STEPHEN LEACOCK

THE HOHENZOLLERNS IN AMERICA

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Leacock S.

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Содержание

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The Hohenzollerns in America / With the Bolsheviks in Berlin and Other Impossibilities

PREFACE

The proper punishment for the Hohenzollerns, and the Hapsburgs, and the Mecklenburgs, and the Muckendorfs, and all such puppets and princelings, is that they should be made to work; and not made to work in the glittering and glorious sense, as generals and chiefs of staff, and legislators, and land-barons, but in the plain and humble part of laborers looking for a job; that they should carry a hod and wield a trowel and swing a pick and, at the day's end, be glad of a humble supper and a night's rest; that they should work, in short, as millions of poor emigrants out of Germany have worked for generations past; that there should be about them none of the prestige of fallen grandeur; that, if it were possible, by some trick of magic, or change of circumstance, the world should know them only as laboring men, with the dignity and divinity of kingship departed out of them; that, as such, they should stand or fall, live or starve, as best they might by the work of their own hands and brains. Could this be done, the world would have a better idea of the thin stuff out of which autocratic kingship is fashioned.

It is a favourite fancy of mine to imagine this transformation actually brought about; and to picture the Hohenzollerns as an immigrant family departing for America, their trunks and boxes on their backs, their bundles in their hands.

The fragments of a diary that here follow present the details of such a picture. It is written, or imagined to be written, by the (former) Princess Frederica of Hohenzollern. I do not find her name in the Almanach de Gotha. Perhaps she does not exist. But from the text below she is to be presumed to be one of the innumerable nieces of the German Emperor.

CHAPTER I

On Board the S.S. America. Wednesday

At last our embarkation is over, and we are at sea. I am so glad it is done. It was dreadful to see poor Uncle William and Uncle Henry and Cousin Willie and Cousin Ferdinand of Bulgaria, coming up the gang-plank into the steerage, with their boxes on their backs. They looked so different in their rough clothes. Uncle William is wearing an old blue shirt and a red handkerchief round his neck, and his hair looks thin and unkempt, and his moustache draggled and his face unshaved. His eyes seem watery and wandering, and his little withered arm so pathetic. Is it possible he was always really like that?

At the top of the gang-plank he stood still a minute, his box still on his back, and said, "This then is the pathway to Saint Helena." I heard an officer down on the dock call up, "Now then, my man, move on there smartly, please." And I saw some young roughs pointing at Uncle and laughing and saying, "Look at the old guy with the red handkerchief. Is he batty, eh?"

The forward deck of the steamer, the steerage deck, which is the only place that we are allowed to go, was crowded with people, all poor and with their trunks and boxes and paper bags all round them. When Uncle set down his box, there was soon quite a little crowd around him, so that I could hardly see him. But I could hear them laughing, and I knew that they were "taking a rise out of him," as they call it,—just as they did in the emigration sheds on shore. I heard Uncle say, "Let wine be brought: I am faint;" and some one else said, "Yes, let it," and there arose a big shout of laughter.

Cousin Willie had sneaked away with his box down to the lower deck. I thought it mean of him not to stay with his father. I never noticed till now what a sneaking face Cousin Willie has. In his uniform, as Crown Prince, it was different. But in his shabby clothes, among these rough people, he seems so changed. He walks with a mean stoop, and his eyes look about in such a furtive way, never still. I saw one of the ship's officers watching him, very closely and sternly.

Cousin Karl of Austria, and Cousin Ruprecht of Bavaria, are not here. We thought they were to come on this ship, but they are not here. We could hardly believe that the ship would sail without them.

I managed to get Uncle William out of the crowd and down below. He was glad to get off the deck. He seemed afraid to look at the sea, and when we got into the big cabin, he clutched at the cover of the port and said, "Shut it, help me shut it, shut out the sound of the sea;" and then for a little time he sat on one of the bunks all hunched up, and muttering, "Don't let me hear the sea, don't let me hear it." His eyes looked so queer and fixed, that I thought he must be in a sort of fit, or seizure. But Uncle Henry and Cousin Willie and Cousin Ferdinand came into the cabin and he got better again.

Cousin Ferdinand has got hold of a queer long overcoat with the sleeves turned up, and a little round hat, and looks exactly like a Jew. He says he traded one of our empty boxes for the coat and hat. I never noticed before how queer and thick Cousin Ferdinand's speech is, and how much he gesticulates with his hands when he talks. I am sure that when I visited at Sofia nobody ever noticed it. And he called Uncle William and Uncle Henry "Mister," and said that on the deck he had met two "fine gentlemen," (that's what he called them), who are in the clothing trade in New York. It was with them he traded for the coat.

Cousin Ferdinand, who is very clever at figures, is going to look after all our money, because the American money is too difficult for Uncle William and Cousin Willie to understand. We have only a little money, but Cousin Ferdinand said that we would put it all together and make it a pool. But when Uncle Henry laughed, and turned his pockets out and had no money at all, Cousin Ferdinand said that it would NOT be a pool. He said he would make it "on shares" and explained it, but I couldn't understand what it meant.

While he was talking I saw Cousin Willie slip one of the pieces of money out of the pile into his pocket: at least I think I saw it; but he did it so quickly that I was not sure, and didn't like to say anything.

Then a bell rang and we went to eat in a big saloon, all crowded with common people, and very stuffy. The food was wretched, and I could not eat. I suppose Uncle was famished from the long waiting and the bad food in the emigrant shed. It was dreadful to see the hungry way that he ate the greasy stew they gave us, with his head down almost in his plate and his moustache all unkempt. "This ragout is admirable," he said. "Let the chef be informed that I said it."

Cousin Ferdinand didn't sit with us. He sat beside his two new friends and they had their heads all close together and talked with great excitement. I never knew before that Cousin Ferdinand talked Yiddish. I remember him at Sofia, on horseback addressing his army, and I don't think he talked to his troops in Yiddish. He was telling them, I remember, how sorry he was that he couldn't accompany them to the front. But for "business in Sofia," he said, he would like to be in the very front trenches, the foremost of all. It was thought very brave of him.

When we got up from supper, the ship was heaving and rolling quite a bit. A young man, a steward, told us that we were now out of the harbor and in the open sea. Uncle William told him to convey his compliments to the captain on his proper navigation of the channel. The young man looked very closely at Uncle and said, "Sure, I'll tell him right away," but he said it kindly. Then he said to me, when Uncle couldn't hear, "Your pa ain't quite right, is he, Miss Hohen?" I didn't know what he meant, but, of course, I said that Uncle William was only my uncle. Hohen is, I should explain, the name by which we are known now. The young man said that he wasn't really a steward, only just for the trip. He said that, because I had a strange feeling that I had met him before, and asked him if I hadn't seen him at one of the courts. But he said he had never been "up before one" in his life. He said he lives in New York, and drives an ice-wagon and is an ice-man. He said he was glad to have the pleasure of our acquaintance. He is, I think, the first ice-man I have ever met. He reminds me very much of the Romanoffs, the Grand Dukes of the younger branch, I mean. But he says he is not connected with them, so far as he knows. He said his name is Peters. We have no Almanach de Gotha here on board the steamer, so I cannot look up his name.

