

the boy is concerned his life wouldn't have been much good to him. Hermann would have stuck to it as tight as wax that it *was* a Christian, and the boy would almost certainly have confessed. And then he'd have been officially done for."

"What, exiled?"

"No. As he was only fourteen he'd have been severely beaten when he was well enough to stand it. But he'd have had a mark against him for life. But about Hermann, his two depositions will go up to the Knights' Court. I shall go to give evidence about the taking of them; Hermann will confess again by word of mouth, and he'll undoubtedly be given Permanent Exile. That is, if he has the nerve to go through with it, and if he really wants to do it. It seems a curiously roundabout and dirty way to get an innocent man out of the country, but, as I said before, this Empire is too well run. The Authority knows where everyone is, and only Knights and Christians can move about as they like."

"Or pilgrims, for a little while. Sir, I have thought of something about the women. You say they are discouraged and won't reproduce themselves."

"I can't say that as a fact. There may be some obscure physical reason as to why girls are not being born in the proper quantity. As von Hess says, research into sex biology was not encouraged even in his time."

"Oh, why?"

"They were afraid the biologists might prove for certain that it is the male who determines the sex of the child, and then no one can ever blame a woman for not having sons. That would be highly inconvenient. Also they were afraid that it might be established that the female, being the more complicated and developed physical machine, takes more vitality in her conception and gestation. That the female is physically the better sex and that with tired parents more boys are likely to be born."

"Is there any human evidence to support that?"

"As a rule more boys are born in times of scarcity, sieges, long blockades, and war, when parents are certainly under the influence of nerve-strain and fatigue and under-nourishment. The official explanation was that Nature is worried by the destruction of males and leaps in and restores the

balance. I don't think it at all likely that Nature does things as quickly as all that or as conveniently, and Nature does not mind, either, a shortage of males. One male can fertilise hundreds of females. A shortage of females is the only *naturally* serious thing."

"And that's what's happening now? Without the parents being fatigued or severely under-nourished or under nerve-strain?"

"Yes."

"And you know that women are unhappy, somehow?"

"I know *that*. You would know it too if you were a Knight. They can carry on all right till they get all together at their Worship, and then their deep grief expresses itself in the most miserable caterwauling."

"But if a woman is of herself nothing but an animal, just a collection of wombs and breasts and livers and lights, *why* should they be unhappy now, when they are at last required to be nothing but animals?"

"A cow bellows when her calf is taken from her."

"For a few days. Then she forgets. But your older women then, they are quite happy? They never cry?"

"They always cry, except one incredibly old and filthy thing called Marta."

"Why should the older ones cry if they're only animals? Or why should the young girls cry?"

"What are you getting at, Alfred? I think myself that women have some terribly deep discouragement. I don't deny it."

"But you don't see that that *proves* they must be something else besides animals and an innate desire to please men, like a good bitch with her master. They *are* animals and they *are* pleasing men, or the pattern would be changed. So they are, according to you, being themselves for the first time in history, perhaps. But actually they are discouraged. Why?"

"I don't know," said the Knight. "All of us want to know."

"It's as plain as a swastika that women *are* something more than animals and a reflection of men's wishes."

"But, Alfred, think of them. Even think of the German girl of long ago. She was beautiful, certainly, but just as adaptable and pliant. Women have *always* followed the



pattern set, so how can they ever have had anything in themselves?"

"When I was a young boy I was brought up to believe that I was different in some deep unalterable way from all Germans, and that because I was different I was inferior. When I grew up I realised this was not so, and then I thought all that Blood business was religious nonsense, that all men are equal in a way, though some, both individuals and races, have special *abilities*. The Germans have musical ability, for instance. And martial ability. However, I naturally discussed that with no one, and Germans kept on telling me I was inferior. And suddenly one day when I was working in the shop with a very decent but fearfully blood-conscious Nazi I realised if he was *right* in this great difference, then I was not only equal to him, but, of course, superior."

"But why, Alfred? I've no doubt you were, but why of course, *if* he was right about the Blood?"

"Because if there's any real difference, the thing you are yourself is the best thing. A man doesn't want to be an elephant or a rabbit. The elephant if it could think wouldn't want to be a rabbit or a man. It wants to be *itself*, because itself is the very best thing there is in the world. In a way, it is the world, it is all life. The life you are yourself is all life. If you look with envy or longing or inferiority-feeling at any other kind of life, you have lost your life, lost your Self. So if a German *is* a different kind of life, a really different kind, he feels superior, but *so do I*. An *acceptance* on my part of fundamental inferiority is a sin not only against my manhood but against life itself. Do you know the type of Englishman who is always trying to be taken for a German and will hardly speak his own language?"

"Yes."

"You despise them a good deal more than an ordinary fellow who never pretends?"

"Yes, I certainly do."

"And so do most Germans, even those without your knowledge. The Germans consciously want us to accept our inferiority, *unconsciously* they despise us for doing it. For unconsciously they are in touch with life and know it is a crime against life. Well, the reason why women have never

been able to develop whatever it is *they are*, besides their animal body, is because they have committed the crime against life. They see another form of life, *undoubtedly* different from their own, nothing half so vague as Blood, but differing in sex, and they say '*that* form is better than our form'. And for that reason men have always unconsciously despised them, while consciously urging them to accept their inferiority. And just as those futile Englishmen are neither English nor German, but only half-baked cowards and idiots, so women are neither men nor women, but a sort of mess."

"But, Alfred, Alfred, you *cannot* mean that women ought to think of themselves as superior to *us*? It's a lunatic thought."

"It's a logical thought," said Alfred. "You mustn't think of women as they are now, it is very muddling. You must think of the argument. Everything that is something must want to be itself before every other form of life. Women are something—female, they must want to be that, they must think it the most superior, the highest possible form of human life. But of course we must not think it too. Otherwise the crime is committed again, and *we* shall be a mess. Women must be proud of having daughters, we must be proud of having sons. Could a woman, ever in the world, have been as proud of having ten daughters and no son as a man could be of having ten sons and no daughters?"

"No!" gasped the Knight. "Of course not. As far as I know."

"Then the crime was committed in the real tribal darkness before history began, and there you are," said Alfred, satisfied.

"Where are we?" demanded the Knight.

"There's the explanation why women always live according to an imposed pattern, because they are not women at all, and never have been. They are not *themselves*. Nothing can be, unless it *knows* it is superior to everything else. No man could believe God was She. No *woman* could believe God was He. It would be making God inferior."

"But apart from God, how could women ever think themselves superior, whatever they turned into, when they cannot be soldiers? At least they can be, they have been, as you'll read in von Hess's book, but only a few particularly gifted by



Nature. There must always be force of some kind, to uphold any kind of law. Women cannot apply force."

"The human values of this world are masculine. There are no feminine values because there are no women. Nobody could tell what we should admire or what we should do, or how we should behave if there were women instead of half-women. It is an unimaginable state of things."

"Your whole argument is fantastic."

"The argument is as sound and solid as a new block of cylinders. The ideas raised by it seem fantastic. But you cannot pick a hole in the argument. Now *I* was thinking about how it was to be put right, and the crime stopped. There are two things women have never had which men have had, of a developing and encouraging nature. One is sexual invulnerability and the other is pride in their sex, which is the humblest boy's birthright. And yet, until they can get back those two things, which they lost when they committed their crime and accepted men's idea of their inferiority, they can never develop their little remaining spark of self-hood and life. We know it is still *there*, or they wouldn't be unhappy now."

"Of course they can never get complete and certain sexual invulnerability," said the Knight. "No matter what sort of laws you make. Laws can always be *broken*."

"I don't mean anything about laws. I mean a personal invulnerability. Wild animals, female animals, have it. They have a mating season, and at other times they keep the males away. They don't want them and they don't have to suffer them. But I don't mean that women can go back to that. I mean a soul-power which would come from being themselves, from being women. Men would never *want* to force them. It would be unthinkable, impossible."

"Nothing is or ever has been unthinkable or impossible to men. Von Hess says so."

"Nothing is unthinkable to men who are born of mess. Lots of evil things might be unthinkable to the sons of men and women."

"And what is your remedy, my dear Alfred?" asked the Knight sarcastically.

"The remedy, in theory, is as simple as the argument. The highest possible masculine pattern of living should be

imposed on women, and when they have come up again to a little understanding, it should be explained to them the crime they at one time committed; that men do not really admire them for it, that inside themselves they hate them for it, and that they may, *must*, now consider themselves superior and bring their daughters up accordingly. Could women possibly be taught to read, before they are themselves, I mean? There's no imaginable limit to what they might be or do afterwards."

The Knight laughed, a little hysterically.

"Alfred, you are really the most fantastic thinker. You don't even know that women could read—read, write, make books, music, pictures, houses (all inferior to men's, of course), be lawyers, doctors, governors, soldiers, fly aeroplanes—"

"*Did* they, by God!" Alfred was amazed and instantly jealous. "And you won't let us! Well!"

"All that, and yet you're saying the only remedy for all sin (as far as I can make out) is that women should think themselves superior to us."

"To all other forms of life as well," said Alfred soothingly.

"Certainly you have reached your conclusion by logic. Why, the women who could do all those things never thought themselves *superior*. They were aiming at equality only, the modest little things."

Alfred sighed.

"You will think about women and not about the argument. *Of course* they never thought themselves superior then. They were not *being* themselves. They were living an imposed masculine pattern just as ours do now. They were no more *women* than ours, they were only in a better position to become so, if any man had had the common sense to see what the real trouble was, and tell them about it."

"They didn't know there was any trouble."

"Well, *you do*. You told me that the pliancy of woman is the tragedy of the human race, and when I tell you what causes it you cannot see it or take in the argument at all. You won't look at it impersonally, and that probably has been always the trouble with Germans. But let's leave the women now. We can't *do* anything about it. Do you think there are any books in the Japanese Empire?"



"No," said the Knight. "I won't leave it for a minute. Supposing what women are is just an inferior sort of man, and that they *were* being themselves when they were moulded to the most masculine pattern and could imitate men fairly well, as they did in Socialist Russia, what becomes of your argument then? The Russian women certainly weren't unproductive of girls."

"When women are being what they are *really* the pattern will never change. They won't allow men to change the pattern. And yet you say yourself that women never mind the pattern being changed, however much it's to their own disadvantage. Were women ever doctors and lawyers and writers and things in Germany?"

