my head; and no sooner had I thought it than I was sure of it, and the conviction was one of quite unprecedented disagreeableness. How profoundly unpleasant to meet this person in the water, to have come all the way to Rügen, to have suffered at Göhren, to have walked miles in the heat of the day to Thiessow, for the sole purpose of bathing *tête-à-tête* with my dressmaker. And to have tumbled in on top of her and clung about her neck! I climbed out and ran into my cell. My idea was to get dressed and away as speedily as possible; yet with all Gertrud's haste, just as I came out of my cell the other woman came out of hers in her clothes, and we met face to face. With one accord we stopped dead and our mouths fell open. 'What,' she cried, 'it is *you?*'

'What,' I cried, 'it is *you?*'

It was my cousin Charlotte whom I had not seen for ten years.

THE FOURTH DAY — *Continued*

AT THIESSOW

My cousin Charlotte was twenty when I saw her last. Now she was thirty, besides having had an india-rubber cap on. Both these things make a difference to a woman, though she did not seem aware of it, and was lost in amazement that I should not have recognised her at once. I told her it was because of the cap. Then I expressed the astonishment I felt that she had not at once recognised me, and after hesitating a moment she said that I had been making too many faces; and so with infinite delicacy did we avoid all allusion to those ten unhideable years.

Charlotte had had a chequered career; at least, beside my placid life it seemed to have bristled with events. In her early youth, and to the dismay of her parents, she insisted on being educated at one of the English colleges for women — it was at Oxford, but I forget its name — a most unusual course for a young German girl of her class to take. She was so determined, and made her relations so uncomfortable during their period

of opposition, that they gave in with what appeared to more distant relatives who were not with Charlotte all day long a criminal weakness. At Oxford she took everything there was to take in the way of honours and prizes, and was the joy and pride of her college. In her last year, a German savant of sixty, an exceedingly bright light in the firmament of European learning, came to Oxford and was fêted. When Charlotte saw the great local beings she was accustomed to look upon as the most marvellous men of the age — the heads of colleges, professors, and other celebrities — vying with each other in honouring her countryman, her admiration for him was such that it took her breath away. At some function she was brought to his notice, and her family being well known in Germany and she herself then in the freshness of twenty-one, besides being very pretty, the great man was much interested, and beamed benevolently upon her, and chucked her under the chin. The head in whose house he was staying, a person equally exquisite in appearance and manners, who had had much to forgive that was less excellent in his guest and had done so freely for the sake of the known profundity of his knowledge, could not but remark this interest in Charlotte, and told him pleasantly of her promising career. The professor appeared to listen with attention, and looked pleased and approving; but when the head ceased, instead of commenting on her talents or the creditable manner in which she had developed them, what

he said was, 'A nice, round little girl. A very nice, round little girl. *Colossal appetitlich.*' And this he repeated emphatically several times, to the distinct discomfort of the head, while his eyes followed her benignly into the distant corner placed at the disposal of the obscure.

Six months later she married the professor. Her family wept and implored in vain; told her in vain of the terrificness of marrying a widower with seven children all older than herself. Charlotte was blinded by the glory of having been chosen by the greatest man Oxford had ever seen. Oxford was everything to her. Her distant German home and its spiritless inhabitants were objects only of her good-natured shrugs. She wrote to me saying she was going to be the life companion of the finest thinker of the age; her people, so illiterate and so full of prejudices, could not, she supposed, be expected to appreciate the splendour of her prospects; she thanked heaven that her own education had saved her from such a laughable blindness; she could conceive nothing more glorious than marrying the man in all the world whom you most reverently admire, than being chosen as the sharer of his thoughts, and the partner of his intellectual joys. After that I seldom heard from her. She lived in the south of Germany, and her professor's fame waxed vaster every year. Every year, too, she brought a potential professor into a world already so full of them, and every year death cut short its career after a period varying from ten days to a fortnight,