S.S. America. Thursday

We had a dreadful experience last night. In the middle of the night Uncle Henry came and called me and said that Uncle William was ill. So I put on an old shawl and went with him. The ship was pitching and heaving with a dreadful straining and creaking noise. A dim light burned in the cabin, and outside there was a great roaring of the wind and the wild sound of the sea surging against the ship.

Uncle William was half sitting up in his rough bunk, with the tattered gray blankets over him, one hand was clutched on the side of the bed and there was a great horror in his eyes. "The sea; the sea," he kept saying, "don't let me hear it. It's THEIR voices. Listen! They're beating at the sides of the ship. Keep them from me, keep them out!"

He was quiet for a minute, until there came another great rush of the sea against the sides of the ship, and a roar of water against the port. Then he broke out, almost screaming—"Henry, brother Henry, keep them back! Don't let them drag me down. I never willed it. I never wanted it. Their death is not at my door. It was necessity. Henry! Brother Henry! Tell them not to drag me below the sea!"

Like that he raved for perhaps an hour and we tried to quiet him. Cousin Willie had slipped away, I don't know where. Cousin Ferdinand was in his bunk with his back turned.

"Do I slip to-night, at all," he kept growling "or do I not? Say, mister, do I get any slip at all?"

But no one minded him.

Then daylight came and Uncle fell asleep. His face looked drawn and gray and the cords stood out on his withered hand, which was clutched against his shirt.

So he slept. It seemed so strange. There was no court physician, no bulletins to reassure the world that he was sleeping quietly.

Later in the morning I saw the ship's doctor and the captain, all in uniform, with gold braid, walking on their inspection round.

"You had some trouble here last night," I heard the captain say.

"No, nothing," the doctor answered, "only one of the steerage passengers delirious in the night."

Later in the morning the storm had gone down and the sea was calm as glass, and Uncle Henry and I got Uncle William up on deck. Mr. Peters, the steward that I think I spoke about before, got us a steamer chair from the first class that had been thrown away—quite good except for one leg,—and Uncle William sat in it with his face away from the sea. He seemed much shaken and looked gray and tired, but he talked quite quietly and rationally about our going to America, and how we must all work, because work is man's lot. He himself, he says, will take up the presidency of Harvard University in New York, and Uncle Henry, who, of course, was our own Grand Admiral and is a sailor, will enter as Admiral of the navy of one of the states, probably, Uncle says, the navy of Missouri, or else that of Colorado.

It was pleasant to hear Uncle William talk in this way, just as quietly and rationally as at Berlin, and with the same grasp of political things. He only got excited once, and that was when he was telling Uncle Henry that it was his particular wish that Uncle should go to the captain and offer to take over the navigation of the vessel. Uncle Henry is a splendid sailor, and in all our cruises in the Baltic he used to work out all the navigation of the vessel, except, of course, the arithmetic—which was beneath him.

Uncle Henry laughed (he is always so good natured) and said that he had had enough of being Admiral to last him all his life. But when Uncle William insisted, he said he would see what he could do.

S.S. America. Friday

All yesterday and to-day the sea was quite calm, and we could sit on deck. I was glad because, in the cabin where I am, there are three other women, and it is below the water-line, and is very close and horrid. So when it is rough, I can only sit in the alley-way with my knitting. There the light is very dim and the air bad. But I do not complain. It is woman's lot. Uncle William and Cousin Willie have both told me this—that it is woman's lot to bear and to suffer; and they said it with such complete resignation that I feel I ought to imitate their attitude.

Cousin Ferdinand, too, is very brave about the dirt and the discomfort of being on board the ship. He doesn't seem to mind the dirt at all, and his new friends (Mr. Sheehan and Mr. Mosenhammer) seem to bear it so well, too. Uncle Henry goes and washes his hands and face at one of the ship's pumps before every meal, with a great noise and splashing, but Cousin Ferdinand says, "For me the pump, no." He says that nothing like that matters now, and that his only regret is that he did not fall at the head of his troops, as he would have done if he had not been detained by business.

I caught sight of Cousin Karl of Austria! So it seems he is on the ship after all. He was up on the promenade deck where the first class passengers are, and of which you can just see one end from down here in the steerage. Cousin Karl had on a waiter's suit and was bringing something to drink to two men who were in steamer chairs on the deck. I don't know whether he saw me or not, but if he did he didn't give any sign of recognizing me. One of the men gave Cousin Karl a piece of money and I was sure it was he, from the peculiar, cringing way in which he bowed. It was just the manner that he used to have at Vienna with his cousin, Franz Ferdinand, and with dear old Uncle Franz Joseph.

We always thought, we girls I mean, that it was Cousin Karl who had Cousin Franz Ferdinand blown up at Serajevo. I remember once we dared Cousin Zita, Karl's wife, to ask Uncle William if it really was Karl. But Uncle William spoke very gravely, and said that it was not a thing for us to discuss, and that if Karl did it, it was an "act of State," and no doubt very painful to Cousin Karl to have to do. Zita asked Uncle if Karl poisoned dear old Uncle Franz Joseph, because some of Karl's

best and most intimate friends said that he did. But Uncle said very positively, "No," that dear old Uncle Franz Joseph had not needed any poison, but had died, very naturally, under the hands of Uncle William's own physician, who was feeling his wind-pipe at the time.

Of course, all these things seem very far away now. But seeing Cousin Karl on the upper deck, reminded me of all the harmless gossip and tattle that used to go on among us girls in the old days.

Friday afternoon

I saw Cousin Willie on the deck this afternoon. I had not seen him all day yesterday as he seems to keep out of sight. His eyes looked bloodshot and I was sure that he had been drinking.

I asked him where he had been in the storm while Uncle William was ill. He gave a queer sort of leering chuckle and said, "Over there," and pointed backwards with his thumb towards the first class part of the ship. Then he said, "Come here a minute," and he led me round a corner to where no one could see, and showed me a gold brooch and two diamond rings. He told me not to tell the others, and then he tried to squeeze my hand and to pull me towards him, in such a horrid way, but I broke away and went back. Since then I have been trying to think how he could have got the brooch and the rings. But I cannot think.

