BASEL, SUMMER 1989.

"Emily Kempin-Spyri? The first woman lawyer?"

The director of the university psychiatric clinic gestures impatiently. "We already wrote you—there is no medical record."

Outside on the square, visible through the director's windows, the asphalt shimmers in the afternoon heat.

A secretary appears from an adjacent office. "We can't find a file, or even a file card."

"You see," the chief physician says, peering over the rim of his bifocals, "this woman never existed, at least not here."

"But I have copies of letters," I insist. "Emily Kempin wrote them, they're dated 1899, from Friedmatt."

The psychiatrist gives me a searching look.

"She died in your clinic on 12 April 1901," I continue. "I assume you have a register of deaths from that time?"

The director is uneasy; he goes to the telephone and calls his predecessor.

Emily Kempin-Spyri? The name means nothing to his predecessor either. But the predecessor mentions his predecessor, who often removed the names of well-known persons from the files. For reasons of confidentiality. "Yes, tell that to your readers," the present director says with a sigh of relief. "You must to able give your readers some explanation, after all."

His eyes wander over to the wall, to the images of solace the world has to offer—Jesus, Buddha, the cloisters at Neuburg.

I stand up. It's senseless to repeat yet again that sections of the file have found their way to the outside world, not from the time of his predecessor twice removed, but later.

The lady in question was never at our clinic. There is neither a medical

record nor an index file card, Professor W. P. wrote me in June 1989.

A woman makes inquiries about a woman who, while she lived, was ahead of her time and who today, one hundred years later, is still not allowed to exist.

But she does exist. I see her emerge from the shadows in the park at Friedmatt and walk up and down the gravel paths: She has grown thin, and is dressed in light cotton. It is 1899; Emily is forty-six years old.

On 11 March she had been moved from the Berolinum Clinic in Lankwitz, near Berlin, to Friedmatt, the mental institution in Basel. Her request to be transferred to the Burghölzli institution in Zurich was ignored.

Her footsteps in the gravel are barely audible. She has come from one of the pavilions with their jigsaw-work verandas; she moves as if something in her body were causing her to contract inwardly, something cumbersome, a growth. I know that on 12 April 1901 she will die of it.

She pauses under a tree, its long-stalked, velvety silver leaves waving in the wind. A small plate attached to the trunk labels it a weeping silver linden, an uncommon tree. It has been faithfully cataloged by the canton's official gardener: "Weeping silver linden no. 5." The circumference of trunk and crown have been measured and noted, and its age has been calculated as well—150 years. So I have no problem allowing her to stroll under it. Today, in 1989, I can order a brochure through the mail entitled, *An Index to the Trees of Friedmatt.*

I am a restless woman. Almost all
my chosen companions
are restless women.
—ELINOR BYRNS

18 DECEMBER 1899. She is sitting at a mahogany table. An inkspot in the shape of a devil's head has seeped into the varnish of the tabletop. The shadow of a potted palm lies entangled in her lackluster hair, cut by her nurse, Sister Clarissa Rosa. She has recently received permission to come to the guests' salon to write letters. As a favor to her? No, she has "earned" this special permission because she is making progress, no longer trying to escape, not acting up.

Dr. Wolff had told her this following his morning rounds, his lips drawn into a thin smile beneath his moustache. She looked at him for a long time. Her old vivacious expression had returned to her eyes. She likes his face—so cultured, as they would say in Berlin, totally different from the flushed face of Director Wille. She keeps his calling card under her pillow: Dr. Wolff, M.D., Ph.D. From Karlsruhe, he is in his mid-thirties, a resident physician. Dr. Wille does not yet allow him to make many decisions, particularly those concerning suggestions he has for improving the institution. She is familiar with them, for during his rounds she has coaxed one or two of these proposals out of him.

She is writing a letter.

"Ach, still working on the same one?" This is spoken by the head attendant, in a voice so shrill it could shatter glass.

"The same one. I'm preparing a clean copy."

The head attendant laughs. She doesn't like the fact that Emily has been granted a special authorization. The very idea of allowing her to sit here, in the middle of the salon! She had argued with Dr. Wolff behind Emily's back. Friedmatt, she had told him, is a microcosm of

the world. Class distinctions must exist here just as they do in the outside world: third-class patients pay 1.80 francs per diem; second-class patients, 3.75 francs; first-class, 7 francs; and then, for the crème de la crème, there is the small hotel among the trees, where the inhabitants are not called patients, but guests. No mention of what they pay. Only the well-heeled among the deranged could enjoy the turned mahogany columns, the books behind glass, the newspapers hanging from hooks on wooden rods—nothing too exciting, of course, no burning issues to disturb them, just food for thought with a daub of culture. It was here, in the *Clergyman's Record*, that Emily had found the ad, and used her fingernail to cut it out.

Now she is writing out a clean copy of her letter of application. For the third time.

It can't get any cleaner.

Friedmatt
Basel

18 December 1899

Pastor A. Altherr
Basel

Dear Sir:
In issue no. 50 of your esteemed journal there is an ad seeking a single woman or widow of dependable character to manage a large household. I humbly apply for this position. I have been at this institution since February of this year . . . I very much desire meaningful work and activity such as that offered by the diverse responsibilities of running a household. I am currently without a livelihood. The office I had in Berlin is closed, of course, and my clientele no longer acknowledges me. My name is tainted by the stigma of mental illness. I am totally without means and alone; I have been separated from my husband for years now, my children have scattered, my connections to friends and relatives have been severed. The latter cut themselves off from me 15 years ago when I chose to study jurisprudence. For this reason, and due to the fact that for years I have distanced myself from the radical

feminists, or, more precisely, expressed my opposition to their demands, based on the law, my financial situation, in Zurich and later, following my move to Berlin, has worsened . . .
Concerning my qualifications for the position advertised, I ask that you consider that despite my studies, I have never forgotten the art and skills of the housewife. My blessed mother trained us in these for a lifetime. Besides which, I began my studies at an advanced age and already had my own children at the time, ages three to eight years. I therefore know how to cook, clean, sew, and can also do a bit of seamstress work, namely, making old clothes into new. I love all children and enjoy their company, and will eagerly perform any task, including washing dishes and cleaning. If requested, I can also do gardening work, which I know a bit about.
My needs by nature and upbringing are very modest, in addition to which I am also too aware of my lack of means and livelihood not to welcome anything willingly and with a glad heart. I would be satisfied with a monthly wage of 10 francs, but would not object if the family you represent should choose to engage me provisionally for one month without pay.
If, as I assume, my background and family are not unfamiliar to you—I am the daughter of former pastor Spyri—I humbly ask that you recommend me to the family in question.

Respectfully yours,
Dr. Emily Kempin

Now another of the attendants is standing at her back. Hügin, as she is called, has a way of silently sneaking up behind people in her cloth shoes. She's a nosy one, sniffing at things with her fleshy nose, showing her teeth under her wrinkled upper lip.

"No, don't read it." Emily lifts her shoulders like a schoolgirl who doesn't want her neighbor to copy from her.

Hügin spots Emily's signature under the crook of her arm: "Dr. Emily Kempin."

"A forceful signature!" she laughs. "'Doctor'—it sounds good, doesn't it?" She stops laughing, but still shows her sharp teeth.

Emily sits up straight, turns her head sharply: "I earned my doctorate, I didn't marry into it."

"Fine, fine, Mrs. Kempin."

"Doctor Kempin."

Not even Clarissa Rosa, her favorite attendant, will get to see the letter. Only Dr. Wolff. Director Wille will read it, of course; he oversees everything that occurs here. Almost everything.

Before she returns to the pavilion, Hügin hands her the well-thumbed newspapers. "The scissors too?"

Yes, the scissors too.

Dr. Wolff has granted Emily the privilege of using a pair of the otherwise well-guarded scissors twice a week, from three to five o'clock, for her "world order." At five she must hand in all the things she has been loaned—that's the rule.

Sitting upright in bed, she cuts up the newspaper, running the tip of the scissors around the outlines of figures in the advertising section: a woman in a fur coat, a fur cap perched on her curls like a ship on the waves. The scissors continue their work, cutting out a man in a top hat, his left arm outstretched, its white-gloved hand pointing to an elegant attaché case. Careful now . . . careful . . . so the creased paper doesn't rip. She has to bend her head down sharply to see clearly; she has needed reading glasses for some time now. That's the first thing she'll buy with the housekeeping money she earns after she's released.

Now she cuts the figures into pieces: cleanly separate the woman's head with its smiling mouth from the body, cut off the left arm with the fur muff. Perspiration breaks out on her forehead. A man's leg in striped pants, a woman's nose, a man's foot shod in patent leather all lie on the blanket.

And now to arrange everything in boxes—a woman's box and a man's box.

At almost five o'clock, Clarissa Rosa comes to help her clean up. "Quickly, Mrs. Kempin, everything must be cleared away before rounds."

Away with all of it: Clarissa Rosa snatches up a man's arm from the linen sheet and throws it into the women's box. With a small cry, Emily fishes out the arm from among the female parts and gives Clarissa Rosa a reproachful look.

Enclosed in the letter that arrived that morning from her daughter Agnes was a postcard from America, from Stanleyetta Titus, a former student from her Woman's Law Class and the first female attorney in the state of New York.

Emily carefully cuts the Statue of Liberty on the postcard into pieces—torch, crown, head, statute book, the giantess's bosom. Dr. Wolff, who has arrived earlier than usual, watches her, engrossed.

"Do you know who created the statue, Mrs. Kempin?"

"Bartholdy."

He isn't surprised that she knows the statue's history; she is never mistaken. She knows all the particulars: that Lady Liberty, for instance, was disassembled into two hundred pieces in the back courtyard of the Paris workshop of Gaget et Gauthier, to be packed into crates and shipped to America.

"Do you remember the statue, Mrs. Kempin?"

"Oh yes," she smiles.

How could she ever forget her bright feeling of hope at the moment she first saw "Liberty Enlightening the World"?

FALL 1888. There stands the statue in the morning light.

She finally sees her with her own two eyes. Liberty, colossal woman of justice. A little distant, veiled in horizontal strips of fog. She hears the passengers' cries. The ship appears to list, and suddenly begins to rock, as if to pay its respects to the lady.

She has dreamed of this moment day and night, in the darkness of the cabin, as the ominous throbbing of the engines drowned out the whimpering of her small daughter, sick with a sore throat.

She feels the cool breeze as little as she feels tiny Agnes tugging at her skirts. At this moment she needs to be alone; the only person she wishes to share it with is the woman coming toward her through the crowd—Fanny Weber, from New York. They have gotten to know each other on the trip, and have discovered, during their all-night talks, that they have much in common.

Fanny Weber, the middle-aged wife of a physician, told Emily of

the organization she founded to help the poor obtain their rights. She interested several prominent New York women in her Arbitration Society, and for four years she fought to improve conditions among Manhattan's indigent population. She organized classes in cooking and hygiene, and in the process came to realize that much of the misery she sees derives from an ignorance of the law. The Arbitration Society endeavored to make the poor aware of their rights. Fanny is still searching for a legal counselor to direct her welfare organization and represent the destitute before the bench, where the attorneys of the rich are able to draw the law to their side. And now, on the ship home from a vacation in Italy, she has met Europe's first woman lawyer.

Emily, though she had earned her doctorate in Zurich, was not allowed to practice there, to earn her daily bread for herself, her out-of-work husband, and her three children. In New York she intended to become what her homeland would not allow her to—a lawyer and university lecturer.

Walter Kempin stood next to Dr. Weber, near the pilot house, with the two older children. During the crossing the two were often seen together—the older man in his sixties, with a crown of white hair and round, ruddy cheeks; and the younger, who was thin and wore a fearful, anxious expression. The physician had been born in Bavaria and spoke German, which was fortunate for Kempin, who did not yet have a command of English.

The men found their wives at the railing: Emily, small and girlish, standing next to Fanny, the curls on the nape of her neck stirring in the morning breeze. It was clear that the two women did not seek company; they stood silently, Emily's eyes on the statue.

Liberty—a woman, she thought. A concept only the French would come up with.

Delacroix had painted Liberty on the barricades, bare-breasted and waving the tricolor. This Liberty held a book of statutes and a torch. Look at her, this woman conceived and created by men, holding her own against wind and weather and history—precisely because she was not Madame Lafayette or Mrs. Kempin or any other woman of flesh and blood who could take up the law book, the torch.

In Zurich I learned that men think a woman's hands are too soft to hold a law book, Emily thought. And differentiating between good and evil, right and wrong, has always been considered men's work. It was true that the Bible allowed a few virgins to carry lamps, but they were accompanied by equally as many foolish women holding up mirrors to see themselves exactly as men wished to see them: gentle, good, a part of men's history. They forgot that half of mankind was female, and that the new man the world was yearning for just might be a woman.

For the last two years the *Züricher Post* repeatedly had published reports on women of the United States. American women were quite active and influential in the public sphere, as a matter of course. Curti, editor of the *Post*, had sent her an article on attorney Belva Lockwood, who had prevailed over the opposition and been admitted to the Supreme Court of the state of Iowa. Curti included a note saying that the New World was more open and less biased, and expressed the hope that there would be room for her, Emily, there as well.

The rays of the morning sun, stronger now, warmed her back and neck as the ship gathered speed and moved away from Liberty. She turned and saw Manhattan—diaphanous, cloaked in blue. The buildings rose up against the horizon like a wave: a mass of glittering, drifting ice.

The ship crossed the Narrows and approached Hoboken. There the wooded hills and a villa complete with bathhouse caught the immigrants' attention. A flag waved over a lawn with newly cut grass, and blond children waved from the shore. Their first American dream.

The captain announced through a tube that the ship would drop anchor in the Hudson for a while before they could dock at the pier. Without the head wind it was oppressively stuffy, and the passengers were getting fidgety. The Americans returning home had their minds on the dreaded customs, the immigrants on the formalities. They would have to be patient just one last time, so close to their goal.

The passengers booked in cabins, however, were not taken by boat to the feared immigration station at Castle Gardens, as were those

from steerage. The customs agents in Hoboken worked quickly and humanely. This fact, and the prospect of a more comfortable voyage in the company of interesting fellow passengers, had induced the Kempins to spend the extra money for first-class tickets for the five of them and the family maid.

The entire family sat down near the exit ramp on the smaller pieces of luggage. The children were restless and had to be told not to do this or that so that their collars or the silk bows of their shirts didn't get dirty at the last minute. They wanted to enter the New World in their Sunday finest, Emily had told them. Agnes looked pale in her white cotton lace; her sore throat had made her weak, and she still felt the shock of the last few stormy nights in her bones. Everything in the cabin had rattled: the doors, a loose wooden plank in the wall lining, even the toothbrush glasses in their holders.

"It will soon be over, Agnes," Emily said, giving her youngest child's cheeks little pats with the tips of her fingers to bring some color to them, as one would slap a newborn baby who was having trouble catching its breath in the New World.

"Never cross the ocean again, never again . . ." Agnes's husky voice sounded pitiful.

"But I want to!" Gertrude protested. "I want to see Zurich again, and grandmother, and my girlfriends!"

"Then we'll have to fly like birds," Robert said, and looked at his father inquisitively. "People can fly, can't they?"

"Two have tried," Walter said, "Daedalus and Icarus." He answered absentmindedly, his eyes scanning the masts and sails on the Hudson, seeking Manhattan behind the clouds of mist.

When the older children insisted that Walter tell them the story "now, immediately!" he began reluctantly: Daedalus, a cunning Greek artisan—master builder or stonemason—one day wished to have a pair of wings with which to fly over land and sea. Taking some bird feathers, small ones at first, then larger ones, he sewed them together with thread, dipped them in wax, and tied them together. He shaped them with his hands until they moved just like real wings. Then he made a second, smaller pair for his son, Icarus. One day he took Icarus to the shore and told him: "Fly neither too high

nor too low, always follow me! No going off in another direction, no capers, no leaps . . ."

Walter was interrupted by a sudden cry of joy. The anchor had been raised, and the ship was heading for the pier.

Behind a forest of wooden masts, sails glowing in the morning light, the New World looked rather somber. Wooden shacks covered the shore like scabs, and a wire entanglement held back friends and acquaintances waving to those returning home. In the surge of the crowd a uniformed porter tried to take hold of Emily's small bag, and in the confusion Agnes got lost. Emily went looking for her among the two-wheeled carts loaded high with baggage and finally found her in the line in front of the immigration station. The Kempins took their place at the back of the line, which was moving slowly. The air was humid and sticky, with the smell of brackish water. Clouds were gathering behind the masts. Sultry heat, sheet lightning, augurs of the new.

When the Kempins finally reached the head of the line, Walter didn't understand the official's question of whether or not he was still a pastor. Emily pressed up next to him and, when the question was repeated, answered in the negative.

What was he, then?

A journalist.

With which newspaper?

That was yet to be decided.

So—unemployed. Hastily, he stamped their papers.

The official, in shirtsleeves, and without a uniform, did not ask Emily her profession. He wrinkled his forehead at the term *Dr. jur.* before her name.

"What does that mean?"

"It's my title," she said. And softly, as if in apology, she added, "I have a doctorate in law from the University of Zurich."

The official glanced up at her in astonishment. She appeared small, almost childlike. He smiled and started to say something, but his counter window was buzzing with the crowd that was closing in. "Children?"

"Yes, three. Gertrude, Robert Walter, Agnes."

"Go ahead," he said, and waved them on.

They waited for their luggage outside the baggage rooms, which were marked with the letters of the alphabet. Three hours later, the Kempins still had not assembled all twenty-two of their crates for customs inspection. Elsbeth, their sixteen-year-old maid, had been sent to the piers with the children and now returned, on the verge of tears: The children didn't want to go for any more walks.

They were thirsty, Robert said. No, hungry, Gertrude contradicted. Their father encouraged them to be patient, and Emily spoke with the customs official in her strange English. The two older children watched her for a while, fascinated by how she contorted her mouth to utter words she was not yet accustomed to. They shyly repeated one or another of the words they recognized, which their mother had taught them on board ship: "how long," "where," "oh, I see." When the rest of the baggage failed to materialize, Robert began to whine that he wanted to take a ferry over to Manhattan.

"What are we doing here for so long?"

"Patience," his father repeated. He took the children and the maid to a booth selling drinks and huge sandwiches piled high with meat. They cost twice as much here as they do in Manhattan, a fellow countryman next to him complained.

A man was peddling switchblade knives—for protection at night, he said, against New York's nocturnal riffraff. Apparently he himself was part of the riffraff, for when a harbor policeman approached, his vendor's tray disappeared into a sack.

A man from the New York Bible Society wanted to convert Walter: "Into the New World with God," he said, German rolling off his tongue. Walter tried to get rid of him by saying he was a pastor himself and believed what the Bible said.

"Everything?" the man with the blond moustache asked. When Walter nodded, the man laughed and made a gesture with his hand as if encompassing this "everything." Then he bent down to Agnes and presented her with a tiny Bible.

In the meantime, Emily had found out why several of the crates still had not been located: They had mistakenly been sent to Castle Gardens with the other freight.

"It's your fault, I'm sorry to say," the official told her. "You marked your crates with numbers instead of letters. But the error has been cleared up, and the crates are on their way back from Castle Gardens."

Emily told this to Walter, who had just returned from the piers with the children. Her voice sounded thin, and she was drowned out by the shrill cries of Agnes, who had been stung by a wasp while sipping her syrupy drink.

Walter listened to her explanation; his face was pale. He pressed his hands together, and when Emily looked at his knuckles she saw that they were white from the pressure. She recognized this gesture as a vent for his panic. It was always the same. He would lose his temper, flail his arms, begin issuing recriminations: Rubbish, Spyri nonsense, unnecessary . . .

She remained calm as he raged, until he too suddenly fell silent, exhausted, his expression one of bewilderment. He looked down at himself as if to confirm that he was still all there. He stared down at his shoes in silence; they had never looked so shiny, so neat. On the landing, a little negro boy with a brush had fallen on his shoes, calling up to him repeatedly from the dusty ground of the New World: "Look nice in the New World, mister, only two pennies, nice in the New World for two pennies."

Another ship had arrived with eight hundred passengers in steerage to be taken to Castle Gardens in boats. They streamed off the ship in a gray, doughy mass.

The Kempin's crates finally arrived back in Hoboken toward evening. But by then the customs office was closed, to reopen again only early the next morning with the arrival of the first ship. The children leaned against the crates in exhaustion. On the dock the lanterns had already been lit. Walter had gotten the address of the Naegeli, a hotel in Hoboken run by Swiss people.

"Go with the children and get some sleep," he said.

"No, you go," Emily said. "Should there be an emergency, I can

speak English." He gave in, promising to return in three hours to relieve her.

Five hours went by. Emily was seated on one of the crates, in the weak lantern light under the baggage rooms' canopy. She was still wearing the straw hat with the checked ribbon that had been cut from the seam of the checked costume she traveled in; when she got cold she draped her woolen shawl about her shoulders and pulled it together over her breasts. She suffered the guards patrolling nearby, with their stares, questions, and jokes. She sat there and kept her eyes on the twenty-two crates full of what Walter called Spyri rubbish: two bundles of pure linen bed sheets, Aunt Johanna's silver tea service, and the twenty-four-piece set of silverware edged in gold.

"She needs a household equal to her status—are you listening to me?" her mother had said to her father. "If you are going to deny her her dowry, she at least should have these things. She is a Spyri, Johann Ludwig, you can't treat your own flesh and blood this way.

"Here, Emily, take these things and value them. Your husband and your children should have a sense of well-being."

Emily had yet to take one step into the New World, and already she felt the weight of the Spyri possessions from Zurich. Even worse were the words spoken by her mother, the mother-text in her blood. She couldn't get it out of her head, even as her brain repeated a thousand times over: *Forget them. Leave it all behind.*

She arrived in the New World bringing with her the Old: twenty-two crates, an out-of-work husband, three small children, and a homesick house servant. Without them she could have moved freely, sailed over to a promising future in Manhattan. But this was her life: entangled in tradition, yet with a drive to move ahead, into the open.

She heard the footsteps of the harbor policeman nearby, echoing from the cobbled streets behind the sheds. She felt the pulsing sepia-colored mass beyond the square stones of the jetty walls: the ocean, erasing her tracks.

There is an ocean between us, Father.

I have gone out of your life, left behind your trains and your schedules, your figures and your tracks. I need not fear that you will follow; you prefer the earth beneath your feet. Even a short boat trip on Lake Zurich rattles you.

There, across the green and phosphorescent Hudson, lies Manhattan. Thousands have arrived before me, without a father, without a fatherland, escaping old patterns to an island where there is no way back to what has always been. A stage where my better self, free of my father's shadow, can contemplate its entrance. Curtain up, spotlight on: New York.

No more stage directions. No sister or mother who have made this journey before me. No woman in whose lee I may travel. No father to hold back Icarus from the heights and depths, to allow only the middle ground.

Emily, Europe's first woman lawyer. Others, sisters, were to follow. The path would broaden in time. One day women would be free to move about naturally. Like a man? No, like a woman.

It was dawn: a light rain was visible in the lantern light. Walter arrived, his collar unfastened, his coat flapping. He had overslept, and his eyelids were twitching. His eyes sought hers. He had sat for hours that night at Agnes's bedside, trying to calm her, he said. Yes, she had one of her sore throats again, and that hacking cough—probably a form of homesickness.

"She's young, she needs time to adjust," Emily said, shrugging her shoulders as if doubting her own words.

A uniformed official stepped forward out of the lamplight to wish them a good morning. The customs office would open soon, he said, the next transatlantic liner had arrived at Sandy Hook. But they would be the first to go through, he assured them, the young lady certainly deserved it after such a night.

"Don't you want to go to bed?" Walter asked, overcome by remorse. He put his arm around her shoulders.

She shook her head. "I'm wide-awake now."

"Then we'll wait together." He went to sit down on the crate next

to her, but she stopped him with a little scream. "Not that one!" She pointed to the red warning stripes: fragile, breakable.

"What's in there?"

"Our wedding gift from the Enge congregation."

He laughed, remembering how she had packed the white opal lamp in layers of tissue paper and sawdust. Emily had studied Latin by the light of that lamp, and Roman law, and English. She needed that lamp; there would be much to learn in the New World.

They took a horse-drawn cab to the boardinghouse near Washington Square, ideally located close to the university.

They saw their small, shabby rooms only late each evening. They spent their days, bright days of Indian summer, looking for an apartment and waiting in the corridors of officialdom. The children had to be registered for school in mid-September. And Emily had arranged an appointment at the secretariat of the university on Washington Square, a university that until 1894 was known as the University of the City of New York.

The family first congregated after dinner. They sat on their beds, which were lined up like barges in the small rooms, their suitcases blocking the narrow hallways. Emily was the only one of them still cheerful after running around all day. She would leaf through the dictionary, making notes for lectures she might someday hold in English. On the other side of the hall Gertrude and the house servant shared a storage room lit only by a skylight.

Agnes and Robert Walter were asleep. Walter lay holding the dictionary with his right hand, his head propped up on his left arm. Through half-closed eyes he took in the shabby wallpaper—vines against a lilac background. The pattern had almost been rubbed out completely above the beds' headboards. The light from the electric ceiling lamp was weak, the color of egg yolk. At the suggestion of Fanny Weber, the lamp from Enge had been taken to a shop on lower Broadway to be wired for electricity. Walter rested the open dictionary on his chest. He didn't want to look at the words dancing before his eyes.

Emily glanced over at him. "Are you studying?"

He barely nodded, suppressing a yawn. She laughed, slipped from her bed, and climbed over a suitcase, as yet unpacked, to get to him. She wrapped her arms around him and brought her face down to his. He looked into her eyes, which were suddenly alive again, flashing as they had in the early days of their marriage.

"New York stimulates you."

"Is that so?" She laughed, and kissed him. She was overcome by a feeling of tenderness; she was happy and full of energy. It made her tolerant of Walter, who was having a difficult time adapting to their new situation. She had the patience of a saint with the children as well, as if she were responsible for their happiness, as if she owed all of them—husband and children—happiness in the New World.

"Everything is going so well, Walter. Just look at how the Webers have taken us under their wing."

After Walter turned off the light, Emily lay awake in the darkness for hours. Since arriving in New York she had scarcely been able to sleep. She went over the day's events in her mind: Holding Agnes by the hand, she had walked up Broadway with Fanny. With every step she registered something new: buildings six or seven stories high with low wooden structures in between, like broken-off teeth; carriages and horse cars, faces of all colors. Impressions followed one upon the other, like colored bits of glass in a kaleidoscope.

Then, in contrast, came Fifth Avenue with its ivy-covered villas of brown sandstone and carriages that moved almost silently on wheels of rubber. In front gardens the oak trees displayed their fall colors, and through the foliage she could see windows with pointed arches and little neo-Gothic turrets. Downtown, at Broad Street, horse-drawn carriages stood before bank buildings, and building facades had yellow and white awnings. The men wore black top hats, their legs looked short, as if hacked off, and they moved as if they were windup toys.

Everyone was running around, crowding along: the day was forcibly moving forward. In the New World days passed more quickly, as if the globe had lead in its belly, causing it to turn a bit too fast. One had to streamline oneself to accomplish anything here.

"Hurry, Agnes, move your legs a little faster, the office is closing soon."

It is spooky to pass night after night without ever closing her eyes. She lies in the dark, but her thoughts are as bright as if someone were shining a bright, concentrated light on her brain.

Like the little light Dr. Wille uses during her monthly checkups. He shines it in her eyes, coming much too close to her with his liver-spotted hands, his yellowish goatee aquiver.

"Did you mail my letter, Director Wille?"

"Which letter?"

"The one to the pastor, in which I applied for the position of domestic, as advertised."

"Many letters come and go here, Mrs. Kempin."

"Dr. Kempin. So you didn't send it?"

"I didn't say that—don't accuse me of that, Mrs. Kempin."

He flares up at her in anger and threatens to put her with the "disturbed" patients, back in the park. Friedmatt has two pavilions for "peaceful" patients and two for the "disturbed." If he could, Dr. Wille would "pacify" all of Manhattan: the troubled visionaries, the discoverers, the poets who babbled on about things that did not yet exist, the women banging against the cell walls of their existence. Yes, her too. The most creative among them would be locked in padded cells, where washbowls and drinking cups were made of papier-mâché. All restless souls would be pacified. The pavilions for the "disturbed" would be packed so full that the walls would burst. Once outside, they would snatch up the "peaceful" ones of Friedmatt and take them to a place where peace reigned, and they could all tend their lawns and breed Irish sheep.

The abnormal outside, the normal inside Friedmatt. Then the world would be in order again.

"World order, Mrs. Kempin? Aha, that's what you call that game of yours with the newspaper cutouts and boxes."

Clarissa Rosa acts as if she understands all the crazy things that go

on inside these walls—it's part of her profession. She sits at a little table by the door, knitting a jacket for the baby her niece is expecting.

"A woman must realize her limits, otherwise she'll be banging against the walls. We must simply accept that we're here, Mrs. Kempin. But we're beginning to understand, isn't that so? Your three children . . ."

She looks at Emily and waits for these words to sink in, waits until the small stubborn face is wet with tears. Then she nods and presses her knitting to her stomach—the stomach of a virginal woman who has never borne children.

A rough night. The attendant in the hall has fallen asleep.

Every fourth night, when Clarissa Rosa is on duty, she leaves Emily's door open and pushes her table over close to it. Dr. Wille turns a blind eye to this, because Clarissa Rosa has explained that she prefers to stay awake if there is any chance of having a rational conversation with her patient. But night duty after a ten-hour workday is rough even on the strongest of attendants.

Their talks are slowly weaving themselves into a tapestry, but around midnight the wine begins to make Clarissa Rosa feel a little tired. Each attendant receives a daily ration of half a liter of wine; married attendants get a whole liter. It's considered part of their pay, and wine is their only choice. Dr. Wolff is opposed to this; the food budget at Friedmatt is only a fraction of that for alcohol, but Dr. Wille says he'll leave abstinence to Dr. Forel, over at Burghölzli. Wine fortifies, he says, that's been common knowledge since the time of antiquity.

Emily can only support Dr. Wolff. When she was at university, she had several conversations with Dr. Forel on psychiatry and abstinence. When she told Dr. Wille this, what did he do? He laughed. She hates the way his laugh explodes out of his red face.

It's windy outside. Icy branches scrape at the windows. She thinks about her letter. She wants to be fair to the pastor, she's serious about the month's probationary period. Would she still be able to make the French onion soup she had learned to cook in Neuenburg, at the home economics school? She had delighted guests in Zurich, New York, Dresden, and Berlin with her French onion soup. Now she had gone two years without a kitchen of her own—what kind of life was

that? She had spent fifteen months at the Berolinum Clinic in Lankwitz, and now, since 10 March, a few months here.

In her mind she walks back and forth in the pastor's house dusting the furniture with a feather duster. No, Emily, use a dustcloth. It's Mother's voice.

Mother had kept a close eye on the housekeeping. She was a Spyri, after all. In the bourgeois households of the Spyris, everything was always neat as a pin—with the exception of her stern Aunt Johanna, who liked to spend her mornings writing.

Emily laughs. Clarissa Rosa's tired blue eyes open with a start, her violets-at-the-edge-of-the-woods eyes. "What is it?"

"Nothing, nothing. Just memories."

The attendant nods off to sleep again, her carafe of wine beside her. The open gas flame is smoking.

"We should install incandescent light," Dr. Wolff has suggested. "They've had good experiences with it in institutions in Dresden."

Dr. Wille, at sixty-five, is not enthusiastic about this kind of progress.

In the near future, she intends once again to demand her right to be transferred to Burghölzli. She belongs in Zurich, at least at the Zurich mental institution. She comes from Zurich. She was born a Spyri; it's her right.

"Your rights. Don't always be insisting on your rights."

There it is again, from over in the corner, behind the billowing curtains: Mother's lightly whining voice. She never demands her rights, never opposes Father when he speaks. Yet she was born with the name of Wild. "I've tamed myself a wild one," Father would joke to his friends.

What would Pastor Altherr look like? She projects his face onto the wall: a large head with sparse gray hair; a jutting chin that lends strength to his words; a powerful chin, a protruding chin, fertile ground for a beard. And on his broad face a pair of bifocals. . . . Emily gives a sudden, happy laugh. She's caught herself in the act: it's Father's nose, Father's beard, Father's glasses! She shudders, and becomes small again.

The sky has fallen,
the abyss is filled,
covered with reason
and easy to traverse.
—KAROLINE VON GÜNDERODE

A childhood spent under Father's beard.

They're sitting at the table. Johann Ludwig Spyri, assistant pastor in Altstetten/Zurich, is spooning up his pea soup, the children spooning up theirs. The only sound breaking the oppressive silence is that of spoon clinking against bowl. Father, a deep crease between his brows, takes a spoonful, swallows, then chews the peas, chews at the words of his Sunday sermon. Mother keeps the children in check with her eyes. At the same time, shoulders tense, she watches her husband, fearful, prepared to respond to any gesture.

Emily throws a few words out into the silence. The assistant pastor pauses in his brooding and catches the child's roguish expression. His face relaxes. Suddenly he joins the table, peering over his plate at them. After a guarded look at Father's face, Emily's siblings begin to laugh. The ice has melted.

Spyri doesn't realize that he pays more attention to this child than to his wife. And Elise Spyri, née Wild, doesn't hold it against him. Pulling him over to the window, she points to the square in front of the church, where the children are playing Heaven and Hell. A little girl from the neighborhood has cheated at the game, and Emily is catechizing the transgressor. As punishment, she is sent back to the first chalk-drawn square.

"Do you hear how she commands respect? She could be a pastor or a lawyer if she weren't a girl! She has the gift of gab, and your tenacity. When she goes after something she wants, the sparks fly."

Spyri's laughter breaks off abruptly. As always, he feels the sharp

pain he gets when he remembers his wife has borne him five daughters and only one son. His second-born, Johann Ludwig, is his namesake, but there the resemblance ends. The boy sits dully at the table; he is unresponsive and lacks intelligence and spirit.

But Emily—sometimes he calls the little girl Emil, as a joke—is the only one he allows to approach his sanctuary, the extra desk in the smoking room at which Spyri pursues his after-work hobby—trains and statistics. He shows her a little model train. "Soon the entire country will be crisscrossed by rails. Just imagine sitting in a train, Emil! In this elegant car . . ." The child approaches and crawls with her eyes through the model's tiny window, sits down on the wooden bench, which in reality is only a matchstick. Spyri nudges the locomotive with his finger and the train is set in motion, carrying Emily along the track Father has laid, stopping here and there at stations Father has determined.

She is still a child, a neuter, a headstrong youngster who has a bit of time left yet before the commencement of those years when she will become adulterated by her sex. She was still *das Emmeli,* as they said in Zurich, using the neuter gender. "It" is such a sweet, droll thing! A bundle of innocent charm, according to her family. And so "it" should remain.

It doesn't. It is growing, and is becoming more and more of a girl. Her father is too busy to notice. In 1865, when Emily is twelve, Johann Ludwig Spyri moves the family from Altstetten into Zurich when he becomes a deacon of the Reformed church at Neumünster.

Emily, now attending the city's secondary school, accompanies her father on a house call. Each of the homes has a little front garden, and its own secrets. The evening sun is reflected in the windows as father and daughter walk together in silence.

Suddenly Emily stops. She has stumbled upon something: a shadow, a big shadow is following them! She steps to one side of the footpath and lets her father walk on ahead. And a second shadow emerges from the father-shadow. It grows in the evening sun, comes alive, climbs up the wall.

Emily believes that at midnight her shadow walks alone, without her body, through the alleys of the city. On the gravel paths by the

lake, lovers brush against it, and their love brushes against Emily, lying shadowless in her bed.

"Come along now, Emily!" Father turns back to her impatiently. He must go home to his desk and sit down to his Sunday sermon.

At the meal table in Zurich as well, her father always had his mind on his sermon. The message that trickled down to churchgoers from the canopy of his pulpit was an extremely delicate affair. There were many professionals among the Neumünster congregation—professors and doctors—and traditional theological beliefs met head-on with materialistic, atheistic resistance. It was important to maintain the peace, for there could be no repeat of what had happened in 1839. The church bells, newly installed, had pealed their alarm as Pastor, and Archbishop, Füssli summoned the faithful to march on the government. This was in protest against the appointment one David Friedrich Strauss to the newly founded university. Strauss was a Württemberger who, in a work on the life of Jesus, had referred to the gospels as fairy tales and myth!

On that September day the faithful had simply swept away the government, and Strauss, at age thirty-one, was retired with a pension of 1,000 francs. But by 1845 the liberals had once again gained a foothold in Zurich, and ever since then the pulpit of the Reformed church of Neumünster had been forced to soften its tone. No more of these archpious, pietist pastors; antireligious views were widespread in the community. Those who wished to be considered educated turned their back on the Church. Religious instruction was banned in the secondary schools and relegated to the private sphere; it became necessary for Pastor Hiestand to hold classes on Sunday. A proposal for an increase in rent subsidies for the clergy was rejected at the township meetings, *amidst strong admonishment from the pastorate.*

God was tolerated in affluent Zurich only when He kept to the background. Insurance policies replaced a trust in the Lord; the mighty fortress was now the newly constructed bank. Spyri had been chosen because he was liberal; he was broad-minded when it came to materialism. His interest in economics and statistics, which served

him well in his activities at the *Schweizerische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft* (Public Service Society of Switzerland), was also appreciated. And after work he occupied himself with the routing of the train that was to run along the left bank of Lake Zurich.

"Look, Emil, it's strangling the villages, cutting them off from the lakeshore. The residents of Enge and Riesbach are protesting. A new route has to be planned—"

Emily is curious about her father's world. Abruptly she asks, "Father, what were you like when you were my age?"

Spyri looks at his daughter in surprise. He becomes reflective, and his eyes wander over her head to the window. "I was an insecure boy. . . . Did I ever tell you that my brother and I were orphans, raised by strangers, rich people? The maid, who was also a Spyri, was always reminding us that the bread we ate was provided by others. Every night we had to include our benefactors in our prayers. At school, and later—when I was studying theology, the career they chose for me—I was always afraid that my foster parents wouldn't be satisfied with my performance."

"Is that why you work so hard?"

His eyes return to his daughter in amazement.

The end of June. Storm clouds gather over the lake and at the edge of the mountains, which are still covered in snow. Women stroll along the promenade, their silk petticoats rustling.

"How they must be sweating in their lace bodices and corsets," Emily remarks to her school friend Iris.

There is something cosmopolitan about Iris Gudden, the daughter of a brain specialist. The Zurich dialect she has picked up is mixed with traces of High German.

"Have you still not seen a woman naked?" Iris asks.

Emily shakes her head. Her mother turns away from her in shame when she undresses. Even as a small child Emily had wondered what women looked like under their clothing, under their fishbone corsets.

Iris knows of an isolated swimming hole beyond the Zurich Horn, where the bank is protected by silver-leafed bushes. The girls undress and wade into the water up to their waists, their upper bodies dappled by the sun and by leafy shadows. They study each other in surprise: Overnight they've become young women!

Iris has small, firm breasts; a school of glittering fishes swims past her hips. Emily's legs look foreshortened, bent at angles, green. They are mermaids, prettier than the dolls who stroll the lake paths with their wasp waists and their flat, bound bosoms. They never want to be like that—never!

As they dry themselves on the rocks in the sun, Emily has a dreamy look on her face. "What do you think of marriage, Iris?"

Pretty Iris, with her red curls, answers that what most men want in a woman is a blank slate, a zero, a nothing whom they can shape at will. "My husband will love me because I'm me, and for that reason alone—he'll be a true twentieth-century man."

Emily nods. "That's the kind of husband I want, too."

The light shimmers in the reeds, storm clouds are brewing in the mountains.

"Let's promise we won't marry any other kind." They laugh, look each other in the eye, and raise their right hands in oath.

Emily is beginning to have thoughts and ideas that her father would not understand. Spyri notices nothing of this; he is concerned with other problems. There is an outbreak of cholera in Zurich, to which 450 people have succumbed within a short period. He sits at his desk drafting a plan for treatment of the disease, which he needs to go over once more before signing.

There is a knock at his study door, and Emily appears. He is astounded when he has to look up from his seat to see her face. For the first time he registers her delicate skin, which accents her prominent eyebrows and deep-set eyes. Her mouth has an unusual shape, with a somewhat mocking expression at its corners that he doesn't like. Nor, for that matter, does he like her lower lip protruding as it does. And her body has shot up suddenly, and is slender and supple. Her breasts have begun to develop, her checked cotton blouse is too small for her now.

He is touched by the realization that she has become a young woman. How could he have overlooked that? It was high time to make up

for his neglect of her education. He admired his daughter's willfulness, her intelligence and energy, but it was precisely these qualities—and her teacher, Mr. Campe, agreed with him in this—that turned into their opposites at the onset of womanhood. Willfulness in a woman became obstinacy, intelligence turned into audacity, energy into imagination run wild.

After Emily completed her fours years of secondary school, it was decided that she would postpone the obligatory year of domestic service in French-speaking Switzerland. There was enough for her to learn at home, and there was certainly more than enough work to be found in a family of nine.

So now she stands there looking down at her father, noticing that time has altered him as well. His face has grown coarser, broader. Like his superior, First Pastor Hiestand, the deacon now sported the muttonchops that were in fashion, with side-whiskers that grew from his ears to his chin, leaving only the middle part of his chin free.

"Well?" He reaches for his pince-nez and bids her to speak; he has urgent business to complete and gestures toward the papers awaiting his signature.

"What is to become of me?" she blurts out.

Spyri removes his glasses and looks at his daughter with amusement. "What is to become of you? What kind of a question is that? Look at your mother."

Emily's cheeks flush red.

Her mother is in a state of advanced pregnancy. She's expecting another child, a late arrival. This seventh, unwanted pregnancy is causing her mother problems—and with her legs bandaged for support, she must carry out her household duties as well as she can. Emily has to do her bending for her and carry the bags when they go shopping. People in the shops whisper about her behind their backs: pregnant, and the eldest daughter already seventeen, and engaged!

"Did you want this child, Mother?"

"I would have been satisfied with a half-dozen," her mother admits to her.

"Why are you having it, then?"