"Yes."

"And what happened?"

"Hitler discouraged them. But, mind, he didn't want them to be wholly illiterate and ugly and animal, and lose their nationality and class and rejection-rights."

"No, but he wanted to change the pattern a little. And what had the women to say about it?"

"They were wildly enthusiastic about him and everything he did."

"Then there's your answer. Why should women be wildly enthusiastic about a man at all? It's an unnatural crime to allow something totally different from yourself to impose a pattern of living on you. Now it may astonish you, but the average Nazi doesn't dislike me at all. I have lots of friends, fellows I like and who like me, among the Nazis in England. And that's because though I have to accept the German pattern of living and belief outwardly, because I belong to a conquered nation, inwardly I have thrown it off. They realise, unconsciously, that I am really myself, different (if there is any real difference between English and Germans) and *therefore* superior feeling. And they *like* it. They despise the German-English consciously, and unconsciously. They only despise *me* consciously, and half the time they've forgotten all about it."

"They wouldn't like it much if you ran about saying you were superior."

"No. Because then religion and tradition and all sorts of conscious things would get in the way. Besides, it would take

a very long course of impersonal and objective thinking before any German could realise that he *could* still feel superior without making everybody else in the world feel inferior. Do you see what I mean?"

"I can understand your argument when you apply it to yourself and us. But, after all, we're all *men*."

"And therefore not so different. Probably without any right to *fundamental* superiority feeling among ourselves."

"But when you go on to women, I cannot follow you. Their depth of inferiority lies in the very fact that they *are* so different."

"Why does it?"

"Because their physique and their mental make-up prevent them doing anything worth while, doing it *well*, that is, except just their animal job of bearing children."

"And which sex has been setting the standard of what is worth while?"

"Well, the male sex," the Knight admitted.

"And how do you know what women will do when they have stopped being submissive and despising themselves and causing the tragedy of the human race?"

The Knight shook his head.

"Now we're back at the same place again. I will think about what you say, and try to understand it. But I am one of the men, I expect, who cannot be impersonal."

"Well, of course your thinking has been conditioned by von Hess. The only hope probably for impersonal thinking is having to think by yourself. *Any* kind of tradition must rot you up."

"And why haven't you thought about women before? They have always been there. I didn't make them, neither did von Hess."

"I never knew they were important. If you could have made me believe fleas were important I would think seriously and impersonally and as far as possible without prejudice of fleas. I should not say, immediately, oh well, *it's only a flea*. Low, low, base flea."

"But if someone seriously put it to you, a flea thinks itself superior to everything, and the whole of life——"



"It does!" cried Alfred. "And God likes it to think like that! Yes, whatever God is, He must want women to feel themselves superior, and fleas, and lice, and men. It's just a condition of healthy life. And now, do you think there are any books in the Japanese Empire? Old books, I mean. Oh, highly-born, let's leave the women. There's so much I want to know."

The Knight almost visibly dragged his mind away from the question of women, which as Alfred treated it was repugnant and absurd and yet somehow held an unholy fascination for him, and turned it on to the Japanese Empire, which suddenly, however huge and however potentially dangerous, seemed friendly by comparison.

"I don't think there are any pre-imperial records there either," he said. "We do not know, of course; Asia and America are vast places, and the Japanese, however slavishly imitative they are, could probably never manage to be as thorough and as patient in destruction as our people. But von Hess has a speculative sentence about that point. He says: 'Either we shall at some time conquer the Japanese and thus have the whole world and its records under our control, or the Japanese, whose only mental characteristic as a nation is ape-like imitativeness, will copy us and destroy the records themselves in each country they conquer.' All I know is that the Japanese of the Samurai class believe themselves to be the originators of civilisation in Asia and America and Australasia, which is rather amusing, seeing even their pre-westernisation culture, what you might call their own native culture, was borrowed from the Chinese. The Japanese are quite incapable of originating anything at all, or creating anything except yellow-faced babies. Fortunately now even that low form of creation is failing them."

"You are a little prejudiced against them perhaps," Alfred suggested. "Have you met many Japanese?"

"I was on duty for five years on the Eastern Frontier in Persia, and after the truce had become to all intents and purposes an absolutely permanent peace (until something different happens in one or other of the Empires) there was courteous if not exactly friendly contact between us and the Samurai. I applied for the duty on purpose to get in touch with the Japanese, and I found it duller than anything you

like to imagine. They are an utterly boring people. They think of nothing, no *nothing*, except war-machines, their honour and the Emperor."

"But then how do they differ from most German Knights? Isn't it that when you see people you *can* criticise who have the same idea of life as you, you see not perhaps how bad the idea is but how dull it is?"

"I've always known it is a bad idea, and I have always been able to criticise the other Knights. And I do assure you that the Japanese are a great deal duller and more stupid than we are. We have the remnants of a great culture of *our own*; our music, for instance, is ours, it expresses something we have lost certainly, but which *was* German when it was alive. The Japanese have nothing but a few dirty rags all cut off other nations' clothes. If they were to conquer the world, culture could never start again, it would be a lost, permanently lost, human activity."

"Are the Japanese women the same as ours?"

"I never saw any. But the Japanese regard women in the same way as we do, *of course*, as beings without nationality. They copied von Wied's idea, and the women of Asia and America—women all over the Empire—are just the same—ugly, animal and wretched. If only some other nation had conquered the East—the Chinese, or the Siberian Russians, or the North Americans—things would have been very different."

"And if only some other nation than Germany had conquered Europe things would have been different, wouldn't they? Or is it perhaps the conquering itself that is wrong? It is hard to tell which comes first. Whether dull, stupid, soulless nations make the best conquerors, or whether conquest makes nations dull, stupid and soulless. What were the British like when they had an empire? Does von Hess say anything about that?"

"It wasn't a conquest empire really. It was made by restlessness. The English and Irish and Scotch and Welsh just roved about on the sea and took places before other Europeans got there, or places the others didn't want, and suppressed the practically unarmed native inhabitants and just stayed there. It was an empire ruled in the most sloppy way you can imagine; everyone did exactly as they pleased



without any reference to the British Government, and only the dark races were treated with a certain amount of authority. It was never strong in a military sense, and when it could no longer be defended by a big and efficient navy (von Hess allows you a certain talent for sea-fighting) it just fell to pieces. The Japanese got most of it and we had the rest, the African portions."

"And what does he say about the character of the people? Were they dull, stupid and soulless? Or was a sloppy Empire better than a military one?"

"He doesn't say. You see, he knew the Germans were in their madness committing a great crime against humanity in destroying the records, but he never attributed the madness to militarism and conquest, thinking those bad things in themselves. He blamed a flaw in the German character. A tendency to moral cowardice, mad spiritual panic, he calls it in one place. His few remarks on the English character have reference to this weakness of Germans, for in what he calls the Nordic population of the islands, that is among the English and the lowland Scots, he finds an opposite tendency. He thinks little of your ancestors as soldiers or administrators, he says your general culture was nothing to compare with the French, that your music was almost non-existent, and that your only claim to great literature rested on two poets, both inferior he *thinks* (he says 'I think') to the greatest Germans, and a magnificent translation of the Christian Bible. But he says, the English have one claim to real greatness, which lies in a toughness of moral fibre, an immovable attachment to what they believe, often in the face of large majorities, to be right, that von Hess finds admirable. He says, 'They are sturdy heretics. The best of them are incapable of spiritual panic, even the ordinary men among them are hard to move to dubiously moral courses by spiritual pressure. If they get a notion that a certain thing is right they will hold to it with the utmost stubbornness. A Christian sect called the Society of Friends gained influence far out of proportion to their small numbers by their tenacious devotion to their principles, which included a refusal to bear arms for any purpose whatsoever. When England was in the gravest danger both in the 1914 war and the Final

European War a large proportion of these men still refused to fight, no matter what moral or physical pressure was brought to bear on them, and what is more remarkable than that is that in the 1914 war there was in the country at large even a certain amount of sympathy, not with their pacifism, but with their moral attitude. A genuine Friend (not a coward hiding under the shelter of the sect) was right not to fight because he believed fighting to be wrong. A man must do what he thinks right and (Englishmen are inclined to add) I am the sole judge of what that is.' Von Hess goes on, 'You cannot imagine a similar strength of moral feeling among large numbers of Germans, or that any of them could respect pacifist principles in time of war; but that very tolerance of *sincerity* in ideas which oneself finds loathsome shows a reserve of spiritual power which I cannot help envying for our people. In these English and Scotch heretics of all ages and in the common men who could not withhold from them all sympathy, England's real greatness lay. If they can resist, not the physical destruction of their records, for that will be impossible, but the Germanisation of their character, and somehow, in face of all the deception they will suffer, remain themselves, there will be soul-power in Europe after the passing of this dark evil time.' There, Alfred. Have these heretics' qualities descended to you? Have you resisted the Germanisation of your character? I think many of the English have, most successfully. That's one reason why the Knights always try to be sent there."

"I don't think I have," said Alfred dubiously. "I shouldn't be tough enough not to fight when the other Englishmen were fighting. I don't really believe in fighting at all, but I should have to go in with them. It's a new idea to me that a man might refuse to fight with his own people."

"You must remember it was a religious principle with them. It can't be with you. Your childhood's religion was ours, and now of course you have none."

"Well, it is vague. I react against bloodshed and violence and cruelty because it's your religion, but I don't know that I could let any man have even a chance to call me



a coward. Von Hess was a better Englishman than I am."

"He saw that he must be called a coward for the sake of truth."

"Well, I *could* do it, of course," Alfred said, after a pause. "Yes, if it was a question of protecting the book, I'd let my best friends think me a coward. Why couldn't he have collected just one or two more books, the Christian Bible, for instance, and left them with Arnold just the same?"

"He doesn't say. But I think it may have been very dangerous for *anyone* in Germany in the state it was in then to buy anything but technical books. I expect he didn't dare to risk it, not through Arnold, an agent or anyone. And his own were already sealed up. And those sort of books, just on cheap paper, wouldn't have lasted. He says he made his book to endure for thousands of years. Before you go I'll show you how to touch up the letters with a paint-brush if any of them show the smallest sign of fading."

"He might have sent Johann Leder to buy a Bible in some little quiet place in England, and then I should be able to read our claim to literary greatness."

"I know he would have got other books had it been possible. But if he had been found out, we shouldn't even have had *his* book."