S.S. America. Saturday

To-day when I went up on deck, the first thing I saw was Uncle Henry. I hardly recognized him. He had on an old blue sailor's jersey, and was cleaning up a brass rail with a rag. I asked him why he was dressed like that and Uncle Henry laughed and said he had become an admiral. I couldn't think what he meant, as I never guess things with a double meaning, so he explained that he has got work as a sailor for the voyage across. I thought he looked very nice in his sailor's jersey, much nicer than in the coat with gold facings, when he was our High Admiral. He reminded me very much of those big fair-haired Norwegian sailors that we used to see when we went on the Meteor to Flekkefyord and Gildeskaale. I am sure that he will be of great service to this English captain, in helping to work the ship across.

When Cousin Ferdinand came up on deck with his two friends, Mr. Mosenhammer and Mr. Sheehan, he was very much interested in Uncle Henry's having got work. He made an arrangement right away that he would borrow Uncle Henry's wages, and that Mr. Sheehan would advance them, and he would then add it to our capital, and then he would take it and keep it. Uncle Henry is to get what is called, in the new money, one seventy-five a day, and to get it for four days, and Cousin Ferdinand says that comes to four dollars and a quarter. Cousin Ferdinand is very quick with figures. He says that he will have to take out a small commission for managing the money for Uncle Henry, and that later on he will tell Uncle Henry how much will be left after taking it out. Uncle Henry said all right and went on with his brass work. It is strange how his clothes seem to change him. He looks now just like a rough, common sailor.

S.S. America. Tuesday

To-day our voyage is to end. I am so glad. When we came on deck Mr. Peters told me that we were in sight of land. He told me the names of the places, but they were hard and difficult to remember, like Long Island and Sandy Hook; not a bit like our dear old simple German names.

So we were all told to put our things together and get ready to land. I got, out of one of our boxes, an old frock coat for Uncle William. It is frayed at the ends of the sleeves and it shines a little, but I had stitched it here and there and it looked quite nice. He put it on with a pair of gray trousers that are quite good, and not very much bagged, and I had knitted for him a red necktie that he wears over his blue shirt with a collar, called a celluloid collar, that American gentlemen wear.

The sea is so calm that Uncle doesn't mind being on deck now, and he even came close to the bulwarks, which he wouldn't do all the way across. He stood there in quite an attitude with his imperfect hand folded into his coat. He looked something, but not quite, as he used to look on the deck of the Meteor in the Baltic.

Presently he said, "Henry, your arm!" and walked up and down with Uncle Henry. I could see that the other passengers were quite impressed with the way Uncle looked, and it pleased him. I heard some rough young loafers saying, "Catch on to the old Dutch, will you? Eh, what?"

Uncle Henry is going ashore just as he is, in his blue jersey. But Cousin Ferdinand has put on a bright red tie that Mr. Mosenhammer has loaned to him for three hours.

Cousin Willie only came on deck at the very last minute, and he seemed anxious to slink behind the other passengers and to keep out of sight. I think it must have something to do with the brooch that he showed me, and the rings. His eyes looked very red and bloodshot and his face more crooked and furtive than ever. I am sure that he had been drinking again.

I have written the last lines of this diary sitting on the deck. We have just passed a huge statue that rises out of the water, the name of which they mentioned but I can't remember, as it was not anything I ever heard of before.

Just think—in a little while we shall land in America!

CHAPTER II

City New York. 2nd Avenue

We came off the steamer late yesterday afternoon and came across the city to a pension on Second Avenue where we are now. Only here they don't call it a pension but a boarding house. Cousin Ferdinand and Cousin Willie drove across in the cart with our boxes, and Uncle William and Uncle Henry and I came on a street car. It cost us fifteen cents. A cent is four and one-sixth pfennigs. We tried to reckon what it came to, but we couldn't; but Uncle Henry thinks it could be done.

This house is a tall house in a mean street, crowded and noisy with carts and street-sellers. I think it would be better to have all the boarding houses stand far back from the street with elm trees and fountains and lawns where peacocks could walk up and down. I am sure it would be MUCH better.

We have taken a room for Uncle William and Uncle Henry on the third floor at the back and a small room in the front for me of the kind called a hall bedroom, which I don't ever remember seeing before. There were none at Sans Souci and none, I think, at any of the palaces. Cousin Willie has a room at the top of the house, and Cousin Ferdinand in the basement.

The landlady of this house is very stout and reminds me very much of the Grand Duchess of Sondersburg-Augustenburg: her manner when she showed us the rooms was very like that of the Grand Duchess; only perhaps a little firmer and more authoritative. But it appears that they are probably not related, as the landlady's name is Mrs. O'Halloran, which is, I think, Scotch.

When we arrived it was already time for dinner so we went downstairs to it at once. The dining-room was underground in the basement. It was very crowded and stuffy, and there was a great clatter of dishes and a heavy smell of food. Most of the people were already seated, but there was an empty place at the head of one of the tables and Uncle William moved straight towards that. Uncle was wearing, as I said, his frock coat and his celluloid collar and he walked into the room with quite an air, in something of the way that he used to come into the great hall of the Neues Palais at Potsdam, only that in these clothes it looked different. As Uncle entered the room he waved his hand and said, "Let no one rise!" I remember that when Uncle said this at the big naval dinner at Kiel it made a great sensation as an example of his ready tact. He realised that if they had once risen there would have been great difficulty in their order of procedure for sitting down again. He was afraid that the same difficulty might have been felt here in the boarding house. But I don't think it would, and I don't think that they were going to stand up, anyway. They just went on eating. I noticed one cheap-looking young man watching Uncle with a sort of half smile as he moved towards his seat. I heard him say to his neighbour, "Some scout, eh?"

The food was so plain and so greasy that I could hardly eat it. But I have noticed that it is a strange thing about Uncle that he doesn't seem to know what he eats at all. He takes all this poor stuff that they put before him to be the same delicacies that we had at the Neues Palais and Sans Souci. "Is this a pheasant?" he asked when the servant maid passed him his dish of meat. I heard the mean young man whisper, "I guess not." Presently some hash was brought in and Uncle said, "Ha! A Salmi! Ha! excellent!" I could see that Mrs. O'Halloran, the landlady, who sat at the other end of the table, was greatly pleased.