Her mother attempts carefully to explain things to Emily. "A child just arrives, it is an act of nature one simply has to accept." Emily understands: A wife is subject to her husband, to her lot in life.

She contemplates this as she furiously scrubs the floor, washes the dishes, and mends her younger sisters' stockings. She is afraid. She sees herself at fifteen already falling into a trap. Her father senses her secret defiance. One Sunday he interrupts his work to summon Emily to his study. He tells her that being a wife and mother is woman's original, most inner calling, and that she should learn to practice sacrifice and renunciation.

"But I want to study," she protests. "I miss school. I could become a teacher, maybe."

Her father shoves the newspaper article he is writing to one side and gets down to brass tacks: He is against women teachers. A woman's body is designed for conceiving and bearing children, is unsuited for public service. Female emotions are subject to mood swings, but children in public schools need discipline, and that calls for a firm male hand. His knobby chin sticks out when he speaks and moves to the rhythm of his words, lending them force.

Emily stares at her father's side-whiskers and discovers gray, bristly hair, thinning at his left ear.

He continues to talk: He knows what is good for her.

Mother delivered me of her body, Emily thinks, but Father has yet to deliver me from his head. He knows me before I know myself. If I become the idea of me in his head, I'll die yet unborn.

The year 1868 is a happy one in the chronicles of the Spyri family. Emily's mother gives birth to a boy, Heinrich. Father's brother, Bernhard Spyri, is promoted to the position of town clerk and moves into a government apartment in city hall with his wife, Johanna, and their son, Bernhard.

Emily's family is invited for a visit. Emily is curious about her aunt, who she knows doesn't fit in. Johanna Spyri had yet to write her international best-seller, *Heidi;* as of then she had published nothing at all. But friends and family are aware of the fact that the town clerk's

wife spends every morning plotting stories. Her mother, Meta Heusser, wife of a doctor in Hirzel, had written lieder. They all smiled indulgently and granted Johanna this extravagance, only to then repeat the same old story: that this—what else?—explained her lack of housewifely virtues.

Sunday afternoon. The plush chairs in the apartment are of a dark cherry red, and uncomfortable. The two families size each other up, putting on airs.

Spyris sitting across from Spyris.

The grown-ups talk for a while about music, knowing well that the town clerk is an admirer of Wagner. In the fifties, as editor of the paper, the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*, he had met often with the exiled composer in the Orsini Café and had promoted his work in print. But everyone knows as well that Johanna can't stand the composer. She has said so outright: his music is bombastic, it has something of the brimstone about it . . .

They drop the topic of Wagner to joke about Johanna's "mountain nature," her way of obstinately contradicting her husband. But her husband refuses to be provoked by the conversation. Too bad; his mind is probably on his work again. It is said that he brings stacks of files and newspapers to the lunch table with him. No sooner has he taken a spoonful of soup than he disappears behind the pages.

Emily feels she is being observed. She doesn't know what to do with her long legs. "Where is cousin Bernhard?" she asks.

"He's playing for the boy's choir; they rehearse on Sundays. But he should be here any minute now." Johanna stands and opens a window. The furniture in the room is dark and heavy, with turned columns and curved profiles. An odor like cinnamon or an exotic wood fills the room.

"It's jacaranda," Johanna says. Her brother, Christian Heusser, had sent chests and cabinets of jacaranda from Brazil. Lake air streams through the window, between the trees on the shore they can see the water glistening.

"Too bad it's so cool," Johanna says. "I prefer to entertain in the rose garden. I'd like to show you the rose path later; after hours at my

desk nothing revitalizes me more quickly than a little talk with the roses." A smile flits across her face and disappears again just as quickly, leaving her broad, stern features in shadow.

Emily's father inquires about Spyri's new job at city hall. Uncle Bernhard talks about records, files; his voice becomes stilted. Emily grows bored. She fiddles with the fringe on her armchair, braiding it. "Psst, Emily." Her mother shoots her a look.

Now and then Uncle Bernhard's stream of words dries up and his thin lips make mute, snapping motions. Emily tries not to laugh; her mother glares at her again. Luckily, everyone moves to the table for tea. In its center stands the ornament that all of Zurich is talking about: an authentic samovar, direct from Russia.

Johanna talks on effusively about the curliqued filigree work of the silver tea-boiling monster. She had bought it from a Russian student who needed the money. At evening gatherings in Zurich, people laughed at an amusing story that Frau Meyer, mother of the writer Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, told about Johanna: Johanna once served tea to Mrs. von Sternberg and then went to extinguish the flame underneath the samovar. "She blew it out as impudently as a kitchen maid, at which poor Johanna's bad breath almost caused the delicate Mrs. Sternberg to faint . . ."

The tea had a slight flavor of vanilla.

"Do you like it, Elise?" Johanna pours another cup.

With a glance at the samovar, Emily's mother answers, "More and more young Russian women are enrolling at the university . . ."

"I don't understand why the administration tolerates it," Emily's father interrupts. "They're not even requiring a diploma of these foreign girls! The government thinks it's being cosmopolitan, but you can't fool me. Scarcely any of these girls really do any studying. They're here fishing for a husband, or plotting the revolution."

"But what about Suslova!" Emily interjects. "She has a gynecological practice in Petersburg and is married to an eye doctor named Ehrismann, who's Swiss. They studied together . . ."

"So, a marriage *studiosus* after all!" her father laughs.

It irritates Emily how Father can simply brush aside a topic with his rumbling laugh. She thinks up all kinds of retorts, but at that moment

cousin Bernhard comes rushing in to grab the last piece of cake. It's as if her cousin, two years her junior, were a changeling. He doesn't fit in with the apartment, the jacaranda, and the plush.

Johanna has been praising his musical talents, and now the time has come for him to demonstrate them. The thirteen-year-old doesn't need much coaxing; he plays a polka on his violin, winking at Emily across his bow.

Emily's parents applaud. Wonderful! What are the plans for this talented boy?

"He wants to study music," Aunt Johanna says.

"He'll study law," says Uncle Bernhard.

And Emily? Aunt Johanna asks her about her plans amidst a crossfire of glances. Emily is embarrassed. "According to Father, I'll be going to western Switzerland next spring, to Neuchâtel."

"Aha, to get polished up for the marriage market—cooking, a few French expressions, piano lessons—"

"But I want to be a teacher," Emily interrupts. She gives a father a defiant look and is happy to hear him take the bait: women, mood swings, fragile physique . . .

Johanna contradicts him: "And yet nature entrusts children's education to women!"

"Within the family, my dear Johanna! Therein lies the difference. What happens in a public school when a woman has her menstrual cycle, pardon me for mentioning it!"

Johanna is unable to suppress a smile. As always when contradicted, Emily's father becomes agitated. He sticks out his chin, his beard stabbing the air like a horn. "An eligible bachelor comes along and the teacher hangs up her profession. And just as in the business world, we must ask: Was the expenditure of time and money worth it?"

"But there are more and more women who are not marrying, voluntarily or not, dear brother-in-law."

"My Emily does not belong to that group, of that you can be certain!"

Their faces were red and angry, they looked like spinning whetstones, shooting sparks. Anything that stuck out got ground down:

Emily's bony elbows, her knobby knees, runny nose, funny nose, her chin, her pout. They wanted to shape her into a spoon, a highly polished spoon in which all of them would see their own reflection. A spoon with a bowl eager to be filled, an instrument for their formal, bourgeois table.

"When it comes to women, you're quite conservative, brother-in-law. Is it true that you spoke out publicly against a swimming area for women at the lake?"

"A bunch of half-naked women is neither hygienic nor aesthetic. The good city of Zurich would be wasting its money on such a place."

"It seems to me you're overshooting your mark."

"Is that so, sister-in-law?"

Town clerk Spyri sits in silence, his face a closed book. Father talks and talks. Emily retreats from his words; the grinding wheel turns and turns. She sits there spitefully, becoming more stiff, more angular, more scratchy.

As they are leaving, Aunt Johanna takes her aside. "I'd be pleased if you would come to see me alone. But drop me a note first—unannounced visitors are anathema to me!"

"The steam engine, Emil!"

Spyri shows his daughter a picture in the *Braunschweig Journal*, pointing to the text, popular science jargon from a scholar named Helmholtz: *Like a water pumping station, the atmosphere takes water from tropical seas in the form of steam and circulates it up to the mountaintops.*

The world as one big steam engine, with God's hand on the lever in the predawn of history. Once set in motion, it functions by itself.

"So we don't need God, then?" Emily interjects.

The pastor looks at his daughter, a furrow in his brow. "That's going too far, Emil. Where did you get that, at Iris Gudden's?"

Iris's father is a full professor of psychiatry, and director of the new mental asylum at Burghölzli. Iris is Emily's favorite of all the girls in the neighborhood. But Emily's father doesn't share her enthusiasm; he doesn't like the fact that Gudden and his family never go to church.

"I don't like you going to that house, Emily. Libertines are not the proper companions for a pastor's daughter."

Pastor's daughter! How she hates that expression. They're always teasing her with it at school. Iris is the only one who doesn't care about Emily's background. To her, it is only Emily herself who counts.

"Can you keep a secret?" Iris asks. "If you can, I'll take you with me to Burghölzli."

Behind the main building, where the park begins its ascent, a tall stand of trees protects them from Gudden's eyes. The doctor is in the habit of looking out over the heads of his patients at nature, as if to draw strength there. He has forbidden his daughter to bring her schoolmates onto the grounds of the asylum.

A shudder runs through Emily. The shadow of her father has never crossed these gravel paths. The trails lead into the woods; it has rained and mist rises from the forest floor to hang in the branches.

A man appears out of the mist, his blue eyes open wide. He walks past them with his head bent down at a sharp angle. His name is Vladimir; he is an educated Russian who can prophesy the future, in which he already dwells. He appeared voluntarily one day at the gates of the asylum, and they leave him in peace here with his sad, twentieth-century tableaux. A young woman conversing with an invisible partner brushes against Emily's sleeve in passing.

These are fragile people who simply passed through the gates into madness, shrouded in fear. Once here they draw their chalk circles and tread on moon dust. Behind the agriculture building men stand embracing one another, half-dressed, motionless. In their mute ecstasy they could be mistaken for statues.

"There are men who love men," Iris said. She speaks unflinchingly of things her peers have no inkling of. They walk for a while longer in the milky haze of this strange world, far away from Zurich, with its bustle and its Spyris.

Assistant curate Spyri, who has no idea where his daughter was, criticizes at table the amoral conditions at the asylum. "Schnurrenberger, the administrator, is tolerating homosexuality and prostitution. Gudden is spineless, and he allows that majordomo Schnurrenberger to

do whatever he pleases." Schnurrenberger, who has the support of the Democrats in the government, writes inflammatory articles for the local papers, in which he criticizes the Burghölzli directors and makes fun of the doctors.

"Believe me, Emil, no good will come of it."

"Are you not feeling well, Mrs. Kempin?" The attendant bends down to her and wipes her brow with a cloth. "You're perspiring."

"I hear a train rumbling by, Clarissa Rosa. It must be very close, I feel the walls shaking and the window glass is rattling."

"At Friedmatt? You're mistaken. It's the wind in the treetops you hear rustling. I'll close the window, Mrs. Kempin."

Emily, having returned from her year in the west of Switzerland, leans down beside her father in his study to look at some pictures. Spyri notices that she has grown, her face has taken on a pleasant expression. He is touched.

"What is that, Father?"

"The railroad, on the march. Tracks are being laid down all around the world. Those are telegraph poles beside the tracks. Through technology, the earth will become a body of nerve and muscle."

She looks him full in the face, a mocking expression in her eyes. Her upper lip curls as she says, "That sounds poetic."

This upsets him. "There are poets of the railroad—Carl Maria von Weber's son, for example. His father named him Max, after the hero of his *Freischütz*. He's director of the Engineers Association of Saxony and has published a book of poetry called *Rolling Rotors*. Would you like to read it?"

"I don't know."

"And Helmholtz compares the union of steam and machine to a marriage. Masculine steam—surging, choleric—and feminine machine—mannerly, functional."

She looks at her father in her new, direct way and laughs.

Emily, under the direction of her mother, the perfect housewife, is to put into practice what she learned while she was away. Each morning the potatoes must be peeled. The kitchen maid, barely fifteen, looks lost behind the high brown mountain of them. There are hungry mouths to be fed morning, noon, and night. Evenings, the women sit bent over the darning, mending wool socks that are full of holes and pilled from so many washings.

"This household is like a treadmill," Emily groans. "You put your whole being into it while life passes you by."

"So that others may live," her mother answers.

Her father has become an influential person, even beyond the bounds of Zurich. He is president of the Rütli Commission, president of the Swiss Public Welfare Society, and editor of its newspaper, which he founded in 1860. He radiates energy, and succeeds at every goal he sets for himself. But he is sensitive to criticism, much too sensitive. Even the euphoric obituary years later in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* makes mention of this.

He compensates for his rather insignificant position as second pastor of Neumünster through his preoccupation with economics and statistics, winning the respect of industrialists and railroad magnates. One young railroad stockholder arrives to take a look at Spyri's figures.

"Father would like for you to serve the coffee, Emily. You needn't hide yourself away." Her mother smiles knowingly.

Emily knocks, enters, and sets the tray down on the desk among the railroad papers. She feels the young man looking at her. She gives curt, snippy answers to his questions.

Spyri feels that his daughter, if she is to make a truly good match, needs more polish. And in this respect no finishing school can replace the parental home.

The no-man's-land between childhood and marriage.

If only Iris Gudden were still here, but during Emily's year of absence Iris moved with her family to Munich. "Is she studying there?" she asks her father.

Spyri explains to his daughter that German universities are not open to women. "Only in Zurich do they believe in that kind of generosity."

Bertha, a friend from her school days, suddenly has a strained look about her nose and mouth. She barely looks up when Emily arrives for a visit. She spends her days crocheting borders on linen handkerchiefs; she has finished eight already, with four to go. "Or do you think I need twenty-four, Emily?" Letters written in a forceful male hand lie beside the bureau as if by coincidence.

"Do you want to get engaged?" Bertha asks.

"Not yet. My parents are telling me to wait."

"And you, Emily? What are you waiting for?"

"If only I knew."

Emily begins observing the female Russian students, and their open way of dealing with men. "An influence you should protect yourself from," her mother says.

Emily stands on the university terrace. She could see all of Zurich from this spot, called the "ramp of knowledge." From here one could float high above the roofs of the old part of the city. Young women emerge through the university gates with books under their arms, laughing and talking to their fellow students. Most of them rent rooms from families in the vicinity, in the Oberstrass and Platte sections of town. They live in houses with cast-iron gates and front gardens, and move through Zurich inconspicuously, with a few exceptions: Lubatovitsch, for example. When new students arrive from her homeland, it is her they go to for information on matriculation and lectures.

Lubatovitsch wears a shockingly short black skirt and a sailor cap at a jaunty angle, so that her provocatively masculine haircut is clearly visible. She drapes her scarf loosely, nonchalantly, around her neck, and walks around the university wearing this flowing, gold-speckled thing and smoking openly in the street. When she talks she holds her amber cigarette holder between her fingers.

Schlikoff is more discreet. Her mother accompanied her from Russia and hired a French-speaking Swiss woman, Miss Margueret by name, for her daughter. On inspection, the mother found the board-

inghouse rooms in Fluntern and Oberstrass too crude, and rented her daughter two rooms on Freiestrasse. Now Schlikoff lives next to Suslova, who has returned from Petersburg with her Swiss husband, Dr. Ehrismann. Their marriage, from what can be heard through the wall, is not going well.

Russian colonies have sprung up in Fluntern and Oberstrass. The men sport beards and are said to be plotting a revolution. They are well matched by their female counterparts, who hold vehement discussions about the turmoil in Russia and read Dostoyevski, Tolstoy, and Turgenev. Most of the women study medicine.

The few German women at the university are much less talkative, study hard, and are older than the others: Franziska Tiburtius, for example, a pretty, tall blond student. There are almost no Swiss female students. The first was a medical student from Brugg named Marie Vögtlin.

"Would your parents allow you to attend the university, Bertha?"

"What are you talking about? My parents say that no man wants to marry any woman strange enough to study."

"Study?" Spyri shakes his head behind his newspaper. "Emily, you yourself know that it's too late for that. You don't know any Latin, you never attended the gymnasium. And as of this year the female students are required to have a diploma, just like the males."

Her mother, head bent over her mending, says, "When the right man comes along you'll forget about such nonsense. A woman who is loved adapts to her lot."

Is love a trap? Emily wonders.

Emily's three younger sisters are playing Marriage, Children, Baptism under the linden trees next to the church in Neumünster. She watches through the window as they dance in a circle, mouthing clichés in their singsong voices, repeating everything over and over. It was enough to drive one mad.

She escapes down to the lake. The seagulls scream and wheel through the air. Do they even know what it is they hunger for? Does she?

On a bench not far from her uncle's apartment she inhales the thirty-three pages of Aunt Johanna's first work. Printed in Bremen, it bears the title *A Leaf on Vrony's Grave,* by J. S. The author is unidentified.

One late afternoon in September Emily appears at the city hall apartment unannounced. It is raining and the lake and shore have merged into a monotone gray. The maid opens the door and, recognizing Emily, announces her to Johanna Spyri, who is seated at her desk. Johanna has Emily wait for a few moments and then invites her into the small alcove. The lake is visible from the bay window located three steps above the living room.

Because she now spends so much time at her desk, Johanna tells her, she receives her visitors standing, and prefers to pace back and forth as they speak. Yes, she's writing a new book; the working title is *At Home and Abroad*.

Emily apologizes for her sudden appearance. She had read *A Leaf on Vrony's Grave* in one fell swoop, she said, and had found it captivating.

Johanna smiles. She enjoys the enthusiasm of the young, but her niece's face reveals something that disturbs her: a wildness, a sadness.

"Aunt Johanna, what will become of me?" Emily blurts out. "Father wants me to be just like Mother. But I'll never be like that, never!"

Johanna stands there for a moment in astonishment, not knowing what to say. Fortunately, the maid appears with elderberry syrup.

"From the bushes behind the doctor's house on the Hirzel. They taste like my childhood," Johanna says. She empties the glass in three quick swallows, like a man. A button is missing from her house jacket. The dirty windows, the layers of dust on the turned columns of the massive furniture—Emily sees it all through the critical eyes of her mother. She finds it endearing that to her aunt the household is, as they say in Zurich, a *quantité négligeable*. She trusts her aunt's stern, almost peasant face. "Aunt," she says, "I want to be a writer too."

Johanna's mouth twitches in amusement. "Do you write?"

Emily nods. "In secret. Two poems so far and the beginning of a missionary story."

Her aunt looks at her intently and opens her mouth to say something, but just then cousin Bernhard comes in from the gymnasium and immediately he is the center of attention. He throws his satchel to the carpet, groaning about his Latin assignment—a vocabulary list a mile long, and he'd rather practice the violin!

"Read me a sentence in Latin," Emily implores him. And as Johanna rings for the maid, her sixteen-year-old son recites his Latin like a Catholic priest at mass.

"Why do you need to know Latin?" his cousin asks.

"For my diploma. Then I can study what I want at university. But all I really want in life is to play music."

Johanna breaks in. "Art is an unpredictable profession, Bernhard, you know that. Listen to your father! You can always play the violin once you're a lawyer. Those who study law serve the good cause, justice. You'd be helping those who are weak and exploited to obtain their rights. A lawyer decides what is good and just. A lawyer, more than anyone else, can change the world."

Emily listened in amazement, envying how smoothly everything was going for her cousin, two years her junior: Latin, diploma, university, profession. He had a plan, his parents were involved, everything hung on his future. And herself, did she have a future?

"Could I still take Latin lessons, Aunt Johanna?"

"Why not? There's a course being offered at the lyceum. It would teach you the similarities between French and Italian, so that you'll be able to help your children with their lessons someday. A woman's education should serve her future family; on this point I agree with your father: The only honorable sphere of activity for a woman is the home."

Her aunt stands with her back to the window. Her hairnet weighs down her coiffeur, giving her head a lopsided look. Shadows line the corners of her mouth. The afternoon ends differently from what Emily had imagined: Bernhard plays a sad waltz, his thoughts elsewhere. Johanna observes her only child, her son, his cheek resting on his violin. Emily once heard her say to someone, "He's so talented that he even empowers his mother with great hope."

One Sunday in July Emily is to accompany her sisters to the lake. Although he is opposed to the planned swimming area for women, Spyri will, permit his daughters to remove their shoes at a remote shoal on the shore and go wading. Only boys are taught to swim; they alone may splash around on the dock in front of everyone. From the water they watch the Spyri girls go by. Emily hears someone call her name—it's cousin Bernhard! He leaps from a piling into the water and comes up sputtering.

Emily slips off her dress and stands there in her long batiste slip. Without a moment's hesitation she removes her stockings and sandals and wades into the water up to her chest, then up to her neck. Her sisters scream in fear. Emily has never told them that she learned how to swim the summer before at Neuenburger Lake. They see Emily's blond hair bobbing in the water, her quick strokes. The boys try to follow but they can't catch up to her. Emily swims as if her life depended on it, swims out into the open water and into the shimmering light.

The New York light! Each morning an unbelievable southerly light explodes onto the walls of the buildings opposite. Barely has she fallen asleep after endless hours of tossing and turning, than the bright light of day arrives again, and the streets reverberate with noise.

The avenues, the city's main arteries, pump people through Manhattan. But where is the city's heart? To Emily, it is Washington Square: A mirror of New York's diversity, it pulses with life around the clock. She strolls under the trees in the mild November air, a woman like any other. Her long taffeta skirt rustles as she walks, the sun warms her head under her elaborate coiffure.

Emily loves to walk along the columned facade that lines the north side of the park. She can sense the presence of the financial district nearby; powerful people are said to live here. But Agnes is pushing her toward the artists' cafés on the south side of the square, where musicians play Irish folk songs. Students from the university pass by in groups. Dappled light falls through the treetops, and doves rise in flight.

The red brick of a Presbyterian church can be seen between the buildings. The university, positioned next to the two towers of the

Old Dutch Church, looks picturesque. Emily cannot stop looking at the building. With its high, arched windows it could be mistaken for a church itself. Her petition has been waiting there since September. Three times already she has appeared at the secretariat. "Still no answer?"

The young man in glasses, the one with the dreamy expression, shakes his head: "It takes time, Madam."

"Even in New York?" she said with a worried laugh.

"Even in New York, Madam."

Everything else around her was hurrying along, moving forward, but in the shadow of the neo-Gothic university walls time stands still. To assuage her, he shows her a copy of the record of her visit:

> *5 November 1888:*
> *The vice-chancellor of the university receives the petition of Miss Emily Kempin, LL.D., to be accepted as a student at the university, and passes it on to the Law Committee for the final decision.*

She has requested nothing more in her capacity as a professionally trained lawyer than to be accepted as an auditor! And they need to think about it, each administrator passing off the decision to the next. The only reason she came to New York was to study law! What would it take for her to fulfill this wish?

"Shall I come back next week?"

"No, it would be better to come back in two, Doctor Kempin."

It would be the middle of January before the decision was made:

> *7 Jan. 1889*
> *At the recommendation of the Law Committee, Dr. William Allen Butler has given verbal instruction that Miss Emily Kempin, LL.D., be allowed to attend lectures of the law faculty.*

The word *Kempin* is crossed out and corrected in the margin to *Kempen*.

When I set out to acquire happiness
in Arcadia,
Doves led the way.
—ROSE AUSLÄNDER

It was the end of January; dry leaves whirled down the avenues and a cold wave drove the downtrodden to the Arbitration Society, which was open twice a week. Word had gotten around that the society provided practical assistance, and the benches in the hall were filled with immigrants from the tenements. They were joined by families from Pine Street, where the tall buildings rarely allowed even a ray of sun to penetrate the narrow alleyways.

Fanny Weber and her assistants registered their complaints and referred the legal cases to Dr. Kempin, who prepared judicial opinions in the next room. It had not yet been decided whether she, as a foreigner, would be permitted to appear before the New York courts. In the meantime her young male colleagues appeared for her. Considering the low fee, most of them were too ambitious to be willing to perform this task more than a few times.

After a hard day's work, Emily and Fanny relax with a walk in Central Park. The day has cleared up, and the snow-covered bushes shimmer in the winter sun. Ice skaters are cutting figures on one of the frozen ponds, black silhouettes in the evening light. The tall buildings in the background are set against a turquoise sky.

At five in the evening the park comes to life. As in Italy, the *corso* takes place summer and winter. People stroll to see and be seen. This year women are wearing their coats trimmed in fur: collars of luxurious blue fox, fur hems swinging, hands tucked into muffs. The lanes and riding paths are busy as well, for it is a well-known fact that nowhere in New York can one meet prettier women than here. Emily can see

that these women are more self-confident than their European counterparts. They grow up freer, have an interest in business and politics. They flirt openly, for they can depend on the chivalry of American men. Yet in spite of this, even these free, beautiful, athletic creatures are surrounded by a wall of discrimination.

Wyoming is the only state where women have the vote. Those from the upper echelons of society do not work, on principle. Most universities are still closed to women. As of two weeks ago, Emily, the first woman in Europe to earn a doctorate in jurisprudence, is the sole woman to attend lectures of the law faculty at the University of the City of New York.

At a clearing in the trees where the riding paths cross the footpaths, a young woman on horseback stops, gets down, and goes over to Fanny. Judging from her age, she young woman could be Fanny's daughter. The two engage in lively conversation, and Emily can understand enough to know that they are discussing a social cause: a sewing course planned for indigent women. She has time to observe this woman closely: her intensity, the alert expression on her full and still childlike face, her elegant dress.

As they continue their walk, Fanny tells Emily that the young woman was Helen Gould, daughter of Jay Gould, the richest and most unscrupulous of the railroad magnates.

Young Helen Gould attends the next meeting of the Arbitration Society. Roughly twenty women assemble in the Weber's salon on Forty-sixth Street, the walls of which are hung with gold-framed etchings of German landscapes. Fanny moves through the room serving tea, her tall frame clad in a light yellow cashmere dress that accentuates her black hair, a string of pearls around her high collar. She introduces all those who do not already know her to Dr. Kempin of Zurich, Europe's first woman lawyer, praising the work Emily had performed for the society over the last several weeks. She also announces the decision of the New York bar association to deny Emily admission on the grounds that she is a foreigner.

Amelia Forman, wife of attorney Alexander Forman, articulates what the others are feeling: "This decision threatens the very exis-

tence of the Arbitration Society. In the last few weeks it has been almost impossible to find lawyers who will take our cases to court for us."

This is followed by a heated discussion. A vibrant woman with strong features stands up. She is not wearing the obligatory hat, and her rimless glasses flash in the light. Everyone falls silent to listen to Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi, physician and author, and the very embodiment of the "new woman" as envisioned by feminists.

As always, she expresses herself with vigor: "The 1886 statute that permits women to practice law in the state of New York is a mockery. They made sure that women would not be able to put their education into practice, for the study of law is reserved for men only."

Other states were further along, she says, mentioning the name of Arabella A. Mansfield of Iowa, who in 1869 became the first woman admitted to the bar. And Miss Lenna Barkaloo, who has been practicing in Missouri since the end of the seventies. And Belva Lockwood, who has fought her way to the Supreme Court. "It is time for things to change in the State of New York as well!" she says, as she calls for those present to form a league.

Enthusiastic applause.

The next speaker calls for quiet. Her red curls spring out from under her hat brim onto her forehead. She is Martha Buell Munn, one of the society's younger members, and wife of John P. Munn, a physician. Emily's active participation at the office has attracted her attention.

"The Arbitration Society has been condemned to death," she announces dramatically. "We need women who have knowledge of the law. Emily Kempin, who possesses this knowledge, has her hands tied. Though our offices are filled with petitioners, the Arbitration Society will be forced to cease activity. We must found a new society for the purpose of training women in points of law."

Mrs. Hewitt, wife of the former mayor of New York City, rises awkwardly, her huge hat swaying above her curls. "My dear friends! It is important to know the law, not only that we might improve the lot of the poor, but also for our own private concerns! Must we not all deal with questions of property, make purchases that call for wise investment? Do we not enter into contractual agreements with employees, and sooner or later come into contact with issues of inheri-

tance? I support Mrs. Munn's suggestion for a Woman's Legal Education Society, and that is exactly what we should call it."

They ask Emily to outline her vision for such a school, and she proposes a basic, demanding curriculum, preferably under the aegis of the university. After her initial statement, the women storm her with questions about her own personal path to the law. They listen in astonishment as she tells them how she began her studies at thirty-one, the wife of a pastor and mother of three children. She hadn't been strong enough as a girl, she told them, to overcome her parents' objections and swim against the current.

"I have my husband to thank for my breakthrough," she said. "He was the first to believe in me. It was he who, after a long workday, himself taught me Latin and mathematics."

Toward the end of the meeting Walter Kempin rings the doorbell. He has picked up the older children from school and taken them for a walk in the park. Now he is waiting in the hall for his wife, so they can take a carriage to the apartment they have recently rented at 207 East Fourteenth Street.

But when the maid announces him to the lady of the house, she insists that Walter and the children join them at the table of honor in the salon for a cup of tea. And there he is, the twentieth-century man they all dream about: a man who doesn't view his wife simply as the trainbearer of his own career, but who concedes that she has a right to develop her own personality, and even helps her in the process.

The women crane their necks to get a look at him, sitting at the table of honor with his wife and members of the committee.

Is he a lawyer as well? he is asked.

"No, a theologian, a pastor."

They scrutinize the forty-year-old's fine, narrow features, and then turn to his blond-headed children, who are politely trying to hide their gluttony while polishing off the rest of the cake.

What, they ask, is he, a doctor of divinity, pursuing here in New York?

He wishes to find work as a journalist, he tells them. He has a chance of becoming a correspondent for the *Philadelphia Democrat*.

The women like his slight air of shyness and the slow hesitation of his speech. Fanny and Emily fill in for him when his vocabulary falters. He listens, able to understand only a fraction of what they are saying about him. He is disengaged, a shy smile on his lips. With no trace of envy he looks at his wife in astonishment as she sits there, only a few months after their arrival, among the women of New York society. She is wearing her checked Sunday dress from Zurich, but her dark blond hair is capped in velvet now instead of topped by a straw hat. He notes the high cheekbones in her oval face and her dark, lively eyes that light up when she is excited.

Years ago he fed her—like a bird in need of nourishment—what he could: small bits of knowledge, Latin, a little math. Now she soars above him. He would never have imagined that she could sprout such powerful wings, strong enough to cross the ocean. He had allowed her to carry him along, and now here he sits, lost in a salon on the other side of the world, under the curious eyes of these well-dressed, pretty women. Who knew what they were looking for in him, as they leaned closer so as not to miss his words or his gestures. He took in the billowing motion of hair piled high on heads, and hats of velvet and bright felt decorated with artificial flowers, fruit, and feathers and perched like ships atop permanent waves.

Mrs. Hewitt reaches for the lorgnette dangling from a golden chain over her ample bosom, and raises it to her face to examine him more closely. Under the eyes of these women he feels like the last ex- tant specimen of the species of Man, on display, admired, and lamented.

As if to awaken himself from a dream, he turns to his children, who are pressing their tongues against their forks to capture the last crumbs of cake. Then he looks at his wife. It is as if he were on a train, traveling back over the tracks of the last fifteen years, to the moment when he discovered her in Zurich, in the Spyri family garden.

In the summer of 1873 Walter Kempin, twenty-three years old and recently ordained, was ushered into Johann Ludwig Spyri's study by a young girl who was later to become his wife. At Spyri's request

Kempin, as a new member of the Swiss Public Welfare Society, had written an article on the public health care system. Kempin had been recommended to the editor as a "talented, promising theologian" committed to philanthropic work. In Kempin's presence, Spyri quickly skimmed the article, and was not pleased by its modern tone nor by the exuberance with which it embraced the poor and made demands on the establishment. Spyri, too, was a philanthropist, his work in the name of the Public Welfare Society was familiar far beyond the borders of Switzerland. He had raised money for the people of Arth and Elm when those towns were destroyed by avalanche, and had collected alms for the town of Glarus, destroyed by fire in 1861. He had enlisted support for the Rehalp Cemetery in Zurich, and acted as official bursar for neglected children. Spyri performed all this from behind his desk, from whence he issued directives, organized, and administered—the "grand seigneur of philanthropy," as one journalist had called him.

This young man, however, actually visited the ill and sat with them at their sickbeds, taking the smell of poor people home with him on his clothes. Spyri looked into Kempin's haggard face and was displeased by the fanatical expression he saw behind his glasses.

"Free medical care for the sick—what a preposterous demand!"

"We must work for what now seems utopian," Kempin answered.

"There's no room for utopia in the journal of the Swiss Public Welfare Society," Spyri replied. "Sound economic ideas can also serve as a model for humanitarian policy."

The young man politely contradicted him. "In this case, economic concepts are shallow and misleading. Social engagement, even if it is costly, pays off in the long run, namely, through the health of the nation."

Spyri quoted the Manchester theorists.

Kempin responded that he, too, had been to England, but had found the ideas there outdated, at least in the area of philanthropy. What mattered today was a basic improvement in the lives of the poor, not the distribution of alms.

Their discussion grew more heated, Spyri's arguments, louder. Emily, who was copying French idioms into a notebook in the adja-

cent living room, lowered her quill. Shame welled up inside her. Then, through the half-open door, she saw the young curate cross the corridor. He was pale, his lips were pressed together, and he forgot his coat hanging on the coatrack.

She ran after him with it to the front yard. He blushed and thanked her. They exchanged a few words, and his face relaxed. She remembered having seen him in his father's bookshop at Stadelhoferplatz 5.

The following Saturday they met at the bookshop. Their meeting was only ostensibly accidental; everything followed some secret course. It was a hot day, and the mood in Zurich was also heated. People were gathering here and there, and in front of the shop, to discuss the mandatory expulsion of Russian students. It was not Zurich but the Russian government that had issued the decree ordering several hundred of its subjects enrolled at the university back to the fatherland. Walter stepped outside the shop with Emily to watch protesters march by with Russian flags and pennants decorated in Zurich's official colors. They watched as people declared their support and said goodbye to each other.

When they next met, this time on a bench at the lake grounds, Emily steered the conversation to her father. Walter diplomatically mentioned the deacon's distinguished services at Neumünster. Emily in turn complained about his inability to accept the views of others. He steamrolled people with his opinions, she said, and puffed himself up like a toad. She pulled from her pocket a newspaper article, an offprint of her father's lecture, *The Participation of Women in Public Education*. It was so antediluvian! And her father had held this lecture in Zurich, of all places, at a general meeting of the Public Welfare Society. Everyone laughed at it; even Aunt Johanna had made fun of it!

Emily handed Walter the piece of paper and pointed to a passage: *A woman's sex life—we shall come to the disparity in intellectual and emotional life later—plays such a major part in the female nature that the fulfillment of the preeminent role of wife and mother should not be permitted to become obstructed by other types of responsibilities . . .* Woman as sensual piece of flesh. Infuriating! Her cheeks flushed red. Walter was charmed by the wildcat expression in her eyes.

"Don't let it upset you," he said. "Time is working against your father. You must read John Stuart Mill; he supports a society that is truly democratic. Like your father, he admires what the British have achieved in the first half of the century. But he draws other conclusions. He maintains that even our modern states raise women to be dependent, to be intellectual vassals! For the improvement of mankind, women must be helped to achieve their rank and their due. For this deficiency in women invites men to misuse their power."

She listened, enraptured. Light flitted across her face.

Between the wind-tossed leaves of the trees lining the shore they could see Enge, close enough to reach out and touch. Walter pointed to it across the water. He would soon leave Rüti, where he was substituting as pastor, to go to Enge as parish curate and postulant for the vacant pastorate. What fertile ground for his philanthropic ideas! So close to the city, and yet with all the advantages of a rural community. She gazed across the sparkling ribbon of water to the roofs of the humble houses there, then saw the light and water reflected in Walter's eyes, and shared his hope.

Zurich was prospering in those years: A stately railway station was constructed, *the colossal entrance hall more spacious than the nave of the Cologne cathedral*. An elegant street, replacing the ancient Fröschengraben, led from the station to the lake. Nonetheless, the city could be taken in at a glance; eyes everywhere registered who was meeting whom on the benches by the lake.

One evening Spyri summoned his daughter to his study. He had heard that she had seen Walter several times and wished to inform her, before she fell in love with this young man, that he was opposed to her association with the son of a Prussian typesetter!

Spyri had checked with his brother, the town clerk, and found out that Walter's father, Robert Kempin, had come to Zurich from Stettin, Germany, in the 1840s. He first worked for Füssli, as a typsetter. Then in 1855 he bought his own place in Zurich. Shortly before that he married Anna Häsli, a clergyman's daughter from Oberwinterthur. They had produced six children. Now Robert Kempin ran a bookshop at Stadelhoferplatz 5; Gottfried Keller, the writer, was one of his best customers.

Bright people, no doubt about it, but unsuitable for a Spyri. Walter's background as a skilled laborer was evident; for his taste, Spyri said, Walter sympathized a bit too much with the shirtsleeved democrats.

Emily laughed, and replied impertinently, "Just what great things, then, do you expect of my future husband? Is he to be a manufacturer, the owner of a railroad, perhaps? Maybe an Escher or a Landolt, with a villa on the lake?"

Spyri stared at her in astonishment. He did not allude to the fact that great changes were in store for him. If he took advantage of the opportunity he had been offered, he would overnight become one of the most influential men in Zurich, which would enable his prettiest, smartest daughter to make a match in keeping with her social standing.

"Yes, why not an Escher or a Welti or a Landolt?"

Three months after this conversation, in the spring of 1874, Emily casually mentioned at table that Walter Kempin had become curate in charge of Enge, and that one day he probably would even be awarded the pastorate.

Spyri stopped eating. His face turned red, and he glared at his favorite daughter across the Sunday roast. "Nevertheless, I don't want this Kempin for a son-in-law! Do you hear me? I repeat: You shall not continue to meet this young man in secret!"

Emily said nothing; she glared back in turn at her father. And amazingly, at this moment she became her father's spitting image: cheeks flushed in anger, vein swollen and throbbing between her eyebrows, mouth clamped shut in rage.

Her mother, noticing this, interjected, "It's for your own good, Emily. Your father means well."

The cruelty one is subjected to by parental love.

They continued to eat in silence. Emily's youngest sister began to cry.

Spring arrived. The new leaves on the chestnut trees were tinted a fresh phosphorescent green. Emily grew stronger with each encounter.

"Are you still seeing Kempin?"

"Yes, yesterday. He will be the pastor in Enge."

"I don't want you to see him."

"But I want to see him."

"You would defy your father?"

"I'm twenty-one. When does a girl finally come of age in this country? Cousin Bernhard is only nineteen, and he has registered at the university and can do what he pleases."

Her father draws up rigidly behind his desk. She knows the signs: the raised eyebrows that curl into question marks above his bifocals, his flushed, lined forehead. He creates new obstacles. Defiance meets with defiance. She grows with his resistance. It pleases her to stockpile expressions that she then tosses out into the silence of the dining room, to hear them detonate.

"Why, in a democratic country, am I given the opposite of a democratic education? Democracy—isn't that one of your favorite words in those speeches you give?"

Emily is not shy about communicating exactly what it is that she wants. In the long run not even Spyri can withstand her determination. In addition, Johann Ludwig is preoccupied with his own activities this spring, though his plans still remain secret. He brings in reinforcements: "If you marry this Kempin, I'll deny you your dowry! I'm the one who throws the switches—just so you know! Anyone who doesn't stay on track gets derailed!" Father's train talk, words like iron rails that strangle life, snipping out a small part of what life is, what life could be.

Emily and Walter were married on 22 June 1875.

The wedding guests gathered in front of the prayer house in Enge, its tiny square ringed with curious onlookers. Word had gotten around that the pastoral candidate was marrying into prominent society. Everyone inspected the bride, taking in her impish expression, the defiance evident in her fleshy, sensuous lower lip.

"She got the one she wanted, through sheer obstinacy. Is it true Spyri didn't give her a cent of her dowry?"

"Yes, it's true."

The oak doors of the prayer house opened, and the thin sound of a harmonium drifted out. It really was a shame that Enge still did not have a decent church, only this run-down building to pray in, which at the very least should have been whitewashed for the occasion. But their future pastor would discourage their desire to have their own church. From the time he had become administrator he suggested remodeling instead. Perhaps that was why he was elected by only seven votes to four.

As the guest procession fell into position behind the bride and groom there suddenly was a swell of music and the sound of voices.

"It's the double quartet of the Zurich Harmonic," one of the onlookers whispered. "A surprise for the bride."

"And who is paying for it?"

"Probably her aunt, the writer. Or the town clerk, her aunt's husband."

A gust of wind swept across the square, blowing off the hat of the father of the bride just as he was entering the church. The groom's father bent down to retrieve it, handing it back to his new relative with a laugh.

"My pleasure, Pastor Spyri!" he said in his broken Swiss German. And Spyri, who wished to put off addressing him in the familiar until they were sharing a glass of wine after the ceremony, replied, "Begging your pardon, Director!"

It was finally out—Johann Ludwig Spyri's long-kept secret; the transition had been taking place for months. More and more often the outline for his Sunday sermon had been pushed aside by probability studies and railroad statistics. The less he prepared for the sermons the longer they lasted. His words lost their power under the canopy of the pulpit. The word God, which so provoked the atheists, was mentioned less and less. Spyri filled in the gaps with meaningless patter.

Then, on the Sunday before Emily's wedding, Pastor Hiestand announced the news to an astounded congregation: Deacon Spyri was relinquishing his office. He had been offered the position of director of the newly established Office of Statistics of the Northeast

Railroad. There was much shaking of heads at this. Spyri, they said, was trading in God for statistics. He was breaking with his former life.

Shortly before the turn of the century, the area around Friedmatt flooded. Allschwiler Creek, which flowed by the institution, rose above its banks, and the third-class patients were put to work draining the park. When the weather turned cold everything froze, including the remaining puddles along the paths.

From behind the curtain of the salon Hügin watches as Emily pauses under the silver linden to pick up a stone and throw it at a frozen puddle. The ice splinters on impact and cracks appear in the glassy blue-green surface. Emily tramples around on the ice in her boots until it crunches and water bubbles through, creating miniature rapids to the left and right of her shoes. There are fractures in the ice—blue-veined tributaries.

