is that to be taken as real? Is it the literal truth, what he says there of hell, or is it but a metaphor for a bit of commonplace Dürer-like melancholy? In sum, we purvey merely that for which the classical poet, the most worthiest of all, so prettily thanked his gods:

All they give, do the gods, do the unending gods,
To their darlings, entire;
All the joys, and all unending joys,
All the pain, the pains unending, entire."

I: "Mocking liar! Si Diabolus non est mendax et homicida! If I must hear you, then at least speak not to me of untainted greatness and native gold! I know that gold made by fire steal of by the sun is not genuine."

He: "Who says so? Has the sun better fire than the kitchen? And untainted greatness? The mere mention thereof! Do you believe in such a thing, in an ingenium that has nothing whatever to do with hell? Non datur! The artist is the brother of the felon and the madman. Do you esteem that a merry work has ever come about without that its maker had learned to practise the condition of the felon and the lunatic? How now, diseased and healthy! Without disease life would never have fared well its whole life long. How now, genuine and false! Are we mountebanks? Do we draw good things from the sleeve of nothing? Where nothing is, the Devil, too, has lost his right, and no pale Venus complements anything of merit. We create nothing new—that is others' business. We merely deliver and set free. We let the lameness and shyness, the chaste scruples and doubts, go to the Devil. We stimulate and, with but a little tickle of hyperæmia, we sweep away weariness—be it small or large, private or that of the age. That's the thing—you are not thinking of time in its courses, you are not thinking historically when you complain that some one or another could have it entire, joys and pains unending, without that his hour-glass had been turned or that at the end his bill be presented him. What he could at best have without us in time's old classic courses, only we can offer now-a-days. We offer better still, we offer foremost the right and true—a thing no longer even classic, dear boy, which we let be experienced, a thing archaic, primal, a thing that has long since ceased to be attempted. Who knows still today, who knew even in classic times, what inspiration, what genuine, ancient, primal enthusiasm is, enthusiasm ne'er sickled o'er with criticism, lame prudence, and the deadly reins of reason—what holy rapture is? The Devil, I believe, is held to be the man of ravaging criticism? Slander—once again, my friend! God's bodykins! If there be some-

thing he hate, something most contrary in all the world, it is ravaging criticism. What he wishes and spends, that is verily the triumph over and beyond such, the shining want of thought!"

I: "Charlatan."

He: "Of a certain! When, more out of love of truth than of self, on sets right the rudest misconceptions about oneself, one is a vapourer. Shall not let my mouth be stopped by your ungracious shamefastness for I know you do but suppress your affects and hearken to me with a much pleasure as does the maid to the whisperer in church. . . . Take for instance your 'fresh idea'—or what you call such, what you all have called such for one or two hundred years now—for that category did not exist in olden times, as little as musical copyright and all that. The fresh idea, then—a matter of three, four bars, no more, is it not? All the rest is elaboration, the grindstone. Is it not? Good, we, however, are sapient and know the literature and remark that the idea is not fresh at all, that it recalls all too much something that occurs in Rimsky-Korsakov or Brahms. What to do? One simply changes it. But a changed idea—is that still a fresh idea at all? Take Beethoven's sketchbooks! Not one thematic conception remains as God gave it. He fashion it new and adds: 'Meilleur.' Little trust in God's promptings, little respect of it is expressed in that scarcely exuberant 'Meilleur'! A terrified gladdening, ravishing, undoubtful, and believing inspiration, an inspiration for which there can be no choosing, no bettering, no mending, in which everything is received as blessed decree, which trips upon and tumbles, ruffling sublime shudders from pate to tip toe over him whom it visits and causing him to burst into streaming tears of happiness—that comes not from God, who leaves to reason all too much to do, but is possible solely with the Devil, the true Lord of Enthusiasm."

A little and a little during his last speech, something else had happened to the fellow before my eyes. When I looked at him direct, he seemed different to me from before: sits there no longer the pimp-master and bawd but rather, begging your pardon, a better gentleman, has a white collar and a bow-tie, spectacles rimmed in horn atop his hooked nose, behind which somewhat reddened eyes shine moist and dark; the face a mingling of sharpness and softness; the nose sharp, the lips sharp, but the chin soft, with a dimple in it, and yet another dimple in the cheek above; pale and vaulted the brow, from which the hair indeed retreats upward, whereas that to the sides stands thick, black, and woolly—an intellectualist, who writes of art, of music, for vulgar newspapers, a theorist and critic, who is himself a composer, in so far as thinking allows. Soft, lank hands as well, that company his speech
with gestures of refined clumsiness, sometimes stroking gently over
the thick hair at temples and nape. This was now the portrait of the visi-
or in the couch's corner. He had not grown larger; and above all the
voice, nasal, distinct, schooled to please, had remained the same; it pre-
served identity for the transitory figure. And thus I hear him say and
observe his broad mouth, crimped at the corners 'neath the poorly
shaven upper lip, puckering to articulate:

"What is art today? A pilgrimage upon a road of peas. Takes more
than a pair of red shoes to dance now-a-days, and you are not alone in
being distressed by the Devil. Look at them, at your colleagues—I
know well you do not look at them, you do not attend them, you nurse
the illusion of solitude and want everything for yourself, all the curses
of the age. But do console yourself with a look at them, at your co-
inaugurators of new music—I mean the honest, serious ones, who draw
consequences from the situation! I speak not of those folklorists and
seekers of neoclassical asylum, whose modernity consists in forbid-
ing music to break open and who, with more or less dignity, wear the
garb of a pre-individualistic age. Who convince themselves and others
that what is tedious has grown interesting, because what is interesting
has begun to grow tedious. . . ."

I had to laugh, for although the cold continued to press me, I was
forced to admit that since his alteration I had grown more at ease in
his company. He smiled with me, but only in that the closed corners of his
mouth contracted more firmly and he shut his eyes a little.

"You, too, are impotent," he went on, "but I believe that you and I
prefer the estimable impotence of those who disdain to conceal the
general malady under a dignified mummery. The malady, however, is
universal, and honest men observe the symptoms both in themselves
and in those who compose back to the past. Is there not a threat that
production will cease? What is of merit and still put to paper betrays
effort and reluctance. External social causes? Lack of demand—so that,
as in the preliberal era, the possibility of production greatly depends
on the accident of a patron's favour! True, but that does not suffice as
an explanation. Composition itself has grown too difficult, desperately
difficult. Where work and sincerity no longer agree, how is one to
work? But so it is, my friend—the masterpiece, the structure in equilib-
rium, belongs to traditional art, emancipated art disavows it. The
matter has its beginnings in your having no right of command whatso-
ever over all former combinations of tones. The diminished seventh, an
impossibility; certain chromatic passing notes, an impossibility. Every
better composer bears within him a canon of what is forbidden, of
what forbids itself, which by now embraces the very means of tonality
and thus all traditional music. What is false, what has become a vitiated
cliché—the canon decides. Tonal sounds, triads in a composition with
today's technical purview—they can outdo every dissonance. As such, they can be used if need be, but cautiously and only in extremis, for that
shock is worse than was once the harshest discord. Everything depends
on one's technical purview. The diminished seventh is right and
eloquent at the opening of Opus 111. It corresponds to Beethoven's
general technical niveau, does it not?—as the tension between the utter
most dissonance and consonance possible to him. The principle of
tonality and its dynamics lend the chord its specific weight. Which it
has lost—through a historical process no one can reverse. Listen to
that defunct chord—even isolated from the whole it stands for a gen-
eral technical state that contradicts our reality. Every sound bears the
whole within it, and the whole of history, too. But that is why the ear's
judgment of what is right and false is directly and irrebuttable tied to it
to this one chord that is not false in itself, quite apart from any abstrac-
tion reference to the general technical niveau. What we have here is a claim
to rightness that the figure places on the artist—a bit harshly, don't you
think? Are his endeavours not quickly exhausted simply in executing
what is contained within a work's objective requirements? In every bar
he dares conceive, the general technical state presents itself to him as
the problem, demands of him at every moment that he do justice to it
as a whole and to the single right answer it permits him at each mo-
ment. The result is that his compositions are nothing more than such
answers, nothing more than the solution to technical puzzles. Art be-
comes criticism—a very honourable thing, who would deny it! It in-
volves a great deal of insubordination within strict obedience, much
self-reliance, much courage. But the danger of being uncreative—what
do you say? Is it truly still a danger, or already a fixed and settled fact?"

