

understand anything of all these things. I have only to relate how they taught them to me.

When I went to my private lessons—"together with the others"—the professor was not at home; we indulged in an hour's wrestling.

When I went to my dancing lessons—"together with the others"—the dancing master was missing: again an hour's wrestling.

During the French lessons we again wrestled, and during the drawing and violin hours we spent our time exactly as we did during the other hours; so that when the gymnastic lessons came round we had no more heart for wrestling.

I did just learn to swim,—in secret, seeing that it was prohibited, and truly without paying:—unless I may count as a forfeit penalty that mass of water I swallowed once, when I was nearly drowned in the Danube. None even dared to acquaint the people at home with the fact: Lorand saved me, but he never boasted of his feat.

As we left the house of this very kind man, who quite overcame grandmother and us, with his gracious and amiable demeanors, Lorand said:

"From this hour I begin to greatly esteem the first professor: he is a noble, straight-forward fellow."

I did not understand his meaning—that is, I did not wish to understand. Perhaps he wished to slight "my" professor.

According to my ethical principles it was purely natural that each student should admire and love that professor who was the director of his own class, and if one class is secretly at war with another, the only reason can be that the professor of one class is the opponent of the other. My kingdom is the foe of thy kingdom, so my soldiers are the enemies of thy soldiers.

I began to look at Lorand in the light of some such hostile soldier.

Fortunately the events that followed drove all these ideas out of my head.

CHAPTER III

MY RIGHT HONORABLE UNCLE

WE were invited to dine with the Privy Councillor Bálnokházy, at whose house my brother was to take up his residence.

He was some very distant relation of ours; however, he received a payment for Lorand's board, seven hundred florins, a nice sum of money in those days.

My pride was the greatest that my brother was living in a privy councillor's house, and, if my school-fellows asked me where I lived, I never omitted to mention the fact that "my brother was living with Bálnokházy, P. C.," while I myself had taken up my abode merely with a baker.

Baker Fromm was indeed very sorry that we were not dining "at home." At least they might have left me alone there. That he did not turn to stone as he uttered these words was not my fault; at least I fixed upon him such basilisk eyes as I was capable of. What an idea! To refuse a dinner with my P. C. uncle for his sake! Grandmother, too, discovered that I also must be presented there.

We ordered a carriage for 1:30; of course we could not with decency go to the P. C.'s on foot. Grandmother fastened my embroidered shirt under my waistcoat, and I was vain enough to allow the little pugnose to arrange my tie. She really could make pretty bows, I thought. As I gazed at myself in the looking-glass, I found that I should be a handsome boy when I had put on my silver-buttoned attila.* And if only my hair

* The coat worn by the hussars, forming part, as it does, of all real Magyar *levée* dresses.

was curled! Still I was completely convinced that in the whole town there did not exist any more such silver-buttoned attilas as mine.

Only it annoyed me to watch the little pugnose careering playfully round me. How she danced round me, without any attempt to conceal the fact that I took her fancy; and how that hurt my pride!

At the bottom of the stairs the comical Henrik was waiting for me, with a large brush in his hand. He assured me that my attila had become floury—surely from Fanny's apron, for that was always floury—and that he must brush it off. I only begged him not to touch my collar with the hair brush; for that a silk brush was required, as it was velvet.

I believe I set some store by the fact that the collar of my attila was velvet.

From the arched doorway old Márton, too, called after me, as we took our seats, "Good appetite, Master Sheriff!" and five or six times moved his cap up and down on the top of his head.

How I should have loved to break his nose! Why is he compromising me here before my brother? He might know that when I am in full dress I deserve far greater respect from when he sees me before him in my night clothes.—But so it is with those whose business lies in flour.

But let us speak no more of bakers; let us soar into higher regions.

Our carriage stopped somewhere in the neighborhood of the House of Parliament, where there was a two-storied house, in which the P. C. lived.

The butler—pardon! the chamberlain—was waiting for us downstairs at the gate (it is possible that it was not for us he was waiting). He conducted us up the staircase; from the staircase to the porch; from the porch to the anteroom; from the anteroom to the drawing-room, where our host was waiting to receive us.

I used to think that at home we were elegant people—that we lodged and lived in style; but how poor I felt we were as we went through the rooms of the Bálnok-

házys. The splendor only incited my admiration and wonder, which was abruptly terminated by the arrival of the host and hostess and their daughter, Melanie, by three different doors. The P. C. was a tall, portly man, broad-shouldered, with black eyebrows, ruddy cheeks, a coal-black moustache curled upward; he formed the very ideal I had pictured to myself of a P. C. His hair also was of a beautiful black, fashionably dressed.