I was surprised to find—because it is so hard to get used to the change of things in our new life—that all the people went on talking just the same after Uncle sat down. At the palace at Potsdam nobody ever spoke at dinner unless Uncle William first addressed him, and then he was supposed to give a sort of bow and answer as briefly as possible so as not to interrupt the flow of Uncle William's conversation. Generally Uncle talked and all the rest listened. His conversation was agreed by everybody to be wonderful. Princes, admirals, bishops, artists, scholars and everybody united in declaring that Uncle William showed a range of knowledge and a brilliance of language that was little short of marvellous. So naturally it was a little disappointing at first to find that these people

just went on talking to one another and didn't listen to Uncle William at all, or merely looked at him in an inquisitive sort of way and whispered remarks to one another. But presently, I don't just know how, Uncle began to get the attention of the table and one after the other the people stopped talking to listen to him. I was very glad of this because Uncle was talking about America and I was sure that it would interest them, as what he said was very much the same as the wonderful speech that he made to the American residents of Berlin at the time when the first exchange professor was sent over to the University. I remember that all the Americans who heard it said that Uncle told them things about their own country that they had never known, or even suspected, before. So I was glad when I heard Uncle explaining to these people the wonderful possibilities of their country. He talked of the great plains of Connecticut and the huge seaports of Pittsburg and Colorado Springs, and the tobacco forests of Idaho till one could just see it all. He said that the Mississippi, which is a great river here as large as the Weser, should be dammed back and held while a war of extermination was carried on against the Indians on the other side of it with a view to Christianizing them. The people listened, their faces flushed with eating and with the close air. Here and there some of them laughed or nudged one another and said, "Get on to this, will you?" But I remember that when Uncle William made this speech in Berlin the Turkish ambassador said after it that he now knew so much about America that he wanted to die, and that the Shah of Persia wrote a letter to Uncle, all in his own writing, except the longest words, and said that he had ordered Uncle's speech on America to be printed and read aloud by all the schoolmasters in Persia under penalty of decapitation. Nearly all of them read it.

Wednesday

This morning we had a great disappointment. It had been pretty well arranged on board the ship that Uncle would take over the presidency of Harvard University. Uncle Henry and Cousin Ferdinand and Cousin Willie had all consented to it, and we looked upon it as done. Now it seems there is a mistake. First of all Harvard University is not in New York, as we had always thought in Germany that it was. I remember that when Uncle Henry came home from his great tour in America, in which he studied American institutions so profoundly, and made his report he said that Harvard University was in New York. Uncle had this information filed away in our Secret Service Department.

But it seems that it is somewhere else. The University here is called Columbia, so Uncle decided that he would be president of that. In the old days all the great men of learning used to assure Uncle that if fate had not made him an emperor he would have been better fitted than any living man to be the head of a great university. Uncle admitted this himself, though he resented being compared only to the living ones.

So it was a great disappointment to-day when they refused to give him the presidency. I went with him to the college, but I cannot quite understand what happened or why they won't give it to him. We walked all the way up and I carried a handbag filled with Uncle's degrees and diplomas from Oxford and all over the world. All the way up Uncle talked about the majesty and the freedom of learning and what he would do to the college when he was made president, and how all the professors should sit up and obey him. At times he got so excited that he would stop on the street and wave his hands and gesticulate so that people turned and looked at him. At Potsdam we never realized that Uncle was excited all the time, and, in any case, with his uniform on and his sabre clattering as he walked, it all seemed different. But here in the street, in his faded frock coat and knitted tie, and with his face flushed and his eyes rambling, people seemed to mistake it and thought that his mind was not quite right.

So I think he made a wrong impression when we went into the offices of the college. Uncle was still quite excited from his talking. "Let the trustees be brought," he said in a peremptory way to the two young men in black frock coats, secretaries of some sort, I suppose, who received us. Then he turned to me. "Princess," he said, "my diplomas!" He began pulling them out of the bag and throwing them on the table in a wild sort of way. The other people waiting in the room were all staring at him. Then the young men took Uncle by the arm and led him into an inner room and I went out into the

corridor and waited. Presently one of the young men came out and told me not to wait, as Uncle had been sent home in a cab. He was very civil and showed me where to go to get the elevated railroad. But while I was waiting I had overheard some of the people talking about Uncle. One said, "That's that same old German that was on board our ship last week in the steerage—has megalomania or something of the sort, they say, and thinks he's the former Emperor: I saw the Kaiser once at a review in Berlin,—not much resemblance, is there?"

CHAPTER III

For weeks and weeks I have written nothing in my diary because it has been so discouraging. After Uncle William's offer to take over the presidency of Columbia University had been refused, he debated with Uncle Henry and with Cousin Ferdinand of Bulgaria (who is not living in our boarding house now but who comes over quite often in the evenings) whether he would accept the presidency of Harvard. Cousin Ferdinand looked up the salary in a book and told him not to take it. Cousin Ferdinand has little books with all the salaries of people in America and he says that these books are fine and much better than the Almanach de Gotha which we used to use in Europe to hunt people up. He says that if he ever goes back to be King of Bulgaria again he is going to introduce books like these. Cousin Ferdinand is getting very full of American ideas and he says that what you want to know about a man is not his line of descent but his line of credit. And he says that the whole King business in Europe has been mismanaged. He says that there should have been millions in it. I forgot to say in my diary sooner that Cousin Ferdinand's two friends, Mr. Mosenhammer and Mr. Sheehan, took him into their clothing business at once as a sort of partner. The reason was that they found that he could wear clothes; the effect on the customers when they see Cousin Ferdinand walking up and down in front of the store is wonderful. Of course all kings can wear clothes and in the old days in the Potsdam palace we thought nothing of it. But Cousin Ferdinand says that the kings should have known enough to stop trying to be soldiers and to put themselves at the head of the export clothing trade. He wishes, he says, that he had some of his Bulgarian generals here now in their blue coats trimmed with black fur; he says that with a little alteration, which he showed us how to do, he could have sent them out "on the road," wherever that is, and have made the biggest boom in gentlemen's winter fur trimmings that the trade ever saw.

Cousin Ferdinand, when he comes over in the evenings now, is always beautifully dressed and I can notice that Mrs. O'Halloran, the landlady, is much impressed with him. I am glad of this because we have not yet been able to pay her any money and I was afraid she might say something about it. But what is stranger is that now that Cousin Ferdinand has good clothes, Uncle William and Uncle Henry seem much impressed too. Uncle Henry looks so plain and common in his sailor's jersey, and Uncle William in his old frock coat looks faded and shabby and his face always vacant and wondering. So now when Cousin Ferdinand comes in they stand up and get a chair for him and listen to his advice on everything.

So, as I said, Cousin Ferdinand looked up the salary of the President of Harvard in a book and he was strongly against Uncle William's taking the position. But Uncle William says this kind of position is the nearest thing in this country to what he had in Germany. He thinks that he could do for Harvard what he did for Germany. He has written out on a big sheet of paper all the things that he calls the Chief Needs of America, because he is always busy like this and never still. I forget the whole list, especially as he changes it every day according to the way that people treat Uncle William on the street, but the things that he always puts first are Culture, Religion, and Light. These he says he can supply, and he thought that the presidency of Harvard would be the best place to do it from. In the end he accepted the position against Cousin Ferdinand's advice, or at least I mean he said that he would be willing to take it and he told Uncle Henry to pack up all his degrees and diplomas and to send them to Harvard and say that he was coming.

