jumps it all gets tangled again and she jumps every moment."

Cornelli now came back and ate her soup. Her seat was beside her cousin and faced the other lady.

"What is sticking to your dress here?" asked Miss Dorner, looking with disgust at the little skirt. Something was really hanging from the bottom. "Can this be hay or straw? It certainly does not look orderly. I hope you have not come from the stable!"

"Yes, I have," replied Cornelli.

"How horrid! Indeed, I can even smell it. That is too much!" she exclaimed. "I am sure your father would not let you go there if he knew about it."

"Oh, certainly; he goes himself," Cornelli retorted.

"Do not reply impertinently. In the case of your father it is quite different," explained Miss Dorner. "I want to tell you something which you must remember. If you are allowed to go to the stable and you enjoy doing it, you can go. But when afterwards you come to your meals, you must first go to your room. Get properly washed there and also change your dress. Be sure not to forget."

"Yes," replied Cornelli.

"It is very strange what queer pleasures country children have," remarked Miss Grideelen. "Have you no books, Cornelli? Don't you like reading better than wandering around and going to the stable?"

“Oh no, I don’t like it better, but I have some books,” replied the child.

“What are you going to do in the afternoon, when you have no more lessons to study?” asked Miss Dorner.

“I always go to Martha,” was the reply.

“Who is Martha?” inquired the cousin.

“A woman,” said Cornelli.

“I can guess that,” replied the cousin. “But what kind of a woman is she?”

“A good one,” answered Cornelli quickly.

“What an answer!” The cousin turned now to Miss Mina: “Who is this woman? Can the child go to see her? Does anybody here know about her?” she questioned.

“Oh yes, she is well known here and was here long before I came,” was Mina’s reply. “She nursed the mistress of this house in her last illness. She is a very good woman and always looks neat and clean. Our master likes her well.”

“Now I have really found out something! You must learn to give proper answers, Cornelli, do you hear?” said the cousin. “You are like a wild hare which does everything in leaps and bounds. You can go to see the woman after finishing your work for your teacher. I am sure you must have some to do for to-morrow.”

Cornelli assented to this, and as soon as the ladies had left the room to retire to their bedrooms for the hottest hours of the day, she sat down at her little table in the corner. Here she wrote down a page with lightning speed, then taking up her book she read her lesson over and over again till she knew it by heart. Soon she was finished, and flinging the books into the drawer, she ran out of the house.

“Oh, Martha, I wish you knew how terrible it is at home now since Papa has gone,” called Cornelli to her old friend, before she had even reached the top of the stairs. “I just wish Papa was back already and everything was again as before.”

“What is it, Cornelli, what makes you so cross? Come, sit down here a while and tell

me about it," said Martha kindly. She put a chair beside her own at the table where her mending lay neatly sorted out.

"Of course, you can't understand it, Martha," Cornelli continued, just as excited as before. "Here with you everything is always the same and nobody comes and orders everything to be changed. Now, I am not allowed to come in any more without getting washed; now, I cannot come out of the stable without changing my clothes. Then I must not wash my hands at the hydrant because I get splashed, and, oh, so many new things have to be done; so different from before."

"I am sure, Cornelli, that it is not at all bad that things should not always be the way they were before," said Martha reflectively. "I believe that the lady who is related to you wants the same thing from you that your mother would have wished had she lived. This is very good for you. Of course, Miss Mina and Esther mean well, but your relation knows much better what is to be done to make you grow up the way your mother would have desired. Just think how happy your father would be if you should resemble your mother and he be reminded of her every time he looked at you. You well know what great joy that would be to him."

Cornelli did know that her father would be very happy then, for he had made many remarks which she had understood. A short time ago he had said that his cousin found no likeness between his child and her mother, and Cornelli had observed the sad expression of his eyes when he had said it.

Cornelli shook her head. "You said once that my mother was different from anybody," she said. "So I can't ever be like her; you said so yourself, Martha."

"Yes, yes, I have said that," confirmed Martha. "But I have to explain something to you, Cornelli. If you can't become exactly like your mother, you certainly can become more like her than anybody else, for you are her child, and a child always has something from her mother. I have seen you look at me just the way she did, with the same brown eyes; but not when you frown the way you do to-day. You

must try to watch the two ladies very carefully in all they do and in the way they speak. They are your mother's kind, and that is why I am so glad that you can watch their manners and can try to imitate them. You can learn to resemble your mother in your ways, if you copy the ladies."

"Yes, I shall do that," agreed Cornelli. "Just the same, I am not terribly pleased that they are here and that everything has to be changed. Oh dear, I have just remembered that I have to be back now and drink some hot coffee and milk, because Miss Dorner says that the afternoons are so frightfully long in the country they have to be interrupted. At that time I always used to get from the garden some apples or cherries or whatever else there was, and they always tasted so awfully good. If I only could lengthen my afternoon, which seems too long to them! I never can do all I plan to do. Good-bye, Martha."

And with these words Cornelli ran away.

CHAPTER IV THE UNWISHED-FOR HAPPENS

Esther, the able mistress of the kitchen, was standing in the garden picking green peas, which hung in clusters from the vines. They had ripened quickly in the sunny June weather.

"Come down here, Cornelli!" she called. "Just see how many peas there are! Why do you steal about so quietly nowadays, and why don't you run the way you used to?"

"I am not allowed to do anything any more," replied Cornelli, approaching her. "Mina is beginning to tell me that I even must not jump, for it might tangle my hair. I wish I had not a single hair left; then I could at least run and jump about."

"No, no, child; that would look too dreadful. Just imagine it! But don't get sad on account of that," Esther consoled her. "Just jump around as before! Your hair can always be put in order again. Why haven't you come into the kitchen lately to see if

things taste right?"

"I am not allowed to; Miss Dorner says that is bad manners," Cornelli informed her.

"Oh, I see! Well, you might do worse things. However, you must obey! Yes, you have to obey," Esther repeated. "Don't you go to Miss Mina any more, either, when she fixes the dessert?"

Cornelli shook her head.

Miss Mina had quickly understood the new order that had begun in the household and accordingly had suited herself to it. When she thought the ladies would not approve of an old custom, she dropped it quickly, and Cornelli had soon noticed her change of attitude.

"I don't care if I never can go to the pantry any more, I don't care," Cornelli exploded now. "She can eat all the things herself which drop beside the plate. I don't care. I don't want anything as long as I can go to the little kid in the stable; it really is the most cunning creature in the whole world. Have you seen it yet, Esther?"

"Certainly I have, and why not?" the cook replied. "Matthew took me out to the stable as soon as it was born. You can certainly go to see it as long as it is in our own stable. Just go there as much as you like! Nobody can forbid you that."

"My teacher is coming," Cornelli now exclaimed, "and I have to go."

"Yes, child, but do keep up your spirits. There are lots of pleasant things still left for you to enjoy. Just wait till you taste the strawberry tarts I am going to make to-day."

With these words Esther smacked her lips to express the great succulence of the promised dish.

"I wouldn't even care if you baked nettle tarts; I wish I didn't have to eat at table and could just eat berries in the garden and drink milk in the stable."

Cornelli ran towards the house, for she had forgotten to walk sedately, as she had been told to do.

While Cornelli had her lessons upstairs in the living room, in the jessamine arbor both ladies were sitting on a garden bench.

“It would be so pleasant and agreeable here,” said Miss Dorner, “and my cousin could have such a very charming life, if the child were only a little different. Don’t you think, Betty, that she has no manners whatever?”

“Yes, but she has had no training at all.” remarked Miss Grideelen; “and she may have inherited some qualities from her mother.”

“Oh no, not a single trait! You cannot possibly imagine a greater difference than between the mother and this child,” Miss Dorner exclaimed. “Cornelia was full of amiability and gayety. She always greeted and cheered everyone with her laughing brown eyes. If my cousin could only have the happiness to see his child resemble her mother the slightest bit! He was so fond of his wife! He deserves this joy, for he is a splendid man.”

“It is curious how very different children can be from their parents,” said Miss Grideelen with regret in her voice. “But I am sure that something can still be accomplished by educating the child. Many qualities can be developed that hardly show themselves yet. We ought to do our best for her, especially for her father’s sake.”

“That is just what I am doing, Betty. Unfortunately, I have had very little success as yet,” answered Miss Dorner. “But I just hope that the day will come when I can write her father some pleasant news about Cornelli, something different from what I feel obliged to send him now.”

The day had been exceedingly hot, and the ladies retired to their rooms immediately after dinner, while Cornelli, according to her custom, obediently did her lessons. Then she disappeared. In the late evening, when the ladies sat down to supper, it was so warm that Miss Mina was ordered to open all the windows.

Now Cornelli entered.

“For mercy’s sake, what are you thinking of!” the cousin accosted the child. “We are nearly perishing with the heat and you put on a fur dress, which you could wear without a coat in a sleigh ride in the middle of winter. Why do you do such foolish things?”

Cornelli was really attired very strangely. Her little dress was made of such heavy, fur-like material that one could see it was meant for the coldest winter weather, and for someone who disliked much outer clothing. The child’s cheeks were glowing red, and from the insufferable heat whole streams of perspiration trickled down her face.

“I have no more dresses left,” she said stubbornly.

“Can you understand it?” asked the cousin, looking at her friend.

“I really think that this is the fifth dress in which I have seen Cornelli to-day,” answered the friend. “In the early morning I saw her running across the yard in a dark dress. At breakfast she wore a light frock and for lunch a red one. I believe that she wore a blue dress when we had our coffee this afternoon, so this must be the fifth costume. I was beginning at lunch time to wonder about the frequent changes.”

“I have to change my dress every time I go to the stable,” Cornelli said, a little more stubbornly than before.

“How can anybody be so foolish!” exclaimed the cousin now. “I can understand now why you have no fun and why you always wear an unhappy face. You must be nearly perished with the heat! Finish your supper quickly and then go to your room and take off this heavy dress. You surely have another dress. I must forbid you to go to the stable from now on! You can see for yourself what comes of it! If only you would not frown like this, Cornelli. You look exactly as if you had two little horns growing on your forehead, one on each side. There are many other and better amusements for you than spending your life in the stable. Are you able to embroider?”

“No,” Cornelli answered curtly.

“Children of your age ought to be able to, though,” said the cousin. “But we have not come here to teach you that; have we, Betty? You probably do not even know how to hold the needle in your hand.”

“Why should it be necessary for Cornelli to learn embroidery just now?” replied the friend. “She has lovely books that she can read; she has shown us some herself. Don’t you prefer reading a pretty story to running about in the stable, child?”

“No, I don’t,” replied Cornelli crossly.

“We must not pay attention to what she says,” remarked Miss Dorner. “When Cornelli is bored, she will probably turn to her books herself. Please, Miss Mina, keep an eye on Cornelli. Nonsense like this must not happen any more.”

When supper was finished, Cornelli went up to her room, and Miss Mina followed her.

“You certainly don’t need to do such silly things,” she said scoldingly, as soon as they were on the stairs, where her words could not be overheard. “I have enough to do nowadays without watching whether you put on a new dress every few hours.”

“It isn’t my fault,” Cornelli replied morosely. “They ordered me to do it.”

“They won’t always smell it when you have been to the stable,” scolded Miss Mina.

“Yes, but they do smell it,” Cornelli retorted, “and even if they didn’t, I should have to obey. They told me to change every time I go to the stable.”

“Yes, but now you are told not to go there any more, remember that!—so your frequent changing will have to stop,” grumbled Miss Mina, while she was helping Cornelli to take off her hot dress.

“Now I have to clean it, besides! You actually give more work than six well brought up children.” Miss Mina had never before spoken so roughly to Cornelli, for she had always been anxious to keep in the child’s good graces. But she had suddenly ceased

to care about that.

Cornelli looked at her with astonishment. The child's eyes were also full of something that nobody had ever seen there before. Mina seemed to understand: "I did not do you any harm," she said quickly; "what I have said is only the truth." With that she left the room.

"If everybody treats me that way I'll be that way, too," cried Cornelli with a furious look. Suddenly taking hold of the dress she had just taken off she threw it out of the window. After a while Mina returned, bringing back the dress. Cornelli was sitting on the window-sill crossly looking down at the yard.

"Look out that the wind doesn't blow you down, too, like your dress," Miss Mina said unpleasantly.

"I don't care," Cornelli replied obstinately. "It did not blow down at all, for I threw it down on purpose."

"Oh, is this the way you behave? Next time you can get it yourself," said Miss Mina, running away indignantly.

Next morning Cornelli was walking across the courtyard, happily talking to her teacher, whose hand she was holding. During her school hours she had forgotten all the troubles of the day before, for Mr. Malinger had been as kind to her as ever. He at least had not changed.

"Could you give me a little rose?" he asked smilingly, while they were passing the blooming rose bushes. So Cornelli quickly ran from bush to bush till she had gathered a fine bunch of dark and light, white and red roses. These she offered to her teacher, warning him not to prick himself. Then the two parted most cordially.

Cornelli, on coming back, ran swiftly toward the stable. Suddenly, however, she stood stock still, for she remembered that she was not allowed to go there any more. No longer could she see the darling little kid and watch its growth. She would be unable to tell when the moment had come for it to be hitched to a carriage to be

driven about by her. She might not be allowed even to do that! She hoped, however, that her father might be back by that time and that then everything would be different. Cornelli danced with joy at that thought, and her old gaiety seemed to return. She felt like going to Esther and talking it all over with her good old friend. The moment the child went into the house, Miss Dorner stepped out of the living room.

“You have just come in time,” she said, “for I have to show you something. Where are you going?”

“To the kitchen,” replied Cornelli.

“You have nothing whatever to do in the kitchen and you shall not go there. I thought you knew that you have to go upstairs before lunch to fix your hair. But before you go up come in here. I have to tell you something very important.”

Cornelli followed her cousin into the room. Miss Grideelen was standing near the window as if she had expected the return of her friend. Leading Cornelli to the sofa, Miss Dorner pointed to it, saying: “You are sure to know who has done this and you had better tell me right away.”

On the dark plush coverings were visible distinct marks of dusty shoe soles. There was no trace of a whole foot, but one could see that somebody had trampled on the sofa.

“I did not do it,” said Cornelli with sparkling eyes.

“Who in all the house would have done it except you? Please ask yourself that, Cornelli! There is no question about it at all,” said Miss Dorner. “It is probably one of your little jokes similar to throwing your dresses out of the window. I know all about it. Just let me tell you this! It is the last time that you, a girl of ten years old, will show such a terrible lack of manners. As long as I am here, you shall not do it any more. You really should spare your good, sensitive father such behavior.”

“I have not done it. No, I did not do it, no, no!” Cornelli cried aloud.

“But Cornelli, only reflect! You are blushing and your conscience is giving you away,” Miss Grideelen here remarked. “It would be so much better for you to say humbly: ‘I have done it and I am sorry; I shall never do it again!’”

“No, no! I have not done it. No, no!” Cornelli cried out louder still. Her cheeks were glowing red from anger and excitement.

“Do not make such a noise,” ordered the cousin. “One might think there was an accident. It is not worth while to lose so many words. You should not have made things worse by denying it; if you had not, everything would be all settled. You have misbehaved and you shall not do so any more. Remember!”

“No, I did not misbehave. No, no! And I shall not say yes when it is not true,” Cornelli now cried, quite beside herself.

“Go to your room, Cornelli, and smooth out your forehead before you come to dinner. Your little horns are protruding quite plainly when you act that way. Just look at yourself in the mirror and see yourself how repulsive you look. If you think that there is anybody in the world who can still like you when you have black horns on your forehead, you are mistaken. Go, now, and return with another face.”

Cornelli went.

Reaching her room, Cornelli put her hand up to her brow. Right on her forehead were two protruding points. Should horns be really growing there? The child had a sudden horrible fright at this thought. She was sure that everybody could see them already, for she could feel them quite distinctly. She could not stand it any longer, so she ran away to old Martha.

“No, I did not do it, Martha. I never did it,” she called out, running into the little room. “When I tell them no, no, they ought to believe that I did not do it. I never, never did it. They shall know it! But they won’t believe me even if I say it a hundred times and—”

“Stop a little, Cornelli!” said old Martha kindly. “You see, you are all out of breath.

Sit down here on your stool and tell me quietly what has excited you so. You know that I believe your words. I have known you since you were small, and I know that what you say is true."

It was impossible for Cornelli to speak calmly about what had happened, but it soothed her, nevertheless, to be able to pour out her heart and to know that Martha believed her. She told of the accusation which had been brought against her, and how she had not been believed despite all her assurances. She was certain that both ladies would always believe for ever and ever that she had done it and had denied it. At this thought Cornelli again became quite red from excitement and was on the point of breaking out again. But Martha put her hand on the child's shoulder, quietly restraining her.

"No, no, Cornelli, that's enough," she said soothingly. "It is only to your advantage that it is so and not as they have said. You have been accused wrongly and cannot prove it, but God knows the truth. He has heard everything. You can be calm and happy and look up to Him with a clear conscience. You can say to yourself: 'God knows it, and I do not need to be afraid or frightened.' If you had really done wrong and had denied it, you would have to be afraid that the truth would be revealed. Then you could not look up calmly to the sky, for you would be frightened at the thought that up there was One who knew everything and from whom nothing could be hidden. A wrong accusation does not stay with us forever. Even if it takes ever so long, it generally is revealed in the end, and you certainly will not need to bear it in all eternity, because God already knows how it is."

Cornelli had really grown calm at the thought that there was One who knew how it all was. When her trouble began to weigh upon her, she could always say: "You know it all, dear Father in Heaven, You have seen and heard everything."

"If He could only tell them! They would then know it, too. God could easily do that," Cornelli said.

“Yes, but that is not the way things happen. We do not know better than He what is good for us,” Martha said, shaking her head quite seriously. “If we could rule, everything would come wrong. We never can see ahead of the hour and we never know what is good for us because the next moment always brings something we did not know about. Otherwise we would always be trying to undo what we have strained to do the day before; we should only make ourselves miserable over and over again. But if God ordains anything that we do not understand, we must believe firmly that something good will come out of it. We must be patient, and if our troubles are too heavy, we must console ourselves and think: God knows what good will come from it. But we are forgetting the time, Cornelli. You must hurry home to your dinner, now. I am afraid it is already late.”

Cornelli’s black frown had disappeared during Martha’s soothing speech, but now a deep shadow flew across her face.

“Oh, Martha, if I only did not need to go home any more! I hate to go back and sit at table. I would not mind dying of hunger, if I could only stay here with you.”

Cornelli, glancing at her home, drew together her brows as if she saw something frightful there.

“But, child, you must not say such things about your lovely home; it is wrong to do that,” said Martha, kindly admonishing her. “Just think how many children have no home at all. How grateful they would be to God for a home like yours. Go, now, Cornelli, be grateful for all God has given you and chase away the thoughts that make you sad. Come soon again and we shall be glad together, for there is always something to be glad about.”

Cornelli went. While she had been with Martha and had heard her words, it had really seemed to her that there was no cause for grief. As soon, however, as she entered the garden and saw the windows of the room where they were surely already at table, everything that had pressed heavily on her heart rose again. After all,

Martha did not know everything.

Cornelli was sure that she could never be happy any more. She could not go in there and she could not eat. She felt as if she could not swallow anything, for big stones seemed to stick in her throat. If she would only die from it all! Cornelli thought that that would be best, for then everything would be over. So she sat down on the lawn behind the thick currant bushes, where she could not be seen from the house. Meanwhile, Miss Mina had carried away the sweets and was putting the fruit course on the table.

“It seems to me that Cornelli does not care if she comes to table a whole hour late,” said Miss Dorner. “Nothing is to be kept warm for her, for she does not seem to have learned yet how to respect time and order. She had better learn it soon.”

Mina went out to sit down for her dinner. Esther had everything ready and was just putting the dessert in the cupboard.

“That is for Cornelli as soon as she comes home,” she said, sitting down, too; “the poor child gets enough bitter things to swallow nowadays.”

“But why shouldn’t she come in time?” asked Mina crossly. “Besides, she couldn’t possibly eat the whole dessert. We can take our share and there will be enough left, surely as much as is good for her.”

“I won’t let you have it,” said Esther, firmly pressing her arm to the table as a sign that she would stay there. “The child must have something that will help her to swallow all the cross words she hears all day,” she continued. “What was wrong again this morning, when there was such a scene in the living room?”

