КОЛЛЕКТИВ АВТОРОВ

THE GERMAN CLASSICS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES, VOLUME 10

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Prince Otto Von Bismarck

BISMARCK AS A NATIONAL TYPE[1]

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No man since Luther has been a more complete embodiment of German nationality than Otto von Bismarck. None has been closer to the German heart. None has stood more conspicuously for racial aspirations, passions, ideals.

It is the purpose of the present sketch to bring out a few of these affinities between Bismarck and the German people.

I

Perhaps the most obviously Teutonic trait in Bismarck's character is its martial quality. It would be preposterous, surely, to claim warlike distinction as a prerogative of the German race. Russians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, undoubtedly, make as good fighters as Germans. But it is not an exaggeration to say that there is no country in the world where the army is as enlightened or as popular an institution as it is in Germany.

The German army is not composed of hirelings of professional fighters whose business it is to pick quarrels, no matter with whom. It is, in the strictest sense of the word, the people in arms. Among its officers there is a large percentage of the intellectual élite of the country; its rank and file embrace every occupation and every class of society, from the scion of royal blood down to the son of the seamstress. Although it is based upon the unconditional acceptance of the monarchical creed, nothing is farther removed from it than the spirit of servility. On the contrary, one of the very first teachings which are inculcated upon the German recruit is that, in wearing the "king's coat," he is performing a public duty, and that by performing this duty he is honoring himself. Nor can it be said that it is the aim of German military drill to reduce the soldier to a mere machine, at will to be set in motion or be brought to a standstill by his superior. The aim of this drill is rather to give each soldier increased self-control, mentally no less than bodily; to develop his self-respect; to enlarge his sense of responsibility, as well as to teach him the absolute necessity of the subordination of the individual to the needs of the whole. The German army, then, is by no means a lifeless tool that might be used by an unscrupulous and adventurous despot to gratify his own whims or to wreak his private vengeance. The German army is, in principle at least, a national school of manly virtues, of discipline, of comradeship, of self-

[1] From *Glimpses of Modern German Culture*. Permission Dodd, Mead & Company, New York.

sacrifice, of promptness of action, of tenacity of purpose. Although, probably, the most powerful armament which the world has ever seen, it makes for peace rather than for war. Although called upon to defend the standard of the most imperious dynasty of western Europe, it contains more of the spirit of true democracy than many a city government on this side of the Atlantic.

All this has to be borne in mind if we wish to judge correctly of Bismarck's military propensities. He has never concealed the fact that he felt himself, above all, a soldier. One of his earliest public utterances was a defense of the Prussian army against the sympathizers with the revolution of 1848. His first great political achievement was the carrying through, in the early sixties, of King William's army reform in the face of the most stubborn and virulent opposition of a parliamentary majority. Never, in the years following the formation of the Empire, did his speech in the German Parliament rise to a higher pathos than when he was asserting the military supremacy of the Emperor, or calling upon the parties to forget their dissensions in maintaining the defensive strength of the nation, or showering contempt upon liberal deputies who seemed to think that questions of national existence could be solved by effusions of academic oratory. Over and over, during the last decade of his official career, did he declare that the only thing which kept him from throwing aside the worry and vexation of governmental duties and retiring to the much coveted leisure of home and hearth, was the oath of vassal loyalty constraining him to stand at his post until his imperial master released him of his own accord. And at the very height of his political triumphs he wrote to his sovereign: "I have always regretted that my talents did not allow me to testify my attachment to the royal house and my enthusiasm for the greatness and glory of the Fatherland in the front rank of a regiment rather than behind a writing-desk. And even now, after having been raised by your Majesty to the highest honors of a statesman, I cannot altogether repress a feeling of regret at not having been similarly able to carve out a career for myself as a soldier. Perhaps I should have made a poor general, but if I had been free to follow the bent of my own inclination I would rather have won battles for your Majesty than diplomatic campaigns."

It seems clear that both the defects and the greatness of Bismarck's character are intimately associated with these military leanings of his. He certainly was overbearing; he could tolerate no opposition; he was revengeful and unforgiving; he took pleasure in the appeal to violence; he easily resorted to measures of repression; he requited insults with counter-insults; he had something of that blind *furor Teutonicus* which was the terror of the Italian republics in the Middle Ages. These are defects of temper which will probably prevent his name from ever shining with that serene lustre of international veneration that has surrounded the memory of a Joseph II. or a Washington with a kind of impersonal immaculateness. But his countrymen, at least, have every reason to condone these defects; for they are concomitant results of the military bent of German character, and they are offset by such transcendent military virtues that we would almost welcome them as bringing this colossal figure within the reach of our own frailties and shortcomings.

Three of the military qualities that made Bismarck great seem to me to stand out with particular distinctness: his readiness to take the most tremendous responsibilities, if he could justify his action by the worth of the cause for which he made himself responsible; his moderation after success was assured; his unflinching submission to the dictates of monarchical discipline.

Moritz Busch has recorded an occurrence, belonging to the autumn of 1877, which most impressively brings before us the tragic grandeur and the portentous issues of Bismarck's career. It was twilight at Varzin, and the Chancellor, as was his wont after dinner, was sitting by the stove in the large back drawing-room. After having sat silent for a while, gazing straight before him, and feeding the fire now and anon with fir-cones, he suddenly began to complain that his political activity had brought him but little satisfaction and few friends. Nobody loved him for what he had done. He had never made anybody happy thereby, he said, not himself, nor his family, nor any one else. Some of those present would not admit this, and suggested "that he had made a great nation happy." "But," he retorted, "how many have I made unhappy! But for me three great wars would not have been

fought; eighty thousand men would not have perished; parents, brothers, sisters, and wives would not have been bereaved and plunged into mourning…. That matter, however, I have settled with God." "Settled with God!"—an amazing statement, a statement which would seem the height of blasphemy if it were not an expression of noblest manliness, if it did not reveal the soul of a warrior dauntlessly fighting for a great cause, risking for it the existence of a whole country as well as his own happiness, peace, and salvation, and being ready to submit the consequences, whatever they might be, to the tribunal of eternity. To say that a man who is willing to take such responsibilities as these makes himself thereby an offender against morality appears to me tantamount to condemning the Alps as obstructions to traffic. A people, at any rate, that glories in the achievements of a Luther has no right to cast a slur upon the motives of a Bismarck.

Whatever one may think of the worth of the cause for which Bismarck battled all his life—the unity and greatness of Germany—it is impossible not to admire the policy of moderation and self-restraint pursued by him after every one of his most decisive victories. And here again we note in him the peculiarly German military temper. German war-songs do not glorify foreign conquest and brilliant adventure; they glorify dogged resistance and bitter fight for house and home, for kith and kin. The German army, composed as it is of millions of peaceful citizens, is essentially a weapon of defense. And it can truly be said that Bismarck, with all his natural aggressiveness and ferocity, was in the main a defender, not a conqueror. He defended Prussia against the intolerable arrogance and un-German policy of Austria; he defended Germany against French interference in the work of national consolidation; he defended the principle of State sovereignty against the encroachments of the Papacy; he defended the monarchy against the republicanism of the Liberals and Socialists; and the supreme aim of his foreign policy after the establishment of the German Empire was to guard the peace of Europe.

The third predominant trait of Bismarck's character that stamps him as a soldier—his unquestioning obedience to monarchical discipline—is so closely bound up with the peculiarly German conceptions of the functions and the Purpose of the State, that it will be better to approach this Part of his nature from the political instead of the military side.

II

In no other of the leading countries of the world has the *laissez faire* doctrine had as little influence in political matters as in Germany. Luther, the fearless champion of religious individualism, was, in questions of government, the most pronounced advocate of paternalism. Kant, the cool dissector of the human intellect, was at the same time the most rigid upholder of corporate morality. It was Fichte, the ecstatic proclaimer of the glory of the individual will, who wrote this dithyramb on the necessity of the constant surrender of private interests to the common welfare: "Nothing can live by itself or for itself; everything lives in the whole; and the whole continually sacrifices itself to itself in order to live anew. This is the law of life. Whatever has come to the consciousness of existence must fall a victim to the progress of all existence. Only there is a difference whether you are dragged to the shambles like a beast with bandaged eyes, or whether, in full and joyous presentiment of the life which will spring forth from your sacrifice, you offer yourself freely on the altar of eternity."

Not even Plato and Aristotle went so far in the deification of the State as Hegel. And if Hegel declared that the real office of the State is not to further individual interests, to protect private property, but to be an embodiment of the organic unity of public life; if he saw the highest task and the real freedom of the individual in making himself a part of this organic unity of public life, he voiced a sentiment which was fully shared by the leading classes of the Prussia of his time, and which has since become a part of the political creed of the Socialist masses all over Germany.

Here we have the moral background of Bismarck's internal policy. His monarchism rested not only on his personal allegiance to the hereditary dynasty, although no medieval knight could have

been more steadfast in his loyalty to his liege lord than Bismarck was in his unswerving devotion to the Hohenzollern house. His monarchism rested above all on the conviction that, under the present conditions of German political life, no other form of government would insure equally well the fulfilment of the moral obligations of the State.

He was by no means blind to the value of parliamentary institutions. More than once has he described the English Constitution as the necessary outcome and the fit expression of the vital forces of English society. More than once has he eulogized the sterling political qualities of English landlordism, its respect for the law, its common sense, its noble devotion to national interests. More than once has he deplored the absence in Germany of "the class which in England is the main support of the State—the class of wealthy and therefore conservative gentlemen, independent of material interests, whose whole education is directed with a view to their becoming statesmen, and whose only aim in life is to take part in public affairs"; and the absence of "a Parliament, like the English, containing two sharply defined parties whereof one forms a sure and unswerving majority which subjects itself with iron discipline to its ministerial leaders." We may regret that Bismarck himself did not do more to develop parliamentary discipline; that, indeed, he did everything in his power to arrest the healthy growth of German party life. But it is at least perfectly clear that his reasons for refusing to allow the German parties a controlling influence in shaping the policy of the government were not the result of mere despotic caprice, but were founded upon thoroughly German traditions, and upon a thoroughly sober, though one-sided, view of the present state of German public affairs.

To him party government appeared as much of an impossibility as it had appeared to Hegel. The attempt to establish it would, in his opinion, have led to nothing less than chaos. The German parties, as he viewed them, represented, not the State, not the nation, but an infinite variety of private and class interests—the interests of landholders, traders, manufacturers, laborers, politicians, priests, and so on; each particular set of interests desiring the particular consideration of the public treasury, and refusing the same amount of consideration to every other. It seemed highly desirable to him, as it did to Hegel, that all these interests should be heard; that they should be represented in a Parliament based upon as wide and liberal a suffrage as possible. But to intrust any one of these interests with the functions of government would, in his opinion, have been treason to the State; it would have been class tyranny of the worst kind.

The logical outcome of all this was his conviction of the absolute necessity, for Germany, of a strong non-partisan government: a government which should hold all the conflicting class interests in check and force them into continual compromises with one another; a government which should be unrestricted by any class prejudices, pledges, or theories, and have no other guiding star than the welfare of the whole nation. And the only basis for such a government he found in the Prussian monarchy, with its glorious tradition of military discipline, of benevolent paternalism, and of self-sacrificing devotion to national greatness; with its patriotic gentry, its incorruptible courts, its religious freedom, its enlightened educational system, its efficient and highly trained civil service. To bow before such a monarchy, to serve such a State, was indeed something different from submitting to the chance vote of a parliamentary majority; in this bondage even a Bismarck could find his highest freedom.

For nearly forty years he bore this bondage; for twenty-eight he stood in the place nearest to the monarch himself; and not even his enemies dared to assert that his political conduct was guided by other motives than the consideration of public welfare. Indeed, if there is any phrase for which he, the apparent cynic, the sworn despiser of phrases, seems to have had a certain weakness, it is the word *salus publica*. To it he sacrificed his days and his nights; for it he more than once risked his life; for it he incurred more hatred and slander than perhaps any man of his time; for it he alienated his best friends; for it he turned not once or twice, but one might almost say habitually, against his own cherished prejudices and convictions. The career of few men shows so many apparent inconsistencies and contrasts. One of his earliest speeches in the Prussian Landtag was a fervent protest against the

introduction of civil marriage; yet the civil marriage clause in the German constitution is his work. He was by birth and tradition a believer in the divine right of kings; yet the King of Hanover could tell something of the manner in which Bismarck dealt with the divine right of kings if it stood in the way of German unity. He took pride in belonging to the most feudal aristocracy of western Europe, the Prussian Junkerdom; yet he did more to uproot feudal privileges than any other German statesman since 1848. He gloried in defying public opinion, and was wont to say that he felt doubtful about himself whenever he met with popular applause; yet he is the founder of the German Parliament, and he founded it on direct and universal suffrage. He was the sworn enemy of the Socialist party —he attempted to destroy it, root and branch; yet through the nationalization of railways and the obligatory insurance of workmen he infused more Socialism into German legislation than any other statesman before him.

Truly, a man who could thus sacrifice his own wishes and instincts to the common good; who could so completely sink his own personality in the cause of the nation; who with such matchless courage defended this cause against attacks from whatever quarter—against court intrigue no less than against demagogues—such a man had a right to stand above parties; and he spoke the truth when, some years before leaving office, in a moment of gloom and disappointment he wrote under his portrait, Patrice inserviendo consumor.

III

There is a strange, but after all perfectly natural, antithesis in German national character. The same people that instinctively believes in political paternalism, that willingly submits to restrictions of personal liberty in matters of State such as no Englishman would ever tolerate, is more jealous of its independence than perhaps any other nation in matters pertaining to the intellectual, social, and religious life of the individual. It seems as if the very pressure from without had helped to strengthen and enrich the life within.

Not only all the great men of German thought, from Luther down to the Grimms and the Humboldts, have been conspicuous for their freedom from artificial conventions and for the originality and homeliness of their human intercourse; but even the average German official—wedded as he may be to his rank or his title, anxious as he may be to preserve an outward decorum in exact keeping with the precise shade of his public status—is often the most delightfully unconventional, good-natured, unsophisticated, and even erratic being in the world, as soon as he has left the cares of his office behind him. Germany is the classic land of queer people. It is the land of Quintus Fixlein, Onkel Bräsig, Leberecht Hühnchen, and the host of Fliegende Blatter worthies; it is the land of the beer-garden and the Kaffeekranzchen, of the Christmas-tree and the Whitsuntide merry-making; it is the land of country inns and of student pranks. What more need be said to bring before one's mind the wealth of hearty joyfulness, jolly good-fellowship, boisterous frolic, sturdy humor, simple directness, and genuinely democratic feeling that characterizes social life in Germany.

And still less reason is there for dwelling on the intellectual and religious independence of German character. Absence of constraint in scientific inquiry and religious conduct is indeed the very palladium of German freedom. Nowhere is higher education so entirely removed from class distinction as in the country where the imperial princes are sent to the same school with the sons of tradesmen and artisans. Nowhere is there so little religious formalism, coupled with such deep religious feeling, as in the country where sermons are preached to empty benches, while *Tannhauser* and *Lohengrin, Wallenstein* and *Faust*, are listened to with the hush of awe and bated breath by thousands upon thousands.

In all these respects—socially, intellectually, religiously—Bismarck was the very incarnation of German character. Although an aristocrat by birth and bearing, and although, especially during the years of early manhood, passionately given over to the aristocratic habits of dueling, hunting,

swaggering and carousing, he was essentially a man of the people. Nothing was so utterly foreign to him as any form of libertinism; even his eccentricities were of the hardy, homespun sort. He was absolutely free from social vanity; he detested court festivities; he set no store by orders or decorations; the only two among the innumerable ones conferred upon him which he is said to have highly valued were the Prussian order of the Iron Cross, bestowed for personal bravery on the battlefield, and the medal for "rescuing from danger" which he earned in 1842 for having saved his groom from drowning by plunging into the water after him.

All his instincts were bound up with the soil from which he had sprung. He passionately loved the North German plain, with its gloomy moorlands, its purple heather, its endless wheatfields, its kingly forests, its gentle lakes, and its superb sweep of sky and clouds. Writing to his friends when abroad—he traveled very little abroad—he was in the habit of describing foreign scenery by comparing it to familiar views and places on his own estates. During sleepless nights in the Chancellery at Berlin there would often rise before him a sudden vision of Varzin, his Pomeranian country-seat, "perfectly distinct in the minutest particulars, like a great picture with all its colors fresh —the green trees, the sunshine on the stems, the blue sky above. I saw every individual tree." Never was he more happy than when alone with nature. "Saturday," he writes to his wife from Frankfort, "I drove to Rüdesheim. There I took a boat, rowed out on the Rhine, and swam in the moonlight, with nothing but nose and eyes out of water, as far as the Mäuseturm near Bingen, where the bad bishop came to his end. It gives one a peculiar dreamy sensation to float thus on a quiet warm night in the water, gently carried down by the current, looking above on the heavens studded with moon and stars, and on each side the banks and wooded hilltops and the battlements of the old castles bathed in the moonlight, whilst nothing falls on one's ear but the gentle splashing of one's movements. I should like to swim like this every evening." And what poet has more deeply felt than he that vague musical longing which seizes one when far away from human sounds, by the brook-side or the hill-slope? "I feel as if I were looking out on the mellowing foliage of a fine September day," he writes again to his wife, "health and spirits good, but with a soft touch of melancholy, a little homesickness, a longing for deep woods and lakes, for a desert, for yourself and the children, and all this mixed up with a sunset and Beethoven."

His domestic affections were by no means limited to those united to him by ties of blood; he cherished strong patriarchal feelings for every member of his household, past or present. He possessed in a high degree the German tenderness for little things. He never forgot a service rendered to him, however small. In the midst of the most engrossing public activity he kept himself informed about the minutest details of the management of his estates, so that his wife could once laughingly say that a turnip from his own fields interested him vastly more than all the problems of international politics.

His humor, also, was entirely of the German stamp. It was boisterous, rollicking, aggressive, unsparing—of himself as little as of others—cynic, immoderate, but never without a touch of good-nature. His satire was often crushing, never venomous. His wit was racy and exuberant never equivocal. Whether he describes his *vis-à-vis* at a hotel table, his Excellency So-and-So, as "one of those figures which appear to one when he has the nightmare—a fat frog without legs, who opens his mouth as wide as his shoulders, like a carpet-bag, for each bit, so that I am obliged to hold tight on by the table from giddiness"; whether he characterizes his colleagues at the Frankfort Bundestag as "mere caricatures of periwig diplomatists, who at once put on their official visage if I merely beg of them a light to my cigar, and who study their words and looks with Regensburg care when they ask for the key of the lavatory"; whether he sums up his impression of the excited, emotional manner in which Jules Favre pleaded with him for the peace terms in the words, "He evidently took me for a public meeting"; whether he declined to look at the statue erected to him at Cologne, because he "didn't care to see himself fossilized"; whether he spoke of the unprecedented popular ovations given to him at his final departure from Berlin as a "first-class funeral"—there are always the same

childlike directness, the same naïve impulsiveness, the same bantering earnestness, the same sublime contempt for sham and hypocrisy.

And what man has been more truthful in intellectual and religious matters? He, the man of iron will, of ferocious temper, was at the same time the coolest reasoner, the most unbiased thinker. He willingly submitted to the judgment of experts, he cheerfully acknowledged intellectual talent in others, he took a pride in having remained a learner all his life, but he hated arrogant amateurishness. He was not a church-goer; he declined to be drawn into the circle of religious schemers and reactionary fanatics; he would occasionally speak in contemptuous terms of "the creed of court chaplains"; but, writing to his wife of that historic meeting with Napoleon in the lonely cottage near the battlefield of Sedan, he said: "A powerful contrast with our last meeting in the Tuileries in '67. Our conversation was a difficult thing, if I wanted to avoid touching on topics which could not but affect painfully the man whom God's mighty hand had cast down." And more than once has he given vent to reflections like these: "For him who does not believe—as I do from the bottom of my heart—that death is a transition from one existence to another, and that we are justified in holding out to the worst of criminals in his dying hour the comforting assurance, *mors janua vitae*—I say that for him who does not share that conviction the joys of this life must possess so high a value that I could almost envy him the sensations they must procure him." Or these: "Twenty years hence, or at most thirty, we shall be past the troubles of this life, whilst our children will have reached our present standpoint, and will discover with astonishment that their existence, but now so brightly begun, has turned the corner and is going down hill. Were that to be the end of it all, life would not be worth the trouble of dressing and undressing every day."

IV

We have considered a few traits of Bismarck's mental and moral make-up which seem to be closely allied with German national character and traditions. But, after all, the personality of a man like Bismarck is not exhausted by the qualities which he has in common with his people, however sublimated these qualities may be in him. His innermost life belongs to himself alone, or is shared, at most, by the few men of the world's history who, like him, tower in splendid solitude above the waste of the ages. In the Middle High German Alexanderlied there is an episode which most impressively brings out the impelling motive of such titanic lives. On one of his expeditions Alexander penetrates into the land of Scythian barbarians. These child-like people are so contented with their simple, primitive existence that they beseech Alexander to give them immortality. He answers that this is not in his power. Surprised, they ask why, then, if he is only a mortal, he is making such a stir in the world. Thereupon he answers: "The Supreme Power has ordained us to carry out what is in us. The sea is given over to the whirlwind to plough it up. As long as life lasts and I am master of my senses, I must bring forth what is in me. What would life be if all men in the world were like you?" These words might have been spoken by Bismarck. Every word, every act of his public career, gives us the impression of a man irresistibly driven on by some overwhelming, mysterious power. He was not an ambitious schemer, like Beaconsfield or Napoleon; he was not a moral enthusiast like Gladstone or Cavour. If he had consulted his private tastes and inclinations, he would never have wielded the destinies of an empire. Indeed, he often rebelled against his task; again and again he tried to shake it off; and the only thing which again and again brought him back to it was the feeling, "I must; I cannot do otherwise." If ever there was a man in whom Fate revealed its moral sovereignty, that man was Bismarck.

Whither has he gone now? Has he joined his compeers? Is he conversing in ethereal regions with Alexander, Caesar, Frederick? Is he sweeping over land and sea in the whirlwind and the thunder-cloud? Or may we hope that he is still working out the task which, in spite of all the imperiousness

of his nature, was the essence of his earthly life—the task of making the Germans a nation of true freemen?

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THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK[2] TRANSLATED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF CHARLTON T. LEWIS

Hôtel de Prusse, Stettin, (Not dated: Written about the end of December, 1846.)

TO HERR VON PUTTKAMER:

Most Honored Sir.—I begin this communication by indicating its content in the first sentence—it is a request for the highest thing you can dispose of in this world, the hand of your daughter. I do not conceal from myself the fact that I appear presumptuous when I, whom you have come to know only recently and through a few meetings, claim the strongest proof of confidence which you can give to any man. I know, however, that even irrespective of all obstacles in space and time which can increase your difficulty in forming an opinion of me, through my own efforts I can never be in a position to give you such guaranties for the future that they would, from your point of view, justify intrusting me with an object so precious, unless you supplement by trust in God that which trust in human beings cannot supply. All that I can do is to give you information about myself with absolute candor, so far as I have come to understand myself. It will be easy for you to get reports from others in regard to my public conduct; I content myself, therefore, with an account of what underlay that—my inner life, and especially my relations to Christianity. To do that I must take a start far back.

In earliest childhood I was estranged from my parents' house, and at no time became entirely at home there again; and my education from the beginning was conducted on the assumption that everything is subordinate to the cultivation of the intelligence and the early acquisition of positive sciences.

After a course of religious teaching, irregularly attended and not comprehended, I had at the time of my confirmation by Schleiermacher, on my sixteenth birthday no belief other than a bare deism, which was not long free from pantheistic elements. It was at about this time that I, not through indifference, but after mature consideration, ceased to pray every evening, as I had been in the habit of doing since childhood; because prayer seemed inconsistent with my view of God's nature; saying to myself: either God himself, being omnipresent, is the cause of everything—even of every thought and volition of mine—and so in a sense offers prayers to himself through me, or, if my will is independent of God's will, it implies arrogance and a doubt as to the inflexibility as well as the perfection of the divine determination to believe that it can be influenced by human appeals. When not quite seventeen years old I went to Göttingen University. During the next eight years I seldom saw the home of my parents; my father indulgently refrained from interference; my mother censured me from far away when I neglected my studies and professional work, probably in the conviction that she must leave the rest to guidance from above: with this exception I was literally cut off from the counsel and instruction of others. In this period, when studies which ambition at times led me to prosecute zealously—or emptiness and satiety, the inevitable companions of my way of living—brought me nearer to the real meaning of life and eternity, it was in old-world philosophies, uncomprehended writings of Hegel, and particularly in Spinoza's seeming mathematical clearness, that I sought for peace of mind in that which the human understanding cannot comprehend. But it was loneliness that first led me to reflect on these things persistently, when I went to Kniephof, after my mother's death, five or six years ago. Though at first my views did not materially change at Kniephof, yet conscience began to be more audible in the solitude, and to represent that many a thing was wrong which I had before regarded as permissible. Yet my struggle for insight was still confined to the circle of the understanding, and led me, while reading such writings as those of Strauss, Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer, only deeper into the blind alley of doubt.

