TRUTH FROM MORNING DREAMS
and
IDA’S AESTHETIC DEVELOPMENT

(Wahrheit aus Morgenträumen
und
Idas ästhetische Entwicklung)

by
Friederike Brun, née Münter

Aarau (Switzerland), 1824
Heinrich Remigius Sauerländer

English Translation by
Richard Poate Stebbins
2006

Süsser Wehmut Gefährtin Erinn’rung!
Wenn jene die Wimper sinnend senkt
Hebst du deinen Schleier und lächelst
Mit rückwärts gewandtem Gesicht.
Salis.1

1 Remembrance, companion of sweet Melancholy!
   When she reflectively sinks her lashes
   You raise your veil and smile
   With backward glance.
   By the Swiss poet Johann Gaudens Baron von Salis Seewis (1762-1834).
TRANSLATOR’S FOREWORD

The following pages of personal reminiscence by Friederike Brun have been translated from a transcript of the original German text preserved in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, and made available on the Internet for classroom and research purposes by the Sophie Project of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.²

The substance of the work, as its title implies, consists of two short books which were published together in the Swiss town of Aarau in the year 1824. Their author, Friederike Brun (1765-1835), was a recognized German-Danish poet of the pre-Romantic period, a contemporary of Goethe and Schiller and herself a member of Europe’s literary elite, whose life spanned the decades of the so-called European Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic era and the post-Napoleonic Restoration.

Truth from Morning Dreams (Wahrheit aus Morgenträumen) embodies Friederike’s nostalgic recollections of childhood in an alert but generally rather placid Copenhagen, Denmark, up to her fifteenth year of life, from 1765 to 1780. Ida’s Esthetic Development (Ida’s ästhetische Entwicklung), with its needlessly alarming title, surveys a comparable period in the life of Friederike’s youngest daughter, Adelaïde or Ida, an artistically gifted young person who was born in 1792 at the height of the French Revolution and grew up in a Europe convulsed by Napoleon’s campaigns and the attendant rise and fall of kingdoms and empires. The record of her cosmopolitan artistic experience, mostly in France, Switzerland and Italy, reflects an unusually animated childhood and incidentally fills some gaps in her mother’s biography. Both books offer vivid impressions of the various European notables encountered by the two ladies as a concomitant of their social standing and peripatetic manner of life in the Napoleonic years.

The translator has welcomed the opportunity to immerse himself in these pages and to consult also a second German text of Wahrheit aus Morgenträumen, in a modern edition edited by Brian Keith-Smith and published by the Edwin Mellen Press of Lewiston, New York (ISBN 0-7734-7857-4). Included in that excellent volume, in addition to several interesting illustrations, are a number of supplementary notes made by Friederike Brun herself, apparently in her copy of the original work.

The present translation adheres closely to Brun’s original text, except for (1) a somewhat reduced use of italics, and (2) the insertion of paragraph breaks in the typically lengthy passages where the modern reader may well feel the need to take breath. Footnotes are those of the original German edition unless otherwise noted. Page numbers appearing in boldface and parentheses throughout the translation permit easy reference to the German text whenever desired. The German Table of Contents, which replicates the seventy-one chapter headings, has been relegated to the end of the text. Passages in the text which were originally written in French or Italian, not without minor errors, have been corrected before translation.

Truth from Morning Dreams

TRUTH FROM MORNING DREAMS

Preface to the Good-Natured Reader

(iii) At the beginning of the winter of 1810, and about Christmas time, I awoke one morning, after brief slumber, on my sickbed, so weak that I could scarcely raise my head. Yet the inward sense was something wonderful. It dawned and cleared itself before the inward eye of the soul, and heaved and undulated fantastically up and down! Rosy garlands of mist rose and sank, up and down, like Hesperian morning vapors. Finally, the light curtains were rapidly raised as though by unseen hands, and I looked into a narrow but cheerfully illuminated distance, like a Christmas Eve room, in which appeared to me, (iv) quite small and childishly proportioned, the earliest remembrances of my childhood in the most literal sense. Closer and closer pressed about me these tall and happy visions: wherever I turned in the dusky chamber, they met me again: indeed, they were becoming constantly more numerous, and no child looks and strains his ears more eagerly at the Marionette Theater than I did in these smiling scenes from the morning dream of life!

But eventually this lovely puppet show began to disquiet me: I just couldn’t free myself from this little marionettes’ world! In vain I had all the curtains raised and full daylight admitted to the sleeping room. The puppets, scared by the daylight, now slipped into my interior, and there rattled around quite differently than they had done in the rosy distance! To get rid of the little kobolds, I called on black and white conjuring charms, and laid them in magic rows, that is, I wrote – weak as I was and hardly seeing – what it was that I saw! – until (v) my line of thought broke off from sheer weariness, and the marionettes’ world disappeared. Thus the first impulse had been given, and without any action on my part. On the next morning (I was still in bed from weakness) it was the same thing all over again. Early waking, a chaos of pictures, beginning where yesterday’s had broken off, and no rest until I had written up what I saw. Three mornings went by in this way before I had emptied the whole picture gallery, which suddenly blanked out with the beginning of my fifteenth year -- figures and colors faded, and I was heartily glad to be able to complete my morning sleep without disturbance.

The cartoons of this inward Camera obscura (scarcely legible scribbled notes) were thrown together with other papers and forgotten: until one day I was talking with some friends about this remarkable hocus-pocus, and satisfied their curiosity by sharing these almost indecipherable notes with them. They found living matter in [these scraps], so that I had to promise at least to copy them out legibly, and did so as a favor to them. But now these morning dreams began to cheer and amuse me myself, and so I let myself go, adding very little (for the facts had been correctly passed over by the marionette ghosts), but arranged and expanded, and corrected details of the whole to the extent of my knowledge and capability. So forgiveness is in order where there may have been errors in the sequence of events and thoughts by the little childish beings who are unconstrained by the circle of logic and take no account of time.

The author
(1) 1. My Parents, Grandparents, Birth and First Journey

I was born in the year 1765 on the morning of the third of June, at Gräfin-Tonna, two miles from Gotha, where my father, Balthasar Münter, was Superintendent. My mother, the daughter of a noble von Wangenheim and a great-granddaughter of the Court Preacher Ludewig, well-known in the history of the Duchy of Gotha as the confessor and friend of Duke Ernst the Pious, was orphaned as early as her seventh year, since she lost her father in 1741 at the beginning of the Seven Years’ War, before she was born, and the mother died before her 30th year from grief at the loss of the loved spouse of her youth.