"And how were all the things destroyed? Were there a great many books?"

"Millions. And records in stone and in paint and in architecture."

"However was it done? It must have taken twenty years."

"More likely fifty or a hundred, and it must have cost as much as a small war. I don't know how it was done."

"But doesn't he say?"

"It wasn't done then. Only starting to be done. He wastes no parchment talking about that."

"But *someone* must know. There must be records with *der Fuehrer*, or the Inner Ring."

"Alfred, you're being stupid. If you murder a Knight

you don't bury him in a Holy Field with a tombstone explaining how you killed him. You hide the body and hope people will think he's been lost or fallen down a crevasse or drowned himself. Those Germans wanted future generations, Knights, Fuehrer and all, to be ignorant, wholly ignorant of the *existence* of other civilisations."

"I see. But there must be legends. We've got legends about all sorts of things."

"There are no legends about it in Germany. None that I've ever heard, and I've collected legends since I read the book at twenty-one. The Germans were ashamed of it really. They deliberately forgot it as soon as possible."

"I think in England it's got mixed up with our loss of freedom," said Alfred. "I don't know anything in particular about books being burned, certainly. We moonrakers say that there was once a great building in Salisbury with a pointed tower where the Holy Swastika Barracks Church stands. But the Germans tell us we didn't know how to build with mortar before they taught us, that we could only put up primitive monuments like Stonehenge."

"The thing with the pointed tower was probably a great Christian church. There were thousands of them, some very beautiful, von Hess says."

"Why didn't they just keep them for Hitler churches, then?"

"Because they were built in the form of the cross and were packed with records in stone of past civilisation. But Stonehenge is much older than your Salisbury church."

"Does von Hess mention Stonehenge?" Alfred asked, thrilled and surprised.

"He does, because it was famous in Europe. There is nothing so good in Germany."

"How old is it?"

"He says it wasn't absolutely certain, but that it was pre-Christian, pre-Roman, probably Druidic."

"And why didn't the Germans blow that up?"

"Because there's nothing civilised about it, and it served to remind you of your tribal darkness."

"Well, it's a queer place," Alfred admitted. "I often go there to think over things. All those great stones lying about,



and the two that are still upright with the thing across the top. I'm glad they left Stonehenge."

"It's not *yours*," said the Knight. "Your ancestors were running about in Jutland or some such place when men were worshipping at Stonehenge."

"It's mine *now*. You've made it mine. Your people have always dinned it into me that that's *our* primitive savage monument, and you can't take it away from me now. I'm glad you've got nothing like it in Germany. How did von Hess get that photograph of the girl?"

The Knight smiled.

"It's a curious reflection that every man who sees that photograph looks more at the girl (once they know it is a girl) than at Hitler, even though *when* they see it they suppose Hitler to be God."

"I didn't suppose him to be. Surely you didn't either?"

"Of course I did, at twenty-one. You can't teach children dangerous secret heresies, because they can't be trusted not to talk about them. The von Hess boys are brought up like any other Knight's sons, and at twenty-one, or when the father thinks the youth has gained some stability of character, he receives this severe shock."

"And of course the father is always an unbeliever?"

"Yes. It makes a difficulty, a gap between father and son, but the son comes to understand at last, and then they can make friends. There were few happier times in my life than the years I spent making friends with my father first, and later with my sons."

"Please," said Alfred, a little uncomfortably, as the Knight did not go on. "How did he get the photograph, sir?"

"Oh, he'd always had it. It was a much-cherished possession of his family, one of the few unofficial pictures of Hitler that were left. They took great care of it and when von Hess left Germany he took it with him. He knew that all photographs and pictures of Hitler would be gathered in, and all the statues destroyed, if he was going to be God. Even greatly idealised, as he was in the statues, he was still not impressive enough and not German enough to be God. The Thunderer would naturally have exploded him with a

much larger, blonder, nobler type of physique. Von Hess when he's writing about Hitler states that he has no doubt whatever that it is an authentic photograph of him, and he describes it exactly, so that there shall be no doubt he means *that* photograph. The placing of the figures, their clothes, the somewhat peculiar position of Hitler's hands, and a detailed description of all the faces. He says the girl is a member of the Hitler Mädchen, probably a sort of leader among them, and that the men behind are two of Hitler's bodyguard. Of course Arnold had it when he got the book, and they've been together ever since. Now it is yours."

"Ah," said Alfred, "that'll be grand."

"I wish you were an older man—no, I don't. But that girl is not important except to show what a shaky basis our religion has. How many lies there are that can be shown in just one picture."

"And as showing how von Wied changed the pattern for women. Didn't von Hess think that important?"

"Yes, he did. He found von Wied's ideas so disgusting and unmanly that he writes quite a long piece (he apologises for the length of it) about the history of women. Oh, I suppose she *is* important. But you'll only make yourself unhappy looking at her."

"I'd rather be unhappy. Are all the composers you say are German really German?"

"Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Mozart, Wagner, Schumann, Meyerbeer, Gluck, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Handel, Haydn, Bruckner, Strauss—oh, scores; I couldn't give you offhand the whole list von Hess gives. All German or Austrian. When they wrote their music the Austrians did not call themselves Germans, but of course they always were. But there are some big things we play that I can't believe are German, and I believe it's Russian music. Von Hess mentions one great Russian composer called Tchaikowski, and several lesser ones. Then doubtless there is a good deal of French and Italian and Spanish music attributed to minor German composers. You often hear things that don't go at all with the other work of some particular man you're supposed to be studying."

"And no English music?"

"There *might* be," said the Knight doubtfully. "But



I doubt if much of it was good enough to last. There's a most interesting thing about the music, Alfred," he said, his eyes brightening with enthusiasm for the subject: "those enormous works we play of Wagner aren't supposed to be only played; they're operas. They're supposed to be acted and sung as well as played."

"You mean like a Hitler miracle play with heroes?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't they do them?"

"Because the operas are jammed up with beautiful and heroic and sexually attractive women. Von Hess says he knows the operas will have to vanish as themselves."

"I think that's rather silly. They could have put lovely heroic boys in the places of all the women and let the men love the boys. Men do love boys, nearly all of them, at one time or another, in one way or another."

"The only unfortunate thing is that boys can't possibly sing the music."

"Ah, that is rather a facer. Could women really sing in those days?"

"Judging by Wagner's music, in which you can trace all the songs once you have the clue, the women had voices of enormous range and power. I never can imagine what it sounded like, however hard I try. No boy could sing more than little bits of the songs, even in the soprano parts. I do not particularly care for Wagner's music, but I often wished I could slip back in time and hear one of those operas performed. They must have been in their way magnificent."

"Why doesn't someone write an opera for men and boys, with not such difficult soprano songs?"

The Knight sighed, and the light went out of his eyes.

"No one can write anything now, not even a new march. No one has written anything for hundreds of years, except the most flagrant hash-ups and plagiarisms. You can't cut all culture off at the root and expect it to go on flowering at the top. Lots of us, most of us, love music. Many of us are excellent instrumentalists and quite a number of us can sing in tune and with feeling. But we can't *make* music. We have nothing to make it out of. No one knows or ever did know, so says von Hess, quite what will cause a vigorous culture, or how

the creative spirit in men works. But he says, one culture seems to grow out of another, one will go rotten, and another spring up on its grave, with a bit of the old one in it, like manure you see, and those wretched mangolds that won't grow, but they'd have grown even less if I hadn't put something into the ground first. Now we have nothing in the ground. We didn't let the old cultures die, we killed them. Now we have nothing, except the memory, in our music, of our own. But we killed even part of our own, our literature—that is all gone; we have nothing but the Hitler Bible and the legends, and what *we* call the history of Germany. We are stagnant. We're not exactly barbarians, we have technical skill and knowledge, we are not afraid of Nature, we do not starve. But in the rich mental and emotional life men live when they are *going somewhere*, aiming at something beyond them, however foolish, we have no part. We can create nothing, we can invent nothing—we have no use for creation, we do not need to invent. We are Germans. We are holy. We are perfect, and we are dead."

"It's extraordinary it should all absolutely stop, like that," Alfred said.

"No more extraordinary than that my nose should bleed when I hit it hard on a rigid steel-bar. One thing follows from another. It's the same with all the other arts. There are men who can draw, men who can paint, men who can carve in wood and stone. And all they can do is to copy. They have technique, they know about perspective and so forth, but they can *make* nothing. Statues and pictures of Hitler and the heroes, all exactly alike, all weak and dull. If they draw a picture of a cat, well it is a cat. If the man is clever it is like a photograph of a cat, if he is not it's like a bad photograph of a cat. None of it is art, none of it is worth doing. I don't know what a real picture is like, but I do know it must be very different. No, there is no civilised culture in the world now, only remnants of the old. Our music, the traditional tunes of the subject races, and all the legends. The real legends, not the Hitler ones."

"Tunes like this," Alfred said. He whistled the Highland air, the Skye tune.

"That's a Celtic lament," said the Knight. "It has the true Celtic melancholy. The Scandinavian tunes are rather



similar. I think it comes from long dark winters, lack of sun. It would sound better if you whistled it in tune, and in the right key. It's a lovely melody."

"I may whistle out of tune, but that is the key. Why, I can hear Angus at it now."

"It's the wrong key," said the Knight. He went to a corner of the room and took a violin out of its case. He tuned it and played some runs and arpeggios and chords with such power and grace that Alfred sat open-mouthed with admiration. Then he played the Skye tune as Alfred had whistled it.

"You hear that?"

"Yes, that's right. It starts on that note."

"Then listen to this."

The Knight played it in a different key, lower down on the violin.

"That is the key. Are you so deaf, you unmusical English dog, that you can't hear the difference? And are you so half-witted that you think that any music from the simplest to the greatest can ever be played except in its own key, the key that suits the form and thought of the composition? Would you transpose the symphonies of Beethoven, and then think they would sound just the same? Yes, you probably would."

"The first key was the one Angus always played it in," said Alfred obstinately.

"And what did he play it on?"

"A whistle."

"Of course. And the key of the whistle was D flat. You can make accidentals on those primitive home-made wooden whistles by not wholly stopping up the holes, but owing to their small range you cannot conveniently play anything except in the key of the whistle itself. Had Angus sung it or been able to play it on a violin he would, of course, have put it in the right key. Now here is another Celtic tune, either Irish or Scottish in origin. I heard it first from a Japanese."