He greeted us in a voice rich and stentorian; kissed grandmother; offered his hand to my brother, who shook it; while he allowed me to kiss his hand.

What an enormous turquoise ring there was on his finger!

Then my right honorable aunt came into our presence. I can say that since that day I have never seen a more beautiful woman. She was then twenty-three years of age; I know quite surely. Her beautiful face, its features preserved with the enamel of youth, seemed almost that of a young girl; her long blonde tresses waved around it; her lips, of graceful symmetry, always ready for a smile; her large, dark blue, and melancholy eyes shadowed by her long eyelashes; her whole form seemed not to walk—rather fluttered and glided; and the hand which she gave me to kiss was transparent as alabaster.

My cousin Melanie was truly a little angel. Her first appearance, to me, was a phenomenon. Methinks no imagination could picture anything more lovely, more ethereal than her whole form. She was not yet more than eight years of age, but her stature gave her the appearance of some ten years. She was slender, and surely must have had some hidden wings, else it were impossible she could have fluttered as she did upon those symmetrical feet. Her face was fine and *distingué*, her eyes artful and brilliant; her lips were endowed with such gifts already—not merely of speaking four or five languages—such silent gifts as brought me beside myself. That child-mouth could smile enchantingly with encouraging calmness, could proudly

despise, could pout with displeasure, could offer tacit requests, could muse in silent melancholy, could indulge in enthusiastic rapture—could love and hate.

How often have I dreamed of that lovely mouth! how often seen it in my waking hours! how many horrible Greek words have I learned while musing thereon!

I could not describe that dinner at the *Bálnokházys* to the end. Melanie sat beside me, and my whole attention was directed toward her.

How refined was her behavior! how much elegance there was in every movement of hers! I could not succeed in learning enough from her. When, after eating, she wiped her lips with the napkin, it was as if spirits were exchanging kisses with the mist. Oh, how interminably silly and clumsy I was beside her! My hand trembled when I had to take some dish. Terrible was the thought that I might perchance drop the spoon from my hand and stain her white muslin dress with the sauce. She, for her part, seemed not to notice me; or, on the contrary, rather, was quite sure of the fact that beside her was sitting now a living creature, whom she had conquered, rendered dumb and transformed. If I offered her something, she could refuse so gracefully; and if I filled her glass, she was so polite when she thanked me.

No one busied himself very particularly with me. A young boy at my age is just the most useless article; too big to be played with, and not big enough to be treated seriously. And the worst of it is that he feels it himself. Every boy of twelve years has the same ambition—"If only I were older already!"

Now, however, I say, "If I could only be twelve years old still!" Yet at that time it was a great burden to me. And how many years have passed since then!

Only toward the end of dinner, when the younger generation also were allowed to sip some sweet wine from their tiny glasses, did I find the attention of the company drawn toward me; and it was a curious case. The butler filled my glass also. The clear golden-

colored liquor scintillated so temptingly before me in the cut glass, my little neighbor would so enchantingly deepen the ruddiness of her lips with the liquor from her glass, that an extraordinarily rash idea sprang up within me.

I determined to raise my glass, clink glasses with Melanie, and say to her, "Your health, dear cousin Melanie." The blood rushed into my temples as I conceived the idea.

I was already about to take my glass, when I cast one look at Melanie's face, and in that moment she gazed upon me with such disheartening pride that in terror I withdrew my hand from my glass. It was probably this hesitating movement of mine that attracted the P. C.'s attention, for he deigned to turn to me with the following condescending remark (intended perhaps for an offer):

"Well, nephew, won't you try this wine?" With undismayed determination I answered:

"No."

"Perhaps you don't wish to drink wine?"

Cato did not utter the phrase "*Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni*," with more resolution than that with which I answered:

"Never!"

"Oho! you will never drink wine? We shall see how you keep your word in the course of time!"

And that is why I kept my word. Till to-day I have never touched wine. Probably that first fit of obstinacy caused my determination; in a word, slighted in the first glass, I never touched again any kind of pressed, distilled, or burnt beverage. So perhaps my house lost in me an after-dinner celebrity.

"Don't be ashamed, nephew," encouragingly continued my uncle; "this wine is allowed to the young also, if they dip choice Pressburg biscuits in it; it is a very celebrated biscuit, prepared by M. Fromm."