At night, lying on her back with her eyes open, she dreams of America, of a city created and built against the void, a surging wave of stone walls. The buildings, taller in her mind than those of the nineties had been in reality, are crowned by towering domes and gilded spires.

"The Sutros, the Webers, the Dr. Putman Jacobis. All the women you met recently will be there, Walter."

A meeting is to take place in the parlor of the former mayor of New York, named Hewitt, at 9 Lexington Avenue, at 6:30 in the evening.

"Fanny will sit by the fireplace, because she knows that the light from the flames will make her black hair shine and her powdered neck even whiter. Dr. Weber, her husband, will sit next to her, sunk into himself, listening, his cheeks rosy as with sleep, his double chin resting on his chest. Helen Gould usually sits toward the back, next to Mrs. Sutro. You like Martha Munn, the redhead, don't you? She's one of the brightest. She and her husband are interested in our cause—I feel it. They'll be of help. Do you remember John P. Munn, or did

you meet only his wife? He's in his early forties, one of Manhattan's best-known physicians. Jay Gould and Russell Sage, the rail magnates, are patients of his. He's quite modest, almost awkward, with his huge, slightly stooping figure, and big ears that stick out from his red side-whiskers. He wears gold pince-nez that are always sliding down his nose. At my last lecture in the Sutros' parlor, Munn asked me to address the point at which medicine and law meet. As a professor at Bellevue Hospital and the medical school, he has to deal with these issues daily.

"Tonight's topic is 'The Alienist and the Law.'... You don't know what 'alienist' means, Walter? Picture Dr. Forel's patients at Burghölzli, and then you'll know who their patients are. The mentally ill, yes. Opinions have changed in recent years concerning their criminal liability. Someone who is mentally ill and breaks the law cannot be convicted in the same way as those who are healthy. Does that person have a free will, the choice between obeying the law or breaking it? I want talk about the positions taken by two Italian schools—the classical, and that of the positivists who follow Lombroso."

Emily paced the corridor, going over her lecture. She had written it in German and then translated it with the help of a dictionary: *I think too highly of the office of law and justice in social life to recommend indulgence in any weak sentimentality. But I wish to point out in this connection, that the philosophers themselves are still at variance as between Predestination and Free Will. . . .*

The corridor is windowless and full of twists and turns. If the doors to the kitchen and living room weren't open, she would be standing in the dark. How could anyone have chosen sepia brown for the floorboards and wainscoting?

Nowhere does the difference existing between these two schools come more conspicuously to light than in the administration of criminal law.

Doesn't that sound a bit complicated, Emily? Most of your audience are not lawyers . . .

That's only the introduction. Then I take Lombroso's theory point by point. That will make it clearer . . .

She sighed and looked through the crack in the door into the living room, where Walter was sitting in the glow of the Enge lamp,

which had been wired for electricity. At the other end of the table Gertrude and Robert Walter were doing their lessons. Robert's thin legs were in constant motion as he wrote; his teachers in Zurich had complained about his nervousness, and now his teachers in New York were doing the same.

"Stop fidgeting," Gertrude said irritably. "How am I supposed to get any work done?"

The apartment on Fourteenth Street was too small for a family of five. It was a temporary solution. They were living on their savings; after six months in the New World neither Emily nor Walter had found steady employment. As soon as they brought in regular earnings they would move to a more quiet neighborhood. I'll have a room of my own, Emily thought with a sigh, as she walked past the children to the window, to look down at the street.

Across from them, the colorful lights of the Jefferson Theater were already on. The rumble of the Third Avenue elevated rattled the windowpanes.

Gertrude looked down at her index finger, smeared with ink, and asked, "Mama, what does 'he is holding the newspaper upside down' mean?"

And Robert Walter asked, "How do you say *'Erkundigungen einholen'* in English?" Emily answered them absentmindedly.

"Leave your mother in peace," Walter said. "You know she's practicing her talk."

Emily retreated to the corridor and continued to memorize: *The other, the Positive School, plants itself upon the postulates of the alienist Lombroso. This clever investigator asserts that the difference between the insane and the sane can be stated by means and measurements . . . the shape and structure of the skull, the length of the facial profile, the malformation of the ears and of the nose . . .*

Suddenly she stopped and sniffed: Something was burning in the kitchen. In three strides she was at the stove, yanking a pan from the fire.

"Elsbeth! You cannot leave the stove when you're cooking, how many times have I told you that!"

"But Agnes wanted me to fix her doll's arm—"

"You need your eyes and your nose when you're cooking! Have you reheated the vegetables from lunch? Agnes must finish what she left on her plate today."

Agnes, who was pushing her doll carriage, stopped. Of all the voices in the family, hers attracted the most attention; it had a trembling, swelling chirp to it that was always threatening to spill over into tears.

"But I don't like cauliflower, not for lunch, and not for dinner!"

"Quiet!" shouted her brother from the dining room table.

Emily picked up her piece of paper with Lombroso's thesis: *There is no free will, hence no moral or liberty of choice, no moral responsibility . . .*

Walking back and forth between the two doors she caught a glimpse of herself in the wall mirror. She stopped where she was, repeating to herself: *The recent researches into criminal anthropology have demonstrated that the criminal is not a normal man, and that he belongs to a special class of individuals . . .*

I look like a startled mouse. My eyes are sunken, I can see them gleaming far back in their sockets. Has my jawbone always looked this sharp? My hair has gotten thin, wispy; I'll have to wear it up tonight, Elsbeth can help me.

"Mrs. Doctor?"

"Yes, Elsbeth?"

"There's no flour," she said in German.

"No? Then go to the baker's on Third Avenue. And buy a loaf of dark bread while you're there."

Emily looked up from the sheet of paper. Elsbeth was still standing at the kitchen door, her shoulders shaking.

"Elsbeth, what's the matter?"

"I'm afraid to cross Third Avenue. There are so many cars coming around the corner. And I don't know the right words in English."

"Robert, go with Elsbeth. And show her again how to cross the street."

She looked into the living room as Robert waved his sweaty hand as if shooing away flies. "Go shopping, that's all I need! I've got so much to do, it'll take me till midnight to finish."

"The shops will still be open when we leave for the lecture," Walter murmured.

Emily returned to the mirror and began putting up her hair. Her hands were shaking. Her lips, pressed together to hold her hairpins, were rigid and hurt.

Statistics have shown that the increase of crime is uninfluenced by punishment, she recited silently.

Then the chirping whine again, this time right next to her in the hall.

"My skirt is torn. Elsbeth says she doesn't have time to sew it . . ."

If only she doesn't start to cry, Emily's little pain in the neck. "I'll take care of it tonight, dear. When I come home from the lecture. It will be ready in the morning, I promise."

Emily watched as her breath fogged the mirror: I promise, I promise. A dark vein throbbed between her eyebrows; there was a humming in her head.

Sometimes I think I'll explode. I can see it now—thoughts erupting all over the place, a spray of sparks, a bright chrysanthemum of light. And in the end, a pile of ashes that once was she—Emily, née Spyri.

What was she?

Everything to everybody.

At six o'clock Emily walked down to the street with Walter. She looked back up at the corner window on the third floor, lit by the kitchen lamp under which Elsbeth and the children were eating dinner.

"Hopefully Agnes will finish her cauliflower. She's so stubborn," she said.

Walter turned to her with the trace of a smile. "I wonder who she gets that from."

Once again she looked back up at the facade of the building. It fit so nicely into the line of brick houses along Fourteenth Street, with the chiseled friezes and stonework between the windows. The red of the brick was dark, burning. The color of raw meat, Emily thought. As if the black rails of the fire escape zigzagging up the facade were cutting into the flesh of the building. She glanced briefly through the store window at street level, under the sign that read "Frivolités." It revealed evening bags, leather belts, sequined collars,

and eye-catching plaster arms wearing tight-fitting gloves. The cuffs were lined with buttons; Emily had counted twenty or twenty-five of them—fashionable foolishness.

On the sidewalk they dodged elegant ladies whose velvet robes took up all the space. As they neared Union Square the jewels and silverware of Tiffany & Company beckoned to them. Fourteenth Street came alive when the offices closed; even the men went window-shopping for shoes and coats, all of a quality finer than those on Broadway. A quick walk at the end of the business day, then a visit to a restaurant or a theater when it got dark. The Academy of Music was presenting *The Old Homestead* this spring, for the 130th performance. From their window each evening they saw people line up in front of the tiny Jefferson Theater. Its white stones stood out among the red brick buildings, and the ceiling of its entryway—a wide-open mouth with an appetite for an audience—was painted with an artificial sky.

Even the restaurants on Fourteenth Street were in fashion. At Luchow's, right across the street, the waiters who served the dumplings wore lederhosen; on weekends there was a Bavarian band. Walter complained that he could hear the oompah-pah of the trombones deep into the night.

The grocery stores were still open as they turned onto Third Avenue, as was the bakery where they bought bread. A train thundered by on the elevated tracks above, from the direction of the Battery. Walter stopped to cough. Emily put her hands over her ears. She was afraid, every time the train sped by at eighteen miles an hour, that it would jump the tracks and crash down on the pedestrians. By the time they reached Twentieth Street, west of Gramercy Park, it was strangely quiet.

Emily gave a sigh of relief. Each time they came here she said, "This is where I want to live, Walter, on Gramercy Park. An oasis in Manhattan."

They stopped to look up into the bare branches of the ginkgo trees: A gray squirrel, the kind one could see scurrying across the streets of New York in the early morning hours, stared back down at them.

Women have served all these centuries
as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power
of reflecting the figure of man
at twice its natural size.
—VIRGINIA WOOLF

Walter left his wife at the front door of the Hewitts', saying that he had to work on his article. A sudden tiredness had come over him, he told her, and he hadn't gotten anything done that day.

He took Fourth Avenue home, in order to buy a newspaper at Union Square. The park at the intersection of Broadway, Fourth Avenue, and Fourteenth Street was a wall of noise at that time of the day. Walter could just make out the landmarks through the trees: Washington seated on a horse at the south end of the square, Abraham Lincoln to the north, and to the east, on a round pedestal, Lafayette, a work by Bartholdy prior to the period when he created Liberty.

Strange, Walter thought fleetingly, *women are rarely set on pedestals, and if they are, then most often as allegory, or as fallen woman in some erotic representation. Was it so unbearable to see women elevated?*

To him, Emily seemed elevated even without a pedestal. She moved through Manhattan with her chin held high, as if its vastness had been created for her alone, whereas it was an effort for him to keep up with her in the shadows of the buildings.

Since the onset of winter, he had been suffering from coughing fits and shortness of breath, which caused him to stop on the street and wait, bent over, for the attack to pass.

"You must see a doctor," Emily said. But there was no money for a doctor; they were having trouble enough meeting the rent and their daily expenses.

Walter didn't sleep well in their new apartment on Fourteenth Street. At midnight he would hear people leaving the restaurants

and theaters: Their drunken calls and snatches of conversation floated up to him. Then toward morning there was the noise of the wagons. The noise clogged his pores, and he woke up worn out, weak. He would hear Emily get up and move around the kitchen and the children's room, issuing orders while he lay there unable to decide whether to get out of bed. When he finally did get up, it was with the feeling that he had shrunk, that due to some secret balance he was growing smaller as his wife grew larger.

The day that stretched out before him already seemed to be dissolving under numerous demands, not one of which seemed worth individual mention: pick up the children from school, oversee their lessons, go shopping, look through the paper for a job.

Hadn't Emily complained in their first years of marriage about the monotony of the petty details of everyday life, and sighed under the burden of having three children, born one after the other? She changed in Enge, becoming dull and lifeless; there had been little left of the impertinent, wild Emily of her girlhood.

One day she had finally stopped and thought about it, and said to him: "I'm working hand and foot providing love, and you're doing all the planning and thinking for us."

"And?"

"I want my brain back."

He could understand that.

And he, what responsibilities had he now delegated to her, split off from himself and transferred to her, because it was easier. That part of him that now walked at his side, as his wife.

He had helped her prepare for her studies back then. He didn't want to make his wife small and subservient, an extension of himself, as did the fat burghers of the city. She should be allowed to develop, to have her own world. And where had all that led?

On his way to the newsstand on the west side of the park, Walter stopped abruptly. There was a statue on the fountain that he had never noticed before: a woman with an urn, holding a child tenderly in her arms, with an older child beside her, hanging onto her skirts.

The Unknown Woman. As dreamed by man.

Years before, in Enge, he held a talk at the Public Welfare Society on women who deserved to be put on a pedestal: learned women, women active in politics or art, from antiquity and the Renaissance. The residents of Enge had listened to his history lecture in discomfort, glancing over at the young pastor's wife. They knew that with her husband's help she had privately passed an exam for her secondary school diploma and was studying—not to become a midwife or a physician, which might have been understandable. No, she was studying law!

Neither in Germany nor in Switzerland had any woman ever dared to enter this all-male field. And it was the residents of Enge, of all people, who had to endure a pastor with such a grandiose wife. Some model for their own wives and daughters!

Enge. Walter saw it before him—its houses scattered around the lake, the villas and farms spreading out over the foothills of the Uto—so clear and colorful that Union Square disappeared. He thought back on the day of his appointment, when everything had begun so happily. That day he had accepted his office and, with it, responsibility for the welfare of this flourishing spot on Lake Zurich.

The congregation had done everything to make the 8 August 1875, a festive occasion. It was true that they couldn't offer their new pastor, who had married into the best circles, a church; Enge was still tied to the mother church, the Reformed parish church of St. Peter in Zurich. At the wedding ceremony, in the presence of the Spyris, they had been ashamed of the shabby condition of their small prayer house. They decided it mustn't be allowed to happen again.

The churchwardens, otherwise quite thrifty, had the prayer house whitewashed inside and out that summer. An honorary committee of three men was put in charge of decorating the chapel and the banquet table, and 100 francs were allotted to purchase wine for the occasion. It was a sunny day, with a light breeze coming in from the lake. The congregation entered the prayer house to the ringing of bells; the guests were shown to their seats around the baptismal font. Following a performance by the men's choir, the president of the churchwardens introduced the new pastor. His enthusiastic words painted a picture full of hope: a strong, young shepherd of the soul, and at his side a woman from the best of families, a Spyri!

"Happiness to the young couple and happiness to the spiritual life of our community!"

At noon a banquet was held on the Bürkli terrace, for which the wardens had allocated three-and-a-half francs per person, wine included, as determined by protocol. They sat under the open sky and looked out over the hills and lake. The men took off their jackets, but kept on their dark hats to protect them from the hot August sun. The few women among them looked provincial, in their straw hats decorated with flowers. Emily sat at the middle of the table, next to her husband. She had pushed her half-veil up over her hat brim, and little beads of sweat dotted her bare forehead. She drank and laughed a great deal, her cheeks more flushed than usual. Her father, seated across from her between prominent members of the congregation, made a bet with himself that she was already pregnant. The fact that his most rebellious daughter had not been able to escape her fate as a woman cheered Spyri, as did the fact that his unwished-for son-in-law had nevertheless managed to be appointed pastor of one of the best congregations. At any rate, Walter could not remember a time when he had seen his father-in-law in such good spirits.

Spyri among the Eschers and the Weltis and the Landolts. Conrad Landolt, president of the congregation, pointed out the places in the community that offered the most beautiful views, and those locations where, in the last decades, several villas had been built: Escher's classical Belvoir; Freudenberg, built by Heinrich Bodmer; the Little Venice which faced the lake, an ornate little castle surrounded by water; the splendid Muraltengut, all of them attesting to the wealth and taste of their owners. And then there was the Rosau on Schanzengraben, and merchant Wesendonck's villa on the Rietberg, now owned by the Rieters. . . . Spyri followed Landolt's finger with his eyes and praised Enge's prosperity.

"Of course, not all of our residents are doing quite so well," the president of the congregation continued. "There are still—especially over behind the Moränenhügel—a number of the needy among our population. Your son-in-law will more than satisfy his social leanings there, if only he doesn't insist on turning things inside out! He's a bit too eager; a Prussian, after all. . . ."

After a while Spyri and Landolt were deep in discussion about the train line for the left bank of the lake; the Zurich-Ziegelbrücke line was finally to be opened that September. Escher listened in, praising Spyri's expertise: The Director knew his stuff, one could see that. Spyri laughed, flattered.

Walter kept glancing over at his father-in-law, who had totally transformed. Once their eyes met and Spyri nodded to Kempin, so that Walter caught a glimpse of himself in Spyri's glasses: high cheekbones and moustache, eyes like pinpoints behind his own glasses. Spyri, with a conciliatory smile, announced that as of that day he was naming him, his son-in-law, as co-editor of the journal he had founded, that of the Public Welfare Society.

Walter smiled back at him. He would have preferred the dowry.

Property values were climbing in Enge, due to speculation engaged in by its wealthy members. There was no possibility that Walter would be able to buy a house for his future family. Only a few days before, he had found out that the property on Seestrasse, in which he lived, was to be renovated and sold. The price was astronomical. He couldn't afford it, he first had to finance the furnishings that Emily, with the Spyri's sure sense of style, had picked out for them in Zurich.

Spyri raised his glass and toasted Walter. The breeze bore the smell of freshly cut grass.

Walter could not have foreseen the work load that would befall him following that wonderful day. It was true that as administrator he had already learned what an enormous task it was to serve not only Enge but nearby Leimbach as well. Scarcely had he assumed office when Leimbach increased its demands on him: twelve morning services monthly, and baptisms and funeral orations were expected of him, in addition to the Sunday sermon. He took a hackney to services on Sunday, even in bad weather and the deep of winter. And giving religious instruction in this materialistic day and age was like walking on china eggs: The pupils the teachers sent him for instruction were already exhausted from their other studies. If he protested this, it made trouble for him with the secondary school authorities, who were quick to claim that he could not maintain discipline. Those in

disagreement with the pastor could send their children to St. Peter's in Zurich for instruction, a right that wealthy families, in particular, made use of. In winter, when it was freezing in the prayer house, he had to hold instruction in a room at the Stern inn. Through the thin walls they could hear the conversation in the bar adjacent; the pupils listened to it with one ear and to him with the other.

Many of the children were neglected and poorly nourished. The pastor founded a Relief Association, and in summer he organized vacation colonies for them.

Enge was becoming more and more a desirable place of residence for Zurich's prosperous citizens. The housing market left those who weren't rich out in the cold. Walter hadn't been in office two years before he had to move tiny Gertrude and Emily, who was pregnant, into their third apartment. It would later be said that Emily was not a good housewife, and the owners were only protecting their property. That was a lie. In a letter to the Titular Churchwardens of St. Peter's in Zurich, Pastor Kempin recorded the true course of events: He had to leave the first apartment because the building was sold. For their second apartment, in Seeau, he had supplemented the 1,000 francs allotted by the church with 200 francs of his own money, in the hope that they would not have to move again. Then in 1877, just as they were beginning to feel at home, that building, too, was sold, and the new owner raised the rent to an incredible 1,800 francs! As their third residence was a renovated barn—impossible in live in, only provisional—President Landolt suggested to the school administration that the old schoolhouse be remade as a parsonage. The school administration turned this down, but agreed in the end to sell it for 30,000 francs, and in 1878 the schoolhouse became a parsonage.

After his work was finished for the day, Walter spent his evenings at his desk, reviving himself with his philanthropic projects. He still felt constrained in his capacity as co-editor of the journal of the Swiss Public Welfare Society. Spyri, who had resigned his editorial post, stood watch in the background, as president. The shadow of Walter's father-in-law was omnipresent and clearly visible in the manner in which he was introduced to the readership, in a summer issue of 1875, by the editor-in-chief, Pastor Grob: *I am pleased to announce*

that Pastor Kempin of Enge near Zurich (husband of the daughter of the founder of our journal, the highly esteemed Deacon Spyri) has agreed to serve us as assistant editor. A patriotic greeting to you!

At the general session held in Schwyz, where Kempin received positive encouragement from the central committee for his favorite project, health care, the presence of his father-in-law was oppressive. Director Spyri held endless table talks sprinkled with phrases typical of him: *truly heroic Swiss concepts* and *democratic* (though he couldn't abide the Zurich democrats), thereby hindering Kempin from calling for a vote on health care policies. Spyri cited as pretext the time pressure that the assembly was working under, and suggested instead a hike on the Seelisberg. A few years later, in 1880, Walter Kempin was finally able to present his ideas on free health care to the public, at the meeting of the Public Welfare Society in Winterthur, in the canton of Zurich.

At the end of his report he gave a long-winded conclusion, and then, in reaction to his own feeling that he had spoken too emotionally, closed with the following:

> *There are issues of public life that one cannot support absolutely, no matter how much one would like to, which nevertheless make the pulse beat faster than usual. For that is the power of the Ideal in the human spirit, to enable us to make allowances for human error.*

In 1881 Walter founded his own journal, which he called *Blätter und Blüthen* (Leaves and Blooms), the name of which he changed one year later to *Philanthrop*.

His favorite idea was now taking shape. In 1882, using as model an association in Baden-Württemberg, he founded the Central Association of the Swiss Red Cross. It called for nurses to be trained for duty in peacetime, with hospital wards a part of the plan as well. It was a totally new concept, and he pushed it through despite resistance. It was never easy for him—he found enemies even in his own camp, who eventually brought him down.

It seemed as if all of his bridges had been burned behind him by the time he left Enge; a part of himself lay buried beneath the ruins of his former life.

And in the New World he even lost his language.

It was dusk, the sidewalks were crowded with more and more people, traffic was growing in the streets. This purposefulness irritated him, the exaggerated haste of those hurrying along Manhattan's sidewalks, as if everyone was driven by the fear of losing time, of arriving too late, and was annoyed at being held up. Following a sudden notion, he climbed into a hackney cab on the north side of the square at Seventeenth Street.

"Where to?" the driver said, turning around.

"Just drive, it doesn't matter where," Walter replied, and named a sum. The driver, a heavy-set man with a red nose and hands like huge blocks of wood, stared at his passenger. He shouted something several times to Walter as his horse started off, but Walter didn't understand a word of it and remained silent. At the top of Madison Square the driver halted abruptly and adjusted his rearview mirror, to keep an eye on his passenger. After going up Broadway for two blocks, the driver slapped the reins and the horse began to trot faster than was permitted.

"Slower," Walter called to the driver.

But the driver couldn't or didn't want to hear him. He turned onto Forty-second Street and soon hit a traffic jam. A horse had stumbled and lay dying in a pool of blood while wagons rolled by to the left and right of it. A family landau approached from the opposite direction, with the children in it wearing fur caps. One of them pointed at the fallen horse and the others screamed, frightened and fascinated by the horrible sight. A woman applied her lipstick in a brown "coupé" that was approaching.

"The horse, the horse!" Walter cried, but the driver paid no attention. The road was wet with the recently fallen, rapidly melting snow. Clouds of steam, rising from the sewer grates, blended with the confusion of carriage wheels and horses' hooves and were illuminated briefly by the carriage lanterns, only to disappear.

Following Emily's talk, "The Alienist and the Law," Dr. Munn came forward and shook her hand. He could see, he said, that she was *à jour*, that she had brought with her a fresh breeze from Europe. He told her that he would very much like for the medical school and Belle-

vue Hospital to benefit from her knowledge; he wished to hire her to handle issues in that murky zone between medicine and law.

"Have you or your husband found a satisfactory position yet in New York?"

"No, not yet." Emily blushed. "In the meantime I am attending lectures at the University of the City of New York, becoming acquainted with American law."

The position of secretary of the Medico-Legal Society was free, Dr. Munn said. It would be her responsibility to communicate ideas to students, and write articles for the professional journals.

"Dr. Emily Kempin intends to establish a Woman's Law Class," one of the women interjected boldly. "We're all waiting impatiently, isn't that true?" she said, with a toss of her red curls.

"Could you tell us more about that?" asked Florence Clinton Sutro's husband, a well-known attorney who appeared almost daily before New York's courts.

Standing before a blazing fire, Emily presented her ideas on the purpose of such a school, and the material to be covered. One newspaper subsequently reported on it in the "Society News" column: *Mrs. Kempin speaks with enthusiasm and a clear head. Small wonder that for weeks now she has been passed around from parlor to parlor!*

After Emily's short speech Florence whispered for a moment with her husband and then called out in her high and carefree voice: "Emily Kempin, you can register me already as one your students!"

That boded well: One of New York society's best-loved women, a pianist of high standing, was supporting the project. Dr. Munn again spoke up, offering advice. As middleman between the medical school, Bellevue Hospital, and the university, he advised the women present to appeal once again to the dean of the law faculty. Their question should be formulated quite explicitly: Would the university yield to the needs of women and open existing law classes to female students? Or would they be willing to establish a course of study for women, to be headed by Dr. Emily Kempin?

By the beginning of April 1889, the dean had received the women's formal request, but at that point the university was totally preoccu-

pied with the past, celebrating the 100th anniversary of George Washington's birth, as well as Founder's Day. A bust of Butler, founder and first professor of the law school, was to be installed.

The law students, with Emily as the only woman, took part in the festivities. The bust of Carrara marble, created by an art class, was unveiled. A small sensation was caused by the presence of a woman amidst the art students: Ann Lynch Botta, director of the art school. Her speech created a stir.

If it was possible for a woman professor to stand before an art class, why not a female instructor on the law faculty? It was explained to Emily and her friends that, as opposed to art, jurisprudence was a serious field, dealing with issues of societal abnormality: theft, murder, adultery. Women should be spared coming face-to-face with this sort of criminal activity.

"As if women lived in some sacred women's world," Martha Munn remarked furiously at a subsequent meeting.

Following the celebration, Emily was invited to a small reception at the university and asked her husband to accompany her. Walter declined. He didn't belong there, he said.

"But the professors and students are bringing their wives, their girlfriends," she told him.

In the end, Walter stood in the lecture hall amid a swirl of celebrants, glass in hand, shoulder to shoulder with Emily. She introduced him to her professors. He suddenly saw himself through their eyes, saw his mouth spitting out strange, unfamiliar words in fits and starts: Thanks. The same to you. Yes, with my wife.

He made his way out of the group, which was laughing and toasting one another, and because his usual route was blocked off due to the midday processional, took a street unfamiliar to him, crossing a square he had never seen before. Two blocks farther it seemed to him that he had drifted too far east, and he tried to make his way west, only to land in a dark, gas-lit street.

Once this immense city was small and could be taken in at a glance, he thought to himself. One could move about without difficulty. And even later, as new buildings were being built, an attempt had

been made to designate one point as city center. But in the meantime this center lost its distinctive character—it no longer existed—and was replaced by ever-new perspectives, more exciting from one day to the next.

A constable making his rounds helped Walter find his way back.

Clinging to the details to escape the uncontrollable.

The window onto Fourteenth Street—a cross of crumbling white paint, four fields of smeared glass. Through the cross section of the frame, the windows across the way changed color as quickly as the eye could behold them, announcing the time of day: a dull ash gray in early morning, as if the walls were porous. Later in the day the glass blazed with the reflection of a light source yet invisible to the observer.

When Emily returned from the reception at 10:00 PM, Walter said to her, "You already belong here, but I am like a plant in sand: I can't take root."

She stood next to him at the window and put her arm around his shoulder. "Don't always be thinking of Zurich."

Emigration is like a high wire act: Those who look back, fall.

Robert, his head still swimming with figures and English vocabulary long after he went to bed, heard his parents talking. In his long nightshirt, he pushed past Emily and leaned against his father, who put his arms around him.

"I want to go back to Zurich, too. You promised, Father, that we would go back this summer."

Walter had spent a great deal of time with the children lately. They were all that was left him, the safety net that broke his fall. He picked them up from school and helped them with their lessons as well as he could, given his poor English skills.

"Don't bother your mother, let her write her lecture," he would say when one of the children turned to Emily. And: "No, I'll pick you up, your mother is going to the university."

Emily had been glad of Walter's help. Her struggle in New York was for her children; she was building a future for them all. And now

she had to stand by and watch as Walter imperceptibly pulled the children over to his side, away from her and from New York.

It was true that it was hard for the children to follow instruction in a language still strange to them. Gertrude had come home in tears with the news that she had to repeat the sixth grade.

"Don't cry, Gertrude, that's normal when one changes continents," Emily had said in consolation. "And what's one year?"

But Walter had supported Gertrude in her complaints about the strange school system: Lessons moved ahead too quickly, nothing was explained thoroughly. And he had reinforced Robert's thinking that in New York he was losing entry to the better schools. Attendance at the Zurich gymnasium, where Robert had earned only mediocre grades when younger, now seemed desirable. Indeed, everything about the city across the sea had been transfigured in their eyes.

Emily sat at the table; the congregation lamp threw a bright light on her manuscript. Walter stood at the window, partially turned away from her.

"Dr. Munn is interested in the topic of hypnosis and the law. I told him about Professor Forel's experiments at Burghölzli. Are you listening, Walter?"

Her lecture was to be published in *Arena* magazine.

"My position as secretary of the Medico-Legal Society will bring in a little money periodically; the issue of the law class won't be resolved so quickly. . . .Walter, listen to me, we're going to get through this together . . ."

Her eyes shone in the light. It wasn't the lamp, but she herself who was electrified. She asked herself how much longer she could carry on her back the man brooding at the window—a man who himself had never landed.

But he, too, had carried her, one summer evening in Enge. They had been married for five or six weeks then. Walter had not yet been appointed pastor; everything was up in the air. He had been working late on an urgent project. She was standing impatiently at the window of his study, the moonlight outside was making her fidgety.

"Come, Walter, there's a full moon. We wanted to take a little walk."

"This late?"

He saw her expression. It mirrored everything: meadows in the moonlight, luminous paths. Emily, the woman in the moon. Outside, the newly installed street lanterns had already been extinguished. Enge looked unreal, the lake glimmering between the trees.

"Let's go to the crest of the hill, Walter. We can look down at the water!" She pointed up between the buildings to the land that belonged to the Wesendonck villa.

There was a hole in the wall there, and she slipped through it and pulled Walter after her, then up across the meadows. Walter hid behind a tree trunk, sneaked up behind her, and put his hands over her eyes, delighted by her little shout of fright. From the branches a bird made a sound in its sleep. Then she ran ahead, a bright shadow among the trees, not far from the columns of the villa's veranda. Near the summerhouse she stumbled, hurting her ankle, and sank down into the grass.

They sat there with their arms around each other. A snake with red scales lay on the surface of the lake. Behind them the summerhouse: romantic, with a panoramic view.

"We should live there, don't you think, Walter?"

Walter told her that as a guest of the Wesendoncks, Wagner had occupied the summerhouse. It was said that he made nightly excursions, climbing over the eaves to Mrs. Wesendonck's bedroom.

"Uncle Bernhard's Wagner? That clumsy old tomcat?" Emily laughed.

On the way back her ankle began to hurt seriously, and he carried her, a light load, down the hill.

They never again returned to slip through the wall. As pastor, Walter could never have gotten away with such a thing, and Emily, who was pregnant, could no longer fit through the hole.

YEARS LATER. Another Enge, the roofs crowded together under the December sky, the lake water calm, like a gray fish fin. Zurich was far away on the other shore; no ship made the crossing. The hills crouched at the horizon, crowned by forest. The first snow, long

awaited by the children, fell around noon. Now it lay on the fields, a shabby white color broken by clumps of earth and grass. The two younger children wanted to take the lake road and pick up their sister from school.

"Quick, put your things on!" Emily bent down for their boots, then their jackets, mittens, scarves, and wool caps.

Robert's old boots were too short for him. Agnes could wear them this winter if she put on two pairs of wool socks.

"Come here, Agnes, slip into these."

Agnes's legs look pitifully small in the wide boot tops. Robert was wearing Gertrude's boots, but he wouldn't put on her jacket. "You can't tell from the cut," his mother says, in defense of the jacket.

"But the color! This shade of green is for girls!"

Emily gives in and gets his old jacket from the wardrobe, the one that makes him look like a stuffed sausage and exposes his wrists to the cold. They simply can't afford a new piece of clothing following the holidays, but perhaps she can cut a jacket for him out of Walter's old coat. If only she didn't have to watch every penny.

Emily stands and automatically puts her hand on the small of her back, which aches from so much bending over. Robert, in the meantime, has run down the steps and opened the door, with Agnes close behind. She must have slipped on the cobblestones outside, for Emily hears a scream. She grabs her jacket from the hook, slips into her shoes, and charges down the stairs after them.

Agnes has almost fallen on top of the boot scraper! Emily shakes her head and takes a deep breath. These dangerous boot scrapers, they're in front of every door in the countryside, so that those entering can scrape the dirt off their soles. Sharp iron half-moons, little guillotines, they are.

Emily walks along the lake road with the children, Robert to her left, Agnes to her right. The children run beside her; she holds onto them as they skid over the wet snow. Emily cannot get enough of their happy faces. When Agnes laughs, her teeth gleam, white and small as grains of rice. Robert glances up at her, and she can look into his nose and into his eyes that twinkle wildly. Gone is the serious expression that often frightens her. The road is still empty, but Gertrude

will appear at any moment. Or must she once again clean the slate board for Lienhard, the teacher?

Emily thinks of the work yet to be done at home. The days are short, too short to get anything accomplished. She thinks of herself as a snowplow, pushing everything ahead of her. Gertrude appears in the distance, her cape and cap making her look like a mushroom. Only when she gets closer can they see her legs, hurrying along under the bell of her cape. When she sees her mother and siblings she starts to run, falling breathlessly into Emily's arms.

"What an honor to be met!"

Her cheeks flush with laughter, the color of apples. In contrast to her thin brother and sister, Gertrude looks robust, broad-shouldered—a country child. She would fit right into Aunt Johanna's books.

"She looks like Heidi," Robert calls out, then stops and reconsiders. "Only Heidi has dark curls, and Gertrude's hair is blond and straight."

Early that evening Emily is sitting in the lamplight sewing. Robert has a hole in his sock again—it's amazing. His boots need to be taken to the shoemaker, the leather is rubbing against his heel and wearing holes in his socks. She moistens the thread with her lips and sighs.

"What is it, do you have a headache? That comes from the snow." Walter is sitting at the table, correcting a manuscript. The *Philanthrop* has to go to the printer right away.

With each issue Walter struggles to attract new subscribers, but to no avail. Emily has suggested that he publish more articles of a general nature, more entertainment. The newspaper serves as the central organ of several associations: It is the Record of the Society of Swiss Educators of the Poor, the Central Organ of the Swiss Society of Medical Orderlies, the Chronicle for Artisans and Crafts, and now also the paper of his own organization, the Central Association of the Swiss Red Cross. Everything under one umbrella, something for everyone, make sure of that, Kempin. And it comes out every eight days and costs only four francs eighty for a year's subscription!

Nevertheless, in October he had published a colorful assortment of articles: "Sketches from the Diary of an Asylum Warden," "The Soul: A Sketch by Dr. Karoline Farner, M.D.," "The Red Cross in

Württemberg," "Rescue Organizations in Prussia," "Little Newspaper," and the latest installment of a serialized novel.

At his insistence, Emily had written the serial novel for the paper. It skewered intemperance and had hair-raising complications and a strong moral at the end. In each issue the story broke off at a particularly suspenseful moment, then continued—an endless tapeworm. She wrote the novel the summer before, cranking it out between her housework, in the footsteps of Johanna Spyri. And like Johanna with her first novel, she published it under a pseudonym. After reading it, readers would presumably quit drinking in droves. But new subscribers had failed to materialize.

Emily reads through Walter's lead article. She skims it, her sewing in one hand, her forehead wrinkled in thought: "It affords us much pleasure to hear that . . ."

"Could you say that more simply, Walter?"

He concedes that it sounds awkward, but he would have to copy the entire passage out by hand again, in his scrawl, and there is no time for that. It is his misfortune that all his writing has to be done in the evening, when he is exhausted from his responsibilities. As pastor, he is the community's beast of burden.

Emily sits down again to her sewing. The room smells like the damp clothing drying by the stove.

Then Robert comes down the stairs sobbing. Agnes has knocked over his train, a Christmas present from Grandfather Spyri. There are screams coming from the children's room. Gertrude, it seems, has cuffed the little one. Emily hurries upstairs, then back down again when Walter calls, then back up. Thousands of steps daily, back and forth, up and down the stairs.

Trapped in the labyrinth.

She finally gets the children undressed and under the covers. She sits down on Robert's bed first. He sleeps next to the door in the huge, bare room that once served as classroom. Robert gives a sigh of contentment, throws his arms around her neck and pulls her down to him. Together, cheek to cheek, they listen to the chime of the prayer bell floating over from the octagonal tower. Robert's lips at her ear whisper endearments that tickle.

"Tell me more about Heidi. She's in Frankfurt, at the Sesemanns'."

Emily spins the tale, diverging from her austere aunt's story because she doesn't want to go and get the book. She prefers to invent small scenes herself in the semidarkness. The girls listen from across the room, lying under the canopy of the former marriage bed of Mr. Egli, the teacher. He sold them this ornate wrought-iron monstrosity when he moved out of the schoolhouse apartment.

It was a good moment: feeling the warmth of their little bodies in the darkening room, whispering words against the night, against fear: And Heidi was plagued by homesickness, most often at night, and she wandered the house, sleepwalking, and the Sesemanns' cat walked beside her with its fiery eyes and whispered, Heidi, you will see a secret . . .

Emily heard her voice as it penetrated the flickering dusky light and returned like an echo—hollow and fervent in the oversize room. Once, when her voice swelled at a particularly dramatic moment, the built-in wardrobe on the back wall had creaked open slowly, as if an invisible teacher had entered the room and was looking for the slate boards. The children screamed in terror: Their window opened onto the cemetery.

But it is not only children who feel the presence of powerful things that cannot be named. Emily went over to the girls' bed, first to Agnes, then to Gertrude's side. She felt the warmth of their strong little bodies and took a deep breath. Thoughts of the day receded, and from deep inside her a groundswell rose up to fill the emptiness, an ominous feeling, as if the lake were running under the house, washing away its foundation, and with it the house as well.

In the first years of their marriage they had moved four times, each time at a point when Emily was pregnant or had just given birth. The search for an apartment that the pastor could afford humiliated and upset them more than the move itself. The people of Enge had gotten accustomed to seeing the pastor's furnishings, and crates packed with Spyri things, on the street. Each time, the new apartment was too small and too shabby to unpack everything and they were already planning the next move. After a year and a half's effort, Walter obtained a parsonage for his family, and as actuary of the churchwardens had

registered his own investment in it, which antagonized the school board and several of the teachers. But now they had their home, this ancient schoolhouse located between lake and cemetery. Yet it seemed to her that a cloud of ill fortune hung over them.

The leaves of the poplars in front of the parsonage stirred: words whispered in the wind. Walter's minutes of the churchwardens' meetings (which he had brought home with him under the pretext of making a clean copy of his almost illegible notes, a task he put off from month to month) seemed threatening to her. But when she read through them she concluded that her fears were unfounded. She was also bothered by the impenetrable, superficial politeness people showed when they came to the parsonage to arrange for baptisms or funerals. But occasionally, when she turned around suddenly in the square after the Sunday sermon, she would see them talking with their heads together, and then they would quickly disperse, broken-off sentences left hanging in the poplar trees. More and more of the well-to-do were sending their children to St. Peter's in Zurich for instruction, instead of to Walter. And yet, in the last years that he lived in Enge, Gottfried Keller appeared occasionally for a service. He had a reputation more as a drinker than as a religious man, but as he told Landolt, he valued Walter's father's bookshop and Walter's sermons.

In the twilight outside she saw the gravestones and crosses, row after row of them as if they had been laid out with a straightedge. Each morning for hours the church warden's wife, with her stiff back, bent over to clear the weeds from the flower beds on the gravel paths. They believed in order in Enge, even among the dead.

As for the living, in 1883 they were registered according to their assets: Enge counted four millionaires, five men with assets of over 100,000 francs, and nineteen with assets of between 50,000 and 100,000. Then followed the average property owner, and finally the majority—852 people with no assets at all.

Class differences persisted even into the realm of the dead: Whereas common mortals lay unprotected under Enge's sky, the high iron fence of the Escher family vault was visible from afar. Emily found that the Eschers living at Belvoir were more in need of this protec-

tive shelter than the dead Eschers. Alfred Escher—at thirty years of age already a member of the National Council, founder and director of the Credit Bank, president of the Northeast Railway of which Emily's father was director—had his share of trials and tribulations. At the end of the sixties, after a period of unrestricted Manchester capitalism, the democrats began to make a fuss and attacked the Escher System, for Escher had no great opinion of democracy. As far as he was concerned, the Council members were "priests guarding the fire." Salomon Bleuler directed barbs at him from his desk at the *Winterthurer Landboten:* Escher was a "money aristocrat, a railroad matador, an ally of big interests." Shortly before Escher's death, his competitors ran the train line on the left bank of Lake of Zurich right through Belvoir, his estate.

Nor was he to find peace and quiet once in the ground: His daughter Lydia, married to National Council member Welti, ran off to Rome with an artist named Stauffer, from whence her family dragged her back. She was mentally ill, they said, and the artist, himself a madman, had seduced her. Lydia atoned for her lapse with house arrest, a shadow pacing among the columns of Belvoir's veranda.

Anyone who didn't fit the norm was punished for it. Zurich was ruled by reason. But at Burghölzli, that amply designed asylum for the insane, all the beds were filled.

At the back door of the parsonage, pale and weeping, stood the wife of the former church organist and leading soloist. Her husband had been denied the raise he had requested at the end of the year, and had resigned his office in anger, but had not found another. Now he was spotted daily in the Stern, lifting his glass. His wife was trying to support their large family by sewing lace-trimmed shirts for the children of the rich.

And now she was standing at the back door. Emily looked at her hand, stretched out, begging for alms, and a feeling of shame rose up in her throat. She fetched the silver piece that she had put aside or material for a coat, murmured a few words of consolation, and shut the door.

Suddenly she was struck by the thought that the same could happen to them. Would she be able to support her family? What skills did she have? She knew a little French, could play the piano, do housework.

Shortly thereafter, she began having Walter teach her Latin and math. And twice a week she attended lectures at the university on metaphysics and logic, given by Professor Kym. Other women from Zurich's better families did the same: sniffed at men's knowledge, enthused over certain lectures, discussed metaphysics over strawberry shortcake and tea.