“It was nothing,” replied Mina. “There were a few marks of dust on the sofa, and the ladies thought that Cornelli had been standing on it. The child would not admit it and so the ladies kept on accusing her till Cornelli set up a senseless row.”

“I really think, Miss Mina, that you could have given an explanation,” said Esther with a sly smile. “If one has to wind up the clock, it is quicker to jump up on the

sofa than to push the heavy thing away. When one wears tight lace boots in the early morning, one can't take them off easily, eh, Miss Mina?" With these words Esther glanced at the neat little boots that Mina was stretching out comfortably under the table.

"Well, what was there so terrible about that?" retorted Mina pertly. "The sofa won't be spoiled on account of that, and besides, I have to clean it myself."

"I only think you could have said a word, before the ladies accused the child of having lied to them and before she nearly had a fit over the injustice. She made such a noise that one could hear it all over the house! It went right through me."

"Oh, pooh! it was not as bad as that," asserted Mina; "the child has long since forgotten the whole thing. That is the way with children. One moment they make a horrible noise and the next they go out of the door and forget about it. Why should one bother?"

"It used to be different," said Esther smilingly, "Miss Mina could not be obliging enough to the child then. Things are all done for other people now and not for those of the house."

"Those of the house!" repeated Mina mockingly. "It won't be long before you, too, will be singing another tune. When the new lady of the house gives orders in the kitchen you will have to obey, too."

Esther dropped her spoon. "For goodness sake, what are you saying?" she exclaimed. "Who should have thought of such a thing? Whom do you mean, the cousin or the other one?"

"Well, I can't tell that exactly," replied the maid. "Our master has not discussed that with me, but one must be dumb not to see what is going on and why the ladies came here. After all, one wants to know what one is going to do. That two have come, is the surest sign of all, for we shall be supposed not to suspect."

"For goodness sake," said Esther again, "what a discovery! I am sure it must be the

relation, for she already rules the house. I tell you one thing, though, Miss Mina, that I shall keep on singing the same tune I have been singing for the last twelve years in this house, and I don't care who is going to rule. You can believe me."

"Oh, we shall see about that, Esther," said Mina with a superior air. She got up, now, to see if the ladies needed anything.

Waking up from a sound sleep, Cornelli did not remember where she was. She was lying on the lawn behind the currant bushes. She remembered at last how she had come back at lunch time from Martha's cottage and how she had suddenly felt weary and sleepy. She must have dropped down and gone to sleep.

It was evening and there was no more sunshine on the grass, but the sky was still light, although it was beginning to grow dark. Cornelli suddenly had a longing she had never known before. She felt as if she had to eat and taste everything about her, the bushes and the leaves, the flowers, and especially the unripe plums on the tree above her. Oh, if she only had a piece of bread! Cornelli got up quickly and ran towards the house.

"Come quickly, Cornelli," Esther called to her through the open kitchen window; "they are just sitting down to supper; you have come just in time."

Cornelli flew to her room and, pulling out a thick shawl from among her things, tied it around her head. Then, running to the dining room, she sat down at her accustomed seat.

"So you have come again," said Miss Dorner, who had just settled down, too. "A well brought up child should at least say good evening when she enters the room after a long absence."

"Good evening," said Cornelli, after which she finished her soup with unusual haste.

"Where do you come from after all this time?" asked the cousin.

"From the garden," was the reply.

“That is quite possible, but where were you before that?”

“With Martha,” Cornelli answered.

“If you could only learn to answer more pleasantly!” remarked Miss Dorner, “it would be to your own advantage, for you do not have many pleasing things about you; it would only make you more attractive, and you really should strive to become so.

“Next time you want to stay so long at this woman’s house you have to ask my permission. I absolutely forbid you to stay away so long without asking me, do you hear? You deserve to be scolded for your long absence to-day, but I shall not say anything further. But why do you look so pitiful! What is the matter? Have you a toothache?”

“No,” Cornelli quickly gave forth.

“Have you a headache?”

“No.”

“What is the matter with you?”

“Nothing.”

“You shall never again set up such a masquerade when there is nothing the matter with you, Cornelli,” said the cousin scoldingly. “Why do you put this shawl around your head? Are you trying to look like an untidy gypsy? Don’t ever come to table that way again! Betty, have you ever seen the like? Can you understand this behavior from a sensible child?”

The friend just shook her head.

“Perhaps Cornelli does it because she does not know what else to do. She does not seem to desire a proper occupation,” she replied.

When Cornelli came down to breakfast next day, she had taken off the shawl, but she still looked very odd.

“You look exactly like a savage from New Zealand,” said the cousin. “Do you think you are improving your appearance by plastering your hair all over your face?”

“No,” said Cornelli fiercely.

“Neither do I,” said the cousin. “I cannot make you out at all. What will you put on next, I wonder, when your hair is brushed away?”

“My fur cap,” replied Cornelli, according to the truth.

“I never heard such nonsense,” exclaimed Miss Dorner. “I really think that the child is capable of doing that. She will probably pull it down over her head to her nose when the temperature is eighty. I have never seen such a child. What shall I do with her?”

Cornelli really looked as if she did not know how well brought up European girls usually wore their hair. From the middle of her head thick uneven strands of dark hair hung down over her forehead and deep into her eyes. The hair was not hanging loose, but was firmly glued to her skin. Her intention seemed to be to keep it there to prevent it from being blown away.

“You look positively repulsive and no person on earth will want to look at you if you go around like that. This may teach you to give up your terrible obstinacy! Nothing else can be done with you.”

With these words the cousin rose and left the room. Miss Grideelen promptly followed.

That evening a letter was sent to Cornelli’s father:

ILLER-STREAM, July 20th, 18—.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

Your affairs are going brilliantly, for your manager is splendid. I can also inform you that perfect order reigns in your house, your garden and the stable. Your place is perfectly magnificent; it abounds in fruit and vegetables and lovely flowers. I should

never have imagined this possible years ago, when I wandered about here with my friend Cornelia.

I am coming now to the principal subject of this letter, which is less pleasant. I do not understand how your daughter has gotten her disposition. She does not either resemble you, with your fresh and open manner, or Cornelia, with her merry, pliant disposition, which won every one's heart. The child has a dull and sullen nature, a roughness of manner and an unheard-of stubbornness. I can do nothing for her, at least not by anything I say. But I have decided to leave physical or other punishment to you. I shall do all I can by good example and admonishment as long as I am here. My friend is supporting me faithfully. I do not dare raise in you the hope that the child will ever make you happy. A rebellious nature like hers is sure to get worse from year to year. I hope, however, that the success of all your ventures will give you the satisfaction that your home life cannot give you.

Your faithful cousin, KITTY DORNER.

CHAPTER V A NEWCOMER IN ILLER-STREAM

Old Matthew was raking the gravel paths in the garden when Cornelli stepped out of the house and slowly approached. She held a book in her hand and now sat down on the bench under the hazel bush. Laying the book on her lap, she watched Matthew while he cleaned up the paths. Looking up he said: "Come with me, Cornelli, and let us go over to the stable together, for you have not been there for a long time. You should see how the little kid is growing."

Cornelli merely shook her head and gave no answer. Matthew looked over at the child a few more times, but said no more.

Esther, carrying a large basket, now arrived. As she was going to the vegetable garden she called over to the child: "You must have a specially nice book to be sitting there so quietly, Cornelli."

Cornelli shook her head.

“No?” laughed Esther. “All right, then, come with me and I’ll show you how many yellow plums there are going to be this year; the whole tree is full and they are already beginning to ripen.”

“I don’t care,” said Cornelli.

“No?” laughed Esther. “All right, then, plums,” Esther exclaimed. “And our large juicy pears are beginning to get ripe, too. Don’t you want to come and see how long it will be before they are ripe?”

“No,” was the reply.

Esther now went her ways. A short time after that Matthew joined her. “What is the matter with the child, Esther,” he asked. “She is so changed! One can hardly recognize any more our gay and friendly Cornelli. And why does she have her hair hanging into her face that way? One absolutely does not know her any more.”

“That is just what I say,” Esther replied. “I really can’t understand it. One hardly ever sees the child, and if one does meet her somewhere, she scarcely says a word. She never sings or laughs the way she used to, and she always wears such a terribly unhappy expression that it fairly makes one’s heart ache. How happy the child used to be!

“They say that she needs to be educated, and it may be so; but since she is getting an education she is absolutely changed, and not for the better. However, things may go well again when her education is finished.”

“She misses her mother,” said Matthew. “It is awfully hard on a little one to grow up without a mother, for she needs her at every step. It is so easy when you have a mother to whom you can tell your joys and troubles.”

“One might think that you still run to your mother whenever anyone does you harm, Matthew,” said Esther, a little mockingly.

“I should love to,” Matthew assured her. “I know what my mother meant to me and so I am always sorry for every child that has none. One can see how it is with our master’s child; nothing is of any good to her as long as she has no mother.”

Matthew went away, looking once more with pity at Cornelli, who was sitting quite motionless on the bench. The book by now was lying on the ground.

Soon afterwards Mr. Maelinger entered the garden and neared the house, but Cornelli intercepted him.

“I could not come at 9 o’clock to-day,” he said, “but I think one hour is better than none, so am here now, at 11 o’clock. I hope you have spent a pleasant, useful morning.”

“No, I haven’t,” said Cornelli drily.

“But you have a fine book in your hand. It is sure to have something nice in it. What is it all about?”

“I do not know,” replied Cornelli.

“Let us go to our work now. Your reading does not seem to have impressed you much, so let us hope for a better result from our lesson.”

The teacher entered the house with his pupil, and they were just getting settled in their accustomed places when he said: “It seems to me, Cornelli, that your hair hangs a little too much over your face. It must be very uncomfortable. Could not this be changed?”

“No, I can never change that, never, never,” Cornelli said passionately, tightly pressing down the hair on her forehead. “Oh, really! But this is no affair of mine,” said the teacher calmly. “Only it seems to me a rather disfiguring manner of wearing the hair. You would feel much more comfortable without these weeping-willow-like hangings in front of your eyes.”

Cornelli was still pressing both her hands against her forehead, as if the teacher

might try by force to straighten up her hair. But he now began the lesson quite peacefully.

When the ladies were leaving the room after lunch, the cousin said to the child: “You are not going to run off again immediately, Cornelli. You must begin a proper and orderly existence. When your work is done you can read one of your many lovely books. You have enough time after our coffee hour to take walks and to pay visits.”

As usual the work was soon finished. Afterwards Cornelli sat down on the garden bench. Just as before, she put the book in her lap, and it soon fell to the ground. Cornelli peeped about her, at the trees and at the ground, but she did not really seem to see them.

At coffee time Cornelli punctually appeared at table and quickly gulped down everything that was poured out for her, as if it were a medicine that simply had to be swallowed. Afterwards she sat there frowning, for she had to remain at her seat till the ladies got up; she had learned this custom from her cousin.

“Don’t always frown and make such horns! One can see them quite plainly even through your curtains,” said Miss Dorner. “It won’t be long before you can go away.”

At last the ladies got up to go into the garden. Cornelli sneaked out behind them, turned unseen around the corner of the house, and walked across the meadow to the path.

“To sit here under the hazel bush and read a fine book is really a pleasure not many children have,” said Miss Dorner, sitting down on the bench. “For this alone you should be grateful, instead of frowning and sulking all day, Cornelli—yes! But where has she gone again?” the lady interrupted herself, glancing around.

“She disappeared as soon as we came out,” her friend answered. “Isn’t Cornelli really peculiar? She never says a friendly word and never gives a single sign of

childish love. She always runs away as soon as she possibly can."

"I am so sorry for her father, who must long for a pleasant family life," Miss Dorner continued. "He will never have this by the side of his only daughter, who seems to become more unfriendly and stubborn every day. Others in the house have noticed it, too, so Mina tells me. Oh, what a life it will be here in two or three years. My poor cousin with his beautiful estate! What good is that to him?"

"Many things can happen in two years that can't be foretold, Kitty, and that can change a household entirely," replied the other lady. "For the benefit of your cousin let us hope that this may come true."

Cornelli was not leaping or running, but was quietly creeping along the edge of the path. She was staring at the ground, without once looking up at the merry birds which were whistling above her. Not once did she glance to right or left in the meadows, though they were full of red daisies and blue forget-me-nots which Cornelli ordinarily loved to pick.

Martha saw the approaching child. She came out with a worried face and full of sympathy asked: "What is wrong with you, Cornelli? Can you never again be merry?"

"No, not any more," replied Cornelli, entering Martha's little chamber and sitting down on the stool which her old friend had put for her in the usual place. Cornelli's words did not come rapidly and angrily any more, as they had done before. With a deep sigh she added: "I only wish I had never learned to read."

"What! But child, what an idea," exclaimed Martha, "what a foolish wish! You should realize what it means to want to find out something and not be able to. One has to begin over and over again, and nothing helps one. That is what happened to me to-day. If you don't help me I won't ever understand it. I often wish I could read and write as fast as our Cornelli does. It is a great gift to be able to read and write easily, and everybody who can't do it knows that well. Don't you like the pretty

books your father has given you?"

"No, I don't. They are pretty, but awfully tiresome, Martha," Cornelli assured her. "There are all kinds of stories and descriptions in them of famous people and discoveries. Father said that he used to love them when he was young, but he was probably different from me. Now I can't run to the stable any more, nor into the woods as I feel like doing; now I have to sit around all the time and read a book. Oh, I wish nobody had written any books, then nobody would have to read them."

"But Cornelli, I do not think that this would suit everybody," Martha said. "Please help me to read a letter I got to-day, and then you will see what an advantage it is to be able to read. I need your help, for I do not understand what is wanted of me."

Cornelli, taking up the letter, was quite willing to help her dear old friend.

"Who wrote it?" asked the child.

"That is just the thing I cannot read," Martha answered. "I only know that it comes from town, but I cannot guess who could possibly write to me from there."

Cornelli began to read the letter aloud. It was an inquiry as to whether the spare room had yet been taken, and if Mrs. Wolf could take care of a boy of twelve years for a few weeks. He did not need special care, as he was not exactly ill; but the boy undoubtedly was not very strong. Good air and fresh milk were the chief things he needed. If no refusal came, the boy would arrive in the middle of July. It was signed: Nika Halm, rector's widow.

"Oh, how easily you read. It seems to go all of itself," said Martha admiringly, when Cornelli had finished. "I never could have made it out so well. Just think how proud I can be that a rector's wife will bring her son to me. Oh, I'll take the best care of him, and I must ask Matthew to let him have some milk from the cows every morning and evening. Isn't it too bad it is not a girl; then you would have a playmate. But you will entertain each other just the same. Are you not a little bit glad that he is coming?"

“No, not a bit,” Cornelli returned curtly. “I know quite well that he won’t have anything to do with me, and I know why, too. I do not care whether it is a boy or a girl. I don’t want him.”

“But Cornelli, you never used to be that way. You used to be so friendly and bright with everybody. What has happened to you?” asked Martha, quite grieved. “You do not look about you with bright eyes and your hair hangs too low on your face. Can’t I push it back a little?”

Martha, fetching a comb, was going to touch Cornelli’s hair, when Cornelli hindered her by crying out: “No, Martha, leave it! It has to stay that way all my life.”

“Oh, no, I won’t believe that. Why should your face be half covered up? One can hardly recognize you,” Martha said regretfully. “What do the ladies say about it?”

“Miss Dorner says that I am the most obstinate being in the whole world, and that no one can ever set me right,” was Cornelli’s truthful information. Then she added: “She says that no child on earth looks as ugly as I do and that nobody in the world will ever like me. I know that it is true, and I only wish nobody were coming to you; then I could always be alone with you.”

“Cornelli, I am quite sure that you would do right in obeying the ladies,” said Martha. “If you did what they say, they would love you as well as everybody else does.”

“No, no, Martha, you don’t know how it is,” Cornelli said, quite frightened. “I’ll do everything they say, but I can never push my hair away, for then it would be worse still and everybody could see it.”

Martha shook her head.

“I do not know what you mean, Cornelli. Please come to me just as often as you can. I shall always love you more than anybody who might ever come here. If you did not come, it would hurt me dreadfully. Then I would rather not have the rector’s son here, glad as I am now that he is coming.”

“All right, Martha, then I shall come,” Cornelli promised. “We can easily be alone together in the kitchen, for I want to see you alone. I shall not come on Monday, for that is the day they arrive. On Tuesday, though, I’ll come. Then we’ll go together to the kitchen.”

Martha promised this and Cornelli went home in the same way as she had come. Not once did she run to the meadow to pick forget-me-nots or other flowers that were sparkling there.

When Monday came, she was wondering if a carriage would arrive with a proud city boy and a lady with a high feather hat, both of whom would look down on her with disdain. Cornelli settled down beside the garden fence, for from there she could conveniently survey the road. But she saw no carriage, though she watched through both the morning and the afternoon. She really was very glad, for she was quite sure that nobody had arrived. Next day when the time came for her to be free, she walked over to Martha’s little house.

“Oh, I am so glad that nobody has come. Now I can be alone with you and don’t have to go to the kitchen—”

Cornelli had said these words on entering, but she suddenly stopped. A boy she had never seen sat at the table in the room and Martha was just clearing away the supper things. So he had come after all and had even heard what she had said. Oh, it was dreadful! But the boy was laughing.

Cornelli wanted to withdraw quickly, but the boy called out: “Please come in and let us get acquainted. Mrs. Martha has already told me about you. Just come in,” he continued, when he saw that Cornelli still hesitated. “If you want to be alone with Mrs. Wolf I can easily go to my own room.”

Cornelli felt that it was very nice of the boy not to resent her words and to be willing to give place to her. She therefore entered. Martha had already put a chair in readiness for her and greeted her heartily.

“I expected you, Cornelli,” she said. “Just sit down here a little with our guest. His name is Dino Halm and he already knows your name. I am sure you will have a good time together. I’ll go up in the meantime and if you need me you can find me in the room upstairs.”

Martha, thinking that the children could get acquainted better if they were left alone, had planned to unpack her new arrival’s things while they were together. She put his belongings neatly away in the wardrobe and the drawers in order to make him feel at home in his tidy little chamber.

“Why did you think that we did not come?” asked Dino as soon as Martha had left the room and Cornelli was sitting beside him silently.

“Because I did not see the carriage,” she replied.

“The carriage? Well, I can believe you,” said Dino. “We walked more than an hour, in fact, nearly two, before we got here from the station. Do you just hop into a carriage when you go to the station?”

“Yes, I do; I always go there with Papa,” replied Cornelli.

“But where do the horses always come from?” Dino wanted to know.

“From our stable,” was the answer.

“Have you your own carriage and two horses of your own, just to be able to drive about?” Dino questioned, full of astonishment.

“Yes, we have the two brown ones and six others to carry away the iron from the foundry.”

“Good gracious, eight horses!” Dino exclaimed. “You are lucky to be able to sit in a carriage with your father and drive around!”

“Can’t you do that?” asked Cornelli.

“Never in my life,” Dino replied in a voice full of conviction. “First of all, I do not have a father. Besides that, we do not own a stable and horses. How lucky you are!

Have you anything else in the stable?”

“Oh yes, lots more. Six cows and a large gray stable cat,” Cornelli informed him. “Then there is an old nanny goat and a young snow white kid, about whose neck I tied a red ribbon. You are going to drink milk from our cow, did you know that?”

“Oh, I shall love to do that!” Dino exclaimed. “Do you think I’ll be allowed to go to the stable and look at the horses?”

“Certainly you will; Matthew will love to show them to you, and Martha will willingly let you go. If I only could go with you!” And Cornelli uttered a deep sigh.

“Well, I should think you certainly could do that, when the stable belongs to you. Who would hinder you, I’d like to know?” Dino said. “Do you know what we’ll do? We’ll hitch the little kid to a cart. Won’t that be lovely? It can pull you and I shall be the coachman. I once saw such a little carriage on a promenade in town.”

Cornelli had already had that thought herself, but she knew now that she could never again go to the stable. It was suddenly clear to her that she could not run about as before and that she could not be happy any more. The chief reason for it all was clear to her, the reason that prevented her from being carefree and bright as in the old times. She did not answer, but gave forth a profound sigh, profounder than the one she had uttered before.

“Why do you sigh, as if you had to carry a mountain about with you—a load that keeps you from going forward? Why do you do it?” asked Dino.