So it was dreadfully disappointing when all the diplomas came back again by the next post. There was a letter with them but I didn't see it, as Uncle William tore it into fragments and stamped on it. He said he was done with American universities for ever: I have never seen him so furious: he named over on his fingers all the American professors that he had fed at Berlin, one meal each and sometimes even two,—Uncle has a wonderful memory for things like that,—and yet this was their gratitude. He walked up and down his room and talked so wildly and incoherently that if I had not

known and been told so often by our greatest authorities in Germany how beautifully balanced Uncle William's brain is, I should have feared that he was wandering.

But presently he quieted down and said with deep earnestness that the American universities must now go to ruin in their own way. He was done with them. He said he would go into a cloister and spend his life in quiet adoration, provided that he could find anything to adore, which, he said, in his station was very doubtful. But half an hour later he was quite cheerful again,—it is wonderful how quickly Uncle William's brain recovers itself,—and said that a cloister was too quiet and that he would take a position as Governor of a State; there are a great many of these in this country and Uncle spent days and days writing letters to them and when the answers came in— though some never answered at all—Uncle William got into the same state of fury as about the Presidency of Harvard. So, naturally, each day seemed more disappointing than the last, especially with the trouble that we have been having with Cousin Willie, of which I have not spoken yet, and I was getting quite disheartened until last evening, when everything seemed to change.

We all knew, of course, that Uncle William is the greatest artist in the world, but no one liked to suggest that he should sell his pictures for money, a thing that no prince was ever capable of doing. Yet I could not but feel glad when Uncle decided yesterday that he would stoop to make his living by art. It cost him a great struggle to make this decision, but he talked it over very fully last night with Uncle Henry, after Uncle Henry came home from work, and the resolution is taken.

Of course, Uncle always had a wonderful genius for painting. I remember how much his pictures used to be admired at the court at Berlin. I have seen some of the best painters stand absolutely entranced,—they said so themselves,—in front of Uncle's canvasses. I remember one of the greatest of our artists saying one day to Uncle in the Potsdam Gallery, "Now, which of these two pictures is yours and which is Michel Angelo's: I never can tell you two apart." Uncle gave him the order of the Red Swan. Another painter once said that if Uncle's genius had been developed he would have been the greatest painter of modern times. Uncle William, I remember, was dreadfully angry. He said it WAS developed.

So it seemed only natural that Uncle should turn to Art to make our living. But he hesitated because there is some doubt whether a person of noble birth can sell anything for money. But Uncle says Tintoretto the great Italian artist had two quarterings of nobility, and Velasquez had two and a half.

Luckily we have with us among our things Uncle's easel and his paints that he used in Berlin. He had always to have special things because he doesn't use little brushes and tubes of colour as ordinary artists do, but had a big brush and his paint in a tin can, so that he can work more quickly. Fortunately we have with us three of Uncle's pictures rolled up in the bottom of our boxes. He is going to sell these first and after that he says that he will paint one or two every day. One of the three canvasses that we have is an allegorical picture called "Progress" in which Progress is seen coming out of a cloud in the background with Uncle William standing in the foreground. Another is called "Modern Science" and in this Science is seen crouched in the dark in the background and Uncle William standing in the light in the foreground. The other is called "Midnight in the Black Forest." Uncle William did it in five minutes with a pot of black paint. They say it is impressionistic.

So all the evening Uncle William and Uncle Henry talked about the new plan. It is wonderful how Uncle William enters into a thing. He got me to fetch him his old blue blouse, which was with the painting things, and he put it on over his clothes and walked up and down the room with a long paint-brush in his hand. "We painters, my dear Henry," he said, "must not be proud. America needs Art. Very good. She shall have it."

I could see, of course, that Uncle William did not like the idea of selling pictures for money. But he is going to make that side of it less objectionable by painting a picture, a very large picture, for nothing and giving it to the big Metropolitan Art Gallery which is here. Uncle has already partly thought it out. It is to be called the "Spirit of America" and in it the Spirit of America will be seen

doubled up in the background: Uncle has not yet fully thought out the foreground, but he says he has an idea.

In any case he is going to refuse to take anything more than a modest price for his pictures. Beyond that, he says, not one pfennig.

So this morning Uncle rolled up his three canvasses under his arm and has gone away to sell them.

I am very glad, as we have but little money, indeed hardly any except Uncle Henry's wages. And I have been so worried, too, and surprised since we came here about Cousin Willie. He hardly is with the rest of us at all. He is out all night and sleeps in the day time, and often I am sure that he has been drinking. One morning when he came back to the house at about breakfast time he showed me quite a handful of money, but wouldn't say where he got it. He said there was lots more where it came from. I asked him to give me some to pay Mrs. O'Halloran, but he only laughed in his leering way and said that he needed it all. At another time when I went up to Cousin Willie's room one day when he was out, I saw quite a lot of silver things hidden in a corner of the cupboard. They looked like goblets and silver dinner things, and there was a revolver and a sheath-knife hidden with them. I began to think that he must have stolen all these things, though it seemed impossible for a prince. I have spoken to Uncle William several times about Cousin Willie, but he gets impatient and does not seem to care. Uncle never desires very much to talk of people other than himself. I think it fatigues his mind. In any case, he says that he has done for Willie already all that he could. He says he had him confined to a fortress three times and that four times he refused to have him in his sight for a month, and that twice he banished him to a country estate for six weeks. His duty, he says, is done. I said that I was afraid that Cousin Willie had been stealing and told him about the silver things hidden in the cupboard. But Uncle got very serious and read me a very severe lecture. No prince, he said, ever stole. His son, he explained, might very well be collecting souvenirs as memorials of his residence in America: all the Hohenzollerns collected souvenirs: some of our most beautiful art things at Potsdam and Sans Souci were souvenirs collected by our ancestors in France fifty years ago. Uncle said that if the Great War had turned out as it should and if his soldiers had not betrayed him by getting killed, we should have had more souvenirs than ever. After that he dismissed the subject from his mind. Uncle William can dismiss things from his mind more quickly than anybody I ever knew.

The Same Day. Later

I was so surprised this afternoon, when I happened to go down to the door, to see Mr. Peters, the ice gentleman that was on the ship, with his ice cart delivering ice into the basement. I knew that he delivered ice in this part of the city because he said so, and I think he had mentioned this street, and two or three times I thought I had seen him from the window. But it did seem surprising to happen to go down to the door (I forget what I went for) at the moment that he was there. He looked very fine in his big rough suit of overalls. It is not quite like a military uniform, but I think it looks better. Mr. Peters knew me at once. "Good afternoon, Miss Hohen," he said (that is the name, as I think I said, that we have here), "how are all the folks?"