and the *Kreuzzeitung* seemed perpetually to be announcing that *Heute früh ist meine liebe Frau Charlotte von einem strammen Jungen leicht und glücklich entbunden worden*, and *Heute starb unser Sohn Bernhard im zarten Alter von zwei Wochen.* None of the children lived long enough to meet the next brother, and they were steadily christened Bernhard, after a father apparently thirsting to perpetuate his name. It became at last quite uncomfortable. Charlotte seemed never to be out of the *Kreuzzeitung*. For six years she and the poor little Bernhards went on in this manner, haunting its birth and death columns, and then abruptly disappeared from them; and the next I heard of her was that she was in England, — in London, Oxford, and other intellectual centres, lecturing in the cause of Woman. The *Kreuzzeitung* began about her again, but on another page. The *Kreuzzeitung* was shocked, for Charlotte was emancipated. Charlotte's family was so much shocked that it was hysterical. Charlotte, not content with lecturing, wrote pamphlets, — lofty documents of a deadly earnestness, in German and English, and they might be seen any day in the bookshop windows *Unter den Linden.* Charlotte's family nearly fainted when it had to walk *Unter den Linden.* The Radical papers, which were only read by Charlotte's family when nobody was looking and were never allowed openly to darken their doors, took her under their wing and wrote articles in her praise. It was, they said, surprising and refreshing to find views and intelligence of

the sort emerging from the suffocating ancestral atmosphere that hangs about the *Landadel.* The paralysing effect of too many ancestors was not as a rule to be lightly shaken off, especially by the female descendants. When it did get shaken off, as in this instance, it should be the subject of rejoicing to every person who had the advancement of civilisation at heart. The civilisation of a state could never be great so long as its women, etc. etc.

My uncle and aunt nearly died of this praise. Her brothers and sisters stayed in the country and refused invitations. Only the professor seemed as pleased as ever. 'Charlotte is my cousin,' I said to him at a party in Berlin where he was being lionised. 'How proud you must be of such a clever wife!' I had not met him before, and a more pleasant, rosy, nice little old man I have never seen.

He beamed at me through his spectacles. Almost could I see the narrow line that separated me from a chin-chucking. 'Yes, yes,' he said, 'so they all tell me. The little Lotte is making a noise. Empty vessels do. But I daresay what she tells them is a very pretty little nonsense. One must not be too critical in these cases.' And, seizing upon the cousinship, he began to call me *Du.*

I inquired how it was she was wandering about the world alone. He said he could not imagine. I asked him what he thought of the pamphlets. He said he had no time for light reading. I was so unfortunate as to remark, no doubt with en-

thusiasm, that I had read some of his simpler works to my great benefit and unbounded admiration. He looked more benign than ever, and said he had had no idea that anything of his was taught in elementary schools.

In a word, I was routed by the professor. I withdrew, feeling crushed, and wondering if I had deserved it. He came after me, called me his *liebe kleine Cousine*, and sitting down beside me patted my hand and inquired with solicitude how it was he had never seen me before. Renewed attempts on my part to feed like a bee on the honey of his learning were met only by pats. He would pat, but he would not impart wisdom; and the longer he patted the more perfect did his serenity seem to become. When people approached us and showed a tendency to hang on the great man's lips, he looked up with a happy smile and said, 'This is my little cousin — we have much to say to each other,' and turned his back on them. And when I was asked whether I had not spent a memorable, an elevating evening, being talked to so much by the famous Nieberlein, I could only put on a solemn face and say that I should not soon forget it. 'It will be something to tell your children of, in the days to come when he is a splendid memory,' said the enthusiast.

'Oh won't it!' I ejaculated, with the turned-up eyes of rapture.

'Tell me one thing,' I said to Charlotte as we walked slowly along the sands towards the cliff and the beechwood; 'why, since you took me for

a stranger, were you so — well, so gracious to me in the water?'

Gertrud had gone back to the hotel laden with both our bathing-things. 'She may as well take mine up at the same time,' Charlotte had remarked, piling them on Gertrud's passive arms. Undeniably she might; and accordingly she did. But her face was wry, and so had been the smile with which she returned Charlotte's careless greetings. 'You still keep that old fool, I see,' said Charlotte. 'It would send me mad to have a person of inferior intellect for ever fussing round me.'