“I can’t tell anyone. You couldn’t, either, if you had the trouble I have,” replied the little girl.

“Oh, yes, I could. There is nothing in the world I couldn’t tell,” Dino asserted. “If you can’t confide in other people, you can always tell your mother, for she can always smooth everything out for you. Just go to her and tell her about it. That will relieve you and everything will come right.”

“Yes, and now I can say what you said to me before. You are lucky and much luckier than I am,” said Cornelli with a trembling voice. “I never can go to my mother because I have none. Now you see how well off I am! I am sure you would never exchange with me, would you?”

Dino looked quite frightened.

“I did not know that you had no mother,” he said, full of pity. In his mind he saw his own mother, the way she looked at him, so full of love that it always lightened his heart whenever anything troubled him. And poor Cornelli had to miss all that!

Even the stable with the horses, the large garden with all the fruit, about which Martha had told him so much, appeared to him now in a different light.

Full of decision he said: “No indeed, I would not change with you.”

But a great pity for the motherless child welled up in Dino’s heart and he longed to be her protector. He could understand now why Cornelli looked so strange; he had even noticed it as soon as he had seen her. There was no mother to fix everything the way it should be.

“We’ll try to be friends, Cornelli! But you must push your hair back from your forehead first of all; one can hardly see your eyes. Nobody wears hair like that. I don’t see how such long hair can stay there without blowing off. What on earth did you paste it on with?”

“With glue,” replied Cornelli.

“How nasty! Come, I’ll cut it all off, and then your eyes and your forehead will be clear. You can hardly see that way.”

Dino had seized the scissors that were lying beside Martha’s work basket, but Cornelli, struggling against him with both hands, fairly screamed: “Let it be. It has to be that way. Put the scissors away!”

“I won’t hurt you. But don’t scream so loud!” said Dino quietly, putting down the

scissors again. “I only wanted to do you a favor. If my two sisters, Agnes and Nika, could see you, they would laugh at you; they would not like the way you pasted on those locks.”

“I know that. But they do not need to see me at all,” said Cornelli crossly. “Nobody needs to see me. I know that nobody likes me, but I don’t care.”

With these words Cornelli ran away. Dino was terribly astonished and stood looking at the door through which Cornelli had disappeared without even a word of farewell.

When Martha again entered the little room and was looking at Cornelli’s empty chair, Dino said: “What a queer child she is. I never thought she would be so unfriendly.”

He related how they had passed the time together and how Cornelli had suddenly run off without even saying good-bye. He had not wanted to offend her.

Martha shook her head and said: “Cornelli never was that way before. I am so worried about her, for she is absolutely changed. You must not think that she is queer and runs away like that and suddenly gets cross. She never was that way at all; this is something new. If I only could hear her sing and laugh again as of old. I hoped that her old gaiety would come back with such a good playfellow as you are. Maybe it will; after all, this is only the first day of your acquaintance.

“I am sure Cornelli will not come back to me,” said Dino, still quite puzzled. “She ran away so full of anger.”

When Cornelli had exclaimed, “I don’t care,” it probably was not true. On reaching home she quietly stole to her room. Sitting down on a stool, she put her head in both hands and began to cry bitterly.

CHAPTER VI A FRIEND IS FOUND

Cornelli had not appeared at Martha’s cottage for quite a number of days, and so

Martha was filled with grief and anxiety. There were many reasons for this. First of all, she loved the child as if she had been her own and missed her daily visits terribly. She also knew that there was something the matter with Cornelli and that this was the reason why she did not come. From the time the child was small, she had run over to her old friend every single day and had told her everything. Martha was also sorry for her guest's sake that Cornelli stayed away. She had told Dino how merry and bright the child could be and how he would enjoy her as a daily companion. Now it had all come to nothing.

In the meantime Dino and Martha had become firm friends, and the old woman was very eager to make everything cosy and comfortable for her polite and friendly housemate. After his daily walks and after he had done his school work conscientiously, Dino loved always to sit down beside Martha. Then she would talk to him and tell him many things which Dino loved to hear.

She generally told about Cornelli's father and mother, for Martha had known the latter as a small child. Before long, though, she would always begin to talk about Cornelli, for she never tired of that subject. She assured Dino that she had never known a more bright or amusing little girl. Dino always assured her that he could not believe this and when Martha even asserted that Cornelli was more attractive than any child she had ever seen, Dino laughed.

"She looks exactly like a little owl," he always said. "One can hardly see her eyes. I should love her to come again, though," he added, for he was curious to see Cornelli when she was funny and bright, as Martha described her.

When Dino had gone to his room that evening, Martha quickly put on a better apron, took the big shawl from her cupboard, and putting it on her shoulders, went quietly out of the house and over to the Director's residence. She looked up at the kitchen windows and saw a light there, as well as in the room that overlooked the garden. On entering the kitchen Martha saw Esther and Miss Mina sitting down to a plentiful

supper. The latter was just getting up to answer a bell which had rung in the dining room, but Esther offered the empty seat to her old acquaintance.

“Sit down, Martha. I am sure you have earned a rest, the same as I have,” she said, and with these words moved three platters and a bottle over to the new arrival. “Just take it. There is a lot left and I am glad when it is gone, for then I can plan something new for to-morrow.”

“Thank you, Esther,” Martha replied. “I have already eaten supper. It is very nice of you to invite me to share it with you, but I really can’t.”

“How can you refuse? I simply won’t have it. Anybody can eat what I cook, even the Emperor of Russia himself. I am sure you are not yet quite as mighty as that,” Esther proceeded eagerly, loading a plate with macaroni and stewed plums.

“Please, Martha, don’t make a fuss; just eat this and drink this glass of wine. I don’t know why you shouldn’t. Why shouldn’t you eat supper twice, if it is good?” Martha did not dare to refuse Esther’s offering any more, so she began to eat her second supper, which was much more abundant than the first had been.

“What brings you here so late, Martha; what is it?” asked Esther curiously, for this visit was quite unusual.

“I was going to ask you something, Esther, and I thought that I would interfere less with your work in the evening than at any other time,” Martha answered. “Cornelli, who used to come to me every day has not been to see me all week. I thought that the ladies might have objected to her going to such a humble old woman as I am. I could understand that well enough. Do you think they have?”

“Oh no, they don’t object at all,” Esther replied. “Miss Mina has told them that our master thinks well of you. But you have no idea how changed the child is in all her ways. One hardly knows her any more. Three or four times a morning she used to come running in and out of the kitchen. She was always singing and flying about the garden like a little bird, at all hours of the day.

“Who picked all the fine berries and the yellow plums, the juicy, dark red cherries from the young trees over there, so that it was a pleasure to see her? Cornelli, of course! And now she won’t even look at anything. All the berries are dried up by now and spoiled, and the fine cherries, too. The yellow plums, also, are lying under the tree by the dozen. They are only meant for children; the ladies won’t bother about them and one can’t cook them, either. So they fall down and lie there, and Cornelli never raises her head when she goes by them.”

Martha was much too modest to say how she would have loved to have a little basket full of plums for her young boarder. She never could give him any fruit and she knew how he would enjoy some. But as long as he was staying with her she could not do it, for that would seem as if she were begging for herself.

“Yes, Esther,” she said after a while, “I certainly have noticed how changed Cornelli is. I pray to the Lord that everything will come right in the end. Of course, it is hard for the child to get used to a new life right away. But it surely will be good for her to have somebody looking after her bringing-up.”

Esther shrugged her shoulders significantly at this, but said nothing. “Is the child still in her room or has she gone out, Esther, do you know? I wanted to tell her to come again to see me, as long as the ladies don’t object.”

Esther did not need to answer. At that moment Cornelli came stealing quietly down the hall. When she saw Martha a ray of sunshine passed across her face and she greeted the old woman.

“I came to see if you were ill,” said Martha. “What keeps you from coming to see me, Cornelli? The time has passed so slowly without you, child,” she added, holding Cornelli’s hand affectionately.

“With me, too,” said Cornelli hoarsely.

“Please come to-morrow and every day, the way you used to,” Martha begged.

“No, I won’t come,” Cornelli answered.

“Why not, Cornelli?” Martha asked, full of dismay.

“Because the boy is there. I don’t like him and he does not like me,” Cornelli stated.

Martha now eagerly told Cornelli of the falsehood of this assertion. She told her how Dino had asked after her every day and had hoped that she would come again. It was awfully dull for him to be alone all day without a playmate. Martha was quite sure that it had not been Dino’s fault that she did not like him. The boy had nothing at all against her, for he was asking every day that she come back.

“Tell me, Cornelli,” Martha said finally, “why don’t you like the boy? He is so nice!”

“I’ll come to see you to-morrow,” was Cornelli’s answer, and it sufficed. Quite happily Martha said good-bye, making Cornelli repeat her promise that she would spend some time next day with her old friend and the new boarder.

Next day Cornelli actually arrived at Martha’s cottage at the accustomed time. Martha was standing by her carnation pots on the porch, ready to greet the visitor who was approaching.

“Dino is so glad that you are coming, Cornelli,” she said, offering her hand as greeting. “He has just returned from drinking milk. Look, here he comes!”

Dino had heard the arrival of Martha’s expected friend and opening the door had stepped out. “Why have you not come for so long?” he asked, giving Cornelli his hand. “I waited for you every day.”

Cornelli gave no answer. Entering the room together they sat down just as they did the first day of their acquaintance. Martha went out, because she knew that the children would get along better alone, and she was very anxious for the two to become good friends.

“Your small white kid is growing more cunning every day,” said Dino. “You should see it when it bounds about so gaily.”

“I don’t care if I see it again or not. Nothing matters at all to me,” Cornelli returned in a most unfriendly manner.

“No, this is not true,” said Dino, laughing kindly. “When one talks that way it shows that one cares a great deal and that one is full of bitter thoughts, just because one can’t have what one wants. I know that very well; I do exactly the same thing.”

Cornelli was so astonished by Dino’s knowledge in the matter that she gazed at him dumfounded.

“Oh, yes, I know how it is,” he repeated. “But you do not need to be bitter, because you lead the finest life anyone possibly could. I always think so each morning and evening when I go over to the stable to drink my milk. What a wonderful garden you have! I never saw such fruit. A whole tree full of plums and all the berries on the bushes! And then the two fine horses that are kept separately in your stable for you. Matthew has told me that your father drives with you every week and that you can have everything in the house and in the garden, for you are the only child.”

“Oh, if only there were twelve or twenty children in the house, then everything would be different,” Cornelli broke forth passionately. “But I am always alone and never can say a word to anybody. And if one is made so that everybody hates and despises one, and if no one in the whole world can help one and everything gets worse all the time—-You do not know how it is. I only wish I could die right away—” Here Cornelli burst into sudden tears. Putting her head on the table she sobbed violently.

Dino looked quite frightened; he had never intended to make Cornelli sad and he could not understand what she had said. But he remembered that she had no mother and so he could understand her tears, for that was dreadfully sad. That seemed more cause for tears than that she was an only child.

The thought filled him with deep compassion for her, and he said softly: “Come, Cornelli! It is terribly sad that you have no mother, but you must not think that

therefore you are all alone and nobody wants to help you. I'll be your friend and I'll help you, but you must tell me what troubles you. I do not understand from what you have said. Please explain it all to me."

"No, I can't do that, I can't tell anyone," Cornelli said between her sobs.

"Oh, yes, you can. Don't cry any more and I'll help you. I can surely find a way. Please tell me."

Dino took Cornelli's hand and gently pulled it away from her eyes.

"No, no, I can't," she said timidly.

"Oh, yes, you can. First of all, we'll push your hair away. It is all sticking to your forehead and your eyes; you can hardly see." Dino pushed the hair away as much as he was able; but it was still hanging down and sticking fast.

"Oh, now you'll see it, and then you'll make a great noise, I know," Cornelli exclaimed desperately.

"I do not see anything except that you look a thousand times better that way than with these thick, drooping fringes all over your face," said Dino.

"No, let them be! I know exactly how it is," cried Cornelli, making an effort to push her hair back again. "Only you won't say it, because you want to be my friend. But I know it and everybody can see it and hate me."

"But Cornelli, why are you crying?" said Dino, full of astonishment. "I don't know what you mean and I am sure you are imagining something. You must be, for one often does."

"No, I'm not, and there are people who can see it. You must not think that I imagine something, Dino; otherwise I would not be so frightened that I often cannot go to sleep for a long, long while. I have to think and think all the time. I know that it will get worse and worse and that I won't be able to cover it up in the end. Then there won't be a single person in the world who does not hate me when he looks at me.

You, too, will hate me then, I know."

"I swear to you right now that I shall not hate you, whatever should appear," Dino exclaimed enthusiastically. "Just tell me for once and all what you mean. Please do it, for I might be able to help you and give you some advice. Just tell me, for you know now that I will remain your friend in spite of everything that might turn up."

Cornelli still hesitated.

"But will you still be my friend later on, when everything is still more changed and nobody else will be my friend?" she asked persistently.

"Yes, I promise; and here is my hand!" said Dino, giving the little girl a hearty handshake. "You can see that I really mean it, for what one has promised that way, one can never take back. Now you can be sure that I shall always be your friend."

Cornelli's face lit up with joy. It was obviously a great comfort to her to have a friend who would remain so for all time.

"So now, I'll tell you what it is. But you must promise not to tell anyone in the whole, wide world about it, as long as you live."

Dino promised, giving his hand again for solemn assurance.

"Look, here on both sides of my forehead," said Cornelli now, hesitating a little and pushing the fringes of hair out of her face, "I have two large bumps, they grow all the time and especially when I frown. I have to make a cross face all the time, for I cannot be jolly any more and can never laugh again. So the bumps keep on growing and in the end they will be just like regular horns. Then everyone will hate me, for nobody else has horns. I can do nothing now but hide them, but in the end they will come through and then my hair won't hide them any more. Then everybody can see it and people will despise me and children will be sure to throw stones after me. Oh!"

Cornelli again put her head on her arms and groaned in her great trouble. Dino had

listened, full of astonishment. He had never before heard anything like that.

“But, Cornelli,” he said, “why do you frown all the time, if the bumps grow when you do it? It would be so much better if you would think of funny things and would try to laugh. If you always made a pleasant face they would perhaps go away entirely.”

“I can’t! I can’t possibly do it,” Cornelli lamented. “I know that I make a horrid face and that I am so ugly that nobody wants to look at me. Whenever anybody looks at me I have to make a cross face, for I know that everybody thinks how horrid I look. I never can be happy any more, because I have to think all the time about that terrible thing on my head, and that it is getting worse. And I can’t help it and can do nothing. You don’t know how it is. As long as I live I have to be that way, and everybody will hate me. You could not laugh any more, either, if you were like that.”

“You should try to think of quite different things and then you would forget it. Later on it would probably seem quite different to you. You keep on thinking about it all the time and so you believe in it more and more. Get it out of your head, then it will be sure to get better,” said Dino, who could not quite understand it. “Come, I’ll tell you a story that will change your thoughts. Once upon a time there was an old copper pan—-See, you have laughed already!”

“Oh, that will be a fine kind of story—about an old copper pan!” Cornelli said.

“It certainly is a fine story,” Dino assured her; “just listen: She had a step-brother who was a wash boiler—you see, you have laughed again! That’s the way! So they went together to Paris, where there was a revolution.”

“What is a revolution?” Cornelli asked, quite thrilled.

“See how the story interests you!” said Dino, thoroughly pleased. “You have no more wrinkles on your forehead, because you are listening well. Didn’t I guess what you have to do? I’ll go on now. You call it a revolution when nobody wants to

remain in their old places and everything goes to pieces."

"What do you mean by going to pieces? Do you mean it the way chairs begin to go to pieces when the glue comes off and the legs get loose and shaky?"

"Just that way," Dino assented. "When all laws and orders begin to go to pieces like chairs, when the glue is off and everything crashes and tumbles down; do you understand?"

"Yes. And what happened?" Cornelli wanted to know.

"The travellers liked that well," Dino continued, "for they were full of discontented thoughts. The copper pan had thought for a long time that she wanted to be something else. She was tired of cooking greasy food and of all the time being full of soot at the bottom; she wanted to be something better. The wash boiler had similar thoughts. He thought he would be much better off as a nice tea kettle. He thought how nice it would be to stand on a fine table, so he wanted to get away from the laundry.

"When they came to the revolution they joined in it, too. They became quite famous making speeches, for they both could talk very well. The wash boiler had learned it from the washer women, and the copper pan from the cook. So they were both asked what they wanted to become. The copper pan wanted to become an ice box; she wanted to sparkle outside with fine wood and inside with splendid ice. The wash boiler wanted to become a fine tea kettle and be able to stand on a finely laid-out table. So they both became what they had wished.

"But the copper pan, who had been used to the cosy fire, began to shake and freeze when the ice filled her whole inside. Her teeth were chattering while she looked about to see if she could discover a little fire anywhere. But nobody ever brought any burning spark near her. She suffered the bitterest hunger besides, because she had been used to quite different nourishment from fat morsels roasting in her insides. Now she had to swallow little lumps of ice and nothing else. She was not a

bit pleased with shining outside and in, for she had to think all the time: how terrible it is to starve and freeze to death.

“The tea kettle meanwhile was standing on a beautifully set table. Many splendidly dressed young ladies and gentlemen were sitting around him and drinking tea out of fine china cups, and eating from lovely gold-rimmed plates. The tea kettle felt flattered and said to himself: ‘Oh, now I can be anybody’s equal.’ But one of the ladies said: ‘I can smell tar soap and I think it comes from this tea kettle. I wonder what that means?’ Her neighbor laughed and said: ‘I noticed it long ago. I hope it has not been used for washing stockings.’ So they looked at the kettle and sniffed and turned up their noses with disdain.

“The tea kettle lost his assurance, for he knew quite well that many hundreds of stockings had been boiled inside of him. The poor thing had never guessed that the smell of tar soap would stick to him in his new shape. He felt very cramped and uncomfortable in the society he was in, and was possessed with the thought of getting away and returning to the place where he had been comfortable and had been held in high esteem, for he had really been a first-rate boiler.

“Then suddenly the revolution ceased. The lady of the house who owned the ice box said: ‘I do not want the horrible ice box any more, which they have exchanged for my good old ice box. All the ice that comes out of it tastes of onion soup.’ The copper pan had always cooked this soup better than any other. ‘Lulu, throw it out to the old iron heap,’ said the lady. So Lulu, the butler, and Lala, the maid, took the ice box and with terrible might threw her down on the scrap heap, where old iron, bones and dirt lay in the back yard.

“The ice box felt that all her limbs were giving way and that everything was going to end badly. She lamented: ‘Oh, if only I had not joined the revolution! If I had only stayed at home by the cosy fire! Oh, if only—-’ And with that she cracked completely.

“On the same day the young lady on whose table the kettle was standing said: ‘Now I have had enough of this horrid tar-soap boiler. I want a genuine tea kettle and not an imitation. Away with this thing!’ So the butler took the kettle and dashed him down to the heap of rubbish in the yard. It was the same rubbish heap where his step-sister had been thrown, and in his fall he broke his own and his step-sister’s last bones. Then he exclaimed in bitter pain: ‘Oh, if only I had not joined the revolution! Oh, if I were only home in the peaceful, steaming laundry.’ Then he was completely smashed by the old muskets that were used in the revolution and that had been thrown down on top of him. And this is the end of the story.”

“Yes, they were right. If only they had not joined the revolution!” Cornelli said sympathetically.

“Yes, and I am right, too,” Dino cried triumphantly. “Just see how much it helped you to forget your curious bump affair. You have no more wrinkles on your forehead and you have pushed all your hair away. You look entirely different; I hardly know you now.”

Cornelli in very truth had been so eager in listening to the story that with one quick motion she had pushed the hanging curtains out of her eyes. She had been anxious not to miss a word, and the hair had bothered her very much. Her whole face had become bright and changed during the thrilling tale.

“Just look at yourself!” Dino encouraged her, taking a little mirror from the wall and holding it in front of the little girl.

“No, no, I do not want to see it!” she cried out. In the same moment she had pulled her hair back again over her eyes, and on her forehead appeared a lot of wrinkles.

“Don’t get so excited!” said Dino, putting back the mirror. “But I am awfully glad to know a way to help you. I shall do it every day, but you must promise to come regularly. I am sure you’ll forget everything else that worries you, and in the end you’ll forget about it and so be gay again.”