This grandmother of mine is said to have been one of the most beautiful and gracious women of her time, and as good as she was beautiful. But my grandfather had two brothers, and these three Wangenheims were called: Wangenheim the Scratch-Brush, Wangenheim the Handsome, and Wangenheim the Agreeable. This last-named was the father of my mother, and since unfortunately I inherited nothing, either of my grandmother’s or my mother’s beauty, let me at least be allowed to remark in passing that I look so much like an oil painting of my grandfather, the work of one of the artist dynasty of the Tischbeins, that up to this time there exists no picture so much like myself.

My mother was brought up for three years by her maternal grandmother, the daughter of the good and pious Ludewig. She seems to have been a most unusual person. Intelligent, commanding, high-minded, with too manly an outlook. Always involved in lawsuits, which she conducted herself (for she understood Roman law), and while quarreling with the people around her, within her own house she had introduced the peace of Paradise, at least as regards the animal kingdom; for my mother often told me how young chickens, birds, cats and dogs, owls and crows, dwelt peacefully together in her menagerie and ate out of the same trough. Beside this, she was a mother to the poor, for whom she herself prepared medicine, magnanimous to the point of prodigality, so that when she died little was left for my mother except her blessing, since her own parents had also left her only an insignificant fortune, as she, an only daughter, could advance no claim to her father’s feudal properties.

This dear mother of mine now became very pious in the ecclesiastical foundation of Altenburg – cloisterly and neat, brought up to aristocratic discipline and manners, to which she remained true to her death, so that I do not remember to have seen a woman with a more noble bearing. When her education was completed, she went to live with her maternal uncle, the worthy Consistorial Councillor Gerlach in Gotha, where a few years later she gave her hand to my father [Friedrich Münter], a young clergyman who had already gained a significant reputation by reason of his erudition, penetrating eloquence, and the purity and grace of his manners.

The young couple passed their first years in Gotha, where my father was simultaneously orphan-asylum preacher and court deacon, and my brother Friedrich Münter was born, the first child of the loving couple. A few years later my father was called to the Superintendent [Superintendur] of the country town of Gräfin-Tonna. But my beloved father was a stranger in
the land: Born in Lübeck, the son of a wealthy merchant who had become impoverished through an imprudent business association with his eldest son, my father had with difficulty obtained his father's permission to study, and received only infrequent and scanty support from him. But the cheerful Charitos [sic] which accompanied him from early childhood won for him everywhere the hearts of good and noble people. Everyone loved and served him, and he never felt the lack of gifts of fortune [Glücksgütern], since quiet happy contentment was a leading trait in his charming and pure character.

In Tonna, my tender and delicate mother now had suddenly to become a country manageress, for the income of the superintendency was mostly in the form of country produce. She often told me how distasteful this was to her, how much she had to pay for experience [Lehrgeld] in the first year, but how (5) she quickly learned from her good and helpful neighbors (for those happy times didn't yet teem with theories), and how in the second year her agriculture was already the finest and blooming like that of her neighbors. –

It was into this happy country life that I was born, the one fortunate and safe birth that befell my mother, who had several other children after me. I am supposed to have been a quite small, round, red and white object, never to have cried, but very early to have laughed, and became from the very beginning the favorite of my father, who had much wanted a girl.

While my mother was pregnant with me, my father was called to Copenhagen by election of the German parish [Gemeine] of the St. Peter's Church there, which call, so honorable for a young man (he was about 30 years old) he gladly accepted, for Denmark under the regime and leadership of the good Frederick the Fifth and the first great Bernstorff contained every kind of merit in its own bosom; and my father found Cramer, Klopstock and other famous men already there.

(6) Thus I was scarcely four weeks old when I began to travel, after having already been carried in happy hopes of journeying. Furthermore, the shaking of our traveling coach is said to have been very agreeable and beneficial to me, and I the best and happiest of traveling companions, as my mother often assured me: and everything went very well until we took ship for Copenhagen in Lübeck. But there we were overtaken by a severe storm! My mother and the

---

3Born 1723; reigned 1746-1766.

4Johann Hartwig Ernst Count Bernstorff (1712-1772); born in Germany; guided Danish foreign policy in the mid-18th century.

5Johann Andreas Cramer (1723-1788), German theologian and poet; in Denmark 1754-1771.

6Johann Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803), renowned German poet, in Denmark 1751-1770.
Truth from Morning Dreams

Saxon servants became deathly seasick – the milk in the mother’s breast dried up, and poor little Friederike began to whimper for nourishment. But a good-natured cabin boy took pity on her and cooked up a hearty gruel; but alas, in his well-meant haste he gave it to her too hot, burned her mouth, and Friederike cried out for the first time since her birth, loudly and heartily. Meanwhile the family arrived happy and unharmed in Copenhagen when I was just ten weeks old.

To what nationality I now really belong, I really do not know, and this may be the source of my complete lack of exclusive fatherland-love, which has opened my mind, (7) heart and eyes to the merits and defects of peoples and lands that I have seen. And my father often said Christ worked against nothing earlier and more persistently than exclusive love of fatherland, and the even more exclusive fatherland pride; and sought to promote nothing more eagerly than the sense of open world citizenship. To me, too, this seems to emerge clearly from all of the Evanglist. But he did love most heartily the land of his choice, dear Denmark, and heartily was he loved in return by the good [Danish] people. All my memories, all the experiences of my life, are, on the part of the Danes, love -- friendly hearty recognition of the good that was in us. From the father down to the children and grandchildren, Münter’s name is loved among us. – And he deserved it, too; for he was mild of heart, without pride, recognizing the good with open heart, as he found it, and through his influence radiating the spirit of peace, of cheerful understanding and love.

(8) 2. Earliest Recollections. – Resewitz, von Berger – Friends, Neighbors; Cramer, Klopstock, Sturz, Trants – Tendency to the Comic: Queen Juliana Maria and I –

In the year 1769, which was my fourth, I was attacked by a deadly scarlet fever, and lay sick and already hopeless. I still see clearly before me the little cabinet at a street-corner in which I lay: the whole decoration of the sickroom, with the screen and the dimness, the little table with medicine beside me, and at the foot of the little camp bed, a tall thin man sitting, with great raven-black eyes, and bushy eyebrows, which caused me great anxiety. This was the famous Resewitz, who had been for some time a colleague of my father’s in the German congregation, and was later abbot at Klosterbergen. My poor father and my good mother were weeping in the upper story, and in deference to the pronouncements of the royal physician von Berger, who had been summoned in addition to the clever house doctor, did not dare (9) to be present. But these two intelligent men were friends of my parents.

Berger does not yet decide, but prescribes various remedies, one of which in particular excited the spirit of resistance in the small patient, and aroused her imagination. She protests with all her remaining strength, asserting, with a fever-brushed tongue and parched lips, that she will rather die than submit to it. But the serious doctor will admit no challenge, and on leaving repeats his order to the nursing attendant, and it is carried out [after he is gone].