'It would send me much madder to have a person of superior intellect buttoning my boots and scorning me while she does it,' I replied.

'Why was I so gracious to you in the water?' repeated Charlotte in answer to my inquiry, made not without anxiousness, for one likes to know one's own cousin above the practices of ordinary bath-guests. 'I'll tell you why. I detest the stiff, icy way women have of turning their backs if they don't know each other.'

'Oh they're not very stiff,' I remarked, thinking of past bathing experiences, 'and besides, in the water ——'

'It is not only unkind, it is simply wicked. For how shall we ever be anything but tools and drudges if we don't co-operate, if we don't stand shoulder to shoulder? Oh my heart goes out to all women! I never see one without feeling I must do all in my power to get to know her, to

help her, to show her what she must do, so that when her youth is gone there will still be something left, a so much nobler happiness, a so much truer joy.'

'Than what?' I asked, puzzled.

Charlotte was looking into my eyes as though she were reading my soul. She wasn't, whatever she might have thought she was doing. 'Than what she had before, of course,' she said with some asperity.

'But perhaps what she had before was just what she liked best.'

'But if it was only the sort of joy every woman who is young and pretty gets heaped on her, does it not take wings and fly away the moment she happens to look haggard, or is low-spirited, or ill?'

It was as I had feared. Charlotte was strenuous. There was not a doubt of it. And the strenuous woman is a form of the sex out of whose way I have hitherto kept. Of course I knew from the pamphlets and the lectures that she was not one to stay at home and see the point of purring over her husband's socks; but I had supposed one might lecture and write things without bringing the pamphlet manner to bear on one's own blood relations.

'You were very jolly in the water,' I said. 'Why are you suddenly so serious?'

'The water,' replied Charlotte, 'is the only place I am ever what you call jolly in. It is the only place where I can ever forget how terribly earnest life is.'

'My dear Charlotte, shall we sit down? The bathing has made me tired.'

We did sit down, and leaning my back against a rock, and pulling my hat over my eyes, I gazed out at the sunlit sea and at the flocks of little white clouds hanging over it to the point where they met the water, while Charlotte talked. Yes, she was right, nearly always right, in everything she said, and it was certainly meritorious to use one's strength, and health, and talents as she was doing, trying to get rid of mouldy prejudices. I gathered that what she was fighting for were equal rights and equal privileges for women and men alike. It is a story I have heard before, and up to now it has not had a satisfactory ending. And Charlotte was so small, and the world she defied was so big and so indifferent and had such an inconsequent habit of associating all such efforts — in themselves nothing less than heroic — with the ridiculousness of cropped hair and extremities clothed in bloomers. I protest that the thought of this brick wall of indifference with Charlotte hurling herself against it during all the years that might have been pleasant was so tragic to me that I was nearly tempted to try to please her by offering to come and hurl myself too. But I have no heroism. The hardness and coldness of bricks terrifies me. What, I wondered, could her experiences with her great thinker have been, to make her turn her back so absolutely on the fair and sheltered land of matrimony? I could not but agree with much that she was saying. That

women, if they chose, need not do or endure any of the things against which those of them who find their voice cry out has long been clear to me. That they are, on the whole, not well-disposed towards each other is also a fact frequently to be observed. And that this secret antagonism must be got over before there can be any real co-operation may, I suppose, be regarded as certain. But when Charlotte spoke of co-operation she was apparently thinking only of the co-operation of those whom years, in place of the might of youth, have provided with the sad sensibleness that comes of repeated disappointments — the co-operation, that is, of the elderly; and the German elderly in the immense majority of cases remains obscurely in her kitchen and does not dream of co-operating. Has she not got over the conjugal quarrels of the first married years? Has she not filled her nurseries and become indefinite in outline? And do not these things make for content? If thoughts of rebellion enter her head, she need only look honestly at her image in the glass to be aware that it is not her kind that will ever wring concessions from the other sex. She is a *brave Frau*, and a *brave Frau* who should try to do anything beyond keeping her home tidy and feeding its inmates would be almost pathetically ridiculous.