Cornelli shook her head. “No, you can’t prevent it from getting worse,” she said, covering her forehead with more hair. However, she took Dino’s hand as a promise to come again, for she had enjoyed her visit very much and was looking forward to repeating it.

From that day on, Cornelli wandered over to Martha’s little house as she had always done. The old woman cried with joy when she heard the child’s merry laughter after all that time, for it had been a great grief to her to see the bright child so terribly changed. She loved to leave the children by themselves, for then they always seemed to enjoy themselves best. From time to time she heard their happy laughter; it thrilled her with joy, and she never wanted to interrupt it. She had seen how Cornelli behaved when listening to one of Dino’s stories; the little girl was as eager as if she were experiencing it all herself. In her burning zeal she would fling back her hair, her eyes would sparkle as in days gone by, and a brightly laughing face would regard the story teller. Everything else was forgotten for the time; but if something reminded Cornelli of her own life and troubles, all sunshine was suddenly gone from her face, her forehead clouded up, and the horrible sticky hair was again hanging over her eyes.

So Martha always tried to leave the children undisturbed. She had many hopes for Cornelli on account of this daily intercourse with the charming boy, whose clear brow was never troubled and who could so quickly drive away the clouds from his friend’s face.

As soon as Cornelli left the little house and was approaching her own garden, everything changed back to the old condition. Martha, looking after the child, could always see the fearful looking hair that so strangely disfigured the little girl’s pretty face. Then she would sigh deeply and would say to herself: It seems like a disease, but who can help her? Oh, if our blessed lady had seen her child so terribly disfigured!

Cornelli was very much surprised when she found that Saturday evening had come again, for the last two weeks had flown by very fast.

She ran through the garden. Under the plum tree lay the last fully ripened dark gold plums. Cornelli picked them up; they were really splendid, but they had given her no pleasure that year. She took them with her and put them on Martha's table.

"Oh, what fine yellow plums! I am sure they taste as sweet as honey," exclaimed Dino. "Are they from your garden? When the sun shines on them in the morning, all the branches seem to sparkle with reddish gold like a Christmas tree."

"Yes, they are from the tree. Do you want to eat them?" asked Cornelli.

"With pleasure. But you must eat some, too," said Dino.

"No, I don't want to," Cornelli replied. "Just try whether they are good. If you do not like them, you can leave them or give them to the birds."

"Oh, but there is nothing that tastes as sweet and splendid as these golden plums!" cried Dino, while he was slowly eating one after another.

"What a shame! I wish I had known how much you like them; you really ought to have told me," Cornelli said. "There are none left on the tree and they are the last that were lying on the grass. But very soon we'll have the best juicy pears—they are perfectly delicious, I think, even better—and then I'll bring you some every day."

"Yes, it certainly would be great to have a pear feast with you every day," said Dino, looking admiringly at the last reddish plum before he ate it. "It is easy enough for you, Cornelli. You can stay right here under the pear tree, but I have to go away. I'll have to spend my time behind the school house walls, regretting all that I have lost."

"But you are not going away," said Cornelli with dismay.

It had never occurred to her that this happy companionship could ever end.

"Yes, I have to. If I could, I would stay here much longer with our good friend Martha. She is better than anybody I know except my mother, and she takes care of

me as if I were a silkworm."

"Yes, and when you go, everything is over," said Cornelli, speaking as if Dino were her enemy. Her eyes glowed at him from under her hair and she seemed to be accusing him of some bitter wrong. She now turned away, as if to say: Now I do not want to hear of anything more. But Dino understood her sudden anger.

"No, Cornelli," he said soothingly, "just the opposite will happen. It is not over at all, because it has only just begun. I have planned with Martha to-day that I shall come again next summer and the summer after and every year after that, till we are both old and gray."

But Cornelli only saw the immediate future before her and what was going to happen now; she could not look so far ahead.

"Yes, but it is so long till next year, that you are sure to forget all about me a hundred times," she said crossly, as if she were chiding her companion.

"No, I won't do that," said Dino quietly. "I won't forget you once, least of all a hundred times. I'll prove it to you, Cornelli. Let us still have a good time together and enjoy the four remaining days that I can stay here. Let us look forward, also, to the time when I shall come again. Just think how much the kid will have grown by then! We shall be able to drive together. I'll be the coachman and you'll be the lady in the carriage. That will be splendid!"

But Cornelli could no longer be really gay. She always saw the moment before her when Dino had to say good-bye, and when all their fun would be over. The morning really came fast enough when she had to take leave of him in Martha's cottage. After Dino had driven away, Cornelli buried her head in her arms and cried piteously. Martha, too, was heavy of heart, and sat beside her, crying quietly.

That same evening when dinner was done and Cornelli got up from table to leave the room, the cousin said: "You have not said a single word to-day, Cornelli. You seem to get worse instead of better! Ought your father find you worse on coming

home than when he left?”

“Good-night,” said Cornelli hoarsely, and left the room without once looking up.

“There is nothing to be done with her; you can see it for yourself, Betty. You have thought that we could still produce a change for the better,” said Miss Dorner, after Cornelli had shut the door behind her. “What have we accomplished with our best efforts? We have tried hard enough for her father’s sake. How terrible it will be for him to live alone with her again! Instead of cheering his lonely life, she will only cause him worry and trouble. And what a sight she is! Have you ever seen an obstinacy equal to hers in all your life?”

“No, never,” replied the friend. “It actually seems as if all the helpful words we have spoken had the opposite effect with her. Whenever we told her how terrible she looked, the disfiguring hair fringes always seemed to get worse. I should like to know what one could do to break her stubborn will. Maybe great severity would do it or bringing together Cornelli and other children; they might cure her by laughing at her.”

“I do not believe so, for nothing seems to help,” Miss Dorner concluded. “My cousin himself, when he comes back, shall decide what to do with her. But I know that one thing is certain: whatever will be done, she will never be a joy to her father.”

CHAPTER VII A NEW SORROW

Autumn had come, and all the fruit trees in Mr. Hellmut’s garden were laden with gorgeous fruit. Bright red apples and golden pears were shining through the green branches; dark blue plums, honey sweet, fell here and there from the deeply weighted trees. Whoever passed the garden had to stand still and look, full of wonder, at this great abundance, and many a person was tempted to leap over the hedge and get one of the golden pears as a prize.

Cornelli, staring in front of her, was sitting on the bench under the hazel nut tree. Matthew was just approaching from the stable; he wore his best coat, and one could see that something special was going on.

“Do you want to come with me, Cornelli?” he asked, walking over to the bench where she was sitting. “I am just going to harness the horses. Your father is coming at eleven o’clock and I am going to drive down to the lake to meet him. Come with me! Our brown fellows will be sure to trot well, for they have had a long rest. Come along! It will be fun, I know.”

Cornelli shook her head.

“No?” said Matthew with disappointment. “I was sure you would not let slip a chance of driving gaily out into the bright morning to meet your father. Shall I get you down some pears? No pears, either?” Matthew went away, shaking his head. “If our master only had half a dozen boys and as many girls, how nice it would be here on the place. Then such splendid pears would not be hanging sad and forgotten on the trees.” Then he added, in a murmur: “Not even to care about driving with such horses!”

Soon afterwards, Mr. Maelinger arrived, for it was time for Cornelli’s lessons. Most of the time the teacher sat beside his pupil shaking his head. He really needed all his patience to endure the total indifference she showed in all her tasks. To-day it was again the same.

The two hours passed, and the carriage which was bringing home her father had just driven up in front of the house. Mr. Maelinger was filled with astonishment, for his pupil, instead of jumping up happily and running away to greet her father, looked shyly through the window and did not budge.

“You can go, Cornelli; your father is here! We have finished our work,” he said, and with these words departed.

Cornelli had heard her father coming into the house and had heard the ladies’ joyful

words of welcome. She crushed a tear that had begun to trickle down her cheek and went over to the room where her father had just entered.

“How are you, child? Have you come at last?” the father called gaily to her. “But how strange you look, Cornelli!” he went on with a changed voice. “What is it?” Cornelli had silently given him her hand and was shyly looking down.

“What has happened to you? How odd you look! I hardly know you any more! Push away all that gypsy-like hair from your face! Why don’t you look at me pleasantly? Why do you keep looking away? For months I have been looking forward to this home-coming to my little daughter, who, I had hoped, would have gained much. So this is the way I am to find you, Cornelli.”

Full of sorrow and anger, the father was gazing at the little girl. She had turned away and had not said a word. Her face, half hidden by the horrible hair strands, seemed to be covered by a gray cloud which threatened to break out in a violent rain.

“We shall talk it all over later, Frederick,” said the cousin. “Let us first enjoy and celebrate the happy hour of your return and let us keep all troublesome thoughts away.” With these words, Miss Dorner led her cousin to the dining room, where the table was festively set with all the good dishes Esther knew were her master’s favorites.

The Director’s thoughts, however, were so troubled that even the festive meal could not dispel them. He barely touched the food that was offered, for he could not take his eyes off his only child. She sat in front of him with bowed head, and only now and then looked up at him, quite shyly. The meal did not go through in a very festive spirit. It was noticeable that Mr. Hellmut had to force himself to the few words he spoke. His thoughts were elsewhere and were of a very disturbing nature. He got up from the table, as soon as possible, and hurried away.

“He is going over to the works,” said Miss Dorner to her friend, following him with her eyes. Cornelli, too, had left the room as soon as her father had gone. “I think it

has upset him more than I thought it would. He has to give vent to his excitement a little, and I hope that seeing the workmen over there will help him to get over his impression. I hope he will hear there many new and pleasant things—of much work and good business. It is hard for him to carry on his endless work for the sake of such a child, don't you think so? But it can't be changed."

After a while the Director came back again. He did not look much soothed or pleasantly surprised by what he had just heard. The ladies now sat down again to drink a cup of coffee with him.

"They have spoiled many things for me over there," said the Director, sitting down beside them. "Even if it should mean considerable loss, I can bear it, but I cannot stand the way Cornelli has changed. What a frightful sight she is, and how dumb and stupid she has grown. She did not show the slightest sign of pleasure at my coming and has not said a single word since then. She has hardly even looked at me and only sits there as if her existence were a real misfortune—I cannot stand it. What has happened to the child?" In his excitement Mr. Hellmut jumped up and paced about the room.

"Nothing has happened to the child; at least, we know of nothing, do we, Betty?" said Miss Dorner. "We have both tried to teach her good manners, for we found that she lacked them sadly. We did it chiefly on your account. Sorry as I am to say it, Frederick, I have to tell you that the child's disposition is so terribly obstinate one can hardly do anything with her. The more we fought against it and tried to bring her on the right path, the worse it got and the more she would insist on having her way.

"What have we not said against this terrible disfigurement! And all for nothing! The more we said, the more Cornelli would pull her hair into her eyes. So I gave it up, for I saw that only physical punishment would help in such a case and I wanted to leave that to you; I did not come into your house for that. I do not even dare to decide if that would help. I have really never in all my life seen such a stubborn

child. I shall certainly admire anybody who can bring her to rights."

The director had marched up and down the room with restless steps. Now he suddenly stood still.

"But good gracious!" he exclaimed, "there must certainly be a way to help a child of ten years. Are there no means except chastisement to bring up a young creature like her? What an abominable thought! I will not believe such a thing! Can you give me no advice? What could I do? Ladies surely know how to educate a little girl. Something simply has to be done right away. I am to blame for my neglect and for leaving her too long in the wrong hands. Oh, what would my Cornelia say if she could see her child?" Mr. Hellmut threw himself down in his chair and put his hands before his face.

"Please calm yourself, Frederick! It is not your fault at all, for you can't fight against her disposition," the cousin said soothingly. "We have thought of a way of helping the child. You might send her to a boarding school in town where there are a great many children and young girls. Children often help each other by rubbing up against one another and by noticing each other's faults and mistakes."

"Do you think that this might help Cornelli?" asked the father doubtfully. "Cornelli is not used to being rubbed against and laughed at."

"For that reason it would make a still deeper impression on her," answered the cousin. "You can believe me when I say that this may be the only means to break her obstinacy, and I am not sure that even this will help. If such a school can't break her will, nobody on earth can reform her; you can believe me, Frederick."

"She is still very young to be sent away from home," said the father, full of pity. "But I fear that you are right. She could not get better here, only worse, and so it will probably have to be. Do you know of a boarding school you could recommend?"

The cousin answered that she knew of one, and offered to take the necessary steps as soon as she was again at home. Miss Dorner hoped in vain that her cousin's humor

would change and that he would become again the merry and sociable companion of old days. He tried with all his might to be entertaining when they met at table; but he always had to glance at his little girl, who sat at her place dumb and seemingly afraid even to glance about her. A deep shadow always came across his features, and one could see that it was hard for him to mingle in the general conversation.

Miss Dorner at last had enough of his unfriendly attitude. As a last means to break it and to shake him up a little, she said to him on the third day after his arrival: “It seems to me, Frederick, that you are too much occupied even to remember your duties as a host. We are thinking of going back to town. Are you willing?”

“I understand your decision absolutely,” Mr. Hellmut answered politely. “You are right in telling me that I am the most unpleasant host that could be found, but I hope you understand that the change in Cornelli has spoiled everything for me and has only filled me with the thought of how to help her. I hope very much that you will visit my house again at a pleasanter time. You can order the carriage whenever you want it.”

The cousin had not expected this answer. “You go entirely too far, Frederick,” she said angrily. “How can a man sacrifice everything and change all his ideas for the sake of such a child?”

“You seem to forget that it is my Cornelia’s and my only child,” answered the Director. “But we shall not talk about it any more, because we could not understand each other. I am so grateful for your goodwill that I do not want to cause you any anger at the end.”

Two days later the carriage stood before the door. Both ladies stepped in and Mina stepped in after them. The latter had known so well how to make herself liked by them that they were taking her to town, for Mina had wished to become a maid in the city to get away from country people. One of the ladies was to take her as chambermaid, but it had not been settled yet which of them would do so.

Esther was terribly indignant because Mina was leaving a good house for no reason whatsoever. Since Esther had been managing in the Director's home she had always felt the honor of the house to be her own. Full of resentment, she was standing behind her master, who was shaking hands as a last farewell.

Miss Mina was looking towards the other side, where Cornelli stood: "Won't you even give me your hand? This is not very friendly of you. That is just the way you are," she said to the child in a low voice.

Now Esther broke forth: "Miss Mina," she called out as loudly as she could, "please be so kind as to tell the ladies on the trip who left the dusty marks on the sofa by standing on it. They were not from a child's shoe."

Mina blushed a deep scarlet and Miss Dorner, full of astonishment, looked at her glowing face. She expected a fitting retort, but none came.

"Go ahead, Matthew," Miss Dorner ordered excitedly. She did not desire a further explanation.

Mr. Hellmut had moved away.

Cornelli now took Esther's broad hand inside both her own and pressed it hard. A ray of joy flitted over her features, the first after a long, long time. "Oh, I am so glad that you said that, Esther; I am more glad than you can think," she said eagerly. "If you had not said that, they would have thought all their lives that I had done it and denied it. But how does Mina know who did it?"

"She knows, because she did it herself," Esther replied.

"Oh, oh! So she did it with her own feet," Cornelli exclaimed. "It is better that she has gone then. We'd rather be left alone here, wouldn't we, Esther, just you and I?"

"Yes, indeed," said the cook, full of satisfaction. "Just tell your father that I do not mind double work, but that I do mind deceitful ways."

Cornelli had not spoken to her father since he had come back. She was shy before

him, because she realized that the sight of her displeased him. She was, however, quite sure that she could never change and always had to be like that. She was also certain that he would only abhor her more if he ever found out what was hidden under her locks of hair. She therefore went slowly and hesitatingly towards his room in order to give him Esther's message. In former times she had always run to him gaily, whenever she had something to tell him. Since then things had changed.

"It will never again be that way," she said to herself. The thought seemed to weigh so heavily on her that she suddenly stood still. At that moment her father opened the door in front of which she stood. "Oh, here you are, Cornelli," he said delightedly. "Did you want to pay me a little visit? We have really hardly seen each other. Come in here! I was just going to get you, for I want to speak with you."

Cornelli entered, not saying a word and avoiding her father's glance.

"Come, Cornelli," he said, leading her through the room and sitting down beside her. "I have something to tell you that will make you very happy. You have changed so much during my absence and so little to your advantage that something has to be done for your education. It is high time. I shall take you to a boarding school in town, where you can be with many other children and young girls. You will have the chance to learn many things from them and to make friends with many. You will be sure to change there, then you can return to bring your father joy. I cannot enjoy you now, for I do not know what ails you. It may be better after you get some education. I expect to take you away next week."

Cornelli's face became snow white from sudden terror. First she uttered no sound, but soon she burst into violent tears.

"Oh, Papa," she sobbed, "leave me at home! I'll be good. Oh, don't send me to town to so many children! Oh, I can't, I can't. Oh, Papa, don't send me away!"

Mr. Hellmut could not bear to see Cornelli's tears and still less to hear her supplications. "But for her own good it has to be," he said to himself to strengthen

his resolution. Cornelli's lamentations were too much for him and he rushed away.

Several hours later, the time had come for supper and he returned from the iron foundry.

Esther came to meet him: "Oh, I am glad that you have come, Director," she said excitedly. "When I went up to Cornelli just now she was crying. I wanted her to taste some of the little plum cakes she usually likes so much, but the poor child only shrieked: 'Oh, leave me here, leave me here!' Oh, Mr. Hellmut, what if Cornelli should get sick and die?"

"Nonsense, Esther," he returned; "children do not die from obstinacy."

The master of the house had tried to speak harshly, but he did not quite succeed. He ran straight upstairs to Cornelli's room and saw the child on her knees in front of the bed. Her head was pressed into the pillows and she cried as if her heart was breaking.

"Oh, don't send me away, don't send me away!" she cried as soon as he entered.

He saw that Cornelli was trembling all over from fear and excitement. "I cannot endure this," he said to himself, and seizing his hat ran out of the house.

Martha was sitting in her peaceful little chamber, busy with her mending and thinking about Cornelli. She was wondering what would happen now that she was again left alone with her father. She wondered if the old days would come back, or if something new was going to be done for Cornelli's education. The door was suddenly flung open and Mr. Hellmut entered.

"Oh, Martha, I do not know what to do," he said to her in a perturbed manner. "You simply have to help me. You knew my wife and you know my child and love her; and besides, she is attached to you. Tell me what has come over her. Since when has she been so frightfully stubborn? Was the child always that way, or has she only grown more stubborn lately? Have you noticed how she has changed in my absence?"

“There is nothing so very much the matter with Cornelli, Mr. Hellmut. Cornelli is not an ill-natured child, I am sure of that. But won’t you take a seat, Director?” Martha interrupted her speech, placing a chair now here and now there for her visitor, who was running excitedly to and fro. But he refused, for he was too restless to settle down.

“It was really a very abrupt and sudden change for the child, and it was hard for her to have everything so different all at once,” Martha said. “Even an older child might have become shy under those conditions, and Cornelli is still very young. It is hard for a small plant to have too much done for it all at once and too suddenly; it has to have time to develop, and the better the plant the more carefully it should be tended.”

“I hope you are not trying to insinuate that it was not good for Cornelli to at last get into the right hands,” said Mr. Hellmut, standing still in the middle of the room. “I have to reckon it as a great blessing that she was thrown with ladies of culture and refinement, who could awaken in her everything that was good, noble and fine, and could teach her many things. My Cornelia would have done this herself, above all others, for she was in all those things the most striking example. The child has not a trace of her, not even in her looks; everything is lost that used to remind me of her.”

“Oh, Mr. Hellmut, if I might be allowed to say anything else, I would only add one word,” Martha replied calmly. “I have always found that a little love goes further than many good rules. I know that a young child can be frightened by harsh words more than grown-up people realize. Afterwards they cannot understand the cause of the shy behavior which is the result. Cornelli has not lost her mother’s eyes, only one cannot see them under her hanging fringes.”

“Yes, that’s it, Martha, this horrible disfigurement, this obstinacy which holds fast to it all. The shy, spiritless manner, the absolutely changed ways of the child hurt and worry me so. It takes away all my joy and all my courage and paralyzes all hope for

the future. It has absolutely spoiled my life."