The next morning Resewitz faithfully reappears at the bedside, and Berger with him. “Did she take it?” he asks the attendant – who gives an affirmative sign. Then, turning jokingly to me, says Berger, “Now, Friederiekchen, how did it taste?” and Friederiekchen immediately
Truth from Morning Dreams

[responds], “Are you in the habit of eating that?” Both broke out in loud laughter – and Resewitz cries, “She won’t die this time!” and hastens to bring the good news to the anxious parents. The little patient recovered, but (10) slowly and amid renewed dangers; for even as she was improving, there appeared a swelling that threatened dropsy [Wassersucht], and Mother Nature saved [the situation] through a big abscess on the neck from which I still bear the scar.

Among my earliest memories of these years is a sense of the friendly life and interaction with our neighbors – and what neighbors! Opposite us was the Bossuet of the Germans, the fiery Cramer, with the deep and wisely comprehending wife, five sons and five blooming daughters. Their tutor and friend was the gently loving Funk: at the corner of the Petri Street (where we lived) and the Norderstrasse, [dwelt] the learned and witty Resewitz, the deep thinker! Directly across from us, a familiar cloverleaf of siblings, Trant and his two sisters, gently loving souls, who later always made me think of the family loved by Christ in Bethany. All these were not merely neighbors but friends. Klopstock and Sturz animated this society, (11) the former honored like a god, the latter bubbling with wit and fancy. All of these now took a great interest in the little creature, and I was specially often and wittily teased, which may well have led to the early development of my talent for repartee.

Berger had been friends with me ever since the scarlet fever, and had spoken of me to the late widowed Queen. The latter asked that I should one day accompany my parents to see her. I was not yet over four years old, but remember clearly that we first visited the little Crown Prince (now (12) reigning King Frederick VI). Count Struensee, physician and all-powerful secretary of state, was treating the delicate child by the mixed modern French and English method. We found the royal boy in midwinter, in the great unheated room, frozen blue and shivering from cold, which aroused such sympathy in me that in leaving I earnestly begged my father to send some wood to the poor little fellow so he could warm himself.

We next went into a different room, in which a circle of ladies assembled around us, causing me to chatter to my heart’s content – when another one joined them, whom I answered as unconstrainedly as I did the others. This however was precisely the Queen Juliana Maria, widow of Frederick V, and sister of the Duke Ferdinand [?] of Brunswick, the (13) hero. The court lady, to embarrass me, says suddenly, “But Friederike, aren’t you greeting the Queen?” – and I: “But how can I know she’s the Queen, if she doesn’t have her crown on?” This simple childish response made a great hit: the tall majestic woman picked me up and gave me a real motherly kiss.

There remained only two of us children, brother Fritz and myself, for a first one, Balthasar, had died in the cradle. My brother Fritz, a year and a half older than I, was as excessively honorable, serious, industrious and exemplary as I was mischievous, unconstrained and roguish. We loved each other heartily, but nevertheless quarreled very often, and I always got the better of him with an adroitness that probably came from my litigious great-grandmother.

---

7Born 1768; reigned 1818-1839. For details see “A Look Ahead” after Chapter 4.
Truth from Morning Dreams 8

Mother however was as partial to the beloved first-born as Father was to the smiling minx; but when it came to a decision, I made them both laugh. — On one such occasion, the highly honored Cramer came in and was chosen as arbitrator between parents and children. — Fritz presented the case, solemnly and conscientiously (14) — and Cramer decided it offhand: “Your brother is right, Friederike!” “But my goodness, Mr. Court Preacher, you give me no opportunity to present my case.” This comical appeal in the mouth of a not yet four-year-old child did not fail of its effect. Cramer laughed, my position was acknowledged, I was caressed, and the impertinent little thing got away with it unpunished.


In the meantime Friederike had come to be four years old, and according to the prevailing custom of that period she should learn to read — about which, however, she showed little enthusiasm, since it involved sitting still for at least a quarter of an hour. The generally acknowledged author of the whole new educational system, Basedow, was also staying in Copenhagen at that time, and was a visitor in my parents’ house. He felt sympathy for my predicament, and indicated that he had found a method [of dealing with it], (15) whereby even the wildest kitten would at least have begun by learning the letters, without sitting, in the following way. The alphabet, that is, was baked into tasty cakes [Kuchen — cookies?], which Friederike consumed with hearty pleasure, and to such excess that it was soon necessary to set a limit to her greed for knowledge. But as for not yet knowing the letters, that was still her situation, since indigestion is not accustomed to favor the operation of the brain.

My brother’s tutor, a very clever but somewhat impatient young man, approached the matter differently. He taught me (well or badly, I don’t remember) first of all to sit still, after which he took a spiritual oratorio of my father’s, in beautiful sounding verses. This he taught me to read like a parrot (without having to spell the words) until I could not only read from one end to the other, but knew it by heart. Then he put before me a heap of books, and said, “See here, Friederike, all these books are full of nice stories, so pick out the words from here (indicating the oratorio), and ask when (16) you don’t know one — and here he let me go! After half a year, I read everything they put before me, and now fell hungrily on the books. But alas, it soon became apparent that while I could read, I couldn’t spell, and though a “Chair of Shame” was set up — actually on a round dining table — with the whole house staff around it, derisively calling, “Now, Friederike, just spell my name!,” I managed more or less badly, and glowed with shame, tears on my burning cheeks; and when now the sole guilty party, my overhasty reading master (the house tutor) comes to the table: “Now, Rickchen, my name too!” But his name was Dragun. Quick as lightning came the answer, D-r-a-ch-e, Drache [Dragon in English]! The whole circle laughed, and I was excused; now spelled day and night, and soon had this [accomplishment] also in my possession.

— J.B. Basedow, German educationalist, 1723-1790.
4. Handwork – The Salad – Where are my Wits?

But now my mother found it necessary to teach me some handwork. This, however, in view of my dislike of sitting (for with the books I ran all around the house and garden), was a difficult undertaking. They began with the increasingly popular Marli – through-sewing – but nothing turned out well, and the spoiled child definitely could not be forced. Then I promised to learn faithfully if they would allow me to make a Dorneuse (a big nightcap) for Bellina, my mother’s favorite dog, and my true playmate. The pattern was taken, and I learned to sew Marli, quickly and neatly.

In spite of my capriciousness I was really a most good-natured and very true-hearted creature, and believed unconditionally everything that grownups told me; and this with a literalness that often led to the most laughable misunderstandings. Among our good acquaintances was an honorable and cheerful graybeard, the doctor at the excellent Friedrichshospital, Fabrizius, the father of the well-known insectologist of the same name. This man had once chosen me as his little tablomate, and when with childish joy I offered him the self-prepared salad (for I had an early aptitude for such little household matters), he answered quite seriously, “Wer Gott vertraut, der frisst kein Kraut!” (Who trusts in God eats no greens.) I froze entirely at this outspoken Anathema pronounced against my most beloved dish (for we Münters loved salad as though we were Italians), and did not dare to touch it at all that day – and also asked no explanation, but for a long time afterward never ate the dear salad without secret qualms of conscience, until the example of my elders, who, after all, did trust in God and yet ate greens every day, little by little reassured me.