The Knight played a simple, sweet and very melancholy tune on the violin. First he played it in single notes and then with a rich deep double stopping. Alfred was entranced.

"Ach, you like that, do you?" asked the Knight sarcastically. "Ach, how English you are, Alfred! No one should play double stopping with Celtic melodies. They were not made for that, they are too sweet themselves. The harmony overloads them, and makes them sickly. It is just what you *would* like. Shall I play it again?"

"Yes, please," said Alfred, unabashed. "It's lovely."

The Knight played it again, with tremendous feeling, his cloak shaking gracefully back from the shoulder of his bow arm, his great nose bent down towards the violin, and his eyes rolling towards his appreciative audience. Afterwards he played an aria of Bach, a severe cold piece of music.

"Just to get the taste out of my ear," he explained, when he had finished.

"You play beautifully, sir," Alfred said. "Even an English dog can hear that."

"I used to play a little," said the Knight, with a sigh, putting the violin back in its case. "Not well, really. Now my fingers are getting stiff. If I really wanted to play something I should have to practise three hours a day for three months and at the end of that time they still would not be supple enough."

"Did you say you had that lovely tune from a Japanese?"

"Yes. But *he* didn't make it. The Japanese have no more real music in them than a tom-cat, and their singing sounds very much like cats. It is an American traditional tune, an old tune. He knew its name, but no words. It is called 'Shenandoah', and the Shenandoah is a river in North America. That Samurai was one of the very few who had a tiny spark of intelligence and taste."

"But if it is an American tune why should it be a Celtic tune?"

"Because there was a strong Celtic influence in America. I don't care what you say, Alfred, if the man who made that tune was not a Scotsman or an Irishman, or else under hypnotic Celtic influence, I would—I would break my violin. It is a Celtic tune. Now sing me or whistle me an English tune. I think I will have the violin out again to play it. I can hear it when you whistle, but it is not quite itself."



"No German but you has ever heard this tune," said Alfred. "It is a secret one."

Alfred whistled a tune, and the Knight played it through. He smiled.

"And what words do you sing to it? Secret rebellious words?"

"Yes. We sing:

*"God send our warrior-king,  
God send our valiant king,  
God send our king.  
Send him victorious,  
War-worn but glorious  
Long to rule over us,  
God send him soon."*

*"Thy choicest arms in store  
On us be pleased to pour  
On churl and thegn,  
Scatter the enemy!  
Death to all Germany!  
England will yet be free  
In that great reign."*

"What!" cried the Knight. "Do you mean all you good English Hitlerians sing that song?"

"No. It's a heathen song. But all of us know it, and some of us sing it, sometimes. A great leader is to arise and arm us, you see. There are stores of arms taken from the Germans left over from the war if we knew where to find them. Parts of aeroplanes and tanks and things."

"They'd be a lot of use, after six hundred years and more, wouldn't they?"

"Oh, I know. It's all nonsense really."

"What do churl and thegn mean?"

"Nobody knows. They're the men who are to be armed, anyway."

"*Kerl*, of course," said the Knight. "Those must be very old Anglo-Saxon words meaning common fellow, *Kerl*, and officer. Like Nazis and Knights."

"And king means leader. Fuehrer. We have two words for leader, you've only one."

"On the contrary, king is a German word. It comes in von Hess. *Koenig*. A king was not in later history quite the same as a Fuehrer. It became a hereditary office. Der Fuehrer is chosen. Kings were born. When there were no more dynastic kings in Germany, and history had vanished, the word vanished too. But you've still got it because you are still fundamentally irreligious and disloyal. I'm glad. Only you'll never beat Germany and free yourselves by force of arms. You mustn't allow yourselves to be made stupid and violent by your secret song."

"We don't really. Only the English tune helps us to keep ourselves together—such of us as want to."

"But then it is not an English tune," said the Knight.

"It is an English tune!" said Alfred angrily. "It is a very old sacred English tune. I'll bet you it was sung all over the old empire to different words."

"It may have been, but for all that it is not an English tune. It is a German tune. I have heard it in Saxony. Besides, I should know it was German if I had not heard it in Saxony. It is a typical good, sound, rather dull German tune."

"You want to have everything, even our tunes now! You leave us nothing, nothing at all! I wonder you allow us to eat or to wear any clothes!"

"Alfred, do not get so heated. I shall have to play you some more double-stopping. And whatever you say, and if you kill me, you will never get me to admit that that tune is anything but German. Whistle me another English tune."

Alfred whistled another, a sad but sweet melody. The Knight played it, first in single notes and then with harmonies that brought tears to Alfred's eyes and made him forget the insult the Knight had offered to the sacred secret English tune.

"The double-stopping is all right for that melody," he said. "It is more sophisticated than the Highland air, not quite so *purely* sweet—yes, it is allowed to have double-stopping. It goes well. *Ganz gut!*"

He played it again. Alfred thanked him, bending his head down so that the Knight should not see his tears. He was ashamed of himself for being so deeply affected, and yet



there was something about the old German's playing or about the tune itself—

"You are allowed to have that tune," said the Knight, laying the violin back in its case. "It is not Celtic, and not German. Certainly not Russian, nor is it at all like the French or Spanish folk-melodies. It has a quality of its own. What are the words?"

"It is a love-song from a man to a beautiful youth, and it starts, 'Drink to me only with thine eyes.'"

The Knight softly sang these words in a voice that had lost all tone but was true and clear.

"Ah, yes," he said. "Of course it is a love song. But it was never written for a boy. The words have got altered like your rebel song. It's an old song written in the time when women were beautiful, and men had to woo them, to court them, perhaps to be rejected. Ah, yes. Now if you think of that German girl in the photograph you can come to a faint understanding of the tune—not musically, it is very simple there, but emotionally. No tunes like that have been written since men gave up loving women. No tunes at all of any kind a quarter as good as that little English song. But, Alfred, you must go. I have wasted all our time in trifling matters and have explained nothing. I have to go to Munich to-night."

"In the aeroplane? The new one?"

"I'm going in my car. I'm being more careful now, taking no risks whatever. And have you had any supper?"

"No, sir."

"Then go to the kitchen and find out what Knights' personal servants get to eat. They live too high for an officially Spartan empire, but the Knights are not Spartans except voluntarily, and the food is always there, so naturally the servants eat it."

"What is Spartan?"

"Another warlike half-civilisation like ours. Now, be quiet, Alfred. Stand to attention. I am going to summon Heinrich to take you to the kitchen. Come to-morrow earlier, say at four. Bring Hermann with you. I must find out what he really wants to do. And think of some more tunes. But no, we have so little time. Only I must show you—ach, here is Heinrich!"

## CHAPTER SEVEN

"HERMANN," said von Hess, when this curious trio were together again upon the following day, "are you really willing, you an innocent man, or a comparatively innocent man (you killed that boy), to submit to Permanent Exile in order to go to England with Alfred?"

Hermann's face twisted like that of a man in severe pain, but not out of any unmanly feeling of pity for his youthful victim.

"My lord, I am willing," he said in a low voice.

"And are you sure you can put up with the examination, the confession, the Knights' Court sentence, the public degradation, and the journey through Germany?"

"I can put up with all that, sir. Please, highly-born, I am not a coward."

"You don't know what it'll be like. Have you ever seen a Nazi degraded and sent to Permanent Exile?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I have once. It's terrible. Even though I do not believe in the Blood, I found it terrible. And I cannot do anything for you, or give you countenance, or speak to you after the sentence is passed. I shall never be able to speak to you or see you any more after that."

Hermann's face twisted again.

"My lord, it will be my deep grief not to see you any more. I—I think I will not do it."

"Then will you be a good lad and do your work and behave yourself sensibly?"

"No, my lord. If I don't go I shall kill myself."

"But then you won't see me any more either, at least it's all very problematical."

"I think I had better go, sir," said Hermann.

"You must be certain. Once I've started this I can't possibly stop it. It'll roll over you like a tank. Do you think you can live in England without killing yourself? Because if you're going to do that anyway you might just as well die a good German in Germany and be buried here."



"I can live in England with Alfred. He says he can get me work in an English farm, under Englishmen. In Wiltshire somewhere not too far from Bulfort."

"And will you protect Alfred and my book that I've given him as far as you are able?"

Hermann held his head up higher, and drew a deep breath.

"With my heart's blood, my lord."

"Well then, as you can't go on being a Nazi and my man, you are Alfred's man, to serve him and protect him as you would me."

"I shall do that, my lord."

"Then now listen. I went to Munich last night on this business of the boy Rudolf, who died the day before yesterday. I have shown no one your deposition yet. You are officially under Knight's Marshal's arrest for beating the boy so severely that he died. But that would be an accidental killing and naturally nothing much would happen except that you would be flogged to teach you to be more careful in future and remember that boys of fourteen, however tough, are not men. If I make this deposition public"—the Knight touched his tunic pocket—"nothing would happen at all. To kill a boy in the commission of the disgusting crime of race defilement is not murder in any true German's eyes, any more than it is murder to kill a bluebottle. But to get you Permanent Exile you must dictate another confession to me, that this first deposition is a malicious false accusation, and to make it plausible you'd better say you brought it out of sudden jealous hatred of Rudolf, because he wouldn't have anything to do with you."

"Yes, sir," said Hermann, in an expressionless voice.

The Knight paused.

"Hermann, there is a Knights' Court in a week. But I must give notice of the case to be brought. If you miss this one there will be no more for three months."

"I'll go before this one."

"But it means that you must come and make your second deposition to-night. It must be taken with the other to Munich to-morrow. And to-morrow you will have to go to jail in Munich."

"I will do that, sir."

"And you won't be able to go to England with Alfred. In Germany he must pretend to be as disgusted with you as anyone else. Besides, you'll be under guard till you're on the ship."

"Will they send me straight there after the degradation?"

"I believe they will."

"Then I shall be there about the same time as he is."

"You can go to my house even if you do get there first," Alfred said. "Thomas and Fred and young James will be there. Will he have any money, sir? Or will he have to walk from wherever he lands into Wiltshire?"

"He'll have any money I give him. I can't give him very much, of course. But they won't take it away from him. In England until he gets work he'll be entitled to an old woman's ration of food, which is half nothing, and of course if any English farm foreman cares to employ him the estate owner won't stop his wages. And, Hermann, you won't be allowed to look like an Englishman, or be able to pass for an Englishman as long as you don't speak."