The visitor had gotten more and more stirred up as he went on. "So I shall help her in the only way I know of: I shall send her to a boarding school. I just told her about it and she acted as if she were absolutely desperate. I simply cannot look upon her terrible despair. I actually feel as if my Cornelia could have no peace in Heaven if she heard her child's supplications."

"Oh, Director, if you could only keep Cornelli at home for a little while, so that she could calm down," Martha said humbly. "Cornelli has had to go through so many new experiences lately that it would be good for her to stay quietly at home for a while. In the meantime you could get her more accustomed to the idea of leaving home, so that it would not scare her so dreadfully. I promise to do all I can too, Mr. Hellmut. I will tell her pleasant things about the school and the nice children that she might meet there."

"That is a fine idea, Martha," Mr. Hellmut said, a little more calmly. "Please do all you possibly can to make the idea pleasant and desirable to the child. Do not forget, Martha, that you are my only help."

After these words Mr. Hellmut went away.

"Oh, the good kind Director!" said Martha, following him with her eyes. "What help can old, stupid Martha be to him, I wonder. But I shall certainly do whatever I can."

Arrived at home, Mr. Hellmut went straight up to Cornelli's room. She was still kneeling at her bed in the same attitude, and still crying bitterly.

"Get up, Cornelli, and stop crying," he said. "I meant well with you, but you did not understand me. You shall stay at home for the present; later on you may feel differently about it. You can go to Martha to-morrow. Listen well to her words, for she is your best friend."

Cornelli could not have heard a more consoling word. It sounded so hopeful after all the horrible news about going away.

“Can’t I go to Martha right away?” she said longingly.

“Yes, you can, Cornelli,” replied her father, “but you have not eaten anything yet.”

“That does not matter,” said Cornelli, already running down the stairs.

At last Cornelli was running again. She flew quickly up the little stairs and into Martha’s room.

“I have to go away, Martha, but not right away. Papa says that I have to go,” the child called out on entering. “Papa told me to come to you; I think it was because I cried all the time and he wanted me to stop. But I won’t stop, unless you promise to help me to stay at home. I do not want to go to all the strange children. I couldn’t stand it; oh, no, I couldn’t! Oh, it would be dreadful. Please help me, Martha, help me!” The terrible fear in Cornelli’s voice and the sight of her swollen eyes went straight to Martha’s heart.

“Come and sit down on your little stool the way you used to in the old times, Cornelli,” she said lovingly, “and I’ll tell you something that will help and console you. It has helped me, too, and still does when trouble comes. You see, Cornelli, I once had to go through a terrible sorrow just as great as yours is to-day. I had to give a child I loved back to God. So I cried, as loudly as you are crying and even louder: ‘No, I can’t do it, I can’t!’ The more I fought against it, the more terrible I felt, till in the end I even thought I should despair. So I cried out in my heart: ‘Can nobody help me?’ And then I suddenly knew who could do it. I knelt down and prayed to God: ‘Oh, give me help, for thou alone canst do it!’”

“Can I stay here if I pray like that, Martha? Will God help me right away?” asked Cornelli eagerly.

“Yes, He will surely help you the way He knows is best for you, Cornelli. If it should be good for you to go away and you ask your Father in Heaven for help, He will bless your life away from home, so that it won’t be as hard as you have feared. If you pray to Him, you will get the firm assurance that nothing will be hard for you,

because you have His help in everything you do. God is sure to ordain everything in such a wise way that happiness will come to you in the end."

"Did you have to give Him your child after all?" Cornelli wanted to know.

"Yes, God took it to Himself," Martha answered.

"And could you get happy again, Martha?"

"Yes, yes. The pain was very great, but I was consoled by the thought of my child's peace. I knew how many ills he had been spared. God gave me the assurance that He meant well with both of us. With that thought I could grow happy again."

"I want to go home, now," said Cornelli, suddenly getting up. It seemed as if something were drawing her away.

"Yes, go now, child, and think of what I told you!" said Martha, accompanying her.

"Yes, I will," said Cornelli. She ran home quickly, because the desire to get to her room was urging her on.

Cornelli had never prayed so earnestly and heartily as she did that day. Kneeling beside her bed, she confided all her sorrow to her Father in Heaven, and begged Him to make her happy once more.

CHAPTER VIII A MOTHER

When Mr. Hellmut sat down to his coffee in the morning he always found letters and newspapers on the breakfast table.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed on the morning after the ladies' departure, "what correspondents have you in town, Cornelli? Here is a letter for you."

Cornelli, looking up from her cup, glanced incredulously at the letter.

"It is really for you. Listen! Miss Cornelli Hellmut, Iller-Stream, Iron Foundry," the father read. "Here it is!"

Cornelli opened the letter under great suspense and read:

DEAR CORNELLI:

Only think! I am ill and have to lie in bed. The doctor has forbidden me to read and write, so this letter will be very short. It is very tiresome to be sick, for my sisters are in school all day. Mama always has a lot to attend to and Mux is still a very useless little fellow. Could you not come here and pay me a little visit? I should love to see you and should enjoy hearing all about Iller-Stream. You could tell me all about good old Martha, whom I love nearly as much as a grandmother, about your little kid and Matthew, the horses and everything else, and especially about yourself. I always had such a good time with you that I should be terribly pleased if you came to visit me. Please come very, very soon! Your faithful friend,

DINO.

When Cornelli was folding up the letter again, her father said: “Can I read it, too?”

Cornelli promptly handed him her letter.

“What friend is this that wants you to come to visit him?” the father asked with astonishment. “I expect you to cry immediately, though, for you might have to go to town.”

“Oh, no, Papa, I really would love to see him,” said Cornelli. “It is Dino, who stayed with Martha this summer.”

The father put down his spoon from pure surprise and looked wonderingly at his daughter.

“How strange you are, Cornelli!” he said finally. “Now you suddenly want to visit a strange family. You only know this boy and you do not hesitate about it and are not even shy about appearing in your present condition.”

“Dino knows me well and knows that I would come to see him alone. He will arrange everything for me so that I won’t have to see his mother or his sisters. He

knows everything," was Cornelli's explanation.

"That has no sense at all," the father said curtly, and gathering up his papers he went away.

Soon afterwards he entered Martha's little house.

"Here I am again. I wonder what you will say to me?" he called to the surprised old woman. "Here is a letter with an invitation which came for Cornelli to-day. It is from a boy who stayed with you. Who is he? Who are his parents?"

This question made Martha fairly overflow with praises of the boy. She told Mr. Hellmut that she had never known a boy who was so polite and friendly to simple folks as this boy had been; he had been well brought up, had the most refined and charming manners, and was well educated, and at the same time so simple and childishly devoted to old, plain Martha. She had never read letters like the mother's letter to her son, so beautiful, affectionate and elevating. He had always read them to her, and she had had to cry every time from sheer emotion. She had never before seen as beautiful linen as the boy had worn, and it had all been his two sisters' work.

"Martha," the Director finally interrupted her, "according to your account, it would be a great blessing for my daughter to spend even a day in such a family."

"If you would really take her there, Director, I certainly would be happy—ah! I would not know a greater happiness."

Martha had to wipe her eyes, she was so stirred.

"You shall know it, Martha. We'll go tomorrow, and on the same evening you shall hear an account of all that happened." With these words the Director seized her hand, and after shaking it heartily, departed.

"Get everything ready, Cornelli! We are going to town to-morrow," he called to his daughter, who sat on the garden bench quietly thinking. "Esther shall call you early, at six o'clock."

“Indeed, I shall,” came Esther’s voice through some open window. She was a good sentinel, for she always seemed to know what was going on in the house and its immediate neighborhood.

Early next morning the two shiny brown horses were trotting down the valley. They had to go for four full hours, but that seemed a pure pleasure to them; the longer they ran, the more spirit they seemed to get, and Matthew had to keep them from galloping all the time.

In her corner Cornelli meditated as to how she could tell the maid at her arrival that she wanted to visit no one but Dino, and wanted to be taken straight to his room. She planned also to forbid Dino to call his sisters and his mother, for she wanted to see him alone. She would pay Dino a long visit and then steal quietly away without being noticed. She was also reflecting about everything she wanted to tell her friend. First of all, she had to tell him that the news had at last come out regarding who had been standing on the sofa. She had told him all about this deep grief she had borne for so long.

So they came to town much sooner than Cornelli had ever thought possible. The carriage was already halting before the hotel where her father usually stopped, and Cornelli jumped down.

“Shall I come back again in four hours, Papa?” she asked. “I can find my way alone, for Dino has described it to me.”

“Stop, stop! That is not the way; I am coming, too,” the father said.

Cornelli was quite sorry not to be able to start off alone, for that had been her plan. Now everything was quite different.

As Dino had written his exact address in his letter and the Director knew his way about town very well, they passed quickly from street to street till they reached a narrow little lane. Here stood the house they had been seeking. When finally four high stairs had been climbed, the Director stood on the highest narrow step where

the door took up half of the standing room.

“If the inhabitants correspond to their dwelling place, we shall probably not remain here very long,” he said, looking up doubtfully at the inconvenient entrance.

“Dino does not correspond,” said Cornelli quickly. She had not quite understood her father’s words, but felt them to be an attack on her friend.

“Climb up there, Cornelli, and pull the bell-rope!” he commanded. “When the door is open I’ll probably find room to stand there, too.”

Cornelli obeyed. A slender girl a good deal taller than Cornelli opened the door and looked with surprise at the new arrivals through a pair of dark and serious eyes. Cornelli retreated suddenly.

“Well, what I see is not very dreadful,” the Director said, stepping forward.

“How do you do, child. Is your mother at home, and can I speak to her a moment?”

The girl who had opened the door was Nika. With great politeness she led the gentleman to a room and informed him that she would go at once to fetch her mother, who was with her sick brother.

Upon her polite invitation the Director followed her, and settled down in an arm-chair. He looked about him with astonishment at the small but scrupulously neat room, which was decorated with several charming pictures.

When Nika neared the door, Cornelli said to her in a low voice: “I want to visit Dino.”

“Come, I’ll show you the way,” came a small voice from behind the door. It was Mux, who had quickly hidden there to peep with curious eyes at the new arrivals. He came out and seizing Cornelli’s hand, pulled her away with him. The mother had heard the stranger’s voice and at this moment entered from an adjoining chamber.

“She does not correspond, either, as Cornelli puts it,” the Director said to himself with a smile. He rose and introduced himself. “Following your son’s summons, Mrs.

Halm, I have brought you my daughter," he said. "She can stay a few hours with her sick friend, if that suits you, and then she can join me again at my hotel."

"I am so much obliged to you for the great favor of bringing her. My son has looked forward so much to this visit. We all know and love Cornelli already from what he has told us about her. She has been so kind to him and has entertained him so well when he was alone in Iller-Stream that she has earned his and my sincere thanks. Could I not beg of you to leave Cornelli here for a few days, or at least for all of to-day?"

"You are very kind, Mrs. Halm," he replied, quite astonished to hear that his shy, unfriendly child should have furnished the boy any entertainment. "Those are just polite words," he said to himself, but aloud he added: "I am afraid that it won't be possible, for my child would not stay. She is very shy and has all kinds of peculiar habits, as you probably have noticed from her looks. Your daughter certainly looks different."

"I shall not keep Cornelli here against her will, of course, but may I hope to have your permission if the child should want to stay?"

The rector's widow had such a pleasing manner that it was hard to refuse her anything. The Director therefore gladly assented, for it was his wish as well as hers.

"Certainly, Mrs. Halm, I shall joyfully give it," he assured her. "What could please me more than to have my daughter in surroundings like these? But I am perfectly certain that Cornelli will desire to go back with me. Just the same, I want to thank you sincerely for your great kindness; it will help her to spend even a single day in your charming household."

The Director said farewell and departed. At the entrance door down stairs a school girl, carrying her schoolbag and books, ran towards him so violently that a collision could not be avoided, so the Director opened his arms wide and caught Agnes in them. Agnes always approached everything like a wind storm. She could not behave

otherwise. The Director laughed heartily and so did Agnes.

“I am sure you belong to Mrs. Halm, too,” he said, looking with pleasure at the lively face with the wide-open, bright eyes. How nice and trim everything was about her!

“Yes, indeed,” she replied quickly, and ran away.

“What a happy mother, what a happy woman!” said the Director to himself. “And to compare my child to such children. I cannot bear it! Such children, and mine beside them!”

Dino had told his mother about his experiences in Iller-Stream and especially of his acquaintance with Cornelli. He had also related to her the child’s strange trouble, but she had had to give her promise to keep it to herself. It did not seem wrong to Dino to tell his mother, because she always knew everything he knew. When the invitation had been sent to Cornelli, Mrs. Halm had seriously told the children not to make any remarks about Cornelli’s hair in case she should come. She had told them not to show any surprise if Cornelli wore her hair in a rather strange fashion and not to notice it further; that was the way the mother wished it to be.

Little Mux was very much pleased at having a new companion. He looked upon her as an old acquaintance, for Dino had talked so much about her. First he took her to see the kitchen.

“But I am sure Dino does not sleep here,” said Cornelli, surprised.

“No, this is the kitchen; there are no beds here,” Mux asserted. “But I shall show you first why Agnes cried one whole hour to-day, or perhaps it was two.” And Mux led his new friend to a whole pile of apple peels which lay in a bucket. “Isn’t Agnes stupid to cry when we get good apple tarts afterwards.”

“But why did she cry?” asked Cornelli, full of sympathy. She knew exactly what it was like when one simply had to cry.

“We don’t know,” retorted Mux.

“But why does the maid not peel the apples?” asked Cornelli again.

“There is no maid, except block-headed Trina,” Mux informed her.

“Who is block-headed Trina?” Cornelli wanted to know.

“She has to help; she is small and fat,” Mux described her. “Mama has to show her how to cook, and she has to fetch what we need and always brings the wrong thing. So Dino says: ‘We really must send block-headed Trina away.’ And then Mama says: ‘Trina has to live, too.’ And then she is not sent away after all.”

Cornelli had great sympathy for Agnes, who apparently had a secret trouble like her own; she did not have to be afraid of her, as she was of the proud sister who had received her.

“I am sure, Mux, that your other sister never cries. Are you not afraid of her?” asked Cornelli.

“Not the least little bit,” replied the little boy. “She often makes a face, though, as if she wanted to cry and a thousand, thousand times she begins to when nobody knows why. I don’t know why, either, for she doesn’t tell me.”

Immediately Cornelli’s great shyness of Nika changed into great pity. If Nika could not even talk about her sorrow, she might have the deepest sorrow of all.

“Now we shall go to Dino,” she said, hurrying to the door which the little boy had pointed out to her.

“But wait! I shall first show you our big picture book. You’ll love it,” Mux assured her. “There is something in it that looks just like you; it is an owl that has rags over its eyes like you. But you must not talk about it, because Mama has forbidden it.”

“No, no, I don’t want to see the book. Please take me to Dino now,” Cornelli urged.

Mux pulled Cornelli away from the kitchen at last and, not far from there, opened a door.

“Are you coming at last, Cornelli?” Dino cried to her. He was sitting up in bed. He glanced happily at his approaching friend, and Cornelli, too, felt deep joy at seeing him again. The hours she had spent with him had been the only happy ones she had had all summer. Quickly sitting down by his bed, she began to relate to him everything that had happened in Iller-Stream since his departure. Dino asked many questions that Cornelli had to answer, and the time went by they knew not how.

Mux had disappeared. As long as he could not have his new friend’s whole attention, he preferred to find out what was being prepared for dinner in the kitchen.

Now the mother entered the room.

“I have hardly seen you yet, dear child,” she said, taking Cornelli’s hand, “but I thought I would leave you and Dino undisturbed for a little while. You must have many things to talk over about your experiences and friends in Iller-Stream. Dino has looked forward so much to your visit. Please come to lunch now. Dino has to sleep a little while afterwards, and then you can go back to him again, if you wish.”

A difficult moment had now come for Cornelli. She had secretly hoped that she would be able to spend all day alone with Dino, and that nobody else would notice her. Now she had to sit at table with Dino’s mother and sisters. Mux, however, was her consolation; he seemed so confiding and so friendly. She had felt immediately to her great discomfort how different and how horrible she looked in comparison with these charming children. When she had stood in front of Nika, who was so very pretty, she felt sure that the elder girl must be filled with disgust at the sight of her, even if she did not show it. Mux had seen her peculiarity immediately and had remarked upon it. And now Agnes would be there, too.

That Agnes, as well as the proud-looking Nika, had a secret sorrow made Cornelli feel as if there were a bond between them. This gave her a little courage to follow Dino’s mother, who was waiting in the doorway. When Cornelli entered Agnes was standing, full of expectation, in the middle of the room. Going up to the visitor, she

shook her hand.

“I am so glad you came, Cornelli,” she said with animation. “Dino has talked so much about you that we, too, wanted to meet you.”

“I want to sit beside you,” said Mux, dragging his chair to Cornelli’s side.

“Just stay where you are! That is my seat,” Agnes cut him short. She could not be misunderstood, for she pushed back the chair and Mux quite vigorously.

The mother had again gone out to the kitchen, so he could not get her help, which made him very angry.

“Yes, yes, you always want to order everybody around all the time,” he cried out furiously, “and you even broke somebody on the wheel, once.”

Now the mother entered.

“Oh, Mama, Mux is saying such frightful things. Shouldn’t he go to bed?” Agnes called to her.

Mux was just gathering up his strength to fight against this proposed punishment, when the mother cut short their quarrel.

“No, no,” she said kindly. “To-day Cornelli is here for the first time and it is a feast day for us. Mux shall not go to bed, but he must sit down quietly in his chair and say grace; then all will be well.”

Mux was soon calmed by the soothing words and the good soup’s delicious odor which penetrated his nostrils. So he said grace in quite a tolerable manner. Cornelli had been very much touched by his desire to sit beside her. She was anxious to do him a favor, too, and she tried to think of something that might please him.

Directly after lunch Nika and Agnes had to hurry off to school again and the mother had to supervise Trina’s work, so Mux was entrusted with the task of entertaining Cornelli for a little while. That suited him exactly.

“Now, I’ll show you that Agnes has really broken a man on the wheel,” he said

triumphantly.

“But I don’t believe it, Mux. And why should the man have held still?” asked Cornelli.

“You can read it here. See, it is written there!” said Mux, placing his picture book on Cornelli’s lap and pointing to a splendid colored picture. “Read what is written here,” he directed. “Dino once read it aloud to me and then I knew it.”

Cornelli read aloud: “Agnes orders Rudolph von Warth to be bound to the wheel.”

“Now you see it,” Mux said complacently.

Cornelli did not quite know what the picture was supposed to mean, so she began to read the story that explained it. She read more eagerly each instant, for it was described so vividly that she had to consume one page after another.

“Now you know it,” said Mux a little impatiently. “Now look at the goat wagon.”

“But Mux,” Cornelli said eagerly, “it is quite a different Agnes, it is a queen. You must never think any more that your sister has done such a dreadful thing.”

“Oh, but look at the goat wagon, now,” begged Mux, a little disappointed.

“Why is the child here crying on the road? Just look how he is pressing his hands up to his eyes! Oh, he is so unhappy! Do you know why?”

Mux shook his head.

“Then I have to read it quickly,” said Cornelli. She became so absorbed in the story that she did not notice how Mux was pulling her and urging her to stop reading; he even shook the book.

The mother came into the room now and said: “Dino has shortened his rest a little, for he is longing to see you again, Cornelli. Will you come?”

Cornelli immediately shut the book, for she was extremely glad to go to her friend. She felt some regret, however, at having to leave the story unfinished; she would have loved to know what happened further.

“So you like the book? It was the joy of all my children from the oldest to the youngest,” said the mother. Cornelli’s regretful glance at it had not escaped her. “You can look at it again later on, for we still have lots of time.”

But Cornelli had to talk over so many things with Dino that the time had passed before they had thought it possible, and it was not long before Mux came running with the message that supper was ready. The meal had to be early because Cornelli had to leave immediately after it.

“Oh, what a shame!” said Cornelli, jumping up because she knew her father did not like to wait.

“Bring mother here, Mux,” said Dino, and the little one departed. “Wouldn’t you like to stay with us a few days, Cornelli? It would be so nice. Wouldn’t you like to? Oh, I think you would!” said Dino eagerly.