But I myself gave occasion for much laughter through my lack of understanding of words from other languages, and in incorrect and at the same time unquestioning application of them. – For I had to understand something, good or bad, with every word. There lived in Copenhagen a very learned and meritorious professor of history; he had a beautiful and elegant wife, who suffered greatly from those nervous troubles which have since become so prevalent among women, and which at that time were dismissed with the general name of hysterical complaints. Now, since I knew this beautiful woman here and there, and had seen her become unwell and fainting in social gatherings, getting spasms, etc., there once came out of me, quite loud, the words, “Now, God protect me, once I grow up, from marrying a professor of history!” People laughed half to death; but to set me right at this time would have been more difficult.

Meanwhile there was much misuse of my little gift of arousing laughter through incomprehension brought out in a funny way. The little monkey was regularly invited [with her parents], or it was at least formally specified that Friederike should be brought in with the dessert, like a little court fool – whereby both heart and stomach were equally endangered, as will be shown by the following last story of the kind that I remember. Specifically, we were invited by an apothecary who, with his family, was among my father’s well-liked acquaintances. This man was well to do and had a very good house which was visited by the best society. Many from the nobility and especially many gentlemen from the Court visited him, enjoyed his liberal
dinner table, and afterward, in accordance with court custom, made merry about the [prevalent] pharmaceutical odor.

When I came in, they were at the dessert, I was set on the table, and the usual vulgarity began. I had been warned by my mother not to eat too much pastry [Confect]. But now the host and hostess competed in pressing me to partake of the seductive sweetmeats! I defended myself, wavering between desire and obedience, as long as I could, but in the end, becoming quite impatient, I cried out, “Now, that’s nice. You spoil people’s stomachs with your confectionery, so they will afterward buy rhubarb from you!”

Malice itself could have found nothing more bitter than what was here brought forward by childish inadvertency [Unbedachtsamkeit]. Embarrassed silence by the well-meaning hosts, secret scornful laughter by many of the refined guests, and deep embarrassment of my parents, were the immediate result. People (21) tried to turn everything into laughter, and to forget what could not be taken back, and concerning which I could not possibly be instructed on the spot.

But now my father brought the misuse to a permanent end; I was no longer fetched to dessert, was less teased, and furthermore it was represented to me, and explained in serious terms, what pain I had inflicted on these to me well-disposed people. The effect was deep and lasting, like all the influence of my much-loved father on my state of mind. My wit died out in its real sense, and good nature won out; but I give my sacred assurance that in the later years of childhood, from fear of giving pain, I was so disarmed that playmates who were vastly my intellectual inferiors teased me with impudence and amused themselves over my naïveté [Treuherzigkeit]; the bee had lost its sting forever.

Meanwhile I have kept the cheerful recollection that wherever I appeared, jest and laughter accompanied me, and no little cloud troubled the morning brightness of my life.

**

A Look Ahead
by the translator

A full appreciation of Friederike’s childish recollections requires an understanding of a political background which was probably familiar to her original readers but is bound to strike later generations as rather confusing. Basically, Denmark’s political affairs moved through three successive phases during Friederike’s first thirty-two years of life, between 1765 to 1797:

1. The first Bernstorff era (1751-1770). These were the closing years of Denmark’s revered King Frederick V (who reigned from 1746 to 1766) and the early years of his son and successor, the mentally disturbed Christian VII, whose even longer reign would extend for forty-two years, from 1766 to 1808. The presiding genius of the period was the German-born Johann Hartwig Ernst Bernstorff (1712-1772), a friend and close advisor of Frederick V, who served as
Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1751 to 1770, settled thorny territorial issues with Russia, and fostered a remarkable growth of navigation and trade while successfully avoiding Danish involvement in Europe’s Seven Years War of 1756-1763.

2. The Struensee Affair (1770-1772). The invaluable services of the first Bernstorff were terminated in 1770 by the death of King Frederick V and the enthronement of his mentally handicapped son, Christian VII. Where the old King had relied upon the highly qualified Bernstorff, the new sovereign put himself into the hands of his personal physician, another German whose name was Johann Friedrich Struensee (1737-1772). This able but ill-adjusted character wasted no time in gaining the confidence of the new King and his young consort, Queen Caroline Matilda (a sister of King George III of England), and purging potential competitors, such as Bernstorff, while reshaping the apparatus of government in his own interest. Some of Struensee’s economic and social initiatives were sufficiently enlightened to win the approval of good judges like Friederike’s father, Friedrich Münter; but his bias against the nobility, and his arrogant and dictatorial manner, earned the hostility of many at Court. There was also an ambiguity about his relationship with the young Queen, who conspicuously promoted Struensee’s rise.

Under these conditions, many of the firmest supporters of the Danish state and throne were forced (or actually preferred) to emigrate. Among them were Cramer, Klopstock and other Germans who had been in the forefront of economic and social progress during Frederick V’s reign. Matters reached a crisis in 1772 when a group of aristocratic conspirators compelled the ailing King to turn against Struensee, the new Chief Minister, who was accused of adultery with the Queen and summarily tried and executed, while the Queen was sent back to England. Friederike’s father, who had enjoyed a good personal relationship with Struensee, was greatly distressed at being required to play a part in the formalities precedent to his death.

3. The Second Bernstorff era (1773-1797). Denmark’s return to a species of constitutional rule, dominated initially by the Court party, paved the way for the advent of a second highly qualified Bernstorff, a nephew of the former statesman, whose name was Andreas Peter Bernstorff (1735-1797). After serving as Foreign Minister from 1773 to 1780, Andreas Peter was temporarily removed from office owing to problems with Catherine the Great of Russia, but later returned to serve as Chief Minister from 1784 to 1797. His administration is favorably remembered for its preservation of Denmark’s neutrality during the French Revolution, and its promotion of timely internal reforms, including the alleviation of feudal burdens on the peasantry as well as the disabilities of the Jews.

On reaching the age of sixteen in 1784, the young Crown Prince, the son of Christian VII, was named Regent, a status he retained until the death of his father in 1808, when he ascended the throne as Frederick VI. This was the little boy whom Friederike had seen shivering in the great hall on her first visit to the royal palace. Three years younger than Friederike herself, the gifted youth confronted a stormy time in which Denmark was no longer able to stand aloof from the upheavals in northern Europe, the repercussions of Napoleon’s campaigns, England’s
Continental Blockade, and an international competition over the possession of Norway, at that time a separate kingdom under the crown of Denmark. But these are matters which only intermittently engaged the attention of Freiderike, who by then was spending much of her time abroad in company with one or more of her children. Meanwhile we return to her own account of the upheaval which shook the Danish Kingdom to its foundations at the beginning of the 1770s.