"I know, sir. I shall have to wear a special red uniform and if I take it off I shall be beaten."

"Yes, you'll be a recognisable outcast. Every Nazi has the right to kick you, and every Englishman to scorn you. Are you sure you can stand it?"

"Yes, sir. When shall I come to give the highly-born my second deposition?"

"Oh. About five. But stay now if you like, Hermann."

"Sir, I would rather work on the farm to-day, if you please. We have not even to-day quite finished the mangolds."

"Oh, damn the mangolds. Oh, well, all right, you'd better go. You'll be happier working, I expect. I'll give you my last commands and advice to-night. Dismiss."

Hermann went out. The Knight looked very distressed, but he said nothing.

"Sir," Alfred ventured after a long silence, "will they let him choose his place of exile? What if they send him to Russia after all he'll have been through?"

"They let them choose any place in the Empire so long as



it is out of Germany. If an exile said he wanted to go to South Africa they'd send him there. The punishment is in the exile and being an outcast, they don't mind where a man goes to."

"A real one must feel bad about it."

"I'm afraid Hermann will for a bit, even though he loves you and he's not a real one. He ought not to have been told, Alfred."

"All Germans ought to be told."

"Yes, but not yet. The time is not come."

"How will it come?"

"I don't know how. There are two things that might happen. First, I do not think, the nation can stand another fifty years without war. Perhaps they can't even stand thirty. Then the deep wretchedness which comes from being unable to adapt to changed conditions, permanent peace in this case, will make them do *something*. They may turn upon the Knights and der Fuehrer, revive some of the old socialist feeling and believe that it is the Social Order only that is causing them misery. In that case there would be civil war, some Nazis being loyal to the Knights, and some Knights, a very few of them, siding with the discontented Nazis. But the subject races would probably not be content to let the Germans smash themselves up, but would raise idiotic rebellions; that would pull the Germans instantly together, and whatever they did about the Social Order Germany would turn and rend and smash the subject races again, and be glad to do it. But I don't believe any of that is so likely to happen as a gradual, or not so gradual, loss of faith. An uncertainty about the religion, the ethic, our whole philosophy. Because it is a stinking corpse, and its smell is coming through. It is a religion which must die directly there is no *possibility* of war, it is really only very useful and lively actually in time of war. Well, then, when this loss of faith is getting a real hold in Germany, when men in their extreme wretchedness are beginning to grope about for new ideas, for new thought, for a new ethic, that is the time the Evangelists of Truth must start their mission. They *may* come from all sorts of places, both within Germany and without, but I know one place from which, if we all have good luck, a message *will* come, and that is from England. Not in my lifetime, not probably

in yours, but some time. You must make the nucleus, Alfred, with the help of my book and your own character, and you must train the men. Train your sons—have you sons?"

"Three."

"Good. Get three more. And train other men's sons. Accept no weaklings into your truth society, and no stupid men, not yet. Make sure of every man you have, and don't try to have too many. And warn them, warn them, Alfred, with all the soul-force you have, against violence. I don't mean telling them just not to kick physically against the German authority, I mean warn them against accepting violence as a noble, manly thing. We Germans have done that, we have brought force to its highest power, and we have failed to make life good, or even, now, possible. So for God's sake warn them against all our bodily soldierly virtues, and make a new set of spiritual virtues, and preach them. Make them understand von Hess. Officially and on the top he still believed in force, in conquest, in physical domination of man by man, but his virtue and his heroism were of the soul. Remember that 'the choicest arms in store' for men are spiritual honesty and courage. Sometimes," the Knight went on, fixing his large grey eyes dreamily on Alfred's, "I think that the past civilisations with all their unimaginable complexity and richness—for von Hess says he cannot tell a millionth part of their wonder—sometimes I think that perhaps even they were only the childhood of the race; that this gulf, this dreary blankness, is like the dullness that comes on boys sometimes at adolescence, and that our manhood is yet to be. That perhaps God allowed men to commit this crime against truth through his handy instruments, the Germans and the Japanese, to make a break between childhood and manhood, to give us a rest, to enable us to overcome regret for what cannot come again. If we knew the marvels of our childhood we might want to get back into it again; so long as we do not know, but only know that it was *there*, we can go forward with good heart. It will be your business, and the business of your descendants, to let these dull boys, these stupid destructive adolescents, know that they are not perfect, that they *have* had a brilliant childhood, and that they will, if they can but proceed with their duty of growing up, pass



on to a maturity before which the childhood genius even will be like a candle in daylight. Have you any man to whom you could trust the guardianship of the book *now*? You must not leave it, like I did, to chance. You have no reason to do so. I was uncertain of my duty, you are not."

"I have a man," Alfred said.

"How old is he?"

"Seventeen."

"Too young," said the Knight, shaking his head.

"He's the best man to leave the book to I know. It's not that he's braver or stronger-minded or more trustworthy than lots of others of my friends, but he's the cleverest."

"Well, I hope he will be a great deal older before he actually has to take charge of it. It is your son, I suppose?"

"Yes, young Alfred."

The Knight smiled, remembering something.

"Has this valiant King-Fuehrer who is to deliver you all from Germany got a name, by any chance?"

"Why, yes. His name is to be Alfred. The same name as a great English king who lived some time before we were conquered."

"Conquered which time?"

"Ah, I don't know."

"But you do know you were conquered twice? That the Germans were not the first invaders, but the second?"

"We have a legend that we were conquered before, but that we ate up the conquerors. But the Scots say they had never been conquered at all."

"That is interesting. Yes, you were conquered, and von Hess mentions it because it had important results in Europe. About a thousand years before Hitler, the Normans, who were men of Scandinavian descent, settled in the north part of France, conquered the Anglo-Saxons and took England."

"And did we eat them up? It doesn't sound like it."

"In a way you did. They had to stop ruling England from France, they became English, and then tried for hundreds of years to rule France from England. That is as if the Knights of Southampton and London and all the English districts remained there all their lives and later on their descendants

raised an army of Nazis and Englishmen and Welsh and Scotch and Irish, and attacked Germany."

"That wouldn't be such a bad scheme, just to go on with until we can tell the truth."

"I'm afraid more than half of you is bloody-minded," said the Knight, shaking his head. "As to the Scots never being conquered before Germany did it, it seems likely enough. Von Hess just says that at a certain date—I've forgotten it, seventeen something—Scotland and England were united and the British Isles were all under one king. It sounds more like an arrangement, a marriage or something, than a war."

"Does he say anything about a king called Alfred?"

"Yes. He organised the Saxon law, and prevented England from becoming Scandinavian."

"Ha!" said Alfred, grinning with pleasure. "There *was* one, you see. And there *will* be one. Young Alfred's son, perhaps. The messenger."

"It would be a good idea if I wrote to the Knight of London, and told him to round up all the men in the province of England who are called Alfred Alfredson, and who have named their eldest son Alfred. I shall tell him he can safely shoot them all for certain disloyalty."

"Oh, that wouldn't be fair, sir. Why, it's nearly as common a name as Hermann."

"What, going on and on from father to eldest son? And that reminds me, you asked me how you lost your surnames. I think it is because the German Government wished the common men, the Nazis and the subject races, to have as little family feeling as possible. The Knights are allowed to have family feeling; you see how dangerously strong it can be. The von Hess men have never done anything about the book, but none of them have destroyed it, as is their duty as good Germans. But the Knights are aristocrats and must have family pride. The Nazis are only allowed to have pride in Germany; the Blood itself is to be their family, and so all their surnames were proscribed, and there is only a limited number of ordinary German first names they are allowed to call their sons. No man can cock himself up with the possession of a rare name. But all that was arranged long ago. I do not really *know* about it. It's just part of the social order *now*. Knights have surnames, Nazis don't."



"And what were *we* to take pride in?"

"Oh, nothing. Your surnames must have been proscribed to prevent the Nazis being jealous. After all, every man in the Empire has a registration number, and what more can you want than that?"

"Oh, I don't care. Alfred's good enough for me, and we call the young 'un Fred. But there's another thing that's been puzzling me a lot. If you wanted to Germanise us, why did you let us keep our own language and our own script? It's bound to hold Englishmen together if they have a different language and a rather different way of forming letters. It would have been easy to enforce the speaking of German in the Boys' Nurseries."

"We didn't want to Germanise you in any way except in making you accept our philosophy and your inferiority. If our blood and our language are sacred we cannot have every little Russian and Italian and English boy acquiring our language as a birth language. It is not fit for such as you to have by *right*, you must learn it for our convenience, that's all. There are two ways of running an Empire. One is to make the foreign subjects feel that they are far better off inside the Empire than out of it, to make them proud of it, to give them a really better civilisation than their own, and to allow them to attain full citizenship by good behaviour. That was the Roman way. There were thousands of men who proudly and gladly called themselves Roman who hadn't a drop of Roman blood in them. They had the legal right to do it, and shared in the privilege of the ruling race. The other way is to make the subject races think themselves fundamentally inferior, believing that they are being ruled by a sacred race of quite a different kind of man, and to deny them all equal citizenship for ever. That is our way. We could not dream of allowing any man to call himself German unless he is German by birth. We are the Blood. All you are the not-Blood. So you must speak your own languages and write your own script, and think, in English, how holy we are, how Hitler could never possibly have been anything but German, and how there can never be any other philosophy or way of life than ours. You are not even allowed to have equality within the religion. There are several ceremonies in our churches from which foreigners are excluded. Exclusion is an excellent way of making men feel

inferior. Then again, within the religion which you're all supposed to believe in and quite a lot of you actually do, you are always laymen. You can never be priests——"

"But what is a priest?"

"A man who conducts the ceremonies of a religion."

"That's only a Knight."

"We had the sense not to have priests *and* Knights. That always leads to trouble. Church and State really *are* one in the German Empire, and der Fuehrer is the Pope."

"I don't understand."

"In the Christian religion the priests—that is, the men who conducted the ceremonies and might go into what corresponded to the Hitler chapels, the holy men—were usually a different set of men from those who did the administration and the governing and the fighting."

"What an amazing idea! But one set or other must have been paramount."

"Not at all times. The priests had spiritual power and the Government had temporal power. The nobles were often more afraid of the priests than the other way on."

"The priests were armed, then?"

"No. But they could curse people."

"What of that? Knights have often cursed me."