But Emily wanted to take the graduating exams at the boy's secondary school, as a nonresident student, and then register at the university, unsure as yet with which faculty. Should she study medicine, like most of the female students, or should she dare to enter an all-male domain, jurisprudence perhaps. "Don't make it too hard on yourself," Walter finally said. "You could become a midwife, or a nurse. But a lawyer—what an undertaking!"

"Professor Schneider, one of the law teachers, is encouraging me. Law is a field respected by everyone."

"Respected? By your father, you mean?" Walter laughed. From his drawer he took out Spyri's notorious article on female teachers, and tried to imitate his father-in-law's tone:

> *Our task is not to judge the issue of whether or not the female sex is suited for the profession of doctor or lawyer or priest, and in any case—though we discuss the physical condition of women—this is not the place to appraise the intellects of the two sexes; but even if we assume that the female sex is as capable as the male of comprehending science, we believe we are correct in stating that in all cases in which office and vocation are one, the physical constitution of women gives rise to great disparities and hindrances.*

Emily was familiar with the article. But for the first time she felt boldly confident. Soon enough her father would find out that his daughter, at age thirty-one and with three children, had begun to study jurisprudence. He, who had tried to convince her that at twenty she was too old to begin her studies.

Once she had married and had a child each year, her parents were

placated: Our rebellious daughter is like all other women. She'll wear herself out by the time the children are grown. Once that is accomplished, she'll have no strength left for youthful fancies.

Yes, Emily was afraid that at thirty-one it was too late. Her strength was sapped by everyday chores, her memory and concentration were on the wane.

Lately it had occurred to her that Walter had grown somber; he seldom showed signs of his wry humor, and relaxed only when he was with the children. In the evenings as he was editing, she noticed the new bitter lines around his nose and mouth. It hurt him that no one appreciated his work. People focused only on his weak points: the lack of discipline during instruction, his stiff style of preaching, the fact that the minutes of the churchwardens' meetings still had not been copied out. He often lay awake at night, too tired to speak, seeking comfort in her arms. He clung to her as if she were his anchor.

She turned away. "Walter, stop, I don't want another child. Turn on the light; we'll study some more Latin."

The thought that her body might once again become heavy with child, which would sap her strength, made her forehead break out in sweat. Now, of all times, when she wanted to be light and independent and create some space for herself, through knowledge.

"Above us towers the fortress / with its offices of knowledge . . ."

Emily felt a chill run up her spine at the pyrotechnic display of words and attitudes that summer. As always when Zurich celebrated, Gottfried Keller prepared a poem for the occasion. In May it had been for the country fair and now, in August 1883, it was for the university's fifty-year anniversary. Attenhofer had set the cantata to music, and the spacious hall reverberated with the sound of it.

At the point of lamentation for the weak financial situation of the fortress of knowledge, the music swelled dramatically, ringing like "an assault of storming calvary," the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reported the next day.

Rector Krönlein, who had made his career as a surgeon in Berlin, was the speaker. A democratic Zurich was something dear to his heart,

he said, and everyone in the hall knew that with this he was countering the assertion of his colleague, Christian Billroth, that *"Zurich was an academic waiting room, first class."*

As he spoke, Emily imagined herself in the foreseeable future, standing before Rector Krönlein to take her examinations. She felt his alert eyes on her from behind his pince-nez, and once again a chill ran up her spine. She looked up. Among the guests of honor in the overfilled room she discovered Johanna Spyri and her husband, the town clerk. Following the festivities the writer, clearly bored, stood conversing with a group of professors' wives in one of the side entrances. Emily, who wanted to slip by shyly, was recognized by Johanna, who called her over. Embarrassed by the abrupt end to their conversation, the ladies departed, with a glint in their eyes that said: The town clerk's wife still has a temperament that does not stoop gladly to social custom!

Johanna inquired about Walter, and Emily asked how her cousin Bernhard was.

"He's studying in Leipzig," Johanna said.

Emily silently counted up the semesters and recalled that he had wanted to finish in 1879. It was now the summer of 1883.

Johanna, who could well read her thoughts, said, "He has been sick a great deal; we had to send him to South America, to Uncle Christian Heusser. Last winter he was in Engadin, which did him good. In addition to his studies, he has founded a chamber orchestra with friends in Leipzig, and is playing violin. You know what music means to him. But tell me, how are the children?"

"Robert Walter is in love with your Heidi."

Johanna's face flushed faintly. "Yes, *Heidi* has conquered people's hearts. I never dreamed it would sell in the tens of thousands. It's being translated into several other languages; next year it will appear in America!"

As if ashamed of her own success, she broke off their conversation and turned to her husband Bernhard, who was standing among members of the government.

"Come visit us again, and bring the children!" she called back to Emily.

I had been on earth for a long time,
and then I began to live,
and the wings of my spirit
braved first flight.
—KAROLINE VON GÜNDERODE

The opposite shore was barely visible across the water. Emily breathed on the frosted windowpane in Walter's study. Thoughts held back for years, desires thwarted, the rooms of the parsonage were stacked floor to ceiling with the unspoken: Be quiet, you have no other choice, Emily, don't talk about your needs. Every object in the house was thick with wishes exhaled. She was a fish, bumping dumbly against the transparent walls of its prison. When, finally, will this other "I" come to life, this part of myself that has never been exposed to the light? Looking into others' eyes as if into a mirror. The old questions: How do they see me, how do they want me to be, how should I be?

She wants to visit Johanna Spyri. Emily hopes to draw advice and understanding from the deep well of her eyes. Johanna, the only woman in the family who has claimed her own life, if only at a writing desk, who communicates with the great writers of her time, with Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, with Gottfried Keller.

She has not seen her aunt since the festivities at the university the preceding summer. She wants to arrange a visit during the days after Christmas, before people begin to arrive at city hall to deliver their New Year's greetings.

The children, who otherwise hate visiting their relatives, beg to be taken along. "I want to see Heidi's mother," Robert cried. Emily had to laugh at the wildly determined, devoted expression on his face. She decided to take Gertrude and Robert with her. "Agnes, you can go next time."

This time, Emily makes an appointment. Years have passed since her last visit. Vreneli, who has been Johanna's maid for years now, serves the children hot chocolate in tall cups without handles. Johanna comes down the steps of her alcove and inspects the children from head to foot, silent, almost gloomy. Robert is uneasy under her gaze.

"So, you love Heidi?"

Robert nods vehemently. Johanna lowers the top of her desk and opens a drawer, taking out a beautifully illustrated edition.

"Here, this is for you." As the adults speak with each other Robert shyly runs his hand over the title page. Gertrude hopes for a gift as well, but the writer seems to have forgotten the children.

"Do you remember when you came to me and asked, 'What will become of me?'" she asks Emily. "Now, of your own will, you have become something of use: a pastor's wife in Enge, the mother of three children."

Emily nods, then gathers her courage. "In two months I'll take the examination for my diploma. Then, this spring, I want to begin my studies, probably in jurisprudence, like Bernhard. Is he in Zurich?"

Johanna is silent for a moment. After a while she says dully, "Yes, he is here for the holidays, from Leipzig."

Then there is another pause, during which they can hear the children making slurping noises. They are drinking their piping hot chocolate in small, careful sips. Robert breaks the silence with, "Did you really know Heidi, Aunt Johanna?" And with this breaks the promise he made to his mother, that at city hall he would speak only when spoken to. Emily shoots him a look.

Johanna seems not to have heard the question. She stands and goes over to the window, then returns as if from a long journey. Shaking her head, she says, "Why this? You already have your responsibilities! Here—" she stretches out her hand and strokes the heads of the children, who stand stock-still, "—here they are!"

Emily feels the disappointment rise up inside her. The crooks of her arms and her neck break out in a cold sweat. Behind Johanna appears the face of her father, furious with disapproval.

"I'm doing it for the children," she cries. "It may soon become necessary for me to help earn our keep." And then quietly, bending

toward Johanna so that the children won't hear, "Walter's days in Enge are numbered."

"But why law," Johanna interjects, "a field that calls for a cool head?" She stares at her niece, who looks quite feminine in her lustrous high-necked blouse with the small white collar that accentuates the oval shape of her face.

"Look," she says, and her voice takes on a soft note, "women who move through life coolly and impassively are practically unknown in the Spyri family. Why, then, choose a profession in which a man undoubtedly can achieve more, and something better? Why not choose instead something women excel at? Become a ward attendant, a nurse, a midwife, run a household . . ."

"I can help people as a lawyer as well," Emily says. "From the time I was small I have settled disputes, defended and argued. It suits me, I'm looking forward to the study of law. . ."

Johanna appears to have stopped listening. Her eyes are on the door and her face has lost its usual severity. Emily follows her gaze, and Bernhard walks through the door. He has changed so noticeably that Emily's heart constricts. He is terribly thin, and his eyes have a feverish glaze. When he greets Emily and the children he makes an attempt at his customary joking, but doesn't succeed. He was overcome instead by a coughing fit. Johanna rings, gives hasty orders, and the maid brings a cloth soaked in camphor. Johanna presses it to Bernhard's nose and mouth and finally the coughing stops. The young man's cheeks are the color of peaches, like a young girl's.

Exhausted, he leaves the room without a word.

"He won't be returning to Leipzig," Johanna murmurs. "He'll stay in Zurich, where he has good medical care. After New Year's we're returning to Suna, near Pallanza, in northern Italy. The mild climate on Lake Maggiore did him good last winter. After that he will assist his father in his work. His studies will have to wait."

The room smells of camphor and chocolate. Her aunt goes over to the window and throws open the casements. Shocked by the cold lake air, she quickly closes them again. The air is heavy in the room with its upholstered armchairs and jacaranda furniture. Emily doesn't

say what she is thinking: poor Bernhard. How is he to be of help to his father when all that matter to him are boyhood dreams: to play the violin, to belong to his friends' chamber orchestra, to cross the ocean to Uncle Christian Heusser? Now he is forced to become a Spyri like all the others: chained to his office.

After they say good-bye and Johanna returns to her alcove, she glances back at her niece, and their eyes meet. There she stands, Emily thinks, and sees in my silhouette only her gifted son, dragging himself, coughing and wheezing, toward the far-off goal of becoming a lawyer.

Emily Kempin began her law studies in the summer semester of 1884, the first woman to do so. In the student directory of the University of Zurich, she later found her name listed not among the law students, but as a student of political science; all female students of law were designated as such up to the year 1902.

A new side of her came to light during her studies, as if she had turned a bit on her own axis, like the earth. She blossomed, and all signs of tiredness left her. She got up early, when Walter was still asleep and light was just beginning to rise over the lake. Her plans and visions for the future threw fantastic shadows over the bay.

Before her husband and children got up, she had already accomplished part of the housework: she cooked the potatoes for lunch, prepared the vegetables, laid out the children's clothes. She did not intend for her household responsibilities, all dire predictions to the contrary, to suffer from the fact that she was studying.

At seven o'clock a young girl arrived from Wollishofen. She was inexperienced and Emily was trying her out. In her absence the girl was to do the cleaning and look after her youngest child. A pastor's family could not afford experienced help.

Emily usually traveled the long distance to the university on foot. The new Zurich tramway, built by the London firm of Meston, was too expensive for daily use. She set off in the mildly pleasant air. Once she stepped outside Enge she felt lighter, carried along by the wind.

Her knees churned, her head bent forward; in her mind she had already arrived at the portal to science.

She always wore black, with a touch of white provided by the Orleans collar of her dress. She decided to forego the capot, the close-fitting cap many of the younger female students wore to appear more serious. She had feared her age would make her conspicuous, but no one took her as older than the average woman student, which was around 25. The daily walk of over an hour made her slim and supple; her eyes were as bright as when she was a girl.

Zurich first admitted women to the university in 1864, so female students had become a customary sight. The first generation of women graduates, mostly physicians, had long since gone on to practice: Marie Heim-Vögtlin, Switzerland's first woman doctor, opened a practice in Zurich in 1874, and the second, Karoline Farner, in 1877. And relations between male and female students had normalized. Scenes like the one reported in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* by the Prussian student Franziska Tiburtius, rarely repeated themselves now: *It became known among the students that females . . . were arriving for the first time. When we entered, the hall was filled with students, from other faculties as well, and there arose a deafening noise, with shouting, yodeling, whistling, etc. We were told to keep calm.*

Nor was there the exaggerated politeness that Marie Heim-Vögtlin had experienced: *I know almost all of the students I study anatomy with; most of them, when they see me coming, run ahead to open the door for me, and then stand there with their caps in their hands until I have sailed through.*

After the third week she began taking the horse-tram home, which cost money but got her there faster. The wagon was drawn by Ardennen ponies, which by ordinance were allowed only to trot, even on the straight stretches, and they didn't move fast enough for her. She saw before her the kitchen stove, and the meals she arranged for early each morning. They required a bit more preparation in order to be served warm at the right moment.

From the beginning she noticed that her new undertaking was a second relationship, which she maintained in addition to her husband and children, an undercurrent that always ran through her. When she was busy with one, she felt the pull of the other, creating a tension that gnawed at her. But it was a price she was prepared to pay.

She studied late into the night. The articles of knowledge that were hers alone lay spread out in the intimacy of the lamplight. Walter, sleeping fitfully nearby, often awoke and looked over at her, still studying: "Come to bed now, Emily, you have to get up on time."

In the beginning she smiled at his concern. She did not feel at all tired. It was as if she were feeding an undernourished part of herself, spooning up knowledge before it was time for her chores to start up all over again: make the coffee, do the darning, prepare the vegetables. The same work performed by all who had come before her: her mother, her grandmothers, all the women of the family.

Why did she always run away so quickly after the lecture, a fellow student asked her after class one day. It was May, the Zürichberg was at its prettiest at this time of year, the students wanted to go for a walk, he said.

Emily looked up at the hills, the meadows a smoky white under the forest dome, the trees in full bloom.

"I can't," she said.

"Why not?"

She explained that she wasn't a true student. After class she had to go home to her husband and children. Study was the only part of student life she participated in!

The student had not realized that. They talked a bit longer; time passed. Although she rushed down the steps, the tram had already departed. She was already late for lunch and now she would have to go on foot. For the first time she had the querulous thought: If only I could be a student like cousin Bernhard! Johanna had written of his student days in a letter: *After he graduated from the gymnasium, he attended the universities of Zurich, Leipzig, and Göttingen, where he studied with outstanding professors of law and, in addition, happily gave himself over to the freedom and the poetry of student life . . .*

But I am a woman and have children. Openly or in secret, people are saying that I should not have the right to study. And I? Barely do I arrive home before I slip into my other skin. I live both here and there, and cannot relinquish either. A secret hairline crack goes right through me.

She reached the parsonage, panting, fifteen minutes later than usual. Walter was waiting for her at the door, dressed in his most formal black, which startled her. What did it mean?

Walter took a step toward her. "Your cousin Bernhard is dead."

At certain moments she could feel the speed at which she was rushing toward some unknown goal, as if she were sitting in Father's Northeast Railway, looking out at the world rushing by.

In New York in 1889, a diffident spring turned to summer from one day to the next, the city's contours shimmered and dissolved in the bright light. Emily did everything she could to withstand the paralyzing humidity. Every day counted, the ladies of society were already packing their bags for their summer homes. The lethargy was spreading; whatever wasn't accomplished now in the offices and secretariats would have to wait until fall.

Walter sees her walking around with her stonelike expression. "Still no answer from the university?"

"No."

"Then let's go back, Emily. Our savings are gone, the experiment has failed."

"Nothing has failed."

She stares through the window as if she could summon her goal through sheer willpower. "I want to establish a school," she said. "Because the university is taking so long."

Walter Kempin gives a little cough. "A private school?"

She nods. "Emily Kempin's Law School for Women. The Munns have found rooms on Fifty-ninth Street that could serve both as living quarters and classrooms."

"Aren't you being a bit hasty, Emily?"

She blows a lock of hair off her forehead, her cheeks suddenly flushed. "I've thought it through."

"And who will pay for it?"

"I can count on the support of the Munns, the Sutros, and the Webers. And young Helen Gould has offered her assistance; her mother passed away in February and left her an inheritance."

"The climate in New York is murderous. Let's go back to Zurich this summer."

Her voice quivers in agitation. "I can return to Zurich only once I have succeeded here! Otherwise my dear colleagues there will have me where they want me—on my knees. A cleaning woman instead of a lawyer . . ."

Her eyes return from the distance. The man standing before her is gaunt, his breathing is labored. The heat is hard on him.

The shadow of doubt crosses her face. She takes a deep breath and her eyes fill with tears. "I must go forward, Walter. Believe me, at this lunatic juncture we can play only for high stakes. We'll be over the top by fall."

On clammy summer nights many of the immigrant population sleep under mosquito nets on roofs and fire escapes, in an effort to breathe in the humid air, and find that the feeling of oppressiveness they wish to escape resides in their own chests.

Emily lies awake listening to Walter's breathing. She is afraid of seeing things through Walter's eyes, of hesitating, of crawling back, cowering back into the what-has-always-been. Swiss restraint—whoever sticks his neck out will get it chopped off. A dog kept on a chain all day will cringe through the night.

It is a difficult battle on two fronts: against resistance from the outside and the brake from the inside, from the family, who show no understanding, have no idea what it is all about.

A senseless drain of energy.

Florence Clinton Sutro was giving a house concert before the summer vacation, in her home at 102 West Riverside Drive. (It was

planned as a goodwill action for Emily, but that was a secret!) When Emily told Walter of the invitation, he confused Mrs. Sutro with Mrs. Munn.

"But the two are quite different," Emily explained. "Mrs. Munn has curly red hair and a pale, narrow face. You recall how she moves her hands when she talks, and she's usually holding a cigarette! Always a little eccentric, theatrical, but a wonderfully alive woman.

"Florence Clinton Sutro is a different type altogether: athletic, with a happy, pretty face and a snub nose. She's society's favorite, especially when she sits down to the piano. But she knows how to use her elbows when she wants to get something done, you'll see."

The trip from Fourteenth Street to Riverside Drive was like a journey to another world. It was so hot that the horses pulling the omnibus on this late afternoon had their tongues hanging out. They traveled along Broadway, a treeless canyon of violet-colored house fronts. The buildings came to a point in the distance that dissolved in the shimmering light of the bright sun.

It was the end of the workday and the omnibus was full. At the Thirty-fourth Street stop a rat lay in the middle of Broadway, smashed flat by the wagon wheels. A pedestrian tried to push it aside with his walking stick, but it was etched into the asphalt like an insignia. The passengers squeezed as close together as they could to make room for the young women sales clerks getting on. Their polka-dot blouses with gigot sleeves were crumpled, their powdered faces furrowed with sweat. They all endured the journey silently, their eyes glassed over.

Riverside Drive is like another planet. The house entrances, with their porter's lodges, are pleasantly cool, with striped curtains to keep out the heat. The sparkling water of the Hudson is visible through the trees of the park.

Emily and Walter are among the last guests to arrive. The carriages are parked in front of the house in double rows; even this close to summer vacation no one would pass up an invitation to the Sutros'. Everyone knows their apartment is the picture of elegance. The preceding winter a weekly journal published a story on it, simultaneously

satisfying New Yorkers' curiosity about society people with a portrait of the young couple:

> *Theodore Sutro was born in 1845 in Aachen, Prussia. For four years now he has served as a brilliant defense attorney before the New York Bar. . . At almost forty years of age the eligible bachelor married Florence Edith Clinton, whose comely profile and snub nose have graced the pages of the press. She incorporates what in New York is called "brains and beauty," and she is an exceptionally gifted musician . . .*

Florence sits at the piano, light reflecting from the back of her neck as she bends over the keyboard. Her guests are enveloped in the sound. The evening sun crosses the gold brocade of the smartly arranged upholstery, flower-shaped lamps on high-stalked bases rest on the marble-top tables. Silver bowls hold yellow roses, and yellow azaleas nest in bamboo jardinieres, an oriental touch.

Absent are the heavy damask drapes and massive carved furniture usually found in cosmopolitan brownstones—at the Hewitts', for example—with the inner doors of the cabinets affixed with certificates verifying that the pieces have been taken from the bankrupt castles of Europe.

After the concert, the group does not segregate as usual into ladies in the salon and gentlemen in the smoking room. The guests remain comfortably seated, and the host himself serves the drinks. There are no caterers present, no waiters in fancy costumes hired for the occasion.

Florence moves among her guests. Little drops of perspiration dot her nose and she fans herself with her hand. Theodore Sutro and a housemaid refresh the drinks.

"Hats off to you, young lady! You played beautifully, particularly the modern French Valses!" Judge George Thompson, a senior colleague of Florence's husband, is the first to compliment her performance. The judge, with his striking gray hair, has a reputation for humorlessness, and there ensues a silence, as they all listen to Thompson's infrequent praise echo throughout the room.

It is still so hot in the room that even Reverend Howard Crosby allows his glass to be refilled. Slanting rays of sunlight force their way under the curtains; the Hudson is tinged in rose. The talk is of impending summer vacations, and everyone exchanges the addresses of their summer homes in Newport. Suddenly, the hostess calls for silence.

"Emily Kempin intends to establish a law school for women. Her course of instruction will enable women to appear before the courts of the State of New York as attorneys. The project needs assistance, moral support." She invites those present to attend the press conference to be held when the school opens at the beginning of October.

"Such a school, ladies, will unfortunately conflict with the law," Judge Thompson interjects. "Women are not allowed to appear before the bar as attorneys of the State of New York."

Emily takes the floor and politely explains to Judge Thompson that he is not adequately informed on the matter. Through her own inquiry she found that on 19 May 1886, a change in the law included a provision for female judges. The only reason there were no women in office, she said, was that there was no opportunity for them to study! That was to change . . .

"In three years New York State will be deluged with so many female attorneys you won't believe it, Thompson!" exclaims Judge Kellogg, who is only half joking.

"The danger of being overrun by women lawyers is not a great one," Emily countered. She glances at Thompson, who is fingering his collar, which he has unbuttoned in the heat. His puffy face is flushed, his forehead glistens above his gold pince-nez.

In her mind, Emily saw her colleagues in Zurich, sitting stoutly in their chairs, as Thompson was, defending themselves. "Many women have no professional ambitions, but will study for purely personal reasons," she adds.

"I, for instance! I will be her first pupil."

The guests stare in astonishment at their hostess. Florence bobs her head as if she were still at the piano; a sunspot dances on her nose.

"Pianist *and* lawyer? Aren't you overtaxing yourself a bit?" asks the wife of rail baron Russell Sage from her chair, bolstered by her black satin dress.

Florence refuses to back down, and looks straight into the woman's dark crow's eyes and answers in the negative, expressing with great self-assurance her desire to learn. Nothing of what she says seems put on, and that takes the wind out the sails of men like Thompson: an unaffected young woman announcing her hunger for learning. It was if she were speaking of athletic exercise, something women in America had long been allowed to engage in, of tennis lessons or javelin throwing, sports currently popular among society women.

Thompson reacts with feigned nonchalance. "And what does your husband, my colleague, have to say to that?"

"My wife wishes to know more about the kinds of things I engage in every day. Is that meddling, or evidence of her love? What do you say, Thompson?"

Thompson shakes his huge, close-cropped head. He gives an equivocal grin and wraps himself in silence for the rest of the evening.

Those who venture into open water must either continue to swim, or sink.

The sky over New York is white, seared bare. Words bounce off the bright ceiling of indifference: Careful now, the deacon will have a rude awakening when he reads *The New York Times!*

Florence, making notes at her rosewood desk, winks at Emily. She has prepared a clean copy of the press announcement on her typewriter. Emily is amazed by this novelty in black metal, with its mother-of-pearl keys and gold letters. Florence's hands fly across this strange animal, her fingers performing solo dances in staccato, striking with precision, as if she were seated at the piano.

Emily goes over in her mind when she herself would to be able to afford one of these machines. Her texts would finally appear cool, factual, juridical, and the subtle serifs of the letters would reveal nothing of her own personal history.

"Buy a better model," Florence said, reading her thoughts. "Theodore used this one in his practice, and the capital M is damaged and the loops in the letters—see, here—are already clogged."

On 6 August 1889, the following text appeared in *The New York Times:*

A LAW SCHOOL FOR WOMEN

Dr. Emily Kempin's Plan to Found Such an Institution

On Oct. 1 there will be opened in this city a law school exclusively for women in which the students will have an opportunity to pursue a course of study which will enable them to profit by an amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure passed by the Legislature of 1886, under which women can gain admission to the bar under the same conditions as men. The promoter of the plan is Dr. Emily Kempin, Ll.D., a graduate of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and the author of several legal works. Dr. Kempin has been in this country for a year or two, and has gained a considerable reputation as an advocate of woman suffrage. She says she has the support of many prominent members of the New York bar.

Her plan is to incorporate "Dr. Emily Kempin's Law School" under the laws of the state and establish it on a basis that will make the degrees as valuable as a means of gaining admission as are the sheepskins of any law school. Dr. Kempin does not expect, at least for a few years, that her school will flood the city with Bachelors of Law. She does not believe that the number of women who wish to study law as a profession is very great. Much as do so desire will be put through a thorough course, the system being that of the European universities.

Dr. Kempin's main idea, however, is a broader one. By exhaustive courses of lectures she desires to furnish women who make their own living with such a necessary knowledge of law as shall fit them to hold positions of responsibility and trust, and to qualify women for the management of their own affairs and the supervision of their agents. The lectures will be delivered by jurists who have made a specialty of the subjects under consideration.

Dr. Kempin is to call a meeting of those she has interested in her work for Sept. 1 when definite plans of organization will be agreed upon.

On the day the story appeared, the Kempin family moved to Fifty-ninth Street. The children were overjoyed to have Central Park so

close by. Walter was looking forward to rooms that let in more air.

On the first evening Walter looked lost in the large residence. He felt he would never be able to fill these rooms. He retreated to a corner, where he took notes on something or other, and then waited for dusk, standing at one of the high windows. He was constantly plagued by one thought: *Emily, you're getting us into a life the demands of which are too high.*

Emily closed the curtains, shutting out the twilight. She was already at her seat under the lamp, drafting study plans and letters to contributors and patrons. When she looked up she could barely make out Walter's form in the semidarkness outside her zone of light.

"Our article looked good in print, didn't it?"

She sensed that he nodded, and continued to talk, the light in her face. "Judge Noah David and Pastor Crosby have assured me of their support. That's promising, Walter, don't you think?" She gave a girlish laugh, her eyes had their old mischievous expression.

Why, at a moment like this, when he felt her excitement, did that ridiculous story occur to him, the one he had read this morning in the *Times'* "Miscellaneous" column, printed on the very same page as Emily's story? Why hadn't he shrugged it off and pushed it across the table for Emily to read? Now he couldn't get the story out of his head:

A COUNTESS IN HER MIND

A sad-eyed woman named Mary June Billington was among the more distinguished steerage passengers who arrived on the Servia yesterday. Her particular distinction was that she claimed to be a Countess and the proprietor in general of the United Kingdom. She imparted in a moment of confidence to the officials at the Garden that she had also recently negotiated the purchase of Italy. She said that she had a sister in Newark who is also a Countess and that she intended to buy New York if she found the people agreeable. The Commissioners will not be likely to allow her to land, as her schemes might interfere with those of American capitalists and they accordingly feel that she is probably suffering from hallucinations.

"Just think, Walter, even Thompson will be at the press conference in October," Emily said.

"Even Thompson? I wouldn't have imagined that . . ."

When he looked at her he saw her on an island of light. Shadows swirled around her, her chair and table cliffs rising up from the dark sea, her left cheek aglow with the warmth of the lamp, as with the nearness of a lover.

In dream towers
the bells chime miracles.
—ROSE AUSLÄNDER

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1884. Emily and Walter stand at the window of the Enge parsonage, listening to the peal of cathedral bells across the water. People shout in celebration, and there are fireworks at the lake shore.

Bürkli, the cantonal engineer, and his workers proudly cross the quay bridge they recently completed. The new year will be one of progress; the plan to develop the grounds around the lake, which the people of Enge voted for with enthusiasm three years before, has been outlined. Earth is piled up where the Enge River is being widened, modified to flow seamlessly through the city. Ever faster the current, ever steeper the gradient of the years. Only fifteen left until the twentieth century.

On Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich, Henneberg's Store for Silks is lit by electric light, and the telephone system already numbers more than one thousand customers.

Only death can impede progress. In 1884 a typhus epidemic broke out in Zurich; the ancient sewer system, stinking of waste, was blamed. Cantonal engineer Bürkli, man of the hour, was now building a drainage system. Proper hygiene and advancements in medicine would eliminate all illness, it was just a matter of time.

Emily's mother died at the beginning of the new year. Emily felt like a stranger when she attended the funeral, standing a few steps away from her father and her siblings at the open grave. She looked over at her father, begging for some reaction from him, but since she had begun to study law she was as good as dead to him. He walked right past her to extend his hand briefly only to her children.

"We look back on a full and Christian life," she hears a colleague of her father say in giving the funeral oration, and she completes the thought: Yes, now heaped with the stones and gravel that she cleared from her husband's path, his career covers her like a shroud, her story seeps into his. If, in eternity, she is asked who she is, she will look around for her husband out of habit, so that he may answer for her. A woman is a zero, she gains value only when preceded by a masculine figure.

From beneath her black hat, through the grid of her veil, Emily steals a glance at her father standing in the midst of his clan. Her brothers and sisters step forward to drop pale flowers, frozen in this cold air, into the grave.

Here she lies—née Wild, tamed forever.

Emily has never seen her father's hands shake before; she feels sympathy for him when he bows his head over the flower he holds before it is swallowed up by the clay hole. Suddenly, in the silence of the snow falling on the graves, she finds herself in the midst of a battle with herself. One part of her, another Emily, a twin, pulls at her sleeve, whispering: What are you doing to yourself? Be like her; nestle back under Father's beard. You love him, admit it. Look how the others gather round the old man, crowding close. There he stands, older to be sure, but still sticking out his chin, his sparse beard piercing the air like a horn. Why aren't you still his favorite project, as you used to be: the train he sets in motion, the one that stops at the stations he determines? You've jumped track, Emily.

Derailed. Unhinged.

The voice inside her. It has to be silenced at once! She doesn't want to become a comical figure like her sister Karolina, now leading her father away from the grave site to the family circle, playing caretaker when it is she who needs care. Karolina has decided to keep house for her father, following in her mother's footsteps. Her father's daily routine must not be disturbed. She will spend her best years caring for her father, and become old and gray in the process. She will wither away toward her grave, having neither lived nor been loved. She will suffer in silence: her father's bride.

The new year breathes icy patterns on the windowpanes. Birds swarm overhead in search of food; the air is filled with their shrill cries. The trees lining the shore keep watch over the parsonage. There is a whirring, a buzzing in the air every time Emily turns around: Kempin is allowing it to happen. He closes his eyes to what she is doing. It's strange, scandalous.

"What were you just whispering about?"

"Nothing, Mrs. Kempin, nothing, really. How are you? And the children?"

The children look unhappy. They've got a mother who's always running off to the university. They walk down the street with their eyes staring straight ahead.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Kempin, I was just saying that the weather could be a little milder. January air, icicles' lair . . ."

A nice example *she's* setting as parson's wife. And the parson? He held one of his lectures on the education of women again recently. He's encouraging exactly what he should be discouraging. She wants to help out by earning money, does she? She'll have her chance soon enough, when the pastor is let go.

She has figured out a counter-spell to ward off the whispers, to ward off her own fear on hearing that they plan to let Walter go. She calls up in her memory scenes of Walter at his best: when he visited the houses of the poor during the typhoid epidemic and got help for them—medical help, care, sustenance. Sometimes he tended them himself. When he came home on those evenings she could smell poor people on him.

"Aren't you afraid of getting infected, Walter?"

He looked at her in silence, then shook his head. Finally he said, "If I abandon the poor, then who will help them?"

Walter at the lectern in Lucerne, during the general assembly of the Public Welfare Society. His reserved nature evaporated in thin air when he was trying to win support for his organization, the Central Association of the Swiss Red Cross, which was modeled on an association in Württemberg that trained and placed nursing personnel

in peacetime. His passion showed on his face—a spark ignited. In Lucerne, even her father had joined the association of his unwanted son-in-law.

Walter with the neediest of Enge's children at the Kerenzerberg vacation colony. On rainy days he knew how to get even the older children involved, working with the jigsaw and carving linden wood. They stood surrounding him, the tall fifteen-year-olds who normally had only mischief on their minds. At the end of the summer the group returned to Enge strong and invigorated. They scarcely even thanked the pastor for this; they took his engagement for granted. But behind his back the rumor circulated that Kempin had often rested his hand a bit too long on the shoulder of a particularly handsome lad. No wonder his wife studied all night!

At the February meeting of the churchwardens Kempin announced that he needed a second stove for the east room of the parsonage. This was met with a round of meaningful looks.

Was his wife getting cold feet, studying all night? someone joked.

Kempin nodded.

General winking all around, excluding him.

He made a second request, asking that he be relieved of his actuarial duties. The reason? His feud with the school board.

The silence that followed crackled with tension. With his head bent over the draft of the minutes, Walter waited to record his own demise.

His journalistic work was proceeding well enough, town clerk Hasler noted pointedly. When they appointed him ten years before, they hadn't taken into account *that he would secretly be devoting himself to politics*.

Kempin raised his head in astonishment. "What does that mean? The work I do is philanthropic." He looked at the faces of the group: eyes that knew everything about him, that judged him with lips clamped shut.

"Anything further for the minutes? No? Then I wish to resign from the office of actuary, as I stated."

Had a clean copy of the minutes been completed? someone asked. They had only seen a rough draft.

Walter gestured nervously. "In the last few months I've had too much to do, what with the typhoid epidemic and my various activities, and writing to raise money for the poor. One ends up putting off things that are not so pressing. I'll make the copy in the next few days. For sure." He lowered his head and felt the heat rising up in him, all the way to his forehead.

In March they pressured Kempin to resign his position. The minutes do not record the circumstances. When he wrote to the church council of the Canton of Zurich on the matter he received a reply within two days, as if they had been waiting to hear from him:

> *In response to a request of the 18th of the current month from Pastor Kempin of Enge to be relieved of his duties as of May 1 in order to assume other responsibilities, it has been accepted that Herr Kempin resign his office as pastor on May 1 of the current year. We express our gratitude for his services.*

They packed up the Spyri crates to unpack them again. They moved out of the Enge parsonage to Oberdorfstrasse in Zurich. Their old familiar life was disrupted; no one felt at home anymore. They labored up the steep cliff of the passing days.

"The apartment is only a temporary solution, Robert, your tin soldiers and your model train must stay in their boxes. You yourself can see that there's no room for them in the nursery."

"We had many more rooms in Enge," Gertrude said. "Some of them were even empty. Those were the nicest of all."

Emily nodded and opened the bedroom window. It looked down into an inner courtyard, and behind the red of the brick wall the silhouettes of the Old Town row houses collapsed into one another. Several doves rose up, flapping their wings.

"The doves are pretty, aren't they, Agnes? Listen, you can hear the hiss of the blacksmith's bellows, and that hammering sound is coming from the shoemaker's next door."

"But I want a meadow to play in, like in Enge," Agnes said sulkily.

She cried at night, because she missed her friend from Enge, the daughter of the Messmers.

But their change of living quarters also had its advantages. Emily's journey to the university had become shorter. With every step toward home the lecture she had just attended on Roman law is organized into components, particles of laws, all in motion. Her head was like a beehive that goes into production as she quickened her pace; a locomotive that pulled her somnambulant body along behind it.

One day she stumbled, and a young man coming toward her picked up her briefcase from the cobblestone street. She blushed and smoothed her skirt over her thighs. A few steps farther on, and she was already back at work in her mind. That night she stayed bolted to her chair, poring over her books. It didn't matter if she had bloodshot eyes the next day. She had volunteered for a project with Professor Schneider.

"You, Mrs. Kempin? All right." Schneider had given her a nod, a nervous, myopic look, and then had bent his balding blond head to record her name in his exaggeratedly small handwriting. She liked Schneider, even though his lectures were delivered in a monotone and were not particularly appreciated by the other students. She never forgot the fact that it was he who once encouraged her to study law.

That night, after the children were in bed, the particles and pieces of law floating around in her head would settle and she would master the paragraphs. Schneider recently had praised her efficient, logical intellect, traits not usually attributed to women.

"My respects, Mrs. Kempin."

Her fellow students applauded her in their own way, with mute expressions of indifference or hostility.

"Emily the striver"—Walter's words. Vague exhortations from his side of the bed. But tonight there would be none of that. Walter was on a trip to Remscheid, in Rhenish Prussia, to inquire about an editorial position. He had been invited for an interview. Why not return to Germany? It was where his father was from, after all. He had fled to Switzerland with a group of newspaper people and book dealers following the failed revolution of 1848. It would be good to get out of Zurich for awhile. Walter's attempt to publish an "Intelligencer" in Zurich had failed. And gossip was seeping through the cracks in Enge and crossing the lake with the first fall mist. A former landlady of the Kempins was withholding a security deposit; Walter needed

the money and had threatened suit. Now she was telling everyone that the Kempins had destroyed her house, and that if he sued her she would sue him in return.

"Don't aggravate yourself with such drivel, Walter," Emily had said. "Why not spend some time outside the country? After I take my exams, we'll make a new start in Zurich. A brief separation; distance is unimportant. We can overcome that," said Emily, daughter of railroad statistician Spyri.

On Oberdorfstrasse the maid rushes toward her with fear in her eyes.

"Elsbeth, what is it?"

"It's Agnes! We were shopping, and she was up and gone! I noticed it only when I got to the bakery. The shoemaker's wife asked me so many questions about you, whether you ever cook and things like that." Elsbeth sniffed and struggled to catch her breath.

"And then?"

"Then I started looking for Agnes, up and down the streets and in the courtyards. Maybe she went down to the lake, and is on her way to Enge!"

Emily's heart is pounding. She can already see the headline: *Child Drowns While Mother Studies*.

She hurries through the streets. The bushes by the lake are wet with the recent rain. The paths are sodden; the hems of her skirt get soaked.

"Agnes!" she calls. Strollers turn around to look at her.

She finally finds her, on the bank of the lake, exhausted, one of her boots lying beside her on the ground.

"What's the matter with you! You scared me to death!"

Emily strikes her on her small back, which gives at the blow. She raises her arm again, but freezes midair, then drops to her knees and presses the shaking little body to her, her cheeks wet with Agnes's and her own tears.

"Did you want to go back to Enge?"

Agnes nods.

Mother and child walk hand in hand beneath the trees along the shore. Across the water stand the houses of Enge, sanctimoniously nestled under the cloudy autumn sky. They can see the parsonage,

its windows red with the reflection of the evening sun.

That night she observes Agnes's face as she lies on her pillow: The childishly round cheeks have disappeared, and her features suddenly look sharper, older, there is an aloofness in her eyes. How could she not have noticed the change that must have been taking place over the last few weeks?

Things move too quickly that fall. Days, hours, minutes—the air is filled with the sound of time rushing by. Emily reaches for her watch, the small silver one inlaid with enamel that Walter had given her at the beginning of her studies. It swings from a chain attached to a metal ring that is pinned to the pocket of her blouse.

"Go to sleep now, Agnes. Tomorrow we'll go to Enge and visit your friend Magdalen." Emily bends down to Agnes and looks into her eyes: lakes that ripple at her breath.

"Aren't you going away tomorrow?"

"To the university? Yes, but not until three."

"Mrs. Kempin, how old were your three children when you began your studies?"

Clarissa Rosa is obsessed with the topic. Above all at night, when it is quiet in Friedmatt's pavilion, and every word penetrates the quiet as if echoing off the walls. She pulls her chair up to the bed, her knitting in her hands. She wants to share in the fit of temper that is turning Emily's face red.

Emily remains silent and turns her head away to avoid breathing in the wine on the attendant's breath. Clarissa Rosa knows this is not the way to get anything out of her. She goes to the wall cabinet and from the pile of papers there takes out the article from the magazine *From Cliff to Sea,* her favorite of the things Emily has written—everything else is gibberish to her. She positions the magazine in the lamplight and reads as she knits:

> *Because I have experienced with my own body how impossible it is to do justice to the various demands of a dual profession, I believe*

> *that any woman who has not been through it can speak of it only as a blind person speaks of color. The more we acknowledge that all avenues must be opened to women in their struggle for survival, that it is simply a law of humanity that her potential not be obstructed in any sphere of activity, the more necessary it is that we be open with one another ...*
> *I myself did not know—until that great taskmistress, Experience, came along—that the care and education of children cannot be restricted to certain hours of the day. ... A woman will think back with bitterness on those hours she spent away from her children. ...What do those women without children, those unmarried women who, as a rule, stand at the forefront of the women's movement, understand of such things?*

"Are you listening, Mrs. Kempin?"

Emily hates the click of her knitting needles, her irritating voice. She imagines Clarissa Rosa reading pious stories aloud at Sunday School, to save lost souls.

"Did you write that?"

Emily nods. It was just before she was delivered to the psychiatric ward in Lankwitz, already ill, plagued with money worries. Harassed by those who opposed women's rights, by women within her own ranks who accused her of having her feet planted too firmly on the ground of their struggle, of dealing only with givens. She lacked vision, they said. What did these single women, these women with their guaranteed incomes, know of Emily's life?

"They deprive children of their mothers, and themselves of the joy of motherhood, isn't that so, Mrs. Kempin?"

The clicking of the knitting needles.

Clarissa Rosa pricks up her ears, waits for Emily's "yes," then takes a deep breath and leans back in her chair.

"So you regret becoming a lawyer, do you?"

Emily sits up in her bed in one abrupt movement.

"No!" she gasps.

"You would still study if you could do it all over again? Aren't you contradicting yourself, Mrs. Kempin?"

"Life is full of contradictions, Clarissa Rosa," Emily says, and thinks, *Life is conceived in contradiction, between man and woman, day and night. One truth is revealed and other aspects of the truth are obscured.*

A woman should take care of her own children, but what happens when she herself doesn't get to live her own life? If she had raised her children with a constant feeling of restlessness, the feeling that life was passing her by, what good would that have done her children? There wasn't one square centimeter of the old parsonage that wasn't sticky with her aspiration. Like the sudden flow and clotting of blood.