* * *

(22) 5. Serious Remembrances: Cramers, Bernstorff the first; Stollbergs, Klopstock et al leave Denmark. – First Reading.

In my home I had early enjoyed and shared the gift of friendly relationships, and I was also to share at an early date the pain of separation, the rupture of a faithfully woven wreath of noble human beings. The first great Bernstorff, the friend of Frederick V, united through Klopstock’s muse with Moltke9 and the beloved King in an immortal trefoil or cloverleaf, was deposed and removed through Struensee’s caprice, as was the noble bold Cramer! They were followed by the noble race of the Stollbergs, Klopstock Funke, the brightly shining stars! These, the immortal, unforgettable benefactors of the land – for it was the Stollbergs (the parents of the poets Friedrich Leopold and Christian Stollberg) who first gave freedom and property to the oppressed peasants (23) on the lands belonging to Hirschholm Castle of Queen Sophia Magdalena. But Cramer actually introduced the cultivation of the potato on his little peasant property of Sandholm. He who later planted so many seeds of spiritual nourishment in schools and seminaries! All of these men now left us; my father’s pain was deep. He remained – almost alone among the foreigners -- in the power and under the influence of a regime that actually defied religion and morality: – for Struensee ruled arrogantly –

A little brother was born to us in May 1770, a weak and premature child of seven months, about whom the whole house was lovingly busied, in order that the light gasp should not expire which should once animate the breast (24) of a prematurely ripened hero youth. I recall that in the days of separation I knelt at the little one’s cradle, dissolved in tears and thinking darkly, “You are lucky; you don’t feel it yet!” For opposite us, in the great Cramer mansion, everyone was evacuating, and they were busily packing in order to take ship for Lübeck, where the noble curator of souls had been sent for. My father for a long time remained gently saddened, and I with him, and there developed in me with unusual energy a capacity for pain, and the deep feeling of the absence of loved ones, which was destined to become the real tonic chord [Grundaccord] of my being.

9Count Adam Gottlieb Moltke, an intimate friend and adviser of Frederick V, described by one subsequent writer as “the leading politician of the day as well as ... a particularly astute business man.” His friendship with the King is commemorated by an obelisk erected in 1770 in the park of Bregentved, a huge estate given to Moltke by Frederick V at the time of the latter’s accession in 1746.
Truth from Morning Dreams

My father was working at this time on his heart- and thoughtful spiritual songs, and of two of them I know for a certainty that they originated during these days. The Lament at the Power of the Ungodly, and the Prayer for Absent Friends. Both of such high and sweet beauty that they must soften even the hardest heart. Thus the roguish and self-willed Friederike had also wept tears of tenderness, though she was not yet five years old!

I began soon afterward (25) to read with real passion, and my first readings were – the daily [readings] of my mother: [Richardson’s] Pamela, Clarissa, Grandisson in old faithful German translations; correctly all four, seven and eight volumes before I was seven years old. When the nursemaid became impatient to rock the little restless child, she put a book into my hands and I rocked faithfully onward, forgetting Heaven and earth, lost in Richardson’s magic world. Truly, I understood hardly a tenth part of it, but I followed the thread of the story, and the forms of the characters burned themselves deeply into me.

6. The Year 1772.

So passed the year 1771 and began the following year, of fateful content for Denmark. The embitterment of the soundest part of the nation against Struensee’s rough and (26) strong-armed regime, which united an arrogance scornful of custom with the influence of the most shameful examples, had reached its summit. Alliances against him, to which the best and the wisest were not strangers, were also formed among the upper classes. Finally came the approach of the revolution, which by its nature was as unavoidably necessary as it was shocking and inhuman in its accompanying circumstances.

The matter was known to many ahead of time, including the small circle which had separated itself from the unorganized majority and was narrowly grouped around our house. There was often much talk of these things in my mother’s cabinet and in my father’s study, and they had not been careful enough: I had picked up many things in unconcernedly playing around, which I had filed away in my little head in quite orderly fashion. And so one morning I am sitting in my mother’s front room playing with my doll when a family friend, whose name I have forgotten, (27) passing through on the way to my mother, stops to chat with me. – “So you know the latest?” I begin. “Struensee and Brandt are to be arrested,” etc. Cautiously inquiring further, he convinces himself that I know everything there is to know, hurries to my mother and tells her what he has just heard. It was 14 days before the outbreak, but although the thing itself was known, the day was not yet known (it was January 17). My greatly frightened mother does the one thing possible, takes hold of me immediately, and without saying a single word about what has happened, keeps me at her side both day and night until the critical moment is past.

One cannot sufficiently protect oneself against the wide-open senses of early childhood, which know no distraction, forget little or nothing, and whom one neither can nor should prevent from speaking. Thus concerning the Revolution itself I remember only my joy at the illumination of the city, and nothing else. The following anecdotes of these times I have heard later.
My father, at the time of his unhappy (28) business with Count Struensee, had a French servant who accompanied him onto the scaffold at the insistence of my mother, who feared that my father might succumb to the unspeakable pain of separating from one with whom his soul was united only through the most sacred bond. (In fact he did wander around like a sleepwalker for a fortnight afterward.) The only profit drawn by this stupid French rabbit in the observation of this tragedy – having in fact been present throughout the execution -- was the following: “My God, but Monsieur le Comte had a lot of corns [Leikdörner]!”

Struensee and my father had become really close [hatten sich innig lieb gewonnen], and each of the two friends had promised that, if spirits are allowed to break through the bonds of the sensual world, he would appear to the other during the first three months after death – to the unspeakable anxiety of my mother, who spent those three months sleepless beside my sweetly sleeping (29) father as he awaited the apparition which never occurred. But during this period, the leaden tobacco box which Struensee had used in prison, and which my father now always kept close at hand, was the particular object of her horror; and she always feared to see the amputated hand appearing right beside it.

7. The Next Years; my Readings.

The next years flow together in my recollection, although I know well the results of my dawning thoughts and feelings. Reading was and remained my highest enjoyment, but in those days there was still not much written for children, and what there was almost always bored me. But I do remember with inward pleasure Gellert’s spiritual songs, and his fables and tales; and a collection for young people, from Kleist, Gessner, Gellert and other German poets, whose contents I enjoyed (30) with real delight. I still remember word for word from this period Kleist’s Irish Woman and Gellert’s tale, “To See the Rhinoceros,” and much from Gellert’s Menalk. But Gessner soon put to flight all the others; I lived and breathed in his idyllic world, from which everything around me was turned to pictures; and I never failed, during the better season, to read him out of doors, for only then did I feel at home with him.