So we talked for quite a little time, and I told him about Uncle trying to get work and how hard it was and how at last he had got work, or at least had gone out to get it, as a painter. Mr. Peters said that that was fine. He said that painters do well here: he has a lot of friends who are painters and they get all the way from sixty to seventy-five cents an hour. It seems so odd to think of them being paid by the hour. I don't think the court artists at home were paid like that. It will be very nice if Uncle William can mingle with Mr. Peters's artist friends. Mr. Peters asked if he might take me out some Sunday, and I said that I would ask Uncle William and Uncle Henry and Cousin Ferdinand and Cousin Willie and if they all consented to come I would go. I hope it was not a forward thing to do.

I forgot when I was talking of work to say that Uncle Henry got work the very second day that we were here. He works down at the docks where the ships are. I think he supervises the incoming and outgoing of the American navy. It is called being a stevedore, and no doubt his being an Admiral

helped him to get it. He hopes to get a certificate presently to be a Barge Master, which will put him in charge of the canals. But there is a very difficult examination to go through and Uncle Henry is working for it at night out of a book. He has to take up Vulgar Fractions which, of course, none of our High Seas Command were asked to learn. But Uncle Henry is stooping to them.

So now, I think, everything will go well.

CHAPTER IV

Uncle's art has failed. It was only yesterday that I was writing in my memoirs of how cheerful and glad I felt to think that Uncle William was going to be able to make his living by art, and now everything is changed again. All the time that Uncle was out on his visit to the picture dealers, I was making plans and thinking what we would do with the money when it came in, so it is very disappointing to have it all come to nothing. I don't know just what happened because Uncle William never gives any details of things. His mind moves too rapidly for that. But he came home with his pictures still under his arm in a perfect fury and raged up and down his room, using very dreadful language.

But after a little while when he grew calmer he explained to me that the Americans are merely swineheads and that art, especially art such as his, is wasted on them. Uncle says that he has no wish to speak harshly of the Americans, but they are pig-dogs. He bears them no ill-will, he says, for what they have done and his heart is free of any spirit of vengeance, but he wishes he had his heel on their necks for about half a minute. He said this with such a strange dreadful snarl that for the moment his face seemed quite changed. But presently when he recovered himself he got quite cheerful again, and said that it was perhaps unseemly in him, as the guest of the American people, to say anything against them. It is strange how Uncle always refers to himself as the guest of the American people. Living in this poor place, in these cheap surroundings, it seems so odd. Often at our meals in the noisy dining-room down in the basement, in the speeches that he makes to the boarders, he talks of himself as the guest of America and he says, "What does America ask in return? Nothing." I can see that Mrs. O'Halloran, the landlady, doesn't like this, because we have not paid her anything for quite a long time, and she has spoken to me about it in the corridor several times.

But when Uncle William makes speeches in the dining-room I think the whole room becomes transformed for him into the banquet room of a palace, and the cheap bracket lamps against the wall turn into a blaze of light and the boarders are all courtiers, and he becomes more and more grandiloquent. He waves his hand towards Uncle Henry and refers to him as "my brother the Admiral," and to me as "the Princess at my side." Some of the people, the meaner ones, begin to laugh and to whisper, and others look uncomfortable and sorry. And it is always on these occasions that Uncle William refers to himself as America's guest, and refers to the Americans as the hospitable nation who have taken him to their heart. I think that when Uncle says this he really believes it; Uncle can believe practically anything if he says it himself.

So, as I say, when he came home yesterday, after failing to sell his pictures, he was at first furious and then he fell into his other mood and he said that, as the guest of a great people, he had found out at last the return he could make to them. He said that he would organise a School of Art, and as soon as he had got the idea he was carried away with it at once and seized a pencil and paper and began making plans for the school and drawing up a list of the instructors needed. He asked first who could be Principal, or President, of the School, and decided that he would have to be that himself as he knew of no one but himself who had the peculiar power of organisation needed for it. All the technical instructors, he said, must be absolutely the best, each one a master in his own line. So he wrote down at the top of his list, Instructor in Oils, and reflected a little, with his head in his hand, as to who could do that. Presently he sighed and said that as far as he knew there was no one; he'd have to do that himself. Then he wrote down Instructor in Water Colour, and as soon as he had written it he said right off that he would have to take that over too; there was no one else that he could trust it to. Then he said, "Now, let me see, Perspective, Freehand, and Crayon Work. I need three men: three men of the first class. Can I get them? I doubt it. Let me think what can be done."

He walked up and down the room a little with his hands behind his back and his head sunk in thought while he murmured, "Three men? Three men? But Ha! why THREE? Why not, if sufficiently gifted, ONE man?"

But just when he was saying this there was a knock at the door and Mrs. O'Halloran came in. I knew at once what she had come for, because she had been threatening to do it, and so I felt dreadfully nervous when she began to say that our bill at the house had gone unpaid too long and that we must pay her at once what we owed her. It took some time before Uncle William understood what she was talking about, but when he did he became dreadfully frigid and polite. He said, "Let me understand clearly, madame, just what it is that you wish to say: do I apprehend that you are saying that my account here for our maintenance is now due and payable?" Mrs. O'Halloran said yes, she was. And Uncle said, "Let me endeavour to grasp your meaning exactly: am I correct in thinking that you mean I owe you money?" Mrs. O'Halloran said that was what she meant. Uncle said, "Let me try to apprehend just as accurately as possible what it is that you are trying to tell me: is my surmise correct that you are implying that it is time that I settled up my bill?"

Mrs. O'Halloran said, "Yes," but I could see that by this time she was getting quite flustered because there was something so dreadfully chilling in Uncle's manner: his tone in a way was courtesy itself, but there was something in it calculated to make Mrs. O'Halloran feel that she had committed a dreadful breach in what she had done. Uncle William told me afterwards that to mention money to a prince is not a permissible thing, and that no true Hohenzollern has ever allowed the word "bill" to be said in his presence, and that for this reason he had tried, out of courtesy, to give the woman every chance to withdraw her words and had only administered a reprimand to her when she failed to do so. Certainly it was a dreadful rebuke that he gave her. He told her that he must insist on this topic being dismissed and never raised again: that he could allow no such discussion: the subject was one, he said, that he must absolutely refuse to entertain: he did not wish, he said, to speak with undue severity, but he had better make it plain that if there were any renewal of this discussion he should feel it impossible to remain in the house.

While Uncle William was saying all this Mrs. O'Halloran was getting more and more confused and angry, and when Uncle finally opened the door for her with cold dignity, she backed out of it and found herself outside the room without seeming to know what she was doing. Presently I could hear her down in the scullery below, rattling dishes and saying that she was just as good as anybody.