New York, before the *Evening Post* building that rose up eleven stories high, its merlon towering over all the other buildings in the vicinity. Whenever Emily walked by she would stop briefly, tilt back her head, and look up at the roof floating in the blue sky. She loved the way the merlon's filigreed curlicues tickled the clouds. A porter who was sweeping the steps outside looked over at her and laughed.

"Would you like to come in, Miss?"

"May I?"

"Strangers aren't allowed in, but your eyes are so pretty, I'll make an exception." He gave her a nod of encouragement. She took the marble stairs two steps at a time. When she reached the fourth floor she paused for breath, to gather steam to continue her swift ascent. She was in the grip of some inexplicable desire to get to the top. On the eleventh floor she finally reached a door, threw herself against it, and climbed a ladder up to the merlon. Beneath her lay entire blocks of streets, lined with buildings. The tin roofs glittered.

She shaded her eyes with her hand and in doing so became aware of the dazzling eye of light directly above her. It filled the entire sky with its glare. There was no escape. She stood there, out of breath, alone. Then she teetered, and her shoulder blades twitched. As if she had wings like Icarus and they were melting under the eye of the sun.

OCTOBER 1889. Dry leaves were torn from the trees of Central Park by the high gusts of wind and swirled in the empty square in front of the Plaza between Fifty-eigth and Fifty-ninth streets. Pedestrians

dodged carriage wheels; women gathered their skirts to step gingerly around the puddles. A group of people was making its way to East Fifty-ninth Street. Walter, standing at the window with Agnes, saw them coming. The men wore top hats and the women were dressed in fur-trimmed coats with turned up collars.

"And then," Agnes said, tugging impatiently at her father's sleeve. "Go on . . ."

". . . and then the people built the Tower of Babel," Walter murmured, his eyes on the street. "Stone by stone, floor by floor, higher and higher toward the sun."

"And then?"

"Then they spoke to each other, all at one time. Their voices filled the rooms. Each wanted to be heard, but no one could understand anyone else. In desperation, they gestured at each other with their arms and hands . . ."

Walter watched as carriages drew up and halted in front of the building. There were already two long rows of them at the curb.

"And then? Come on, tell me!"

"And then they descended the tower, step by step. They went out into the street and set off throughout the land, and confusion accompanied them, and the shadow of their Tower of Babel fell across everything—"

"Walter!"

Emily called to her husband to come and help with the coats. More and more people were filling the rooms of the apartment.

She had never expected that so many people would accept her invitation. Now her guests sat crowded up against each other on chairs borrowed for the occasion. Emily's eyes flew over the group. Such a large number of prestigious people—she shuddered inwardly at so much prominence. Luckily, Dr. Putnam Jacobi had offered to give the welcoming speech.

The first law school for women. A bold experiment, epoch-making.

Mary Putnam Jacobi concluded her speech by wishing the school a long life. Emily looked over at her students. They sat at a slight angle to the audience, so that the guests could get a look at them: fourteen

young women dressed in the latest fashion, so as not to be taken for bluestockings.

Emily welcomed them all. Eight journalists—among them reporters from the *Sun, Mail and Express, Brooklyn Standard Union, New York Herald,* and *The New York Times*—took notes. She heard herself speaking in a language that still sounded strange coming out of her mouth. She felt small and lost among the intellects she had invited here, New York's elite. Those who could not attend telegraphed their best wishes, and she now mentioned their names: Judge Noah Davis, Charles D. Kellogg, William Allen Butler, Pastor Howard Crosby, Doctor of Divinity . . .

The crystal ceiling lamp projected her thin, delicate shadow, light as a feather. She smiled, and her speech took on authority, her eyes looked bluer and filled with ideas.

A *New York Times* report of 5 October 1889, stated:

> *The doctor is a pleasant-faced little woman, who speaks with great emphasis and a foreign accent. She began by saying that the men lawyers were not very smart after all, because a number of them told her distinctly that women would not be allowed to practice in this state, and whem she herself looked the question up, with little trouble, she found that women can gain entrance to the New York bar under an amendment of the Civil Code dated May 19, 1886.*
>
> *She went on to say that she did not intend to turn out pupils fitted simply to earn their bread and butter, but fitted to cope with any legal fight of the day in any court. She will begin from the beginning and teach the old Roman and German law, and her pupils will not be as dependent on text books as their brothers are.*
>
> *The doctor announced that the course would be two years, with a supplementary year in a law office and that the pupils would be examined for the bar by the Supreme Court Judges, as her college has not yet a charter.*
>
> *Fourteen young ladies from all over the country will begin work at the school, which will be held in the doctor's residence Tuesday.*

The children wanted to go to Liberty Island that Sunday. The air was clear and cold as they crossed on the ferry; they could see their breaths. Emily had looked forward to her encounter with Liberty, but the closer she got to the statue, the more ungainly it seemed, a colossus of a woman with dead eyes. The children pointed to the dark line of visitors on the island, who were disappearing into the lady.

"Father says she's swarming with people inside, we'll have to stand in line. I want to climb every one of the 171 iron spiral steps, right up into her head," Robert said.

"Her arm is a little Eiffel Tower," Gertrude said.

"I want to look up her nose," said Agnes.

"Don't you want to come?" Walter asked Emily.

"No," she said, "I don't."

Left alone at the base of Liberty, she looked over at the clouds above Manhattan. Fish clouds, a pike, its mouth open, ready to swallow up the smaller fishes. America at the end of the eighties was full of these omnivores: the Pennsylvania oil millionaires, the railroad barons; Carnegie, the steel magnate; Munn from Illinois, with his grain storehouses being defended in court. Everything was staggering under the expansion of these giants, the laws of economics were changing. The public was protesting, and twenty-one states were preparing antitrust amendments to their constitutions.

Now she knew what she would write about: It would be a work on modern trusts. She had assembled enough material for her opening speech, should she be accepted as a lecturer in New York, or later, in Zurich.

You'll see, Father. I'll do it.

With her inner eye, she had already sighted the shore of the approaching century. Women would have room to breathe then, to pursue their work unhampered by prejudice, to make their contribution to a better world.

The first days of the new era were clear as glass. Across the pavilions of Friedmatt a carillon of blue rang in the twentieth century. There were banners of smoke above the farm buildings; the silver linden was bare. The new century's arrival found Emily crushed, taken out of battle, under lock and key. She was overwhelmed by a terrible feeling of restlessness, fearful of these days when everything was slipping away. But still she struggled: a gnat in the frosty blue air.

She looks down at the fingers covered with black hair as they explore her stomach. It is cold in the room, a chill runs down her spine.

"I'm still waiting for a letter, Doctor Wille."

"What kind of letter?"

"An answer to my application, from Pastor Altherr."

The doctor's fingers now probe around her navel.

"I need activity, I want to do useful work . . ."

The fingers become obstinate, they press and push. "Does that hurt?"

She looks up at him reproachfully. There are tears in her eyes.

"It's getting bigger, your myoma." He gives her a sign to get dressed, then bends over his notes to make an entry in the second column.

When Dr. Wille leaves the office for a moment Emily sneaks a look at his open notebook. The first column notes the date: "January 1900." The third, headed "Treatment," remains empty; there has been nothing added for months now. Nothing is happening, except the tumor is getting larger. She imagines her cells dividing inside her day and night, happily reproducing.

"I feel like I'm in prison here, Dr. Wille. I want to do something stimulating, something meaningful."

"That can be arranged. I'll sign you up for the kitchen duties that third-class patients usually perform to contribute to their upkeep. Voluntarily, that is, if you—"

"Have you received another payment for me again?"

"Yes, last week. For second class."

"From whom?"

"The donors do not wish their identities to be known."

"Are they former students of mine from Berlin?"

"I am not at liberty to give you that information, Dr. Kempin."

The tumor isn't a tumor. She knows better: She has a man in her stomach. She revealed this to Dr. Wille once, during an examination. He stared at her in disbelief, bent over his notebook to make voluminous notes, and then suddenly looked up at her.

"Did you swallow him, Dr. Kempin, or—" Here he cleared his throat and gave her a stern look, "did he force entrance into your vagina?"

She told him she couldn't say, because she herself didn't know.

"Does he have a name, this man?"

She nods. "He has a name. But I am not at liberty to give you that information."

Back in the pavilion, sitting upright in bed, her scissors tear through the newspaper. She has already cut out a man in cowboy boots and leather hat, staring out into the distance with hooded eyes. She imagines what it is that he sees: a high plain, speckled brown with his herd. She adds a second man in a striped jacket and bowler.

Clarissa Rosa puts down her knitting—a tiny pink baby jacket—and looks at the figures. "These days women are wearing suits with knickerbockers to soirees, Mrs. Kempin! And turbans, *à l'Orientale!* There's a picture in the Basel paper today of a fashion show. She-males, Mrs. Kempin!"

She-males. She whispers the monstrous word softly to herself and smiles. Johanna Spyri had used the same word on Emily's last visit to her, during the time when Walter was working in Remscheid as editor of a political publication.

With Walter gone, she had stayed on with the children on Oberdorfstrasse day in and day out, and she longed for conversation. She thought Johanna would be pleased by her visit. After the death of her husband, which had followed close upon the death of her son, Johanna moved back to Zeltweg, where she lived as a recluse. A mutual

friend had told Emily that Johanna was lonely and carried on conversations with her own fictional characters.

Emily met Johanna at her flat, which seemed stuffed full with the heavy furniture from the city hall apartment. Every inch of available space was covered in manuscripts. Johanna looked pale, older. The hand she extended to Emily was blue, as if there were ink flowing in her veins. Barely had Emily sat down when Aline Kappeler, Johanna's friend from Frauenfeld, appeared. Tea was served by the same maid she had employed at city hall.

Johanna introduced her with the words, "This is my niece, the student." Her friend immediately seemed to know all about her.

"How are your children?" she asked Emily.

"The other children must laugh at them for having a mother who is a student," Johanna interjected.

"Sometimes, yes."

Emily felt a twinge, for Johanna had hit a nerve. Only yesterday Robert had come home from school crying, because a friend had teased him saying, "Your mother can't cook like other women, that's why you're so skinny!"

When Robert cried, "That's not true!" the boy had replied, laughing, "Oh yes it is, your mother is a shrew-stocking!"

"He must have said bluestocking," Emily corrected him.

During tea Emily made light of the shrew-stocking story. Johanna gave her a thin smile.

"In time, people will get used to the idea of women studying," Aline Kappeler said. She found the tense atmosphere unpleasant.

"Hopefully not!" Outspoken as always, Johanna unabashedly said exactly what she thought: "I don't approve of these women and their excessive learning; it robs their home life of all peace and quiet. She-males, that's what they are . . ."

Mrs. Kappeler gave at Emily a sidelong glance of embarrassment.

Husband and wife are one,
and that one is the man.
—SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE

"Woman—a woman is a woman!" the judge said. Edgy from the long wait, he crossed his hands over his stomach and cracked his knuckles. His neck, invisible under his white collar, was turned toward the door in anticipation of the latecomer, the plaintiff in a legal dispute who, he had been told, was arriving from northern Germany.

When the door finally opened a woman, visibly upset, hurried toward the bench elevated on a small podium. She apologized for her late arrival, saying the bailiff had refused to admit her to the courtroom.

When the judge asked what she wanted, she replied that she was there as representative, and eventually as cessionary, of Walter Kempin. She handed him a piece of paper, a power of attorney, which the judge quickly looked over. In the meantime, opposing counsel was whispering in the first row with Mrs. Körner-Schweizer, the defendant, who was also bringing counterclaim.

When the judge put down the document, opposing counsel rose. He refused, in the name of the defendant as well, to recognize a woman to represent the plaintiff. The woman, dressed in gray, her dark blond hair piled on her head, replied somewhat testily, "I am the wife of the plaintiff Walter Kempin. I am also a citizen of Zurich, by birth and by marriage." A tension-filled silence followed. The opposing counsel was still on his feet. He was a middle-aged man with deep lines in his face, marks of a difficult life. Until recently he had been an innkeeper, and now he was trying his luck as a shyster. The woman turned to stare at him. He cleared his throat, embarrassed under her gaze.

"Have you studied law, counselor?" Emily asked.

"The canton of Zurich requires no proof of qualification in that respect," he said in his own defense. "The sole qualification of being a lawyer is that of active citizenship."

She took a deep breath and turned to the judge, saying, "I am a law student in my sixth semester. In one year I will take my doctoral examinations. Once I have attained certification, I wish to open my own practice."

"Nothing much will come of that," the judge said, unable to conceal an ironic smile.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean that you can study as much as you wish, but you will never become a lawyer. You have one small flaw, Mrs. Kempin: You're a woman."

She struggled to remain calm, quoting Article 4 of the constitution as if she had anticipated this obstacle: *Every Swiss is equal in the eyes of the law. There exist in Switzerland no relationships of subservience and no privileges of place or birth, concerning either families or persons.*

"But your citation doesn't mention Swiss females," the judge said, his upper lip curling in mild derision.

"And what does that mean?"

"It means that you, as a woman, are not an active citizen, because you do not have the right to vote. Active citizenship is the sole requirement of the rules of procedure in Zurich for representing a third party in court."

"So any man, regardless of his training or the kind of life he has led, can represent a third party before the bench?"

The judge nodded. "That is, unless that man has lost his active citizenship due to unscrupulous acts: crime or insolvency or a lifelong dependence on charity."

"So a man needs nothing more than to be a man?"

"That is correct, Mrs. Kempin."

This took place on 24 November 1886, before the local court of Selnau-Zurich. That very same evening one of Zurich's most prominent journalists and politicians, Theodor Curti, appeared at the Kempins' door. After six years on the editorial staff of the *Frankfurter*

Zeitung, Curti—born in 1848 in Rapperswil—had founded his own newspaper, the *Züricher Post*.

"Excuse me for disturbing you," he said. "I would have preferred to call first, but the telephone system is not yet what it should be." He had heard that Emily, a student of law, had been refused admission to the local court to represent her husband in a legal case.

She invited him in and then quickly had to clear a place for him to sit in the living room; every available surface was covered with papers. Just like at Aunt Johanna's, it occurred to her.

He wanted to hear her side of the story, Curti said, so that he might support her in the press. He held the local court's decision to be false. Democracy, as he envisioned it, would not tolerate women being treated as if they were minors.

He adjusted his glasses. "You are aware, of course, aren't you, Mrs. Kempin, that according to such a decision by the court, you would have to give up your wish to become a lawyer?"

"I'm aware of that, yes."

She saw the sympathy on his face, a face with large and energetic features she found pleasing. His mouth, almost completely concealed by a bushy moustache, had a hint of irony.

"What will you do?"

"Fight the decision with a constitutional appeal to the federal Supreme Court." She pointed to the manuscripts piled on the chairs. "That is the draft of my appeal."

He stroked his moustache, and commended her on her determination. "I would bet that you're going after the local court's definition of the concept of active citizenship?"

She nodded. "The right to vote is not a prerequisite of active citizenship," she said, "but a consequence of it. Active citizenship is equal to a citizen's full enjoyment of civil rights, to which all citizens are entitled, even those who do not—or do not yet—have the right to vote."

"That is the way I see it as well," he agreed.

There was a pause, during which he seemed to be studying her face. She felt this, and was embarrassed by the hope that he would feel sympathy for her. Quickly she said, "And what do you think of the court's

argument that a wife has no right of active citizenship because she is subject to her husband's guardianship?"

"Medieval claptrap!" Curti said emphatically. "A husband's guardianship extends only to the property, and not to the person of the wife!"

She nodded. "Were the latter true, then in the case of divorce, the husband's guardianship would have to be replaced by another's!" She was struck by the absurdity of this, and wrinkled her nose when she laughed. Curti found her sudden good humor infectious.

"Then, as soon as the wife practices a profession or a trade," she continued, and he completed her sentence as if they were singing a round, "she is obliged to pay taxes, and therefore is equal to any other person with the capacity to conduct business!"

The conversation had taken on a nearly frivolous tone. She offered to make coffee and suggested he take a look at her manuscript while she was in the kitchen.

As she was putting the water on to boil, she remembered that Curti occasionally published poems and novellas, odd pieces that were deemed objectionable because they were unconventional and did not easily fit into any political system of thought. Nor did the *Züricher Post* hesitate to take passing shots at both the left and the right. Yet despite this the paper was respected, even by the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* its competition.

When he put down her text, he asked, "Do you think you could add one more thing to your request to have your active citizenship and your capacity to transact legal business recognized? Something important to the public at large—namely, the request to make the practice of law contingent upon proof of competence?"

She laughed. "That's exactly what I have in mind."

They agreed that Emily would bring a clean copy of her appeal by his office, and she appeared with it at the beginning of December. Curti was working on a series of articles on economic policy, the first of which had appeared already, causing a stir in Zurich.

She told him that his articles made her father's blood boil. He smiled, probably envisioning Spyri for a moment, with whom he sat on the same political committees.

"That probably holds true for anyone who still dwells in the world of Manchesterism," he conceded. "My ideas on social policy changed while I was in Frankfurt. For six years I was the editor of a newspaper that opposed the government of Bismarck; that left its mark. It was a time when Social Democracy was suppressed, and the free expression of opinion was shackled!"

"So you see things here in a different light as well?"

He nodded vehemently. "The state is not a playground for private speculation. The rights of the people must be expanded and the lot of workers improved!"

"And yet you reject socialism as sectarian. You won't join any camp. That must be an effort for you."

"I'm for reform, not revolution. If you overshoot the target you miss the mark! People don't change from one day to the next."

"Does that apply to the women's question as well?"

He noted her sly expression and nodded. "But now I want to read your petition. Would you have a glass of wine with me, Mrs. Kempin? It would brighten up this gray afternoon a bit. When December comes around I can feel my family's Italian ancestry; I miss the sun."

"Aha, so that's a part of you, too!" She pointed at him, laughing, as if she had discovered a secret. "But in your newspaper you support temperance societies and the brandy tariff."

When he laughed in turn she noticed how full his lips were. Why does he hide them under his moustache, she wondered.

"I find your work to be meticulously grounded," he said in compliment, as he returned her manuscript. "It's wise to base your argument on Article 4. Surely the federal Supreme Court will not refuse to hear it; the time is ripe. Did you know that a woman in America has fought almost the same battle as you are fighting, and was successful?" When Emily shook her head, he showed her a news agency report on the American attorney Belva Lockwood.

"And now, to the horror of the citizenry, she's bicycling to court in red stockings," he concluded with a laugh. "Who knows, perhaps soon we'll see you bicycling to your practice. When are your exams?"

"In early summer. Hopefully by then I will have heard something positive from the federal court, and will be motivated to study."

"How very much I wish that for you, Mrs. Kempin."

He accompanied her to the corridor. She looked small in her black coat with the fur trim. In the lamplight, her hair shone gold. She caught his attentive look, and it stayed with her for a while afterward.

Six weeks later she entered Curti's office after a short knock, not waiting for a response. He turned to her in astonishment.

"An answer?"

She nodded. The papers Emily handed him across his desk were dated 29 January 1887.

"And?"

"Read it for yourself."

She sank into a chair and watched his face, which took on a composed expression as he read. His lips moved, and she heard him say: *In a decision by the federal Supreme Court of 29 January 1887, the appeal made by Emilie Kempin, student of jurisprudence, is rejected as unfounded.*

"This can't be true!" he said in disappointment, lowering the pages.

"Unfortunately, it is true." She brushed away a tear of anger with the back of her hand.

> *If the petitioner bases her argument on Article 4 of the federal Constitution (Every Swiss is equal in the eyes of the law...) in an attempt to deduce that the federal Constitution is postulating therewith the full and lawful equality of the sexes in the entire sphere of public and private law, then her interpretation is as novel as it is bold; it cannot, however, be accepted ...*

"As novel as it is bold." He shook his head in disbelief. "That such a decision would be handed down thirteen years prior to the beginning of the twentieth century—I never would have believed it."

She nodded, then said in a strained voice, "So the judge in Selnau was right. I can study; I can earn my doctorate like a good girl, but I will never be a lawyer."

He saw her angry expression. "You've taught the judges the meaning of fear, Mrs. Kempin. 'The consequences would be unthinkable,' as the local court already stated. These gentlemen can feel the day

coming when the other half of humanity will demand its rights, and they're holding fast to their exclusivity. But just wait: In a few years Zurich will have new rules concerning lawyers. The day of the woman is nigh. . . . At any rate, I will do my part with the kindred spirits of the cantonal council to speed that day."

"What good will that do me?" she said impatiently. "I haven't that much time."

"I was born a few years before you," he said, "and I can wait."

"But I can't!" She looked at him in despair.

(She was to have only a decade of struggle left before the doors of the insane asylum shut behind her. And one year following that, on 3 July 1898, on a motion by Curti, a new statute on lawyers took effect, which required a law examination, the results of which— regardless of sex—would determine competence in the field.) He could not bear her expression. "Come, Mrs. Kempin, let us go to the Meise and raise a glass to that not-so-distant day."

The tavern, at its customary lull around six, was almost empty. The writer Gottfried Keller was sitting against the wall with a half-liter of Clevner. He recognized the wife of former pastor Kempin and greeted her with a nod. A young couple looked over at Curti and his companion and whispered to each other.

"They recognize you; aren't you concerned for your reputation?" he asked.

"As of today, I could not care less," Emily said, feigning indifference. "Shouldn't you be concerned for your own reputation, appearing in public with a woman who is a student? You married only a few years ago, didn't you?"

He looked at her, disarmed, and laughed. She laughed back, and accepted a second glass of wine, though the first had gone straight to her head. He saw the transformation, the sudden illuminated landscape of her face. Her usual strained expression had abruptly disappeared. Nor had she missed the sudden play of darkness and light reflected in the mirror next to the sideboard: the darkness of the back of Curti's head set against her face, framed in gold.

She looked away from Curti's face into her own eyes in the mirror. You're still here, Emily, they'll have to reckon with you yet. Have

you now discovered that there are a man's eyes that make you feel alive? Are you to ignore the fact that you are a woman just because you're in the process of discovering you have a brain?

"Novel and bold, I'm novel and bold," she said suddenly with a surge of excitement, her eyes sparkling. "What do you say to that, Editor Curti?"

"I am happy to be sitting here with a novel and bold woman," he replied.

Standing amidst the buildings of Manhattan in the fall of 1889, she felt an enormous need for lake air and space. She took the elevated railway to the southern point of Manhattan and boarded a ferry, plowing through the water, clouds racing by overhead.

She stood at the bow in the wind, the sole passenger, her hair flying. Her cape billowed behind her as if she had sprouted black fur-trimmed wings. The buildings of Manhattan grew smaller beyond the whitecaps, and the pressure in her chest lessened.

For the past several weeks she had gone through a tunnel of disappointment and anguish. But always before her, in the distance, was this shimmering light, this promise of a new era: *You can do it Emily, hold on*.

Of the two dozen women who had responded to the advertisement for her new school, fourteen appeared for the first night of classes: a sound, optimistic number nevertheless. But once classes began, the first set of examinations and the fact that she could not offer scholarships caused a loss of students. In the end, three remained. Undeterred, she carried on with her lectures—for three students.

The investment in terms of money and energy was laughable. What kind of miracle was she hoping for? Walter was trying to convince her to finally see the light, to leave New York and return to the old, familiar ways.

"We still have time to go back before the winter storms begin," he said. Suddenly, as if on cue, the two older children appeared in their nightshirts to flank their father. Little angels of wrath, hurling

angry looks at her and stamping their bare feet: Back, yes, back!

Standing at the bow, a figurehead in the wind, she heard other voices: Florence Clinton Sutro, inspired by her lectures, saying to Fanny Weber, "If Emily Kempin's law school closes, we might as well give up fighting for the education of women."

Fanny Weber hastily called a meeting of former members of the Arbitration Society, during which Martha Munn shouted out exuberantly, "Let's get down to brass tacks and found a new society. We'll call it the Women's Legal Education Society!"

"We'll collect money so that it will have a solid financial base!" This in the solemn, somewhat hoarse voice of young Helen Gould.

Male voices in chorus. Judge Noah Davis: "Don't give up, Mrs. Kempin, they're holding a meeting at the University of the City of New York."

Crosby's preacher's voice: "I have heard that Chancellor MacCracken is seriously considering you women's suggestion."

"How much longer are you going to believe in voices?" Walter had said. "You have to keep your feet on the ground."

At the landing, she quickly moved away from the passengers who were boarding. She walked past the docks, following the line of the water, ankle-deep in sand and paying no attention to her shoes.

Soon there were only yellow dunes and the green and foaming sea around her. In the distance, Manhattan was a wedge driven deep into the water. The wind had died down and birds picked for worms in the silt of a stream. She stopped and filled her lungs with the salty air.

Behind the dunes, protected from the wind by a barracks, she discovered a pair of lovers. The man had his arm around the woman's hips; she lay with her cheek against his neck, her eyes looking up into the open expanse of the sky.

Emily was embarrassed to watch them, and yet she couldn't take her eyes off the couple. She was shocked at how strongly she wished that she were the woman behind the dunes; shocked at her wish to throw everything away for one moment of love, to be shipwrecked and lying with her lover.

The glass panes of the pavilion shine with the morning light. She opens both casements at an angle, so they mirror her. She is naked, and looks at herself: She is still pretty, still has soft, flowing curves. She stopped wearing a corset when she lived in Berlin, preferring the natural movement of her breasts and hips. The sight of her own body fills her with confidence.

She still exists. Despite the tumor, her body still struggles toward life, toward love.

"You'll catch cold, Frau Kempin."

Behind her, Dr. Wolff has entered the room. He takes the crocheted blanket from her bed and puts it around her shoulders. She turns and the blanket opens to reveal her legs and left hip. She tells him that they should run away together, begin a new life in England. She would write that very day to one of her patrons in Berlin, she says, and ask for money.

She inclines her head forward, and her voice takes on a poignant, almost childlike and confidential tone as she says to him: "The old man will do you in."

He blushes. She sees this and is pleased by the trace of sensitivity on his pale, anxious face.

"You'll catch cold," he says again.

She smiles and reassures him with an almost maternal gesture. "I'm tough; last night I slept on the floor. And up until last week I was walking in the meadows barefoot. Dew heals, as Kneipp says."

He looks at her with a mixture of astonishment and admiration. The barren atmosphere of Friedmatt, the monotony of institutional life are quick to turn other patients lethargic. She was steeling her body, holding fast to her mental exercises, making notes for her world order, writing articles for Berlin papers.

"Well then . . ." He moves toward the door.

She nods. She is firm in her decision to flee to England with him. Dr. Wolff and herself, Emily, two autonomous, marvelously free creatures who meet, are separated from one another, and—with the other's smile as guide—find each other again.

Dreams. Everything is still possible.

The first snowstorms of the year swept through the streets of Manhattan. A hearth fire was burning in the foyer of the Liederkranz Society. Everyone was enjoying a glass of Rhine wine following a performance of Carl Maria von Weber's *Freischütz* at the Deutsches Theater. Walter Kempin and Dr. Weber sat apart from the others in a niche decorated like a Bavarian tavern.

"You don't look well," the doctor said, putting his hand on Kempin's arm in a paternal fashion.

"My cough," Kempin sighed. "It starts early each morning. By the time I get up, I'm surprised I'm still here."

"You spend too much time in a draft, dear man, and more than likely it's coming from your wife, always moving around, trying out this and that! Go back across the ocean before this winter really sets in. I don't know how you will survive it otherwise, with that bronchitis of yours."

"She has to move around," Kempin says in defense of his wife. "There are five of us, and the articles I write for the *Philadelphia Democrat* don't bring in much. It's she who keeps us going."

"Don't misunderstand me, I have great admiration for your wife," the doctor says.

"Another glass of Riesling?"

They toast one another. Their table is dappled with yellow and green moons, reflections of the bull's-eye window glass.

"Is it true that it was you who encouraged her to study?" Weber asked, setting down his glass.

"Yes, that's true."

"That was something novel, perhaps as novel as what your wife is doing, and now you're shocked at your own courage. Here you are, standing in the middle of the New World, and you've forgotten how to put one foot in front of the other. In the next century men will have more time to get used to the new woman. You'll have to do that now, Kempin, the wheels won't roll back."

Emily, Fanny, and Florence stood by the fire talking to each another, watched over by the figures from German mythology painted on the ceiling above them. Compared to the partially clad female Huns, the women appeared small and delicate. Florence had invited them to the evening meal, raving about the cook at the Liederkranz, and now they were picking at their ribs and sauerkraut with knife and fork. And then, during the meal, she announced the good news: Helen Gould was donating scholarship funds so that her friend Etta Titus, and other women without means, could attend Emily Kempin's school. And plans to found the Woman's Law Education Society were proceeding.

"We're taking it one step at a time, on sound legal footing. And armed with our impressive membership list we'll advance on the university again! As far as financing the new society, Helen will have to reach into her pockets again. Whatever Jay Gould wangles out of others, Helen gives back in social works. That's what I call a division of labor!"

They laughed. The fire was pleasantly warm. Emily gazed at the blue-tipped flames, starved for oxygen. *I don't have to get too close to the fire,* she thought, *though I have a burning desire to succeed. I don't have to go up in the flames, I can learn to master the fire.*

"You give me courage," she told them. "My family and I will survive this terrible winter. We're giving up the apartment on Fifty-ninth Street at the beginning of the year, it's too expensive and my husband has never felt comfortable there. He wants to live downtown, at the southern tip of the island, on Nassau Street. He likes it because it's so bumpy and crooked—like a market street in Europe.

For months now Walter had been drawn back to South Ferry again and again. From the Battery he had watched the newcomers arriving from Europe. He saw them standing on line in Castle Gardens, where immigration officers decided whether or not to admit them to the promised land. Later, he watched the same people depart through the open doors of the decrepit building. Most of them looked relieved, set free. Many of their faces glowed with grandiose plans. He loved

to analyze their expressions, to try and guess what their ancestry was, what they had left behind. In their eyes he read the history of their sacrifices. They brought with them the smell of the Old World in their hair and in the folds of their coats. He watched them entering their barracks, where others were lying in wait to sell these greenhorns railway tickets west, or land in Wisconsin. Barbers and shoe-shine boys offered their services, jobs were posted in one booth, a provisional telegraph office had been set up in another. He was touched by the immigrants' hope and courage, by the spirit of beginning anew. The feeling stayed with him for hours.

On this afternoon he stood with Agnes in front of the stone wall of the jetty, only a few feet from the ocean. The water was the green color of reeds, turning chalky at the line of the horizon. First they had gone to Nassau Street, to look at the building where Mama had been offered an apartment. As their eyes climbed the red sandstone facade, Agnes remarked on the stonework and the delicate inscription: "Palmcourt."

"It's pretty, isn't it, Papa?"

"Yes, it's pretty, for you and Mama."

"And for you?"

"I had a talk with Mama last night. I'm going back to Zurich with Gertrude and Robert. Don't you want to come with us on the ship?"

"No, I get seasick. Besides, I want to stay with Mama. We can't leave her all alone in New York."

They walked in silence to Beaver Street, where Walter inquired at a travel agent's about booking passage on the next ship to Bremen. It turned out that cabins were available on the same ship they had come over on. Departure was in eight days.

"Two children and two adults?"

"No, two children and one adult."

"Look how calm the sea is," Walter said.

Agnes leaned out over the walls of the jetty. "I still don't want to travel on a ship."

"But we've already decided that you'll come for a visit this summer, you and Mother."

"Couldn't we fly, Papa? You told us a story once about someone who tried, what was his name again?"

"Daedalus."

"And his son?"

"Icarus."

"Tell me again how they made their wings. . . . No, not later, Papa, now!"

She tugged at his arm, her wishes blasting out like a hot furnace. She was passionate about her wishes, she had inherited that from Emily, and he could never resist it.

"Daedalus was a skilled artisan. He made two pairs of wings, a big set for himself and a smaller set for Icarus, and together they practiced flying.

"When they had learned how to fly, Daedalus said, 'Whoever learns to fly must also learn to fall. Pay attention now, Icarus: when you fall the Earth comes closer and closer. The tiny dots that are trees and houses fly up to meet you. But they're not really flying, it is you who are flying, and everything beneath you gets bigger to the same degree that you get smaller.'"

"Smaller? How small?"

"It's like a cat, Agnes. It's the art of knowing how to relax before crashing against whatever is coming toward you. You know—a cat has nine lives. You can fall nine times, and only then do you die."

How many falls have I survived so far? Walter asked himself. The fall from Enge, the fall from the editorial offices in Remscheid and then again—a terrible year, 1885—the fall from the Red Cross, my own philanthropic organization. The clash with the central committee almost killed me. All of a sudden I was in the minority—I and my ideas about peacetime service. And then in November I was forced to resign my office as president of the central association, and the remaining members voted in new statutes, more suited to the army's needs. My philanthropic work went up in smoke, my own ideas were turned against me. When I crashed, something insideme died. It was the same in Remscheid, nothing I tried worked. And here, too, in America, I can still feel this dead part of me inside.

And my return from the New World—will that prove to be a fall as well?

Emily felt rejuvenated as the year 1890 began. Snow was falling; it took away Manhattan's heaviness and enclosed her in a light and dreamlike world behind the windows on Nassau Street. But there was a note of melancholy to these dreams; she turned her inner eye to the distance and saw her two older children walking across Stadelhoferplatz in Zurich, on their way to see their Grandmother Kempin.

She was shocked to realize that she barely missed her husband. Only now was she becoming aware of how much space he took up with his constant, pervasive uneasiness. His indecisiveness, his "what ifs" and "buts" had clogged her pores like wax and inhibited her. It was as if her role in their life together had been to shelter him, and then one day she realized that in the long run she wasn't strong enough to carry them both.

Slowly, her energy was returning. She awoke earlier than usual, and the contours of the day stretched out before her in clear outline. She got up cheerfully and prepared for her classes. She had kept the classroom on Fifty-ninth Street; in the last few weeks the school had settled down to a normal schedule. Thanks to the relief committee Helen Gould had organized, four scholarship students had joined the three original students—all independent women who made teaching a joy.

There was Stanleyetta Titus, sharp as a tack and full of provocative questions. She was studying law in order to help her family out of the financial difficulties that had ensued from a lawsuit. And Cornelia Hood, a large and energetic woman with a double chin, was extraordinary for someone her age. She had originally wanted to train as a midwife, and she brought a homespun practicality to questions of law. The objections she raised brought the class back down to earth, particularly the artistically inclined Florence Clinton Sutro. Isabella Petma, another student, was a pudgy girl who learned only with effort what the others sailed through. Yet once she had grasped something,

her memory was unassailable. Whenever someone forgot something, she needed only ask Isabella.

Twice a week Emily offered evening courses, at the suggestion of the committee. For a fee of one dollar anyone could become a member and attend the evening courses free.

The winter social season was in full swing. Word was out among Emily's friends that she loved to go to the theater. She sat in the dark like a delighted child, staring at the stage, her eyes wide, as if at a brightly lit window on life itself. At the theater one could sit back and for two hours become an observer, step out of one's own story.

The Webers and Sutros issued invitations to her often. But Emily loved even more to stay home evenings, in her new apartment on Nassau Street. She left the large living room almost totally unfurnished; she didn't want upholstery and dark wood to absorb the light that came through the generous corner windows. At dusk she liked to sit on an old carpet she had brought with her from her parent's house, the one with blue triangles and green moons that had lain in her room as a girl. She would sit there and read, sometimes preferring the stories of Walter Scott to the law. She often would take Agnes on her lap, to talk about the day's events. Agnes's health had stabilized; she was calmer, as if the departure of her father and siblings had allowed her to relax, too.

"What are Gertrude and Robert doing now?" she sometimes would ask suddenly.

"They're asleep. It's already past midnight in Zurich."

"That's funny. They're as far away as night from day!"

"Yes, Agnes."

When Agnes was asleep and the rest of the family, on the other side of the world, was preparing to rise, Emily was still awake, planning and organizing. She needed very little rest. When she looked in the mirror above the sink each morning she saw another Emily, one she had been seeking for a long time.

At the end of February, Dr. Munn again asked her to lecture on hypnosis, this time to the young physicians of the Woman's Hospital.

There was a wave of interest in the topic, which had washed over to America from Europe, and Emily, because she was familiar with Dr. Forel, his experiments at Burghölzli, and his publications, was considered an expert on the topic.

Her talk was followed by an animated discussion. Dr. Munn later expressed his pleasure at the evening's success. She had spoken with clarity and enthusiasm, he said, carrying her audience along with her. Then he asked if she would like to attend the theater with him that evening, he had two tickets. His wife? No, she couldn't go. And besides, they often went their separate ways . . .

The look Emily gave him made him a bit uncomfortable. Munn was a fashionable physician of awkward manner. He had dark, alert eyes and his ears stuck out, something that women found endearing.

"You'll have to decide quickly, I'm afraid. The performance begins in half an hour."

"I won't have time to change."

"You look just fine," Munn said as assurance, and complimented her on her velvet dress with the lace collar, saying that it made her look small, yet feminine. And the moss color brought out the blond in her hair.

"You talk like a fashion magazine," she laughed.

They sat in a loge in the most expensive section of the theater. She understood little of the play. In the intermission a theater attendant served champagne, while eyes and opera glasses turned to their loge. It often happened that John P. Munn, the Goulds' personal physician, appeared in the company of a strange woman, and the only question was, Who is she this time?

As she sipped champagne, she tried to imagine how she appeared through opera glasses: reduced in size, with pinpoints for eyes, her nose peeking out over the plush balustrade. Munn's head next to hers, with his stand-up collar, silk handkerchief, ears sticking out, monocle in place, hair slick with pomade, and a dyed black moustache. She felt as if she were floating, as if the balcony loge had broken loose from its moorings and was circling above the heads of the audience.

Standing outside on the sidewalk after the performance, Emily feels more in control of her faculties. Munn insists on accompanying her home. She lived quite near, on Fifty-ninth Street, doesn't she?

Only her classroom is still located there, she informs him. She lives downtown. She could take a carriage home; he needn't go to the trouble.

"It's too late for a lady to travel alone by cab," he says.

The drive down Broadway is long and bumpy, snow is piled up on the street. Under the lamb's-wool blanket, the warmth of someone else's body is pleasant; she allows him to take her hand and hold it in his own.

"Is everything all right, Emily?"

She nods.

A snowflake gets caught in his moustache and melts. Under the blanket his signet ring is pressing the soft flesh between her thumb and her index finger; she moves her finger to lessen the pressure. It is too cold for tender feelings. On top of that, the driver should have turned onto Maiden Lane, but he is already at Trinity Church, visible in the soft light of a shepherd's crook lantern. He takes Wall Street, and then at the Sub-Treasury Building, which looks unreal with its columns and the statue of Washington freezing on its steps, he turns onto Nassau Street and stops before her building.

Munn looks up at the facade and murmurs something, presumably complimenting its modern style. His words float out of his mouth like clouds.

"A cup of coffee to fortify you for the return trip?" She looks at him, brushing frost from her eyebrows with the tips of her fingers.

"Should I wait?" the cabby asks. Munn tells him no and pays him. They have scarcely gotten out before the carriage disappears in the snow.

She lights the lamp in the living room and goes into the children's room. Agnes is having a fitful night again, tossing and turning. Munn, at Emily's request, lights the fire; the flames are darting up by the time she returns from the kitchen. They drink the coffee and become warmer with each sip; the warmth of his hand pressing her arm passes through

her as well. He puts his hand on the back of her neck and turns her head gently toward him. Docile, she sees his lips under his moustache coming nearer, trembling and sensuous. He binds his beard at night, she thinks with a shudder, and then lets him kiss her anyway. It would be a routine love story: He would make love to her, return two days later and then the next week, and this would turn into a clandestine game that would only create a new kind of dependency for her.

Is this what she wants? Just when she is feeling so unencumbered? She listens to his breathing and to the moans of the child in the next room. She removes his hands from around her neck and takes back control of her own mind. "It is time," she says, looking at him with determination, "for you to go."

"The carriage has left." He leans back, rumples his forehead like a dachshund, and looks at her with pleading eyes.

"There's a carriage stand right around the corner, on Fulton Street."

She stands at the window and watches him in the lamplight. All she can see is a top hat with legs, spats, patent leather boots. The snow swallows every sound, and it is as if someone is silently receding from her dreams.

She undresses and lies down beside Agnes under the blanket. Agnes, blinking, recognizes her mother, and turns toward her with a sigh of contentment. Taking in the warmth of the child's body, a feeling of sadness touches her. The child's breath on her neck, she falls asleep.

She spent the entire next day at her desk. Toward evening it began to snow again, and the light of dusk, reflected by the snow, made the room seem larger. When the letters on the page began to swim before her eyes she sat down on her rug, stroking the blue and green pattern. She looked out the window at the driving snow, the pupils of her eyes were filled with it.

This room would be nice for love, she thought. And yet I don't regret sending Munn home last night. I'll imagine an ideal lover, create him for myself. We'll lie close together and take in the stillness. At night, the soft moonlike light of Manhattan will fall on our naked bodies. We'll make love on the secret symbols of my rug. My lover will weave a tapestry of stories that will cover us, and our love

itself will be an ever changing story. Why shouldn't my Scheherazade be a man? Walter Scott, had he not died long ago, could be my lover. I've loved his stories since I was a girl. I still go through them again and again; I dwell in them as in a house.

In *The New York Times* she had read that Walter Scott, an attorney like herself, had built himself a home—spacious and splendid, with each room decorated from one of his books. He had gone into debt building the house, and he had been forced to keep writing stories to support one many-chambered story of stone.

She put her head down on the carpet's ocean blue spheres, and touched her breasts with her fingertips. Here I am, come, make yourself known to me so that I may know myself. Walter Scott, attorney of the existential battle for dream become reality—my male side, come, we are one.

Whoever is able,
Toss the world into the air
so that the wind may pass through it.
—HILDE DOMIN

It was a stormy April. Emily took Agnes out one day between downpours and, without knowing it, stood at exactly the same point on the jetty where Walter had stood with Agnes before his departure.

"Beyond this water are Robert, Gertrude, and Father," Agnes said reflectively. "When will we be together again, Mother?"

"This summer, when the water is calm and smooth. We'll go by ship, and this time you won't get seasick."