Cornelli had quite a strange sensation. She hardly dared to say yes; it seemed so incredible to her that everybody in the house should be so friendly to her and really want her to stay. But that probably would not last if she remained and they got to know her better. Soon the mother came in with Mux. The little boy had heard Dino’s last words to Cornelli and had already announced to his mother that Cornelli was sure to stay, because Dino would not let her go.

“Oh, I am so glad that you have settled it all between you! I am so pleased that you are going to stay, Cornelli,” she said, full of joy. “I was just going to propose it to you, and I am so glad that Dino has persuaded you. Your father has already given me his permission and all I have to do is to let him know right away. Now you can stay quietly together, for there is no hurry about supper.”

The mother immediately wrote to Mr. Hellmut, and soon after that, fat little Trina was running over to the hotel.

Cornelli had again settled down beside Dino with a mixed feeling of wonderful delight and fear. He noticed her timidity.

“Oh, yes, Dino, I love to stay with you and Mux,” she assured him. “Your mother is so good to me, too, but I am afraid of your two sisters. I have to think of poor little block-headed Trina all the time, when she does everything wrong and does not know how to do otherwise; you all despise her for it and she can’t help it. I know what it is like to be so block-headed.”

Dino had to laugh a little.

“Why do you suddenly think of our Trina?” he asked. “Do not worry about her, for mother is very good to her. Just be happy, Cornelli, and do not imagine all kinds of things about block-headed Trina.”

Cornelli did not say another word, but Dino noticed that she kept on thinking just the same. After a while the mother came to announce that it was time for Dino’s rest. The prospect of seeing each other again on the following day was a great consolation to them both.

Then Cornelli and the mother went back to the room where the sisters were sitting at their school work. Mux was bending over his picture book, hatching out new ideas, no doubt. Just then the half grown Trina entered with a basket on her arm. While she was passing Nika’s chair, her basket got caught on it. Pulling violently to free it, she turned the chair around quite suddenly.

“You are getting more awkward every day, Trina,” Nika said crossly.

Cornelli blushed. She felt as if these words were meant for her as well. She must be just as awkward in Nika’s eyes as Trina was. The latter failed to excuse herself and from embarrassment became more clumsy in her movements. Cornelli understood this perfectly; that was what she always did, she knew it quite well.

“Now we shall have supper,” said the mother, “and when the children’s work is done we shall all sing together. Don’t you sing, too, Cornelli?”

“I probably do not know the songs, and so I can’t sing,” she replied shyly.

After supper Mux fled back to Cornelli with his book. He wanted to renew his conversation with her, but his mother had a different plan.

“Give your book to Cornelli, for it is time for you to retire,” she said. “You can join us again to-morrow.”

Mux departed reluctantly.

When his mother was firmly leading him away, he was still able to call to Cornelli: “Be sure not to go till I come back!”

Cornelli felt quite frightened when her confiding little friend had gone. Now for the first time she was left alone with the two sisters. She wondered what would happen. But nothing happened. They were both so deeply occupied with their work that they did not even raise their heads. Cornelli now remembered the lovely story book. She had already begun a story and she simply had to know how it would end. So she began to read. As soon as she finished one story, a new wonderful picture would lead her to another story.

Suddenly some splendid music sounded close beside her, and Cornelli started. Agnes was sitting at the piano close to her side and playing. Cornelli could not read any more, for Agnes played one lovely tune after another as quickly and easily as if it did not cause her any trouble. She knew from Dino that Agnes was not much more than a year older than she was. She listened with admiration to the beautiful melodies that were pouring forth from the instrument. Finally the mother returned. She had made her nightly visit to Dino and had had several things to say to him.

“Mama,” Agnes called to her eagerly, “I am playing all the merry pieces I know to-night, for I have just finished my long composition.”

“You are right, Agnes. And how are you getting along with your painting, Nika?” asked the mother.

Nika replied quite sadly that she had hoped to finish it that day, but the days were very short now and she could not paint by lamp light. Her mother should see how

little her work still lacked.

“If I had one hour more of daylight, I could finish it,” she sighed.

Nika placed a large painting under the bright lamp. It somewhat resembled the beautiful pictures which decorated the walls of the room. The colors in it were perfectly wonderful, and Cornelli had never before seen such a lovely picture. Sparkling crimson roses were hanging down an old wall and dense ivy was creeping up between them with shiny green leaves. An old oak tree was stretching large gnarled branches over the decayed wall, and below, a clear stream was peacefully flowing out to a meadow, where glowing red and blue flowers seemed to greet it joyfully.

Cornelli stared at the lovely picture; she had never seen anything like this glittering stream, the painted trees and flowers; one seemed to hear the murmuring of the brook, far, far away through the meadow. It was all so full of life! And to think that Nika had painted it! Cornelli felt as if a deep, deep gulf lay between her and the two sisters, a chasm that separated her from them forever.

The two sisters seemed to stand before her like two splendid creatures, full of beauty and fine gifts, while she stood there a stupid, awkward, block-headed Trina, whom nobody on earth ever could possibly love. Mrs. Halm gave Nika great encouragement by praising her work and urging her to begin promptly next day.

Then she sat down at the piano, for they always concluded their evening with a song.

Cornelli remained still. The rector’s wife urged her to join them, but Cornelli had had too many impressions that day to be able to sing. She knew quite well the old evening song that they were singing, for Martha had taught it to her long ago, but she felt as if she could not utter a note.

At the end of the song Agnes suddenly exploded: “Oh, mother, that is nothing at all. When you are hoarse and Dino is in bed, our singing is frightful. Nika only squeaks

like a little chicken with a sore throat."

"Well, then one has to stop singing," said Nika, shaking her shoulders a little proudly.

"No, the whole household has to sing, otherwise it is not worth anything," Agnes declared. "It is a shame that the most beautiful thing in the world should be so little practiced."

After the song was ended the mother took Cornelli kindly by the hand and said: "I am sure that you are tired, dear child. I am going to take you to a tiny bedroom, for I have no larger one. Your door leads into Agnes' and Nika's room," she continued, when she was standing with Cornelli in the little chamber.

"You can open the door and then you are practically all three in a single room."

Then she said good-night cordially and wished Cornelli a good rest.

Nika and Agnes quickly said good-night, too, and then Cornelli was alone in her room.

She had no desire to open the door, for her shyness had only increased since her arrival. How high the two stood above her! Cornelli was not a bit sleepy and kept on thinking of all the things that had happened to her that day.

What did Agnes mean when she spoke about the most beautiful thing in the world? Did she mean singing? That was not the most beautiful thing by any means. The most wonderful of all was a painting like Nika's, with lovely roses and trees and the meadow with clear water. At last Cornelli's eyes closed, but she kept on seeing the flowers and seemed to be looking up admiringly at Nika, who stood beside her, tall and beautiful. Cornelli thought: If she would only say one pleasant word to me. Then Nika turned around to her and said: "You are an awkward, block-headed Cornelli!" All this Cornelli saw and heard in her dream.

Agnes said to her sister in the other room: "If only Cornelli would say something!

One cannot tell what she is thinking about. How could Dino find her so amusing, and become her friend? She sits there all the time and never says a word."

"That is her least fault," Nika returned. "But it is horrid that she insists on looking like a wild islander. I do not understand why Mama did not push the frightful locks out of her eyes."

CHAPTER IX A GREAT CHANGE

Next morning Mux had hardly opened his eyes when he desired to go again straightway to Cornelli, for this had been promised him the night before. Before he succeeded, however, he had to submit to his usual fate in the morning. He ran into the room at last, neatly washed and combed and with cheeks shining like two red apples. Cornelli was already sitting in a corner of the room, listening attentively to Agnes' playing. He flew towards her and saw his beloved book already in her hands.

"Oh, now we shall read and tell stories all day long," he called out happily. "All the others have to go to school."

But Mux had forgotten that breakfast came first of all. After the meal the two sisters departed, but Dino knocked and clamored for Cornelli to come to him. Mux loudly protested against this and only calmed down when Cornelli promised to keep him company during Dino's rest hour. He kept on objecting and murmuring to himself even after she had gone.

Cornelli was quite thrilled and overcome by the thought that anybody should love her so, and it did her more good than anything else. As soon as she came to Dino's room he asked her if she would read to him, too, for he had found out how much she enjoyed reading to Mux out of his picture book.

"Have you entertaining books, too?" asked Cornelli with hesitation. In her mind she saw her own beautiful books at home, that she had left alone because so many things in them had been unintelligible.

“I should say so! You just ought to see them,” said Dino. “Please take down the book called ‘Funny Journeys.’ There are pictures in it, too. They are not as big as in the other book and are not colored, but they are so comical that they make one laugh all the time.”

Cornelli got the book down, and in a little while merry peals of laughter filled the room. The mother, who heard, was happily smiling and saying to herself: “No, no, all is not yet lost.”

So the week passed by. Cornelli spent most of her time reading aloud to Dino and to Mux. She grew more eager all the time in this occupation, and if Mux would suddenly want to play with soldiers, Cornelli would say: “You can easily play that alone. Let me read this and later I’ll tell you all about it.” So she had soon finished reading the whole big book.

Cornelli had so far scarcely become acquainted with the two girls, and Nika had rarely spoken to her. On Saturday morning the mother entered Dino’s room just after Cornelli had finished reading such a funny tale that both children still laughed aloud at the remembrance.

“Children, to-morrow Cornelli’s father is expecting to hear from me. He will want to know if he is to come to fetch her home, or if he is to leave her here another week. Cornelli herself shall decide, but we all want her to stay.”

“Don’t go, don’t go! Tell him not to come for a long while,” Mux implored her. The little boy had slipped in behind his mother and was keeping a tight hold on Cornelli, as if her papa might come at once to pull her away.

“No, no, Cornelli, you won’t go away yet,” Dino now said. “To-morrow I am allowed to get up for the first time and you must be there to see if I can still walk. After that you must stay here till I go to school; won’t you, Cornelli? You don’t want to go, do you?”

“You must not urge her too much,” said the mother. “Maybe Cornelli would rather

go home, and by your talking you might keep her from saying so." But being urged by the two children was such a joy to Cornelli that she never even hesitated.

"I should love to stay," she said.

"Oh, how splendid!" Dino exclaimed. "Please ask for at least two or three weeks, Mama. It is so nice to have Cornelli with us."

"I shall ask Cornelli's father to let us have his daughter a while longer," said the mother, "I cannot possibly settle the time, her father will do that."

"Oh, yes, a while longer is just right. Then it is so easy to ask for a little more time, for we can say that we meant that by a little longer," said Dino.

The same day, later on, while Dino was resting, Cornelli was sitting with Mux. They were both so happy over the prospect of remaining together that Mux opened the piano and asked Cornelli to sing with him. Cornelli could not play, so promised that she would try to sing. She asked Mux to choose a song, but he knew none.

"You sing one," he proposed, "and I might know it, too."

Cornelli was just in the mood to sing once more. She began a song with her bright, full voice and Mux listened admiringly.

The snow's on the meadow,

The snow's all around,

The snow lies in heaps

All over the ground.

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

All over the ground.

Oh cuckoo from the woods,

Oh flowers so bright,

Oh, kindliest sun,

Come and bring us delight!

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

Come and bring us delight!

When the swallow comes back

And the finches all sing,

I sing and I dance

For joy of the Spring.

Hurrah, oh hurrah!

For joy of the Spring.

Suddenly the door flew open and Agnes burst into the room.

“But why didn’t you ever say anything?” she cried out. “To think of it! Why did you never say a word, Cornelli?”

“But what should I have said?” Cornelli asked, very much frightened.

“You must not be afraid,” Mux now calmed her, “I’ll help you, if she should want to hurt you.”

“Don’t be so unnaturally stupid, Mux!” his sister ejaculated as she ran to the next room. Here her mother was already standing in the open door. “Have you heard it, Mother? Come out and let Cornelli sing her song again!”

“Yes, indeed! I have heard it with pleasure and great wonder,” said the mother, approaching Cornelli. “You have a voice, dear child, that we all should love to hear again. Have you often sung before?”

“Oh yes,” said Cornelli. “Martha has taught me many songs, but—”

“What do you mean by but?” Agnes quickly interrupted her. “I know now what a voice you have. I have to go quickly to my music lesson, but you must sing a lot with me to-night. No buts will be allowed then.”

“Oh, Cornelli, won’t you sing with us tonight?” asked the mother kindly. “We know now how well it sounds, and I do not see why you should still hesitate.”

“I can’t sing properly when I am afraid, for then it does not sound well,” Cornelli replied.

“Why should you be afraid?” asked the mother. “You know us all so well now.”

“Oh, because I am not like Agnes and Nika. I can’t do anything they do and I don’t look the way they do,” said Cornelli. With these words she frowned again in the old way, so that one could see it through the thick fringes of hair that covered her forehead.

The mother said no more and went out.

“Just stay with me, Cornelli; then you don’t have to be afraid of anything,” Mux said protectingly. “I am afraid of nothing in the whole world—except of the dark,” he added quickly, for he had seen Cornelli’s penetrating eyes looking at him through her hair, and felt that he had to tell the truth, for she was sure to find him out. “No,” he continued, “I won’t be even afraid of that if you stay with me all the time.”

Agnes had finished her school work sooner than ever that day. She ran to the piano and called to Cornelli: “Come here! Mux can play alone, for we must sing now.”

So Cornelli went up to the piano.

“I shall sing the first stanza of this song and then you can sing it with me the second time,” Agnes said and began: “The beauteous moon is risen.”

“Oh, I have known that song a long time. Shall I sing the second voice?” asked Cornelli.

“What? Can you really sing second voice? Can you really do it? Oh, that would be wonderful! Go ahead and do it!” said Agnes excitedly.

So the two girls sang alone together, for Nika had not finished her work, and the regular time for the evening songs had not yet come. Agnes was radiantly happy

while she was making experiments with a new voice.

Nika was still absorbed in her work, the mother only entered the room now and then, and as Agnes was singing with her, Cornelli did not have the feeling that anybody was listening. So she sang quite freely and let her whole, full voice flow out. Agnes became more eager all the time, and it really sounded as if a whole chorus were singing in the room.

At last the mother stood still, and Nika, lifting her head from her work, listened, too.

When the song was done, Agnes clapped her hands and said: “Oh, Cornelli, your voice is as clear as a bell! Oh, if I only had a voice like that! What wonderful things I could sing then! Do you know many songs, Cornelli? Just tell me all you know.”

Cornelli looked over the song book before her. She knew quite a number of the songs in it, for Martha had taught her many.

Agnes was in raptures: “Oh, now our evening songs won’t be like a feeble chirping any more; now everything, everything will be different!” she cried out. Suddenly struck with a new idea, she ran over to her other music books.

She got a book of songs for two voices, which she had only been able to use at her music lessons and never at home, for Nika could not join her. “Come, Cornelli, try to sing after me now. This is your part, and when you know it, I’ll sing mine. Here are your notes,” she instructed Cornelli, and with that she began to sing.

Cornelli did not know the notes very well, because Mr. Maelinger had not instructed her very deeply in that subject. Her ear, however, was correct, and she could immediately repeat a melody. Agnes began with the easiest songs, and it did not take Cornelli any time to learn them. She soon knew where to pause and where to take up her part again. So a second piece was started and soon a third. Then they repeated them all again and before long they could sing three songs quite well.

“Once more, once more,” Agnes urged her. It went better every time, and in the end they sang together perfectly. Agnes jumped up from her seat and exclaimed: “Oh,

you are a wonderful Cornelli! Who would have thought it? Please do not go home yet. Stay here, and then we can sing together every day. Have you heard it, Mama?"

The mother affirmed it and told them that she and Dino had both enjoyed the singing. Dino had asked to have his door kept open, for he had wanted to hear it all.

"Do you know what we'll do, Cornelli?" said Agnes. "To-morrow morning we'll study a festive duet. We shall greet Dino with it when he comes back to this room again for the first time."

Cornelli gladly agreed.

It was time now for their accustomed evening song, which had been put off longer than usual that day. Agnes was of the decided opinion that it was not suitable to end this day with a mild evening song. She suggested a loud hymn of praise and thanks. She started it with enthusiasm, and all the others soon joined.

The unexpected joy and great friendliness Agnes had shown had made Cornelli so happy and astonished that she sat a long time on her bed in the little room. She was wondering to herself why she could never be quite happy in spite of everybody's goodness, but she knew soon enough why this was so. Her old fear had not left her. She fully realized that she looked different from other children and that her horns would get worse, till they could not be hidden any more. Then everybody would think what Mux had thought, even if they did not say it.

Next morning, when Cornelli had just gotten up, Mrs. Halm entered her room. "Cornelli," she said, taking the child's hand, "you have made us all so happy! You have done much for Dino by helping him to pass many pleasant hours, and you have entertained my little restless Mux so wonderfully that he can hardly live without you any more. I should like to do something for you now; I should love to make you look festive to-day and get rid forever of everything that disfigures you."

The mother had already begun to smooth out the child's thick hair.

"Oh no, oh no, please don't do it!" Cornelli cried out, "then everything will be lost. I

want to go home, oh, I must go home! Oh, they will all laugh at me and they won't like me any more. Oh, you don't know how it is."

"I know everything, dear child," the mother said quietly. "Dino has told me everything. Don't you know, child, that I love you? You know, Cornelli, that I would not do anything that might hurt you the least bit, or that would not help you. I want to free you from an error, Cornelli."

"No, no, it is not an error, surely not," Cornelli called out in her great anxiety. "My cousin said it and Miss Grideelen said it, too. They saw it, and I know it. Oh, please don't brush my hair away."

"Cornelli," the mother went on calmly, "the ladies told you they saw little horns on your forehead, that got bigger every time you wrinkled up your brow. You are afraid that this is really so and that it is getting worse. You understood it in a way they did not mean. They only wanted to tell you that when you frowned you looked as if you had horns on your forehead, and they said it to keep you from frowning. They meant well by you, but you misunderstood them. But you can understand me. Just let me help you to be happy again.

"Have you any confidence in me, Cornelli? Tell me, do you think that I would do anything that would make you repulsive in the eyes of everyone? Do you believe that? I know you don't, child!" Cornelli only groaned a little.

With nimble hands the mother had in the meantime kept on smoothing and combing the child's heavy hair. It already lay beautifully parted on both sides of her face. The brown, wavy hair framed a snow-white brow, for not a ray of sunshine had penetrated through the hair all summer long. The mother finished the two heavy tresses and wound them about Cornelli's head like a crown. Smilingly the mother looked into Cornelli's face. The great change had thrilled her with joy.

"Now come with me to the children. We shall see if they can notice any change," she said, and taking the little girl's hand, she led her away. Cornelli was extremely

glad to enter the room at the mother's side, for she would not have dared to go alone. When the door opened, she looked shyly at the floor.

Mux had already been waiting for his companion and now ran to meet her. "What have you done, Cornelli?" he cried out in sudden surprise. "Your forehead looks quite clean and neat, and you have shiny eyes like a canary bird, and you don't look like an owl any more."

"Why Cornelli! You are transformed!" Agnes exclaimed. "Just let me see you. Make a little room, Mux! No, I don't know you any more. It is fortunate you did it, for it is a pleasure to look at you now."

"Your mother has done it," Cornelli explained confusedly, for she was quite overcome at all these manifestations of joy.

Nika also glanced up at her. "You are a different child, Cornelli, and I do not see how you could ever have gotten the way you were."

These words were said in such a charming manner that a deep sensation of well-being filled Cornelli. She tried to fight against it, however, for she did not think it possible that she should suddenly become freed from her horrible, sickening fear.

Agnes was very anxious to practice their song for the festive reception of the newly risen Dino, and Cornelli, too, was filled with ardor. The two children kept up their singing quite a while, for Agnes could not weary of trying the songs for two voices which she had never before been able to use.

Dino did not come until lunch time. Though he was still very pale, he felt extremely lively. "Hurrah, Cornelli!" he cried out as he entered the living room. "Now you look again the way you used to in Iller-Stream when you forgot to pull your curtains over your brow. You even look better than that, Cornelli, you look perfectly splendid! Another hurrah for this great joy!"

The next moment a surprise came for Dino: the lovely festive song which Agnes and Cornelli were singing in his honor. The voice of the latter was full of purity and

strength, and Dino kept on signalling to Nika over and over again, saying in a low voice: “Do you hear it? Do you see it? Do you notice it at last?”

It was quite evident that two had not been of the same opinion about Cornelli till that day.