"They could exclude them from the benefit and blessing of God."

"Could they really? I don't believe it."

"Of course no man can ever exclude another man from God. The people *thought* they could, that's all."

"Then they ought to have killed the priests."

"But that in itself would have excluded them from God. The priests were sacrosanct, like der Fuehrer and the Inner Ring."

"But you say they weren't *Knights*, only priests, with no real power at all except cursing. Naturally a man's sacrosanct if you get flogged to death for hitting him in the face. If I could hit Knights in the face and have them do nothing to me but curse me, there are one or two in England I should slap—quite gently, of course."

"I'm afraid you're too irreligious to understand. The people, and even the nobles, could not approach God except



through the Church, that is, the priests. Just as you can't approach a Knight except through the Knight's Marshal. And you couldn't approach der Fuehrer at all, in any possible way. And if you annoy the Knight's Marshal you won't get through even to a Knight, will you? Then this was the same: if the people or the nobles annoyed the priests seriously they were cut off from God."

"What would that matter when God was not cut off from them? Why, supposing der Fuehrer has heard of me and says, 'I want to see that interesting fellow Alfred who is going to take von Hess's book back to England,' none of you can keep *him* away from *me*. If you can, he's not Fuehrer at all, *you* are. If the priests could keep God away from men and say, 'You can go on blessing this chap, but you must now keep from benefiting that chap,' then He's not God. He's inferior to the priests. And while der Fuehrer is only a man and doesn't know me or a millionth of the people under his rule, God must know everybody and if they want to come to Him or not. Nobody could ever have believed such a crazy idea as that a man could keep God away from other men."

"God gave the priests the power to keep Him away from them."

"That's crazier still, because it would mean that God deliberately resigned and gave away His freedom of judgment to a lot of priests. Why, if those people believed all that they were in a way less civilised than you are. Dumber, anyway. When I was a little boy and still believed in Hitler I never thought any Knight or der Fuehrer himself could keep Hitler away from me. As far as me and Hitler went you could all have fallen into the sea. I used to pray, 'Please, Hitler, let me get into the Technical School,' without thinking I had to go and bother a Knight about it."

"Ours is not a supernatural religion, not in the same sense. There is no hell in it, and as the soldiers and priests are one, and ours is a warlike religion, you are ruled in a soldierly way, not in a priestly way."

"It'll be a merry day in England when you try to rule us in a priestly way," said Alfred, chuckling. "Knights' heads will be sold for a shilling for the teeth."

"And yet the Messengers will have to go more in a

priestly fashion than a soldierly, if they're to be any good."

"Ah, that's different. They're not going to go about pretending they can get between God and any man. They're going to tell the truth. There's nothing priestly about that. Who are the arch-devils? I suppose they're really no more devils than Hitler is God."

"Eh?" said the Knight. "Who do you mean?"

"The devils in the creed. Does von Hess say what they really were?"

"Oh, them. Well, Lenin and Stalin really were a bit like devils because they were Russian leaders, and the toughest fight Germany had, by a long way, was against Russia. Lenin, however, was dead long before Hitler came to power, and he never got anywhere near Stalin personally."

"He never flew to Moscow in the Sacred Aeroplane at the head of the air fleet?"

"Of course not. He was far too precious ever to be allowed to risk a finger-nail."

"Then he wasn't a hero?"

"I've no doubt at all that he was a brave man, because Germans would never follow a coward. But he wasn't allowed to *do* anything. It's only for purposes of divinity he's allowed to go into action."

"Then was Roehm as bad as he is made out in the Hitler Bible? The arch-traitor, the deceiver, the fiend who took on the form of one of the Hero-Friends?"

"I don't know why he's been picked out for Judas, because there were several men in it."

"Who's Judas? Several men in what?"

"Judas is in the Christian religion. The friend of Jesus who betrayed him. Roehm was a man who either did rebel against Hitler soon after he came to power, or did not rebel and was killed for some other reason. Several men were killed, and von Hess says the episode remains obscure. It may have been important at the time, but it certainly was not a full-dress rebellion. Roehm was a friend of Hitler's, and a man of considerable power before he did whatever it was he did wrong, but I really don't know why he and none of the other delinquents got into the Creed. They were



most of them important Nazis. As for Karl Barth, the fourth one, I can find out nothing whatever about him. Von Hess doesn't mention him. I think it possible that, seeing two devils are Russians and one is a German traitor, Karl Barth may represent the other enemy, Christianity. He also, I think, must have been German, and naturally to Hitlerians a German Christian would be more deadly than any other kind."

"Being tougher?"

"Or more disgraceful."

"Karl Barth ought to be in the Hitler Bible. The other three are mentioned in the Hero-Fights."

"Karl Barth is a mystery," said the Knight, sighing. "One we can never clear up. He may have been an ordinary man like Roehm, or a great leader such as Lenin and Stalin undoubtedly were, or he may have been another such man as von Hess, a man of soul. On the other hand, he may have been a really evil fellow. I never say the Creed without wondering about Karl Barth."

"I don't know how you can say it at all without laughing."

"It is absurd, and yet it is not absurd. That Creed has held this huge Empire together for over six hundred years. Nonsense of such endurance value almost ceases to be nonsense."

"That's dangerous thought. If it endured for a million years it would still be nonsense, just as if no one believes in truth ever it wouldn't stop it being truth. How do you think I'm to get this book to England, sir?"

"I've thought of that. I am going to wrap it and seal it and address it as from me, with my name written on it, to the Knight of Gloucester. He's a friend of mine. If the Nazi officials open your sack anywhere, either this side or the other, they'll never dare to break a Knight's seal. And no Knight would do it. It would be a discourtesy for which I could challenge him. I shall write on the outside of the package, 'By the bearer, Alfred, E.W. 10762,' then no one will be officious enough to think they ought to take it away from you and send it through the post. If they ask you what's in it, you will tell a large fat round lie and say you don't know. If they ask you why you, an Englishman, were

chosen to be Knight's messenger, you'll say that I took a fancy to you, which isn't quite such a lie."

"And what if some Nazi official remembers it and presently writes to the Knight of Gloucester to know if he ever got his huge important-looking parcel?"

"The Knight of Gloucester will then take it up, through your Knight's Marshal, with you. And you will simply say you're very sorry but it fell into the Avon, or the sea, or whatever you think best, but that anyway you've lost it. And that you hardly liked to write to the Knight of Gloucester to tell him so. Then the Knight of Gloucester will simply say to himself, 'Poor old von Hess is quite batty at last, to trust anything to a half-witted Englishman,' and he may write to ask me what was in it. I shall write back and tell him it was detailed plans on parchment for a new attack on the Japanese with things that burrow underground and come up behind them and he will say, 'Sad, sad,' and not bother any more. But I don't think the Knight of Gloucester will ever know anything about it. Nazi officials are very chary of interfering even with the best intentions in any business between one Knight and another, and no one even as high up as a Knight's Marshal is likely to look into your sack. Get some twigs as from the Holy Forest and a stone or two as from the Holy Mountain."

"I have some genuine ones."

"What for?"

"A man asked me to bring some back. A homesick Nazi."

"Oh, poor lad! Well, I hope they'll make him feel better. And what are you going to do with the book instead of taking it to the Knight of Gloucester?"

"I'm going to put it underground until it can come up behind some Germans. Now I'll tell you something very secret, a real English secret, and you won't be able to say you've heard *this* in Saxony. You know Stonehenge, of course?"

"Yes."

"Did you by any chance notice a little chalk quarry, or what looks like a chalk quarry, about due east, a quarter of a mile, not far from those old ripples that must have been a trench system?"



"No."

"A sort of raised lump with a chalky face one side?"

"Wiltshire's so covered with lumps. No, I don't remember it."

"Well, it's a burrow all right, but not a primitive one. It's an old gas chamber or dug-out. A concrete room, a big one, underground."

"Don't the Nazis know about it?"

"No. Its front fell in, either in some bombardment or a chalk slide in bad weather. It was blocked up. I was poking round about Stonehenge ages ago, when I was only nineteen, and I fell through this loose bit of chalk into the entrance of the dug-out. I was half killed. But I got out all right and told no one, and then I made a tunnel through the chalk into the dug-out and concealed the end of it."

"And what did you find, gas?"

"No. The air was just plain bad, but with the hole in the chalk it gradually got better. After a while I could go in safely. I found a decent big dug-out, a little room off it and eleven skeletons. Mouldering skeletons. Just slightly unskeletonish. They didn't smell bad exactly, but very queer and musty. But I put some disinfectant on them and they soon settled down again."

"Why didn't you put them out? It's quite likely they died of plague influenza."

"I couldn't put them out. Supposing I carted them off to bury them and some Nazi sergeant saw me and said, 'Hi, Englander-schwein, where did you get those bones?' No, I kept them in. But I wanted a two-way run to my rabbit-hole, so I told another fellow, a young chap of my own age who worked in the Armaments in Salisbury. He stole some explosive and we blew a bit out of the corner of the big dug-out. At least we cracked it up and then we could make a small hole."

"Did he know anything about blasting?"

"Not very much. But we didn't stand and throw matches at the stuff, we fixed it with a decent long fuse and waited for a thunderstorm. A beauty came at last, at night fortunately, and I rushed up there from Bulfort and fired it. It didn't blow up much of the top part of the dug-out, but

when I was waiting for the thing to go off, lying outside in pouring rain, I got the most terrible fright we might have put far too much in, and then the whole dug-out would go up and perhaps about half a mile of country and Stonehenge too. I was very young and stupid, and we knew really nothing about explosives. And there came the most terrific bang of thunder and I thought, 'Oh, God, there's Stonehenge gone.' I never thought I'd be gone myself. Well, it was all right and there was just a nice little thump, quite unnoticeable in the storm, and when we could next get there together we saw it was all right. So we tunnelled through the chalk and made a much better concealed entrance the other side of the lump where there were some little juniper bushes. Then we got all these stiff, and wired them up."

"Wired the stiff? What's that in German?"

"Wir haben den Draht durch die Skelleten gerannt. There were eleven of them, ten men and one little one. Must have been a child, though what it was doing there I can't think. There was an old machine-gun, all hopelessly rusted and jammed up, and some rifles."

"'Arms from thy choicest store,' said the Knight, sardonically."