Emily looked at the ocean, which seemed to her a living, breathing creature. An ocean separated her from her husband, who was trying to escape her shadow back in the Old World. And yet he was walking in her footsteps. As of the winter semester he had been studying law in Zurich.

"Father told me the story of Daedalus, Mama." Agnes tugged at Emily's arm looked up at her with her round eyes. "But what happened after he taught Icarus to fly?"

"Daedalus said, 'Follow behind me, Son,'" Emily murmured, her mind still on Walter.

"And then?"

"And then later, when Daedalus looked around, he couldn't find Icarus anywhere."

Walter wants to catch up with me by studying law, she thought. He wants to be on my level, and is standing on tiptoe. In her mind she saw him sitting in Schneider's class, in Meili's, and Liliental's.

"And then what, Mama?"

"And then he saw a dot high up in the heavens, near the sun. He

leaned far back and stared upward. He wants to call out to his son, but his voice couldn't reach him."

A sea gull flew above them, soaring free against the light.

Cumulus clouds drifted behind the university, making figures in the blue spring sky. The carriage crossed Washington Square Park and moved toward the main building of the university.

It looks like some medieval relic, Emily thought, with its narrow Gothic steeples and its high, pointed windows. With each turn of the carriage wheels the austere structure seemed more threatening to her. She became a small girl smoothing her unruly hair before a visit, checking her pocket mirror to see if she was presentable for this meeting, which she had looked forward to for months now.

"You can do it," Fanny Weber said, sitting across from her with Helen Gould, and Helen, her round cheeks spotted with sun, smiled.

Yet Emily was worried. Did this bastion of science house real human beings? Did this university have a human face?

The human face looking out of the third-story window of the east wing saw the carriage approach and stop before the gate, and the man this face belonged to asked himself: What will they look like, these three Amazon women?

He knew only one of these women, Helen Gould, and that in passing. She had attended university ceremonies with her father, Jay, a former student, sitting next to him on the podium near the vice-chancellor's lectern. Gould owed this place of honor to the generous contributions he had made to the university. Helen had seemed like a butterfly then, dressed in white muslin, and refreshingly youthful. Now she was a young woman whose social commitment was a topic of conversation; he was curious to hear her ideas. Vice-Chancellor MacCracken found that it was high time that the university addressed the woman question.

Until now they had shut women out, with the result that all of a sudden women were proving a threat everywhere, not only in the yellow press. Even the serious newspapers carried frequent and astounding reports: Documents on witches had been found in Salem, women

dressed as men were championing free love, seamstresses in the fur business on the Lower East Side were threatening to strike. Perhaps it was possible to dismiss such sensationalism with a laugh, but reports concerning the newly founded Law School for Women, in contrast, were alarming.

Smug professors were pricking up their ears at statements such as those that had appeared in *Mail and Express:*

> *Doctor Emily Kempin, herself turned away by Columbia University and the University of the City of New York, says she wants to enable women to pass official examinations successfully and appear before the bar of the State of New York, as do their male colleagues who are trained at traditional universities. Boston, meanwhile, already has four female attorneys, and another dozen are employed in states west of Missouri and Mississippi, she says.*

A petition submitted by this Kempin woman had been ignored the year before, and in no time at all the opposition had initiated an enterprise that, over the short or long run, was a threat to the entire profession. The vice-chancellor felt that these wild outcroppings of women's initiatives should be brought under control. Assuming, of course, that it would cost the university nothing, that the faculty would not have to forego funds marked for their true purpose: the education of young men.

In March, just as they were considering what steps should be taken, another petition arrived from the circle of women around Kempin, and among the signatures was the clear, almost childlike handwriting of Helen Gould. Contrary to usual procedure, this request immediately was passed on to the committee of the juristic faculty, and the committee had instructed the chancellor to invite the ladies to present their objectives and ideas.

So this is what the face of the university looks like, Emily thought fifteen minutes later, when shown into the office of the vice-chancellor. It's not what I expected—old-fashioned, to be sure, with his antiquated, billowing St. Nick beard, but it's a well-meaning face. His eyes are alert and full of humor.

Fanny spoke first, reporting on the Arbitration Society she had founded, and on the dilemma of there not being any women trained to handle the legal questions that arose in the field of social work. It was for this reason that Dr. Kempin, with the support of the Women's Circle, had founded her law school. They wished for their law school to be affiliated with the university, which would conserve energy currently wasted on organizational activity. On the condition, of course, that Emily Kempin remain head of the school and be allowed to realize her plans.

"Her concept," MacCracken said, "is something I'd like to hear more about."

As always when she spoke about the school, Emily did so with enthusiasm.

"Remarkably explicit," MacCracken commended her when she finished. "As far as the autonomy you wish for the law class, it would be best for it to remain under the protection of the future Woman's Legal Education Society, even if it becomes part of the law faculty. And when will the society be founded?"

"We're moving forward one step at a time. Registration will be held in a few weeks. A society like ours is not planned as a passing fancy," Fanny answered, adding that she could show him the list of eventual charter members.

The vice-chancellor scanned the list, noting with satisfaction the names of the wealthy and famous. He now felt more comfortable in addressing the most sensitive point: "The society will have to finance all classes for the first few years. We unfortunately don't have any funds to divert."

Fanny, in her own dignified fashion, replied, "We will assume Dr. Kempin's salary for the first four years, and award stipends as well."

"But that will cost a great deal," MacCracken said. "Do you have a financial fund?"

"We are in the process of underwriting a scholarship fund," Helen answered, as if the time had come for her to speak her lines. "Could I ask you for a blank piece of paper, Reverend MacCracken?"

At the top of the pure white sheet of paper she wrote: "Helen Gould

will contribute $16,000 to the Woman's Law Class." She then handed the sheet to Fanny, who wrote: "Fanny Weber will contribute $1,000 to the Woman's Law Class."

The vice-chancellor's eyelids fluttered. He rose and gave a formal bow. "I look forward to your class, Dr. Kempin. If all goes well, I will be named chancellor next year, and your class will come under my personal protection. It would be my pleasure to do something for the cause of women."

She looked at him, faint with happiness, and the words got stuck in her throat.

On 5 May she received the university council's decision:

> *The University of the City of New York authorizes the Vice-Chancellor to allow Mrs. Emily Kempin, Doctor of Jurisprudence of the University of Zurich, to hold lectures at the University for non-matriculated students, predominately businesswomen.*
> *According to agreement, the honorary fee for these lectures will be paid by friends of Dr. Kempin and will amount to not less than one thousand dollars per year for four years. A certain percent of the course fees will be paid to the university, to cover its costs.*

On 14 June 1890, the Woman's Legal Education Society was formally established. Fanny was named president, and Mrs. Field vice-president. The wife of attorney Alexander Forman offered her services as secretary, and Dr. Mary Putnam, physician and suffragette, became treasurer. Among the members were Mrs. Abraham S. Hewitt, wife of the former mayor of New York City.

Emily Kempin's lectures were to commence in October 1890.

Emily, roly-poly woman. As a child, she had received a toy roly-poly man as a gift. When she pushed him over he sprung back up again, due to a lead weight in his stomach.

She felt the place below her navel where all of her experience and hopes and ideals came together. She had to find her center of gravity that would always push her upright again, some technique that she could use to her own advantage.

Years later, her experience had settled there and hardened. The doctor's hands palpate the place under her navel. "An ulceration, Mrs. Kempin. It's growing, getting denser."

The figure in white in the park at Friedmatt, there, under the silver linden—something is making her pull herself upright.

Roly-poly woman.

Following the federal Supreme Court's ruling against her in January 1887, Emily Kempin repeatedly received expressions of support in the press. One letter to the *Züricher Post* quoted Shakespeare, comparing Emily to Portia. Another article pointed out that "progressive" Zurich was, in fact, more retrograde now than in medieval times: In the fourteenth century the daughter of law professor Johannes Andreae, whose name was Novella, often held lectures for her father at the University of Bologna when he was ill. She stood behind a curtain when lecturing so that the students would not be distracted by her beauty.

Curti exhibited his solidarity in the lead articles he wrote on Emily's case, their titles like drumbeats: "Why Isn't a Woman Allowed to Become a Lawyer"; "The Position of Women"; "Women's Struggle"; "The Woman at the Podium." Even during her time in New York, he saw to it that Zurich did not forget her.

EARLY SUMMER, 1887. Emily Kempin sat at her desk and looked at Zurich as if through the small end of a telescope: laterally inverted and tiny. And floating above it as if on a cloud were the members of the council—her father to the extreme right, Theodor Curti to the left. The eyes of both men were upon her and her work, one pair approving of what they saw, the other disapproving, and their cross-gaze bent her like a bow. She spent her days, her weeks, aiming at one target: her doctoral exams scheduled for that summer.

One day on the steps of the university, a student who usually hurried by her with eyes averted stopped to speak to her. It was Meta von Salis.

"I read the article in the *Züricher Post* about the court's decision against you," she said. "It's unbelievable. My condolences." The thin face under her hunter's cap was flushed with anger. The two stu-

dents had never spoken to each another privately before. Emily was always occupied with maternal and household duties; Meta von Salis, daughter of impoverished Grison nobility, was financing her education by giving private lessons and writing newspaper articles.

"I know about your work through the *Züricher Post,* too," Emily said. "I remember a review of your poetry, and on January first, I read your article, 'Heretical Reflections for the New Year.' It was excellent. You know, don't you, that all of Zurich is still aghast at its suffragist message?"

Meta's stern features brightened. "The thought of women's suffrage will cause panic among the Swiss for a long time to come, I fear. But first, in this new year of 1887, we two shall earn our doctorates; you as the first female doctor of law, and I as the first female doctor of philosophy! Two early swallows," Meta laughed.

"Didn't you devote a poem to that in 'The Future of Women'?"

Meta nodded. "I'll note the page for you as encouragement," she promised.

Emily watched her walk off, and saw how the male students made fun of her cap as she passed through the gate of the university. We arrive, gather honey from the comb, and disappear again, she thought. We're older than most of the male students; life already has its hold on us. We have no time to lose, our goal is in sight and each of us must beat through the bushes of doubt on our own.

The next day Emily found an envelope in her mailbox.

. . . she who has always winged so steadily through the sky
lies cold and stiff, because she dared to fly
north too soon, and into danger.
Weeks later, her sisters followed her through the air,
And behold, May is laughing and its scent is everywhere.
. . . So do not hold against me my all too early flight.
In the folds of my wings might
be a message that summer can apply.

At the end of May, 1887, Emily submitted her dissertation, "The Liability of the Seller of Property Held in Another's Name," to the office

of the dean of the faculty of law and political science. At the same time she petitioned, in her delicate, neat handwriting, to be admitted to doctoral examinations, stating the motivation for her studies as follows:

> *I spent the years following, during which I bore three children, almost exclusively in the nursery. Later, in carrying out my duties as a pastor's wife, I came to know society's weaknesses, and reached for that alternative chosen by all who wish to improve the world—the pen. Happily, the joy at seeing my work in print a few times was not so strong that I could overlook the gaps in my insufficient training. And since, in the meantime, I had come to know the gravity of life, I was horrified to realize that my education would not enable me to accomplish any single activity in the sphere of human endeavor, should that become necessary. I had only half the ability and less than half theknowledge I needed. In an attempt to improve the latter, I was instructed by my husband in the basics of Latin, and attended a course on Mathematics at the Polytechnic Institute, both of which introduced me to the wealth of those sources of knowledge and I decided to try to enter those gates that had until then been closed to me. In the winter of 1883 I attended courses in Logic and Metaphysics with Professor Kym (Doc. 1), in the summer of 1884 I took History of Roman Law, and in the winter of 84/85, Institutions, both with Professor Schneider (Doc. 2). Having experienced both departments, I became convinced that I had been correct in my choice of the discipline that best suited my interests. In spring, 1885, I successfully passed my matriculation examination. Encouraged by the beneficent kindness of my esteemed teachers I then, as indicated by the enclosed departmental report book (Doc. 3), set out upon my chosen path, moving forward all the more so as the change in my situation made it desirable to acquire proof of what I had learned as soon as possible in order to utilize it constructively.*

On 16 July 1887, at thirty-four years of age, Emily graduated magna cum laude following six semesters of study. She dedicated her dissertation *in grateful admiration* to Professors Schneider and von Orelli.

What sort of trap had she fallen into?

Had she studied law, escaped her limited opportunities, and written her dissertation only to end up at her father's desk after all, as agent for Professor Meili? Her own desk was covered with books on trains, a listing of Northeast Railway's dividends, and a statement on the profitability of privately owned railway systems, which was signed by her father.

After her exams she was congratulated in the corridor outside the rector's office by Professor Meili, whose course on institutions had taken. He then asked her what she planned to do with her education.

She looked up at the big man with the prominent nose and sharp-lined mouth. It was said he ran the most modern law firm in Zurich. She knew that he knew she intended to convert what she has learned into hard cash as soon as possible. Zurich was already talking about the fact that her husband has been unsuccessful in Remscheid and could send his family practically no money at all. There was rent to pay and the children needed clothes.

It was regrettable, he told her, that the federal court had ruled that she could not practice law. What was she going to do now?

She looked at him and something in his face told her not to mention her desire to become a lecturer at the university.

"I propose that you come to work at my firm as an independent agent."

He relished her surprise, showing his teeth when he laughed. Others found his laugh captivating, but even in the classroom it had made her uneasy, as if she were slithering down the mocking corners of his mouth.

"I have plenty of work," he said. "At the moment I'm involved in railroad legislation; I saw your father yesterday at a conference with representatives of Northeast Railway. He said to say hello to you, Mrs. Kempin."

She looked up at him in surprise with her old wide-eyed expression. Her father had avoided her since she had begun to attend university; she had heard nothing at all from him. And now this greeting—an early swallow, first sign of a thaw to come?

Meili named a sum, a beginning salary. She reflected on it, and something threw her switches into reverse. If I'm working on railway legislation, she thought, does that mean I'm seeking Father's approval? And if I don't take this offer, what will be left to me?

"Could you begin immediately, Dr. Kempin?"

Emily nodded.

On the first day at Meili's international law office on Zurich's Fraumünsterstrasse she felt she had spiraled back in time. She saw before her her father's desk, newspaper clippings with railroad bridges, and a face she thought she recognized.

"Who is that?"

Meili smiled at her ignorance.

"Sir Marc Isambart; he built the tunnel under the Thames. Head of iron, brilliant designer, a master of mechanical engineering." Her boss's voice rose: "We are merely lawyers, Mrs. Kempin. But in proposing new legislation, we participate in our own way in the triumph of technology."

She nodded absentmindedly. She was once again a young girl, having returned home from Neuenburg, and Father, his index finger pointing at Isambart's head, was saying, "A man must be hard as steel in carrying out his decisions, do you hear me, Emily? He mustn't allow himself to be swayed by his feelings. Only in that way can he can withstand all opposition." And then he had added with a sigh, "But you are a woman, and just the opposite: weak and emotional."

Emotions and dreams had no place at all on Fraumünsterstrasse. Meili occupied himself with everything the new era washed up on shore: railway legislation; trademark protection; postal, telegraph, and telephone laws. By 1902 he would already be dealing with the automobile. If it's a novelty, Meili's firm will snap it up, was the saying in Zurich.

Emily herself was a novelty.

August was heating up. In the law offices on Fraumünsterstrasse they were passing around a newspaper with a barely concealed laugh and a sidelong glance at Emily. One month after she received her doctorate in jurisprudence, Johann Ludwig Spyri, the father of this age's

Novella, voted in a cantonal council meeting against a public swimming pool for women, on moral and aesthetic grounds!

While Emily was struggling with legal paragraphs, at work on material that would appear under Meili's name as *Modern Traffic and Transportation Institutions,* Meili was devoting himself to his own ambitious dreams. He did not yet realize that his agent in the next room had dreams of her own as well, dreams that soon would encroach upon his.

An associate professor with a seat and a vote on the faculty, Meili wanted ultimately to become an honorary professor. His lectures at the Polytechnic Institute enjoyed little success, and his request for a professorship was turned down by the school council: advanced professors like Treichler and von Fick, both born in 1822, had long been holding lectures on railway law and other topics in Meili's sphere of interest. Meili was frightened of the constant battle against time and its novelties, with which he felt he must keep pace. First it was the competition at Polytechnic, and now he sensed a new threat on the horizon: women. A few of them already were scattered among the men in the classroom, as thirsty for knowledge as if they had not been allowed to drink from the source for decades now. Hardworking, ambitious. At first they had been shy about speaking up in seminars, but they found courage soon enough and blossomed like roses of Jericho after the first desert rain. The consequences of this were unforeseeable, but ancestral privilege was threatened.

He had taken this Kempin woman under his wing to subdue his fears. From his office next door he could keep her under control, rein in her ambition, the intellectual arrogance that enabled her to invade an all-male domain. Seated beneath pictures of locomotives and railroad bridges, she was to learn the rudiments of her trade. Substitute agent: She worked on tiny pieces of a mosaic that, once completed, would appear under his name.

Meili was involved in another pet project during this period as well. He wanted to found a Swiss school of law. Admission would be open to women, but one thing was certain—they never would be permitted to become lecturers.

Snowflakes slowly cover the law office windows. Emily allows herself a quick glance outside now and then. Her thoughts and hopes reach for the light like seedlings. But her workdays are listless, black at the edges.

Late one afternoon her bloodshot, overstrained eyes look up and imagine they see her father walking by in the snow flurry outside. Is he on his way to see Meili, his Northeast Railway files under his arm? She taps on the pane with her knuckle, but that *fata morgana*, her father, dissolves into thin air.

She seldom sleeps. In the evenings she has to catch up on the housework that the young maid cannot manage. Only on Sundays does she allow herself time for a walk with the children out to the snow-covered buildings by the lake. One day she sees Professor Schneider coming toward them on the icy path.

"How are you, Mrs. Kempin?"

She says very little in response, and a shock passes through him when he looks into her red, swollen eyes.

In April the foehn arrived and the light was a sharp knife laying open everything that was concealed.

At the university Professor W., walking down the hall, stopped in confusion and asked himself: What is she doing here? Through the corner windows he has spotted a feminine form, the curves of neck, breast, hips. As yet unencumbered by evil premonitions, his basic instinct told him to take a closer look. It is a well-known fact that fish, particularly the male stickleback, need only see a cardboard cutout of the swollen line of the female's belly to become aroused. He stared into the room where Dr. Wächter's bony figure was usually to be seen. Then slowly it dawned on him.

She was standing before a row of students, turning now and then to write something on the chalkboard. The appeal of her figure dissolved in a succession of thoughts: A female lecturer? Must men now endure being taught by a woman? Anger rose up in him. He waited the few minutes until the lecture ended and the woman—it was that

Kempin woman—left the classroom, surrounded by students.

He went up to her and demanded to know what she was doing there.

"Dr. Wächter asked me to substitute for him," she said, as if this were the most normal thing in the world. As newly appointed district judge he was unable to meet the class that had been announced beforehand, she said.

And the Ordinarius for Roman Law had approved this?

She nodded and gave him a broad smile. "It was Dr. Schneider who recommended me to Dr. Wächter."

"But you're still working as Meili's substitute?"

When she said yes, he shook his head and murmured something unintelligible. She did, however, understand one vehement utterance: "This matter should be brought before the faculty council."

Emily was crushed. Any one of the university's graduates could have stepped in without a stir, but because she was a woman, the "matter" was made into a scandal.

On 19 April 1888, the minutes of the meeting of the law faculty noted the following:

> *As a result of Dr. Wächter's decision to resign from his present position as lecturer for Roman Law following his election as district judge, Professor Schneider has expressed a wish to be assigned another instructor. Professor Schneider is of the opinion that Dr. Kempin might be a possible replacement, and feels that there is no legal obstacle to this. Professor F. agrees with the latter opinion, but nevertheless feels that Dr. Wächter could fulfill the duties of his office as judge and continue to hold lectures as well. Professor von O. does not agree, nor does he oppose the candidacy of Dr. Kempin. Professor M. (Meili), on the other hand, does not wish to support Dr. Kempin's promotion to habilitation. Professor F. does not consider it desirable for a woman to become a lecturer, though he is in favor of Professor Schneider's request for an assistant. Professor W. asked that the issue of admitting a woman be examined in principle. Discussion ended before a motion was proposed.*

At the next meeting fourteen days later, Emily's application as lecturer for Roman Law was presented. Professor Schneider's suggestion that the application be forwarded to the education council caused a stir in the faculty council. The senate subsequently reacted in similar fashion, as if someone had poked an anthill with a stick. There ensued a frantic outpouring of opinions, half-formulated sentences that broke off abruptly or interrupted each other looking for an escape hatch, making excuses.

It was Professor Meili who pulled the emergency brake: "Professor M. is skeptical concerning the applicant's qualifications, based on her activity to date, and due to the possible consequences of this, is unequivocally opposed to granting her application."

The temple of knowledge had been defiled by the shadow of a woman. The room was thick with a fear that muddled the judgment of those accustomed to rational thought.

In the meantime, Emily had already held three classes for the professor who had resigned. She was forbidden to teach any more of them; she would not be permitted to lecture in a university classroom until the senate handed down its decision.

And what if she held lectures elsewhere?

That was her own business.

The students, impressed by her solid presentation of the material, agreed to meet with her at a restaurant in the city. But where would they find a room big enough? On 2 May the Cantonal School of Zurich rejected her request to use one of their classrooms with the following argument: Why the cantonal school building and not the university? Those attending the class are university students, after all, who enrolled for instruction by a lecturer who has resigned.

Always having to seek shelter. Her plans would remain soap bubbles drifting in the air if she didn't find a place for them. She was thrown out on the street as if she were teaching her students something questionable. She was made to understand that official buildings were solely for the use of those who represented power. Emily did not find a room for the course, and the lecture series she took over from Dr. Wächter was canceled.

They let her wait the entire month of May and half of June before they handed down their decision on women lecturers. During this period she received an invitation to Berlin, issued by a group of women engaged in the issue of education for women who wished to see, and hear Emily Kempin, the first woman lawyer. So in the early summer of 1888 she traveled for the first time to Berlin. In the Reich's capital flags flew at half-mast, for Kaiser Wilhelm had died in March and now Friedrich, his son and successor, was gravely ill.

Henriette Schrader-Breymann, a niece of Fröbel, who had established the first kindergarten, and wife of Reichstag representative Karl Schrader, arrived at the train station in her carriage, to pick up Emily. She was a maternal woman, old enough to be Emily's mother. On a brief tour of the city she showed her guest the Pestalozzi-Fröbel House with its kindergarten classes, which she had founded in Schöneberg.

That evening at the home of her hostess, Emily made the acquaintance of a circle of women and men who met regularly for "pedagogical evenings." Among them were the politicians Eberty, Rickert, and Althaus, who like their host belonged to the Liberal Progressive Party. Several of the women were known to her by name: Helene Lange, Auguste Schmidt, Emma Cauer, Marie Loeper-Housselle. Emily was particularly interested in meeting Helene Lange. Curti had reported in the *Züricher Post* on her *Yellow Brochure,* which presented new demands for remedying the miserable state of girls' education, demands that had struck like lightning, and not only at the Prussian Ministry of Education.

What a scandal for Berlin's conservative circle: Victoria, widow of the recently deceased kaiser, who from the time of his death referred to herself as Empress Friedrich, was, as a native-born Englishwoman, sympathetic to the cause of women. She had recently dispatched Helene Lange to England for the purpose of acquainting herself with that country's progressive educational institutions for girls.

And now Lange was to report on her visit. Emily was impressed by the succinct yet humorous manner in which she expressed herself, and by her eyes, which seemed always to be on the alert in her broad face and yet had a kind expression, wreathed in crinkles. She was struck

by the strong maternal character of these women, who dressed and acted in a traditional manner. Only Emma Cauer, co-signer of the *Yellow Brochure,* wore her hair short and frizzy and exhibited more radical ambitions, evident from her report on the *Frauenwohl,* a women's association she had recently founded.

Everyone was surprised that evening by the appearance of Empress Friedrich herself, who also was a friend of Henriette Schrader. She had come to meet the first woman lawyer. Flabbergasted, Emily imitated the curtsy the other women offered. But her shyness evaporated when, under the crown of the widow's veil, she spied the round face with its down-to-earth expression of a housewife.

The next evening the first generation of female German scholars showed up at the Humboldt Academy for Emily's lecture. Emily knew most of them, above all the physicians Franziska Tiburtius and Emilie Lehmus; they had all studied in Zurich. During the discussion that followed she learned that there were no secondary schools for girls in Germany.

"The idea that a female could pass secondary school final examinations makes even the ministers of education break out in gales of laughter," Helene Lange said. And then she announced her plan to establish lower-level secondary courses for women, with the help of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Frauenverein* (General Geman League of Women) in Berlin. The courses were also designed as preparation for the Swiss secondary school final examinations, as Zurich was still the only German-speaking city with a university that opened its doors to women.

When Emily returned to Zurich, they still had not decided on the issue of women lecturers. It appeared that the confusion on the issue multiplied with each meeting. Meanwhile, from the next room at his law office Meili kept a close eye on the candidate. Emily felt constrained by his scrutiny. The opinions he had aired in the senate had trickled down to her, at least by insinuation. When he smiled at her work she saw the wolf licking his chops at Little Red Riding Hood, his mouth dripping with saliva.

"Are you opposed to my becoming a lecturer, Dr. Meili?"

"Not at all, Mrs. Kempin. But there are fundamental issues to be considered . . ."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, where would we be if women . . ."

Where would we be? Wait and see where we will be.

Emily looked out of the law office window and saw women, women everywhere. They were waiting at the starting gate for a signal. Then there would be women in every capacity with seats at every table—like sand at the shore. Meili, surrounded, would escape in a hot-air balloon and float above Lake Zurich, busy patenting the future airships and trajectories that were the objects of his fantasy.

On 1 June 1888, the minutes of the senate recorded the following: *The senate is of the opinion that Paragraph 132 of the Law Governing Instruction absolutely precludes the admittance of female lecturers and, this notwithstanding, that the admittance of women lecturers is inopportune under present conditions.*

The minutes of 29 June concluded the matter: *The rector has also announced . . . that Dr. Kempin's application to sit for qualifying examinations has been rejected by the Educational Council.*

I believe in my heart that burgeoned and grew,
sown in the never-ending furrow.
—GABRIELA MISTRAL

The emptiness of the summer of 1888. The bright light made her dizzy; it erased the contours of mountains and hills, and sky and water merged to a diffuse shade of gray. There was nothing in her life to hold on to, no goal yet worth striving for.

Walter had returned from Remscheid. His attempt to establish himself as a journalist there had failed, his belief in the future was shattered. She could see it in him. He reeked, as he said at some point, of failure.

Emily had little luck establishing her own legal advisory office on Schweizergasse. No matter what she undertook in Zurich, she was always in the shadow of her dogmatic, conservative father, in the shadow of her discredited husband.

Around this time Curti publishes a note in the *Züricher Post* about a young woman by the name of Popplin, who earned her doctorate in jurisprudence in Belgium one year after Emily Kempin, in 1888.

Another article reports on the influence of women in the United States. Once again, Emily's imagination is fired by the mention of Belva Lockwood. Lockwood, a good twenty years older than Emily, was born in Royaltown, New York, near Niagara Falls. Following the premature death of her husband, and left alone with a four-year-old daughter, she began to study in order to earn a living. In 1857 she graduated and became a teacher. In 1866 she founded a coeducational school in Washington, D.C. After remarrying, she decided to study law. In 1873, after passing her examinations at the National Law School, she was denied her diploma. She appealed to President Grant, and in September 1873 received permission to practice law in the District of Columbia.

The following winter the federal Court of Claims refused to allow her to argue cases before it. She petitioned the United States Supreme Court, but was refused a hearing. She won her battle after a five-year struggle, however, thanks to a senator who was sympathetic to women, and in 1879 became the first woman to be admitted before the Supreme Court and the Federal Court of Claims.

She immediately proclaimed her support of women's suffrage, and took on the defense of black and native American minority clients. In 1884 she campaigned for the presidency, and receives many male votes. The photograph accompanying the article shows Belva Lockwood in red stockings, bicycling from her office to court.

In the summer stillness, beyond the hazy landscape surrounding Lake Zurich, Emily sees a flash of red on the horizon: legs churning. Belva Lockwood's red stockings. Lockwood waves to her, hair streaming behind her: Take courage, Emily. You'll never flourish in your father's shadow. Set out to seek your own fortune, like in fairy tales. Test your strength against the hardest surface in the world—the pavement of Manhattan. If you master life there, you can survive anywhere.

They emigrated at the end of September 1888, crossing the ocean with bag and baggage on a mail steamer of the Cunard Line. The crossing cost 145 Swiss francs per person, the 240 pounds of baggage went gratis. She left with twenty-two crates of Spyri possessions, an unemployed husband, three children, and a maidservant from Wollishofen.

She left, and yet kept glancing back at Zurich, silently imploring the town of her father to look at what she was doing, to pay attention to her. She left Zurich, and from the other side of the ocean felt the painful pull of it, as if she were hooked on some invisible line. Zurich, the barb in the center of her heart.

Father, if only you could have heard me, seen me, on 30 October 1890. I gave the introductory lecture at the opening of the history-making Woman's Law Class of the University of the City of New York. The dean and professors of the law faculty were in attendance, and I spoke on the Constitution of the United States, on state and territorial legislatures, citizens' rights and duties. All of this was a prelude

to my basic course plan, which shall unfold in the coming weeks and consist of four subjects of twelve lectures each, to be given twice a week in the old university building on the east side of Washington Square. For those students who work during the day, I will offer an evening course.

We began the first woman's law class in the world with great enthusiasm. There are fifteen students for the day course, and eight for the evening lecture. Their names and faces are etched forever in my memory. At their center is the class speaker, Florence Clinton Sutro, surrounded by Stanleyetta Titus, Katharina Elizabeth Hogan, Cornelia Kelley Hood. Among the new faces are Harriet S. Barnes, Lulu Alexander, Lucy A. Flynn, and Marie Webb, to name only a few.

We are free of money worries. One might say we are sitting on a gold mine—scholarships are plentiful. In all we collected $25,000, with the lion's share coming from Miss Gould, who gave $16,000, and Mrs. Munn, who gave $5,500. So we don't have to charge much for tuition. We offer twelve lectures for the economical price of only five dollars, a real bargain!

The tone of the *New York Herald* was mocking:

> *The first woman lawyer we heard of bargained for a heart. . . . Shylock was to get a pound as his part if he lawfully carried out Portia's argument of his case: The University of New York just gets a bit over a pound ($5) for furnishing these modern Portias with the inspiration for arguments—namely, twelve lectures, or one course of legal study.*

My first lectures, on the origin and foundation of state law, were attended by the vice-chancellor and the dean of the law school. On the basis of their glowing report, the university council decided to assign me a course on Roman law for the first semester of the next school year, this time with male students matriculated at the university!

The Woman's Legal Education Society, in their first annual report, called these lectures a milestone: *The first modern instance of a woman lecturing on law to classes of young men.*

The press took up the sensation; the only paper in New York to neglect reporting on it was the *Schweizer Zeitung*, which slept through

it. Not one word about their native countrywoman, but around this time it did publish a poem by a certain Rosa R.:

> *A man is like a bubbling mountain spring,*
> *boldly conquering every obstacle.*
> *A woman is like a dreaming alpine lake,*
> *placidly awaiting the beautiful day . . .*

The school year 1890–91 passed quickly, filled with preparations and appointments. *As if I had a slight fever,* she thought to herself, *and a constant tingling feeling from the high altitude I found myself in.*

Evenings, when the numbing effect of work wore off, her heart grew heavy at the thought of her two older children. She had been to Zurich that summer with Agnes, and had spent her weeks there exhilarated by dreams of the future, for back in New York her first academic school year awaited her. When she left Zurich at the beginning of October she had to tear herself away from her children, sobbing at the train station. Leaving them behind had almost torn her in two.

She woke at night between dreams, her cheek pressed to her pillow. In her mind she could see the other side of the world as if through a peephole. The mountain peaks were aglow in the morning sun. Her father was flying far below her—she saw his shadow on Lake Zurich—a fish in the sea of clouds. Was he searching for her? Did he see her, close to the sun, a small, circling orb of light?

Zurich: night after night at the bottom of her dreams, its houses perched on water lilies, swaying gently on the waves. Zurich, poured out into the hollow of the lake bed. Emerald sea grass, coral trees.

A painful vision.

She focuses on the university, then seeks out its counterpart, the stone madhouse palace of Burghölzli. Each building is in miniature, rendered harmless, laterally inverted in her pupils. Like an animal trainer, she keeps an eye on both, holding them at bay.

She is with Iris again behind the institution, in the landscaped woods, safely out of view of the director's office. Gudden has the worst case of nerves at Burghölzli, her father said, foreseeing the day when the director, in a highly agitated state, would give up his post and accept

an offer in Munich. Shortly before Emily received her doctorate she received news of Gudden's death. He had drowned in Starnbergersee. She never again heard from Iris, her girlhood friend.

Gudden's successor was a man named Hitzig, a Berliner who had become famous through his experiments on the brain's sensitivity to electric current. Schnurrenberger, who as administrator shared equal power with the director, managed within a few years to wreck Hitzig's nerves as well through his attacks on him in the democratic party organs. Hitzig, distraught, eventually would flee Zurich too.

Hitzig's successor was Auguste Forel, brain specialist and researcher of ant life, who was from the canton of Vaud. Burghölzli was in dilapidated shape by the year he took over, 1879, and he made a clean sweep of it. Not far from the institution, in Stephansburg, Schnurrenberger and the city government had rented property to an Alsatian innkeeper, who was running a bordello under the sign of the inn. Even the wife of the local president of Riesbach had established a bordello. Forel had a new fence built around the institution so that the prostitutes could no longer peddle their wares in the woods behind Burghölzli, and intruders were chased back over the fence. Inside the institution Forel, who was abstinent, waged a campaign against alcohol abuse.

Emily had attended Forel's lectures on hypnotism, and the professor had invited students to come to Burghölzli to assist in an experiment. Emily took this opportunity to talk at length with Forel. Only later did she discover that he had supported her enthusiastically in the senate when the issue of female lecturers was raised.

She is furious, and slams open the swinging glass doors of the salon. The men, all private patients at Friedmatt, look up from their card games in surprise. She stands erect, straightening her spine to counter her upper body's tendency to lean to one side. Maintaining this posture she crosses the room to the desk, all eyes upon her.

The ink spot in the form of a devil's head is still visible in the varnish. The shadow of the potted palm quivers on her rounded back. She covers a sheet of paper with her thin, spidery strokes, then crum-

ples it into a ball and reaches for a new one. This time she writes more slowly, occasionally setting down her quill and shaking the fingers of her writing hand as if to cool them off. Then she leans on her elbows and bites the heel of her left hand, lost in thought.

Hügin is serving the men their mocha. The aroma floats through the room and interrupts her train of thought. Recently she offered Hügin her last lace handkerchief for a cup of mocha, but Hügin had shaken her head fearfully, glancing over at the "gentlemen." Mocha was a privilege of the "guests"; everyone else drank coffee with milk in the evenings. By the time it had been wheeled on a cart from the kitchen through the park it was lukewarm and a skin had formed on top.

She goes over her letter one last time:

Friedmatt Mental Asylum

29 April 1900

To Mr. Nägeli
Cantonal Government
Zurich

I trust you will recall me and my request to be transferred to Zurich. I must under any circumstance leave here and return to my native canton, otherwise I will be forced to bring suit in federal court. I know that you are required to accept cantonal citizens. I accepted my transfer here in February 1899 only as a temporary one, of course, until you could find a place for me in Zurich. As one year and two-and-a-half months have passed since my last request to you, I, with good reason, should be able to depend on an immediate transfer to Zurich.

Dr. jur. Emilie Kempin, née Spyri

"As of December 1899 it is no longer referred to as an asylum, Mrs. Kempin, but a home." Hügin's voice at her left ear.

The attendant had sneaked up on her again in her cloth shoes. She bends over officiously to pick up the wadded sheet of paper.

Emily crosses out the word *asylum* and replaces it with *home*.

"Why aren't you writing this in your room, Mrs. Kempin?"

"I have permission to carry out important correspondence here."

"From Dr. Wolff?"

"From Dr. Wolff."

She pronounces the name slowly, almost tenderly. Hügin bares her incisors and presses them into the soft flesh of her lower lip. Her mouth takes on a scornful expression. She offers to deliver the letter to Dr. Wille immediately.

Emily rejects her offer. She straightens her spine and looks at Hügin as if from a distance. "I'll take it to the mailbox by the gate myself."

"Those letters, too, are censored by the director."

"I know."

Dr. Wolff approaches her hurriedly on the gravel path to the pavilion.

"You've been writing a lot of letters recently, Mrs. Kempin." He smiles at her and his cheerfulness is mirrored in her eyes for an instant, but the spark is short-lived.

She intimates that although she is indeed writing letters, she is not receiving any replies. Her patience is at an end. Her requests echo back to her as if from a frozen wasteland. Was she on an ice floe here, set adrift from the world? Did the world no longer exist on the other side of the fence? Had the world become Friedmatt?

"If you don't want to come to England with me, if you want to stay here and wait for the director's post—which I would understand—then I insist on my immediate transfer to Zurich, to Burghölzli," she says. "I have great respect for Dr. Forel and wish to place myself in his care."

"Forel left Zurich last fall, Mrs. Kempin."

She looks at him, her eyes wide. She stutters in her agitation.

"But . . . but he, he's not old yet, barely fifty, I would guess . . ."

Dr. Wolff smiles. "Despite that, he has chosen to spend the rest of his life with ants instead of with patients. He now lives in Vaud, in Chigny."

She thinks this over, her brow creased in concentration. "Nevertheless, I insist on being transferred to Burghölzli."

She grasps Dr. Wolff's hand with a touching, almost childlike gesture, her eyes like saucers, an expression that still has an effect.

"Please, please, do me a favor."

"Yes?"

"Take this letter with you, and mail it somewhere in the city."

In New York, the winter semester of 1890–91 was drawing to a close. The university chancellor noted in his report: *The course of lectures by Dr. Emily Kempin was carried on with considerable spirit.* Female students were already signing up for the course to be offered the next semester; the members of the Woman's Legal Education Society were jubilant.

Emily administered her course examinations in the presence of Chancellor MacCracken, Judge Noah Davis, and three New York attorneys. Thirteen of the students passed them successfully.

They wanted the certificates to be awarded at a public ceremony. Why should these women hide their light under a bushel; they wanted the Woman's Law School to become well known, respected, emulated. Emily planned the ceremony. Following her introductory speech three of the graduating students would read from their own work: Stanleyetta Titus would read "Origin of Our Law," Cornelia Hood, "Considerations," and class speaker Florence Clinton Sutro, "Why I Study Law." Then each student would walk out onto the stage and be awarded her certificate at the podium by Chancellor MacCracken.

Emily looked with pride into their expectant faces. The young women had decided to forego the cap and gown that male graduates wore in favor of white summer dresses. They wanted to celebrate in batiste and lace and ruffles!

The headlines over the next few days registered surprise: *"These Women Know Law—But They Don't Look Like Typical Lawyers at All!"* wrote *The New York Times*.

The *New York Continental* of 15 April 1891 found that the word *attorney*, in its male connotation, implied *"musty books and barren rooms,"* whereas its female correlative summoned up a vision of hair parted in the middle and gathered about the ears, a black linsey-woolsey dress with a brooch at the throat containing a lock of hair of some deceased relative or other. . . . *"Yet,"* the article closed, *"the woman*

selected to represent the little band of lawyers just graduated from the University of the City of New York is the embodiment of all that is deemed sweet femininity."

After the diplomas and prizes were awarded there came an unexpected intermezzo. Florence Clinton Sutro, representing the class, stepped onto the stage, threw her arms around Emily, and presented her with a wristwatch: a gift exclusively from the Woman's Law Class! At the word "exclusively" she winked at her female co-students, who murmured and giggled in their seats.

Emily found out the reason for this later: Florence told the story of the watch to a reporter from the *New York Continental:*

> *All winter Mrs. Kempin has lectured to the men students of Roman Law, and they treated her ungallantly to say the least. Although they attended her lectures regularly, and with the greatest interest, they made no acknowledgement of gratitude, and Mrs. Kempin is one of the best authorities in the world on the subject of Roman Law. Near the close of the last term the men started a paper saying: 'We, the undersigned students of the Roman Law Class hereby subscribe. . . ' and brought it to us to finish. It was a subscription for a watch. But we didn't see why we should help the Roman Law Class when we had no part in it. So we refused, and bought the watch ourselves and the men made no recognition whatever of Dr. Kempin's work.*

She finished by adding loyally, *But someday people will realize what she has done!*

A photographer was present at the graduation ceremony for the obligatory group portrait. The black gowns that MacCracken and Dr. Kempin wore stood out against the white dresses. Instead of a mortarboard, Emily had chosen a velvet cap, which she wore the back of her head, leaving the hair on her forehead free.

In the photograph Emily appears overworked. She looks prophetically into the distance, but her eyes are anxious and recede under the curve of her brow in noticeable contrast to her narrow, almost girlish face.

No one noticed that a shadow lay over her during the festivities. That morning she had received a dispatch from Walter: Their son Robert was gravely ill, and they awaited her imminent arrival. On Nassau Street her bags already were packed for a quick return to Europe.

Shuttling back and forth between the shores of career and motherhood, back and forth across this ocean, between two poles.

She wanted to be gone only for the long summer vacation; the school year 1891–92 was already planned. Dr. Emily Kempin's successful lecture series was again on the program, to be held twice this time, due to popular demand. The basic concept she originated remained unchanged, and as late as 1940 was still being used by professors of the Woman's Law Class of New York University.

She hastened to Zurich, exhausted by self-reproach, and worried about the condition of her son. Robert was in the care of his grandmother Kempin, at Stadelhoferplatz 5. The doctor had diagnosed a swelling of the cervical lymph node. The boy was slowly recovering, but still susceptible to bouts of high fever. Pale and thin, his eyes glassy, he stretched out his arms to his mother. As Emily put her arms around him she heard him whisper in her ear, "You're staying here for always, isn't that true, Mama?"