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[2] From *The Love Letters of Bismarck*. Permission Harper & Brothers, New York.

I was firmly convinced that God has denied to man the possibility of true knowledge; that it is presumption to claim to understand the will and plans of the Lord of the World; that the individual must await in submission the judgment that his Creator will pass upon him in death, and that the will of God becomes known to us on earth solely through conscience, which He has given us as a special organ for feeling our way through the gloom of the world. That I found no peace in these views I need not say. Many an hour have I spent in disconsolate depression, thinking that my existence and that of others is purposeless and unprofitable—perchance only a casual product of creation, coming and going like dust from rolling wheels.

About four years ago I came into close companionship, for the first time since my school-days, with Moritz Blankenburg, and found in him, what I had never had till then in my life, a friend; but the warm zeal of his love strove in vain to give me by persuasion and discussion what I lacked—faith. But through Moritz I made acquaintance with the Triglaf family and the social circle around it, and found in it people who made me ashamed that, with the scanty light of my understanding, I had undertaken to investigate things which such superior intellects accepted as true and holy with childlike trust. I saw that the members of this circle were, in their outward life, almost perfect models of what I wished to be. That confidence and peace dwelt in them did not surprise me, for I had never doubted that these were companions of belief; but belief cannot be had for the asking, and I thought I must wait submissively to see whether it would come to me. I soon felt at home in that circle, and was conscious of a satisfaction that I had not before experienced—a family life that included me, almost a home.

I was meanwhile brought into contact with certain events in which I was not an active participant, and which, as other people's secrets, I cannot communicate to you, but which stirred me deeply. Their practical result was that the consciousness of the shallowness and worthlessness of my aim in life became more vivid than ever. Through the advice of others, and through my own impulse, I was brought to the point of reading the Scriptures more consecutively and with resolute restraint, sometimes, of my own judgment. That which stirred within me came to life when the news of the fatal illness of our late friend in Cardemin tore the first ardent prayer from my heart, without subtle questionings as to its reasonableness. God did not grant my prayer on that occasion; neither did He utterly reject it, for I have never again lost the capacity to bring my requests to Him, and I feel within me, if not peace, at least confidence and courage such as I never knew before.

I do not know what value you will attach to this emotion, which my heart has felt for only two months; I only hope that it may not be lost, whatever your decision in regard to me may be—a hope of which I could give you no better assurance than by undeviating frankness and loyalty in that which I have now disclosed to you, and to no one else hitherto, with the conviction that God favors the sincere.

I refrain from any assurance of my feelings and purposes with reference to your daughter, for the step I am taking speaks of them louder and more eloquently than words can. So, too, no promises for the future would be of service to you, since you know the untrustworthiness of the human heart better than I, and the only security I offer for the welfare of your daughter lies in my prayer for God's blessing. As a matter of history I would only observe that, after I had seen fräulein Johanna repeatedly in Cardemin, after the trip we made together this summer, I have only been in doubt as to whether the attainment of my desires would be reconcilable with the happiness and peace of your daughter, and whether my self-confidence was not greater than my ability when I believed that she could find in me what she would have a right to look for in her husband. Very recently, however, together with my reliance on God's grace, the resolution which I now carry out has also become fixed in me, and I kept silent when I saw you in Zimmerhausen only because I had more to say than I could express in conversation. In view of the importance of the matter and the great sacrifice which it will involve for you and your wife in separation from your daughter, I can scarcely hope that you will give a favorable decision at once, and only beg that you will not refuse me an opportunity for explanation upon any considerations which might dispose you to reject my suit, before you utter a positive refusal.

There is doubtless a great deal that I have not said, or not said fully enough, in this letter, and I am, of course, ready to give you exact and faithful information as to everything you may desire to know; I think I have told what is most important.

I beg you to convey to your wife my respectful compliments, and to accept kindly the assurance of my love and esteem.

BISMARCK.

Schönhausen, February 1, '47.

I had only waited for daylight to write you, my dear heart, and with the light came your little green spirit-lamp to make my lukewarm water seethe—though this time it found it ready to boil over. Your pity for my restless nights at present is premature, but I shall give you credit for it. The Elbe still lies turbid and growling in her ice-bonds: the spring's summons to burst them is not yet loud enough for her. I say to the weather: "If you would only be cold or warm! But you stay continually at freezing-point, and at this rate the matter may long drag on." For the present my activity is limited to sending out, far and wide, from the warm seat at the writing-table, diverse conjurations, whose magic starts quantities of fascines, boards, wheelbarrows, etc., from inland towards the Elbe, perchance to serve as a prosaic dam in restraint of the poetical foaming of the flood. After I had spent the morning in this useful rather than agreeable correspondence, my resolve was to chat away comfortably through the evening with you, beloved one, as though we were sitting on the sofa in the red drawing-room; and with sympathetic attention to my desire the mail kept for my enjoyment precisely at this gossiping hour your letter, which I should have received by good rights day before yesterday. You know, if you were able to decipher my inexcusably scrawled note[3] from Schlawe, how I struck a half-drunken crowd of hussar officers there, who disturbed me in my writing. In the train I had, with my usual bad luck, a lady *vis-à-vis,* and beside me two very stout, heavily fur-clad passengers, the nearer of whom was a direct descendant of Abraham into the bargain, and put me in a bitter humor against all his race by a disagreeable movement of his left elbow.

I found my brother in his dressing-gown, and he employed the five minutes of our interview very completely, according to his habit, in emptying a woolsack full of vexatious news about Kniephof before me: disorderly inspectors, a lot of damaged sheep, distillers drunk every day, thoroughbred colts (the prettiest, of course) come to grief, and rotten potatoes, fell in a rolling torrent from his obligingly opened mouth upon my somewhat travel-worn self. On my brother's account I must affect and utter some exclamations of terror and complaint, for my indifferent manner on receiving news of misfortune vexes him, and as long as I do not express surprise he has ever new and still worse news in stock. This time he attained his object, at least in my inner man, and when I took my seat next to the Jewish elbow in green fur I was in a right bad humor; especially the colt distressed me—an animal as pretty as a picture and three years old.

Not before getting out of doors did I become conscious of the ingratitude of my heart, and the thought of the unmerited happiness that had become mine a fortnight earlier again won the mastery in me. In Stettin I found drinking, gambling friends. William Ramin took occasion to say, *apropos* of a remark about reading the Bible, "Tut! In Reinfeld I'd speak like that, too, if I were in your place, but to believe you can impose on your oldest acquaintances is amusing." I found my sister very well and full of joy about you and me. She wrote to you, I think, before she received your letter. Arnim is full of anxiety lest I become "pious." He kept looking at me all the time earnestly and thoughtfully, with sympathetic concern, as one looks at a dear friend whom one would like to save and yet almost gives up for lost. I have seldom seen him so tender. Very clever people have a curious manner of viewing the world. In the evening (I hope you did not write so late) I drank your health in the foaming grape-juice of Sillery, in company with half a dozen Silesian counts, Schaffgotsch and others, at the Hôtel

[3] This note has been lost.

de Rome, and convinced myself Friday morning that the ice on the Elbe was still strong enough to bear my horse's weight, and that, so far as the freshet was concerned, I might today be still at your blue or black side[4] if other current official engagements had not also claimed my presence. Snow has fallen very industriously all day long, and the country is white once more, without severe cold. When I arrived it was all free from snow on this side of Brandenburg; the air was warm and the people were ploughing; it was as though I had traveled out of winter into opening spring, and yet within me the short springtime had changed to winter, for the nearer I came to Schönhausen the more oppressive I found the thought of entering upon the old loneliness once more, for who knows how long. Pictures of a wasted past arose in me as though they would banish me from you. I was on the verge of tears, as when, after a school vacation, I caught sight of Berlin's towers from the train.

The comparison of my situation with that in which I was on the 10th, when I traveled the same line in the opposite direction; the conviction that my solitude was, strictly speaking, voluntary, and that I could at any time, albeit through a resolve smacking of insubordination and a forty hours' journey, put an end to it, made me see once more that my heart is ungrateful, dismayed, and resentful; for soon I said to myself, in the comfortable fashion of the accepted lover, that even here I am no longer lonely, and I was happy in the consciousness of being loved by you, my angel, and, in return for the gift of your love, of belonging to you, not merely in vassalage, but with my inmost heart. On reaching the village I felt more distinctly than ever before what a beautiful thing it is to have a home—a home with which one is identified by birth, memory, and love. The sun shone bright on the stately houses of the villagers, and their portly inmates in long coats and the gayly dressed women in short skirts gave me a much more friendly greeting than usual; on every face there seemed to be a wish for my happiness, which I invariably converted into thanks to you. Gray-haired Bellin's[5] fat face wore a broad smile, and the trusty old soul shed tears as he patted me paternally on the back and expressed his satisfaction; his wife, of course, wept most violently; even Odin was more demonstrative than usual, and his paw on my coat-collar proved incontestably that it was muddy weather. Half an hour later Miss Breeze was galloping with me on the Elbe, manifestly proud to carry your affianced, for never before did she so scornfully smite the earth with her hoof. Fortunately you cannot judge, my heart, in what a mood of dreary dulness I used to reenter my house after a journey; what depression overmastered me when the door of my room yawned at me and the mute furniture in the silent apartments confronted me, bored like myself. The emptiness of my existence was never clearer to me than in such moments, until I seized a book—though none of them was sad enough for me—or mechanically engaged in any routine work.

My preference was to come home at night, so that I could go to sleep immediately.[6] Ach, Gott! —and now? What a different view I take of everything—not merely that which concerns you as well, and because it concerns you, or will concern you also (although I have been bothering myself for two days with the question where your writing-desk will stand), but my whole view of life is a new one, and I am cheerful and interested even in my work on the dike and police matters. This change, this new life, I owe, next to God, to you, ma très chère, mon adorée Jeanneton—to you who do not heat me occasionally, like an alcohol flame, but work in my heart like warming fire. Some one is knocking.

Visit from the co-director, who complains of the people who will not pay their school taxes. The man asks me whether my *fiancée* is tall.

"Oh yes; rather."

"Well, an acquaintance of mine saw you last summer with several ladies in the Harz Mountains, and you preferred to converse with the tallest, that must have been your *fiancée*."

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[4] In subsequent letters he speaks of her "blue gray-black eyes."

[5] Inspector at Schönhausen.

[6] Compare the enclosure, in which I used often to find the expression of my inmost thought. Now, never any more. (Enclosed was a copy of Byron's poem, "To Inez.")

The tallest woman in your party was, I fancy, Frau von Mittelstädt.

* * * The Harz! The Harz!

After a thorough consultation with Frau Bellin, I have decided to make no special changes here for the present, but to wait until we can hear the wishes of the lady of the house in the matter, so that we may have nothing to be sorry for. In six months I hope we shall know what we have to do.

It is impossible as yet to say anything definite about our next meeting. Just now it is raining; if that continues the Elbe may be played out in a week or two, and then. * * * Still no news whatever about the Landtag. Most cordial greetings and assurances of my love to your parents, and the former —the latter, too, if you like—to all your cousins, women friends, etc. What have you done with Aennchen?[7] My forgetting the Versin letters disturbs me; I did not mean to make such a bad job of it. Have they been found Farewell, my treasure, my heart, consolation of my eyes.

Your faithful BISMARCK.

Another picture, a description of a storm in the Alps, which catches my eye as I turn over the pages of the book, and pleases me much:

"The sky is changed, and such a change! O night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder; not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now has found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud—
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud.

And this is in the night:—most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and fair delight—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black, and now the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth."

On such a night the suggestion comes uncommonly near to me that I wish to be *a sharer in the delight, a portion of tempest, of night*[8]*; mounted on a runaway horse, to dash down the cliffs into the falls of the Rhine, or something similar. A pleasure of that kind, unfortunately, one can enjoy but once in this life. There is something intoxicating in nocturnal storms. Your nights, dearest, I hope you regard, however, as sent for slumber, not for writing*.[9] I see with regret that I write English still more illegibly than German. Once more, farewell, my heart. Tomorrow noon I am invited to be the guest of Frau Brauchitsch, presumably so that I may be duly and thoroughly questioned about you and yours. I'll tell them as much as I please. *Je t'embrasse mille fois.*

Your own

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[7] Fraülein von Blumenthal, afterwards Frau von Böhn.

[8] English in the original.

[9] English in the original.

B.

Schönhausen, February 7, '47.

My Heart,—Just returned through a wild, drifting snow-storm from an appointment (which unfortunately was occasioned by the burning out of a poor family). I have warmed myself at your dear letter; in the twilight, even, I recognized your "Right honorable." All my limbs are twitching with eagerness to be off to Berlin again today, and to characterize the dikes and floods in terms of the unutterable Poberow[10] dialect. The inexorable thermometer stands at 2 below freezing-point, accompanied with howling wind and large flakes, as though it would soon rain. What is duty! Compare Falstaff's expressions touching honor. At any rate, I shall write you straightway, even if I ruin myself in postage, and no sensible thoughts find their way through the débris of the fire that still has possession of my imagination. After reading your last remark I have just lit my cigar and stirred the ink. First, like a business-man, to answer your letter. I begin with a request smacking of the official desk—namely, that when you write you will, if you please, expressly state what letters you have received from me, giving their dates; otherwise one is uncertain as to the regular forwarding of them, as I am in doubt whether you have received my first letter, which I wrote the day of my arrival here, while on a business trip, in Jerichow, if I mistake not, on very bad paper, Friday, the 29th of January. I am very thankful that you do not write in the evening, my love, even if I am myself to suffer thereby. Every future glance into your gray-blue-black eye with its large pupil will compensate me for possibly delayed or shortened letters.

If I could only dream of you when you do of me! But recently I do not dream at all—shockingly healthy and prosaic; or does my soul fly to Reinfeld in the night and associate with yours? In that case it can certainly not dream here; but it ought to tell about its journey in the morning, whereas the wayward thing is as silent about its nocturnal employments as though it, too, slept like a badger.

Your reminder of the bore, Fritz, with the letter-pouch transports me to Reinfeld and makes me long still more eagerly for the time when I can once again hug my black Jeannette for my good-morning at the desk. About the letter with the strange address, evidently in a woman's hand, I should like to tell you a romantic story, but I must destroy every illusion with the explanation that it comes from a man who used to be a friend of mine, who, if I do not mistake, once in Kniephof took a copy of an Italian address that I received. Again a curtain behind which one fancies there is all the poetry in the world, and finds the flattest prose. (I once saw in Aix-la-Chapelle, while strolling about the stage, the Princess of Eboli, after I had just spent my sympathy upon her as she lay overwhelmed and fainting at the queen's feet in one of the scenes, eating bread and butter and cracking bad jokes behind the scenes.) That cousin Woedtke is fond of me, and that the Versin sausage and letter affair is all right, I am glad to learn.

I need not assure you that I have the most heartfelt sympathy for the sufferings of your good mother; I hope rest and summer will affect her health favorably, and that she will recover after a while, with the joy of seeing her children happy. When she is here she shall not have any steps to go up to reach you, and shall live directly next to you.

Why do you wear mournful black in dress and heart, my angel? Cultivate the green of hope that today made right joyous revelry in me at sight of its external image, when the gardener placed the first messengers of spring, hyacinths and crocus, on my window-ledge. Et dis-moi donc, pourquoi es-tu paresseuse? Pourquoi ne fais-tu pas de musique? I fancied you playing c-dur when the hollow, melting wind howls through the dry twigs of the lindens, and d-moll when the snow-flakes chase in fantastic whirls around the corners of the old tower, and, after their desperation is spent, cover the graves with their winding-sheet. Oh, were I but Keudell, I'd play now all day long, and the tones would bear me over the Oder, Rega, Persante, Wipper—I know not whither. A propos de paresse,

[10] Von Puttkamer Poberow.

I am going to permit myself to make one more request of you, but with a preface. When I ask you for anything I add (do not take it for blasphemy or mockery) thy will be done—*your* will, I mean; and I do not love you less, nor am I vexed with you for a second if you do not fulfil my request. I love you as you are, and as you choose to be. After I have, by way of preface, said so much with inmost, unadorned truth, without hypocrisy or flattery, I beg you to pay some attention to French—not much, but somewhat—by reading French things that interest you, and, what is not clear to you, make it clear with the dictionary. If it bores you, stop it; but, lest it bore you, try it with books that interest you, whatever they may be—romances or anything else. I do not know your mother's views on such reading, but in my opinion there is nothing that you cannot read to yourself. I do not ask this for my own sake, for we will understand each other in our mother tongue, but in your intercourse with the world you will not seldom find occasions when it will be disagreeable or even mortifying if you are unfamiliar with French. I do not know, indeed, to what degree this is true of you, but reading is in any case a way to keep what you have and to acquire more. If it pleases you, we shall find a way for you to become more fluent in talking, than, as you say, you are now. If you do not like it, rely with entire confidence on the preface to my request.

I wrote to poor Moritz yesterday, and, after reading your description of his sadness, my letter lies like a stone on my conscience, for, like a heartless egotist, I mocked his pain by describing my happiness, and in five pages did not refer to his mourning by even a syllable, speaking of myself again and again, and using him as father-confessor. He is an awkward comforter who does not himself feel pain sympathetically, or not vividly enough. My first grief was the passionate, selfish one at the loss I had sustained; for Marie,[11] so far as she is concerned, I do not feel it, because I know that she is well provided for, but that my sympathy with the suffering of my warmest friend, to whom I owe eternal thanks, is not strong enough to produce a word of comfort, of strong consolation from overflowing feeling, that burdens me sorely. Weep not, my angel; let your sympathy be strong and full of confidence in God; give him real consolation with encouragement, not with tears, and, if you can, doubly, for yourself and for your thankless friend whose heart is just now filled with you and has room for nothing else. Are you a withered leaf, a faded garment? I will see whether my love can foster the verdure once more, can brighten up the colors. You must put forth fresh leaves, and the old ones I shall lay between the pages of the book of my heart so that we may find them when we read there, as tokens of fond recollection. You have fanned to life again the coal that under ashes and débris still glowed in me; it shall envelop you in life-giving flames.

Le souper est servi, the evening is gone, and I have done nothing but chat with you and smoke: is that not becoming employment for the dike-captain? Why not?

A mysterious letter from – lies before me. He writes in a tone new for him; admits that he perceives that he did many a wrong to his first wife; did not always rightly guide and bear with her weakness; was no prop to the "child," and believes himself absolved by this severe castigation. *Qu'est-ce qu'il me chante*? Has the letter undergone transformation in the Christian climate of Reinfeld, or did it leave the hand of this once shallow buffoon in its present form? He asserts, moreover, that he lives in a never dreamed of happiness with his present wife, whose acquaintance he made a week before the engagement, and whom he married six weeks after the same event: a happiness which his first marriage has taught him rightly to prize. Do you know the story of the French tiler who falls from the roof, and, in passing the second story, cries out, "Ça va bien, pourvu que ça dure?" Think, only, if we had been betrothed on the 12th of October '44, and, on November 23d, had married: What anxiety for mamma!

The English poems of mortal misery trouble me no more now; that was of old, when I looked out into nothing—cold and stiff, snow-drifts in my heart. Now a black cat plays with it in the sunshine, as though with a rolling skein, and I like to see its rolling. I will give you, at the end of this letter, a

[11] Frau von Blanckenburg

few more verses belonging to that period, of which fragmentary copies are still preserved, as I see, in my portfolio. You may allow me to read them still; they harm me no more. Thine eyes have still (and will always have) a charm for me.[12] Please write me in your next letter about the uncertain marriage-plans. I believe, *by Jove!*[13] that the matter is becoming serious. Until the day is fixed, it still seems to me as though we had been dreaming; or have I really passed a fortnight in Reinfeld, and held you in these arms of mine? Has Finette been found again? Do you remember our conversation when we went out with her in leash—when you, little rogue, said you would have "given me the mitten" had not God taken pity on me and permitted me at least a peep through the keyhole of His door of mercy! That came into my mind when I was reading I Cor. vii. 13 and 14 yesterday.

A commentator says of the passage that, in all relations of life, Christ regards the kingdom of God as the more powerful, victorious, finally overcoming all opposition, and the kingdom of darkness as powerless, falling in ruins ever more and more. Yet, how do most of you have so little confidence in your faith, and wrap it carefully in the cotton of isolation, lest it take cold from any draught of the world; while others are vexed with you, and proclaim that you are people who esteem yourselves too holy to come into contact with publicans, etc. If every one should think so who believes he has found truth—and many serious, upright, humble seekers do believe they find it elsewhere, or in another form—what a Pennsylvania solitary-confinement prison would God's beautiful earth become, divided up into thousands and thousands of exclusive coteries by insuperable partitions! Compare, also, Rom. xiv. 22 and xv. 2; also, particularly, I Cor. iv. 5; viii. 2; ix. 20; also xii. 4 and the following; further, xiii. 2; all in the First Ep. to the Cor., which seems to me to apply to the subject. We talked, during that walk, or another one, a great deal about "the sanctity of doing good works." I will not inundate you with Scripture passages in this connection, but only tell you how splendid I find the Epistle of James. (Matt. xxv. 34 and following; Rom. ii. 6; II Cor. v. 10; Rom. ii. 13; I Epistle of John iii. 7, and countless others.) It is, indeed, unprofitable to base arguments upon separate passages of Scripture apart from their connection; but there are many who are honestly striving, and who attach more importance to passages like James ii. 14 than to Mark xvi. 16, and for the latter passage offer expositions, holding them to be correct, which do not literally agree with yours. To what interpretation does the word "faith" not lend itself, both when taken alone and in connection with that which the Scriptures command us "to believe," in every single instance where they employ the word! Against my will, I fall into spiritual discussion and controversies. Among Catholics the Bible is read not at all, or with great precaution, by the laity; it is expounded only by the priests, who have concerned themselves all their lives with the study of the original sources. In the end, all depends upon the interpretation. Concert in Bütow amuses me: the idea of Bütow is, to my mind, the opposite of all music.

I have been quite garrulous, have I not? Now I must disturb some document-dust, and sharpen my pen afresh to the police-official style, for the president of the provincial court and the government. Could I but enclose myself herewith, or go along in a salmon-basket as mail-matter! Till we meet again, dearest black one.[14] I love you, *c'est tout dire*.

BISMARCK.

(I am forgetting the English verses):

"Sad dreams, as when the spirit of our youth
Returns in sleep, sparkling with all the truth
And innocence, once ours, and leads us back
In mournful mockery over the shining track

[12] English in the original.

[13] English in the original.

[14] English in the original.

Of our young life, and points out every ray
Of hope and peace we've lost upon the way!"

By Moore, I think; perhaps Byron.

"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

Cordial remembrances to your parents and the Reddentin folk.
Schönhausen, February 23, '47.