'You shouldn't bother about the old ones,' I murmured, watching a little white steamer rounding the Göhren headland. 'Get the young to co-operate, my dear Charlotte. The young inherit the earth — Teutonic earth certainly they do. If you got all the pretty women between twenty and thirty on your side the thing's done. No wringing would be required. The concessions would simply shower down.'

'I detest the word concession,' said Charlotte.

'Do you? But there it is. We live on the concessions made us by those beings you would probably call the enemy. And, after all, most of us live fairly comfortably.'

'By the way,' she said, turning her head suddenly and looking at me, 'what have *you* been doing all these years?'

'Doing?' I repeated in some confusion. I don't know why there should have been any confusion, unless it was a note in Charlotte's voice that made her question sound like a stern inquiry after that one talent which is death to hide lodged with me useless. 'Now, as though you didn't very well know what I have been doing. I have had a row of babies and brought it up quite nicely.'

'*That* isn't anything to be proud of.'

'I didn't say it was.'

'Your cat achieves precisely the same thing.'

'My dear Charlotte, I haven't got a cat.'

'And now — what are you doing now?'

'You see what I am doing. Apparently exactly what you are.'

'I don't mean that. Of course you know I don't mean that. What are you doing now with your life?'

I turned my head and gazed reproachfully at

Charlotte. How pretty she used to be. How prettily the corners of her mouth used to turn up, as though her soul were always smiling. And she had had the dearest chin with a dimple in it, and she had had clear, hopeful eyes, and all the lines of her body had been comely and gracious. These are solid advantages that should not lightly be allowed to go. Not a trace of them was left. Her face was thin, and its expression of determination made it look hard. There was a deep line straight down between her eyebrows, as though she frowned at life more than is needful. Angles had everywhere taken the place of curves. Her eyes were as bright and intelligent as ever, but seemed to have grown larger. Something had completely done for Charlotte as far as beauty of person goes; whether it was the six Bernhards, or her actual enthusiasms, or the unusual mixture of both, I could not at this stage discover; nor could I yet see if her soul had gained the beauty that her body had lost, which is undoubtedly what the rightly cared-for soul does do. Meanwhile anything more utterly unlike the wife of a famous professor I have never seen. The wife of an aged German celebrity should be, and is, calm, comfortable, large, and slow. She must be, and is, proud of her great man. She attends to his bodily wants, and does not presume to share his spiritual excitements. In their common life he is the brain, she the willing hands and feet. It is perfectly fair. If there are to be great men some one must be found to look after them — some one who shall be

more patient, faithful, and admiring than a servant, and unable like a servant to throw up the situation on the least provocation. A wife is an admirable institution. She is the hedge set between the precious flowers of the male intellect and the sun and dust of sordid worries. She is the flannel that protects when the winds of routine are cold. She is the sheltering jam that makes the pills of life possible. She is buffer, comforter, and cook. And so long as she enjoys these various rôles the arrangement is perfect. The difficulties begin when, defying Nature's teaching, which on this point is luminous, she refuses to be the hedge, flannel, jam, buffer, comforter, and cook; and when she goes so far on the sulphuric path of rebellion as to insist on being clever on her own account and publicly, she has, in Germany at least, set every law of religion and decency at defiance. Charlotte had been doing this, if all I had heard was true, for the last three years; therefore her stern inquiry addressed to a wife of my sobriety struck me as singularly out of place. What had I been doing with my life? Looking back into it in search of an answer it seemed very spacious, and sunny, and quiet. There were children in it, and there was a garden, and a spouse in whose eyes I was precious; but I had not done anything. And if I could point to no pamphlets or lectures, neither need I point to a furrow between my eyebrows.

'It is very odd,' Charlotte went on, as I sat silent, 'our meeting like this. I was on the verge

of writing to ask if I might come and stay with you.'

'Oh were you?'

'So often lately I have thought just *you* might be such a help to me if only I could wake you up.'

'Wake me up, my dear Charlotte?'

'Oh, I've heard about you. I know you live stuffed away in the country in a sort of dream. You needn't try to answer my question about what you have done. You can't answer it. You have lived in a dream, entirely wrapped up in your family and your plants.'