"We had a good laugh over that," Alfred admitted. "But we found out what liars *you* all were, anyway. The Germans have always told us that all the old dug-outs and concrete stuff, and the old holes under London, were made by *them*, hundreds of years ago, to protect us and themselves against the Japanese. And we found on the concrete, painted with everlasting paint, 'No Smoking.' In English. A give-away, was it not? But I didn't believe in Hitler any longer, neither did Tom, my friend. I stole lengths and lengths of wire little by little from the shop and we wired the skeletons together, leg-bone to leg-bone, and arm-bone to arm-bone, to make them firm, you see, and dressed them up again in their bits of rags and other clothes we made out of anything we could find. We set the machine-gun up in the entrance with four men and made each skeleton be in its proper place doing what it ought. We gave the other men their rifles and leaned them up against the wall at stand easy, propping their toes with stones. They look fine by torch-light. It took us about eighteen months to fix



those stiff, because we could only go up there at night. But we got them all set at last, and those ten Englishmen will guard that place better in their death than in their life. Nazis are afraid of ghosts in England. Did you know that?"

"I know they're afraid of Stonehenge. Yes, it's a good place, where your dug-out is. What did you do with the child?"

"We buried him. He was a very little skeleton; we dragged him out of the back hole and buried him a little way off. At least we buried him thinking he was an English boy, but I'm a bit doubtful now. There was some long hair—about, not exactly on his head. I think he must have been a little girl. Well then, I made a great wooden shield or door for the little room in the dug-out and took it up there in bits and painted it muddy colour. It looks exactly like the rest of the dug-out by torch-light. So that's where I shall keep the book. The Nazis will never find the place itself, because they don't like fossicking about near Stonehenge, and there is nothing to look for there. If they find the place they won't like those grim soldiers all set up near the entrance. They'll just say, 'Ach, Hitler!', and leave them there, doing no harm to Heilige Deutschland. And even if they should get past the soldiers they won't find the inner room."

"And what about your friend, Tom? Is he absolutely trustworthy? Does anyone else know?"

"No one. I thought, there *may* be a time when this'll come in handy. But not while we're all just not believing in Hitler and singing 'God send our King' on the downs at night. We must be doing more than that. So I didn't tell anyone."

"And what about Tom?"

"Tom's very trustworthy. He's dead. He got in a fuss with some Nazis at the Armament, and they kicked him to death."

"Ach!" said the Knight.

"You ought to be quite pleased. Tom was very disloyal."

"Well, I am not pleased. He was a brave lad, and brave boys should not be kicked to death."

"Oh, well, it was a long time ago," said Alfred, com-

fortingly. "Tom wouldn't bear any malice. He was very bloody-minded, and would have liked to kick the Knight's Marshal of Salisbury to death five times, to start from perfect health every time. But he was a pleasant lad. The fun we had over those poor stiff! They all had names, and we laughed at them, but we thought about them when they'd been alive too. Until it made us too savage and gloomy."

"How do you think they died? How did you find them?"

"Just lying about. The child had died with her head on a dead man's shoulder. At least he hadn't moved afterwards. They weren't broken, except King Nosmo, who had the top of his head bashed in."

"King Nosmo?"

"No-Smo-King. Nosmo our King. King Nosmo. Like King Alfred."

"Is that a typical English joke? I don't think it's very funny."

"It was funny to us. We nearly choked ourselves, because we didn't dare to laugh very loud, just in case someone was going over the top and could hear us. King Nosmo was our pet skeleton, and he looks the ghastliest of all because of his head. The others I think must have been gassed or died of disease."

"Well, it really does sound a fairly safe place, though not a quarter as safe as if you were a Knight and left the book unlocked in a drawer in your writing-table. But how about the Christians in the district? Are there many? They're always about at night setting snares and taking them up."

"There are some Christians at Amesbury."

"That's very close. They'll be out after hares and rabbits on the downs."

"Well, I know, but I don't think they've ever found the place. You see, no one can find it accidentally, so to speak, any more. When I fell through, all the chalk settled down firm and no one can fall in again. The hole that end doesn't look as if it went anywhere. The other hole is always blocked up unless someone is actually inside. It's blocked with a stone too big for a boy to move. I've got awful work to move it



myself. It's a piece of that big solitary stone outside the main part of Stonehenge that's all smashed up."

"I know it," said the Knight. "That stone must have got a direct hit with a bomb or shell."

"So it doesn't look really very odd for a comparatively small piece to be a bit farther away than the other lumps and fragments. We lugged it over one night. And I hope it'll guard the book as well as it did whatever it was supposed to do when it was joined on to the big one and standing up."

"Are the Christians afraid of Stonehenge?"

"No. But they're superstitious about other things. If one of them does find the front entrance he won't like those old soldiers. And besides, even if Christians did find it and found the book and everything they wouldn't do anything about it. They can't any of them read. They'd know it was either an Englishman's burrow or a very queer Nazi's hide-out, and they'd never interfere or even say much about it. Christians attend strictly to their own business—praying to Jesus, mourning the Sin, poaching, carving wood, making whistles and baskets, brewing herbal remedies and engaging in illicit buying and selling with the future denizens of the fiery lake."

"Yes," said the Knight, "I am so thankful that it has always proved impossible to prevent all trading with Christians." He rose and opened the door of a little cupboard in the wall. "I have here the best collection of Christian whistles of any Knight in the Fatherland. When I am dead and my property reverts to the State, some zealot will probably feel himself impelled to burn them all. It will be a great crime. I have them in every key, and there is not a German one among them. The Christians must have a secret method of treating the wood before they make the holes that gives the whistles that peculiar sweet bird-like tone. It is a fascinating little primitive musical instrument. There is a kind of music you really cannot play satisfactorily on anything else. Listen to this."

The Knight selected one of his whistles and played a delicious cool little air on it.

"You hear, Alfred? That is not primitive music, but it is the thought of a man with his head full of bird-song. So the

Christian whistle is the suitable instrument. No nightingale—no blackbird—could sing more sweetly and purely. You know that bird-music in what we erroneously call the Siegfried Symphony of Wagner? It is not a symphony at all, but an opera, of course."

"Yes, I know it."

"That bird-music should always be played on Christian whistles. It can be done perfectly well. It would not *fit* with the more sophisticated instruments, any more than a bird's voice fits with anything else in the world. It just would *be* birds, unfitting, startling and delicious. But unfortunately I have never dared to suggest that it should be even tried. There are so many things a sensible man would like to do but which cannot be suggested. Many things." The Knight sadly put his whistle back and closed the cupboard.

"How did you get all the whistles, sir? You can't go to the Nazi go-between and say, 'Get me a Christian whistle in C major.'"

"No, no. My people bring me the whistles. Every now and then at long intervals a man will let me know he has a whistle. I send for him, and I say to him, 'You are sure this is a German whistle?' He says, yes he is sure, he knows the man who made it. Then I hear him play, and if, as occasionally happens with the tone-deaf, it is a German whistle I give it him back. It is not the key I want. It is very childish and stupid, for they all know I won't buy anything but a Christian whistle, and a good one at that, but formalities must be preserved. And, of course, it is very wrong and irreligious of me to collect Christian whistles. I ought not to allow such unclean things inside my house. And I am indirectly encouraging trade with Christians which it is my duty as a Knight to put down. But they forgive me all that part. For one reason, they are mainly musical men themselves, and for another, I am von Hess. When I was away from home on foreign duty in England and Persia and France and Egypt I had to be more careful, but here, even though it is within a walk of the Holy City, I do what I like. Feudal aristocracy, for ours is in feeling feudal, has great advantages."

"Yes, for the Knight," said Alfred, with a grin.

"And even for the Nazis too."



"In keeping them boys and not allowing them to be men."

"They cannot be *men* while they are still under discipline of any kind. I cannot be a man myself if I swear *blind* obedience to der Fuehrer and really mean it. But my not-men, my Bavarian Nazi boys, are better off under me than under the Army Knights and sergeants. That is a cold, uninterested discipline, mine is a paternal rule. Until men can rule themselves, a father is a better thing to obey blindly than a government."

"It depends on the fathers. All Knights, I suspect, are not like you, even in their own home districts."

"No. There may be bad fathers. Cold, unaffectionate, unjust, more cruel than even our religion permits. But a government *must* be cold."

"But not necessarily unjust. The Nazis should be the government themselves."

"What, all of them?"

"No. Selected ones."

"Who is to select them?"

"The Nazis."

"And who is to be der Fuehrer?"

"The selected ones would choose der Fuehrer."

"Now think of them all as English and not German, and if England was free, would you promise *blind* obedience to any man, always, even if he had been selected by Englishmen?"

"No. I should have to be the Leader myself."

"Without knowing anything about democracy you have found the flaw in it. In a democracy no man of character is willing to give up his right of private judgment, and as he cannot blindly trust his leader, knowing him to be of the same clay as himself, *he* must be the leader. So government becomes exceedingly difficult. Because while there are many men of character, and democracy encourages them, there is also the large mass of weaker men, who must be told always what to do and what not to do, and cannot be trusted to live rightly without laws. So the end of democracy, von Hess says, is always the same: it breaks up into chaos, and out of chaos comes some kind of authoritarian government, a Fuehrer, an oligarchy, government by the army, or something of the

kind. Now I am not so contemptuous of democracy as he is, because I have seen the ultimate natural decay of authoritarian government, which is complete stagnation. But I still do not see how democracy can be made to last long enough to develop character in a sufficient number of people. That will be the problem of your great-grandsons, Alfred, for once truth has come back to the world the authoritarian form of government must collapse."

Alfred was deeply interested, frowning with concentration.

"I don't think people ought to chuck—what did you call it? democracy, just because it's *difficult*," he said. "They ought to be so certain it's right that they can face any difficulties. If they persevered with it, it would get easier and easier, after a time. Did they ever try it for very long?"

"Well, no, because of the menace of war. Soldiers cannot be democrats, and armies, even the armies of democratic countries, were always authoritarian."

"Soldiers cannot be men of character, of course," said Alfred. "They can't be *men*. They must always be boys. I've always seen that."

"And again an authoritarian government behind the authoritarian army gives a nation enormous advantage in time of war. The democratic countries, when war was threatening, were panicked by their severe handicap, and loss of faith in the form of government was inevitable."

"Then what it really means is that democracy is too difficult to be persevered with when war is likely to happen, not that it is actually too difficult for human beings to cope with."

"I expect that is it."