What perhaps distinguished me from other children of my age was my early and decided love of solitude; for which reason my good-natured elders, before the end of my seventh year, cleared out for me a little room adjoining their sleeping room. I shall never forget how happy this made me! Through this means it awakened in me an early love of order, but also of independence.

This little room adjoined on one side, as I said, my parents’ chamber, and on the other a large salon which had beyond it, on the opposite side, two little rooms where dwelt my brother Fritz with his tutor. All four rooms opened on the salon, whose door opened onto the landing hall of the second story of the house. Opposite (31) the salon door was my father’s chamber, and on the lower floor were my mother’s living and reception rooms. But in summer we were all upstairs.
Truth from Morning Dreams

My brother’s tutor at that time was called Wolff. He was an angelic, gentle young man, with noble knowledge, and later came to be professor of mathematics at the Copenhagen University, which post he still occupies. This man taught me, too, and since I had early shown some talent for chattering [Guthschwaten], I was now supposed to learn how properly to speak and write. They began by teaching me French grammar – Wolff’s patience was inexhaustible! In order to appease my quicksilver restlessness (which always awakened anew as soon as I was bored), he shook me on his arms while making me decline, or had me climb up and down the ladder in my father’s library – all in vain! Grammar did not wish to enter my head, and has never done so, for I still don’t know a word of it.

With him I also learned to write, and while I wrote from models, Fritz sat opposite me with his tutor and expounded from (32) Ovid’s Metamorphoses. God knows where my mind and ears were – it went passably with the penmanship (and, as my correspondents and typesetters know, it always went passably); but with Ovid, on the other hand, no word fell to the ground! And Wolff soon discovered that I read Latin fairly well, and always scanned it correctly. He asked my father’s permission to teach me Latin – I asked permission to read Ovid, and for this purpose even wanted to try to learn grammar! But my father curtly replied, “I won’t have her turn into a learned fool [Sie soll mir keine gelehrte Närin werden].”

8. Music. – The Stabat Mater. --

I can recall no period of my life when I did not experience the deepest joy in music. My mother had an exceptionally beautiful and wide-ranging voice, but had (33) lost most of it in her first childbed. But she still sang songs very nicely, and I learned from her lips many of them which had been set to music by Klopstock, Kleist and Gleim, and other good composers, whose melodies I still know. I still always see and hear the nobly formed, gentle, tall woman, with her fine eyes and hands, and her whole serious and festal being (which did at times make me somewhat anxious) standing before me.

For my mother still had always in mind the severe monastic training of Altenburg, where she had been brought up; and on the other hand I was now a real little wild animal. – Yes, when she still continued to tell me with warm pleasure how many hours of prayer she had there, how little to eat (in order to form a well-turned figure), and where they were always allowed to go walking only after sunset (in order not to spoil the complexion)! what stiff stays [Schnürbrüste] they wore, and always gloves both day and night, I was assailed by anxiety and fright!

But to return to music, I must observe that at that time (34) there was better singing in Copenhagen than there is today. For many amateurs were still living who had been pupils of Sarti, who had once been Kapellmeister here. These were people of the upper classes, or belonged to good society, and together had formed an Amateur Concert [Society], [Liebhaber Konzert] that was held in the present Post Office on the great Kaufmacherstrasse. My mother once took me there when they were just giving the Stabat Mater of Pergolesi, with Klopstock’s
magnificent text. From the beginning I was beside myself [ich fühlte mich nicht] from mere happiness – but when they began the Ritornello of the aria and the duet, “Might I as on eagle’s wings,” I fell into the most violent movement and immediately began to sing along gently with the melody, without my mother being able to prevent me. It was clear that I had never before heard a single note of the Stabat Mater, but even now this aria sets me on fire, with a deep and mournful longing, as an Alpenhorn does to the Switzer.

(35) 9. Niebuhr; der Strombus Fusus.

It was probably around this time that [Karsten] Niebuhr returned from his travels in the Orient. He became acquainted with my father, and was soon his friend and daily companion. From my childish distance, I contemplated with deep veneration this famous man who had traveled so far and even seen the land of Pharaoh and Joseph. But my childish curiosity may well have troubled the serious, severe man with too many questions, and my whole personality, so alien to the ceremoniously silent solemnity of the Orient, may have been un congenial to him; in short, he conceived a kind of distaste [Widerwillen] for me, of which I was very conscious.

But for my already very promising and, for his age, outstandingly knowledgeable and (36) intellectually curious brother, he had a real and active inclination, and occupied himself with him in the most favorable and instructive manner; and in order not to offend my father, he also didn’t drop me entirely. He once promised to give whichever of us could remember its name a certain beautiful conch shell from the Red Sea. Next day, Niebuhr appeared, the conch shell in his pocket and in his eye the conviction that the wild thing would have forgotten its name a hundred times over, and that his favorite would become the owner of the truly beautiful and rare conch shell; but lo, brother Fritz had completely forgotten this easy task, and it was I who pertly claimed my Strombus fusus, as the conch was called. But I shall never forget the sour face with which the good Niebuhr handed me the prize. I had won! Scarcely had I received it, and admired its beautifully winding rose-red glowing spiral, when I handed it over to my dear brother to adorn his little nature cabinet.

Niebuhr’s contacts with my parents had unfurled a new life and (37) interest around us. He was working on the publication of his fine work, discussed many things, miaowed [? miählt] often about his exhausting and dangerous journey: and soon pyramids, obelisks, crocodiles and hippopotamuses teemed promiscuously in my head.

---

10 The German traveler Karsten Niebuhr (1733-1815) was sent by Denmark’s King Frederick V in 1860 on a scientific voyage of discovery in the Near East, beginning with Egypt, Arabia, and Syria and, despite many mishaps, continuing as far as Bombay (India), returning to Copenhagen in 1769.
(10) The Turtledoves and "Charmant."

One of my favorite occupations was the acquisition and care of winter flowers, hyacinths, Tazetten, etc. — But I had still more joy in living animals, for which reason my dear Trant, a friend of my childhood, gave me a pair of turtledoves, on which I soon hung my whole heart. These I was to care for myself, and to look after their security from the claws of the cats by keeping closed a certain back door in my father’s room, where they stayed in winter.

But alas, this (38) precaution was soon forgotten, and one day not long afterward one of my doves was cruelly torn out of the cage through the bars [Gittern], where the blood and feathers still stuck, while the true mate [Gatte] sat mourning and alone! My grief was boundless! I saw myself as the murderer of the quite harmless little creature, and kneeling beside the cage, I begged God for its life!