My Angel!—I shall not send this letter on its way tomorrow, it's true, but I do want to make use of the few unoccupied minutes left me to satisfy the need I am conscious of every hour, to communicate with you, and forthwith to compose a "Sunday letter" to you once more. Today I have been "on the move" all day long. "The Moorish king rode up and down," unfortunately not "through Granada's royal town," but between Havelberg and Jerichow, on foot, in a carriage, and on horseback, and got mighty cold doing so—because, after the warm weather of the last few days, I had not made the slightest preparation to encounter five degrees below freezing, with a cutting north wind, and was too much in haste or too lazy to mount the stairs again when I noticed the fresh air. During the night it had been quite endurable and superb moonlight. A beautiful spectacle it was, too, when the great fields of ice first set themselves massively in motion, with explosions like cannon-shots, shattering themselves against one another; they rear, shoving over and under each other; they pile up house-high, and sometimes build dams obliquely across the Elbe, in front of which the pent stream rises until it breaks through them with rage. Now are they all broken to pieces in the battle—the giants—and the water very thickly covered with ice-cakes, the largest of which measure several square rods, which it bears out to the free sea like shattered chains, with grumbling, clashing noises. This will go on so for about three days more, until the ice that comes from Bohemia, which passed the bridge at Dresden several days ago, has gone by. (The danger is that the ice-cakes by jamming together may make a dam, and the stream rise in front of this—often ten to fifteen feet in a few hours.) Then comes the freshet from the mountains which floods the bed of the Elbe, often a mile in width, and is dangerous in itself, owing to its volume. How long that is to last we cannot tell beforehand. The prevailing cold weather, combined with the contrary sea wind, will certainly retard it. It may easily last so long that it will not be worth while to go to Reinfeld before the 20th. If only eight days should be left me, would you have me undertake it, nevertheless?—or will you wait to have me without interruption after the 20th, or perhaps 18th? It is true that *fiancé* and dike-captain are almost incompatible; but were I not the latter, I have not the slightest idea who would be. The revenues of the office are small, and the duties sometimes laborious; the gentlemen of the neighborhood, however, are deeply concerned, and yet without public spirit. And even if one should be discovered who would undertake it for the sake of the title, which is, strange to say, much desired in these parts, yet there is no one here (may God forgive me the offence) who would not be either unfit for the business or faint-hearted. A fine opinion, you will think, I have of myself, that I only am none of this; but I assert with all of my native

modesty that I have all these faults in less degree than the others in this part of the country—which is, in fact, not saying much.

I have not yet been able to write to Moritz, and yet I must send something to which he can reply, inasmuch as my former letter has not as yet brought a sign of life. Or have you crowded me out of his heart, and do you fill it alone? The little pale-faced child is not in danger, I hope. That is a possibility in view of which I am terrified whenever I think of it—that as a crowning misfortune of our most afflicted friend, this thread of connection with Marie might be severed. But she will soon be a year and a half old, you know; she has passed the most dangerous period for children. Will you mope and talk of warm hands and cold love if I pay a visit to Moritz on my next journey, instead of flying to Reinfeld without a pause as is required of a loving youth?

That you are getting pale, my heart, distresses me. Do you feel well otherwise, physically, and of good courage? Give me a bulletin of your condition, your appetite, your sleep. I am surprised also that Hedwig Dewitz has written to you—such a heterogeneous nature, that can have so little in common with you. She was educated with my sister for several years in Kniephof, although she was four or five years the elder of the two. Either she loves you—which I should find quite easy to explain—or has other prosaic intentions. I fancy that she, as is quite natural, does not feel at home in her father's house; she has, therefore, always made her home with others for long periods and with satisfaction.

In your letter which lies before me I come upon "self-control" again. That is a fine acquisition for one who may profit by it, but surely to be distinguished from compulsion. It is praiseworthy and amiable to wean one's self from tasteless or provoking outbursts of feeling, or to give to them a more ingratiating form; but I call it self-constraint—which makes one sick at heart—when one stifles his own feelings in himself. In social intercourse one may practise it, but not we two between ourselves. If there be tares in the field of our heart, we will mutually exert ourselves so to dispose of them that their seed cannot spring up; but, if it does, we will openly pull it up, but not cover it artificially with straw and hide it—that harms the wheat and does not injure the tares. Your thought was, I take it, to pull them up unaided, without paining me by the sight of them; but let us be in this also one heart and one flesh, even if your little thistles sometimes prick my fingers. Do not turn your back on them nor conceal them from me. You will not always take pleasure in my big thorns, either—so big that I cannot hide them; and we must pull at them both together, even though our hands bleed. Moreover, thorns sometimes bear very lovely flowers, and if yours bear roses we may perhaps let them alone sometimes. "The best is foe to the good"—in general, a very true saying; so do not have too many misgivings about all your tares, which I have not yet discovered, and leave at least a sample of them for me. With this exhortation, so full of unction, I will go to sleep, although it has just struck ten, for last night there was little of it; the unaccustomed physical exercise has used me up a bit, and tomorrow I am to be in the saddle again before daylight. Very, very tired am I, like a child.

Schönhausen, March 14, 1847.

Jeanne la Méchante!—What is the meaning of this? A whole week has passed since I heard a syllable from you, and today I seized the confused mass of letters with genuine impatience—seven official communications, a bill, two invitations, one of which is for a theatre and ball at Greifenberg, but not a trace of Zuckers (the Reinfeld post-office) and "Hochwohlgeboren."[15] I could not believe my eyes, and had to look through the letters twice; then I set my hat quite on my right ear and took a two hours' walk on the highway in the rain, without a cigar, assailed by the most conflicting sentiments—"a prey to violent emotions," as we are accustomed to say in romances. I have got used to receiving my two letters from you regularly every week, and when once we have acquired the habit of a thing we look upon that as our well-won right, an injury to which enrages us. If I only knew against whom I should direct my wrath—against Böge, against the post-office, or against you, *la chatte la plus noire*, inside and out. And why don't you write? Are you so exhausted with the effort you made in sending

[15] "Right honorable," a common form of address on letters. B. refers more than once to her distinctive way of writing this title.

two letters at a time on Friday of last week? Ten days have gone by since then—time enough to rest yourself. Or do you want to let me writhe, while you feast your eyes on my anxiety, tigress! after speaking to me in your last letters about scarlet and nervous fevers, and after I had laid such stress on my maxim of never believing in anything bad before it forces itself upon me as incontestable? We adhere firmly to our maxims only so long as they are not put to the test; when that happens we throw them away, as the peasant did his slippers, and run off on the legs that nature gave us. If you have the disposition to try the virtue of my maxims, then I shall never again give utterance to any of them, lest I be caught lying; for the fact is that I do really feel somewhat anxious. With fevers in Reddis, to let ten days pass without writing is very horrible of you, if you are well. Or can it be that you did not receive on Thursday, as usual, my letter that I mailed on Tuesday in Magdeburg, and, in your indignation at this, resolved not to write to me for another week? If *that* is the state of affairs, I can't yet make up my mind whether to scold or laugh at you. The worst of it now is that, unless some lucky chance brings a letter from you directly to Stolp, I shall not have any before Thursday, for, as I remember it, there is no mail leaving you Saturday and Sunday, and I should have received Friday's today. If you have not sworn off writing altogether and wish to reply to this letter, address me at Naugard. * * *

Had another visitor, and he stayed to supper and well into the night—my neighbor, the town-counsellor Gärtner. People think they must call on each other Sunday evening, and can have nothing else to do. Now that all is quiet in the night, I am really quite disturbed about you and your silence, and my imagination, or, if not that, then the being whom you do not like to have me name, shows me with scornful zeal pictures of everything that could happen. Johanna, if you were to fall sick now, it would be terrible beyond description. At the thought of it, I fully realize how deeply I love you, and how deeply the bond that unites us has grown into me. I understand what you call loving much. When I think of the possibility of separation—and possible it is still—I should never have been so lonely in all my dreary, lonely life.

What would Moritz's situation be, compared with that?—for he has a child, a father, a sister, dear and intimate friends in the neighborhood. I have no one within forty miles with whom I should be tempted to talk more than that which politeness demands; only a sister—but a happily married one with children is really one no longer, at least for a brother who is single. For the first time I am looking the possibility straight in the eyes that you might be taken away from me, that I might be condemned to inhabit these empty rooms without a prospect of your sharing them with me, with not a soul in all the surrounding region who would not be as indifferent to me as though I had never seen him. I should, indeed, not be so devoid to comfort in myself as of old, but I should also have lost something that I used not to know—a loving and beloved heart, and at the same time be separated from all that which used to make life easy in Pomerania through habit and friendship. A very egotistical line of thought and way of looking at things this discloses, you will say. Certainly, but Pain and Fear are egotists, and, in cases like that referred to, I never think the deceased, but only the survivors, are to be pitied. But who speaks of dying? All this because you have not written for a week; and then I have the assurance to lecture you for gloomy forebodings, etc.! If you had only not spoken of the deadly fevers in your last letter. In the evening I am always excited, in the loneliness, when I am not tired. Tomorrow, in bright daylight, in the railway carriage, I shall perhaps grasp your possible situation with greater confidence.

Be rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. All the angels will guard you, my beloved heart, so that we shall soon meet again with joy. Farewell, and salute your parents. I wrote your father this morning. Your faithful BISMARCK.

Berlin, Friday, May 15, '47.

Dear Heart,—Your father gave me your letter this morning at the session, and in consequence I hardly know what subject was discussed, or, at least, lacked energy to form a clear, conscious conception of it. My thoughts were in Reinfeld and my heart full to overflowing of care. I am submissive in all that may happen, but I cannot say that I should be submissive with gladness. The

chords of my soul become relaxed and toneless when I think of all possibilities. I am not, indeed, of that self-afflicting sort that carefully and artfully destroys its own hope and constructs fear, and I do not believe that it is God's will to separate us now—for every reason I cannot believe it; but I know that you are suffering, and I am not with you, and yet if I were there, I could perhaps contribute something to your tranquillity, to your serenity, were it only that I should ride with you—for you have no one else for that. It is so contrary to all my views of gallantry, not to speak of my sentiments for you, that any power whatever should keep me here when I know that you are suffering and I could help and relieve you; and I am still at war with myself to determine what my duty is before God and man. If I am not sooner there, then it is fairly certain that I shall arrive in Reinfeld with your father at Whitsuntide, probably a week from tomorrow. The cause of your illness may lie deeper, or perhaps it is only that the odious Spanish flies have affected you too powerfully. Who is this second doctor you have called in? The frequent changing of doctors, and, on one's own authority, using between-times all sorts of household remedies, or remedies prescribed for others, I consider very bad and wrong. Choose one of the local doctors in whom you have the most confidence, but keep to him, too; do what he prescribes and nothing else, nothing arbitrary; and, if you have not confidence in any of the local men, we will both try to carry through the plan of bringing you here, so that you may have thorough treatment under the direction of Breiers, or some one else. The conduct of your parents in regard to medical assistance, the obstinate refusal of your father, and, allied to that, your mother's arbitrary changing and fixed prejudices, in matters which neither of them understand, seem to me, between ourselves, indefensible. He to whom God has intrusted a child, and an only child at that, must employ for her preservation all the means that God has made available, and not become careless of them through fatalism or self-sufficiency. If writing tires you, ask your mother to send us news. Moreover, it would seem to me very desirable if one of your friends could be prevailed upon to go to you until you are better. Whether a doctor can help you or not—forgive me, but you cannot judge of that by your feelings. God's help is certainly decisive, but it is just He who has given us medicine and physician that, through them, His aid may reach us; and to decline it in this form is to tempt Him, as though the sailor at sea should deprive himself of a helmsman, with the idea that God alone can and will give aid. If He does *not* help us through the means He has placed within our reach, then there is nothing left to do but to bow in silence under His hand. If you should be able to come to Zimmerhausen after Whitsuntide, please write to that effect beforehand if possible. If your illness should become more serious, I shall certainly leave the Landtag, and even if you are confined to your bed I shall be with you. At such a moment I shall not let myself be restrained by such questions of etiquette—that is my fixed resolve. You may be sure of this, that I have long been helping you pray that the Lord may free you from useless despondency and bestow upon you a heart cheerful and submissive to God—and upon me, also; and I have the firm confidence that He will grant our requests and guide us both in the paths that lead to Him. Even though yours may often go to the left around the mountain, and mine to the right, yet they will meet beyond.

The salt water has already gone from here. If you are too weak for riding, then take a drive every day. When you are writing to me, and begin to feel badly in the least, stop immediately; give me only a short bulletin of your health, even if it is but three lines, for, thank Heaven, words can be dispensed with between us—they cannot add or take away anything, since our hearts look into each other, eye to eye, to the very bottom, and though here and there, behind a fold, some new thing is discovered, a strange thing it is not. Dear heart, what stuff you talk (excuse my rudeness) when you say I must not come if I would rather stop in Zimmerhausen or Angermünde at Whitsuntide! How can I take pleasure anywhere while I know that you are suffering, and moreover, am uncertain in what degree? With us two it is a question, not of amusing and entertaining, but only of loving and being together, spiritually, and, if possible, corporeally; and if you should lie speechless for four weeks—sleep, or something else—I would be nowhere else, provided nothing but my wish were to decide. If I could only "come to your door," I would still rather be there than with my dear sister; and the

sadder and sicker you are, so much the more. But the door will not separate me from you, however ill you may be. That is a situation in which the slave mutinies against his mistress. * * *

Your faithful B.

Berlin, Tuesday Morning, May 18, '47.

Dearest,—The last letters from Reinfeld permit me to hope that your illness is not so threatening at the moment as I feared from the first news, although I am continually beset by all possible fears about you, and thus am in a condition of rather complicated restlessness. * * * My letter in which I told you of my election you have understood somewhat, and your dear mother altogether, from a point of view differing from that which was intended. I only wanted to make my position exactly clear to you, and the apologies which to you seemed perhaps forced, as I infer from your mother's letter, you may regard as an entirely natural outflow of politeness. That I did not stand in need of justification with you I very well know; but also that it must affect us both painfully to see our fine plans cancelled. It was my ardent wish to be a member of the Landtag; but that the Landtag and you are fifty miles apart distressed me in spite of the fulfilment of my wish. You women are, and always will be, unaccountable, and it is better to deal with you by word of mouth than by writing. * * * I have ventured once or twice on the speaker's platform with a few words, and yesterday raised an unheard-of storm of displeasure, in that, by a remark which was not explained clearly enough touching the character of the popular uprising of 1813, I wounded the mistaken vanity of many of my own party, and naturally had all the halloo of the opposition against me. The resentment was great, perhaps for the very reason that I told the truth in applying to 1813 the sentence that any one (the Prussian people) who has been thrashed by another (the French) until he defends himself can make no claim of service towards a third person (our King) for so doing. I was reproached with my youth and all sorts of other things. Now I must go over before today's session to see whether, in printing my words, they have not turned them into nonsense. * * *

Yours forever, B.

Berlin, Friday, May 21, '47.

Très chère Jeanneton,—When you receive this letter you will know that I am not to visit you in the holidays. I shall not offer "apologies," but reasons why it is not to be. I should miss certainly four, and probably five, meetings of the estates, and, according to the announcement we have received, the most important proceedings are to be expected at the coming meetings. There it may depend upon one vote, and it would be a bad thing if that were the vote of an absentee; moreover, I have succeeded in acquiring some influence with a great number, or, at least, with some delegates of the so-called court party and the other ultra-conservatives from several provinces, which I employ in restraining them so far as possible from bolting and awkward shying, which I can do in the most unsuspected fashion when once I have plainly expressed my inclination. Then, too, I have some money affairs to arrange, for which I must make use of one of the holidays. The Landtag will either be brought to a close on the 7th of June—and in that case I should stay here until that date—or it will continue in session until all the matters have been arranged, in which event I should stay till after the decision of the important political questions which are now imminent and shall be less conscientious about all the insignificant petitions that follow after, and await their discussion in Reinfeld. It will, besides, be pleasanter for you and the mother not to have us both—the father and me—there at one time, but relieving each other, so that you may be lonely for a shorter time. * * * Your father will tell you how I stirred up the hornet's-nest of the volunteers here lately, and the angry hornets came buzzing to attack me; on the other hand, I had as compensation that many of the older and more intelligent people drew near to me—people I did not know at all—and assured me that I had said nothing but the truth, and that was the very thing that had so incensed the people. But I must take the field now; it is ten o'clock. Please ask your father to write immediately about your health. I should so much

like to hear the opinion of another person besides your mother. I am all right—only much excited. Farewell, and God guard you.

Yours altogether and forever, B.

Berlin, May 26, '47.

Dearest,– * * * If I were only through with the Landtag and the delivery of Kniephof, could embrace you in health, and retire with you to a hunting-lodge in the heart of green forest and the mountains, where I should see no human face but yours! That is my hourly dream; the rattling wheel-work of political life is more obnoxious to my ears every day.—Whether it is your absence, sickness, or my laziness, I want to be alone with you in contemplative enthusiasm for nature. It may be the spirit of contradiction, which always makes me long for what I have not. And yet, I have you, you know, though not quite at hand; and still I long for you. I proposed to your father that I should go with him; we would immediately have our banns published and be married, and both come here. An apartment for married people is empty in this house, and here you could have had sensible physicians and every mortal help. It seemed to him too unbecoming. To you, too? It seems to me still the most sensible thing of all, if you are only strong enough for the trip. If the Landtag should continue longer than to the 6th of June—which I still hope it will not—let us look at the plan more carefully. * * *

Your faithful B.

Schönhausen, Friday, May 28, '47.

My Poor Sick Kitten,– * * * In regard to your illness, your father's letter has calmed my anxiety somewhat as to the danger, but yours was so gloomy and depressed that it affected me decidedly. My dear heart, such sadness as finds expression there is almost more than submission to God's will: the latter cannot, in my opinion, be the cause of your giving up the hope, I might say the wish, that you may be better, physically, and experience God's blessing here on earth as long as may be in accordance with His dispensation. You do not really mean it, either—do you, now?—when, in a fit of melancholy, you say that nothing whatever interests you genuinely, and you neither grieve nor rejoice. That smacks of Byron, rather than of Christianity. You have been sick so often in your life, and have recovered—have experienced glad and sad hours afterwards; and the old God still lives who helped you then. Your letter stirred in me more actively than ever the longing to be at your side, to fondle you and talk with you. * * *

I do not agree with you in your opinion about July, and I would urge you strongly, too, on this point to side with me against your parents. When a wife, you are as likely to be sick as when a *fiancée*—and will be often enough, later; so why not at the beginning, likewise? I shall be with you as often as I am free from pressing engagements, so whether we are together here or in Reinfeld makes no difference in the matter. We do not mean to marry for bright days only: your ill-health seems to me an utterly frivolous impediment. The provisional situation we are now in is the worst possible for me. I scarcely know any longer whether I am living in Schönhausen, in Reinfeld, in Berlin, or on the train. If you fall sick, I shall be a sluggard in Reinfeld all the autumn, or however long our marriage would be postponed, and cannot even associate with you quite unconstrainedly before the ceremony. This matter of a betrothed couple seventy miles apart is not defensible; and, especially when I know you are ailing, I shall take the journey to see you, of course, as often as my public and private affairs permit. It seems to me quite necessary to have the ceremony at the time already appointed; otherwise I should be much distressed, and I see no reason for it. Don't sell Brunette just now; you will ride her again soon. I must be in Berlin at noon for a consultation about plans for tomorrow. Farewell. God strengthen you for joy and hope.

Your most faithful B.

Tomorrow I'll send you a hat.[16]

Berlin, Sunday, May 30, '47.

Très Chère Jeanneton,—Your letter of day before yesterday, which I have just received, has given me profound pleasure and poured into me a refreshing and more joyous essence: your happier love of life is shared by me immediately. I shall begin by reassuring you about your gloomy forebodings of Thursday evening. At the very time when you were afflicted by them I was rejoicing in the happiness I had long missed, of living once more in a comfortable Schönhaus bed, after I had suffered for weeks from the furnished-apartments couch in Berlin. I slept very soundly, although with bad dreams—nightmares—which I ascribed to a late and heavy dinner, inasmuch as the peaceful occupations of the previous day—consisting in viewing many promising crops and well-fed sheep, together with catching up with all sorts of police arrangements relating to dike, fire, and roads—could not have occasioned them. You see how little you can depend upon the maternal inheritance of forebodings. Also in regard to the injurious effects of the Landtag excitement upon my health, I can completely reassure you. I have discovered what I needed—physical exercise—to offset mental excitement and irregular diet. Yesterday I spent in Potsdam, to be present at the water carnival—a lively picture. The great blue basins of the Havel, with the splendid surroundings of castles, bridges, churches, enlivened with several hundred gayly decorated boats, whose occupants, elegantly dressed gentlemen and ladies, bombard one another lavishly with bouquets when they can reach each other in passing or drawing up alongside. The royal pair, the whole court, Potsdam's fashionable people, and half of Berlin whirled in the skein of boats merrily, pell-mell; royalists and liberals all threw dry or wet flowers at the neighbor within reach. Three steamboats at anchor, with musical choruses, constituted the centre of the ever-changing groups. I had the opportunity to salute, hurriedly and with surprise, and throw flowers at, many acquaintances whom I had not seen for a long time. My friend Schaffgotsch is passionately fond of walking, and he was responsible for our returning to the railway station on foot—a distance of almost three miles—at such a pace as I had not kept up in a long while. After that I slept splendidly until nine, and am in a state of physical equilibrium today such as I have not enjoyed for some time. As the rather dusty promenades in the Thiergarten do not give me enough of a shaking-up in the time that I have available for that purpose, Mousquetaire will arrive here tomorrow, so that he, with his lively gallop, may play the counterpart to the tune that politics is dancing in my head. My plan about Berlin and the wedding immediately, etc., was certainly somewhat adventurous when you look at it in cold blood, but I hope there will be no change from July. If I am to be tormented, as you say, with an "unendurable, dispirited, nervous being," it is all the same in the end whether this torment will be imposed upon me by my *fiancée* or—forgive the expression—by my wife. In either case I shall try to bear the misfortune with philosophical steadfastness; for it is to be hoped that it will not be so bad that I must dig deeper and seek Christian consolation for it.

Your very faithful B.

Berlin, July 4, '47.

Juaninina,—Happily, I have left Schönhausen behind me, and do not expect to enter it again without you, *mon ange.* Only some business matters detain me here, which I cannot attend to today because it is Sunday; but I confidently anticipate starting for Angermünde tomorrow at four, and accordingly, unless the very improbable event occurs that I am detained outrageously in Kniephof, shall arrive in Schlawe on Thursday. * * * Farewell, my heart. This is probably the last post-marked paper that you will receive from your *Bräutigam*[17] (I hate the expression). Our banns were cried today for the first time in Schönhausen. Does that not seem strange to you But I had learned your given

[16] English in the original.

[17] *Fiancé.*

names so badly that I could mention only Johanna Eleonore: the other six you must teach me better. Farewell, my heart. Many salutations to the parents.

Your very faithful B.

My Dear,—I believe I can now reassure you most completely as to the safety of the members of the Landtag. The Landtag was opened today, *minus* King and *minus* cheers, with quite calm discussion. In a few words I uttered my protest against the thanks and exultation that were voted to the King, without hostilities becoming overt. Ten thousand men of the city militia were posted for our protection, but not even a slight disturbance occurred at the palace. I could be with you tomorrow, as there is no session, if I had ordered a carriage to meet me at Genthin this evening. But as the whole affair apparently will come to an end this week, perhaps as early as Thursday, I was too stingy to hire a carriage. Brauchitsch was taken violently ill again last evening. * * * Give cordial remembrances to your mother, and be of good courage. I am much calmer than I was: with Vincke one heart and one soul.

Your faithful B.

April 2, '48, Sunday Evening.

I fear, my dear heart, the letter I wrote you last evening reached the post-office so late, through an oversight, that you will not receive it today, and not before tomorrow with this; and it pains me to think that you were disappointed in your hope when the mail was delivered, and now (9 o'clock in the evening) are perhaps troubled with disquietude of all sorts about me. I have spent a tiresome day, tramping the pavement, smoking and intriguing. Do not judge of the few words I spoke yesterday from the report in the Berlin *Times*. I shall manage to bring you a copy of the speech, which has no significance except as showing that I did not wish to be included in the category of certain venal bureaucrats who turned their coat with contemptible shamelessness to suit the wind. The impression it made was piteous, while even my most zealous opponents shook my hand with greater warmth after my declaration. I have just come from a great citizens' meeting, of perhaps a thousand people, in the Milenz Hall, where the Polish question was debated very decorously, very good speeches were made, and on the whole the sentiment seemed to turn against the Poles, especially after a disconsolate Jew had arrived, straight from Samter, who told terrible stories about the lawless excesses of the Poles against the Germans; he himself had been soundly beaten. * * *

Just for my sake do not alarm yourself if each mail does not bring you a letter from me. There is not the slightest probability that a hair of our heads will be touched, and my friends of all kinds overrun me, to share their political wisdom with me, so that I began a letter of one-quarter sheet to Malle this morning at 9, and could not finish before 3. I am living in comfort and economy with Werdeck, only rather far away, in consequence of which I already feel the pavement through my soles. Cordial remembrances to the mother and the Bellins. I am writing on the table d'hôte table of the Hôtel des Princes, and a small salad has just been brought for my supper.

Your very faithful B. April 3, '48.

Schönhausen, August 21, '48. 8.30 P.M.