But Uncle William seemed to be wonderfully calmed and elevated after this scene, and said, "Princess, bring me my flute." I brought it to him and he sat by the window and leaned his head out over the back lane and played our dear old German melodies, till somebody threw a boot at him. The people about here are not musical. But meantime Uncle William had forgotten all about the School of Art, and he said no more about it.

Next Day

To-day a dreadful thing has happened. The police have come into the house and have taken Cousin Willie away. He is now in a place called The Tombs, and Mr. Peters says that he will be sent to the great prison at Sing-Sing. He is to be tried for robbery and for stabbing with intent to kill.

It was very dreadful when they came to take him. I was so glad that Uncle William was not here to see it all. But it was in the morning and he had gone out to see a steamship company about being president of it, and I was tidying up our rooms, because Mrs. O'Halloran won't tidy them up any more or let the coloured servant tidy them up until we pay her more money. She said that to me, but I think she is afraid to say it to Uncle William. So I mean to do the work now while Uncle is out and not let him know.

This morning, in the middle of the morning, while I was working, all of a sudden I heard the street door open and slam and some one rushing up the stairway: and then Cousin Willie broke into the room, all panting and excited, and his face grey with fright and gasping out, "Hide me, hide me!" He ran from room to room whining and hysterical, and his breath coming in a sort of sob, but he

seemed incapable of deciding what to do. I would have hidden him if I could, but at the very next moment I heard the policemen coming in below, and the voice of the landlady. Then they came upstairs, big strong-looking men in blue, any one of whom could have choked Cousin Willie with one hand. Cousin Willie ran to and fro like a cornered rat, and two of the men seized him and then I think he must have been beside himself with fear for I saw his teeth bite into the man's hand that held him, and one of the policemen struck him hard with his wooden club across the head and he fell limp to the floor. They dragged him down the stairway like that and I followed them down, but there was nothing that I could do. I saw them lift Cousin Willie into a closed black wagon that stood at the street door with quite a little crowd of people gathered about it already, all excited and leering as if it were a show. And then they drove away with him and I came in and went upstairs and sat down in Uncle's room but I could not work any more. A little later on Mr. Peters came to the house,—I don't know why, because it was not for the ice as he had his other clothes on,—and he came upstairs and sat down and told me about what had happened. It seemed a strange thing to receive him upstairs in Uncle's bedroom like that, but I was so upset that I did not think about it at the time. Mr. Peters had been on our street with his ice wagon when the police came, though I did not see him. But he saw me, he said, standing at the door. And I think he must have gone home and changed his things and come back again, but I did not ask him.

He told me that Cousin Willie had stabbed a man, or at least a boy, that was in charge of a jewelry shop, and that the boy might die. Cousin Willie, Mr. Peters says, has been stealing jewelry nearly ever since we came here and the police have been watching him but he did not know this and so he had grown quite foolhardy, and this morning in broad daylight he went into some sort of jewelry or pawn shop where there was only a boy watching the shop, and the boy was a cripple. Cousin Willie had planned to hide the things under his coat and to sneak out but the boy saw what he was doing and cried out, and when Cousin Willie tried to break out of the shop he hobbled to the door and threw himself in the way. And then it was that Cousin Willie stabbed him with his sheath-knife,—the one that I had seen in his room,—and ran. But already there was a great outcry and the people followed on his tracks and shouted to the police, and so they easily ran him down.

All of this Mr. Peters told me, but he couldn't stay very long and had to go again. He says he is going to see what can be done for Cousin Willie but I am afraid that he doesn't feel very sorry for him; but after Mr. Peters had gone I could not help going on thinking about it all and it seemed to me as if Cousin Willie had not altogether had a fair chance in life. Common people are brought up in fear of prison and punishment and they learn to do what they should. But Cousin Willie was brought up as a prince and was above imprisonment and things like that. And in any case he seemed, when the big men seized hold of him, such a paltry and miserable thing.

Later on in the day Uncle William came home and I had to tell him all about Cousin Willie. I had feared that he would be dreadfully upset, but he was much less disturbed than I had thought. Indeed it is quite wonderful the way in which Uncle can detach his mind from things.

I told him that Mr. Peters had said that Cousin Willie must go to Sing-Sing, and Uncle said, "Ha! a fortress?" So I told him that I thought it was. After that he asked if Cousin Willie was in his uniform at the time, and when I said that he was not, Uncle said "That may make it more difficult." Of course Cousin Willie has no uniform here in America and doesn't wear any, but I notice that Uncle William begins to mix up our old life with our life here and seems sometimes quite confused and wandering; at least other people would think him so. He went on talking quite a long time about what had happened and he said that there is an almost exact precedent for the "incident" (that's what he calls it) in the Zabern Case. I don't remember much about that, as it was years ago, before the war, but Uncle William said that it was a similar case of an officer finding himself compelled to pass his sword once through a cripple (only once, Uncle says) in order to clear himself a way on the sidewalk. Uncle quoted a good many other precedents for passing swords through civilians, but he says that this is the best one.

In the evening Cousin Ferdinand and Uncle Henry came over. Uncle Henry seemed very gloomy and depressed about what had happened and said very little, but Cousin Ferdinand was very much excited and angry. He said what is the good of all his honesty and his industry if he is to be disgraced like this: he asked of what use is his uprightness and business integrity if he is to have a first cousin in Sing-Sing. He said that if it was known that he had a cousin there it would damage him with his best trade to an incalculable extent. But later on he quieted down and said that perhaps with a certain part of his trade it would work the other way. Uncle Ferdinand has grown to be much interested in what is called here "advertising,"—a thing that he says all kings ought to study—and he decided, after he had got over his first indignation, that Cousin Willie being in Sing-Sing would be a very good advertisement for him. It might bring him, he said, quite a lot of new business; especially if it was known that he refused to help Cousin Willie in any way or to have anything more to do with any of the rest of us, and not to give us any money. He said that this was a point of view which people could respect and admire.

So before he went home he said that we must not expect to see or hear from him any more, unless, of course, things should in some way brighten up, in which case he would come back.

CHAPTER V

It is a long time—nearly three months—since I have added anything to my memoirs. The truth is I find it very hard to write memoirs here. For one thing nobody else seems to do it. Mrs. O'Halloran tells me that she never thinks of writing memoirs at all. At the Potsdam palace it was different. We all wrote memoirs. Eugenia of Pless did, and Cecilia did, and I did, and all of us. We all had our memoir books with little silver padlocks and keys. We were brought up to do it because it helped us to realise how important everything was that we did and how important all the people about us were. It was wonderful to realise that in the old life one met every day great world figures like Prince Rasselwitz-Windischkopf, the Grand Falconer of Reuss, and the Grand Duke of Schlitzin-Mein, and Field Marshall Topoff, General-in-Chief of the army of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt. There are no such figures as these in America.