So they all had a merry feast. In Cornelli’s heart the feeling of delicious well-being gradually began to drive away all other sensations. Her old gaiety broke forth boundlessly and roused all the others as well to great merriment and joy. Dino looked quite well again, and his eyes fairly beamed with happiness. Even the mother joined in their gay mood, and she had to glance over and over again at her two daughters, who had seldom shown such unclouded joy. She heaved a secret sigh, however, and asked herself: I wonder how long this happiness will last, for we have hard times before us.

“Wasn’t I right, after all?” Dino said to his sisters, when Cornelli had retired and the family separated at bedtime. The sisters till now had made disparaging remarks to him about Cornelli. “We do not see what attracts you in her,” they had said. “We don’t understand how you can find her entertaining,” and so on.

When Cornelli was alone in her room that night, she felt as in a dream. What had happened to her? Was it really true that the great sorrow which had weighed on her and had taken all her joy away had forever disappeared? The mother had told her firmly that it had been an error, and the children had proved it to be so by their reception of her. So she could be happy again as she had always been. Cornelli was filled with joy and praise to God at this thought.

“How wonderfully God has led me,” she said in her heart. She remembered how anxiously she had prayed to Him to prevent her from being sent to town. Now she had come to town, but in such a different way from what she had feared! She had been freed from her trouble by going away. Martha had certainly been right and she would always try to remember this. In the future she would pray to God that she

might do everything according to His will, and she made up her mind that she would never again try to force the fulfilment of her own wishes. She felt that she owed the good Lord in Heaven especial praises, so she lay down to sleep quite late, and because of her happiness, even stayed awake a long time after her prayers were said.

"I have to tell you something, Cornelli," said the mother next day, when all the family was peacefully gathered around the supper table. "You know that I have written to your father asking him to let you stay here a little longer. He has answered me, saying that he would be very pleased if his little daughter could stay with us for a year and could take all the lessons that my daughters are taking; but he leaves you free to decide about it. So you must write to your father to let him know the answer to his proposal.

"Oh, you must stay here, Cornelli. Won't you please stay?" Dino exclaimed. "Then you can be here till summer time and we two can go back to Iller-Stream together, for it is quite settled that I am going again to our good old Martha."

"And I'll go, too," Mux said with conviction. "Do you know, Cornelli," he whispered into her ear, "I'll stay with you all the time in your own house and Dino can go alone to old Martha."

Agnes was simply enchanted with this new prospect. "Oh, how wonderful, how wonderful!" she exclaimed over and over again. "Now we can have singing lessons together and sing again at home. Oh, that is too wonderful!"

Nika also begged Cornelli to stay. "I hope you will tell your father that you intend to remain with us, Cornelli," she said. "We are only just beginning to know you well."

Cornelli's eyes sparkled with pleasure, for now the whole family wanted to keep her with them. Suddenly a thought flashed through her. When her father had threatened to send her to town for a year, she had been terribly upset, and now the year spent in town with this family seemed like pure pleasure. How different everything had been from what she had thought and feared.

“I should love to stay here!” she exclaimed with deep emotion. “Can I write to Papa now?” That suited Mrs. Halm exactly. Sitting down beside Cornelli, she also wrote to Mr. Hellmut, and both letters were sent at once.

Two days later Mr. Hellmut was sitting at the breakfast table, looking at his mail. First of all he opened a fat envelope which had come to him from town. There were two letters in it which caused him great surprise. Mrs. Halm wrote that all the members of her family had joyfully received his proposal to leave Cornelli with them for a longer stay. She told him that they had all become so fond of Cornelli that she would have left behind a feeling of real loss.

Cornelli’s letter read as follows:

DEAR PAPA:

I should love to stay here, for the mother and all the children are very good to me, and I love them dearly. I should also like to learn lots and lots of things. Nika and Agnes know so much and are so clever, and I should be so glad to learn what they know. I shall be unspeakably happy if you will let me stay. Please give my love to Martha, Esther, and Matthew.

YOUR CORNELLI.

After reading the letters, the Director shook his head. “What on earth has happened?” he said to himself. “A few weeks have hardly passed since they told me that this child could not be set to rights, and I have myself seen how stubborn she was and how strangely she behaved. And what a change already! However, I must not take literally what has probably been written in a moment of excitement.”

Mr. Hellmut was very glad about Cornelli’s intention to remain in town, for thus his greatest care had been taken from him. A lovely woman, who with her children had made a most favorable impression on him, had promised to devote herself to his child, and he only wondered how long the present arrangement would last.

Mrs. Halm had soon arranged a regular course of studies for Cornelli. Agnes was

very anxious for her to start music lessons right away, for she thought that that was the most important thing. Cornelli herself was eager to do this, for she wanted to learn everything that Nika and Agnes were learning. So she threw herself with fresh energy into all the fields of study that were opened to her.

Dino also was going to school, for he had entirely recovered. Every morning the four children started out gaily, talking eagerly while they walked down the street, until they finally separated for their various schools. If they met again on their way home, they were still more lively, for they would tell each other all their experiences. Cornelli surpassed them all in that respect. She had the talent of describing everything in such a funny and vivid fashion that she made them all laugh.

Mux alone was unhappy in these days, for he had lost his beloved companion. Full of anger, he would meet the four laughing school children when they were coming up the stairs and would say: “If I owned all the schools I would certainly burn them.”

“But I hope not all the teachers, too, Mux,” said Dino, “for then one would have to tell an even worse tale about you than you were telling about Agnes.”

The door between Cornelli’s and the sisters’ room was always open now, for they all had wished it. There was not a single evening on which they did not make use of the last moment for talking to each other about their mutual interests.

Cornelli was filled with admiration for Nika and for everything she did. She could not understand how Nika, who was so lovely and could do such wonderful things, could have a sorrow. She had never forgotten about it, because she had often noticed that the young girl suffered from some grief.

Even Agnes often stopped laughing quite suddenly. She would say: “Yes, Cornelli, it is easy for you to be jolly. It is easy for you.” So Cornelli knew that Agnes also carried a care about with her. When Agnes frowned and made dreadful wrinkles,

Cornelli was quite sure that then her sorrow was hurting her. She would have loved to help her, but she had never asked her friends about it. She knew that she had been glad when nobody had asked her about her own trouble.

One day it happened that Agnes came home from her music lesson quite upset and terribly excited. “Oh, Mama,” she called from the door, “the teacher has given us the pieces today which we have to play for our examinations. He has given me the most difficult one, and while giving it to me he said: ‘I shall really make something fine out of you.’”

Agnes was throwing her music sheets away as if they were her greatest enemies; then she ran away to her room. There she threw herself down on a chair and began to sob loudly. Cornelli had followed her, for she was filled with sympathy. Putting her arms about Agnes, she said: “Tell me, Agnes, what makes you cry. I know what it is like to have to cry like that. But why do you do it now, when your teacher has just praised you?”

“What good is that to me?” Agnes burst out. “How does it help me to play ever so well? What good would it ever do me even to practice day and night? Nika and I can only keep on one year more, and then everything is over. Then she can’t paint any more and I can’t have any more music lessons, for we shall have to become dressmakers. We won’t even have time to go through the higher classes in school. I would a thousand times rather travel through the world and sing in front of the houses for pennies—yes, I’ll do that!”

“Can’t your mother help you?” asked Cornelli, remembering the mother’s help in her own case.

“No, she can’t; and she is very unhappy herself. There is not a soul on earth who could help us, for our guardian says that it just has to be.”

Cornelli was quite crushed by this explanation, for now she understood quite well why Nika often had such sad eyes. The hopeless prospect made Cornelli’s heart

heavy, too. When Agnes had had such a passionate outbreak, she did not regain her composure for several days. Then Nika would not say a word, either, and the mother only looked very sadly at her children.

Then Dino also became silent, for he knew what tormented his mother and his sisters. He would have loved to help them, but he knew no way. So Cornelli could not laugh any more, either, and her friend's great sorrow weighed on her, too, for she had experienced a heavy grief herself and had not forgotten what it was like.

CHAPTER X NEW LIFE IN ILLER-STREAM

Winter had come. For the inhabitants of the garret lodging the days were filled with so much regular work that the nights were always greeted with loud regrets and complaints. They were always sorry when the day was done and no more time was left for their plans. Agnes was especially angry and ready to spit fire from disgust at the arrival of the hated bedtime which always broke up everything.

"We lose half of our lives in sleeping," she indignantly called out several times. "I wish you would let us sing all night long, Mother," she said. "We should only be more keen for our other work next day, if we could really devote ourselves to music for a while, instead of always stopping off in the middle whenever we are in the mood to sing." The children's mother, however, did not agree with Agnes, so the nights had to be used for sleeping as before.

Cornelli's singing delighted Agnes more and more. Cornelli sang everything as lightly and freely as a bird, and with such a clear and resonant voice that everybody got pleasure from it. There was no other voice in the whole school which was as sure and as full as Cornelli's. Even the teacher said so, and during the singing lesson he placed her right in front of him, because she was the best leader of the chorus.

In the middle of winter Mr. Hellmut wrote to Mrs. Halm to inform her that he was taking a lengthy journey to foreign parts. As he felt that Cornelli was well taken care

of in her household, he was anxious to use this opportunity for travelling. He also wrote that he had shortened his last trip in order not to tie his kind cousin and her friend too long to his lonely house. He told her that he was very sorry not to be able to pay her and Cornelli a visit before leaving, for he had to start at once.

Never before had spring come so fast. So at least it seemed to Cornelli, who was walking home alone one day from school. The winter had gone by and already a mild wind was blowing through the streets, and the melting snow was dropping from the roofs.

From the top of a roof a little bird was whistling and singing a song of delight to the bright blue sky above. Cornelli's school had been over sooner than the other children's, so she was in no hurry and stood still to listen. A ray of sunshine was flowing into the street, and the bird kept on singing and whistling, on and on, a heavenly, familiar sound.

Suddenly the lovely beech wood at home rose before Cornelli's eyes, and she saw the trees in their first green leaves, the first violets under the hedge, her beloved first violets; she saw the yellow crocuses sparkling beside the bright red primroses in the garden. The birds at home used to whistle above her in all the trees in just the same way as these in the city.

Oh, how lovely the coming of the spring had always been at home! How wonderful it would be to see all these familiar sights again! At that thought Cornelli ran to the house as fast as she possibly could. Sitting down beside her ink-well she wrote as follows:

DEAR PAPA:

I am sure it is more beautiful at home now than anywhere else. May I come home soon? I am sure that the violets are out and that everything is getting green in the woods. Soon there will be lots of flowers in the garden, and later on the roses, and then all the berries and forget-me-nots in the meadows will come out. I know now

that it is nowhere as beautiful as at home. I should love to show the mother and the girls everything, and I know that Mux would adore the little kid. Dino already loves the meadows and the garden, and I hope that he will come to Iller-Stream again. If I could only soon see it all again!

A great many kisses, from your daughter, CORNELLI.

Cornelli did not get an answer from her father for three weeks. He wrote to her that his journey had been lengthened beyond his expectation. He also said how glad he was that his daughter had suddenly realized what a beautiful home she had, but that he disapproved entirely of her leaving her school abruptly. He told her to stay in town till the summer holidays, for he was obliged himself to stay away till then. He gave her permission to invite for the holidays all the family who had been so good to her, for he and Cornelli, too, had much reason to be grateful to Mrs. Halm. There was plenty of room for all of them in the house, and he would like to have them with him all summer long.

Cornelli at first was a little disappointed that it was going to be so long before she could be home and see again the garden, the meadows and the beech wood, for her longing for them had grown more and more. But when she thought of the prospect of having all the family with her all summer, including Dino and his mother, she was so happy that all her disappointment vanished.

Her joy was supreme when that day at lunch time she gave the family her father’s invitation. On all sides she perceived signs of boundless joy. Nika and Agnes had had the firm conviction that they were to spend the summer, as usual, in the hot garret dwelling without any special holidays. And now they could spend all summer in beautiful Iller-Stream, about which Dino had told them so much. He had described Cornelli’s house and garden as a perfect paradise, and now they would live there themselves.

Agnes screamed for joy and Nika’s face was radiant with happiness. Mrs. Halm was

greatly moved with gratitude and delight. She had been worrying lately about Dino, for she had been uncertain whether she would be able to send him away long enough for the boy to be properly strengthened. She had feared that the time would have to be exceedingly short and that the benefit therefore would be very slight. Now the good God had suddenly taken all her anxiety from her and had changed it into a boundless blessing.

Dino smiled with complete satisfaction, and said again and again: “I wish you knew how wonderful it all is. Such a garden and such trees! Such a stable and such horses! Oh, how I love beautiful Iller-Stream!”

Mux called out louder and louder: “Oh, Cornelli, take me along!” He could not realize that he was really going, too. There were still many days and even weeks before their bliss would come true, but with this heavenly prospect before them the children performed their remaining duties only too joyfully.

It was different for Cornelli. Her longing for her home had grown more violent every day. Wherever she saw a green tree or a bush, she saw the garden at home, the meadows, and the flowers in Iller-Stream before her mind’s eye. So her desire to return there, to see it all again, became almost painful. She felt finally as if the day would never come when she could again see her home.

It came, nevertheless. A large trunk was taken away on a cart, and the whole family followed it towards the station. Trina came last. In her wondering eyes one could see that despite all the preparations she did not yet believe the reality of the coming journey. Cornelli had begged Mrs. Halm so urgently to let her go, too, that the child’s wish had been granted. Cornelli had been willing to take the responsibility for the unexpected guest. Mux was so excited that he kept on running in front of everybody and hindering them all in walking.

“Be sensible, Mux!” Dino exclaimed. “If you go on like that, we’ll miss the train and there won’t be any trip.”

These words disconcerted Mux to such a degree that he simply tore away down the street. Dino had to run after him to catch him, for Mux knew no road or way and had dashed ahead only in his fear of arriving too late.

At last they reached the station and entered their car. Now they were moving out into the beautiful country. The sun was shining over the fields and woods, and there was not a single cloud in the sky. Cornelli was sitting beside the open window, eagerly looking out. The journey lasted for a little more than two hours, and as soon as it was over they got out.

“Here he comes, here he comes!” Cornelli cried out, running towards the road which led into the valley. Here Matthew was just stopping the pair of horses from their lively trot.

In a moment Cornelli was at the dismounting coachman’s side, calling to him: “How are you, Matthew? I am coming home again. Is everything at home still the same?”

“Welcome, Cornelli, welcome home!” he said, radiant with joy, for his master’s child was his greatest pride. “But how you have grown, Cornelli! Oh, how changed our Cornelli is!”

Matthew shook her hand with great delight and then opened the carriage door for the family who had approached.

“Oh, here is the young gentleman from last summer,” Matthew said again, shaking Dino’s hand. “But you looked better when you were with us. Oh, yes, the young gentleman looked much better then, I think.”

“I should think so, Matthew,” said Dino. “Of course, I looked better when I could drink such good milk from the stable, in the fine, fresh morning air. It was different in town.”

Mrs. Halm had entered the carriage and the two girls had followed. Mux, gazing motionless at the shining horses, could not be taken away in a hurry from that wonderful sight.

“They are coming along, too,” said Matthew, who enjoyed the open admiration the little boy was showing. “You will be able to look at them every day, and you can ride on them to the fountain.”

That helped the situation. Everybody was soon inside of the carriage, and Trina sat beside Matthew on the coachman’s box. Now they galloped gaily along into the valley.

“Oh, mother, just look at the red daisies!” Cornelli cried out. “Oh, look at the golden buttercups! Oh, look, look; see all the blue forget-me-nots!”

Cornelli had jumped up, for she could not sit still anymore, and was looking forwards and backwards, to right and to left. The meadows had never been so full of flowers, and every few moments Cornelli cried out with delight. When the carriage drove into the courtyard, Cornelli was the first to jump down.

“Oh, Esther, how are you?” she called to her old friend. Full of dignity and covered with a spotless white apron, the cook stood ready to receive the guests.

“Oh, now I am home again! Is everything still the same? Is the garden still the way it was? And Martha and her house, too?”

“Yes, yes, Cornelli. And how are you?” returned Esther, looking eagerly at Cornelli. “How you have changed! In truth you have changed wonderfully. You are not the same.”

Cornelli was already running into the house to the living-room and to her own wardrobe. Yes, everything had remained the same. She flew outside again to the mother, to lead her into the house. The child’s face fairly beamed with joy.

Cornelli’s father was busy working in his office. Hearing the sound of the approaching wheels, he started. “Here they are already,” he said to himself. He hastily threw off his working coat and putting on a good coat left the iron foundry. While he was walking across the courtyard he sighed deeply. Freshly stamped in his memory, he saw before him his only child as she had looked when he had returned

from his journey a year ago. Cornelli had stood before him shyly, with averted glance, resembling a little savage, who had never been combed.

“I wonder what the child is like now?” he muttered to himself.

As he entered the living room Cornelli looked up at him. The Director was quite startled at what he saw. Now Cornelli flew up to him.

“Oh, Papa, oh, Papa! It is so wonderful to be home again! Everything is still the way it used to be. Oh, I am so glad to be home again!”

The father wanted to embrace his child, but before he did so he held her at arm’s length to gaze at her once more.

“Cornelli,” he said with tears in his eyes, “you look at me the way your mother used to. You have grown just like your mother,” he said, putting his arms lovingly about her. “How was it possible? How could you change in this way? How did it happen?”

“Mother knows about it, Papa. Mother has helped me,” said Cornelli, going with shining eyes to the mother, for Mrs. Halm had retreated to the back of the room.

The Director now turned to his new guest. “Welcome to our house,” he said heartily, greeting both her and the children. Holding Cornelli’s hand within his own, he continued with emotion: “How different you have brought her back to me! How did you do it? Can this be the same child that I brought you?”

The happy father had to look at Cornelli over and over again, for he hardly yet realized that this was his child. Was this really Cornelli and not a creature of his imagination? So he held the child’s hand and looked again and again into her shining eyes; it really seemed as if he could not believe it.

Esther, laden with the dinner dishes, now came into the room to set the table. She informed her master that the guest rooms were ready and that she supposed the ladies wanted to retire before the coming meal.

Mrs. Halm and her daughter gladly followed her, but Cornelli said: “Oh, Papa, can I

run over to Martha? I'll be back very soon."

Dino also begged to go, for he longed to see old Martha again. As the permission had readily been given, the two children started off. They had meant to run down the path, but Cornelli could not go fast. The meadow was so full of daisies, buttercups and especially of blue forget-me-nots, her favorite flowers, that she felt as if she had to gather them all, and Dino had to remind her that their time was short and that the flowers would still be there to-morrow.

Martha had heard that Cornelli and her guests were expected that day, so she had several times glanced towards the garden to see if she could discover trace of her or of Dino. Now both came flying up the steps, and Martha ran out to meet them. Oh, yes, here was Dino, Dino whom she knew so well, and Cornelli, too—Martha looked at the child and tried to say something. Instead of that, however, bright tears started to her eyes, and she was unable to speak.

"Oh, Martha, how I have looked forward to coming home and coming to you right away!" Cornelli exclaimed. "Are you glad, too, Martha? Oh, I am so happy!"

"I too, I too, Cornelli," Martha assured her. "What memories you bring back to me, child, for you have grown just like your mother. Oh, how different you are now from what you were. God has blessed your life in town. It seems like a miracle. Oh, how I have prayed for this!"

After these words she shook Dino's hand, looking at him rather sadly, for her great joy at seeing him again was dimmed by his delicate appearance.

"Oh, Dino, how pale and thin you look," she said. "Last year you were so much stouter."

"That is why I came again to Iller-Stream," Dino replied cheerfully. "You must rejoice with us now, Mrs. Martha, for Cornelli and I are tremendously pleased to be here again. It is just as lovely here as it was last year, and now we can come to see you every day, for this seems like home."

Martha was so moved that she could not speak. Here was Cornelli, looking as fresh and bright as ever; all the unspeakably sad expression had vanished from her face, together with the awful disfigurement of those days. The old woman was deeply stirred by the happy look in the little girl's eyes. Her young mother had looked at her just that way. And here was Dino, too, full of his old attachment, and speaking such kind words to her. She could hardly believe this great happiness.

"We have to go, now, Martha," Cornelli said, "but we'll come every day the way we used to; you know that, Martha. I'll run over every single day."

"And I, too," cried Dino. When the happy little couple were running away, Martha looked after them from her little stairway. Her eyes were moist, yet followed the two till they were lost from sight.