"You'll get well soon now that your mother is here again," Walter told him. He gently stroked Emily's back as she sat at Robert's bedside, weeping. Emily's mother-in-law gave a sigh of relief. She was old and ill herself, and caring for the child had overtaxed her. She was glad that Emily would now take over the reins of the household.

It was eight weeks before Robert recovered. Eight weeks on the shore of motherhood. New York and her professorship were at the other end of the world. In high summer she was struck by the thought that October would arrive sooner than expected, and with it her departure: Her first lecture in New York was scheduled for November 2. Yet another agonizing leave-taking. Would Mother

Kempin be able to handle the children? The thought gave her chills in the summer heat.

A woman with one foot in Europe, the other in America, and the abyss of the ocean between.

You're overextending yourself, Emily, with this test of endurance. Give up one side or the other. If her family, this root system of relationships, were to be torn from her she would wither on the spot. So did she have to give up New York now, when she was feeling so happy and rejuvenated?

"I can't go on much longer like this. Give up your ambitions," her mother-in-law told her.

"Would you tell a man who loved his profession to abandon his ambitions?"

And besides, they needed the money. For this reason alone she had to utilize her knowledge. Walter, still a law student, had opened a small office, but was earning little. So it was a matter of somehow bringing together the obligations of motherhood and career. One possibility, though remote, was to get a lectureship at the University of Berne. It was like grasping at straws. In midsummer she wrote a letter of resignation, breaking her ties with New York.

Life continued its story. Once set in motion it is as if the hand writes of its own, the script gliding along the page as if nothing could stop it.

Summertime in Zurich, when each thing, each man, each woman took its or his or her ordained place. On hot days they closed the shutters and put dustcovers on the upholstery to protect it from the sunlight shining through the cracks. Summer flowers wilted behind the wrought-iron fences of front gardens. Gnats danced in the still shafts of air.

Robert was healthy again. His mother watched him from the window as he played outside with his sisters. She had given life to him a second time. He is a thin, gangly boy who has inherited her sensuous lower lip, giving him an expression of stubbornness. This lower lip appeared much too red in contrast to his thin face, which still showed signs of his illness.

Walter walked up behind her and conveyed greetings from Meili. "He said to tell you that you can always return to work for him if you wish.

"The world is not passing Zurich by, Emily, just look at Meili," he continues. "A bookkeeper of a lawyer who never discovers any new truths himself, but lives from innovation. He keeps his ears pricked, his nose to the wind."

She sees before her Meili's desk, and her father's face buried in the statistics there, his eyes that still want to control her . . .

She had seen her father from a distance the day before. He was coming out of city hall, his body stuffed into a black suit and his face red and bloated. He was the picture of decorum: the public official, the councillor, the director of numerous clerks at the office of statistics of the Northeast Railway.

She decides to open an office together with Walter.

The still air of this lethargic summer is stirred by Professor von Orelli, who congratulates her on an article she has written. It is to be published in Zurich by Orell Füssli, and he has seen the proofs:

> *"The Legal Foundations of the Member States and Territories of the United States of America, with Particular Regard to Civil Law," by Emily Kempin, Doctor of Laws of the University of Zurich, Lecturer for Jurisprudence at the University of the City of New York, Professor of Forensic Medicine at New York Medical College and Hospital for Women.*

Von Orelli discreetly intimates that he believes the time is ripe for a lectureship. The faculty could well profit from her knowledge of English and American law, he tells her, and the article Orell Füssli was to publish was splendidly suited as qualification.

On 14 October 1891, Emily applies once again for her *Venia legendi*, necessary to become a lecturer for Roman, English, and American law. Professor von Orelli himself delivers to the authorities the faculty council's opinion that: *The need for such a lecturer has been established, and there is no question of the candidate's qualifications.*

This was followed by a memorable meeting of the senate. Auguste Forel recalled it in his book, *Rückblick auf mein Leben* (Looking Back at My Life):

> *The wife of Pastor Kempin, an industrious student, applied for Habilitation. . . . Most of the older members of the Senate opposed this and made no secret of their prejudice; but the lawyers supported her for the most part, and I, too, vigorously promoted the admission of women in saying that there was absolutely no valid reason for allowing women to study and then forbidding them to lecture. We were in the minority in the Senate by a good third, but nevertheless requested that our minority opinion also be presented to the Council.*

The Educational Council supported the opinion of the minority and invited Emily Kempin to hold a trial lecture in December, on the topic: "The Influence of Roman Law in England and America."

Following this lecture Emily Kempin-Spyri, *by way of exception,* was awarded the *Venia legendi* for Roman, English, and American Law, and her opening lecture, "Modern Trusts," was announced for 4 March.

Once again a listless period of waiting, during which an invitation arrived from Berlin. Emily's promotion to the position of lecturer had quickly made the rounds in the German women's organizations.

A financier belonging to Reich representative Schrader's circle made it possible for her to speak before the Juristic Society, Germany's most prestigious law association. The society was headed by the president of the Reichsbank, Dr. Koch. Only insiders knew that the invited speaker, a specialist on English and American law, was a woman. When Emily appeared before her audience—which included the great intellects of the University of Berlin: von Gneist, Kohler, von Liszt, Dernburg, and Simmel—a murmur of astonishment passed through the room. Before them stood a woman of medium stature, with dark blond hair and a pleasant, if unassuming, face. She spoke with a Swiss accent in an unaffected manner, and what she said was notable for its expertise.

Following the lecture another representative of the Reichstag, Baron von Stumm-Halberg, invited Emily to meet with him. He needed

her help on the second draft of the Civil Law Code, which he was working on, he said.

Henriette Schrader told her that von Stumm-Halberg, a steel and coal magnate, was a conservative who belonged to the "Free Conservative" wing of the party. Despite his politics he knew a sign of the times when he saw one, and was supporting reform of the law as it related to matrimonial property. The right of a wife to control her own wage earnings was a particular concern of his. But, she said with a laugh, tongues were wagging in Berlin that there was a personal reason behind his liberal thinking: He intended to leave his entire inheritance to his daughter and only child, and he didn't want some son-in-law to have absolute control over his life's work!

The *Allgemeine Deutscher Frauenverband* (General German Association of Women), also wanted to take advantage of the first female lawyer's knowledge. Louise Otto Peters and Auguste Schmidt, editors of the association's journal, *New Paths,* asked her to author a brochure on the legal position of women; they wanted her to compare the first draft of the new civil code to previous rulings of the various German states.

Emily gave a little sigh, as if preparing herself for a new onslaught—the challenge of developing a new specialty from the woman's point of view. She would accept, she told them, on the condition that her work in Zurich come first. As a beginning lecturer, she had new hurdles to overcome: she had already announced two series of lectures for the summer semester.

She stands at a window at the university.

As the lecture hall fills, her eyes travel quickly over the gables of Old Town and then descend dizzyingly to the lake, where they rest for a moment on the water's calm surface. The Alps are still covered in snow, the houses on the lakeshore are pocked with light. Over where the Sihl cuts into the land her father's office might be.

He has not congratulated her on her professorship. He remains an invisible, silent presence in her life. Often, when she is walking through

the city, she feels his breath at her neck. She can't allow this thought to rob her of her courage now.

She walks to the podium and presents herself to the students. Many more have come to her first lecture than the ten who signed up for her course. The catalog had listed it as "Institutions of English Law, two credit hours," and next to that, in parentheses, "gratis."

Hear the first woman lecturer for free! The newest university in the German-speaking countries has gambled on this experiment, and no one wants to miss it, at least not the introductory lecture.

Their faces intimidate her, and she feels her knees shaking when she opens her mouth to speak. Her first words sound strained.

There is laughter from the back left corner of the room. She ignores it and keeps talking. She takes a breath between words, and the sentences roll out of her like waves on the water. She gains confidence, and her eyes take on a warm glow. She feels the moment at which her words no longer seem to be meeting resistance, when they become one with the students, the objects in the room, when the air begins to dance to the rhythm of her words. She expands with each sentence, inhabits the room, casts off her coy, girlish nature. She exhibits the oft-tested magical power that draws everyone's attention to her person, just as she had in Berlin.

Now she can dare to look into their faces. Yesterday, class roll in hand, she had imagined the faces that went with the names. Seven men, three women: Hitz, Arthur, Zurich; Böninger, Richard, Duisburg; Hasler, Heinrich, Aarau; Mackenroth, Anna, Berlin . . .

Mackenroth! So she has taken up the challenge as well. That fall the manufacturer's daughter from Danzig had attended her lectures for nonprofessionals, and Emily had convinced her that she should study law. And now here she sat, a woman on each side of her, all three of them elbow to elbow as if drawing strength from one another. They had chosen to sit in the first row, ready to leap up and retrieve any bits of knowledge that might fall from Emily's table.

There was Anna Cesana, small, with an expressive face, from Oggione in the south. The Czech student sitting next to her was reserved and watchful, as if she wanted to pluck each single sentence

from the air as it was uttered from the podium.

And up front, in the midst of them all, sat her husband Walter, once again doing something totally novel: sitting at the feet of his wife. As a law student, he attended both of Emily's lecture courses. In addition to the tuition-free lectures he also enrolled in Roman Civil Procedure, two credit hours for ten francs. Only six students had registered for the course. Walter hung on her every word, as if he had never seen or heard this woman before, as if everything were beginning all over again, as it once had in the Spyris' garden.

Their eyes met, and for a split second she was reflected in his pupils. She must have seemed strange to him, a colossus, a goddess. Light streamed in behind her, the cold, sumptuous light of spring. Caught looking at her, he avoids her eyes and bends over his notebook. From this odd perspective she notices how thin and gray his hair has become; he is forty-three years old. His quill moves rapidly across the page, filling it with row after row of tiny points, as if everything she said was pointed.

After the lecture there is a group waiting to offer their congratulations. Walter has hurried off to his next lecture with the other students. Anna Mackenroth and the Cesana girl accompany Emily to her new apartment at Florhofgasse 1.

The forsythia is already in bloom on Universitätsstrasse. The two students had decided beforehand to invite the newly appointed lecturer to dinner.

"It's a surr-prise celebration," said Anna Cesana, rolling her r's.

"And others, former women students of the university, will be there as well," said Mackenroth. "We want to organize an association of academic women." She said she planned to talk to other women about the idea: Ricarda Huch, Anita Augspurg, Rosa Luxemburg, and Marianne Plehn.

They said good-bye at Emily's front door. She sat down at her desk in the empty apartment. A letter had arrived from New York and she opened it impatiently. It was from Florence, congratulating Emily on her appointment as lecturer! But her joy was mixed with sadness, she wrote, for she missed her teacher and friend. Emily's successor,

Professor Christopher J. Tiedeman, had mentioned Emily's name on graduation day: "Without Dr. Kempin's vision, courage, and outstanding ideas this class would have been inconceivable . . ."

Emily closed her eyes for a moment and saw before her Manhattan, the faces of her friends, the streets lined with buildings, the squares. *It would be nice to travel with a group of women to the World's Fair in Chicago next year . . .*

But first she must settle down here. The apartment on Florhofgasse suited her taste: The building was unassuming and had a solid, comfortable feeling. She liked the fact that it nestled against the hill and turned its back to the city. Her study was hidden away from the world; people could not look in at her and she could not see them. Three decades later, the writer Kurt Tucholsky would find asylum here.

And the children, too, needed an atmosphere of security and quiet, particularly as the two oldest were entering puberty. But their quiet existence was still threatened, caught in a stranglehold. University lecturers did not earn a steady income, they lived from the good graces of their students. And these good graces were not secure as long as it was the lecturers who had to grapple with material that was new or unfamiliar and the full professors who taught the required courses.

Six students had enrolled for her tuition course, which meant that she would earn a total of 60 francs for six months of lectures. A few weeks before, with some trepidation, she had opened a law office together with Walter.

She recalled their exchange of glances during the lecture: for a split second it was as if their relationship were brought into relief. They were connected like the pans of a scale. Some secret interplay of forces saw to it that they were never even, the pointer was always indicating some new imbalance. Whatever happened to her affected him.

Barely had she advanced to the position of lecturer when suddenly everyone was looking down on him, the student over forty. He had studied law once before, from 1885 to 1887, and following his return from America he had made a second start. People in Zurich

joked that he would never finish. (And people were right, at least for the duration of Emily's lifetime. Long after her death, when he was sixty-five years old, Walter received his doctorate from the University of Heidelberg, with a dissertation entitled *On Cameral Accounting*.) They laughed at him for taking her classes voluntarily, for swapping roles. But that was only part of the story.

At their office, day in, day out, the reverse was true: she, the experienced lawyer and lecturer, had to remain in the background as a "legal consultant" whereas he, the law student, was permitted to call himself an attorney and represent clients in court because he was a man.

"Absurd." This from Curti, who was incensed. Now that she had been accepted as a university lecturer they should take the next logical step and allow female lawyers, he said. At his advice she filed a petition with the High Cantonal Council of the Canton of Zurich in October 1891. After a brief discussion, the cantonal council, of which her father was a member, rejected her petition and then quickly proceeded to the business at hand!

In January she met Curti at the Meise. He had obtained a copy of the cantonal council's opinion, and sat shaking his head over it: they had refused her request that female candidates who wished to practice law be submitted to an examination with the argument that this would create "a privileged legal status for women." They didn't even discuss her proposal that all candidates to the bar be required to present proof of competence!

"It's a shabby excuse, undemocratic!"

This time she had to calm him down. "Everything will change in time," she said and smiled, aware that she was echoing his own words to her. And just as before, she had the feeling that there was little time left to her. But she no longer said so.

His anger abated. When he looked at her it seemed to Emily that his eyes were boring through her, fixed on some distant goal. As he drained his glass of Clevner, he said quietly, "The time has come for me to act. In February, as a member of the National Council, I contacted like-minded members of the Zurich cantonal council, and we

introduced a motion: *We invite the cantonal government to examine under what circumstances women might join law practices, and which revisions of existing laws must be undertaken to achieve this."*

A deposition from Professor Gustav Vogt was attached to the motion that read: *The concept of 'active citizenship' is not identical with the right to vote, but with the 'full enjoyment of civil rights.'*

So the cantonal council could no longer avoid a decision. In light of Curti's petition, it decided in February to investigate *whether a better method could be found for granting women equal status with men in the area of civil law, and whether the authorization to practice law could be attached to certain general conditions.*

"They'll put this on the back burner," Walter prophesied. "It could take years before they admit you to practice."

The wait was to turn her gray, wear her down in the struggle, make her ill.

A door slammed shut, jarring her out of her thoughts at her desk. Gertrude threw her satchel down in the hall. Emily heard her rattling around in the kitchen, and then she appeared in Emily's study, a piece of bread and butter in her hand.

"How was your lecture?"

"You'll have to ask your father. I think it went well."

"What's for dinner?"

"Everything's ready, I just have to warm it up and make the salad. We're having your favorite—sliced beef."

Gertrude's face lit up. At fifteen, she was tall and stately looking, a little woman. There was something willful in her features; her emotions raced over them like wind over water. She went over to her mother and gave her a warm hug. "It's so nice you're back. And this apartment is wonderful!

"And we won't have to move for a while, isn't that so?" she continued, chewing her bread.

Emily didn't answer. She and Walter, after much deliberation the day before, had decided to move to Bahnhofstrasse 52 in three months. It was a better address, and there they would open their "American Law Office, Drs. E. and W. Kempin." A New York lawyer by the

name of Williams, whom they had gotten to know at the Arbitration Society, was to serve as the American branch of the office.

Anna Mackenroth had promised a splendid evening. Under the name of the women students she had reserved the small dining room at the Plattengarten, the "traditional spot for revolutionaries, Russians, feminists, and socialists," they called it in Zurich.

Emily, seated at the head of the long table as guest of honor, stood to deliver her welcoming speech. She told them about her experiences as a lawyer up to that point, the maze of difficulties, her successes in New York, and her anxiety in waiting for the decision on whether they would allow her to practice in Zurich.

Emily seemed to them more open, more sisterly on this evening than ever before. She was usually reserved. Now she stood there with the innocent face of a girl just coming of age. Her badly cut blond bangs hung in her face, which gave no particular indication that great thoughts were going on inside; she did not have thought lines or a noble philosopher's nose, no striking gestures. She wore attractive but unassuming clothes—a woman of no significant characteristics.

It was a disguise that made people believe that the woman standing before them was not a threat. But her face changed when she lectured, it gained depth and character as she spoke. And she spoke powerfully: She was totally there, down to her fingertips. She would make a good lawyer; people could hear it and feel it.

Anita Augspurg, from Verden near Hanover, alluded to this in her speech that evening. She wished Emily luck and then closed by saying: "Emily Kempin, all of us sitting here are profiting from your struggle, from your experience."

When Anita was excited, the former actress in her came out. Her face had something arch about it, her cheeks sat like two apples beneath her sharp nose. Her colleagues applauded and she acknowledged the applause, blowing a strand of her short hair out of her face.

Anna Mackenroth spoke in favor of founding an International Association of Academic Women that very evening, and formally asked Emily to preside over it. She would pass around a sheet of paper fol-

lowing the meal, she said, and those who wished to become members could sign it. At this, the doors swung open and the waitresses—who in Zurich were referred to as "serving daughters"—brought in the food and drink.

The wine soon had loosened tongues that were unaccustomed to alcohol. A medical student started a round of ribald drinking songs, the words and music of which were familiar to many of the women from evenings spent in taverns with their male counterparts.

These students had not yet come into their own; they were still seeking an identity. Now and then a male student would peek through the crack in the double doors, astounded at the young women's relaxed tone. Anita's pretty face and short hair were almost invisible under a wreath of cigarette smoke. Sitting next to her Anna, known for her reserve, now revealed a flair for the flamboyant. It was rumored that she wrote in secret; she had allowed a chosen few to read an impassioned play that she called *Fever of Life*. The outline for a work tentatively titled *The Robber Maiden* was still in the drawer. Now she stood, wine glass in hand, and called out dramatically, "Dear Brother Apollo!" clinking her glass with the woman across the table.

"Brother Apollo" was a delicate, black-haired feminine creature from Zurich named Hedwig Waser. Professor Knochenmeier's lectures at the Anatomical Institute had proven too ossified for her, and now she was studying German literature and language and singing the praises of the recently deceased Gottfried Keller. It was considered an honor to be invited to the modest afternoon teas held at the home of Hedwig and her mother. The group of students who met there regularly called itself Seldwyla, after Keller's house on Universitätsstrasse. The zoologist Marianne Plehn and Ricarda Huch belonged to the regulars.

Conversation suddenly turned to Huch, the historian and writer from Braunschweig. She was not present that evening, unfortunately, and she was missed. Those who knew her also knew that after her workday she spent her evenings editing her manuscript, *Evoe*. Hertz, her Berlin publisher, was unable to decipher her messy typewriting. Since she had received her doctorate in history the previous summer they had seen little of her. Her life was one of "gray monotony," and

she thought of herself as "l'homme machine," she had complained to Hedwig Waser. She spent her time in the back rooms of the municipal library, examining ancient documents, and teaching at a girls' school to supplement her pay.

Marianne Plehn tapped her coffee glass with a spoon to call for quiet. She apologized for the absence of her friend Ricarda Huch, saying that she had to work. But she also conveyed that Huch had said she had little time for celebrations. (For *official, tendentious festivities*, as she would later write to Viktor Widmann, the Berne writer and newspaper editor.)

There was laughter at this. Typical Ricarda Huch! In her direct way she could say the most brazen things, and no one held it against her. Ricarda, secret princess of Zurich, she of the swaying gait and sphinxlike face. All heads turned when she entered a lecture hall. "Ricarda, do you love?" someone had carved into her desktop. Later, one could make out a faint reply: "Yes, myself." Huch admitted to Hedwig that she had inscribed it there herself.

Marianne again called for quiet. "As a token of her support, Ricarda has written a poem for us. She calls it a 'proper and fitting table song.' After I read it, we can sing it to the tune of 'Going South'!"

The song's lyrics were comical and soon had everyone laughing: A *Lindtwurm*, a pun on the word for the dragon of German myth and the Swiss chocolatier, lay in front of the university, to guard it against women. The Lindtwurm also stood for those students and professors who were hostile to women. This heightens their mood; their conversation grows louder. More grinning faces appear at the door crack. "May we join you?" They were Polish students, playing billiards in the next room. Emily, who before could barely contain her laughter, found it would be better not to sing the Lindtwurm song. The Plattengarten was full of spies.

"Now that I have finally achieved the position of lecturer, we cannot risk throwing it away."

They collected themselves and passed around the membership list. It was decided that they would recruit the older generation of academic women to their cause: female physicians in Zurich, for example, like Dr. Heim and Karoline Farner.

"Why isn't Rosa Luxemburg here to celebrate?" Anna Cesana asked. "She's studying law, too isn't she?" Luxemburg was in Berlin, someone said, and wouldn't be back until May.

"Want to bet she'll never register for a course with Emily Kempin?" Anita Augspurg said derisively. "She only shows solidarity with Russian and Polish emigrants. When she's not in class she spends her time pouring over her proclamations, penning communist declarations with Jogiches, traveling to Geneva and Paris."

"But when it comes to her studies, she's a good bourgeois!" Mackenroth laughed. "She's taking a class with Gustav Vogt, the editor of the *Neue Züricher Zeitung,* and wants to write her dissertation under Wolf, the one who just published that book on Marx that was panned by the *Workers' Voice."*

A medical student named Lehmann began singing "Oh Glorious Fraternal Days." How very fitting, they all think sardonically, but they sing it anyway. The candles on the banquet table burn low, but no one wanted to be the first to leave, to destroy the lovely sense of belonging, the feeling of having warmed a place in a life where everything was changing.

A table of women, a ship with oarswomen on each side. They moved forward through wind and waves, perched high above the whitecaps with a captain named Kempin at the bow. The mood was deceptive: they were all too far ahead of their time.

Too soon! reads the inscription on gravestones. Too soon—a death sentence for the living as well. The horn of death is sounded in the underbrush of backward-looking tradition, and blends with the wheezing of the hunter.

In September 1892, without warning, physician Karoline Farner and her friend and housekeeper are arrested in a gruff manner at the Zurich train station, and Farner is charged with cheating patients out of their property. With no evidence presented against them the women are led away to prison and spend seven weeks in solitary confinement. Months later, her innocence is proven. Meta von Salis, a friend of Farner's, pens an attack on the Zurich judicial system. She is imprisoned for libel.

The witches are back: blue-stockinged, red-stockinged, their hair cut short and frizzy, cycling to the university, restless women who needed to be locked up, to be pacified—with force, if necessary.

The windows of the new office at Bahnhofstrasse 52 looked out onto other office buildings: sandstone, columns, friezes, and balconies. Diagonally across from them and in the same classical style was one of the numerous new bank buildings.

Emily looked out at the red evening sky. Shopkeepers lowered their rattling door gratings, men emerged from offices, and late shoppers, their bags bulging, stood waiting for the tram. The autumn leaves were falling from the trees.

She looked out the window, her hands lying on the table as if they belonged to the folders that were piled up to her left, next to the bookcase. The table, its undulating surface designed especially for the shipping company that once was housed in their office, took up half the space, its top sealed in varnish. When seated on the other side of it, Emily's clients must have felt like they were on the other side of the ocean. After each appointment she could see on the varnish the impression of their sweaty, cramped fingers. Each evening she wiped away the prints with a wool cloth, picturing the fingers that she fixated on during the meetings in order not to look her clients in the face as they struggled to articulate themselves.

Mostly what she saw were well-groomed female hands, and what crossed the ocean of table between them was the pent-up despair of the upper classes: years of repressed anger and shame. One wife asserted that her husband had run around with every woman in town; another's husband had taken her children away from her to force her to divorce him; and a dignified woman from the upper crust showed her the choke marks on her throat and bruises on her breast. The table would groan under their charges, and Emily would get furious about the inadequate and unfair laws she was forced to employ in dealing with these offenses. It often pained her to think of those women in reduced circumstances whose lack of self-confidence and funds kept them from even making a visit to her office. She was determined, as she had been in New York, to open an office that offered free legal services to women.

Yes, it was primarily women who sought out her office, and most of them stated immediately that they wanted an appointment with Mrs. and not Mr. Kempin, assuming that a woman would better understand another woman's complaint.

Walter was brought in if the case went to court. The clients were disappointed that it was he and not Emily who would represent them there. Word soon got around that Walter lacked legal expertise, he was too formal, he delayed cases due to his own indecision. What irritated Emily most was that these reproaches were not unfounded. That very day she had rebuked him for having missed an appointment, which led to a heated argument in the corridor. Their faces were reflected in the wall mirror: her cheeks flushed in anger, eyelids fluttering; his graying head inclined forward, eyes glaring, lips pinched.

Adam and Eve, fallen out of grace with one another. How distressed they were when they looked at each other, as if hoping to find some last glimmer of paradise, some Acadia at the edge of the world where lion and lamb, man and woman could lie down together in mutual understanding.

Would this understanding ever exist between a new Adam and a new Eve? Self-reliant people of equal birth, who loved each other? Sitting behind her ocean of grievances, Emily dreamed of this new human couple.

Behind the glass doors that separated their offices from their apartment, supper was being prepared. It was time for Emily to get up and go over to help the maid they had just hired. Walter had stormed out of the apartment following their argument; she hoped he would appear for dinner with the family, as if their argument hadn't happened. She hoped this "for the sake of the children," realizing how often those words ran through her mind. She wanted to succeed "for the sake of the children and their education," but when she was at work she was plagued by a bad conscience, regretting how little time she actually had for the children.

She had to be everything to everybody: wife, lawyer, mother. By her own expectations and those of others, she was adequate to none. And there was no one on the horizon to serve as model and show her how to reconcile these differences.

Walter did appear for supper, maintaining the illusion of a happy professional and marital union for one more evening. She held out tidbits to him, kept the conversation light, fearing the flare-up of irritability he made no effort to conceal lately.

After the meal she went back through the glass doors for her evening course. An unexpected number of people had responded with interest to her advertisement in the *Züricher Post: The undersigned . . . is opening a law school for nonprofessionals in her apartment at Bahnhofstrasse 52, as she did a few years ago in New York*. It was a more appreciative group than at the university, where only five students had registered for the course she offered during the winter semester 1892–93: English-American Civil Process and Its Relationship to the International Law Process. The opinion expressed in a liberal newspaper following her appointment held true for many male students: "It is degrading to male students to be taught by a woman."

And the decision of whether or not to allow her to appear as counsel was still hanging in the balance. She had to take care not to offend. Cautiously, as if walking on eggshells, she had asked the faculty whether offering a private course would be *agreeable* to everyone. She could not afford to take any risks. She even had kept quiet during the Farner affair.

She awakes at night drenched in sweat, having dreamed that someone was stalking her with a knife. She props herself up on her pillow and listens for a sound, her temples pounding. But she hears only Walter's pen scratching across the surface of paper in the next room. He prefers to work at night, writing articles on interest rates, insurance, market rates, from his seat high above Bahnhofstrasse, where the money flows during the day. The philanthropist has abandoned his altruistic pursuits of free health care and vacation camps for poor children. Like her father before him, a crack runs through his life. Her father had hung up his spiritual office and gone to work for the Northeast Railway as a statistician, and Walter Kempin had exchanged his love of mankind for the stock market.

Where was her old humanitarian Walter, impressionable and energetic? Where was he buried, so that she could go and weep at his grave?

And where was the pastor buried, who in Neumünster had preached beside the image of the angel of the Resurrection? Her father and her husband: dragging the withered part of themselves around with them like the body of a slain twin. With biographical defects like these, why hadn't these two men been locked up at Burghölzli?

Trading their souls for statistics, their love of humankind for the stock market—that was normal. Only those who did the reverse were considered crazy. For the love of money the men and women of Bahnhofstrasse dance around the golden calf to usher in the new century. Only at night, when the window is open, does this luxurious stretch smell like the ditch full of frogs it once was.

She walks with Curti down Bahnhofstrasse toward the lake. It is the end of October. He is not wearing a top hat and the wind blows strands of his black hair into his eyes. She keeps pace with him, lifting her skirts to avoid the puddles. Beside him she feels young and full of energy.

He has insisted that they go to the Baur au Lac for tea.

"Much too refined," she says.

"But you like that," he says, and laughs. She enjoys it as she would the theater: the upper crust seated at marble-topped tables in their velvet and cascades of taffeta. Fashion that winter dictates that giant velvet bows be worn at all strategic points, front and back. And the latest novelty is to perch little pyramids atop a coiffure of curls.

"Overturned wastebaskets," Curti comments with a grin as he orders his Clevner, resisting the exotic aroma of hot chocolate and mocha. There is no pianist at the keyboard today; he has been replaced by a boxy gramophone from which trickles the latest fad in music, waltzes—sold in Zurich by the music firm of Hug.

After taking a first sip of wine, Curti relates his news. "I have made a decision. I'm going to do it." And watches as her face lights up with joy at this surprise. At moments like this she reacts with the incredulity of a child. Her eyes get round as saucers and turn a mauve color. She is speechless, able only to utter, "You'll chance it?"

He nods. "Every other week. It will be the most up-to-date women's supplement in the German language—well written, concrete, everything but mealymouthed. Do you have a suggestion for a name?"

"Frauenrecht," she said: women's rights.

He nods. "That's calling the thing by its name." Accustomed as he is at work to shouting above the clattering of typewriters, Curti silences conversation at the tables nearby.

Looks shoot back and forth among the feathery branches. Palm shadows quiver on powdered faces. People whisper about the fact that the editor of the *Züricher Post* is with the Kempin woman.

"Her articles are always well written."

"Maybe so, but I wouldn't want to know what's going on at home."

"They say her children aren't doing particularly well at school."

"And her husband wanted to reapply for an office as clergyman. They talked him out of it. After the rumors in Enge and all—a pastor with a university lecturer for a wife . . ."

"And?"

"Supposedly he got furious, and now wants to resign from the synod."

The waiter refills Curti's glass. Curti leans across the table: "Has your book appeared in Germany yet?"

She has been waiting for him to ask. "Yesterday!" She hands him a copy, beaming.

He glances at the title: *The Legal Situation of Women Under the Present Laws of the German Reich,* published in Leipzig in 1892 by M. Schäfer.

"They'll want you to hold lectures; a book like this will not go unnoticed."

"I've already been invited to Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin—a whole lecture tour."

"Aha, and have you already ordered a dress with velvet bows?"

She chokes on a sip of hot chocolate, lowers her head, sputters, and laughs.

Curti's expression remains solemn. "They'll probably lure you over to Germany altogether . . ."

"But you'll hold on to me!" She gives him an mischievous look and he looks back at her with a question. There are red highlights in her hair. "You and your *Women's Rights!* People must be asking themselves why you are championing the rights of women."

Curti, smirking, replies that at the moment he is reading a work on the ancient Chinese, who were convinced that inside every man there was also a woman.

"And in every woman a man?"

He nods. "So when I fight for women, I'm also fighting for myself."

Two ladies at the next table look over at them. One glances at the other and raises her eyebrows. "Did you hear that, Mimi? That Curti!"

You're extra,
a mistake, something found:
a gift, a contradiction.
—MARGARET ATWOOD

Crackpots, visionaries—it seems there had never been so many of them. As if the departing century were shedding them like dead leaves from the trees. Clerks fill file cards in their painstaking script, and when enough evidence is amassed, the crackpots are taken away in padded wagons. The mental institutions are filling up with people; among them are the particularly gifted, the highly individual, the creative.

Gottfried Keller's last will and testament is contested by his heirs, who claim he was not mentally competent at the time he made it.

Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, another well-known writer, once again is committed to the Königsfelden Psychiatric Institution; his mother has killed herself in a moment of mental anguish.

The widow of Götz, the musician, throws herself in the Limmat out of love for Ricarda Huch, but is fished out at the last minute. They should put her in a "nice institution," Huch writes.

Lydia Escher and Stauffer, the painter, are so passionately in love with one another that they go mad.

"One shouldn't live too hard, Mimi, it can cost you your mental health. Where did you buy your silk coat? At Grieder's?"

In the ersatz paradise of Bahnhofstrasse, those presumed alive talk about those presumed dead.

There stands a little woman
in the wood alone.
So genuinely piqued is she, a thin cape she has on.
Tell me who . . ."

Hügin walked up behind Emily just as—her face a bright red—she buried a knife under a tree in front of the farm building, a knife she had taken with her after peeling potatoes in the kitchen.

And what had Dr. Wolff done? Treated Emily with kid gloves. First he stood for a long time in the doorway, and then he sat down, always moving his chair a little closer, as if she were a bowl of hot porridge and he might burn his fingers. When he asked her a question, it was as if he were blowing on the porridge to cool it off.

Why had she buried the knife?

Emily suppressed a laugh, then answered, chuckling: "A knife for all occasions." She simply ignored the rest of his questions, his soft patter of gentle words. She had chased her thoughts back into the recesses of her mind.

Suddenly she sat up and screamed, "If you can question me, then I have a question for you: What have you done with the letters I have written to the Zurich authorities?"

Wolff looked uncertain, turned his eyes to the bare trees in the park outside his window. "I put them in the box next to the front gate. All letters written here have to pass the censure of the director's office, it's regulation . . ."

"But you were supposed to take them into the city to mail them! What are you trying to do, ingratiate yourself so that you may become director yourself some day soon?"

She had screamed this, and then sighed. Finally, in a conciliatory tone, she said, "It would be better if we just went to Burghölzli together."

To which Wolff replied, "The institution in Zurich is full, Mrs. Kempin. Nor do they need any more doctors."

That afternoon Emily walked back and forth in the park on the winding, gravel-covered paths. They gave the impression that the grounds were infinite, a garden of paradise.

Dr. Wille stopped her to ask if she weren't cold. "It smells like earth," she answered, subdued and with a pointed smile.

Rays of hope.

On her lecture tour through Germany she observed the seed of the women's movement germinating. In Berlin, Helene Lange had finally succeeded in her long-planned-for coup to turn her middle-level *Realschule* into a fully accredited gymnasium.

And in Leipzig there was soon to be a school for girls, though Möbius, the neurologist, had poisoned the air with his statement that women were feebleminded—as nature had intended. The average brain weight of a woman was lower than that of a male idiot, he said. Female intelligence was a sign of degeneration. Möbius intended to publish his various essays under the title, *On the Physiological Feeblemindedness of the Female*.

Emily lectured in Munich and at the Women's Congress in Nürnberg. She saved her favorite city, Dresden, for last. She had lectured for the first time in Dresden two years before, at the invitation of Marie Stritt. Marie, who was Emily's age, could turn any occasion into a theatrical event. Like a circus director, she had a nose for talent, and she wanted Emily to perform not on one evening, no, but for an entire series of evenings, if you please. People were hungry for anything that promised them their rights and freedom.

Marie scheduled Emily's first lecture for shortly after her arrival by train. Just before she reached Dresden, Emily went to the washroom and changed from her wrinkled dress into a well-tailored suit: The women's movement shouldn't go around in sackcloth and ashes.

When she arrived, Marie was there at the station, laughing. The pretty, dark-haired former actress caused a scene when she embraced her colleague impetuously and pulled her through the station to the carriage waiting outside.

There was not one unoccupied seat at the lecture hall, and Marie gave Emily a spirited introduction. When she opened her mouth to speak, everyone listened. That spring she had given her lecture, *The Woman Who Set Off in Search of Logic,* in Berlin, and had repeated it by popular demand. And now, once again, she spoke with enthusiasm, ensuring that the evening would not be a stuffy one.

"Here she is again, our first German woman lawyer."

"From Switzerland," someone whispered; but Stritt wasn't both-

ered by details. The women of the movement would build one nation.

The mood was one of change. The ground had been cultivated and was ready to receive Emily's idea of an association for the protection of women's rights, an office where women could receive free legal counseling, like the one that recently had been opened in Zurich at Emily's instigation.

"If we neglect women who are destitute, then the whole idea of women's liberation is for naught." She cited as example the clinic in Berlin that had been opened by the first women physicians, Dr. Franziska Tiburtius, Dr. Emilie Lehmus, and Dr. Agnes Blum. Between 1877 and 1892 they had treated 17,000 female patients, free of charge!

Dresden was to prove to be particularly fertile ground; in no time at all the first cells would reproduce and legal offices would soon spring up throughout all of Germany. . . . The idea had caught fire. The Dresden chapter of the General German Association of Women founded an institute *in which women and girls of all social classes could receive free legal advice and information*.

The informal meetings of the Dresden Women's Association were held in the "Italian village" atmosphere of the Red Room at Helbig's Restaurant. The evenings, organized by Marie Stritt and Adele Gamper, were perhaps the liveliest of all the chapter meetings, with a dinner following.

Their faces reflected the red of the damask walls. Adele's curly head was wreathed in cigarette smoke as she ordered more wine from the Sicilian waiter. A gypsy woman entered the restaurant, and the proprietor allowed her to go from table to table, reading palms. She prophesied a long life for Marie.

"And I?"

The gypsy took Emily's hands, small as a child's. They had only a few, almost invisible lines. Her fingertips remained cool, as if they were touching snow. There was a double heart line extending to Emily's thumb.

"One man goes, another man comes."

Emily blushed furiously. Marie, a cigarette burning between her fingers, clapped her hands, and jokes flew around the table.

"And then?" Emily asked breathlessly.

The gypsy was still staring at Emily's hands, scallop-shaped and shining with light pearls of sweat. She was silent, and then, instead of answering, let go of Emily's hands.

Women's Rights, which appears every two weeks as a supplement of the *Züricher Post,* is cherished by its readers. Emily discovers that writing is quite satisfying. She can draw a circle around herself in her writing and feel safe at its center.

She becomes more confident in her public appearances. In September 1894, she is the only woman to participate in the Basel Law Conference, during which Eugen Huber, editor of what will become the Swiss Civil Law Code, lectures in favor of a law that will merge the property of married partners. Emily rejects his argument. Having translated *Le droit des femmes,* which had appeared in France in 1893, she vehemently supports the separation of goods espoused by its author, Bridel:

> *The woman is always at a disadvantage in marriage. . . . The protective measures suggested by Professor Huber work only on paper; if a woman wishes to make use of them it is the end of all amicable understanding. . . . We must devise a matrimonial property rights law that will allow a woman to make her case.*

She also attended the Congress of the International Association of Criminal Science in Bern. At its close, the government councillor Ruchonet organized an excursion into the surrounding mountains. It was a beautiful sunny day and the mood was spirited. Emily was the only woman present, a Novella among the jovial group of men on the Thunerhof terrace, and they asked her to say a few words.

Emily: conjured up in men's eyes. Her words were light as air, they floated upward. She held tight and floated with them, enveloped in the blue.

The Bern newspaper *Bund* captured the moment:

> *She spoke with enthusiasm, not as a feminist usually speaks, but, rather, free of platitudes and declamations. And the men unan-*

another wagon approaching, and walks faster, her head down, as if through some barrier. The wagon jerks to a halt and two men in white coats jump down from the carriage step and grab Emily by her thin wrists. They barely get her into the wagon before the driver turns and the horse begins to trot. The ribbon of road that she had laboriously covered, step by step, reels backward.

When they arrive at the gate of Friedmatt a light goes on. Dark puddles mar the pavement of the square. The director is standing under the arch, his eyes piercing, accusing. She feels that it is not Dr. Wille, but Father's will that is punishing her with this look, causing her to quake to the marrow of her bones.

You brought me down with that look, Father. You lost sight of me for a long time, and then you discovered me high overhead, a speck among flocks of birds. You stood there with your head tilted far back, and stared at me, furious at my daring. That look struck me like a lance. I tumbled headfirst through the swirling air, fell from one stratum to the next, and when I reached Limbo I saw Zurich approaching—the houses on the lake; the university, temple of knowledge; the palazzo of the insane asylum. Come, they called to me, your father city is waiting, and I rushed toward it, welcoming its embrace.

In February 1895, Emily was on her way to the university when she was stopped by a total stranger who informed her that her father was ill, had had a heart attack.

She had last seen her father at her mother's funeral. He had sent word afterwards that he did not wish for her to visit him. Not even the fact that she had become a lecturer had changed his mind. Now she wanted to see him. She took Agnes with her and went to Escherstrasse. The house remained silent when she rang; only after a while did a window open above her head and her sister Maria Karolina look out.

"I've come to see Father," Emily called up to her in a strained voice, her throat tight with fear. Next to her, Agnes lowered the bouquet she was holding, which she had raised in greeting.

"He had an attack early today," she heard from above. "If he sees you, he'll get upset, and that could kill him."

The window closed. Emily stood there, battling the pain and fury inside her. Then Aunt Johanna Spyri stepped out of the house. Emily had heard that she visited her sick brother-in-law often.

"Aunt Johanna . . ."

Johanna Spyri turned her face to her, which had become lined and gray. Only her eyes, now looking at Emily in surprise, were still young. She recognized her niece, whom she had not seen in years.

"Don't go in," she said with an intensity unusual for her. "Karolina has already told you he had an attack." She looked at the tall girl at Emily's side and mistook her for Gertrude. When she had last seen her—eight years before—Agnes was a small child who sat on her lap. After a hasty farewell, Johanna crossed the front garden and climbed into a hired carriage waiting there, its driver giving her an impatient look.

Emily turned the doorknob; the door was not locked. Cautiously, almost silently, she climbed the stairs with Agnes. In the upstairs hall she recognized the furniture from her childhood. She stroked the carving on the oak wardrobe. The picture of Isambart, the tunnel builder with the iron gray hair, was still hanging there. His steel blue eyes were fixed on a point in the semidarkness of the hallway, as if he had been forgotten by time.

The doors to the living room were open and her father sat upright in an armchair. He had fallen asleep, a colossus of slack flesh; one of his hands, waxy white, hung down as if it had no muscles at all. The other hand rested on his chest, as if to quiet a pain there. His head had fallen to one side and from his open mouth came a long, drawn-out irregular rattling sound. It came and went, came and went, as Emily stood with her daughter, Agnes's bouquet still in hand, at the doorsill, paralyzed by the magician's spell.

Agnes tugged at her mother's sleeve and gave her a look that said she was frightened and wanted to go. Emily looked over at her father one last time, and found the strength to turn around. They left her father's house just as they had entered it—unseen, tiptoeing like thieves.

The ailing colossus survived for several months more, lying there in the city they shared while the ground beneath Emily's feet became more and more shaky.