Since it would have been impolitic to feed my frivolity by quick replacement of the stolen food, and yet the view of the remaining solitary dove upset me too much, I brought the matter humbly and sorrowfully back to my dear Trant. But there still remained to me one playmate, namely "Charmant," my father’s much-loved dog! He was a half-Bolognese, and a creature of truly a strange variety, and we both shared the same interest in many things, even in our likes and dislikes!

My father had bought a field near the Osterthor, in which he had installed a kitchen- and fruit-garden, and built a very modest rustic house. (39) He now went there frequently, and Friederike and Charmant accompanied him. On these walks, my father wore not the official gown [Amstal], but a lighter though still long and black garment. When the family was assembled in the afternoon, with Charmant and me next to Mother on the sofa, and the clothes for going out were brought to Father, Charmant simply turned his head and, if he saw the official gown and the big round collar, turned grumpily back and went on sleeping; but if the short skirt appeared with the walking-stick, then he jumped up in a hurry and Friederike with him; the one wagged his tail, the other flattered [schmeichelte], and both usually had their way.

But Charmant and I also used the science of physiognomy. For one of our house friends at that time had won the favor of my so decent and open-hearted father, and even his trust. He was clever, serviceable, well-appearing and insinuating. Against this man, Charmant and I had conceived an involuntary antipathy; the former, who was friendly and caressing to everyone else, showed his teeth only to this (40) individual, or even bit him in the calf. I, in spite of all the bonbons he brought me, and the nice things he said to me, could not be moved even to be polite to him, let alone speak a friendly word to him — to the great annoyance of my father. — It will be seen in the sequel whether the dog and I were so much in the wrong.

But oh, Charmant became ill, and in spite of all remedies applied, he was already lying in a death struggle when my father, in order not to see the death of the faithful animal, fled from his room over to my mother in the large room, and both, to divert themselves, undertook some
Truth from Morning Dreams

interesting reading in common, in which they managed to become so absorbed that the good beast was for the time forgotten. After a while, my father feels an obstruction at his feet, and pushes gently against it while continuing to read; but this is difficult, and soon he feels a chill. – Ah, it was Charmant, who in dying had dragged himself to his master’s feet, and there given up his true ghost!

How heartily I mourned the loved comrade, I think I need not say; (41) but this I must add to his honor, that Resewitz always called my darling the blessed Mante; and to my own [credit], that I lost all fear of his [Resewitz’] great black eyes and bushy eyebrows, and came to like him very much.


Now and again my thoughtless haste in repartee was reawakened, and just where it ought to have been silenced forever – toward my mother. She, who ought to have dealt with the impudent creature on the spot, often took these trivia (42) so much to heart that it still pains my soul.

Now there was one evening when I allowed the sun to set on her displeasure, and had actually gone to bed without a reconciliation. Not long previously, my tender Trant friends, to comfort me after Charmant’s loss, had given me a new pair of turtledoves, which were now placed in my little room, were most carefully watched over by me, and were so tame and sociable that they awoke me every morning on my bed, pricking me on my lips and hands with their bills.

I, however, had gone to sleep very rapidly with my unreconciled sin, but awoke just as rapidly from a noise made by my doves, and with full consciousness of my misbehavior. – This increased from moment to moment, my whole heart was excited [lebendig]; suddenly it seemed to me as though I heard meaningful tones coming from the dovecote [Taubenbauer], and finally calling with a quietly warning sound: Friederike! Friederike! – So, even the reasonless beasts had found speech to reprove me for my misconduct! Unable to hold out longer, I sprang from my bed, threw myself out the door into the (43) salon, where father and mother were sitting and reading, begging forgiveness at Mamma’s feet with a thousand tears of repentance – which, pressed to the loving mother-heart, I so gladly received!

But the doves from then on were sacred to me – This alert tenderness of conscience, heightened by an early fear of God, was the protective spirit which watched over my heart in view of my inclination for wit at the cost of others, my impatience and frivolity.

There were in Copenhagen three Steinmann sisters [Geschwister] who gave instruction in the French language. Since this had not wished to enter into me by way of grammar, I was sent there at the same time as Resewitz’s intelligent daughters; we always went there and back together, and I would like to say that I knew every stone on the way, which we so often trod, joking and laughing. Our teachers were (44) good, friendly people, I soon learned to gossip very prettily in French, and we three undisciplined creatures often brought the whole school into merry movement. But among ourselves it did not always go so peacefully: Resewitz’s daughters had inherited, especially from the mother’s side, the sting of wit in rich measure, and there not seldom took place between us tongue-fights in which I gained by far the short end, for the good of my soul.

To this school, among other children of good houses, went the daughters of the superintendent of the Art Cabinet, and wood-turner, Spengler, who was known even abroad for his fine collection of shells [Conchlien]. The residence of this family was near the school, and when the young people were going home, we could accompany the Spengler children by means of a very short detour and go in with them for a moment. On my side this soon became a real need, for in this house my visual curiosity [Schaubegierde] found full nourishment. The lovely, colorful shell collection, the walls full of paintings, (45) and everywhere the nice wood carvings and string-pipings [Schnurpeifereien]!

Furthermore, this old German house had about it such a confiding domesticity, and especially the eldest daughter, already a full-grown woman, [was] always so charming to me, and showed me and explained everything; so that many a quarter of an hour at school was cut short [abgeknappt], and the visiting of this house my real favorite hour— which I kept it secret that I went there, for fear that it might be forbidden me in order not to abridge the school hours.

I had no idea of denying something I was asked about, still less of direct disobedience; but not being asked, I seldom acknowledged my little sins. My brother, on the other hand, was the most noble truthfulness personified, and always the first to tell Father without being asked where he often felt he had done wrong. Later, I too did this from a sense of duty. But he did it out of inborn love of truth, he could not have let go of it.

(46) 13. Instruction and Play.

On the whole, everything I was supposed to learn from teachers went very badly; in the first place, the teachers were in part very mediocre, and these I laughed at and quickly noted their weaknesses; but the good ones had thought it advisable to spoil [verziehen] me, and to forgive me for the sake of my little allotment of mother wit and my lack of quiet teachability; and so I long remained very ignorant. On the other hand, with educated and cultivated people, I did not readily let even a crumb fall to earth; there I was all ears and eye, noticed everything and forgot
nothing.

At about this time, Kratzenstein was reading his lectures in Experimental Physics and Chemistry; my brother Fritz was one of his most eager students, and I was soon his [Fritz's] most obedient amanuensis [Famulus]. We began by repeating chemical processes and physical experiments on a small scale. My favorite playroom had been for a long time the broad, airy churchyard behind our house, where (47) I found sun, shadow and free playing space. There our laboratory is now set up, and in a very convenient fashion, since the mason had his workshop close by, in a shed by the cemetery wall, where he always had something to put in order on the church, the tower, or the beautiful Chapel of the Dead. Here were assembled plaster, lime, bricks and everything we needed, and the mason was my good friend. So a little hearth was soon installed; I willingly carried stone and cement, and helped with all my strength: and the work is soon completed, and brother Fritz sends many a saved thaler up the chimney.