But another reason for not writing has been that things have been going so badly with us. Uncle William still has no work and he seems to be getting older and more broken and stranger in his talk every day. He is very shabby now in spite of all I can do with my needle, but he becomes more grandiloquent and consequential all the time. Some of the mean looking young men at this boarding house have christened him "The Emperor"—which seems a strange thing for them to have picked upon, and they draw him out in his talk, and when they meet him they make mock salutes to him which Uncle returns with very great dignity. Quite a lot of the people on the nearby streets have taken it up and when they see Uncle come along they make him military salutes. Uncle gets quite pleased and flushed as he goes along the street and answers the salutes with a sort of military bow.

He is quite happy when he is out of doors explaining to me with his stick the plans he has for rebuilding New York and turning the Hudson River to make it run the other way. But when he comes in he falls into the most dreadful depression and sometimes at night I hear him walking up and down in his room far into the night. Two or three times he has had the same dreadful kind of seizures that he had on board the ship when we came over, and this is always when there is a great wind blowing from the ocean and a storm raging out at sea.

Of course as Uncle has not any work or any position, we are getting poorer and poorer. Cousin Willie has been sent to the fortress at Sing-Sing and Cousin Ferdinand of Bulgaria refuses to know us any more, though, from what we hear, he is getting on wonderfully well in the clothing business and is very soon to open a big new store of which he is to be the general manager. Cousin Karl is now the Third Assistant Head-Waiter at the King George Hotel, and in the sphere in which he moves it is impossible for him to acknowledge any relationship with us. I don't know what we should do but that Uncle Henry manages to give us enough of his wages to pay for our board and lodging. Uncle Henry has passed his Naval Examination and is now appointed to a quite high command. It is called a Barge Master. They refused to accept his certificate of a German Admiral, so he had to study very hard, but at last he got his qualification and is now in charge of long voyages on the canals.

I am very glad that Uncle Henry's command turned out to be on canals instead of on the high seas, as it makes it so much more German. Of course Uncle Henry had splendid experience in the Kiel Canal all through the four years of the war, and it is bound to come in. So he goes away now on quite long voyages, often of two or three weeks at a time, and for all this time he is in chief charge of his barge and has to work out all the navigation. Sometimes Uncle Henry takes bricks and sometimes sand. He says it is a great responsibility to feel oneself answerable for the safety of a whole barge-full of bricks or sand. It is quite different from what he did in the German navy, because there it was only a question of the sailors and for most of the time, as I have heard Uncle William and Uncle Henry say, we had plenty of them, but here with bricks and sand it is different. Uncle Henry says that if his barge was wrecked he would lose his job. This makes it a very different thing from being a royal admiral.

But Uncle William all through the last three months has failed first at one thing and then at another. After all his plans for selling pictures had come to nothing he decided, very reluctantly that he would go into business. He only reached this decision after a great deal of anxious thought because, of course, business is a degradation. It involves taking money for doing things and this, Uncle William says, no prince can consent to do. But at last, after deep thought, Uncle said, "The die is cast," and sat down and wrote a letter offering to take over the presidency of the United States Steel Corporation. We spent two or three anxious days waiting for the answer. Uncle was very firm and kept repeating, "I have set my hand to it, and I will do it," but I was certain that he was sorry about it and it was a great relief when the answer came at last—it took days and days, evidently, for them to decide about it—in which the corporation said that they would "worry along" as they were. Uncle explained to me what "worrying along" meant and he said that he admired their spirit. But that ended all talk of his going into business and I am sure that we were both glad.

After that Uncle William decided that it was necessary for me to marry in a way to restore our fortunes and he decided to offer me to a State Governor. He asked me if I had any choice of States, and I said no. Of course I should not have wished to marry a state governor, but I knew my duty towards Uncle William and I said nothing. So Uncle got a map of the United States and he decided to marry me to the Governor of Texas. He told me that I could have two weeks to arrange my supply of household linen and my trousseau to take to Texas, and he wrote at once to the Governor. He showed me what he wrote and it was a very formal letter. I think that Uncle's mind gets more and more confused as to where he is and what he is and he wrote in quite the old strain and I noticed that he signed himself, "Your brother, William." Perhaps it was on that account that we had no answer to the letter. Uncle seemed to forget all about it very soon and I was glad that it was so, and that I had escaped going to the court of Texas.

All this time Mr. Peters has been very kind. He comes to the house with his ice every day and sometimes when Uncle Henry is here he comes in with him and smokes in the evenings. One day he brought a beautiful bunch of chrysanthemums for Uncle William, and another day a lovely nosegay of violets for Uncle Henry. And one Sunday he took us out for a beautiful drive with one of his ice-horses in a carriage called a buggy, with three seats. Uncle William sat with Mr. Peters in the front seat, and Uncle Henry and Cousin Ferdinand (it was the last time he came to see us) sat behind them and there was a little seat at the back in which I sat. It was a lovely drive and Uncle William pointed out to Mr. Peters all the things of interest, and Cousin Ferdinand smoked big cigars and told Uncle Henry all about the clothing trade, and I listened to them all and enjoyed it very much indeed. But I was afraid afterwards that it was a very bold and unconventional thing to do, and perhaps Mr. Peters felt that he had asked too much because he did not invite me to drive again.

But he is always very kind and thoughtful.

One Sunday afternoon he came to see us, thinking by mistake that Uncle William and Uncle Henry were there, but they weren't, and his manner seemed so strange and constrained that I was certain that there was something that he was trying to say and it made me dreadfully nervous and confused. And at last quite suddenly he said that there was something that he wanted to ask me if I wouldn't think it a liberty. My breath stopped and I couldn't speak, and then he went on to ask if he might lend us twenty-five dollars. He got very red in the face when he said it and he began counting out the money on the sofa, and somehow I hadn't expected that it was money and began to cry. But I told Mr. Peters that of course we couldn't think of taking any money, and I begged him to pick it up again and then I began to try to tell him about how hard it was to get along and to ask him to get work for Uncle William, but I started to cry again. Mr. Peters came over to my chair and took hold of the arm of it and told me not to cry. Somehow his touch on the arm of the chair thrilled all through me and though I knew that it was wrong I let him keep it there and even let him stroke the upholstery and I don't know just what would have happened but at that very minute Uncle William came in. He was most courteous to Mr. Peters and expressed his apologies for having been out and said that it must

have been extremely depressing for Mr. Peters to find that he was not at home, and he thanked him for putting himself to the inconvenience of waiting. And a little while after that Mr. Peters left.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.