"And there is another thing. Has a democracy ever started in a community, a nation, where the men all really considered themselves equal, no one fundamentally and *unalterably* superior to any other?"

"I should think it most unlikely. Democracies rose on decayed aristocracies."

"But you see *we'll* start fair from the bottom. In Germany there'll be numbers of discontented Knights, disgusted at the loss or sharing of their privileges. But not among *us* once the Empire has broken up. All Englishmen are so low in your



eyes that they're equal, and we feel equal in our own estimation too. There is no *class*, as there is in Germany. There are only men who can read and men who can't. *That* doesn't really matter."

"No. When there is nothing to read but the Hitler Bible and absurd legends about the heroes and technical books, literacy has an entirely different significance from that which it had in old time. A boy who is to be a technician learns to read just as part of his job, it causes no jealousy among those who do not want to be, or are not fitted to be, technicians. Hermann has the Bible read to him in church, and saves his eyes. And there are advantages in not reading. Hermann sees far more than you do. He notices things about weather, about nature, about animals, and all movements and changing aspects of the world he lives in that you would never see. The illiterate eye and brain are different from the literate, but unless the man is half-witted, they are in their way just as good. It's not only that Hermann is a farm-worker. I've noticed the same thing in illiterate factory workers who tend the simple machines. They see things differently. But you will have to teach your young men to read, Alfred. They must read von Hess for themselves."

"Fred can read, and speak baby-German, but he doesn't know much grammar yet."

"You must teach them to read German. Von Hess is not difficult. But don't try to do things too fast. Neither Jesus nor Hitler nor their best disciples could convert Europe in their lifetime. If you can make twenty men really understand before you die you will have done well."

"I don't understand about Jesus. Where did the Jews come from?"

"They were an Eastern Mediterranean people, not black, but dark, and I gather a little like Arabs to look at."

"But where are they now?"

"They don't exist. They were either absorbed into other nations or wiped out. There were a few left in von Hess's time. The Palestine Jews were killed, massacred to the last man and the last child, when the Imperial German Army took Jerusalem. The German Jews were killed in various pogroms both during and after the Twenty Years' War. The Jews in other countries were harassed first by the anti-Semitic authori-

tarian war governments of those countries, before Germany conquered them, and were much reduced in numbers, and then were harassed over again by the German armies of occupation. But how the last remnants disappeared I don't know. It happened after von Hess's time, as did the segregation of the few faithful followers of Jesus. The end of the Jewish tragedy is in the gulf of our darkness. There must be plenty of men of Jewish descent, particularly in Russia and America and England where they had mixed more with the indigenous people, but there are no Jews as such. They were an unlucky people."

"After they killed Jesus?"

"No, always. Enslaved by the Egyptians, then by the Babylonians, then by the Romans. Then the massacre of Jerusalem and the dispersion (like a whole nation going into Permanent Exile), then the Christian persecution. And hardly had the Christian persecution, which had a religious motive, stopped, than the racial persecution started. And hardly had a little portion of the Jews made a new home in their old home in Palestine, than the Germans pushed the Empire down there and killed them all."

"Why did everybody hate them so much?"

"I cannot make out," said the Knight. "Von Hess does not know. In his time there were too few of them for anyone to wish to do more than despise them and leave them alone. There were none in Germany then. Von Hess had read a great deal about the Jews, but said that even in his day it was not possible really to understand anti-Semitism. They had the unpleasant characteristics of all people who are persecuted persistently and made to feel aliens in the country where they live, but they had brilliant qualities. And they were fanatically brave if once they started fighting. They resisted Titus heroically, and they resisted the German Imperial Army. Titus rewarded them with crucifixion, and we more mercifully shot them and clubbed them. I think that the whole world, not only the Germans, must somehow have been afraid of the Jews. But von Hess could not feel the fear, and so he cannot understand the hatred. Now no one is ever afraid of Christians. We look on them rather as we look on wild animals. If they got savage they would be shot, but as they're harmless they can be left alone."



"But there are so few of them. When there were a lot and they were preaching Jesus against Hitler, weren't men afraid of them?"

"I don't think so. Not in the same way. Von Hess says that the Christians in his time had most of them no heart for their religion. Germany was not Christian, it was without religion except devotion to Germany, and the subject races were for the main part only Christian because to be so was to be anti-German. There were tough ones among them; Christians are everywhere in Europe, even in Germany, but the majority had no heart for it. Now Jews always seem to have had a good will to be Jews, and to contain in their Jewishness something very menacing. But then they were a race, not only a religion, and perhaps Blood will tell. Sometimes. And perhaps Christianity came too soon. Perhaps it was too difficult, like democracy. Von Hess, writing with his martial side uppermost, despises it. He says it is an effeminate religion."

"What does that mean?"

"Like a woman."

"How could a religion be like a woman?"

"It made men be like women."

"They couldn't ever. Oh, well—I did think that perhaps Hermann—oh, yes, I see. It's because the women were more like men. But too soon? Do you mean Christianity will come again?"

"I don't say that. But rejection of war must come again. I mean a conscious rejection, not this dreary involuntary starvation. Now von Hess would have said when he started writing that any man who denied the glory and goodness and beneficence of war was effeminate—that is, like a woman."

"Well," said Alfred, "if I had him here, and saving your presence, highly-born, I'd knock his head off."

The Knight smiled, and then sighed.

"I shall miss you, Alfred. I shall miss von Hess, and I have to assist at the formal disgrace of one of my own Nazis. It's a wretched end to an old man's life. Well, here you are. Our time is up."

The Knight had drawn from the desk a very imposing-looking parcel covered with seals, and most carefully addressed in his meticulous German writing:

*From Friedrich von Hess, the Knight of Hohenlinden in Bayern, to the highly-born Wilhelm von Hohenlohe, the Knight of Gloucester in England, by the hand of the bearer, Alfred, E.W. 10762, Englishman on pilgrimage in Germany.*

Alfred stared at it and said nothing.

"The photograph is inside the book," the Knight explained. "I have not put the plate in. I shall break it. That print is good for a hundred years if you keep it out of strong light, and before that time someone will be able to make a new plate from it. Take care of it. It is not as important as the book, but it has significance."

"But, sir, you said you were going to pack the book up. Do you mean I've got to go now, altogether?"

"Yes. But I did not want to spoil our last conversation with thoughts of parting."

"But why can't I come again? I don't half understand things yet. You say you can do what you like."

"Up to a point. But when the others know, as they will to-night, that Hermann has gone to jail, then I cannot see you any more. They will know afterwards why Hermann went to jail, and that I, as Knight, am from this evening in a sort of shameful mourning because one of my men, a Nazi personally known to me, is disgraced. I could not be expected then to pay any attention to an Englishman, however mad I was, and if I did go on doing so there would be definite suspicion of something odd about the whole affair. You see?"

"Oh, I do. But it's very upsetting. I shan't be able to understand the book."

"Von Hess says a half-witted man can understand it. If there are, as there must be, words that are lost now, you will guess their meaning from the context. Hermann will perhaps be able to help you at first with bits of German you can't understand. But, indeed, though your accent is deplorably British, your command of German seems to be quite good."

"Nothing like as good as yours of English. Oh, the things I meant to ask! I never thought of this because I know it's all put up about Hermann. And can I walk right out now with this parcel under my arm? And of course I can't come with Hermann to-night because he's going to make his foul confession to you."



"No. But you can walk out now with the parcel and show it to the whole village if you like, though I shouldn't do that, and then I think you had better get your sack and walk on somewhere else. To Munich, I think. You must finish your pilgrimage properly. You see, I have done all this with a light heart because all I know so far is that Hermann has accidentally killed a boy whom he swore was interfering with a Christian girl. But after to-night I am not light-hearted any more, and it might be as well if you were started on your journey, and had separated yourself from our affairs."

"I'm not very light-hearted now," said Alfred. "Can I say good-bye to Hermann?"

"The more affecting and public your parting is the better. If Hermann could weep it would be an excellent thing. He is already working himself up to come to me to-night with his horrible tale."

Alfred was standing up, his precious package under his arm. He was staring at the Knight intently, as if he were trying to make a clear photographic image in his brain. He sighed, and presently looked down at the desk.

"When I was a young man," he said, "I used to get little Fred out from the Boys' Nursery in my free time, and take him a walk down the Avon or somewhere, and we used to play a game: 'I love my love with an A, because he is Alfred. I hate him with an A because he is an ass, or annoying, or angry,' or something bad, you see, and then young Fred used to do it to me. All through the alphabet, and sometimes in German, to teach him a few words."

Alfred looked up at the Knight again.

"I love my love with a G," he said slowly, "because he is good. I hate him with a G, because he is German. If I could only remember your face and hair and the shape of your beard, and your eyes, and forget that blue tunic and the cloak, and those silver swastikas on the collar! You have done us a very great harm, because now we can't really love all through, as we should like to, even the best German, not even the *best man*, if he should be a German, in the world."

"Well," said the Knight, with a little cough, "I agree that it is lamentable. But you think too much of me,

Alfred. I am not the best man, I am merely a man with special advantages. A lucky man, and that is not admirable. I pass my luck to you and I hope it won't kill you. So good-bye."

He held out his hand, and Alfred shook it, wondering with half his mind how many centuries had passed since an Englishman had thus been treated as the equal of a Teutonic Knight.

The Knight sat down again, and said, "Attention. I must summon Heinrich."

Alfred stiffened and stood staring into vacancy above the Knight's head till Heinrich came in.

"My lord," he said, saluting.

"Take this man out, and inform the Knight's Marshal that I am ready to see him now."

"My lord," said Heinrich.

Alfred and he saluted, but Alfred walked out in a very slummocky English way, with his head turned over his shoulder. The Knight did not look up. He had his long slender old hands before him on the desk, and was gazing down at his ring.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

ALFRED arrived in Southampton in the early afternoon of the last day of his pilgrimage. His pass gave him till eight o'clock on the next morning, when he must report to his Nazi foreman at the aerodrome. He dawdled about in Southampton till the evening, with plenty to say to the English dock-workers about his travels in the Holy Land, then he walked out on the Salisbury road and presently hailed a passing lorry.

"Where to?" he asked the driver, a German.

"Bulfort. Any good to you, Englander?"

"Nein. Danke schön."

Alfred walked on, the weight of von Hess's enormous tome pressing into his shoulders through the straps of his sack.