My blood rose to my cheeks. M. Fromm! My host! Immediately the conversation will turn upon him, and they will mention that I am living with him;

furthermore, they will relate that he has a little pug-nosed daughter, that they are going to exchange me with her. I should sink beneath the earth for very shame before my cousin Melanie! And surely, one has only to fear something and it will indeed come to pass. Grandmother was thoughtless enough to discover immediately what I wished to conceal, with these words:

"Desiderius is going to live with that very man."

"Ha ha!" laughed uncle, in high humor (his laughter penetrated my very marrow). "With the celebrated 'Zwieback* baker! Why, he can teach my nephew to bake Pressburg biscuits."

How I was scalded and reduced to nothing, how I blushed before Melanie! The idea of my learning to bake biscuits from M. Fromm! I should never be able to wash myself clean of that suspicion.

In my despair I found myself looking at Lorand. He also was looking at me. His gaze has remained vividly imprinted in my memory. I understood what he said with his eyes. He called me coward, miserable, and sensitive, for allowing the jests of great men to bring blushes to my cheeks. He was a democrat always!

When he saw that I was blushing, he turned obstinately toward Bálnokházy, to reply for me.

But I was not the only one who read his thoughts in his eyes; another also read therein, and before he could have spoken, my beautiful aunt took the words out of his mouth, and with lofty dignity replied to her husband:

"Methinks the baker is just as good a man as the privy councillor."

I shivered at the bold statement. I imagined that for these words the whole company would be arrested and thrown into prison.

Bálnokházy, with smiling tenderness, bent down to his wife's hand and, kissing it, said:

* Biscuit.

"As a man, truly, just as good a man; but as a baker, a better baker than I."

Now it was Lorand's turn to crimson. He riveted his eyes upon my aunt's face.

My right honorable uncle hastened immediately to close the rencontre with a vanquishing kiss upon my aunt's snow-white hand, a fact which convinced me that their mutual love was endless. In general, I behaved with remarkable respect toward that great relation of ours, who lived in such beautiful apartments, and whose titles would not be contained in three lines.

I was completely persuaded that Bálnokházy, my uncle, had few superiors in celebrity in the world, for personal beauty (except, perhaps, my brother Lorand) none; his wife was the most beautiful and happiest woman under the sun; and my cousin Melanie such an angel that, if she did not raise me up to heaven, I should surely never reach those climes.

And if some one had said to me then, "Let us begin at the beginning; that rich hair on Bálnokházy's head is but a wig," I should have demanded pardon for interrupting: I can find nothing of the least importance to say against the wearing of wigs. They are worn by those who have need of them; by those whose heads would be cold without them, who catch rheumatism easily with uncovered head. Finally, it is nought else but a head-covering for one of æsthetic tastes; a cap made of hair.

This is all true, all earnest truth; and yet I was greatly embittered against that some one who discovered to me for the first time that my uncle Bálnokházy wore a wig, and painted his moustache (with some colored unguent, of course, nothing else). And I am still the enemy of that some one who repeated that before me. He might have left me in happy ignorance.

Even if some one had said that this showy wealth, which indicated a noble affluence, was also such a mere wig as the other, covering the baldness of his riches; if some one had said that these hand-kissing companions, in whose every word was melody when

they spoke the one to the other, that they did not love, but hated and despised one another; if some one had said that this lovely, ideal angel of mine even—but no farther, not so much at once!

At the end of dinner our noble relations were so gracious as to permit my cousin Melanie to play the piano before us. She was only eight years old as yet, still she could play as beautifully as other girls of nine years.

I had very rarely heard a piano; at home mother played sometimes, though she did not much care for it. Lorand merely murdered the scales, which was not at all entertaining for me.

My cousin Melanie executed opera selections, and a French quadrille which excited my extremest admiration. My beautiful aunt laid stress upon the fact that she had only studied two years. A very intricate plan began to develop within me.

Melanie played the piano, I the violin. Nothing could be more natural than that I should come here with my violin to play an obligato to Melanie's piano; and if afterward we played violin and piano together perseveringly for eight or nine years, it would be impossible that we should not in the end reach the goal of life on that road.

In consequence I strove to display my usefulness by turning over the leaves of the music for her; and my pride was greatly hurt by the fact that my noble relations did not ask grandmother how I understood how to read music. Finally the end came to this, as to every good thing; my cousin Melanie was not quite "up" in the remaining pieces, though I would have listened even to half-learned pieces, but my grandmother was getting ready to return to the Fromms'. The Bálnokházy's asked her to spend the night with them, but she replied that she had been there before, and that I was there too; and she would remain with the younger. I detested myself so for the idea that I was a drag upon my good grandmother; why, I ought to have kissed the dust upon her feet for those words:

"I shall remain with the younger." My brother I envied, who for his part was "at home" with the P. C.