To HERR VON PUTTKAMER, AT REINFELD, NEAR ZUCKERS, POMERANIA.

Dear Father,—You have just become, with God's gracious help, the grandfather of a healthy, well-formed girl that Johanna has presented me with after hard but short pains. At the moment mother and child are doing as well as one could wish. Johanna lies still and tired, yet cheerful and composed, behind the curtain; the little creature, in the meantime, under coverlets on the sofa, and squalls off and on. I am quite glad that the first is a daughter, but if it had been a cat I should have thanked God on my knees the moment Johanna was rid of it: it is really a desperately hard business. I came from Berlin last night, and this morning we had no premonition of what was to come. At ten in the morning Johanna was seized with severe pains after eating a grape, and the accompanying symptoms

led me to put her at once to bed, and to send in haste to Tangermünde, whence, in spite of the Elbe, Dr. Fricke arrived soon after 12. At 8 my daughter was audible, with sonorous voice. This afternoon I sent Hildebrand off to fetch nurse Boldt from Berlin in a great hurry. I hope you will not postpone your journey now; but earnestly beg dear mother not to make the trip in an exhausting manner. I know, of course, that she has little regard for her own health, but just for Johanna's sake you must take care of yourself, dear mother, so that she may not be anxious on your account. Fricke pleases us very much—experienced and careful. I do not admit visits: Bellin's wife, the doctor, and I attend to everything. Fricke estimates the little one at about nine pounds in weight. Up to the present time, then, everything has gone according to rule, and for that praise and thanks be to the Lord. If you could bring Aennchen with you that would make Johanna very happy.

22. *Morning*.—It is all going very well, only the cradle is still lacking, and the little miss must camp meanwhile on a forage-crib. May God have you and us in his keeping, dear parents.

Until we meet again, presently. B.

Have the kindness to attend to the announcements, save in Berlin and Reddentin, in your neighborhood: Seehof, Satz, and so forth. Johanna sends cordial greetings. She laments her daughter's large nose. I think it no larger than it has a right to be.

Berlin, Saturday, 11 p. m. September 23, '48.

To FRAU VON BISMARCK, SCHÖNHAUSEN, NEAR JERICHOW.

My Pet!—Today at last I have news of your condition, and am very grateful to mother for the letter. * * * I am beginning to be really homesick for you, my heart, and mother's letter today threw me into a mood utterly sad and crippling: a husband's heart, and a father's—at any rate, mine in the present circumstances—does not fit in with the whirl of politics and intrigue. On Monday, probably, the die will be cast here. Either the ministry will be shown to be weak, like its predecessors, and sink out—and against this I shall still struggle—or it will do its duty, and then I do not for a moment doubt that blood will flow on Monday evening or on Tuesday. I should not have believed that the democrats would be confident enough to take up the gage of battle, but all their behavior indicates that they are bent on it. Poles, Frankfort men, loafers, volunteers—all sorts of riffraff are again at hand. They count on the defection of the troops, apparently misled by the talk of individual discontented gabblers among the soldiers; but I think they will make a great mistake. I personally have no occasion to await the thing here, and so to tempt God by asking him to protect me in perils that I have no call to seek. Accordingly, I shall betake my person to a place of safety not later than tomorrow. If nothing important occurs on Monday, on Tuesday I shall reach you; but, if the trouble begins, I should still like to stay near the King. But there you may (in an aside I say "unfortunately") assume with confidence that there will be no danger. You received no letter from me today, because I sent a report about the society to Gärtner, and you will learn from him that I am all right. You will receive this tomorrow, and I shall write again on Monday. Send horses for me on Tuesday. God bless and guard you, my sweetheart.

Your faithful B.

(Postmark, Berlin, November 9, '48.)

My Dearest,—Although I am confident that I shall be with you in person a few hours after this letter, I want to inform you immediately that everything is quiet till now. I go to Potsdam at nine, but must post the letter here now, as otherwise it will not reach you today. Our friends have been steadfast till now, but I cannot take courage yet to believe in anything energetic. I still fear, fear, and the weather is unfavorable, too. Above all, you must not be afraid of anything, if I should stay away today by any chance. The K. may send for me, or some one else in Potsdam earnestly wish that I should stay there to advise upon further measures, the trains may be delayed because the carriages are required for soldiers, and other things of the sort. Then, courage and patience, my heart, in any

event. The God who makes worlds go round can also cover me with his wings. And in P. there is no danger anyhow. So expect me in the evening; if I happen not to come, I shall be all right nevertheless. Cordial remembrances to our cross little mother.

Your most faithful B.

Potsdam, November 10, '48.

My Angel,—Please, please do not scold me for not coming today either; I must try to put through some more matters in relation to the immediate future. At two this afternoon all Wrangel's troops will reach Berlin, disarm the flying corps, maybe, take the disaffected deputies from the *Concertsaal,* and make the city again a royal Prussian one. It is doubtful whether they will come to blows in the process. Contrary to our expectations, everything remained quiet yesterday; the democrats seem to be much discouraged. * * *

Your v.B.

Potsdam, November 14, '48.

My Dear Pet,—Long sleep can certainly become a vice. Senfft has just waked me at nine o'clock, and I cannot yet get the sand out of my eyes. It is quiet here. Yesterday it was said to be the intention to serenade the Queen (on her birthday) with mock music; one company posted there sufficed to make the audacious people withdraw in silence. Berlin is in a state of siege, but as yet not a shot fired. The disarming of the city militia goes on forcibly and very gradually. The meeting in the Schützenhaus was dispersed by soldiers yesterday; six men who were unwilling to go were thrown out. Martial law will be proclaimed over there today. My friend Schramm has been arrested. That Rob. Blum, Fröbel, Messenhauser, have been shot in Vienna, you already know from the newspapers. Good-by, you angel; I must close. Many remembrances to all. The peasants of the neighborhood have declared to the King that if he has need of them he should just call them: that they would come with weapons and supplies to aid his troops, from the Zauch-Belzig-Teltow, the Havelland, and other districts. Mention that in Schönhausen, please, so that it may go the rounds.

Your v.B.

Potsdam, Thursday Morning, November 16, '48.

Dear Nanne!—I did not get your very dear, nice letter of Tuesday morning until yesterday afternoon, but none the less did I right fervently rejoice and take comfort in it, because you are well, at least in your way, and are fond of me. There is no news from here except that Potsdam and Berlin are as quiet as under the former King, and the surrender of arms in B. continues without interruption, with searching of houses, etc. It is possible that there may be scenes of violence incidentally—the troops secretly long for them—but on the whole the "passive resistance" of the democrats seems to me only a seasonable expression for what is usually called fear. Yesterday I dined with the King. The Queen was amiable in the English fashion. The enclosed twig of erica I picked from her sewing-table, and send it to keep you from being jealous. * * *

If a letter from the Stettin bank has arrived, send it to me immediately, please, marked, "To be delivered promptly." If I do not receive it before day after tomorrow, I shall return home, but must then go to Stettin at the beginning of next week. So let horses be sent for me on Saturday afternoon; this evening I unfortunately cannot go to Genthin, because I expect Manteuffel here. * * *

The democrats are working all their schemes in order to represent the opinion of the "people" as hostile to the King; hundreds of feigned signatures. Please ask the town-councillor whether there are not some sensible people in Magdeburg, who care more for their neck, with quiet and good order, than for this outcry of street politicians, and who will send the King a counter-address from Magdeburg. I must close. Give my best regards to mamma, and kiss the little one for me on the left eye. Day after

tomorrow, then, if I do not get the Stettin letter sooner. Good-by, my sweet angel. Yours forever, v.B. Schönhausen, July 18, '49.

My Pet,– * * * I wanted to write you in the evening, but the air was so heavenly that I sat for two hours or so on the bench in front of the garden-house, smoked and looked at the bats flying, just as with you two years ago, my darling, before we started on our trip. The trees stood so still and high near me, the air fragrant with linden blossoms; in the garden a quail whistled and partridges allured, and over beyond Arneburg lay the last pink border of the sunset. I was truly filled with gratitude to God, and there arose before my soul the quiet happiness of a family life filled with love, a peaceful haven, into which a gust of wind perchance forces its way from the storms of the world-ocean and ruffles the surface, but its warm depths remain clear and still so long as the cross of the Lord is reflected in them. Though the reflected image be often faint and distorted, God knows his sign still. Do you give thanks to Him, too, my angel; think of the many blessings He has conferred upon us, and the many dangers against which He has protected us, and, with firm reliance on His strong hand, confront the evil spirits with that when they try to affright your sick fancy with all sorts of images of fear. * * *

Your most faithful v.B.

Brandenburg, July 23, '49.

My Beloved Nanne!—I have just received your short letter of Friday, which reassures me somewhat, as I infer from it that our little one has not the croup, but the whooping-cough, which is, indeed, bad, but not so dangerous as the other. You, poor dear, must have worried yourself sick. It is very fortunate that you have such good assistance from our people and the preacher, yet are you all somewhat lacking in confidence, and increase each other's anxiety instead of comforting one another. Barschall has just told me that all of his children have had this croupy cough—that it was endemic in Posen in his time; his own and other children were attacked by it repeatedly in the course of a few days; that every family had an emetic of a certain kind on hand in the house, and by that means overcame the enemy easily every time, and without permanent consequences for the child. Be comforted, then, and trust in the Lord God; He does, indeed, show us the rod that He has ready for us, but I have the firm belief that He will put it back behind the mirror. As a child I, too, suffered from whooping-cough to the extent of inflammation of the lungs, and yet entirely outgrew it. I have the greatest longing to be with you, my angel, and think day and night about you and your distress, and about the little creature, during all the wild turmoil of the elections. * *

Here in Brandenburg the party of the centre is decidedly stronger than ours; in the country districts I hope it is the other way, yet the fact cannot be overlooked. It is incredible what cock-and-bull stories the democrats tell the peasants about me; in fact, one from the Schönhausen district, three miles from us, confided to me yesterday that, when my name is mentioned among them, a regular shudder goes through them from head to foot, as though they should get a couple of "old-Prussian broadsword strokes" laid across their shoulders. As an opponent said recently, at a meeting, "Do you mean to elect Bismarck Schönhausen, the man 'who, in the countryman's evening prayer, stands hard by the devil'?" (From Grillparzer's *Ahnfrau*.) And yet I am the most soft-hearted person in the world towards the common people. On the whole, my election here in these circumstances seems very doubtful to me; and as I do not believe I shall be elected in the other place either, when I am not there personally, we may live together quietly the rest of the summer, if it be God's will, and I will pet you into recovery from your fright about the child, my darling. Have no anxiety whatever about my personal safety; one hears nothing of the cholera here except in a letter from Reinfeld. The first rule to observe, if it should come nearer to you, is to speak of it as little as possible; by speaking, one always augments the fear of others, and fear of it is the easiest bridge on which it can enter the human body. * * *

God guard you and your child, and all our house.

Your most faithful

v.B.

It is better not to leave the doors all open constantly, for the child often gets shock from the draught, when one is opened, before you can prevent it.

(Postmark, Berlin, August 8, '49.)

My Love,—I sent you a letter this morning, and have just received yours, in reply to which I will add a few more words touching the wet-nurse. If any one besides you and father and mother already knows about the matter, in the house or outside, then tell her the truth unhesitatingly, for in that case it will not stay hidden. If the matter is still known to yourselves alone, let it continue so, but then keep watch on the mail-bag, lest she learn of it unexpectedly. The wet-nurse's sister here is unwilling to have it told to her. I shall look her up today and speak with her. But if you do not wish to keep it secret any longer, when once the child is rid of her cough, you should at any rate look about you for a wet-nurse or woman who, in case of necessity, can take Friederike's place immediately, if the effect is such that the child cannot stay with her. I shall get the sister to give me a letter to her, in which the story will be told exactly and soothingly; this I shall send to you, so that you may make use of it in case of need; that, I think, is the best way she can learn of it. To tell her first that her child is sick, and so forth, I do not consider a good plan, for anxiety has a worse effect than the truth. God will graciously bring us out of this trouble. He holds us with a short rein lest we should become self-confident, but He will not let us fall. Good-by, my best-of-all; pray and keep your head up.

Your very faithful

v.B.

Berlin, August 11, '49.

Mon Ange,—I went to see the wet-nurse's kinsfolk, and there learned that the *fiancé* had written to her last Wednesday and revealed all to her; so the matter will go as God directs. If you chanced to intercept the letter, and on receipt of this have not yet delivered it, please delay it until my next arrives. I could not find the *fiancé* himself, and directed him to come to me this evening, and shall write you what I learn from him. If Friederike knows everything already, my wishes will reach you too late; otherwise I should like, if in accordance with medical opinion, not to have the wet-nurse sent away altogether, but only relieved from service for a few hours or days; if, however, there are scruples on that point, it can't be done, of course. From my many doubts, you will see that I cannot decide the matter very well at this distance. Act quite in accordance with the advice of your mother and the other experienced friends. I give my views, merely, not commands. * * * Be content with these lines for today; be courageous and submissive to God's will, my darling; all will surely go well. Cordial remembrances to the parents.

Your most faithful

v.B.

Berlin, Friday. (Postmark, August 17, '49.)

Dearest Nanne,– * * * Your last letter, in which you inform me of the happy solution of the wet-nurse difficulty, took a real load off my heart; I thanked God for His mercy, and could almost have got drunk from pure gayety. May His protection extend henceforward, too, over you and the little darling. I am living with Hans here at the corner of Taubenstrasse, three rooms and one alcove, quite elegant, but narrow little holes; Hans' bed full of bugs, but mine not as yet—I seem not to be to their taste. We pay twenty-five rix-dollars a month, together. If there were one additional small room, and not two flights of stairs, I could live with you here, and Hans could get another apartment below in this house. But, as it is, it would be too cramped for us. I have talked with the *fiancé* of the wet-nurse, a modest-looking person. He spoke of her with love, and declared in reply to my question that he certainly is willing to marry her. What he wrote about the "white pestilence" is nonsense; no such

sickness exists, least of all in Berlin. The cholera is fast disappearing. I have not heard a word more about it since I came here; one sees it only in newspaper reports. Isn't our mammy jealous because, according to the paper, I have been in company with "strikingly handsome" Englishwomen? Lady Jersey was really something uncommon, such as is usually seen only in *keepsakes*. I would have paid a rix-dollar admission if she had been exhibited for money. She is now in Vienna. For the rest, I have not had a letter from you this long time; my last news comes from Bernhard, who left you a week ago today. God has upheld you meantime, I trust, my angel. It is possible that a letter from you is here. The delivery is always rather irregular: sometimes the letter-carrier brings them, sometimes they are delivered at the Chamber postal station. I will go immediately and inquire if anything is there; then I will take a bath, and return at least ten calls that have been paid me. It is a misery that now the people always receive one—one loses a terrible amount of time at it…. Hans is still inclined to treat me tyrannically, but I resist, and have been so far successful that I sleep as long as I please, whereat the coffee grows cold, however, as he is obstinately bent on not breakfasting alone. So, too, he will not go to bed if I do not go at the same time, but sleeps, just like my little Nanne, on the sofa…. Now, good-by my much-beloved heart. I am very anxious on your account, and often am quite tearful about it. Best regards to the parents.

Your most faithful v.B.

Berlin, Monday. (Postmark, August 28, '49.)

My Darling,—I sit here in my corner room, two flights up, and survey the sky, full of nothing but little sunset-tinted lambs, as it appears, along the Taubenstrasse and over the tree-tops of Prinz Carl's garden, while along Friedrichstrasse it is all golden and cloudless; the air damp and mild, too. I thought of you and of Venice, and this only I wanted to write to you. News has come today that Venice has surrendered at discretion; so we can go there again, and again see the tall white grenadiers. * * * I dined with Manteuffel today, yesterday with Prince Albert, of course, day before yesterday with Arnim, and then I took a ride with him of fourteen miles at a gallop—which suited me well, save for some muscular pains. In the Chamber we keep on doing nothing whatever; in the Upper House the German question, happily, has been brought forward again in very good speeches by Gerlach, Bethmann, and Stahl, and yet today the Camphausen proposition was adopted with all the votes against nineteen. With us, too, it is beginning to excite men's tempers. The proposition is bad in its tendency, but its result insignificant even if it goes through with us, as is to be expected. Tant de bruit pour une omelette. The real decision will not be reached in our Chambers, but in diplomacy and on the battlefield, and all that we prate and resolve about it has no more value than the moonshine observations of a sentimental youth who builds air-castles and thinks that some unexpected event will make him a great man. *Je m'en moque!*—and the farce often bores me nearly to death, because I see no sensible object in this straw-threshing. Mother's little letter gave me great pleasure, because, in the first place, I see that you are well, and then because she has her old joke with me, which is much pleasanter at a distance, as it does not lead to strife; and yet how I should like to quarrel with mammy once more! I am genuinely homesick to be quietly with you all in Schönhausen. Have you received the ribbon for Aennchen?

Tuesday.—Hans is just breakfasting, and eating up, from sheer stinginess, a quarter pound of butter that he bought three days ago, because it begins to get old. Now he screams that my tea is there, too. I close for today, as I have something to do afterwards. My love to FatherMotherAnnaAdelheidMarie and all the rest. God's blessing be with you and keep you well and merry.

Your most faithful v.B.

Berlin, September 11, '49. (Postmarked September 10.)

I wrote yesterday, my Nannie, but as it costs me nothing, not even for paper, for this is the Chamber's, I do want to improve a wearisome moment, during which I must listen to the reading

of a confused report on normal prices, to send you another little greeting; but again without the ribbon, for I am going to buy that later on. This morning I attended the cavalry manoeuvres, on a very pleasant horse of Fritz's; rode sharply, swallowed much dust, but, nevertheless, had a good time; it is really pretty, these brilliant, rapidly moving masses interspersed with the clanking of iron and the bugle signals. The Queen, my old flame, greeted me so cordially. Having driven past without noticing me, she rose and turned backward over the bar of the carriage, to nod to me thrice; that lady appreciates a Prussian heart. Tomorrow I shall take a look at the grand parade, in which the infantry also participates. I believe I have written you that the King and Leopold Gerlach visited the Emperor of Austria at Teplitz, where there was also a Russian plenipotentiary. The proletariats of the Chamber are now gradually coming to see that on that occasion something may have been concocted which will cast mildew on their German hot-house flowers, and the fact that his Majesty has conversed with the ruler of all the Croatians frightens them somewhat. *Qui vivra verra*. These Frankfort cabbage-heads are incorrigible; they and their phrases are like the old liars who in the end honestly believe their own stories; and the impression produced on our Chamber by such ridiculous things as they say, without any regard for the matter in hand, or for common-sense, will be sure at last to convince people generally that peasants and provincials are not fit to make laws and conduct European politics. Now I must listen. Farewell, my much-beloved heart. Love to my daughter and your parents.

Your most faithful v.B.

Berlin, Friday.

(Postmarked September 21, '49.)

I am well, my darling Nan, but I am cold, for in the morning the rooms are already so chilly that I long very much for the Schönhausen fireplaces, and matters in the Chamber are so tedious that I often have serious thoughts of resigning my commission. In the ministry there is again a shameful measure preparing; they now want to submit a real property tax bill, according to which those estates which are not manors are to be indemnified, while manors must suffer, as the number of nobles is not dangerous. Only if encumbered for more than two-thirds of their value, they are to be assisted by loans. What good will a loan do a bankrupt, who has it to repay! It is a mixture of cowardice and shameless injustice such as I could not have expected. Yesterday we had soft, warm autumn weather, and I took a long walk in the Thiergarten, by the same solitary paths which we used to traverse together; I sat, too, on our bench near the swan-pond; the young swans which were then still in their eggs on the little island were now swimming vivaciously about, fat, gray, and *blasé*, among the dirty ducks, and the old ones sleepily laid their heads on their backs. The handsome large maple standing near the bridge has already leaves of a dark-red color; I wished to send you one of them, but in my pocket it has become so hard that it crumbles away; the gold-fish pond is almost dried up; the lindens, the black alders, and other delicate things bestrew the paths with their yellow, rustling foliage, and the round chestnut-burrs exhibit a medley of all shades of sombre and attractive fall coloring. The promenade, with its morning fogs among the trees, reminded me vividly of Kniephof, the woodcock-hunt, the line of springes, and how everything was so green and fresh when I used to walk there with you, my darling. * * * On the 1st of October I shall probably have to attend the celebration of the nine-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the cathedral there, to which the King is coming. For the 2d and the following days I have been invited to go on a royal hunt to the Falkenstein. I should be very glad to shoot a deer in those woods which we and Mary saw illuminated by the moon on that evening; but even if matters in the Chamber should not prevent, I am at a loss how to reconcile that with our journey, and I feel as though I should steal my days from you by going. * * * I am now going out to buy a waist, to call on Rauch, and then again to the Thiergarten. All love to father and mother, and may God preserve you in the future as hitherto, my dearest.

Your most faithful v.B.

Berlin, Friday.

(Postmarked September 28, '49.)

_My Dear,—_I have taken the apartment in the Behrenstrasse; that on the Thiergarten is too uncomfortable for you in going in and out in wet winter weather. * * * It is better that I should procure and arrange everything for you in advance; then you need only alight here and sink into my open arms and on a ready sofa; that would be so pretty; only come soon, my beloved angel; today the weather is already bitter cold, and write me exactly when I can come for you to Z. Do not be offended, either, at my note of yesterday, and do not think that you have offended me, but please come quickly. I am not going to the Harz. Much love. In great haste.

Your most faithful v.B.

Over the blue mountain,
Over the white sea-foam,
Come, thou beloved one,
Come to thy lonely home.

—*Old Song.*

Schönhausen, October 2, '49.

_My Beloved Nan,—I am sitting in our quiet old Schönhausen, where I am quite comfortable, after the Berlin hubbub, and I should like to stay here a week, if the old Chamber allowed. This morning Odin awakened me, and then retreated as usual between the beds; then the Bellins groaned very much about the bad qualities of the tenant, with whom they lead a cat-and-dog life, and I discussed with her, pro and con, all that is to be sent to Berlin. The garden is still quite green for the fall season, but the paths are overgrown with grass, and our little island is so dwarfed and wet that I could not get on to it; it rains without let-up. The little alderman, of course, sat with me all the afternoon, otherwise I should have written you sooner and more at length. I want to leave again tomorrow morning, and I have still several business letters to write. Yesterday, with the King, I celebrated the nine-hundredth anniversary of the Brandenburg Cathedral, after it had been thoroughly exorcised and the bad national spirits driven out. The entire royal family was there, except the Princess of Babelsberg, who is at Weimar; also Brandenburg, Manteuffel, Wrangel, Voss, and many high dignitaries, among them myself, quite courageously at the front in church, next to the princesses. At dinner his Majesty said many pretty things about his electoral and capital city of Brandenburg, and was also very friendly to me. I introduced to the Queen a number of village mayors, who had been of particular service in my election; they were so much moved by it that afterwards they embraced me with tears in their eyes. Finally, the King became very angry at Patow, who had made his appearance as President-in-chief, and to whom he had not spoken till then. "Sir," said he, in a very loud and angry voice, "if you belong to the Right, then vote with the Right; if you belong to the Left, vote, in the– name with the Left; but I require of my servants that they stand by me, do you understand?" Breathless silence, and P– looked like a duck in a thunder-storm. * * * It is right good that I did not take the apartment on the Thiergarten; aside from the wet feet which my angel would get in dirty and damp weather, the house has been broken into seven times during the couple of years of its existence, a fact of which sympathizing souls would surely have informed you; and, if on some long winter evening I were not at home, you and the two girls and baby would have shuddered mightily over it. The little old clock is just clearing its throat to strike seven; I must to my work. Farewell, dearest; and, above all things, come-mmmm quickly—in a hurry, swiftly, instantly—to your dear little husbandkin. Most hearty greetings to our parents.

Your most faithful v.B.

Erfurt, April 19, '50.