She had given up the office with Walter, because of personal differences. Instead of the five students she had expected to attend her private course, twenty-five showed up. They filled the small rooms on Bahnhofstrasse to the point that instruction became impossible. Her request for a room in one of the city schools was turned down because she had been forced to charge a small course fee, which was against school policy. So the idea of a private law school collapsed.

Luckily, she could still teach a few hours of the trade class in commercial and bill of exchange law at the secondary school for girls. And the supervisory board endorsed the twelve public lectures she gave in the winter of 1894–95 as being very commendable, and paid her the respectable honorary fee of 250 francs.

She was still waiting—it had been three years now—for the decision on whether she, as a woman, would be permitted to practice law. Curti had left Zurich, having ceased publication of the *Züricher Post*. He was now a member of his native cantonal government, where he laid the cornerstone for the Commercial College. After the turn of the century he was summoned back to Frankfurt, where he became director of the newspaper, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

A positive outcome to the motion Curti had proposed would have put an end to all their financial problems. Now that the children were reaching the age of higher education, the Kempins were more in need of steady income than ever. Emily took Curti's departure from Zurich as a bad sign. She missed him. He was a friend to active women, and at that point she could have used his protection.

Then, suddenly, an opportunity opened up that Emily had waited for for a long time: Two positions at the Olympus of full professorship had become available. Fick and Treichler, both of whom had been kept on at the university until age 73, were finally retiring.

Now was the time. Her fee as lecturer was enough neither to live nor to die on; if she got a full professorship she would receive a salary every month, no matter how many students enrolled in her classes.

She let it be known that she was interested in one of the professorships. But the faculty let it be known that it preferred two male candidates, the lecturers Hitzig and Fleiner—two of the most distinguished representatives of contemporary jurisprudence, they said. Quick starters who had never been forced to take detours, who had never been spotted looking for a place to hold classes, who had never been forced to struggle each step of the way clutching paltry petitions in their hands or forced to go the other end of the earth to succeed there with no previous language skills or connections.

They were young men who had not been used up.

Emily Kempin did not have a chance, they let her know that right away. The faculty issued notice that they considered *the qualifications of Frau Dr. Kempin for holding a practical seminar on Zurich Civil Proceedings as unproven*.

She was gripped by an uneasy feeling. She dully perceived that she had little time left.

If one is a man,
still the woman part of the brain must have effect;
and a woman also must have intercourse
with the man in her.
—VIRGINIA WOOLF

She imagines she is sitting in a train at night, traveling at great speed through the darkness toward an unknown goal: *stazione Terminus*. The train makes no stops; the countryside is void of light, uninhabited. The route the train is taking has been decided beforehand in some office or other, in someone's head.

Has my father laid the tracks of my life? Have I, without knowing it, been moving all this time in a direction predetermined by him?

Where is it that I shall arrive, Father?

As far as the eye can see, a treacherously narrow course.

They moved from Bahnhofstrasse to Fraumünsterstrasse 8. The free law advisory center was located nearby, in the old Fraumünster schoolhouse.

But the move changed little; her marriage with Walter had reached a dead end. They went their own ways now professionally. Walter worked as an attorney in the building next door. He was not very successful, tried other firms, failed, continued to ask his wife for money.

Then, at a gathering one evening on Zürichberg, she met someone who was fully alive. He sat there saying scarcely a word, but he had a presence like no one else, with bright eyes that saw through everything.

After dinner everyone moved from the dining room to the terrace. It was a mild June night. In the small group that Emily joined, the conversation turned a new work by Marholm, *The Book of Women*.

"That's a lot for a title to promise," said a voice in the semidarkness.

"But she lives up to it," the stranger said. "Her portraits are accurate and psychologically up-to-date, *femme fin de siècle . . .*"

Their hostess agreed: it was the first time an author had treated the difficulties encountered by educated women. The portrait of Sonya Kovalevsky, for example, the first female professor of mathematics. After winning the Prix Bourdin in Paris, she fell in love just like any other woman. And Marholm described that perfectly.

"Too bombastic for my taste," someone said.

"Have you read it, Professor Kempin?"

Emily said no, she hadn't.

An opalescent light flickered across the faces of the circle. The smell of summer flowers.

"What the times do to a woman. A life lived full steam ahead, to no purpose. Plucked and pulled apart."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I was quoting Marholm."

From over by the railing where a group of women was standing there came the sound of loud laughter, which broke off suddenly. Light bounced off a beaded shoulder, shooting a spark. Women languished in rustling taffeta, silk stockings.

"The two lovers must protect themselves, so that happiness may develop." She hears the man they call Mathieu Schwann, the one with the intelligent eyes, say this in answer to their hostess. She had asked him about his book, *Heinrich Emanuel;* whether, as she suspects, it violated the moral code of the region he came from.

"The area around Cologne is strictly Catholic, isn't it?"

He nods, and smiles disdainfully. "But here, in strictly Protestant Zurich, it was found to be shocking as well."

"You are too outspoken in terms of what you call the right to love."

"I am merely against ranking that which is rotting above that which is alive."

He gives Emily a look, and she blushes.

Walter is standing with a group of men who are loudly discussing the market.

"I am merely against these terribly haphazard marriages."

"You should write a book on love."

"I intend to. It will be about passion, and the breakdown of this ridiculous misadventure we call marriage. It is essential that we do away with it in our time," he said softly, as if to himself.

He again sought out Emily's eyes, trying to connect with her dreamy, clouded look somewhere on the distant horizon. Then he gave a subdued smile and let his words, which had detonated like a bomb, sink in. Dismay was evident among the couples present; there was an awkward silence, broken by Mathieu Schwann.

"I'd like to tell you a story: Once there was a woman with a beautiful voice, but when she sang it made her husband uncomfortable. Whereas everyone else was charmed by his wife's voice, he would leave the room. He could tell she wasn't singing her songs to him, but to some unknown object of her desire. When the couple was at home alone she never sang. But as soon as he left the house she would hurry to the piano and sing and dream, dream and sing. And the person she desired must have appeared to her one day, because her eyes shone and she was transformed.

"She left her husband, but the respectable world castigated the woman and her shameful desertion . . ."

"As it should," a young woman with a high coiffure said sharply.

Her husband agreed with her. "They are man and wife, to have and to hold."

"Which is to say one of them is master and the other slave," the hostess protested strongly. She looked around her, but no one said anything. In the silence they could hear the muffled sound of a moth bumping against the glass of the lamp. Across the room, the host disentangled himself from the group that was discussing the market. He went over to his wife and ended the discussion with the announcement that as soon as darkness fell there would be a display of fireworks in honor of their hostess, whose birthday they were there to celebrate.

Scattered chrysanthemums of light. A shower of light, each spark an autonomous, exploding ego.

When he had said good-night to Emily, Mathieu Schwann had asked if he could see her again. He found himself in a situation where he needed her professional advice.

Now they are sitting across from one another in the office on Fraumünsterstrasse. Emily had set the appointment for an hour when the office was quiet. Walter is away on business for a few days.

She bids Schwann to take a seat on the plaintiff's side of the ocean-table. As he talks, she stares at the smudged impressions his fingers make on the dark varnish. She is pulled into his life as if into a whirlpool, and recognizes the all-too-familiar pattern there of existential crisis. His well-to-do parents in the Rhineland refused their support; the University of Zurich refused to qualify Schwann, the "private scholar," for habilitation. He's keeping his head above water with publications on the historical and economic aspects of various regions of the country. His wife has been learning a profession in order to help him financially. And that, Schwann intimates, is when they began to move apart . . .

She looks at him in astonishment. "What does your wife do?" she asks.

"She is a midwife."

He has come to seek Emily's advice on a matter relating to an inheritance. She promises to do what she can, and sends him out into the evening, but is shaken, still caught in the web of his blue eyes. Despite the many disagreeable things that have happened to him in this life, Mathieu Schwann exudes calm, and a vital energy she finds missing in her life.

She sees herself in this stranger's eyes, and it frightens her.

She chases away sleep on these summer evenings by reading—the work on Sonya Kovalevsky. At the height of her fame the mathematician, to the horror of her admirers, fell in love with a younger man.

She also reads Schwann's latest book, which, as a new title from the Fischer publishing house, is in all the bookstore windows. In contrast to his earlier publications, this is a novelistic, personal narrative: *Heinrich Emanuel, the Story of a Youth*. Raised in the Rhineland by strict parents, the protagonist converts to a belief in life and, after a few detours, discovers sensuality and love.

She remains in her chair for a long time after she finishes her reading. The book slides to her knees, her eyes turn inward, to her own landscape—a river valley that has been buried in rocks. Rain and

melted snow have washed the stones down from the mountains. The landscape is barren, and empty of people.

It is on one of these evenings that she writes Walter a letter telling him she wants a separation.

Schwann returns for the information she has obtained for him. Their conversation soon turns personal. Schwann says quite openly that the time has come for him to separate from his wife. Their relationship has become too familiar, indifferent. When love disappears, the breath of life disappears with it.

She is shocked at this coincidence. Is he talking about her when he talks about himself? As she listens, she dissolves into tiny particles glittering in the light, caught in the pull of a strange current.

She floats like a cloud over the landscape of life; she is a river flowing in the shadows of trees never before seen. There are houses and a fortress on a hill, all bathed in the blue light coming from the eyes on the other side of her ocean-table.

After he leaves, Emily walks to the lake in the twilight. Lantern light on the water distorts her reflection. Her alter ego. There it is, watching me, never letting me out of its sight. My shadow sister, signaling to me at night from behind the trees along the bank: restrained, silent. Who was it who mistreated you, humiliated you, and who will save you, my sundered self?

By daylight, in a more rational mood, she holds her thoughts of love up to the light— they pass the test.

Mathieu Schwann, even though a few years younger, is still of her generation. He is smart, willful, sensible. They could develop a new kind of relationship: one between two mature people, equals. She feels alive, as if she has been born again. He had sat on the other side of her ocean and spoken to her of his sexual needs. She had never heard anyone do that so openly, and it had excited her. She imagined their two bodies in an embrace sheltered behind the reeds of the world: the world's first couple.

The walls of Friedmatt take a 2100-square-yard chunk out of life, which is immeasurable. The walls rise into the blue of the sky like a

cake mold. Life inverted, endurable only in small, concentrated portions. How does one silence the hungry, the unbridled heart?

Following her escape Emily is locked in her room during the day, as well as at night. It has become a Friedmatt within Friedmatt.

She has the courage one evening to invite Mathieu Schwann to dinner. Her children, older now, are present as well. There will be time later to be alone with him. She feels a new sensuality growing in her, spreading its roots beneath her skin.

The evening is a catastrophe. As Emily converses with Mathieu at the table, his eyes follow nineteen-year-old Gertrude's every move as she carries dishes out of the kitchen. He asks what her plans are, and listens to her childish prattle with infinite patience. Occasionally, she abruptly breaks off a sentence with a giggle, holding her hand over her mouth as if to stifle the laughter that is causing her shoulders to shake, her lively dark eyes peering at him over her fingertips. He laughs when she laughs, is quiet when she is quiet, almost devours her with his eyes.

Emily suddenly sees her daughter through Mathieu's eyes. Gertrude is slender now, lissome and supple. Her long hair flatters her; her eyes are expressive and sparkle like the dew. She had left school before graduating, she tells him, she hadn't liked her apprenticeship at a fashion studio. Now she wants to try something different, work in a hotel on Lake Geneva, perhaps. She learned English when she lived in New York, and was now working on improving her French . . .

Her younger brother and sister, bored, withdraw to their rooms. Mathieu encourages Gertrude to remain, an adult among the adults. Gertrude is flattered, and asks him to tell her about his novel. All of Zurich was talking about it; is he really so immoral?

Schwann laughs. She will have to read it and decide for herself, he says. And afterwards he will expect a visit from her so that they might discuss it . . .

Emily looks on as her daughter grows away from her, and gains power over Mathieu Schwann.

The next morning at breakfast, Gertrude raves about how impossibly bright his eyes are, about his beard—it's so blond, a thick, sweet fuzz.

Two women under one roof, in love with the same man. The daughter, blinded, is oblivious to the pain she is causing her mother. As she articulates her desire she rests her head on her mother's shoulder, as she had done as a child. Emily struggles for air amidst this tenderness.

Several days later Gertrude tells her she has been to see the Schwanns. She looks at her mother with an enraptured expression.

"Was his wife there?"

"No."

"Did he kiss you?"

"Oh, no."

"Did he put his hand on your arm?"

Her daughter is shocked at the strange expression stealing over her mother's face, and suddenly stops talking. Emily was to hear about Gertrude's further visits to Schwann only by coincidence. Sometimes she inferred them from Gertrude's tone of voice or from her pregnant silences.

So she lost her daughter together with Schwann. She felt empty, picked clean; she felt like a tree, its branches stripped bare in anticipation of winter.

Emily was quick to turn the pain she increasingly felt into derision: she had simply deceived herself, that was all. He was a philistine who wanted a woman-child, not a woman who was his equal. He wanted a little woman he could shape like wax to serve and admire him, a droll little pet, a little squirrel, a bedmate. She was furious.

She finds his book, *Heinrich Emanuel*, lying around the house every time she turns around. She is constantly bending down to pick it up in the hallway, on the mantelpiece next to the French grammar book. One morning she finds it lying open next to Gertrude's unmade bed.

She picks it up and reads the underlined passage, wrinkling her forehead: *Love without sensuality is not love, but silly twaddle*. She leafs through the pages and comes to another underlined passage: *A person who*

loves is subject to the consequences of his feelings. He cannot say to himself: At this or that point is where you stop.

"Anything you want, dearest, Adda said to her love."

Emily becomes alarmed. She does not want the passion she herself has been gripped by to be transferred to her daughter. Gertrude is only nineteen, still a child.

One evening she summons Mathieu Schwann to her home, to tell him in no uncertain terms how she feels. She warns him not to take advantage of her daughter's naïveté. He should forget about free love. Not with her daughter, did he understand her?

Mrs. Schwann writes to Emily, complaining that Emily's "juvenile" daughter is making eyes at her husband. The situation was harmless as yet, she writes, but if it continues . . .

Her daughter is not a juvenile, she will be twenty on her next birthday, Emily replies respectfully. Mrs. Schwann will have to figure out her marriage problems herself.

All Zurich was talking. The poet Ricarda Huch repeated the gossip in a letter to Victor Widmann, editor of the Bund, and in doing so recorded it for the posterity:

> *Now I'll repeat to you what Schwann told me: He comes from a good family (his novel* Heinrich Emanuel *is the story of his youth, as you probably already know), and has tried many professions, pharmacy, I think, for example. He began his studies late, and married for love. His wife is also from a very good family. They managed to get by somehow (I don't think their parents gave them anything). To make a long story short, he was supposed to support the family, but felt oppressed by such mundane cares, and his wife decided to relieve him of them by training as a midwife in Zurich. (One can't help thinking that she could have come up with another profession.) During that time he wished to take his qualifying exams as lecturer in history. Her social position here was somewhat of a disadvantage to choice of occupation, but nevertheless she was received in very friendly fash-*

ion. She never built up a large practice, and then one night she suffered a serious fall. Her landlord, to make her angry, persistently had rung her bell, to make her think that someone was summoning her(!), and she fell, and through this fall sustained an injury that led to a prolonged illness. But Schwann couldn't tolerate her illness, and their love suffered from this. Then they met Dr. Kempin, and Dr. Kempin fell in love with him (so the rumor goes), and decided to ensnare him, so that he would marry her daughter. Her daughter, everyone says, is quite cute, but the most insignificant snippet imaginable, totally childish. For instance, she reportedly said to Schwann's maid: "Oh, if only I could figure out how to get Dr. Schwann to kiss me." I've forgotten the details, but Schwann's wife was soon fluctuating between despair and thoughts of suicide, which she never carried out. In the end, the whole thing was cleared up. Dr. Kempin supposedly wrote to Mrs. Schwann: "My child yearns for love; it could have been Milan or Wedekind, but it was your husband. That's just the way it is, and you'll have to find your way around it," etc., etc. Mrs. Schwann's husband then wrote her that it was true, he was in love with the Kempin girl (. . .) He apparently found free love more interesting, modern, poetic. But I scarcely believe that Dr. Kempin would have gone along with that. Dr. Kempin then moved to Berlin.

She would leave Zurich for a while, to escape this professional and personal impasse.

In a letter to the faculty, Emily requested a leave of absence for the winter semester 1895–96. She had to go to Berlin on business, she reported, and perhaps after that to North America, on the same business. Nor did she think she would be able to return for the 1896 summer semester.

At the girls' secondary school, to which she also applied for leave, a substitute was already available: Anna Mackenroth, who has just been awarded her doctoral degree in law. The student from Danzig also followed in her teacher's footsteps when she took a position in

Meili's law offices. She was to remain in Zurich, and relinquish the honor of becoming Germany's first female lawyer to Anita Augspurg, who passed her doctoral examinations three years later, in 1897.

BERLIN, 1896. She had longed for a breath of fresh air. The wind from the flatlands swept down the avenues and across the squares. The streets and buildings were too big. The squares were too wide, too open under the chalky sky. Thanks to her connections with the Schrader circle, she lived at one of Berlin's best addresses: Unter den Linden 40.

The academy is nearby, and the castle and palace: stately buildings with flat roofs from which stone figures tower against a horizon unbounded by the mountains in the background.

Gestures turned to stone.

From the window of her office she can look down at the linden trees. Nannies walk along the avenue with their charges. The maidservants from the Spree Valley dress in short red skirts and bright caps, and have a faraway look in their eyes, as if searching for spring.

Around noon the busy street fills with life: stockbrokers in their carriages, family landaus, a horse-drawn wagon crowded with schoolgirls on an excursion, stable boys with horses, and always officers, whom the palace guards salute unfailingly.

Berlin is full of life this spring.

The second draft of the new civil code has been completed. Its leaves rustle in the breeze; its paragraphs have caused quite a stir. Women feel they have been slighted. Minna Cauer and her association, *Frauenwohl* (Women's Welfare Association), call for a protest. Women stream to a demonstration at the concert hall, the "women's reserves," as they are called, their faces charged with emotion, their skirts billowing in the wind.

The women's movement has changed.

Helene Lange had discussed this with Emily on a walk to the gardens of Charlottenburg. The maternal spirit of the original movement of the eighties had turned to one of agitation. Lange herself advocated a gradual change in consciousness, but she had been overruled

by the radical women's groups, which were not interested in the differences between the sexes, but in equality.

"Time can't stand still," Helene said, in a conciliatory tone. "It works in our favor as well. The first six female students at my gymnasium received their diplomas before Easter—the first girls in Germany to graduate from secondary school!"

"But they still won't be permitted to matriculate at a university, or to take state exams!"

Emily went with Helene to a meeting of the newly founded *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (League of German Women's Associations), an umbrella organization of moderate and radical groups. Working-class women kept their distance from it, however, for various reasons.

Emily saw the change at a glance: On her first visit to Berlin the women she encountered had been maternal types, school and kindergarten teachers, for the most part. Their meetings had opened with coffee and cake, and only afterward did they get down to serious business. The aims they shared had allowed the most diverse women to bond together.

Now there were signs of a more varied scene: upper-middle-class women in robes, clerks in cotton skirts, eccentric-looking women dressed in the flowing uniform of the reform movement, their bare feet clad in sandals. Emily saw many familiar faces, shook many hands. Her old confidant was present—Marie Stritt, who now played a leading role in the umbrella organization. Anita Augspurg's long nose and rosy cheeks came into view. In the summer semester of 1894 she had taken Emily's History of English Law class in Zurich.

She told Emily that she planned to finish her studies the following year, and Emily reflected on the fact that ten years after she herself had received her doctorate, Augspurg would be the first German woman lawyer. *I wish the reverse were true,* she thought, *that it was I who could sail behind in her head wind.*

Previously at these gatherings everyone sat where they wanted. Now they played parliament, with radical groups storming into the room to occupy the seats on the left. Just as in the economy, women were beginning to specialize. First to address the group was the spokeswoman of the morality movement, Hanna Biber-Böhm.

Anita, sitting next to Emily, whispered that she didn't like this morals matron.

"She'll talk herself blue in the face. Look at her, standing there in that blouse she crocheted herself, going on about prostitution and perversion in the most naive of tones, as if she kept those things locked up in her sewing kit."

During a speech supporting women's suffrage, Minna Cauer attacked Helene as being too long-suffering, too moderate. The time for compromise had passed, and that included the General German Women's Association as well.

From the moderate side came the criticism that the radicals were reducing a complex situation to a few simple catchphrases. This applied to Raschke above all, whose juristic polemics, it was said, provided not information, but provocation.

Marie Stritt, member of the league's legal commission, chose not to take this criticism lying down. She called for a discussion of the civil code, and asked Emily, the only woman lawyer present, to comment on the issue. Emily's brochure, *The Legal Position of the Woman According to Current German Law,* was familiar to them all, was it not? she asked.

"The writing is too dry," called out Sera Proelss, one of the league's legal delegates.

Auguste Schmidt, editor of *New Paths,* protested. The book was not intended as propaganda, she said. She recommended that it be used as the standard work of the Legal Protection Committee. It was articulate, understandable, basic, and clear, she said.

They now waited for Emily to state her opinion. She stressed the fact that, in terms of content, there was still much in the civil code that needed changing. It was regrettable that the separation of property she had recommended had not been written into property rights. But she warned them not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Certain reforms in property rights revealed the fly in the ointment only when they came to court. Laws, the advantages of which were unknown, could prove disadvantageous. Women would do well to inform themselves of their rights. Experience and practice would allow them to make claims on the civil code that members

of the women's associations now scarcely heeded: inheritance laws, for example.

When Emily then launched into a lengthy excursus, her audience became restless. She was speaking too much from the lawyer's point of view; they didn't want a lecture on the basics, they wanted slogans, action. It hurt Emily to perceive that she had arrived at a different point from they, to realize that each new era produced something different.

Emily Kempin as individual was no longer needed, not her experience as lone warrior, nor her ifs, ands, and buts. She should join the group, they said, it was the time to join forces; together they would storm into the public sphere.

She began to avoid the public. She was not among the main presenters at the International Women's Congress called by Lina Morgenstern in September. Sufficient time was not allowed for the speeches, and she found the legal addresses dilettantish and tendentious. She did write later in an article, however, that she was impressed by the rebellious mood of the women. They filled every seat of the stuffy hall and were as alert following the hundredth lecture on the seventh day as they had been following the first.

Once again she had to summon all her strength simply to survive. Her children moved to Berlin to be with her; only Gertrude stayed behind with her father in Zurich, in order to complete her training. Robert had broken off his studies at the gymnasium he attended in Zurich; finally Emily had to pay a printer to take him on as apprentice. The master printer, whose small but elegant shop was located on Unter den Linden, was well aware of his position as printer to the royal court, but he left all major decisions to his bigoted wife. Month after month Emily had to come up with Robert's apprenticeship premium, as well as the high rent for her office. There were those in the circle around the Schraders, a group that included "Empress Friedrich," who noted her quiet struggle: Von Soden, professor of theology at the university and pastor of the Jerusalem Church, arranged for Emily to teach courses at the Lessing-Hochschule and the Humboldt Academy.

The pain of taking so many steps forward, only to end up going around in circles!

The days were so terribly bright. The light pierced her skin like arrows, she had become thin-skinned and vulnerable. So many eyes were turned on her; curious and watchful, they caused her to wither and fade. In the evenings she had no strength left to deal with people. She would sit at her desk among her manuscripts and books, feeling safe there in the cool night air, a lizard in the rocks. Her articles on women's issues and borderline cases of jurisprudence were much sought after by journals such as *Zukunft, Grenzboten,* and the *Deutsche Juristenzeitung.* Ink flowed through her veins, and she traced the loneliness of her days in its lustrous blackness. Often she wrote until dawn crept up to her window. Then there would be just enough time before she opened the office for her to cool her face at the spigot. As she dried it she would look into the mirror, noticing how pinched and hard her mouth had become, as if she were clenching her teeth to keep out the sand that covered this flat part of Germany.

A law is like a skeleton, she had told the women of the assembly. It is jurisprudence that gives it flesh and blood. Of what use were the best of laws if women didn't know about them, couldn't use them to their own advantage? She wanted to fight the battle in her own way, to help married women who were in dire straits demand their rights.

During the long evenings she compiled a list of rules from the civil code, published in 1897 by Heine Verlag under the title *Rechtsbrevier für deutsche Ehefrauen* (Legal Brevier for German Married Women). As she was compiling them she kept in mind all the women who had ever asked her for advice: *Rule 1: You cannot be compelled to live together with your husband, and if you can establish valid reasons for your refusal to do so, they cannot do you harm.*

This was followed by her elucidation of Paragraph 1353, which she expressed succinctly and plainly, in the style of the times. She addressed her applicants in the familiar and sisterly second person: *Rule 2: You are not obliged to submit to your husband's decisions if he misuses his privilege.* (Based on Paragraphs 1354 and 1402.)

This collection of fifty-two rules to remember is dedicated: *To my dear daughter Gertrude, as she enters adulthood.*

She hadn't seen Gertrude since her twentieth birthday, in November. Now, at the end of February, Gertrude was arriving from Zurich. A light snow covered the windows. A corps of cadets walked by under the bare lindens, their boots puncturing the thin blanket of snow.

"How are you, Gertrude?" She looked into her daughter's face. It seemed pale and spotty in the yellow winter light.

"I'm expecting a child."

Emily said nothing. She had to sit down. Her daughter clung to her and put her head on her shoulder.

"Schwann's?"

"Yes."

"And? Is he going to marry you?"

Her daughter sighed. "He's still married. He's Catholic."

At that, Emily stood up suddenly, hurling epithets: "That contortionist of love, that blue-eyed seducer of women!"

"Mother," her daughter said wearily, "I love him."

Her mother sank back down on the sofa. She wiped away her tears and was silent. Gertrude loved Mathieu Schwann. Shouldn't she, of all people, be able to understand that? She will provide for Gertrude—hungry for love and shivering in the shadow of her parents' relationship—and for her baby. She will keep on working hard, relentlessly, until this child, too, is grown.

They shoveled and shoveled a grave
and into it threw lantern, sword, and woman.
—META VON SALIS

Her native city was growing impatient with her. What, it asked, did Professor Kempin have in mind; what did this long absence in Berlin mean? Emily was unaware of having done anything wrong; she had requested and received a leave from the Educational Council. When she got word of the controversy she quickly decided to hold lectures in spite of her leave: History of English Law, 2 credits, gratis; Family Law as Represented in the Philosophy of Law, 1 credit, open to the public and gratis. But the university catalog had already gone to the printer.

The minutes of a faculty meeting note that Professor Schneider touched upon *the strange behavior of Lecturer Kempin, who has her domicile in Berlin, doesn't hold lectures she has announced, neglects to announce or advertise any lectures for the coming semester, and yet who wishes to participate on the Council*. Schneider, of all people, whose support she had always enjoyed. That hurt. And what it really meant was that they would abandon her, battle weary, worn out.

In September 1896 she submitted her resignation. The rumor in Zurich was that the faculty would have welcomed it much sooner.

Emily as a warning that a woman has no place among the gods.

She was still waiting, after five years, for a change in the law governing lawyers, appertaining to Curti's motion. She still had not given up on her greatest wish: to practice law in Zurich.

Emily went with Gertrude to the clinic to see Dr. Tiburtius. Both mother and daughter undergo a gynecological examination. The physician determines that the daughter is pregnant and that the mother has a growth of indeterminate size and type in her uterus: a threat, slowly growing now from the inside as well as from the

outside. A thicket of resistance, growing denser day by day. Birds get tangled up in the thorns; at her windowsill she is feeding her death.

When Mathieu Schwann showed up in Berlin to see Gertrude, Emily ordered him to her office. His blue eyes flashed under her reproaches, and when he stood to leave he told her that she was an overworked, hysterical female.

After her escape attempt, Emily is no longer provided with scissors to execute her world order. Only one of the two boxes containing her newspaper cutouts remains. Clarissa Rosa says by way of apology that she needed something in which to pack the baby jacket she had knitted. Emily empties the contents of the box onto the bedcovers. They offer a crazy quilt of male and female body parts: A woman's arm has a man's neck in a stranglehold, a moustache tickles a breast, a man's umbrella bores into a woman's leg, a tailcoat pinches a female foot. A gust of wind swirling in from the window sets off a battle between the sexes that she never wanted—never!

Emily begins to weep; on this particular day she is not to be placated.

Schwann gave her a slap in the face with a vile outburst in the Leipzig monthly, *Die Gesellschaft,* under the title, "On Women's Emancipation," by Dr. M. Schwann. "Educated women," he writes, "first repress their drives, and then, when they reach middle age, there is a wild explosion." He, Schwann, had experienced this first hand: He *had crossed the path of such haughty women, who were caught in the grip of a sexual fever.*

Emily's reply arrived in the next post and was printed in the following issue of *Die Gesellschaft* under the title, "Emancipation and E-marriage-ipation": "Such a blend of fact and fiction appeals to naive minds and lulls the reader into an unctuous parroting of it. The naive minds in this case belong, as a rule, to men." Emily pointed out the sociological changes that hindered so many women in marrying young, and then addressed the psychology of middle-aged women:

So it often is later in life that a woman encounters a love that suits her adult nature and corresponding sensuality. . . . It was fitting that Sonya Kovalevsky fell in love at forty; not because she had had no time for it before that, not because she was busy succeeding in her scholarly studies, but because, following the completion of her studies and all her magnificent scientific achievements, Sonya had become a different person, a new person who had new and different needs.

APRIL 1897. The women walking along Unter den Linden are coatless, and their hips are swaying. Now and again one of them turns to glance behind her, as if searching for the light trails of admiring eyes. The squares are hungry for people more so than in winter. Married couples walk arm in arm, their shadows brushing against the tree trunks. Couples hold hands, seeking in one another that part of themselves that wants to be a man, or that will never be permitted to be a woman: two halves that will never fit together no matter which way they're turned, because each is seeking Abel, the slain twin, that part of the self that never saw light. (What force is it that splits us into who we must be and who we want to and cannot be, except at night in our dreams?)

Her father had once preached, "Man is the head of woman, woman the body of man."

There are the headless women.

There, the bodiless men.

They have to hold fast to each other, these pathetic amputees: she swinging her purse, he clutching his briefcase full of objects void of value.

Even though she had crossed the name Schwann from her life, love had transformed her. Her breast swelled with fresh air, her lips curved in gentleness, her eyes shone. What one truly loves is what endures, the rest is ashes. The new man and the new woman would look each other straight in the eye, so she keeps an eye out for him on Unter den Linden. How much longer would she have to remain alone, was he yet unborn?

Gertrude seldom leaves the house. "But you must; think of the child," Emily tells her. Gertrude wears her winter coat out even in mild weather, in an attempt to hide her roundness from others. But the camouflage is of no use. It's all over town that she's in her fifth or sixth month. And that this would happen to Emily Kempin, of all people! They resent her for it; Emily has been overzealous, they say, in representing irresponsible people, particularly through her legal relief office. Only recently, in an issue of *Die Zukunft,* she defended single mothers and illegitimate children from *that uncomprehending and cruel monster,* public opinion.

That monster—in this instance taking the form of the wife of the printer to whom Robert was apprenticed—had convinced her husband that a respectable business, and especially one that served the royal court, could ill afford to take into its shop the brother of "someone like that."

Robert Walter is dismissed from his job. Emily is stunned to hear from him that he had never wanted to be a printer. He had always wanted to study music, he said, and he suffered from the fact that they didn't have any money.

"So study music," his mother told him.

Schwann made one final appearance, to announce coolly to Emily that he had decided to marry Gertrude. Because he had married in the Catholic church, the ceremony would have to take place in London. They wanted to get married the following week. Emily, he said, was not invited to the ceremony; the father of the bride, with whom Schwann had a good relationship, would be attending.

As Gertrude packed her bags, Emily paced from one room to the next. Gertrude, kneeling on the floor, threw a green shadow onto the wall. Schwann sat on the sofa nearby, smoking. A bird flew against the closed window and Emily opened it to look down at the fallen creature on the sidewalk. On leaning out she became dizzy and felt a catch in her heart. When Gertrude's bags were packed, Schwann went downstairs to summon a carriage. Emily embraced her daughter for a long time, sensing that Gertrude was departing forever from Emily's increasingly circumscribed life.

Robert moved away as well, to study music in Munich. As it had been in New York, only her youngest remained. Agnes at sixteen was a pretty girl, a bit delicate, with amber-colored curls. Her mother was overly protective: What had happened to her older sister was not to happen to her. Agnes dealt with her mother's overprotectiveness with good humor, if somewhat mischievously. But she drew the line at attending school any longer, and her mother finally gave up arguing with her about it.

They soon established a life together, as they had in New York. In the evenings they read or took a walk past the brightly lit display windows. It often seemed to Emily that they were in Manhattan again, returning from a stroll on Nassau Street to the sandstone building with its stone ornamentation. Occasionally, in the midst of her work, she saw New York before her, a billowing wave of stone constructed against the void. The city floated past her under a sky soft with clouds, as if in a bubble; the buildings with their towers and merlons enclosed in a rainbow-colored sphere, episodes from her life.

"I'd like to be the girl in that fairy tale about the star dollars," she often said to Agnes. "The one who holds up the hem of the one blouse she owns, and stars fall in and turn to dollars."

She was always worried about money. Fortunately, she had been earning extra income since January. She was giving an evening law course to society women, as she once had in New York. Mrs. Gnauck-Kühne of the Evangelical Social Congress had organized the course. She was not one of those social dilettantes; she had studied political economy with Schmoller. The course met on Kurfürstendamm, at the home of Mrs. Lippmann, wife of the privy councillor. The empress appeared for their first meeting—she was still interested in the women's question—but she was entangled in political intrigues and had lost her influence.

The rent had been due for over a week now. Emily asked Agnes to go with her to the post office: "Williams, our former partner in America, is sending money."

"Really?" Agnes looks at her mother distrustfully. She has accompanied her three times now, so that Emily would not have to walk the

streets alone carrying so much money. But each time they got to the counter, there was nothing there for them.

"Today?"

"Absolutely, it will be there."

"How do you know that?"

Her mother gives her a mischievous look and puts a finger to her lips. "It's a secret! One of my students invited me to a séance, it's all the rage in Berlin now, and a guardian angel took pity on me and announced that money would arrive soon. Isn't that nice?"

"Yes, of course," Agnes smiled in amusement.

In high spirits they walk side by side beneath the thick summer crowns of trees to the post office. The postal clerk recognizes Emily. "Nothing again, Dr. Kempin."

And suddenly Emily dissolves in tears at the counter, disconsolate, abandoned by God and the world, and Agnes, who has never seen her rational, self-contained mother act like this, is frightened.

Life loses its way, hobbling along only on the crutches of madness. Nights at her desk she is enveloped in smoky clouds of gray. The shadow of a strange existence reaches out for her: garbled voices from the beyond.

"Did you call, Mother?" Agnes is standing in the door, barefoot and in her nightgown.

"No, Agnes, I sometimes talk to myself when I write. Go to sleep, now."

She developed a style that was brilliant, sharp as a knife, clear. In the summer of 1897, when she spoke at the Evangelical Social Congress in Leipzig, she alienated many of the suffragettes present. In a time of change like this, how could she give a speech entitled "Boundaries of the Women's Movement," and for an hour and a half! After the speech she is attacked publicly, accused of contradicting herself.

"Life is a contradiction," she answers.

The social economist Gustav Schmoller prints her speech in its entirety in the *Yearbook for Legislature, Administration, and Economy*. In his introduction he writes: *She possesses such knowledge of life, and such*

a fine sense of observation. She is in total command of the central issue, far-seeing and wisely restrained . . .

In the summer evenings, clouds of linden-scented air fill the room. Agnes can't sleep because of the sound of footsteps on the stairs, the creaking of the floorboards.

The doorbell rings. She feels her way along the corridor in her nightgown and looks through the little sliding window in the door, then goes to the door of the study, which is partially open: "Mother, there's a man outside, maybe he's a salesman."

"At this hour?"

Emily looks out. It is Walter, standing in the semidarkness in a long, shabby raincoat, his eyes on the ground. His suitcase is held together with string. She lets him in.

He asks her for money. He has been to London for the wedding and needs money for the trip home. She takes a bill from a wooden cash box and hands it to him. It is the last of her money, there is nothing left.

The rent has not yet been paid.

Sometime after the beginning of September she became ill. It was a migraine; the room turned in circles, flame-colored and spinning madly. Her eyeballs bulged in her head, her pulse throbbed at her neck.

Agnes, alarmed, called the doctor, a friend of Pastor von Soden.

The doctor took Agnes into his confidence; she seemed to him to be mature.

"Has your mother been agitated recently?"

"There was a letter from Switzerland. National Council member Curti wrote her that his motion finally had been passed and that she could practice law next year in Zurich, her greatest wish . . ."

"And?"

"Mother wept, saying that it was too late, that her strength was all used up. She would have to leave that honor to her student, Anna Mackenroth, she said."

"Nervous breakdown," the doctor told Emily. "You must go away for a while, to take a cure. To Lankwitz, to a private institution."

"And who will pay for it?" Emily asked.

"Let me worry about that, the Jerusalem Church has funds for such cases."

Emily allowed herself to be persuaded and agreed to a three-week stay. She packed the articles she was working on, so that her time would not be wasted.

Agnes accompanied her to Lankwitz on the local train. The clinic was located far from the station, and they had to walk part of the way along the tracks. The sky pressed down on the open countryside, and a few drops of rain dotted the gravel. Among the treetops in the distance Emily thought she could see the iron-gray square stones of the clinic, and its narrow barred windows.

She stopped. "Agnes, I want to turn back."

A train rushed by. Agnes, walking next to the track, had just enough time to leap aside. Emily began to tremble all over; she cursed her foolish stubbornness, which had almost cost her daughter her life.

They walked on in silence, following the track to the walls of the Berolinum Clinic, behind which Emily was to disappear for the next year and a half, until the nocturnal flight in her nightgown to Pastor von Soden. (In 1898, when the new law would have allowed her to practice law in Zurich, the institution's physician certified her as mentally incompetent.)

Her children were not allowed to visit her at Berolinum, allegedly out of consideration for her health.

Once again a train had passed ominously through her life, cutting off her escape route and forcing her onto tracks determined by a secret hand.

You're rubbing life the wrong way, Emily. It's growling, and ruffling its fur. And now you're lying here, bitten by life, sick.

The examining doctor at Friedmatt noted the following: *Tumor has grown considerably. Ulcus uteri the width of a hand above the navel. Tuber-*

ous mass in the vaginal region, particularly painful on the left side. Restless again last night, much weeping. She stubbornly refuses morphine.

Her days pass under a dusting of pain. Her nights are white, cold embers. A bright glare obscures any view into the distance; the tracks that still connect her to the past are soon to be severed.

Shipwrecked. Life has dragged itself onto an island of blinding white. There are only a bed, a chair, and food on a tray, left untouched. What is called life has forced her to the edge: the daily struggle of stumbling through the underbrush of necessity, worrying about paying the rent, about food, clothing.

She swims and swims, struggling for air in the surging waves. As soon as she makes it over one, another rolls in. Swimming, her strength waning, swimming to survive. And for what? To be pulled ashore, exhausted by life, onto a white island: Friedmatt.

There she lies, small, her bed a boat cutting through the waves of the night. The man in her stomach a blind passenger. Her pain has made her quiet, placid, prepared for anything.

"You've become so quiet, so reasonable, Mrs. Kempin, that we no longer need to lock your door." Dr. Wolff pulls his chair closer. She searches for the shining light on his high forehead with its receding hairline.

"What's he called, the man in your stomach?"

She looks at her fingers, smiles. "Just man."

"That's not true."

"Have it your way, then."

The days drop down from the weeping silver linden: spider webs, glistening in the morning light.

When she walks along the park path, less and less often now, her body refuses to throw a shadow. She prefers to stand at an open window and encounter her image in the glass. Two pairs of eyes that merge to a single point the nearer they come to the reflecting glass. A shooting star, a thistle of light, each spark an Emily.

She fogs the glass with her breath, begging forgiveness of her cloudy

reflection for everything she could have become but did not. Begging the indulgence of the world to come for the fact that everything that had begun with such great hope had broken off so soon.

Emily Kempin, first woman lawyer, ending her days in an asylum. What an obituary. It would have been so much more valuable—for the women's movement as well—to have been able to say: She died at an advanced age, among the devoted circle of those women who came after her.

Emily Kempin is coming to her end. She is carrying someone invisible around with her in her pain-racked, tumor-bloated body.

"Is his name Walter?" Dr. Wolff grasps her hand. She turns red and flashes a look at him through her closed eyelids.

Man, son, her life is full of Walters, Walters everywhere, there are always new ones cropping up. Like hills in a landscape, they go on forever.

"So it's Walter?"

She nods. "Walter Scott."

"The writer? He's been dead for a long time, hasn't he?" Dr. Wolff bends over his notebook to make a few notes with his scratchy pen.

"He's being born anew," she says inaudibly, only to herself.

> *March 1901. The growth is increasing. She spends a good deal of her time in bed. Today she received a letter from the* Berlin Generalanzeiger, *inviting her to contribute articles. She has great hopes for this. Her pain is often quite strong, despite which she stubbornly refuses morphine.*

She works on an article for the *Generalanzeiger,* covering sheet after sheet of paper in her spindly handwriting, letters like tendrils, still clinging, holding on.

> *12 April 1901. Exitus letalis. Postmortem brain weight, 1170 grams.*

Ninety years later, the weeping silver linden in front of Friedmatt's Women's Pavilion still throws the same fuzzy shadow.

There are no traces of Emily Kempin here, resistance has rubbed them away. The cancer did its job from the inside, her thin skin has decayed. "There is not even a file card," the director of the Basel institution wrote. Today, one hundred years later, Emily Kempin-Spyri, first woman lawyer, is still not allowed to exist.

I discovered the story of her stays at Lankwitz and Basel through other sources. The dossier also included six letters written by Emily, which were never mailed. Shortly after her first year in the Lankwitz mental asylum she was declared incompetent—at whose instigation?

Among the letters never sent were the request to be transferred to Burghölzli in Zurich, and her application to become a maid.