When I kissed my relations' hands at parting, Bálnokházy thrust a silver dollar * into my hand, adding with magnificent munificence:

"For a little poppy-cake, you know."

Why, it is true, that in Pressburg very fine poppy-biscuits are made; and it is also true, that many poppy-goodies might be bought, a few at a time, for a dollar; likewise I cannot deny that so much money had never been in my hand, as my very own, to spend as I liked. I would not have exchanged it for two other dollars, if it had not been given me before Melanie. I felt that it degraded me in her eyes. I could not discover what to do with that dollar. I scarce dared to look at Melanie when he departed; still I remarked that she did not look at me either when I left.

At the door Lorand seized my hand.

"Desi," said he severely, "that thing that the P. C. thrust into your hand you must give to the butler, when he opens the carriage door."

I liked the idea. By that they would know who I was; and my eyes would no longer be downcast before cousin Melanie.

But, when I thrust the dollar into the butler's hand, I was so embarrassed by his matter-of-fact grandeur that any one who had seen us might have thought the butler had presented me with something. I hoped uncle would not exclude me from his house for that.

Long did that quadrille sound in my ears; long did that phenomenon-pianist haunt me; how long I cannot tell!

She was the standard of my ambition, the prize of a long race, which must be won. In my imagination the whole world thronged before her. I saw the roads by which one might reach her.

I too wished to be a man like them. I would learn diligently; I would be the first "eminence" in the

* Thaler.

school, my teacher would take pride in me, and would say at the public examination: "This will be a great man some day." I would pass my barrister's exams. with distinction; would serve my time under a sheriff; would court the acquaintance of great men of distinction; would win their favor by my gentle, humble conduct; I would be ready to serve; any work intrusted to me I would punctually perform; would not mix in evil company; would make my talent shine; would write odes of encomium, panegyrics, on occasions of note; till finally, I should myself, like my uncle, become "secretarius," "assessor," "septemvir," and "consiliarius."

Ha, ha, ha,!

When we returned to Master Fromm's, the delicate attention of little Miss Pugnose was indeed burdensome. She would prattle all kinds of nonsense. She asked of what the fine dinner consisted; whether it was true that the daughter of the "consiliarius" had a doll that danced, played the guitar, and nodded its head. Ridiculous! As if people of such an age as Melanie and I interested themselves in dolls! I told Henrik to interpret this to her; I observed that it put her in a bad temper, and rejoiced that I had got rid of her.

I remarked that I must go and study, and the lesson was long. So I went to my room and began to study. Two hours later I observed that nothing of what I had learnt remained in my head; every place was full of that councillor's daughter.

In the evening we again assembled in Master Fromm's dining-room. Fanny again sat next to me, was again in good humor, treating me as familiarly, as if we had been the oldest acquaintances; I was already frightened of her. It would be dreadful for the Bálnokházys to suspect that one had a baker's daughter as an acquaintance, always ready to jump upon one's neck when she saw one.

Well, fortunately she would be taken away next day, and then would be far away, as long as I remained in the house; we should be like two opposite poles, that avoid each other.

Before bedtime grandmother came into the room once more. She gave me my effects, counted over my linen. She gave me pocket-money, promising to send me some every month with Lorand's.

"Then I beg you," she whispered in my ear, "take care of Lorand!"

Again that word!

Again that hint that I, the child, must take care of my brother, the young man! But the second time the meaning, which the first time I had not understood, burst at once clearly upon me; at first I thought, "Perhaps some mistaken wisdom or serious conduct on my part has deserved this distinction of looking after my brother." Now I discovered that the best guardian was eternal love; and mother and grandmother knew well that I loved Lorand better than he loved himself.

And indeed, what cause had they to fear for him? And from what could I defend him?

Was he not living in the best place in the world? And did I not live far from him?

Grandmother exacted from me a promise to write a diary of all that happened about us, and to send the same to her at the end of each month. I was to write all about Lorand too; for he himself was a very bad letter-writer.

I promised.

Then we kissed and took leave. They had to start early in the morning.

But the next day, when the carriage stood at the door, I was waiting ready dressed for them.

The whole Fromm family came down to the carriage to say adieu to the travellers.

That girl who was going to occupy my place was sad herself. Methought she was much more winning, when sadness made her eyes downcast.

One could see from her eyes that she had been weeping, that she was even now forcibly restraining herself from weeping. She spoke a few short words to me, and then disappeared behind grandmother in the carriage.

The whip cracked, the horses started, and my sub-