He paused. He gazed at me through his spectacles with moist, red-
dened eyes, raised his hand in a dainty motion and stroked his hair
with two middle fingers. I said:

"What are you waiting for? Am I to admire your mockery? I have
never doubted that you know to tell me what I know. Your method of
presentation is quite deliberate. In all this, you mean to tell me that for
my intents and work I would neither need nor have any one except the
Devil. And yet you cannot exclude the theoretical possibility of spont-
aneous harmony between one's own needs and the moment, the
'rightness'—the possibility of a natural accord out of which one might
create with neither constraint nor forethought."
He (laughing): “A very theoretical possibility indeed! Dear boy, the situation is too critical for an uncritical mind to be a match for it! I reject, moreover, the accusation of having cast matters in a tendential light. We no longer need indulge ourselves in dialectic extravagance for your sake. What I do not deny is a certain satisfaction allowed me by the state of the ‘work’ quite in general. I am against works on the whole. How should I not take some pleasure in the indisposition under which the idea of the musical work languishes. Do not cast the blame on social conditions! I know that it is your inclination and habit to say that such conditions present nothing that would carry sufficient obligation or sanction to assure the harmony of the self-sufficient work. True, but impertinent. The prohibitive difficulties of the work lie deep within the work itself. The historical movement of musical material has turned against the self-contained work. The material shrinks in time, it scorches extension in time, which is the space of the musical work, and leaves time standing vacant. Not out of impotence, not out of an inability to shape form. But rather, an implacable imperative of density—disallowing all superfluity, negating the phrase, scattering all ornament—stands averse to temporal expansion, the very life-form of the work. Work, time, and illusion are one, together falling victim to criticism. It no longer tolerates illusion and games, or the fiction, the self-glorious form, that censors passions and human suffering, assigning them their roles, transposing them into images. Only what is not fictitious, not a game, is still permissible—the unfettered and unvarnished expression of suffering in its real moment. For suffering’s impotence and affliction have swelled till illusion’s games can no longer be endured.”

I (very ironical): “Touching, touching. The Devil waxes pathetic. The woeful Devil moralizes. Human suffering goes to his heart. To his greater glory, he bespits his way into art. You would have done better not to mention your antipathy to works—not if you did not want me to discern your deductions to be but vain Devil’s facts to abuse and injure the work.”

He (without annoyance): “So far, so good. Surely you are in fundamental agreement with me that it can be termed neither sentimental nor malicious if one acknowledges the facts of one’s world and time. Certain things are no longer possible. The illusion of emotions as a compositional work of art, music’s self-indulgent illusion, has itself become impossible and cannot be maintained—the which has long since consisted of inserting preexisting, formulaic, and dispirited elements as if they were the inviolable necessity of this single occurrence. Or put

the other way round: The special occurrence assumes an air as if it were identical with the preexisting, familiar formula. For four hundred years all great music found contentment in pretending such unity was achieved without a breach, took pleasure in conventional universal legitimation, which it endeavors to confuse with its own concerns. My friend, it will work no more. Criticism of ornament, of convention, of abstract generality—they are all one and the same. What falls prey to criticism is the outward show of the bourgeois work of art, an illusion in which music takes part, though it produces no external image. To be sure, by producing no such image, music has the advantage of the other arts, but in the unwearing reconcilement of its specific concerns with the rule of convention, music has nevertheless taken part in this sublime chicanery with might and main. The subordination of expression to all-reconciling generality is the innermost principle of musical illusion. And that is over. The claim to presume the general as harmonically contained within the particular is a self-contradiction. It is all up with conventions once considered prerequisite and compulsory, the guarantors of the game’s freedom.”

I: “One could know all that and yet acknowledge freedom again beyond any criticism. One could raise the game to a yet higher power by playing with forms from which, as one knows, life has vanished.”

He: “I know, I know. Parody. It might be merry if in its aristocratic nihilism it were not so very woebegone. Do you think such tricks promise you much happiness and greatness?”

I (repost angrily): “No.”

He: “Short and peevish! But why peevish? Because I put to you friendly questions of conscience, just between us? Because I have shown you your desperate heart and with a savant’s insight set before your eyes the downright insuperable difficulties of composing nowadays? You might hold me in esteem as a savant at least. The Devil surely knows something of music. If I mistake not, you were reading just now in that book by the Christian enamoured of aesthetics? He knew what was what and made a point of my special relation to this fine art—the most Christian of arts, he deems it—posed in the negative, to be sure, employed and developed by Christendom, true, but repudiated and excluded as a demonic realm—and there you have it. A highly theological matter, music—just as is sin, just as am I. The passion of that Christian there for music is true passion, the which is indeed comprehension and addiction in one. True passion is found only in ambiguity and as irony. The highest passion is spent on what is absolutely suspect… No, musical I am, depend on it. And I have played
the mocking Judas because of the difficulties in which music, like everything today, finds itself. Should I not have done so? But, indeed, I did so merely to intimate that you should break through it, that you should raise yourself above it to the most dizzying heights of self-admiration and make such things that a holy horror of them should come over you."