Even then she still stood there with folded hands.

"Oh, good God," she said quietly, "my heart is full of thankfulness. Thou hast blessed everything that was hard for the child, and hast turned everything to good."

When the children entered the house, Cornelli said: "Just go in, Dino, I'll soon follow you."

Then she turned and went into the kitchen.

"Oh, I was hoping all the time that our Cornelli could still find her way to the kitchen," said Esther with satisfaction. "Come and let me have a real look at you, Cornelli!"

Esther placed herself squarely in front of the child and said: "You have grown a lot last year, Cornelli. And your hair is so neatly combed and brushed! One certainly can enjoy looking at our Cornelli, now."

Cornelli blushed a little, for she had to remember the way she had looked when she had gone away. She knew how it had been and how she had shut her heart against the help Esther had often offered her.

“Oh, Esther, I have to tell you something. Where is Trina, the maid, who has come with them?”

“I told her to go behind the house to look at the vegetable garden,” said Esther. “She stood in my way all the time. I am afraid she is not very quick.”

“No, she isn’t; I know that. But Esther, I want to tell you something about her. Please be good to her!” Cornelli begged. “You see, Trina is block-headed and awkward, but she can’t help it. You don’t know how that is, but I know. And if you are very good to her, she won’t mind as much being that way. Won’t you do me that favor, Esther?”

Full of surprise, Esther looked after the child, who was running towards the dining room.

“How does she ever think of such things,” Esther murmured to herself. “One might think Cornelli had to begin at the bottom herself, instead of being the Director’s daughter who can have whatever she wants.”

Esther kept on shaking her head for quite a while, but she was anxious to show Cornelli that she was the only daughter of the house and could command her. She was very proud of Cornelli’s position and eager to prove to her young mistress that she was only too happy to follow her wishes.

When the first merry meal was over, the children were allowed to run out to the garden. They already knew what they were going to see there, because Dino had described it to them with great enthusiasm. He had told them about the flower garden with its wealth of color, the trellises, covered with red peaches, the heavily laden pear and apple trees. Now they could see all those wonders for themselves, including the stable with the splendid cows and the proud and shining horses. So the five children ran away with great eagerness.

The Director and Mrs. Halm remained in the dining room, drinking their coffee in each other’s company.

“Please, Mr. Hellmut,” she said, as soon as the door had closed behind the children, “please let me thank you for your great kindness. I want to tell you how grateful I am.”

“What do you mean? Why do you want to thank me, Mrs. Halm?” the Director interrupted her. “Please let me speak first! It is I who want to thank you. I shall never be able to repay you for what you have done. What wonders you have accomplished for my child! How you have been able to change and develop Cornelli! How well she looks now! I have to gaze at her again and again, for I can hardly believe that it is the same child. How can I thank you enough? How did you ever do it? And what patience, care and trouble you must have taken with her. I am afraid that it has required endless thought on your part to bring her back like this.”

“Oh, no, Mr. Hellmut, that was not the way at all,” said Mrs. Halm. “Cornelli has cost me neither patience, care, nor trouble. If by a little love I have been able to draw out the good kernel of her nature and bring it to happy development, then that is all I have done. Cornelli has never made my task hard for me. We have all become so fond of her that we had to think with sorrow of the time when she would leave us. I shall never forget what happy hours Dino had with Cornelli during his illness and how she constantly entertained my sociable little Mux with her constant merriment and kindness. Yes, Mr. Hellmut, I shall never forget what she has done, and I can assure you that you have a lovely little daughter.”

The Director jumped up in his excitement and strode to and fro in the room. What different enthusiasm from that of a year ago!

“You do not know what you are saying, Mrs. Halm,” he said, standing still before her. “You are relieving me of most dreadful anxiety. I have suffered perfect tortures, because I was blaming myself for having neglected my Cornelia’s child. I thought it was too late and that Cornelli had grown hopelessly stubborn. Now you have come and brought me back my child so that she even resembles her mother in her eyes and

her whole expression and appearance. My wife was friendly and gay, and now you tell me that this is Cornelli's disposition, too."

"I have to tell you something else, Mr. Hellmut," Mrs. Halm continued. "I am perfectly sure that a child's first impressions are very important. It is natural that Cornelli missed her mother's guidance, but she was not by any means a neglected child when she came to me. From what she and Dino have told me I am perfectly sure that Martha gave Cornelli the best one can possibly give a child on spiritual education. I esteem old Martha very highly, for she must love and understand children as few people do."

"My wife used to say the same thing, and that is why I had such confidence in Martha. Unfortunately a time came later on when I feared that she was wrong, and I did not realize what she meant to Cornelli. You have reminded me of my great debt—"

At this moment such loud laughter and rejoicing sounded from below that both stepped to the open window.

Mux was screaming loudly, and seemed quite beside himself. "Mama, Mama," he cried out, "just look at a living goat boy and a real goat! Come down and see me!"

Mux was sitting on the seat of a lovely wicker carriage, with two reins in one hand and a whip in the other, while a young and slender goat was pulling him. Agnes and Cornelli were running beside the carriage as protectors, while Dino held the goat lightly by the reins to keep her from running off. All the children were screaming with delight at the wonderful ride.

Matthew was standing beside the bushes to watch this trial trip, for he thought that his help might be needed. He had built the carriage for Cornelli and had already several times harnessed the goat so as to teach her how to behave when Cornelli returned. When Matthew had first shown the little conveyance to the children, Cornelli had said right away that Mux had to take the first ride in order to realize the

scene he loved so much in his picture book.

Mux simply screamed to his mother in wild joy. To see the wonderful spectacle from near by, she came down to the garden.

The Director also left the house, but he went another way. Not long afterwards he went up Martha's little stairway to the porch where the old woman sat on her stool mending.

"Oh, Mr. Hellmut!" she called out in her surprise. Opening the door she led her visitor into her room, for the porch was very narrow.

Mr. Hellmut entered.

"Martha," he said in a business-like tone, "I have spoiled your business by taking your boarder away from you forever. That requires a compensation, and so I have just bought your little cottage from the farmer over there, besides the little piece of ground in front of it. Now you will have more room for your carnations, and if you manage well, you can surely have some pleasant days from the rent which you save. Are you satisfied?"

"Oh, Mr. Hellmut! Is this little house really my own, now, and will I really have a garden besides? Oh, Mr. Hellmut!"

But her benefactor would not let her say any more. After heartily shaking her hand, he hurried away.

The large raspberries were peeping out between the green leaves, and the golden plums were dropping from the heavily laden branches. From morning till night on these beautiful summer days Mux fairly swam in uninterrupted bliss. Before he had even opened his eyes in the morning, he would call out to his mother in his sleep: "Oh, mother, are we in Iller-Stream still? Are we still here?" Then the hours of the day began, each more lovely than the last, and Mux could not tell which was the best.

As the boy spent most of the day in the stable, the hayloft, and the barn, his mother had been obliged to make him a special stable costume. The little boy loved to watch the milking of the cows, and he never tired of admiring the horses and the goat.

Matthew had become his best friend. The gardener constantly thought out pleasant surprises for Mux, who showed a decided taste for farming. If Matthew had to do some important work where Mux was in his way, he always devised a plan to keep the boy amused elsewhere: “Go down there to the raspberry hedge, Mux!” he would say. “The berries are finest and biggest there, because the sun has cooked them through. Go to the plum tree afterwards and wait for me!”

Mux would obey promptly, wandering over to the plum tree from the raspberry bushes, which he had lightened considerably. He then would sit thoughtfully under the plum tree, waiting till Matthew returned. The gardener then shook the tree so mightily that a flood of golden plums came rolling down over Mux, who could freely enjoy the wealth about him.

If Matthew could not be found and Cornelli and Dino were busy with their own plans and did not need him, Mux knew another friend who always gave him a good reception, that friend was Esther. He loved to find her in the vegetable garden, which was also full of surprises for him. It was like a marvel to the little boy that the green peas hung here in abundance, whereas they were only served at home on feast days. He became quite scared when Esther picked a basketful. But when he warned her, saying, “Don’t take them all, for then we won’t have any more,” she only laughed and said: “They always grow again; in a week there will be plenty more.”

If Mux looked a little timidly at the large cabbage heads, Esther said to him: “Don’t be afraid of them, Mux. If I cook cabbage, everybody else likes it so much that you won’t have to eat it at all, and you can take the potatoes which I serve with it.”

Mux often accompanied Esther to the kitchen, where he soon picked up a lot of useful knowledge. There was no pastry the exact recipe of which as well as how it

tasted Mux could not tell. In this manner he lived through heavenly days.

They were no less heavenly for the other children. Dino and Cornelli had started the large undertaking of laying out Martha's garden after their own plan. They were so busy inventing things and carrying them out that they could hardly ever be found.

Agnes struggled with Dino for first place in Cornelli's affection, but Dino was always the victor. Cornelli never forgot that he had been her first friend, who had held fast to their friendship. For this she remained faithful to him.

It was a consolation to Agnes that she could play on the lovely piano whenever she wanted to and that Cornelli was always home in the evenings, when she could sing with her. Mr. Hellmut would sit in his arm-chair while the two girls sang one song after another, and he could never hear enough. Beaming with joy, he would say to Mrs. Halm from time to time: "The child has her mother's voice, except that her mother's voice was still fuller and softer."

Mrs. Halm's face would beam, too, as she would say: "Just have a little patience, Director. You are sure some day to hear Cornelli's voice when there will be nothing more to desire in it. Her teacher's highest wish is to train her voice." For answer the father nodded and lay back in his chair smiling contentedly.

Nika, too, was completely changed. No shadows dimmed her eyes, for she could wander about all day with her paint box from one lovely spot to another, up to the beech wood or to the hill where the big oak tree stood. There she could sit on a bench and look down, over the house and garden, and far below into the wide, green valley. Nika was very happy to be able to spend all her time in painting, without ever being disturbed or called away by unwished-for duties.

When the mother saw the happy faces of her girls and Dino's improved health, she felt very happy, too. Suddenly, however, the thought would rise in her: How will it be when these lovely days are over and we have to start living again in the narrow confines of town and in the shadow of those coming years?

The holidays were nearing their end, but nobody yet had time to think of that, for the Director's birthday was drawing near and this was to be the great feast day for everybody. Mrs. Halm had asked each of the children to think out some surprise for Mr. Hellmut. For Mux, however, she wrote a beautiful birthday verse. As the little boy's head was filled solely with thoughts of the barn and stable, the kitchen and the goat cart, the plums, the beetles and ants, it took a great deal of time and trouble to fix the verse in his memory. Nika, needing no advice, had long ago decided what to do. Every day as soon as the meals were over, she silently disappeared. Agnes and Cornelli bolted the door of the music room and let mysterious songs issue from behind it. Only Dino was still undecided about his task. When he was left alone with his mother and Mux one day, and all the others were busy with their preparations, he said: "Tell me what I could do, mother."

"Draw him a picture of the beautiful goat," Mux advised. He knew that Dino could draw animals well, and to him there was no finer animal in all the world than the goat.

"What a knowing goat boy you are, Mux," Dino exclaimed. Despite his refusal to draw the goat, he had nevertheless gotten an idea from his little brother. "Oh, I'll draw the two brown horses," he called out joyously. "I'll make one trotting and the other walking. Matthew must lead them up for me."

So the boy ran happily to the stable, and after that day he and Matthew had many meetings in secret.

The birthday came at last.

When the Director entered the dining room in the morning, such a beautiful duet resounded from the next room that he was compelled to draw nearer. Agnes and Cornelli were both singing a lovely song with such deep feeling that the Director could hardly speak. When they had ended, he patted them both on the shoulder with fatherly tenderness and then passed into the next room. Here Mux approached him

and said his verse faultlessly in a loud, clear voice. On the table the Director found two beautiful drawings of his brown horses, and his joy over them was so great that he did not put them down for quite a while. But finally he saw all at once a large picture resting in the middle of the table. His house, with the surrounding garden, the luminous meadow with the view toward the valley and the distant mountains beyond, was painted in such fresh and absolutely natural colors that Mr. Hellmut was quite overcome. This was the view he had loved so passionately from his childhood.

“Cornelli, come here!” the father called. “Just look at this picture! Don’t you have a beautiful home? Do you love your home as much as your father loves it?”

“Oh yes, Papa, I love it so much!” said Cornelli. “And I have to think every day that I never knew how beautiful it was before I went away. But ever since I came home again, I know. Oh, how beautiful it looks in the picture!”

Agnes had been standing behind Cornelli. Suddenly she exclaimed passionately: “Oh, Cornelli, if only you didn’t have such a beautiful home!”

“Agnes,” the mother said in alarm, “what unseemly words are you saying?”

The Director looked in astonishment at Agnes, whose eyes were flashing fire while she regarded the painting.

“Have you had a disagreement with Cornelli? Is that the reason why you don’t want her to have such a beautiful home?” he asked with a sly smile.

Agnes flushed scarlet.

“Oh no, Mr. Hellmut, I did not mean it that way. I have never fought with Cornelli, and I only fight with Dino because he wants to have Cornelli all the time. If Cornelli didn’t have this beautiful home and if she were like me and had to give up all her music lessons and had to earn her living, we could do fine things together. She has such a beautiful voice that we could hire a harp and could travel into strange cities and sing before the houses. Later on we could give concerts and begin a singing

school. But I can't do anything alone."

At this outbreak, which no sign from her could check, the mother became alternately hot and cold from fright. Agnes' eyes still flashed with passionate excitement like burning coals.

"I approve of the singing school, but especially of sitting down to breakfast. I hope very much that we have the usual chocolate to drink to-day, for it is a good old custom for birthdays which should not be neglected. So a singing school is to be founded," he continued, while Mux gazed solemnly at the three huge cakes which were placed beside the three big chocolate pots. "The wandering harp players are a little too poetical for me, but I like the idea of a school, Agnes. As I, too, wish to profit from it, I want it to be built on my estate. Lots of our workmen in the foundry have small children, whose mothers are busy with the housework and their small babies. So Agnes and Cornelli are going to found a singing school in Iller-Stream, where all the children will go, whose mothers have no time for singing. Upon their arrival the children shall all be given a bowl of milk and a piece of bread apiece to make their voices fuller. Now we have settled all about the school. I shall also have my two teachers instructed, so that they won't ever be out of practice. I have also some work for Nika: she shall fill my house with lovely pictures from top to bottom. To inspire her with plenty of new ideas, I am going to send her to her professor in town for lessons. Dino shall help me keep my two horses in trim by giving them plenty of exercise, for that will be good for him and them. I can use Mux by having him trained to become the manager of my estate. The good beginning he has made in the knowledge of farming under Matthew's guidance shall be continued while the ground is covered with green and the trees are bearing fruit. The mother shall stay here for the protection of you all. So tell me, now, how you like my plan. Shall it be thus?"

Absolute silence followed. The children hardly dared to realize that the words they

had just heard were true, and the mother was filled with deep emotion. She could not utter a word, and tears flowed from her eyes. Could it be possible that her great sorrow and heavy cares were suddenly lifted from her? Could it really be true?

At that moment Mux said loudly: “Yes, we like it very much!” He had clearly grasped that it meant for him keeping on doing what he had enjoyed so much under Matthew’s and Esther’s care. The Director had to laugh, and continued: “I must have the reply of the chief, my dear Mrs. Halm, so please listen to my plan. I shall let you manage the children in the winter, and you shall arrange whatever they are to learn, but they must come here in the summer when I can enjoy all the results of their studies. I shall also enjoy the great advantage of having you manage my house when you are here. Does that suit everybody, or am I getting more than my share?”

At last the mother composed herself.

“Oh, Mr. Hellmut, how can I thank you?” she said, offering him her trembling hand. “I do not know how to express what is in my heart. How can I be grateful enough for such boundless kindness? You cannot know what your generosity means to us all.”

Even the children had understood that this unheard-of bliss was true. Nika was the first to run with beaming eyes to the Director and to seize his hand, but she could find no words to show her gratitude. Agnes and Dino, too, had run towards the Director, and the latter did not know how to shake all the hands that were offered to him. Mux, who could find no access to his benefactor, climbed up on a chair, and putting his arms about him from behind, screamed a thousand words of thanks right into the Director’s ears. The wild rejoicing became louder and louder.

“Cornelli,” said the father at last, “give thanks to your foster-mother! She has earned them, for she has brought joy back to our house.”

Cornelli did it with a full and willing heart, for she realized what the children’s mother had done for her. Soon afterwards, Dino and Cornelli ran away for they had

had a simultaneous thought. They did not want to wait another moment before bringing Martha the wonderful news. Nobody on earth could share their boundless happiness as Martha would.

Martha's heart overflowed when she heard what had been proposed. Between freely flowing tears she said again and again: "Oh, Cornelli! Everything has happened so wonderfully for you. God has ordained it much more wisely than we could have wished and prayed for. From now on, we shall leave everything entirely in His hands. We'll do that as long as we live, won't we, Cornelli?"

Cornelli nodded with understanding; she had not forgotten how she had complained to Martha, and how Martha had told her to seek God's help. Martha had assured her that the help would always come, even if it revealed itself differently from the way she expected. Now it had all turned out so gloriously, and so much more splendidly than Cornelli could ever have imagined!

There had never been such rejoicing in the house as Agnes started when she and Nika had retired to their room in the evening and Cornelli had come to pay her accustomed little evening visit. She skipped and danced about the room like a newly freed bird and called out: "Now our troubles are over and no secret fears can scare us any more. Now we can sing all we want and can live here with you every summer, Cornelli. Oh, we are the happiest creatures in all the world, and it has all happened through you, Cornelli; you wonderful, incomparable Cornelli!"

Agnes, seizing her friend's hand, jumped about with her in the room at such a rate that Nika had to calm her. The elder sister warned Agnes that the Director might have to repent of his kindness to them if their lengthy stay began with such violent noise. One could see, though, that Nika was willing enough to join the others in their antics.

"The day on which you came to our house, Cornelli," she said, "has really been more blessed than any other day in the year. So we must always celebrate it as a

great feast day."

Nika had lately been very sweet and friendly to Cornelli, and the younger girl had been very happy about it. But had never dreamed that Nika would ever speak to her like this.

When Esther heard that the Halm family was going to remain for the present and return every year, she said: "Oh, I am glad. That is much better than if some other people I know had to come back. It is better for me and for Cornelli, as well as for the whole house."

"Oh, if I could only come again, too!" said Trina, whose face in these days was always beaming. "Oh, one feels so happy here!"

"That is very true," Esther affirmed. "I do not see why you shouldn't. You don't need to worry, Trina. If Cornelli and I wish you well, we'll see that you come here again."

The Director did not like the thought of losing his large new family so soon, so he said one day to Mrs. Halm: "I am very anxious to prolong the children's holiday this year till late in the fall. Dino, who is more in need of his studies than the others, is least able to go back to town, because he ought to be thoroughly strengthened and made absolutely well. If it should be necessary for him to study, we have our good Mr. Maelinger, who can give him lessons." The mother agreed, for she also was very anxious to have Dino as well as possible, and she was very grateful to her benefactor for making this possible.

"There is another reason which makes a longer stay necessary," continued the Director. "As I fully intend to visit you and the children several times during the winter, I have rented a more comfortable apartment for you, because I was rather afraid of finding your tower-like dwelling a little inconvenient for me. The apartment will be ready for you in the late autumn, and I want you to get all the rest you can before you move there, for it is sure to involve some additional work for

you. I hope sincerely that you do not resent my step."

"I can only thank you continually," said the mother now. The children arrived at the same moment, and all further words from her were swallowed up in their loud and stormy manifestations of joy. Cornelli had already told them of her father's plan to let them all stay in Iller-Stream till winter time.

When all the fruit had ripened on the trees and Dino was shaking one of them and Cornelli another, Matthew looked over from the barn door, happily rubbing his hands. Right under the tree he saw the other children, one biting into an apple, the other into a pear.

"It certainly is different now from last year," he said, smiling to himself. "There is not a rotten plum or a lonesome pear in all the orchard."

Every evening, when the last songs resounded in the house, there were some of thanks and praise which rose up to Heaven like a loud rejoicing.

More than once the Director said to his little daughter, when she gave him her goodnight kiss: "Did not God mean well with us, Cornelli, when he guided Martha to write such an inviting notice to the paper?"

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CORNELLI ***

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