*My Beloved Nan,—It is bad to live in such a small town, with three hundred acquaintances. One is never sure of his life a single moment, for calls. An hour ago I got rid of the last bores; then, during supper, I walked up and down in my room, and annihilated almost the whole fat sausage, which is very delicious, drank a stone mug of beer from the Erfurt "Felsenkeller," and now, while writing, I am eating the second little box of Marchpane, which was, perhaps, intended for Hans, who has not got any of the sausage even; in its place I will leave him the little ham. During the last few days we have been valiantly quarrelling in Parliament; but neither at the beginning nor later could I obtain the floor for my principal speech; but I relieved myself of some gall in minor skirmishes. * * * I am sick and tired of life here; attending the sitting early in the morning, thence directly to a screaming and chattering table d'hôte, then for coffee to the Steiger, a most charming little mountain, a mile from the city, where one can walk about through the pleasantest hours of the day with a pretty view of Erfurt and the Thuringian woods; under magnificent oaks, among the little light-green leaves of prickles and horn-beam; from there to the abominable party caucus, which has never yet made me any the wiser, so that one does not get home all day. If I do not attend the caucus meetings, they all rail at me, for each one grudges the others any escape from the tedium. * * * Good-by, my heart. May God's hand be over you, and the children, and protect you from sickness and worry, but particularly you, the apple of my eye, whom Röder envies me daily in the promenade, when the sunset makes him sentimental, and he wishes he had such a "good, dear, devout wife." For the rest, my allowance suffices for my needs here, and I shall still bring treasures home. Good-night, my darling. Many thanks for your faithful letter, and write me again at once; I am always anxious for news. Hans has just come in, and sends you sleepy greetings, after sitting on the lounge for hardly ten seconds. Once more, good-night, my Nan.*

Your most faithful v.B.

Erfurt, April 23, '50.

My Darling,– * * * We shall probably be released a week from today, and then we have before us a quiet Schönhausen summer, as the cry of war is also dying. It is really going to be summer again, and on a very long walk, from which I am returning home dead tired, I took much pleasure in the small green leaves of the hazel and white beech, and heard the cuckoo, who told me that we shall live together for eleven years more; let us hope longer still. My hunt was extraordinary; charming wild pine-woods on the ride out, sky-high, as in the Erzgebirge; then, on the other side, steep valleys, like the Selke, only the hills were much higher, with beeches and oaks. The night before starting I had slept but four hours; then went to bed at nine o'clock in Schleusingen on the south side of the Thuringian wood; arose at midnight; that evening I had eaten freely of the trout and had drunk weak beer with them; at one o'clock we rode to a forge in the mountains, where ghostlike people poked the fire; then we climbed, without stopping, until three o 'clock, in pouring rain, I wearing a heavy overcoat; so steep that I had to help myself with my hands; so dark in the fir thickets that I could touch the huntsman ahead of me with my hand, but could not see him. Then, too, we were told there is a precipice on the right, and the torrent sent up its roar from the purple depths below; or that there is a pool on the left, and the path was slippery. I had to halt three times; repeatedly I almost fainted from weakness, lay down on the dripping heath, and let the rain pour on me. But I was firmly resolved to see the grouse; and I did see several, but could not shoot them, for reasons which one must be a huntsman to understand. My companion shot one, and, if I had been well, I might have shot two; I was too exhausted. After three it cleared and became wonderfully fine, the horn-owl gave place to the thrush, and at sunrise the bird-chorus became deafening; the wood-pigeons singing bass, withal. At five I was down again, and, as it began to pour once more, I abandoned further attempts, returned hither, ate very heartily, after a twenty-four hours' fast, and drank two glasses of champagne, then slept for fourteen hours, until yesterday at one o'clock, noon, and now I am feeling much better than before the excursion, and am glad of the good constitution which God has given me, to get through it all. * * * I send you lots of love, my heart, and will piously celebrate fast-day tomorrow at the

Wermel church. God preserve you. Love to mother and Melissa. Excuse my haste. I had really left myself an hour of leisure, but that little old Mass has his fourteenth child, just born. The only son of our poor Eglofstein, of Arklitten, twenty-three-year-old lieutenant of cuirassiers, has shot himself in hypochondria; I pity the father extremely, a devout, honorable man.

Your most faithful
v.B.

Schönhausen, Sunday Evening.
(Postmarked Jerichow, September 30, '50.)

*My Beloved Nan,– * * * I regained possession of my things in Berlin at some cost, after twenty-four hours had elapsed; when I left, the unfortunate Jew had not yet claimed his. Partly on my account and partly on Hans', we had to stay in Berlin two days, but this time the bill was more reasonable. * * * May the devil take politics! Here I found everything as we left it, only the leaves show the rosiness of autumn; flowers are almost more plentiful than in summer; Kahle has a particular fondness for them, and on the terrace fabulous pumpkins are suspended by their vines from the trees. The pretty plums are gone; only a few blue ones still remain; of the vine, only the common green variety is ripe; next week I shall send you some grapes. I have devoured so many figs today that I was obliged to drink rum, but they were the last. I am sorry you cannot see the Indian corn; it stands closely packed, three feet higher than I can reach with my hand; the colts' pasture looks from a distance like a fifteen-year-old pine preserve. I am sitting here at your desk, a crackling fire behind me, and Odin, rolled into a knot, by my side. * * * Mamsell received me in pink, with a black dancing-jacket; the children in the village ridicule her swaggering about her noble and rich relations. She has cooked well again today, but, as to the feeding of the cattle, Bellin laments bitterly that she understands nothing about it, and pays no attention to it, and she is also said to be uncleanly; the Bellin woman does not eat a mouthful prepared by her. Her father is a common cottager and laborer; I can easily understand that she is out of place there, with her grand airs and pink dresses. Up to this time the garden, outside of Kahle's keep, has cost one hundred and three rix-dollars this year, and between now and Christmas forty to fifty will probably be added for digging and harvesting, besides the fuel. The contents of the greenhouse I shall try to have care of in the neighborhood; that is really the most difficult point, and still one cannot continue keeping the place for the sake of the few oranges. I am giving out that you will spend the winter in Berlin, that in the summer-time we intend going to a watering-place again, and that, therefore, we are giving up housekeeping for a year. * * * Hearty love to our parents. I shall celebrate father's birthday with you, like a Conservative, in the old style. May the merciful God, for His Son's sake, preserve you and the children. Farewell, my dear Nan.*

Your v.B.

Since leaving Reinfeld I no longer have heartburn; perhaps it is in my heart, and my heart has remained with Nan.

Schönhausen, October 1, '50.

My Angel,—I am so anxious that I can hardly endure being here; I have the most decided inclination to inform the government at once of my resignation, let the dike go, and proceed to Reinfeld. I expected to have a letter from you today, but nothing except stupid police matters. Do write very, very often, even if it takes one hundred rix-dollars postage. I am always afraid that you are sick, and today I am in such a mood that I should like to foot it to Pomerania. I long for the children, for mammy and dad, and, most of all, for you, my darling, so that I have no peace at all. Without you here, what is Schönhausen to me? The dreary bedroom, the empty cradles with the little beds in them, all the absolute silence, like an autumn fog, interrupted only by the ticking of the clock and the periodic falling of the chestnuts—it is as though you all were dead. I always imagine your next letter will bring bad news, and if I knew it was in Genthin by this time I would send Hildebrand

there in the night. Berlin is endurable when one is alone; there one is busy, and can chatter all day; but here it is enough to drive one mad; I must formerly have been an entirely different mortal, to bear it as I did. * * * The girl received the notice to leave very lightly and good-naturedly, as quite a matter of course; Kahle, on the other hand, was beside himself, and almost cried; said he could not find a place at Christmas-time, and would go to the dogs, as he expressed it. I consoled him by promising to pay his wages for another quarter if he failed to find a place by New Year's. The girl is quite useless except in cooking, of which more orally. I cannot enumerate all the little trifles, and certainly Kahle does not belong to the better half of gardeners. * * * I feel so vividly as if I were with you while writing this that I am becoming quite gay, until I again recollect the three hundred and fifty miles, including one hundred and seventy-five without a railroad. Pomerania is terribly long, after all. Have you my Külz letter, too? Bernhard has probably kept it in his pocket. Do not prepay your letters, or they will be stolen. Innumerable books have arrived from the binder; he claims one section of Scott's *Pirate* is missing; I know nothing about it. The tailor says that he has been able to make only five pair of drawers from the stuff; presumably he is wearing the sixth himself. Farewell, my sweetheart. Write as often as you can, and give love and kisses to every one from me, large and small. May God's mercy be with you.

Your most faithful v.B.

Schönhausen, October 10, '50.

My Darling,—In a sullen rage I swoop down upon my inkstand after just lighting the Town Councillor downstairs with the kindliest countenance in the world. He sat here for two and a half hours by the clock, moaning and groaning, without the least regard for my wry face; I was just about to read the paper when he came. From ten to two I crawled about the Elbe's banks, in a boat and on foot, with many stupid people, attending to breakwaters, protective banks, and all sorts of nonsense. This is, in general, a day of vexations; this morning I dreamed so charmingly that I stood with you on the seashore; it was just like the new strand, only the mud was rocks, the beeches were thick-foliaged laurel, the sea was as green as the Lake of Traun, and opposite us lay Genoa, which we shall probably never see, and it was delightfully warm; then I was awakened by Hildebrand, accompanied by a summoner, who brought me an order to serve as a juror at Magdeburg from October 20th to November 16th, under penalty of from one hundred to two hundred rix-dollars for each day of absence. I am going there by the first train tomorrow, and hope to extricate myself; for God so to punish my deep and restless longing for what is dearest to me in this world, so that we shall not have the fleeting pleasure of a couple of weeks together, would, indeed, be incredibly severe. I am all excitement; that is our share in the newly achieved liberty—that I am to be forced to spend my few days of freedom sitting in judgment over thievish tramps of Jews, like a prisoner in a fortress. I hope Gerlach can free me; otherwise I shall never speak to him again. Tomorrow I shall at once drop you a line from Magdeburg, to tell you how I succeed. * * * The people have abandoned the dike-captain conspiracy against me; the Town Councillor says he will not press it at all. He chattered to me for hours about his land-tax commission, in which his anxiety drove him to rage against his own flesh, and also, unfortunately, against ours. Our chief misfortune is the cowardly servility towards those above and the chasing after popularity below, which characterize our provincial councillor; consequently public business, the chase, land-tax, etc., are all deleteriously affected. It is due principally to the fact that he is grossly ignorant and bungling in affairs, and is, therefore, for better, for worse, in the hands of his democratic circuit secretary, to whom he never dares to show his teeth; and, despite all that, the fellow wears trousers, has been a soldier, and is a nobleman. La-Croix is district-attorney at Madgeburg, withal, and he, too, must help me to sneak out of it. It is still impossible for me to acquiesce in the notion that we are to be separated all winter, and I am sick at heart whenever I think of it; only now do I truly feel how very, very much you and the *babies* are part of myself, and how you fill my being. That probably explains why it is that I appear cold to all except you, even to mother; if

God should impose on me the terrible affliction of losing you, I feel, so far as my feelings can at this moment grasp and realize such a wilderness of desolation, that I would then cling so to your parents that mother would have to complain of being persecuted with love. But away with all imaginary misery; there is enough in reality. Let us now earnestly thank the Lord that we are all together, even though separated by three hundred and fifty miles, and let us experience the sweetness of knowing that we love each other very much, and can tell each other so. To me it is always like ingratitude to God that we choose to live apart so long, and are not together while He makes it possible for us; but He will show us His will; all may turn out differently; the Chambers may be dissolved, possibly very quickly, as the majority is probably opposed to the Ministry. Manteuffel was resolved upon it in that event, and it seems that Radowitz, since he is Minister, has approached him, and, in general, wants to change his politics again. Best love to all. Farewell. God keep you.

Your most faithful v.B.

Berlin, April 28, '51.

My Dear Sweetheart,—Mother's premonition that I would remain long away has, unfortunately, proved correct this time. * * * The King was the first to propose my nomination, and that at once, as a real delegate to the Diet; his plan has, of course, encountered much opposition, and has finally been so modified that Rochow will, it is true, remain Minister at Petersburg, whither he is to return in two months, but meanwhile, provisionally, he is commissioned to Frankfort, and I am to accompany him, with the assurance that, on his leaving for Petersburg, I shall be his successor. But this last is between ourselves.

Now I want to go, first of all, to Frankfort, and take a look at the situation, and hear how I shall stand pecuniarily pending my definite appointment, of which I know nothing at all as yet. Then I shall see whether I can leave again shortly after the start, and whether I am to count on staying any longer; for, although I have, indeed, accepted, still I am not yet sufficiently familiar with the ground to be able to say definitely whether I shall stay there or shortly get out again. As soon as that is decided, we shall probably, after all, have to consider for you, too, the prospect of exchanging your quiet Reinfeld existence for the noise of the Diet's diplomacy. You folks have often complained that nothing was made of me by those above me; now this is, beyond my expectations and wishes, a sudden appointment to what is at this moment the most important post in our diplomatic service; I have not sought it; I must assume that the Lord wished it, and I cannot withdraw, although I foresee that it will be an unfruitful and a thorny office, in which, with the best intentions, I shall forfeit the good opinion of many people. But it would be cowardly to decline. I cannot give you today further particulars as to our plans, how we shall meet, what will be done about your going to the seashore; only I shall try to make leisure, if possible, to see you before. I feel almost like crying when I think of this sudden upsetting of our innocent plans, as well as of the uncertainty when I shall see you again, my beloved heart, and the babies; and I earnestly pray God to arrange it all without detriment to our earthly welfare and without harm to my soul. God be with you, my dear, and bring us together again soon. With heartfelt love.

Your most faithful v.B.

Frankfort, May 14, '51.

My Little Dear,—* * * It seems to be getting constantly more certain that I shall take Rochow's position in the summer. In that event, if the rating remains as it was, I shall have a salary of twenty-one thousand rix-dollars, but I shall have to keep a large train and household establishment and you, my poor child, must sit stiff and sedate in the drawing-room, be called Excellency, and be clever and wise with Excellencies. * * * The city is not so bad as you suppose; there are a great many charming villas before the gates, similar to those in the Thiergarten, only more sunny. As Councillor of Legation, it will be difficult for us to live there, owing to distance and expense; but as Ambassador, quite as

charming as is possible in a foreign land. By letters of introduction I have quickly become acquainted with the charming world hereabouts. Yesterday I dined with the English Ambassador, Lord Cowley, nephew of the Duke of Wellington; very kind, agreeable people; she is an elegant woman of about forty, very worldly, but benevolent and easy to get acquainted with; I have immediately put myself on a friendly footing with her, so that when you step into the cold bath of diplomatic society she may be a powerful support for you. Previously I called on a Frau von Stallupin (pronounce Stolipine), a young woman without children, kindly, like all Russian women, but terribly rich, and settled in a little castle-like villa, so that one hardly dares to take a step or to sit down; a Scharteuck interior is a rude barn compared with it. Day before yesterday evening I called on Frau von Vrintz, a sister of Meyendorf's wife; the diplomatic folks assemble every evening in her drawing-room. Countess Thun was there, a very handsome young woman, in the style of Malvinia; also the Marquis de Tallenay, French Ambassador, a polite fifty-year-old; Count Szechenyi, a gay young Magyar, full of pranks, and divers other foreign personages. They gamble there every evening, the lady of the house, too, and not for very low stakes; I was scolded for declaring it boresome, and told them it would be my rôle to laugh at those who lost. Society probably does not appeal to you very strongly, my beloved heart, and it seems to me as though I were harming you by bringing you into it, but how shall I avoid that? I have one favor to ask of you, but keep it to yourself, and do not let mother suspect that I have written you one word about it, otherwise she will worry needlessly over it: occupy yourself with French as much as you can in the meantime, but let it be thought that you yourself have discovered that it is useful. Read French, but, if you love me, do not do so by artificial light, or if your eyes pain you; in that case you had better ask mother to read to you, for it is almost harder to understand than to speak. If you know of any agreeable piece of baggage you can get in a hurry to chatter French to you, then engage one; I will gladly pay the bill. You will enter here an atmosphere of French spirit and talk, anyway; so you cannot avoid familiarizing yourself with it as far as possible. If you know of no person whom you like and who is available, let it go; and, at any rate, I beg you sincerely not to consider this advice as a hardship, or otherwise than if I asked you to buy yourself a green or a blue dress; it is not a matter of life and death; you are *my* wife, and not the diplomats', and they can just as well learn German as you can learn French. Only if you have leisure, or wish to read anyway, take a French novel; but if you have no desire to do so, consider this as not written, for I married you in order to love you in God and according to the need of my heart, and in order to have in the midst of the strange world a place for my heart, which all the world's bleak winds cannot chill, and where I may find the warmth of the home-fire, to which I eagerly betake myself when it is stormy and cold without; but not to have a society woman for others, and I shall cherish and nurse your little fireplace, put wood on it and blow, and protect it against all that is evil and strange, for, next to God's mercy, there is nothing which is dearer and more necessary to me than your love, and the homelike hearth which stands between us everywhere, even in a strange land, when we are together. Do not be too much depressed and sad over the change of our life; my heart is not attached, or, at least, not strongly attached, to earthly honor; I shall easily dispense with it if it should ever endanger our peace with God or our contentment. * * * Farewell, my dearly beloved heart. Kiss the children for me, and give your parents my love.

Your most faithful v.B.

Frankfort, May 16, '51.

Dear Mother,—* * * So far as I am at present acquainted with the *highest* circles of society, there is only one house which seems to me to promise company for Johanna—that of the English Ambassador. As this letter will probably be opened by the Austrian (Frankfort) post-office authorities, I shall refrain from explaining on this occasion the reasons therefor. Even those letters which, like my last ones, I took occasion to send by a courier, are not secure from indiscretions at *Berlin*; those to me as well as those from me; but those which go by the regular mail are always

opened, except when there is no time for it, as the gentleman who will read this could probably testify. But all that, for better, for worse, forms part of the petty ills of my new position.

In my thoughts I must always ask you and our dad to forgive me for depriving you of the pleasure and the happiness of your old days, inasmuch as I transplant to such a distance the bright child-life, with all its dear cares, and take Johanna away a second time from her father's house; but I see no other way out of it, which would not be unnatural, or even wrong, and the strong arm which separated us when we hoped to be united can also unite us when we least expect it. You shall at least have the conviction, so far as human purpose can give it, that I shall wander, together with Johanna, with the strong staff of the Word of God, trough this dead and wicked activity of the world, whose nakedness will become more apparent to us in our new position than before, and that to the end of our joint pilgrimage my hand shall strive, in faithful love, to smooth Johanna's paths, and to be a warm covering to her against the breath of the great world.

Your faithful son, v.B.

Frankfort, May 18, '51.

My Darling,—Frankfort is terribly tiresome; I am so spoiled by so much affection and so much business that I am only just beginning to suspect how ungrateful I always was to some people in Berlin, to say nothing of you and yours; but even the cooler measure of fellowship and party affiliation which came to me in Berlin may be called an intimate relationship compared with intercourse here, which is, in fact, nothing more than mutual mistrust and espionage, if there only were anything to spy out or to conceal! The people toil and fret over nothing but mere trifles, and these diplomats, with their consequential hair-splitting, already seem to me more ridiculous than the Member of the Second Chamber in the consciousness of his dignity. If foreign events do not take place, and those we over-smart Diet people can neither direct nor prognosticate, I know quite definitely now what we shall have accomplished in one, two, or five years, and am willing to effect it in twenty-four hours if the others will but be truthful and sensible for a single day. I have never doubted that they all use water for cooking; but such an insipid, silly water-broth, in which not a single bubble of mutton-suet is visible, surprises me. Send me Filöhr, the village-mayor, Stephen Lotke, and Herr von Dombrowsky, of the turnpike-house, as soon as they are washed and combed, and I shall cut a dash with them in diplomatic circles. I am making headlong progress in the art of saying nothing by using, many words; I write reports of many pages, which read nice and smooth as editorials; and if Manteuffel, after he has read them, can tell what they contain, he can do more than I. Each of us makes believe that he thinks the other is full of ideas and plans, if he would but speak out, and yet we none of us know a jot better than the man in the moon does what is to become of Germany. No mortal, not even the most malevolently skeptical Democrat, will believe what a vast amount of charlatanism and consequential pomposity there is in this diplomacy. But now I have done enough scolding, and want to tell you that I am well, and that I was very glad and gave thanks to the Lord that, according to your last letter, all was well with you, and that I love you very much, and look at every pretty villa, thinking that perhaps our *babies* will be running about in it in summer. Do see that you get the girls to come along, or if they absolutely refuse, bring others from there with whom we are already somewhat acquainted. I don't care to have a Frankfort snip in the room, or with the children; or we must take a Hessian girl, with short petticoats and ridiculous head-gear; they are half-way rural and honest. For the present I shall rent a furnished room for myself in the city; the inn here is too expensive. Lodgings, 5 guilders per day; two cups of tea, without anything else, 36 kreutzers (35 are 10 silbergroschen), and, served as the style is here, it is insulting. Day before yesterday I was at Mayence; it is a charming region, indeed. The rye is already standing in full ears, although the weather is infamously cold every night and morning. The excursions by rail are the best things here. To Heidelberg, Baden-Baden, Odenwald, Hamburg, Soden, Wiesbaden, Bingen, Rüdesheim, Niederwald, is a leisurely day's journey; one can stay there for five or six hours and be here again in the evening; hitherto I have not yet availed myself

of it, but shall do so, so that I may escort you when you are here. Rochow left for Warsaw at nine o'clock last night; he will arrive there day after tomorrow at noon, and will most likely be here again a week from today. About politics and individuals cannot write you much, because most letters are opened, When once they are familiar with your address on my letters and with your handwriting on yours, they will probably get over it, because they have no time to read family letters. Do not be afraid of the local aristocracy; as to money, Rothschild is the most aristocratic, but deprive them *all* of their money and salaries, and it would be seen how little each one is aristocratic in himself; money doesn't do it, and otherwise—may the Lord keep me in humility, but here the temptation is strong to be content with one's self.

Countess Pückler, sister of the Countess Stolberg, resides at Weistritz, near Schweidnitz. Now, farewell; I must go out. God's blessing be with you. Give F. and M. much love. Your most faithful v. B.

Frankfort, May 27, '51.

My Darling,—* * * On Friday there was a ball at Lady Cowley's, which lasted until five in the morning; they all dance here as if possessed; the oldest delegates of fifty, with white hair, danced to the end of the cotillion, in the sweat of their brows. At midnight "God Save the Queen" was solemnly played, because her birthday was dawning, and it was all a transparency of English coats-of-arms and colors from top to bottom, and very many odd, stiff ladies, who "lisp English when they lie," as I read once upon a time the translation of that passage in *Faust*; that is to say, they all have a passion for talking bad French, and I am altogether forgetting my English, as I have discovered to my dismay. * * * Oftentimes I feel terribly homesick, and that is to me an agreeable sadness, for otherwise I seem to myself so aged, so dryly resigned and documentary, as if I were only pasted on a piece of card-board. * * * Give your dear parents my heartfelt love, and kiss Annie's pretty hand for me, because she stays with you so sweetly-Now, I shall not write another word until I have a letter from you in hand. Yesterday I attended the Lutheran church here; a not very gifted, but devout, minister; the audience consisted, apart from myself, of just twenty two women, and my appearance was visibly an event. God bless and keep you and the children.

Your most faithful v.B.

Frankfort, Ascension Day—Evening.

(Postmarked Berlin, June 1, '51.)

My Heart,—How good it is of you all that, directly after I had mailed my complaint of lack of news, there arrives such a shower of letters. A thousand thanks to your dear parents, and I shall answer dad tomorrow, when I am less hurried than today, for on this dear holiday, after a big dinner, I must still write some long despatches. I was at the French church today, where at least there was more congregation and devotion, and the minister was passable, too, but I cannot talk French with my dear, faithful Lord and Saviour; it seems to me ungrateful. For the rest, they sang pretty hymns, these insipid Calvinists, almost in the sweet Catholic tune which you always play. * * *

Your most faithful v.B.

Your letter had been opened again.

Frankfort, June 4, '51.