'Plants, my dear Charlotte?'

'You do not see nor want to see farther than the ditch at the end of your garden. All that is going on outside, out in the great real world where people are in earnest, where they strive, and long, and suffer, where they unceasingly pursue their ideal of a wider life, a richer experience, a higher knowledge, is absolutely indifferent to you. Your existence — no one could call it life — is quite negative and unemotional. It is as negative and as unemotional as ——' She paused and looked at me with a faint, compassionate smile.

'As what?' I asked, anxious to hear the worst.

'Frankly, as an oyster's.'

'Really, my dear Charlotte,' I exclaimed, naturally upset. How very unfortunate that I should have hurried away from Göhren. Why had I not stayed there two or three days, as I had at first intended? It was such a safe place; you

could get out of it so easily and so quickly. If I were an oyster — curious how much the word disconcerted me — at least I was a happy oyster, which was surely better than being miserable and not an oyster at all. Charlotte was certainly nearer being miserable than happy. People who are happy do not have the look she had in her eyes, nor is their expression so uninterruptedly determined. And why should I be lectured? When I am in the mood for a lecture, my habit is to buy a ticket and go and listen; and when I have not bought a ticket, it is a sign that I do not want a lecture. I did not like to explain this beautifully simple position to Charlotte, yet felt that at all costs I must nip her eloquence in the bud or she would keep me out till it was dark; so I got up, cleared my throat, and said in the balmy tone in which people on platforms begin their orations, '*Geehrte Anwesende.*'

'Are you going to give me a lecture?' she inquired with a surprised smile.

'In return for yours.'

'My dear soul, may I not talk to you about anything except plants?'

'I really don't know why you should think plants are the only things that interest me. I have not yet mentioned them. And, as a matter of fact, you are the last person with whom I would share my vegetable griefs. But that isn't what I wished to say. I was going to offer you, *geehrte Anwesende*, a few remarks about husbands.'

Charlotte frowned.

'About husbands,' I repeated blandly, in a voice of milk and honey. '*Geehrte Anwesende*, in the course of an uneventful existence I have had much leisure for reflection, and my reflections have led me to the conclusion, erroneous perhaps, but fixed, that having got a husband, taken him of one's own free will, taken him sometimes even in the face of opposition, the least one can do is to stick to him. Now, Charlotte, where is yours? What have you done with him? Is he here? And if not, why is he not here, and where is he?'

Charlotte got up hastily and brushed the sand out of the folds of her dress. 'You haven't changed a bit,' she said with a slight laugh. 'You are just as——'

'Silly?' I suggested.

'Oh, I didn't say that. And as for Bernhard, he is where he always was, marching triumphantly along the road to undying fame. But you know that. You only ask because your ideas of the duties of woman are mediæval, and you are shocked. Well, I'm afraid you must be shocked then. I haven't seen him for a whole year.'

Luckily at this moment, for I think we were going to quarrel, Gertrud came heaving through the sand towards us with a packet of letters. She had been to the post, and knowing I loved getting letters came out to look for me so that I might have them at once; and as I eagerly opened them and buried myself in them, Charlotte confined her occasional interjections to deprecating the obviously inferior shape of Gertrud's head.

THE FIFTH DAY

FROM THIESSOW TO SELLIN

MANY a time have I wondered at the unworthy ways of Fate, at the pettiness of the pleasure it takes in frustrating plans that are small and innocent, at its entire want of dignity, at its singular spitefulness, at the resemblance of its manners to those of an evilly-disposed kitchen-maid; but never have I wondered more than I did that night at Thiessow.

We had been for a walk after tea through the beechwood, up a hill behind it to the signal station, along a footpath on the edge of the cliff with blue gleams of sea on one side through a waving fringe of blue and purple flowers, and the ryefields on the other. We had stood looking down at the village of Thiessow far below us, a cluster of picturesque roofs surrounded on three sides by sunlit water; had gazed across the vast plain to the distant hill and village of Gross Zickow; watched the shadows passing over meadows miles away; seen how the sea to the west had the calm colours of a pearl; how the sea beneath us through the parting stalks