All this revives my pleasure in my own neglected dolls' kitchen; but alas! all the pewter tableware has lost its sheen, so that I hardly liked to look at it. – “I'll quickly silver them for you,” says my brother Fritz, and fetches a paste with which he rubs them all and restores their spotless silver tone, and brilliantly! But in the afternoon, when I begin to play with the silver kitchen things, they break apart in my hands; but he (48) laughs me to scorn, calls it amalgamatur, and generally puts on airs.

The little weak brother Balthasar, too, had become a sturdy four-year-old, and was already beginning to tease the older sister at a great rate, and often to use against her tricks originated by brother Fritz. On the whole, I didn’t make a great deal of my dolls; I dressed them splendidly, and left them sitting – only when they were touched did I take their part. This brother Balthasar once did in the most gruesome fashion, in secretly cutting off both their heads and, just as I was coming, was on the point of quartering them, like Counts Brandt and Struensee (as he said), whose execution was still held in most lively recollection by the populace!!

On my urgent request (for with strength I could no longer accomplish anything with the undisciplined child), he let go of them completely; and it was decided to console me with an honorable dolls' burial. – They are already dressed and coffined, the grave has been dug, and brother Fritz (49) is invited (as a future student of theology) to undertake the preacher’s role at the ceremony. – He, however, roundly rejects our request, adding “that one doesn’t joke about such things.” Only then did I weep for my dolls, since burial had been denied them.

14. We Siblings.

We are now at about the year 1774. My brother was entering his thirteenth year, I my ninth, brother Balthasar was four, and our last-born sister, Johanna, was one year old. She was a real angel of beauty, with great brown eyes and brown locks, the delight and joy of the whole house. The gaps between us had been filled by several stillborn children, who had threatened my
Truth from Morning Dreams

mother’s life; for she was very delicate, with sensitive nerves, although basically very healthy, and with the finest blood. But my father I seldom recall seeing even indisposed. His whole figure and his cheerful temperament [Gleichmut]. (50) with the most tender receptiveness of the heart, spoke the exalted prayer of the old people: “A sound mind in a sound body,” and “the beautiful with the good,” in the most complete way.

Brother Fritz was now a serious, learned boy, and had less to do with me; on the other hand, Balthasar was daily growing taller [wuchs täglich mehr zu Berge], and would soon be ahead of me in mischievousness, petulance and strength: for which reason I often took refuge at the cradle of the beautiful little sister, and became a very true and loving care-giver, all the more so because she had a frivolous and neglectful nurse.

Meanwhile brother Fritz did not always disdain my mischievous flights of fancy. For instance, we both had got the measles, I very lightly, but my brother was felled in a more serious way. In order to separate us more readily from the well persons, they had put us together in one room, where we often remained alone and unobserved. Fritz however was supposed to take a medicine which caused him unspeakable disgust. “Don’t take it,” was my advice – “But how [am I to] do that?” “Let me into your bed, give me your nightcap!” Beds (51) and caps were quickly exchanged, before the [female] attendant with the abhorred medicine approached Fritz’s bed, and quite failed to recognize the reasonable and obedient boy when he not only refused to take the medicine but even cleverly struck from her hand the spoon in which the powder had been dissolved. – Growling, she goes to the door. – “One would think it was the naughty Friederike, and not the docile Fritz!” There was only one powder there, and it was too late in the day to have another one made up. I slipped back into my own bed, Fritz into his own: the affair remained undiscovered, but I escaped a great danger, for Fritz’s measles had developed into scarlet fever.

15. The Parrot.

If it had been difficult to keep us in order during our illness, it became even more difficult during the recovery and long confinement after the measles. For this they (52) dug out everything possible to amuse us and make the long delay pass, since both of us were prevented from reading in order to spare our eyesight.

Among Fritz’s natural history objects there was also a three-foot-long stuffed lizard, which since Niebuhr’s appearance I had always called the little crocodile. Our mother had a big green parrot, which none of us could stand on account of its ugly screaming and its malicious nature. Now this creature had a most comical revulsion against the stuffed lizard. As soon as one put it down in front of him so that it seemed to be looking at him with its artificial glass eyes, the parrot would become angry, thrashing madly about in its cage, and finally break out in a stream of curses (he had been well taught by the sailors on the ship that had brought him), continuing until he finally appeared to fall silent from inward fury.
Truth from Morning Dreams

This comical performance would have caused laughter even to persons of understanding. We indulged in it every day, (53) and so tirelessly that one day the poor angry parrot, in the middle of a stream of curses against its dead enemy, fell down on the floor of its cage, dead like him, showing that it is not only humans who can be irritated to death.

16. The Sweet Danger.

All of the young female playmates with whom I grew up were either exceptionally beautiful or at least pretty, and also dainty and experienced in the world, and I had the certain feeling in all this that I was greatly their inferior. But I loved them like pretty pictures, and as such (54) very tenderly. Although they now and then made fun of my simplicity, when there was any kind of expedition Friederike was always the leader.

I particularly enjoyed our frequent visits to the house of Court Apothecary Becker, who was the father of three particularly handsome and well-brought-up daughters. The eldest, who was the same age as my brother, was already a very lovely grown-up girl, and far beyond me. The two younger ones were two and three-quarters of a year my elders. Now when we three jolly creatures had had enough of the charm of the (very fine) governess, we would go down to the Dispenser [Provisor], where my eagerness for looking and for nibbling sweets immediately found ample stimulus. For if I had already had my fill of looking at and asking about pots, retorts, etc., we would go into a certain little room next to the drug store where it rained toasted and sugar almonds!

One day the good Dispenser left us alone in the little room, and we examined it more closely and noticed the shelves (55) with Stettin jars bearing the tempting labels Cherry Juice, Mulberry Juice, Raspberry Juice. – With resolve and boldness, the great decision was reached and quickly carried out: each one of us chose her favorite fruit (I the southern Mulberry). The great heavy jars were tilted toward us, the eldest helped the youngest (me) and then herself; the sweet springs at first flowed gently and smoothly down our throats – but soon the outstretched arms grew tired, the springs became streams; to call for help is impossible, to let the heavy jars fall upon us – for they were too high up to be shoved back into place, and were already too far inclined, for our arms were growing steadily more tired – was a frightful thought!

In short, all three of us were in the process of a sweet death, dying in one way or another, when the returning Dispenser perceived our comic peril, quickly remedied the situation, and assured us, between anger and laughter, that all three of us had already become cherry red. But with me there remained a nameless horror of the Dispensing Room, and I do not remember ever again entering it.