My Darling,—Were you not going to write to me any more? I was resolved even yesterday not to put pen to paper until I should have a letter from you, but, anyway, I will be good, and tell you that I am well and love you, even if you let your little inkstand dry up. I long exceedingly for you and the children, and for quiet, comfortable domesticity at Schönhausen or Reinfeld. As soon as I have finished my hitherto rather unimportant occupations, my empty lodgings, and the whole dreary world behind, face me, and I know not where to set my foot, for there is nothing which particularly

attracts me. Day before yesterday I ate at Biberich, with the Duke of Nassau, the first fresh herrings and the first strawberries and raspberries of the season. It is certainly a delightful piece of earth along the Rhine, and I looked pensively from the castle windows over to the red cathedral of Mayence, which, almost four years ago, we both went to see very early in the morning, in times for which we were not then sufficiently grateful to God; I remembered how, on board the steamer, the blue hills before us, we passed by the Duke's handsome castle, without dreaming how and why I should stand there at the window this year, an old wig of a Minister before me, who unravelled his views on national polities, while I was thinking, with an occasional absent-minded "Quite so," of our trip of '47, and sought with my eyes the spot on the Mayence bridge whence you, in your little Geneva coat, embarked on the steamer; and then I thought of Geneva. * * * Countess Thun unfortunately left on Sunday for Tetschen, to spend three months with her father-in-law. She is a kindly lady, womanly and devout (Catholic, very), attributes which do not grace the women here in general; her husband gambles and flirts, I believe, more so than is agreeable to her. I hardly believe that you will like her, but she is one of the better specimens of women of the great world, even though that just proves to me that a woman of that world would not have been suitable for me; I like her to associate with, but not to marry. Perhaps, by comparing her with the others of her sort, you will learn to appreciate her. The gentlemen are unendurable. The moment I accost one he assumes a diplomatic countenance, and thinks of what he can answer without saying too much, and what he can write home concerning my utterances. Those who are not so I find still less congenial; they talk equivocally to the ladies, and the latter encourage them shamefully. It makes a less morbid impression on me if a woman falls thoroughly for once, but preserves a sense of shame at heart, than if she takes pleasure in such chatter; and I value the Countess Thun, because, despite the general fashion prevailing here, she knows how to keep decidedly clear of all that sort of thing. * * * Your most faithful v.B.

Frankfort, June 26, '51.

My Darling,—Today I have been suffering all day long from homesickness. I received your letter of Sunday early, and then I sat in the window and smelled the summer fragrance of roses and all sorts of shrubs in the little garden, and while so doing I heard one of your dear Beethoven pieces, played by an unknown hand on the piano, wafted over from some window opposite, distantly and in snatches, and to me it sounded prettier than any concert. I kept wondering why I must, after all, be so far away, for a long time, from you and the children, while so many people who do not love each other at all see one another from morning till night. It is now seven months since I received at Reinfeld the order to join the regiment; since then we have twice paid each other a hasty visit, and it will be eight or nine months before we shall be again united. It must, indeed, be the Lord's will, for I have not sought it, and when I am sorrowful it is a consolation to me that I did not speak a syllable in order to come here, and that ambition for outward pomp was not what led me to this separation. We are not in this world to be happy and to enjoy, but to do our duty; and the less my condition is a self-made one, the more do I realize that I am to perform the duties of the office in which I am placed. And I certainly do not wish to be ungrateful, for I am, nevertheless, happy in the knowledge of possessing so much that is dear, even if far away from here, and in the hope of a happy reunion. On the arrival of every letter from Reinfeld my first feeling is one of hearty gratitude for the unmerited happiness that I still have you in this world, and with every death of wife or child which I see in the newspaper the consciousness of what I have to lose comes forcibly home to me, and of what the merciful God has granted and thus far preserved to me. Would that gratitude therefor might so dispose my obstinate and worldly heart to receive the mercy of the Lord that it shall not be necessary for Him to chastise me in what I love, for I have greater fear of that than of any other evil. * * * In a few weeks it must be decided whether I shall be made Envoy here or stay at Reinfeld. The Austrians at Berlin are agitating against my appointment, because my black-and-white is not sufficiently yellow for them; but I hardly believe they will succeed, and you, my poor dear, will probably have to jump into the cold water

of diplomacy; and the boy, unlucky wight that he is, will have a South-German accent added to his Berlin nativity. * * * As far as can now be foreseen, I shall not be able to get away from this galley for two or three weeks, for, including Silesia, that amount of time would probably be necessary for it. But much water will flow down the Main before then, and I am not worrying before the time comes. How I should like to turn suddenly around the bushy corner of the lawn and surprise all of you in the hall! I see you so plainly, attending to the children, covering up Midget, with sensible speeches, and father sitting at his desk smoking, the mayor beside him, and mammy bolt-upright on her sofa, by wretched light, one hand lying on the arm-rest, or holding *Musée Français* close before her eyes. God grant that at this moment everything at Reinfeld is going as smoothly as this. I have at last received a letter from Hans, one that is very charming, and, contrary to his custom, mysterious, in view of the post-office spies. You may imagine how Senfft writes to me under these circumstances. I received an unsigned letter from him the other day, out of which the most quick-witted letter-bandit would have been at a loss to decipher what he was driving at. If you occasionally come across some unintelligible notices at the tail end of the *Observer*, they will thus seem to you more puzzling still, and to the blockhead who breaks open this letter they will remain unintelligible, even if I tell you that they are a part of my correspondence. Only give me frequent tidings, my beloved heart, even if short ones, so that I may have the assurance that you are alive and well. A have picked the enclosed leaves for you in the garden of old Amschel Rothschild, whom I like, because he is simply a haggling Jew, and does not pretend to be anything else, and, at the same time, a strictly orthodox Jew, who touches nothing at his dinners, and eats only "undefiled" food. "Johann dage vid you some bread for de deers," he said his servant as he came out to show me his garden, in which there were some tame fallow deer. "Baron, dat blant costs me two thousand guilders, honor bride, two thousand guilders gash; I vill let you have it for one thousand or, if you vant it for nuddings, he shall bring id to your house. God knows I abbrejiate you highly, Baron; you are a nize man, a brave man." With that he is a little, thin gray imp of a man, the patriarch of his tribe, but a poor man in his palace, childless, a widower, cheated by his servants, and ill-treated by aristocratically Frenchified and Anglicized nephews and nieces who will inherit his treasures without gratitude and without love. Good-night, my angel. The clock is striking twelve; I want to go to bed and read chap. ii. of the Second Epistle of St. Peter. I am now doing that in a systematic way, and, when I have finished St. Peter, at your recommendation I shall read the Hebrews, which I do not know at all as yet. May God's protection and blessing be with you all.

Your most faithful v.B.

Frankfort, July 3, 1851.

My Pet,—Day before yesterday I very thankfully received your letter and the tidings that you are all well. But do not forget when you write to me that the letters are opened not by me alone, but by all sorts of postal spies, and don't berate particular persons so much in them, for all that is immediately reported and debited to my account; besides, you do people injustice. Concerning my appointment or non-appointment I know nothing as yet, except what was told me when I left; everything else is possibilities and surmises. The only crookedness about the matter us far has been the government's silence towards me, for it would have been only fair to let me know by this, and officially at that, whether during next month I to live here or in Pomerania with wife and child. Be careful in your remarks to every one there, without exception, not to Massow alone; particularly in your criticisms of individuals, for you have no idea what one experiences in this respect after once becoming an object of surveillance; be prepared to see warmed up with sauce, here or at Sans Souci, what you may perhaps whisper to Charlotte[18] or Annie in the boscages or the bathing-house. Forgive me for being so admonitory, but after your last letter I have to take the diplomatic pruning-knife in hand a bit. Do not write me anything that the police may not read and communicate to King, ministers, or

[18] Frau von Zanthier, born von Puttkamer.

Rochow. If the Austrians and many other folks can succeed in sowing distrust in our camp, they will thereby attain one of the principal objects of their letter-pilfering. Day before yesterday I took dinner at Wiesbaden, with Dewitz, and, with a mixture of sadness and knowing wisdom, I inspected the scenes of past foolishness. Would that it might please God to fill with His clear and strong wine this vessel, in which at that time the champagne of twenty-two-year-old youth sparkled uselessly away, leaving stale dregs behind. Where and how may Isabella Loraine and Miss Russel be living now? How many of those with whom I then flirted, tippled, and played dice are now dead and buried! How many transformations has my view of the world undergone in the fourteen years which have since elapsed, while I always considered the existing one as alone correct! and how much is now small to me which then appeared great, how much now deserving of respect which I then ridiculed! How many a green bud within us may still come to mature blossom and wither worthlessly away before another period of fourteen years is over, in 1865, if we are then still alive! I cannot realize how a person who is thoughtful and, nevertheless, knows nothing or wishes to know nothing of God, can endure giving a despised and tedious life, a life which is fleeting as a stream, as a sleep, even as a blade of grass that soon withers; we spend our years as in a babble of talk.

I do not know how I endured it in the past; if I should live now as I did then, without God, without you, without children, I should, in fact, be at a loss to know why I should not cast off this life like a soiled shirt; and yet most of my acquaintances are thus, and they live. If in the case of some one individual I ask myself what reason he can have, in his own mind, for continuing to live, to toil, to fret, to intrigue, and to spy—verily I do not know. Do not conclude from this scribbling that I happen to be in a particularly black mood; on the contrary, I feel as when, on a beautiful September day, one contemplates the yellowing foliage; healthy and gay, but a little sadness, a little homesickness, a longing for woods, lake, meadow, you and the children, all mingled with the sunset and a Beethoven symphony. Instead of that I must now call upon tiresome serene Highnesses and read endless figures about German sloops of war and cannon-yawls which are rotting at Bremerhaven and devouring cash. * * * Farewell, my beloved heart. Much love to our parents, and God keep you all.

Your most faithful v.B.

Frankfort, July 8, 1851.

My Darling,—Yesterday and today I wished very much to write to you, but owing to a hurly burly of business I have not been able to do so till now, late in the evening, after returning from a walk during which, in the charming summer-night's air, with moonlight and the rustling of poplar-leaves, I have brushed off the dust of the day's documents. On Saturday, in the afternoon, I went with Rochow and Lynar to Rüdesheim, hired a boat there, rowed out on the Rhine, and swam in the moonlight, nothing but nose and eyes over the tepid water, as far as the Mouse Tower near Bingen, where the wicked bishop met his death. There is something strangely dreamlike in thus lying in the water on a quiet, warm night, carried gently along by the tide, seeing only the sky with moon and stars, and, alongside, the wooded hill-tops and the castle battlements in the moonlight, hearing nothing but the gentle purling of one's own motion. I should like to swim thus every evening. Then I drank some very nice wine, and sat for a long time smoking, with Lynar, on the balcony, the Rhine beneath us. My little Testament and the starry firmament caused our conversation to turn on Christian topics, and I hammered for a long time at the Rousseau-like chastity of his soul, with no other effect than to cause him to remain silent. He was ill-treated while a child by nurses and private tutors, without having really learned to know his parents, and by reason of a similar bringing-up he has retained from his youthful days opinions similar to my own, but has always been more satisfied with them than I ever was. Next morning we went by steamer to Coblentz, breakfasted there for an hour, and returned by the same route to Frankfort, where we arrived in the evening. I really undertook the expedition with the object of visiting old Metternich at Johannisberg; he had invited me, but the Rhine pleased me so much that I preferred to take a pleasure ride to Coblentz, and postponed the call. You and I saw

him that time on our trip directly after the Alps, and in bad weather; on this summer morning, and after the dusty tedium of Frankfort, he again rose high in my esteem. I promise myself much relish from spending a few days with you at Rüdesheim, the place is so quiet and country-like, good people and low-priced, and then we shall hire a little rowboat, ride leisurely down, climb the Niederwald, and this and that castle, and return by the steamer. One can leave here early in the morning, remain for eight hours at Rüdesheim, Bingen, Rheinstein, etc., and be here again at night. My appointment at this place does not appear to be certain, and Hans is going to Coblentz as Lord-Lieutenant; will live there in a stately palace, with the finest view in all Prussia. By leaving here early, one reaches Coblentz by half past ten, and is back in the evening; that is easier than from Reinfeld to Reddentin, and a prettier road. You see we are not forsaken here; but who would have thought, when we went to the wedding in Kiekow, that both of us should be removed from our innocent Pomeranian solitude and hurled to the summits of life, speaking in worldly fashion, to political outposts on the Rhine? The ways of the Lord are passing strange. May He likewise take our souls out of their darkness and lift them to the bright summits of His grace. *That* position would be more secure. But He has certainly taken us visibly into His hand, and will not let me fall, even though I sometimes make myself a heavy weight. The interview with Lynar the other day has truly enabled me to cast a grateful (but not pharisaical) glance over the distance which lies between me and my previous unbelief; may it increase continually, until it has attained the proper measure. * * * I am already beginning to look about here for a house, preferably outside of the city, with a garden; there my darling will have to play a very stiff, self-contained part, see much tedious society, give dinners and balls, and assume terribly aristocratic airs. What do you say to having dancing at your house until far into the night? Probably it cannot be avoided, my beloved heart—that is part of the "service." I can see mother's blue eyes grow big with wonder at the thought. I am going to bed, to read Corinthians i., 3, and pray God to preserve you all to me, and grant you a quiet night and health and peace. Dearest love to your parents.

Your most faithful

v.B.

Frankfort, April 4, '52.

Dear Mother,—I wished to write you today at length, but I do not know how far I shall progress in it after having given myself up for so long to enjoyment of Sunday leisure, by taking a long, loitering walk in the woods, that hardly an hour remains before the closing of the mail. I found such pretty, solitary paths, quite narrow, between the greening hazel and thorn-bushes, where only the thrush and the glede-kite were heard, and quite far off the bell of the church to which I was playing truant, that I could not find my way home again. Johanna is somewhat exhausted, in connection with her condition, or I should have had her in the woods, too, and perhaps we should still be there. * * * She has presented me with an exquisite anchor watch, of which I was much in need, because I always wore her small one. In the Vincke matter I cannot, with you, sufficiently praise God's mercy that no misfortune has occurred from any side. I believe that for me it was inwardly very salutary to have felt myself so near unto death, and prepared myself for it; I know that you do not share my conception of such matters, but I have never felt so firm in believing trust, and so resigned to God's will, as I did in the moment when the matter was in progress. We can discuss it orally some time; now I only want to tell you how it happened. I had repeatedly been disgusted by V.'s rudeness to the government and ourselves, and was prepared resolutely to oppose him at the next opportunity that offered. He accused me of want of diplomatic discretion, and said that hitherto the "burning cigar" was my only known achievement. He alluded to an occurrence at the Palace of the Diet, of which I had previously told him confidentially, at his particular request, as of something quite unimportant, but comical. I then retorted from the platform that his remark overstepped not only the bounds of diplomatic but also of ordinary discretion, which one had a right to demand from every man of education. Next day he challenged me, through Herr von Sauken-Julienfelde, for four pistol-shots; I accepted it after Oscar

Arnim's proposal, that we should fight with swords, had been declined by Sauken. Vincke wished to defer the matter for forty-eight hours, which I granted. On the 25th, at 8 A.M., we rode to Tegel; to a charming spot in the woods by the seashore; it was beautiful weather, and the birds sang so gayly in the sunshine that, as soon as we entered the wood, all sad thoughts left me; only the thought of Johanna I had to drive from me by force, so as not to be affected by it. With me as witnesses were Arnim and Eberhard Stolberg, and my brother as very dejected spectator. With V. were Sauken, and Major Vincke of the First Chamber, as well as a Bodelschwingh (nephew of the Minister and of Vincke), as impartial witness. The latter declared before the matter began that the challenge seemed to him to be, under the circumstances, too stringent, and proposed that it should be modified to one shot apiece. Sauken, in V.'s name, was agreeable to this, and had word brought to me that the whole thing should be called off if I declared I was sorry for my remark. As I could not truthfully do this, we took our positions, fired at Bodelschwingh's command, and both missed. God forgive the grave sin that I did not at once recognize His mercy, but I cannot deny it: when I looked through the smoke and saw my adversary standing erect, a feeling of disappointment prevented me from participating in the general rejoicing, which caused Bodelschwingh to shed tears; the modification of the challenge annoyed me, and I would gladly have continued the combat. But, as I was not the insulted party, I could say nothing; it was over, and all shook hands. We rode home and I ate with my sister alone. All the world was dissatisfied with the outcome, but the Lord must know what He still intends to make of V. In cool blood, I am certainly very grateful that it happened so. What probably contributed much to it was the fact that a couple of very good pistols, which were originally intended to be used, were so loaded that for the moment they were quite useless, and we had to take those intended for the seconds, with which it was difficult to hit. An official disturbance has interrupted me, and now I must close—time is up. Only I still want to say that I had consulted beforehand, about the duel, with old Stolberg, General Gerlach, Minister Uhden and Hans; they were all of opinion that it must be; Büchsel, too, saw no alternative, although he admonished me to desist. I spent an hour in prayer, with him and Stolberg, the evening before. I never doubted that I should have to appear, but I did doubt whether I should shoot at V. I did it without anger, and missed. Now farewell, my dearly beloved mother. Give love to father and every one from

Your faithful son, v.B.

Vienna, June 14, '52.

My Beloved Heart,—At this hour I ought to sit down and write a long report to his Majesty concerning a lengthy and fruitless negotiation which I had today with Count Buol, and concerning an audience with the Archduchess Empress-Dowager. But I have just taken a promenade on the high ramparts all round the inner city, and from them seen a charming sunset behind the Leopoldsberg, and now I am much more inclined to think of you than of business. I stood for a long time on the red Thor Tower, which commands a view of the Jägerzeil and of our old-time domicile, the Lamb, with the café before it; at the Archduchess' I was in a room which opens on the homelike little garden into which we once secretly and thoughtlessly found our way; yesterday I heard Lucia—Italian, very good; all this so stirs my longing for you that I am quite sad and incapable. For it is terrible to be thus alone in the world, when one is no longer accustomed to it; I am in quite a Lynaric mood. Nothing but calls, and coming to know strangers, with whom I am always having the same talk. Every one knows that I have not yet been here very long, but whether I was ever here before; that is the great question which I have answered two hundred times in these days, and happy that that topic still remains. For folk bent on pleasure this may be a very pretty place, for it offers whatever is capable of affording outward diversion to people. But I am longing for Frankfort as if it were Kniephof, and do not wish to come here by any means. F. must lie just where the sun went down, over the Mannhartsberg yonder; and, while it was sinking here, it still continued shining with you for over half an hour. It is terribly far. How different it was with you here my heart, and with Salzburg and Meran in prospect; I have grown

terribly old since then. * * * It is very cruel that we must spend such a long period of our brief life apart; that time is lost, then, and cannot be brought back. God alone knows why He allows others to remain together who are quite at their ease when apart; like an aged friend of mine, who travelled with me as far as Dresden had to sit in the same compartment with his wife all the time, and could not smoke; and we must always correspond at a great distance. We shall make up for it all, and love each other a great deal more when we are again together; if only we keep well! Then I shall not murmur. Today I had the great pleasure of receiving, *via* Berlin, your letter of last Thursday; that is the second one since I left Frankfort; surely none is lost? I was very happy and thankful that all of you are well. * * * As soon as I find myself once more on the old, tiresome Thuringian railroad I shall be out of myself, and still more so when I catch a glimpse of our light from Bockenheim; I must travel about nine hundred miles thither, not including two hundred and fifty miles from Pesth back to this place. How gladly I shall undertake them, once I am seated in the train! I shall probably abandon my trip by way of Munich; from this place to M. is a post-trip of fifty hours; by water still longer; and I shall have to render a verbal report in Berlin, anyway. About politics I can, fortunately, write nothing; for, even if the English courier who takes this to Berlin is a safeguard against our post-office, the Taxis scoundrels will, nevertheless, get hold of it.

Be sure to write me detailed information as to your personal condition. Greet mother, our relations, if they are still there, Leontine, the children, Stolberg, Wentzel, and all the rest. Farewell my angel. God preserve you.

Your most faithful v.B.

Ofen, June 23, '52.

My Darling,—I have just left the steamer, and do not know how better to utilize the moment at my disposal until Hildebrand follows with my things than by sending you a love-token from this far-easterly but pretty spot. The Emperor has graciously assigned me quarters in his palace, and I am sitting here in a large vaulted chamber at the open window, into which the evening bells of Pesth are pealing. The view outward is charming. The castle stands high; immediately below me the Danube, spanned by the suspension-bridge; behind it Pesth, which would remind you of Dantzig, and farther away the endless plain extending far beyond Pesth, disappearing in the bluish-red dusk of evening. To the left of Pesth I look up the Danube, far, very far, away; to my left, *i.e.*, on the right-hand shore, it is fringed first by the city of Ofen, behind it hills like the Berici near Venetia blue and bluer, then bluish-red in the evening sky, which glows behind. In the midst of both cities is the large sheet of water as at Linz, intersected by the suspension-bridge and a wooded island. It is really splendid; only you, my angel, are lacking for me to enjoy this prospect *with you*; then it would be *quite* nice. Then, too, the road hither, at least from Gran to Pesth, would have pleased you. Imagine Odenwald and Taunus moved close together, the waters of the Danube filling the interval; and occasionally, particularly near Wisserad, a little Dürrenstein-Agstein. The shady side of the trip was the sunny side; it burned as if they wanted tokay to grow on the steamer, and the crowd of travelers was large; but, just imagine, not one Englishman; it must be that they have not yet discovered Hungary. For the rest, there were queer fellows enough, dirty and washed, of all Oriental and Occidental nations. * * * By this time I am becoming impatient as to Hildebrand's whereabouts; I am lying in the window, half musing in the moonlight, half waiting for him as for a mistress, for I long for a clean shirt. * * * If you were here for only a moment, and could contemplate now the dull, silvery Danube, the dark hills on a pale-red background, and the lights which are shining up from Pesth below, Vienna would lose much in your estimation compared to Buda-Pescht, as the Hungarian calls it. You see I am not only a lover, but also an enthusiast, for nature. Now I shall soothe my excited blood with a cup of tea, after Hildebrand has actually put in an appearance, and shall then go to bed and dream of you, my love. Last night I had only four hours of sleep, and the court here is terribly matutinal; the young gentleman himself rises as early as five o 'clock, so that I should be a bad courtier if I were to sleep much longer. Therefore I bid

you good-night from afar, with a side-glance at a gigantic teapot and an enticing plate of cold jellied cuts, tongue, as I see, among the rest. Where did I get that song that occurs to me continually today —"Over the blue mountain, over the white sea-foam, come, thou beloved one, come to thy lonely home"? I don't know who must have sung that to me, some time in auld lang syne. May God's angels keep you today as hitherto.

Your most faithful v.B.

The 24th.

After having slept very well, although on a wedge-shaped pillow, I bid you good-morning, my heart. The whole panorama before me is bathed in such a bright, burning sun that I cannot look out at all without being blinded. Until I begin my calls I am sitting here breakfasting and smoking all alone in a very spacious apartment—four rooms, all thickly vaulted, two something like our dining-room in size, thick walls as at Schönhausen, gigantic nut-wood closets, blue silk furnishings, a profusion of large spots on the floor, an ell in size, which a more excited fancy than mine might take for blood, but which I decidedly declare to be ink; an unconscionably awkward scribe must have lodged here, or another Luther repeatedly hurled big inkstands at his opponents. * * * Exceedingly strange figures, brown, with broad hats and wide trousers, are floating about on long wooden rafts in the Danube below. I regret I am not an artist; I should like to let you see these wild faces, mustached, long-haired with excited black eyes, and the ragged, picturesque drapery which hangs about them, as they appeared to me all day yesterday. * * * Farewell, my heart. God bless you and our present and future children.

Your most faithful v.B.

Evening.

I have not yet found an opportunity to send this. Again the lights are shining up from Pesth, lightning appears on the horizon in the direction of the Theiss, and there is starlight above us. I have been in uniform most of the day, handed my credentials to the young ruler of this country at a solemn audience, and received a very pleasing impression of him—twenty-year-old vivacity, coupled with studied composure. He *can* be very winning, I have seen that; whether he always will, I do not know, and he need not, for that matter. At any rate, he is for this country exactly what it needs, and more than that for the peace of its neighbors, if God does not give him a peace-loving heart. After dinner all the court went on an excursion into the mountains, to a romantic spot called the Pretty Shepherdess, who has long been dead, King Matthias Corvinus having loved her many hundred years ago. Thence the view is over woody hills, like those on the Neckar banks to Ofen, its castle, and the plain. A popular festival had brought thousands up to it, and the Emperor, who mingled with them, was surrounded with noisy cheers; Czardas danced, waltzed, sang, played, climbed into the trees, and crowded the court-yard. On a grassy slope was a supper-table of about twenty persons, sitting along one side only, leaving the other free for a view of wood, hill, city, and country, high beeches over us, with Hungarians climbing among the branches; behind us a densely crowded and crowding mass of people near by, and, beyond, alternate horn-music and singing, wild gipsy melodies. Illumination, moonlight, and evening glow, interspersed with torches through the wood; the whole might have been served, unaltered, as a great scenic effect in a romantic opera. Beside me sat the whitebearded Archbishop of Gran, primate of Hungary, in a black silk talar, with a red cape; on the other side a very amiable and elegant general of cavalry, Prince Liechtenstein. You see, the painting was rich in contrasts. Then we rode home by moonlight, escorted by torches; and while I smoke my evening cigar I am writing to my darling, and leaving the documents until tomorrow. * * * I have listened today to the story of how this castle was stormed by the insurgents three years ago, when the brave General Hentzi and the entire garrison were cut down after a wonderfully heroic defence. The black spots on my floor are in part burns, and where I am now writing to you the shells then danced about, and the combat finally

raged on top of smoking débris. It was only put in order again a few weeks ago, against the Emperor's arrival. Now it is very quiet and cozy up here; I hear only the ticking of a clock and distant rolling of wheels from below. For the second time from this place I bid you good-night in the distance. May angels watch over you—a grenadier with a bear-skin cap does that for me here; I see his bayonet two arm-lengths away from me, projecting six inches above the windowsill, and reflecting my light. He is standing on the terrace over the Danube, and is, perhaps, thinking of his Nan, too.

Tomsjönäs, August 16, '57.

My Dearest,—I make use again of the Sunday quiet to give you a sign of life, though I do not know what day there will be a chance to send it out of this wilderness to the mail. I rode about seventy miles without break, through the desolate forest, in order to reach here, and before me lie more than a hundred miles more before one gets to provinces of arable land. Not a city, not a village, far and wide; only single settlers in wide huts, with a little barley and potatoes, who find rods of land to till, here and there between dead trees, pieces of rock, and bushes. Picture to yourself about five hundred square miles of such desolate country as that around Viartlum, high heather, alternating with short grass and bog, and with birches, junipers pines, beeches, oaks, alders, here impenetrably thick, there thin and barren of foliage, the whole strewn with innumerable stones of all sizes up to that of a house, smelling of wild rosemary and rosin, at intervals wonderfully shaped lakes surrounded by woods and hills of the heath, then you have the land of Smaa, where I am just now. Really, the land of my dreams, inaccessible to despatches, colleagues, and Reitzenstein, but unfortunately, to you as well. I should like ever so much to have a hunting-castle on one of these quiet lakes and inhabit it for some months with all the dear ones whom I think of now as assembled in Reinfeld. In winter, to be sure, it would not be endurable here, especially in the mud that all the rain would make. Yesterday we turned out at about five, hunted, in burning heat, up-hill and down, through bush and fen, until eleven, and found absolutely nothing; walking in bogs and impenetrable juniper thickets, on large stones and timbers, is very fatiguing. Then we slept in a hay-shed until two o'clock, drank lots of milk, and hunted again until sunset, bringing down twenty-five grouse and two mountain-hens. I shot four of the former; Engel, to his great delight, one of the latter. Then we dined in the hunting-lodge, a remarkable wooden building on a peninsula in the lake. My sleeping-room and its three chairs, two tables, and bedstead are of no other color than that of the natural pine-boards, like the whole house, whose walls are made of these. A sofa does not exist; bed very hard; but after such hardships as ours one does not need to be rocked to sleep. From my window I see a blooming hill rise from the heath, on it birches rocking in the wind, and between them I see, in the lake mirror, pine-woods on the other side. Near the house a camp has been put up for hunters, drivers, servants, and peasants, then the barricade of wagons, a little city of dogs, eighteen or twenty huts on both sides of a lane which they form; from each a throng looks out tired from yesterday's hunt. * * *

Petersburg, April 4, '59.

My Dear Heart,—Now that the rush of today noon is past, I sit down in the evening to write you a few more lines in peace. When I closed my letter today I did it with the intention of writing to you next a birthday letter, and thought I had plenty of time for it; it is only the 23d of March here. I have thought it over, and find that a letter must go out today exactly to reach Frankfort on the 11th; it is hard to get used to the seven days' interval which the post needs. So I hurry my congratulations. May God grant you His rich blessing in soul and body, for all your love and truth, and give you resignation and contentment in regard to the various new conditions of life, contrary to your inclinations, which you will meet here. We cannot get rid of the sixtieth degree of latitude, and we have not chosen our own lot. Many live happily here, although the ice is still solid as rock, and more snow fell in the night, and there are no garden and no Taunus here.

I could get along very well indeed here if I only knew the same of you, and, above all, if I had you with me. All official matters—and in them rests really the calling which in this world has fallen to my lot, and which you, through your significant "Yes" in the Kolziglow church, are bound to help bear in joy and sorrow—all official matters are, in comparison with Frankfort, changed from thorns to roses; whether they will ever blossom is, indeed, uncertain. The aggravations of the Diet and the palace venom look from here like childishness. If we do not wantonly make ourselves disagreeable, we are welcome here. Whenever the carriages are called here, and "*Prusku passlanika"* ("Prussian carriage") is cried out among those waiting, then all the Russians look about with pleasant smiles, as though they had just popped down a ninety-degree glass of schnapps. There is some social affair every evening, and the people are different from those in Frankfort. Your aversion to court life will weaken. You cannot fail to like the Czar; you have seen him already—have you not! He is extremely gracious to me, as well as the Czarina—the young Czarina, I mean. And it is easy to get along with the mother, in spite of her imposing presence. I dined with her today with the Meiendorfs and Loen,[19] and it was just like that dinner at our house with Prince Carl and the Princess Anna, when we enjoyed ourselves so much. In short, only take courage, and things will come out all right. So far I have only agreeable impressions; the only thing that provokes me is that smoking is not allowed on the street. One can have no idea in what disfavor the Austrians are over here; a mangy dog will not take a piece of meat from them. I am sorry for poor Szechenyi; I do not dislike him. They will either drive things to a war from here, or let it come, and then they will stick the bayonet into the Austrians' backs; however peacefully people talk, and however I try to soften things down, as my duty demands, the hatred is unlimited, and goes beyond all my expectations. Since coming here I begin to believe in war. There seems to be no room in Russian politics for any other thought than how to strike at Austria. Even the quiet, mild Czar falls into rage and fire whenever he talks about it, as does the Czarina, although a Darmstadt Princess; and it is touching when the Dowager Czarina talks of her husband's broken heart, and of Francis Joseph, whom he loved as a son, really without anger, but as if speaking of one who is exposed to God's vengeance. Now I have still much to write for the carrier tomorrow, and this you will not receive, I suppose, until two days after your dear birthday, just when I am celebrating mine by the calendar here. Farewell, my dear, and give each child a sweet orange from me. Love to all.

Your most faithful v.B.

Petersburg, June 4, '59.

My Dear Heart,—At last, day before yesterday, came the long-yearned-for news from you, with the reassuring post-mark, Stolp. I could not go to sleep at all in the evening, because of anxious pictures of my imagination, whose scenes were all the stopping-places between Berlin and Reinfeld. * * * Yesterday I dined at the Czarina's, in Zarske, where I found the Grand Princess Marie, who could tell me at least that she had seen you in Berlin, and that you were all right. On the way back the Czar met me at the station, and took me into his coupé—very conspicuous here for a civilian with such an old hat as I generally wear. In the evening I was, of course, on the islands, on a lively dark-brown horse, and drank tea there with a nice, old, white-haired Countess Stroganoff. The lilac, I must tell you, has flowered here as beautifully as in Frankfort, and the laburnum, too; and the nightingales warble so happily that it is hard to find a spot on the islands where one does not hear them. In the city, during these days, we had such unremitting heat as we almost never have at home. The captain of the *Eagle* told me that the temperature in southern Pomerania was actually refreshing in comparison; with such short nights, too, the morning brings no real coolness, and I could ride or drive about for hours in the mysterious gloaming which hovers at midnight over the surface of the water, if the increasing brightness did not give warning that another day is waiting with its work and care, and that sleep demands its rights beforehand. Since I have had the drosky, in which there is too little room for an

[19] Military *chargé.*

interpreter, I am making, to the smirking delight of Dmitri, the coachman, progress in Russian, since there is nothing left for me to do but to speak it *tant bien que mal*. I am sorry that you have not been able to watch with me the sudden awakening of spring here; as if it had suddenly occurred to her that she had overslept her time, she is putting on, in twenty-four hours, her entire green dress, from head to foot. * * * This whole preparation for war is somewhat premature, and is causing us unnecessary expense. I hope we shall come to our senses finally before setting all Europe on fire, for the sake of obliging some little princes, and, at our own cost, helping Austria in glory out of her embarrassment. We cannot allow Austria either to be annihilated or, through brilliant victory, to be strengthened in her feeling of self-confidence and to make us the footstool of her greatness. But there is plenty of time for either case before we take the plunge, and many a piece of Lombard water can be dyed red, for things will not go forward so easily as hitherto when the Austrians have once placed themselves in their line of forts, as they should have done at the first. * * *

It is a misfortune that I always write to you in a steaming hurry; now the foxy face of the chancery servant, who is in the police pay, besides, is before me again already, and is hurrying me up, and everything I wanted to say is shrivelling before the fellow, who is useful, however. I was just thinking of much more that I wanted to write, and now I do not know anything except that I should like to beat him. * * * In the greatest love,

Your most faithful v.B.

Moscow, June 6, '59.

A sign of life, at least, I want to send you from here, my dear, while I am waiting for the samovar, and a young Russian in a red shirt is struggling, with vain attempts, to light a fire; he blows and sighs, but it will not burn. After complaining so much before about the scorching heat I waked up today between Twer and here, and thought I was dreaming when I saw the land and its fresh green covered far and wide with snow. Nothing surprises me any more so when I could no longer be in doubt about the fact I turned quietly on my other side to continue sleeping and rolling on, although the play of the green-and-white colors in the morning red was not without charm. I do not know whether the snow still lies about Twer; here it is all melted, and a cool, gray rain is drizzling down on the sheet of roofs. Russia certainly has a perfect right to claim green as her color. Of the four hundred and fifty miles hither I slept away one hundred and eighty, but of the other two hundred and seventy every hand's-breadth was green, of all shades. Cities and villages, especially houses, with the exception of the stations, I did not notice; bushy forests, chiefly birches, cover swamps and hills, fine growth of grass under them, long meadows between. So it goes for fifty, one hundred, one hundred and fifty miles. I don't remember to have noticed any fields, or any heather or sand; lonely grazing cows or horses waken in one now and then the conjecture that there are people, too, in the neighborhood. Moscow looks from above like a corn-field, the soldiers green, the furniture green, and I have no doubt that the eggs lying before me were laid by green hens. You will want to know how I happen to be here; I have asked myself the same question, and presently received the answer that variety is the spice of life. The truth of this profound observation is especially obvious when one has been living for ten weeks in a sunny hotel-room, looking out upon stone pavements. Besides, one's senses become somewhat blunted to the joys of moving, if repeated often in a short time, so I determined to forego these same pleasures, handed over all papers to Klüber, gave Engel my keys, explained that I should take up my lodgings in the Stenbock house in a week, and rode to the Moscow station. That was yesterday, twelve noon, and today early, at eight, I alighted here at the Hôtel de France. * * * It lies in the nature of this people to harness slowly and drive fast. I ordered my carriage two hours ago, and to all inquiries which I have been making about every ten minutes during the last hour and a half they say (Russian), "*Ssitschàss*," ("immediately"), with unshaken and amiable calm, but there the matter ends. You know my exemplary patience in waiting, but everything has its limits; hunting comes later, and horses and carriages are broken in the bad roads, so that one finally takes to walking.

While writing I have drunk three glasses of tea and made way with a number of eggs; the attempts at heating up have also been so entirely successful that I feel the need of getting some fresh air. I should shave myself for very impatience if I had a mirror, in default of which, however, I shall send a greeting to my dear Tata, with yesterday's stubble beard. It is very virtuous really that my first thought is always of you whenever I have a moment free, and you should make an example of that fact. Very rambling is this city, and especially foreign-looking, with its churches and green roofs and countless cupolas, quite different from Amsterdam, but the two are the most original cities that I know. Not a single German conductor has any idea of the luggage that can be slipped into one of these coupés; not a Russian without two real, covered head-cushions, children in baskets, and masses of provisions of every sort, although they eat five big meals at the stations on the way, breakfast at two, dinner five, tea seven, supper ten; it's only four, to be sure, but enough for the short time. I was complimented by an invitation into a sleeping-coupé, where I was worse off than in my easy-chair; it is a wonder to me that so much fuss is made over one night.

Moscow, June 8th.

This city is really, for a city, the most beautiful and original that there is; the environs are pleasant, not pretty, not unsightly; but the view from above out of the Kremlin, over this circle of houses with green roofs, gardens, churches, towers of the most extraordinary shape and color, most of them green or red or light blue, generally crowned on top by a colossal golden bulb, usually five or more on one church, and surely one thousand towers! Anything more strangely beautiful than all this, lighted by slanting sunset rays, cannot be seen.

The weather is clear again, and I should stay here some days longer if rumors of a big battle in Italy were not going about, which may result in lots of diplomatic work, so that I must get back to my post. The house in which I am writing is wonderful enough, really; one of the few that have outlived 1812—old, thick walls, as in Schönhausen, Oriental architecture, Moorish, large rooms, almost entirely occupied by the chancery officers, who administer, or maladminister, Jussupow's estates. He, his wife, and I have the one livable wing in the midst of them. Lots of love.

Your most faithful v.B.

Petersburg, July 2, '59.

My Dear Heart,—I received your letter of the 25th yesterday, and you will probably get tomorrow the one that I sent to Stettin on Wednesday with the Dowager Czarina. My homesick heart follows its course with yearning thoughts; it was such charming clear weather and fresh winds when we escorted her Highness on board in Peterhof that I should have liked to leap on the ship, in uniform and without baggage, and go along with her. Since then the heat has grown worse, about the temperature of a freely watered palm-house, and my lack of summer materials is making itself decidedly felt. I go about in the rooms in my shirt alone, as the dear blue dressing-gown is too narrow, even now at six o'clock in the morning. A courier wakened me half an hour ago, with his war and peace, and I cannot sleep any more now, although I did not get to bed until towards two. Our politics are drifting more and more into the Austrian wake, and as soon as we have fired a shot on the Rhine then it's all over with the war between Italy and Austria, and, instead of that, a war between France and Prussia will take the stage, in which Austria, after we have taken the burden from her shoulders, will stand by us or will not stand by us, just as her own interests dictate. She will certainly not suffer us to play a gloriously victorious rôle. It is quite remarkable that in such crises Catholic ministers always hold the reins of our destiny—Radowitz once before, now Hohenzollern, who just now has the predominant influence, and is in favor of war. I look very darkly into the future; our troops are not better than the Austrian, because they only serve half as long; and the German troops, on whose support we reckon, are for the most part quite wretched, and, if things go ill with us, their leaders will fall away from us like dry leaves in the wind. But God, who can hold up and throw down Prussia, and the world,

knows why these things must be, and we will not embitter ourselves against the land in which we were born, and against the authorities for whose enlightenment we pray. After thirty years, perhaps much sooner, it will be a small matter to us how things stand with Prussia and Austria, if only the mercy of God and the deserving of Christ remain to our souls. I opened the Scriptures last evening, at random, so as to rid my anxious heart of politics, and my eye lighted immediately on the 5th verse of the 110th Psalm. As God wills—it is all, to be sure, only a question of time, nations and people, folly and wisdom, war and peace; they come and go like waves of water, and the sea remains. What are our states and their power and honor before God, except as ant-hills and bee-hives which the hoof of an ox tramples down, or fate, in the form of a honey-farmer, overtakes? * * * Farewell, my sweetheart, and learn to experience life's folly in sadness; there is nothing in this world but hypocrisy and jugglery, and whether fever or grape-shot shall bear away this mass of flesh, fall it must, sooner or later, and then such a resemblance will appear between a Prussian and an Austrian, if they are of the same size, like Schrech and Rechberg, for example, that it will be difficult to distinguish between them; the stupid and the clever, too, properly reduced to the skeleton state, look a good deal like each other. Patriotism for a particular country is destroyed by this reflection, but we should have to despair in any case, even now, were it linked with our salvation. Farewell once more, with love to parents and children. How impatient I am to see them! As soon as Vriendschap—so our vessel is called—is in sight, I shall telegraph. With love, as always,

Your most faithful VON B.

Paris, May 31, '62.

My Dear Heart,—Only a few lines in the press of business to tell you I am well, but very lonely, with a view out over the green, in this dull, rainy weather, while the bumble-bees hum and the sparrows twitter. Grand audience tomorrow. It's vexatious that I have to buy linen, towels, table-cloths, and sheets. * * * Farewell. Hearty love, and write! Your most faithful v.B.

Paris, June 1, '62.

My Dear Heart,—The Emperor received me today, and I handed over my credentials; he received me kindly, is looking well, has grown somewhat stouter, but by no means fat and aged, as he generally is in caricatures. The Empress is still one of the most beautiful women I know, in spite of Petersburg; she has, if anything, grown more beautiful in the past five years. The whole affair was official, ceremonial; I was taken back in court-carriage with master of ceremonies, etc. Next time I shall probably have a private audience. I long for business, for I don't know what to do with myself. Today I dined alone, the young gentlemen were out; the entire evening rain; and at home alone. To whom should I go? In the midst of big Paris I am lonelier than you are at Reinfeld, and sit here like a rat in a deserted house. The only pleasure I have had was sending the cook away because of overcharges. You know my indulgence in this matter, but Rembours was a child in comparison. I am dining for the present in a café. How long that will last, God knows. I shall probably receive a summons, by telegram, to Berlin, in eight or ten days, and then good-by to this song-and-dance. If my opponents only knew what a boon their victory would be to me, and how heartily I desire it! Then Rechberg would, perhaps, out of malice, do his best to have me called to Berlin. You can't have any more aversion to Wilhelmstrasse than myself, and if I am not persuaded that it must be, then I will not go. I consider it cowardice and disloyalty to leave the King in the lurch, under pretence of illness. If it is not to be, then God will permit those who search to find another *princillon* who will offer himself as cover for the pot. If it is to be, then "*s'Bogom"* ("with God"), as our Russian drivers used to say, when they took up the reins. * * *

Your v.B.

Bordeaux, July 27, '62.

My Dear Heart,—You cannot refuse to testify that I am a good correspondent; I wrote this morning from Chenonceaux to your birthday-child, and now this evening, from the city of red wine, to you. But these lines will arrive a day later than those, as the mail does not leave until tomorrow afternoon. I left Paris only day before yesterday noon, but it seems to me a week. I have seen very beautiful castles—Chambord, of which the enclosure (torn out of a book) gives only an imperfect idea, corresponds, in its desolation, to the fate of its owner (I hope you know it belongs to the Duke of Bordeaux). In the wide halls and magnificent rooms, where so many kings kept their court, with their mistresses and their hunting, the Duke's only furniture consists now of the children's toys. My guide took me for a French Legitimist, and squeezed out a tear as she showed me the little cannon. I paid for the tear-drop, tariff-wise, with an extra franc, although it is not my vocation to subsidize Carlism. The castle court-yards lay in the sun as quiet as deserted churches; there is a distant view round about from the towers, but on all sides silent woods and heather to the farthest horizon; not a city, not a village, not a farm-house, either near the castle or in the region round it. The enclosed sprigs, specimens of heather, will no longer show you how purple this plant I love so much blooms here, the only flower in the royal garden, and swallows the only living creatures in the castle; it is too solitary for sparrows. The situation of the old castle of Amboise is glorious; from the top you can look up and down the Loire for about thirty miles. Coming from there to this place one passes gradually into the south; wheat disappears, giving way to maize; between, twining vines and chestnut woods, castles and country-seats, with many towers, chimneys, and gables, all white, with high-pointed slate roofs. It was boiling hot, and I was very glad to have a half-coupé to myself. In the evening glorious lightning in the whole eastern sky, and now an agreeable coolness, which I should find sultry at home. The sun set at 7.35; in Petersburg one can see now, without a light, at eleven o'clock. As yet there is no letter for me here; perhaps I shall find one in Bayonne. I shall stay here probably two days, to see where our wines grow. Now, good-night, my angel. Dearest love. Your most faithful v.B.

San Sebastian, August 1, '62.

My Dear Heart,—I could not have believed last year that I should celebrate Bill's birthday this time in Spain. I shall not fail to drink his health in dark red wine, and pray God earnestly to take and keep all of you under His protection; it is now half past three, and I imagine you have just got up from table and are sitting in the front hall at your coffee, if the sun permits. The sun is probably not so scalding there as it is here, but it doesn't do me any harm, and I am feeling splendidly well. The route from Bayonne here is glorious; on the left the Pyrenees, something like the Dent du Midi and Moléson, which, however, are here called "Pie" and "Port," in shifting Alpine panorama, on the right the shores of the sea, like those at Genoa. The change in entering Spain is surprising; at Behobie, the last place in France, one could easily believe one's self still on the Loire; in Fuentarabia a steep street twelve feet wide, every window with balcony and curtain, every balcony with black eyes and mantillas, beauty and dirt; at the market-place drums and fifes, and some hundreds of women, old and young, dancing a fandango, while the men in their drapery looked on, smoking. Thus far the country is exceptionally beautiful—green valleys and wooded slopes, with fantastic lines of fortifications above them, row after row; inlets of the sea, with very narrow entrances, which cut deep into the land, like Salzburg lakes in mountain basins. I look down on such a one from my window, separated from the sea by an island of rocks, set in a steep frame of mountains with woods and houses, below to the left city and harbor. My old friend Galen, who is taking the baths here, with wife and son, received me most warmly; I bathed with him at ten, and after breakfast we walked, or, rather, crawled, through the heat up to the citadel, and sat for a long time on a bench there, the sea a hundred feet below us, near us a heavy fortress-battery, with a singing sentry. This hill or rock would be an island did not a low tongue of land connect it with the mainland. This tongue of land separates two inlets from each other, so you get towards the north a distant view of the sea from the citadel, towards the east and west a view of both inlets, like two Swiss lakes, and towards the south of the tongue of land, with

the town on it, and behind it, landward, mountains as high as the heavens. I wish I could paint you a picture of it, and if we both were fifteen years younger then we would take a trip here together. Tomorrow, or day after, I go back to Bayonne. * * * I am very much sunburned, and should have liked best to float on the ocean for an hour today; the water bears me up like a piece of wood. It is still just cool enough to be pleasant. By the time one gets to the dressing-room one is almost dry, and I put on my hat, only, and take a walk in my peignoir. The ladies bathe fifty paces away—custom of the country. * * * I do not like the Spaniards so well as I like their country; they are not polite, talk too loud, and the conditions are in many ways behind those in Russia. Custom-houses and passport annoyances without end, an incredible number of turnpike tolls, four francs for one hour's drive, or else I should stay here still longer, instead of bathing in Biarritz, where a bathing-suit is necessary. Love to our dear parents and children. Farewell, my angel.

Your v.B.

Biarritz, August 4, '62.

* * * I am sitting in a corner room of the Hôtel de l'Europe, with a charming lookout over the blue sea, which drives its white foam between wonderful cliffs and against the light-house. I have a bad conscience, seeing so many beautiful things without you. If one could only bring you hither through the air, I would go right back again to San Sebastian. Imagine the Siebengebirge with the Drachenfels placed by the sea; next to it Ehrenbreitstein, and between the two an arm of the sea, somewhat wider than the Rhine, forcing its way into the land, and forming a round bay behind the mountains. In this you bathe in water transparently clear, and so heavy and salty that you can lie easily right on top of it and can look through the wide gate of rocks to the sea, or landward, where the mountain chains tower up one after another ever higher and ever bluer. The women of the middle and lower classes are strikingly pretty, sometimes beautiful; the men surly and impolite, and the comforts of life to which we are accustomed in civilized lands are entirely lacking. In this respect I find Russia pleasanter to travel in than Spain. What actually drove me out of the country was the swinishness in certain indispensable arrangements, and then the cheating in the hotels, and the tolls. The heat there is no worse than here, and doesn't bother me; on the contrary, I am very well, thank Heaven. Day before yesterday there was a storm whose like I have never seen. I had to make three attempts before I succeeded in climbing the flight of four steps at the head of the pier. Pieces of stone and of trees flew through the air; so I unfortunately gave up my place in a sailing-vessel for Bayonne, as I didn't believe it possible that all would be quiet and cheerful again in four hours' time; so I missed a charming sail along the coast, stayed one day longer in San Sebastian, and left yesterday by the diligence, rather uncomfortably packed in between attractive little Spanish women, to whom I could not speak a single word. Still, they understood Italian enough for me to make clear to them my satisfaction with their exterior. Gr. Gallen and wife were very kind to me. As I was looking for a fan, they presented me with theirs for you; it is simple, but painted in style characteristic of the country. You would like the wife very much; he, too, is a good fellow, but she amounts to more intellectually. I got Bernhard's long-expected letter today. He looks very black over politics, is expecting another child, and is building barns and stables. I long for news from you and the children. * * * Dearest love to all.

Your most faithful v.B.

Biarritz, August 10, '62.

_My Beloved Heart,– * * * I am living about as at Stolpemünde, only without champagne; I drank some with Orloff today, for the first time since I left Paris. In the afternoon I wander about among the cliffs, heaths, and fields, see orchards with aloe, figs, almonds, and borders of tamarinds, then I do some target-shooting, take my bath, sit on the rocks smoking, gazing at the sea, and thinking of you all. Politics I have entirely forgotten; don't read any papers. The 15th has some claims upon me; for propriety's sake I ought to go to Paris, too, since I am in France, so as to congratulate the Emperor,

hear his speech, and attend the dinner. But I shall hardly bring myself to the point of traveling over five hundred miles and interrupting the air-and-water cure, which is doing me so much good that I actually hate the thought of the dusty, close air of the royal residence. The Emperor is too reasonable a gentleman to take my absence amiss, and from Berlin I have an honest leave of absence. * * * Farewell, my angel, with dearest love.

Your most faithful v.B.

Hohenmauth, Monday, September 7, '66.

Do you remember, sweetheart, how we passed through here nineteen years ago, on the way from Prague to Vienna? No mirror showed the future then, nor in 1852, when I went over this railway with good Lynar. How strangely romantic are God's ways! We are doing well, in spite of Napoleon; if we are not unmeasured in our claims and do not imagine we have conquered the world, we shall achieve a peace that is worth the trouble. But we are as easily intoxicated as disheartened, and it is my thankless part to pour water into the foaming wine, and to insist that we do not live alone in Europe, but with three other powers which hate and envy us. The Austrians hold position in Moravia, and we are bold enough to announce our headquarters for tomorrow at the point where they are now. Prisoners still keep passing in, and cannon, one hundred and eighty from the 3d to today. If they bring up their southern army, we shall, with God's gracious help, defeat it too; confidence is universal. Our people are ready to embrace one another, every man so deadly in earnest, calm, obedient, orderly, with empty stomach, soaked clothes, wet camp, little sleep, shoe-soles dropping off, kindly to all, no sacking or burning, paying what they can and eating mouldy bread. There must surely be a solid basis of fear of God in the common soldier of our army, or all this could not be. News of our friends is hard to get; we lie miles apart from one another, none knowing where the other is, and nobody to send —that is, men might be had, but no horses. For four days I have had search made for Philip,[20] who was slightly wounded by a lance-thrust in the head, as Gerhard[21] wrote me, but I can't find out where he is, and we have now come thirty-seven miles farther. The King exposed himself greatly on the 3d and it was well I was present, for all the warnings of others had no effect, and no one would have dared to talk so sharply to him as I allowed myself to do on the last occasion, which gave support to my words, when a knot of ten cuirassiers and fifteen horses of the Sixth Cuirassier Regiment rushed confusedly by us, all in blood, and the shells whizzed around most disagreeably close to the King. He cannot yet forgive me for having blocked for him the pleasure of being hit. "At the spot where I was forced by order of the supreme authority to run away," were his words only yesterday, pointing his finger angrily at me. But I like it better so than if he were excessively cautious. He was full of enthusiasm over his troops, and justly so rapt that he seemed to take no notice of the din and fighting close to him, calm and composed as at the Kreuzberg, and constantly meeting battalions that he must thank with "Good-evening, grenadiers," till we were actually by this trifling brought under fire again. But he has had to hear so much of this that he will stop it for the future, and you may feel quite easy; indeed, I hardly believe there will be another real battle.

When you have of anybody *no* word whatever, you may assume with confidence that he is alive and well; for if acquaintances are wounded it is always known at latest in twenty-four hours. We have not come across Herwarth and Steinmetz at all, nor has the King. Schreck, too, I have not seen, but I know they are well. Gerhard keeps quietly at the head of his squadron, with his arm in a sling. Farewell—I must to business.

Your faithfullest v.B.

Zwittau, Moravia, July 11, '66.

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[20] Von Bismarck, the oldest nephew.

[21] Von Thadden, commanding a squadron in the First Dragoon Guards.

Dear Heart,—I have no inkstand, all of them being in use; but for the rest I get on well, after a good sleep on camp bed with air mattress; roused at eight by a letter from you. I went to bed at eleven. At Königgrätz I rode the big sandy thirteen hours in the saddle without feeding him He bore it very well, did not shy at shots nor at corpses, cropped standing grain and plum-leaves with zest at the most trying moments, and kept up an easy gait to the last, when I was more tired than the horse. My first bivouac for the night was on the street pavement of Horic, with no straw, but helped by a carriage cushion. It was full of wounded; the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg found me and shared his chamber with me, Reuss, and two adjutants, and the rain made this very welcome to me. About the King and the shells I have written you already. All the generals had a superstition that they, as soldiers, must not speak to the King of danger, and always sent me off to him, though I am a major, too. They did not venture to speak to his reckless Majesty in the serious tone which at last was effectual. Now at last he is grateful to me for it, and his sharp words, "How you drove me off the first time," etc., are an acknowledgment that I was right. Nobody knew the region, the King had no guide, but rode right on at random, till I obtruded myself to show the way. * * * Farewell, my heart. I must go to the King.

Your most faithful v.B.

Vendresse, September 3, 1870.

To MRS. VON BISMARCK:

My Dear Heart,—Day before yesterday I left my quarters here before dawn, but came back today, and have meanwhile been through the great battle of Sedan on the 1st, in which we took some thirty thousand prisoners, and shut the remainder of the French army, which we had chased ever since Bar-le-Duc, into the fortress, where they had to surrender, with the Emperor, as prisoners of war. At five yesterday morning, after I had discussed the terms of capitulation with Moltke and the French generals till one o'clock, General Reille, whom I know, called me up to say that Napoleon wished to speak with me. Without washing or breakfast, I rode towards Sedan, found the Emperor in an open carriage with three adjutants, and three more at hand in the saddle, on the main road before Sedan. I dismounted, saluted him as politely as in the Tuileries, and asked his commands. He desired to see the King. I told him, as was true, that his Majesty's quarters were fourteen miles away, at the place where I am writing now. Upon his question, whither he should betake himself, I offered him, since I was unfamiliar with the region, my quarters in Donchery, a village on the Maas close to Sedan; he accepted them, and drove, escorted by his six Frenchmen, by me; and by Carl, who meanwhile had ridden after me, through the lovely morning, towards our lines. He was distressed before reaching the place because of the possible crowds, and asked me if he might not stop at a lonely workman's house on the road. I had it examined by Carl, who reported that it was wretched and dirty. "*N'importe,*" said Napoleon, and I mounted with him a narrow, rickety stairway. In a room ten feet square, with a fig-wood table and two rush-bottomed chairs, we sat an hour, the others staying below. A mighty contrast to our last interview, in '67, at the Tuileries. Our conversation was difficult, if I would avoid touching on things which must be painful to those whom God's mighty hand had overthrown. Through Carl, I had officers brought from the city, and Moltke requested to come. We then sent out one of the first to reconnoitre, and discovered, a couple of miles off, at Fresnoi's, a little château with a park. Thither I conducted him, with an escort of the Cuirassier body-guards, which was meanwhile brought up, and there we concluded the capitulation with Wimpfen, the French general-in-chief. By its terms, from forty to sixty thousand French—I do not yet know the number more exactly—became our prisoners, with everything they have. The two receding days cost France one hundred thousand men and an emperor. He started early this morning, with all his court, horses, and wagons, for Wilhelmshöhe, at Cassel.

It is an event in universal history, a triumph for which we will thank God the Lord in humility, and which is decisive of the war, even though we must continue to prosecute it against headless France.

I must close. With heartfelt joy I have learned today, from your letter and Marie's, of Herbert's reaching you. I met Bill yesterday, as I telegraphed you, and took him to my arms from his horse before the King's face, while he stood with his limbs rigid. He is entirely well and in high spirits. Hans and Fritz Carl and both the Billows I saw with the Second Dragoon guards, well and cheerful.

Farewell, my heart. Kiss the children.

Your v.B.

Gastein, August 30, '71.

Happy the man to whom God has given a virtuous wife, who writes him every day. I am delighted that you are well, and that you have come to be three, to whom I hope to add myself as fourth on the 7th or 8th. * * * You see I have enough mental leisure here to devote myself to the unaccustomed work of making plans; but all on the presupposition that the excited Gauls do not worry my little friend Thiers to death, for then I should have to stay with his Majesty and watch which way the hare runs. I do not think that likely, but with such a stupid nation as they are anything is possible. Hearty love to both fat children.

Your most faithful v.B.

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CORRESPONDENCE OF WILLIAM I. AND BISMARCK[22]

TRANSLATED BY J.A. FORD

BISMARCK TO KING WILLIAM

Berlin, December 8, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY:—

I have the honor most respectfully to submit a Police report, the printed compilation of the documents relating to the London treaty as commanded, and the telegrams received up to the present. In my most humble opinion it seems expedient to maintain our attitude toward Irminger[23] also outwardly in conformity with that of Austria. It is awkward that Sydow is charged with the report of the committee in the Bundestag, for we shall thus always have to make our declaration first, and before Austria; if your Majesty does not command otherwise I will leave him without instructions on this point, and await tomorrow's committee issues, as the next measure, the letter to Copenhagen, will not be thereby delayed.

The final sentence of the Vienna telegram, that Christian IX. rules also in Copenhagen only by virtue of the London treaty, is not quite right; he rules there because the legitimate heir, Prince Friedrich of Hesse, has resigned in his favor. This legal title, which is in itself sufficient, has only been confirmed by the London treaty, and then extended to the Duchies.

v. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Prince Friedrich resigned merely in order that the London treaty in favor of Christian IX. might be effectuated.

W.

* * * * *

KING WILLIAM I. TO BISMARCK

Berlin, February 12, '67.

When looking back to the decisive turning point reached by the destinies of Prussia through the glorious fights of the past year, the most distant generations will never forget that the elevation of the Fatherland to new power, and to imperishable honors, that the opening up of an epoch of a rich and, with God's help, a blessing-bringing development are essentially due to your penetration, your energy, and the skilful manner in which you conducted the affairs entrusted to you.

I have decided to show a renewed appreciation of these your most distinguished merits, by the bestowal of a gift of four hundred thousand Thalers.[24] The Minister for Finance has been directed to place this sum at your disposal.

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[22] Permission: Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York.

[23] Admiral Irminger was charged with the task of notifying in Berlin and Vienna Christian IX.'s accession to the throne; he was granted no audience in Berlin, and left that city on the 5th for Vienna as, in Bismarck's opinion, the Emperor would more easily receive him than the King of Prussia could.

[24] About £60,000.

It would be in accordance with my wishes if you devoted this gift, the bestowal of which is to manifest my and the Fatherland's thanks, to the purchase of landed property, and entailed the same, so that with the glory of your name it also may remain permanently in your family.

Your grateful and faithfully devoted King,

WILHELM.

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BISMARCK TO KING WILLIAM I.

Donchery, September 2, '70.

After I came here yesterday evening, by your Royal Majesty's command, to take part in the negotiations on the capitulation, these were interrupted until 1 o'clock in the night, by time for consideration, which General Wimpffen solicited, being granted, after General von Moltke had definitely stated that no other terms will be granted than the laying down of arms, and that the bombardment would recommence at 9 o'clock in the morning if the capitulation were not concluded by that time. At about 6 o'clock this morning General Reille was announced, who informed me that the Emperor wished to see me, and was already on his way here from Sedan. The General returned at once to report to his Majesty that I was following, and shortly afterwards I met the Emperor near Fresnois, about half way between this place and Sedan. His Majesty was driving in an open carriage with three officers of high rank, and was escorted by three others on horseback. Of these officers I knew personally Generals Castelnau, Reille, Moskowa, who seemed to be wounded in the foot, and Vaubert. As soon as I reached the carriage I dismounted, walked to the Emperor's side at the carriage door, and asked for his Majesty's orders. The Emperor at first expressed the wish to see your Imperial Majesty, evidently in the belief that your Majesty was also at Donchery. When I replied that at present your Majesty's headquarters were at Vendresse, thirteen miles away, the Emperor enquired whether your Majesty had decided where he should go, and what my opinion on the subject was. I replied that, as it was quite dark when I arrived here, I knew nothing of the district, and offered to place at his disposal at once the house in which I was staying at Donchery. The Emperor accepted this offer, and drove off at a walking pace in the direction of Donchery; about a hundred yards from the Maas bridge, which leads into the town, he stopped in front of a lonely, workman's cottage, and asked me if he could not stay there. I had the house examined by Councillor of Legation Count Bismarck-Bohlen, who in the meantime had followed me; when it was reported that the interior arrangements were very poor and inadequate, but that there were no wounded men in the house, the Emperor alighted and invited me to accompany him inside. Here, in a very small room containing a table and two chairs, I had about an hour's conversation with the Emperor. His Majesty emphasized especially the wish to obtain more favorable conditions of capitulation for the army. I declined from the outset to treat this question with his Majesty, as this was a purely military question, to be settled between General von Moltke and General von Wimpffen. On the other hand, I asked if his Majesty were inclined to peace negotiations. The Emperor replied that, as a prisoner, he was not now in a position to do so, and to my further enquiry by whom, in his opinion, the executive power was at present represented in France, his Majesty referred me to the Government in Paris. When this point, which was indistinct in the Emperor's letter to your Majesty yesterday, was cleared up, I recognized, and did not conceal the fact from the Emperor, that the situation today, as yesterday, was still a purely military one, and emphasized the necessity arising from it for us to obtain by the capitulation of Sedan above all things a material pledge for the security of the military results we had attained. I had already weighed from all sides with General von Moltke yesterday evening, the question whether it would be possible, without detriment to the German interests, to offer to the military feelings of honor of an army which had fought well more favorable terms than those already laid down. After due and careful consideration we both came to the conclusion that this could not be done. When, therefore, General von Moltke, who

in the meantime had arrived from the town, went to your Majesty to submit the Emperor's wishes, he did not do so, as your Majesty is well aware, with the intention of advocating them.

The Emperor then went out into the open air, and invited me to sit beside him just outside the door of the cottage. His Majesty asked whether it would not be practicable to allow the French army to cross into Belgium, to be disarmed and detained there. I had discussed also this eventuality with General v. Moltke on the previous evening and adduced the motive already given for not entering into the question of this course of procedure. With respect to the political situation, I myself took no initiative, and the Emperor went no further than to deplore the ill-fortune of the war, stating that he himself had not wished the war, but was driven into it by the pressure of public opinion in France. I did not regard it as my office to point out at that moment that what the Emperor characterized as public opinion was only the artificial product of certain ambitious coteries of the French press, with a very narrow political horizon. I merely replied that nobody in Germany wished for the war, especially not your Majesty, and that no German Government would have considered the Spanish question of so much interest as to be worth a war. I continued that your Majesty's attitude toward the Spanish succession question was finally determined by the misgiving whether it was right, for personal and dynastic considerations, to mar the endeavor of the Spanish nation to reestablish, by this selection of a King, their internal organization on a permanent basis; that your Majesty, in view of the good relations existing for so many years between the Princes of the Hohenzollern House and the Emperor, had never entertained any doubt but that the Hereditary Prince would succeed in arriving at a satisfactory understanding with his Majesty the Emperor respecting the acceptance of the Spanish election, that, however, your Majesty had regarded this, not as a German or a Prussian, but as a Spanish affair.

In the meantime, between 9 and 10 o'clock, enquiries in the town, and especially reconnaissances on the part of the officers of the general staff, had revealed the fact that the castle of Bellevue, near Fresnois, was suited for the accommodation of the Emperor, and was not yet occupied by the wounded. I reported this to his Majesty by designating Fresnois as the place I should propose to your Majesty for the meeting, and therefore referred it to the Emperor whether his Majesty would proceed there at once, as a longer stay in the little workman's cottage would be uncomfortable, and the Emperor would perhaps need some rest. His Majesty readily assented, and I accompanied the Emperor, who was preceded by an escort of honor from your Majesty's Own Cuirassier Regiment, to the Castle of Bellevue, where in the meantime the rest of the Emperor's suite and his carriages, whose coming had, it appears, been considered doubtful, had arrived from Sedan. General Wimpffen had also arrived, and with him, in anticipation of the return of General von Moltke, the discussion of the capitulation negotiations, which were broken off yesterday, was resumed by General v. Podbielski in the presence of Lieut. Col. von Verdy and the chief of General v. Wimpffen's staff, these two officers acting as secretaries. I took part only in the commencement of the same by setting forth the political and judicial situation in accordance with the information furnished me by the Emperor himself, as it was thereupon reported to me by Major Count von Nostitz, by direction of General von Moltke, that your Majesty wished to see the Emperor only after the capitulation of the army had been concluded—on the receipt of which announcement the hope cherished by the opposite party of securing other terms than those decided on was given up. I then rode off in the direction of Chehery with the intention of reporting the situation to your Majesty, met General v. Moltke on the way, bringing the text of the capitulation approved by your Majesty, and this, when we arrived with it at Fresnois, was accepted and signed without opposition. The demeanor of General v. Wimpffen, as also that of the other French generals, during the previous night was very dignified, and this brave officer could not forbear expressing to me how deeply he was pained that he should have been called upon, forty-eight hours after his arrival from Africa, and half a day after he had assumed command, to set his name to a capitulation so fatal to the French arms, that, however, lack of provisions and ammunition, and the absolute impossibility of any further defence imposed upon him, as a general the duty of suppressing his personal feelings, as further bloodshed could in no way alter the situation.

The permission for the officers to be released on parole was received with great thankfulness, as an expression of your Majesty's intention not to hurt the feelings of an army, which had fought bravely, beyond the point demanded by the necessity of our political interests. General v. Wimpffen also subsequently gave expression to this feeling in a letter in which he thanks General v. Moltke for the consideration he showed in conducting the negotiations.

v. BISMARCK.

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EMPEROR WILLIAM I. TO BISMARCK

Berlin, March 21, '71.

With today's opening of the first German Reichstag after the reëstablishment of a German Empire, the first public activity of the same begins. Prussia's history and destiny have for a long time pointed to an event which is now accomplished by its being summoned to the head of the newly founded Empire. Prussia owes this less to her extent of territory and her power, though both have equally increased, than to her intellectual development and the organization of her army. The brilliant position now occupied by my country has been attained through an unexpectedly rapid sequence of great events during the past six years. The work to which I called you ten years ago falls within this time. How you have justified the confidence with which I then summoned you lies open to the world. It is to your counsel, your circumspection, your unwearying activity that Prussia and Germany owe the world-historical occurrence which is embodied in my capital today.

Although the reward for such deeds is felt within you, I am nevertheless urged and bound to express to you publicly and permanently the thanks of the Fatherland and mine. I elevate you, therefore, to the rank of a Prussian Prince (Fürst), which is to be inherited always by the eldest male member of your family.

May you see in this distinction the undying gratitude of Your Emperor and King

WILHELM.

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EMPEROR WILLIAM I. TO BISMARCK

Coblenz, July 26, '72.

You will celebrate, on the 28th, a delightful family festival[25] which the Almighty in His mercy has accorded you. I, therefore, may and can not remain behind with my sympathy on this occasion, so will you, and the Princess, your wife, accept my most cordial and warmest congratulations on this great occasion. That both of you always gave the first place, among the blessings showered on you by Providence, to domestic happiness is something for which your prayers of thanksgiving should ascend to heaven. Our and my prayers of thanksgiving, however, go further, as they include thanks to God for having placed you at my side at a decisive moment, and thus opened up a career for my Government far exceeding thought and comprehension. You also will send up your feelings of thankfulness that God graciously permitted you to accomplish such great things. Both in and after all your labors you always found comfort and peace in your home, and that gives you strength in your difficult vocation. To preserve and strengthen you for this is my constant solicitude, and I am glad to learn from your letter through Count Lehndorff and also from the latter himself that you will now think more of yourself than of the documents.

[25] Silver wedding.

In remembrance of your silver wedding a vase will be handed you which represents a grateful Borussia and which, fragile though the material of which it is composed may be, shall one day express even in every fragment what Prussia owes to you in its elevation to the height on which it now stands.

Your truly devoted grateful King

WILHELM.

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BISMARCK TO EMPEROR WILLIAM I.

Varzin, August I, '72.

Your Majesty greatly gladdened my wife and me by graciously evincing sympathy in our family festival, and will, we trust, be graciously pleased to accept our respectful thanks.

Your Majesty justly emphasizes happiness in the home as being among the chief blessings for which I have to thank God, but part of the happiness in my house, for my wife as well as for myself, comes from the consciousness of your Majesty's satisfaction, and the exceedingly gracious and kindly words of appreciation which your Majesty's letter contains are more beneficial to afflicted nerves than is all medical assistance. In looking back over my life I have such inexhaustible cause to thank God for His unmerited mercy, that I often fear everything will not go so well with me until the end. I recognize it as an especially happy dispensation that God has called me on earth to the service of a master whom I serve joyfully and with love, as the innate fidelity of the subject never has to fear, under your Majesty's leadership, coming into conflict with a warm feeling for the honor and the welfare of the Fatherland. May God further give me strength to carry out the will so to serve your Majesty that I obtain the sovereign satisfaction, of which such a gracious testimony lies before me today in the form of the autograph letter of the 26th. The vase, which arrived in good time, is a truly monumental expression of Royal favor, and at the same time so substantial that I may hope not the "fragments" but the whole will be evidence to my descendants of the gracious sympathy evinced by your majesty on the occasion of our silver wedding.

The officers of the fifty-fourth regiment showed a kindly spirit of comradeship by sending their band from Colberg. Otherwise, as is usually the case in the country, we were confined to our family circle; only Motley, the former American Ambassador in London, a friend of my early youth, happened to be here on a visit. Besides her Majesty the Queen, his Majesty the King of Bavaria, and their Royal Highnesses Prince Carl and Friedrich Carl, and his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, honored me with telegraphic congratulations.

In health I am becoming slowly better; I have, it is true, done no work whatever; but I hope to be able to report myself on duty in time for the Imperial visits.

v. BISMARCK.

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EMPEROR WILLIAM I. TO BISMARCK

Berlin, December 18, '81.

I must tell you of an extraordinary dream I had last night, which was as clear as I now relate it.

The Reichstag met for the first time after the present recess. On Count Eulenburg's entrance the discussion abruptly ceased; after a long interval the President called on the last speaker to continue the debate. Silence! The President thereupon declared the sitting adjourned. This was the signal for great tumult and clamor. No order, it was urged, should be bestowed on any member during the session of the Reichstag; the Monarch may not be mentioned during the session. The House adjourns till tomorrow. Eulenburg's appearance in the Chamber is again greeted with hisses and commotion —and then I awoke in such a state of nervous excitement that it was long before I recovered, and I

could not sleep from half-past four to half-past six. All this happened in the House in my presence, as clearly as I have written it down.

I will not hope that the dream will be realized, but it is certainly peculiar. I dreamt it after six hours of quiet sleep, so it could not have been directly produced by our conversation.

Enfin, I could not but tell you of this curious occurrence.

Your

WILHELM.

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BISMARCK TO EMPEROR WILLIAM I.

Berlin, December 18, '81.

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious letter. I quite believe that the dream owed its origin, not exactly to my report, but to the general impression obtained during the last few days from Puttkamer's[26] oral report, the newspaper articles, and my report. The pictures we have in our minds when awake do not reappear in the mirror of our dreams until our mental faculties have been well rested by sleep. Your Majesty's communication encourages me to relate a dream I had in the troublous days of the spring of 1863. I dreamt, and I told my dream at once to my wife and to others the next morning, that I was riding along a narrow Alpine path, to the right an abyss, and to the left rocks; the path became narrower and narrower, until at last my horse refused to take another step, and there was no room either to turn or to dismount. I then struck the smooth rocky wall with my riding whip in my left hand, and invoked God; the whip became interminably long, and the wall of rock collapsed like a scene in the theatre, opening up a wide pathway, with a view over hills and forests such as one sees in Bohemia. I also caught sight of Prussian troops, with their banners, and, still in my dreams, wondered how I could best report this Quickly to your Majesty. This dream was realized, and I awoke from it glad and strengthened.

[26] Minister for the Interior, and Vice President of the Ministry of State.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.