I: "To wit: an annunciation. I am to grow osmotic vegetation."

He: "Tis much of a muchness! Ice flowers or such as are made of starch, sugar, and cellulose—both are nature, and the only question is for which one ought to praise nature the more. Your inclination, my friend, to inquire after what is objective, the so-called truth, while suspecting nothing of value in the subjective, in pure experience, is truly philistine and worth your overcoming. You behold me: Therefore am I here for you. Does it pay to ask whether I really am? Is ‘really’ not what works, and truth not experience and feeling? What raises you up, what augments your sense of energy and power and mastery is the truth, damn it—and were it ten times a lie viewed from a virtuous angle. And I will assert that an untruth of the sort that enhances energy is a match for every unprofitably virtuous truth. Will assert as well that creative disease, genius-bestowing disease, which takes all hurdles on horseback, springing in drunken boldness from rock to rock, is a thousand times dearer to life than plodding health. Never have I heard anything more stupid than that only sick can come from sick. Life is not squeamish, and care not a fig for morality. It grasps the bold product of disease, devours, digests it, and no sooner takes it to itself than it is health. Before the fact of life’s efficacy, my good man, all distinction of disease and health is undone. A whole horde and generation of receptive lads, all healthy to the core, throw themselves upon the work of the diseased genius whom disease has made a genius, admire, praise, and exalt the work, carry it away with them, refashion it among themselves, bequeath it to the culture, which does not live by homebaked bread alone, but equally by donations and poisons from the apothecary of the Blessed Messengers. Thus saith the untransmogrified Sammuel. He guarantees to you not only that toward the end of your hour-glass years the sense of power and mastery will more and more outweigh the pains of the little mermaid and finally mount to a most triumphant well-being, to an enthusiastic surge of health, to the life and manner of a god—that is but the subjective side of the matter, I know; it would not suffice for you, would seem unsolid to you. Then know this: We pledge to you the vital efficacy needed for what you will accomplish with our help. You will lead, you will set the march for the future, lads will swear by your name, who thanks to your madness will no longer need to be mad. In their health they will gnaw at your madness, and you will become healthy in them. Do you understand? It is not merely that you will break through the laming difficulties of the age—you will break through the age itself, the cultural epoch, which is to say, the epoch of this culture and its cult, and dare a barbarism, a double barbarism, because it comes after humanitarianism, after every conceivable root-canal work and bourgeois refinement. Believe me, barbarism has a better understanding even of theology than does a culture that has fallen off from the cult, which even in things religious save only culture, only humanitarianism, but not excess, not the paradox the mystical passion, the ordeal so utterly outside bourgeois experience. I truly hope you are not mazed that Old Clootie speaks of things religious? 'Sblood! Who else, I would like to know, should speak to you today of religion? Surely not the liberal theologian? I am by now the only one who still preserves it! Whom would you credit with theological existence if not me? And who can lead a theological existence without me? Religion is as assuredly my field, as it is not that of bourgeois culture. Since culture has fallen off from the cult and has made a cult of itself, it is no longer anything but offal, and after a mere five hundred years all the world is so weary and surfeited, as if, _salva venia_, it were force-fed with iron cauldrons."

It was now—or even somewhat earlier, already during that mockage he had delivered as a fluent lecture on himself as the preserver of religious life, on the Devil’s theological existence—that I perceived it: Yet again the look of the fellow on the couch was changed; he no longer appeared as the bespectacled musical intellectualist as which he had spoken to me the white, nor sat he any longer in his corner, but rather rode légèrement, half-sitting upon the rounded arm of the couch, his fingertips interlaced in his lap and both thumbs stuck out wide. A small forked beard on his chin bobbed up and down as he spoke, and above his open mouth, revealing little sharp teeth within, was a moustache ending in stiff twirled points.

And though mummied against the frost, could not but laugh at his metamorphosis into something old and familiar.

"Your very humble servant," say I. "I ought to know you thus, and I find it courteous of you to read me a private lecture here in my hall. Given what mimicry has now made of you, I hope to find you ready to quench my thirst to know and to provide fine proof of your independent presence, in that you will lecture to me not only on things which I know of myself, but for once also on such as I would first like to
know. You have lectured to me much on the hour-glass time in which you deal, and also on the payments in pain to be made now and again for the lofty life, but not on the end, on that which comes after, the eternal extinction. My curiosity is for that, and you have, as long as you have been perched there, made no room for the question in your discourse. Am I not to know the price in pence and farthings of our dealing? Give account! What is life like in Old Scratch's house? What awaits those who have taken you for liege in your horrid hole?"

He (laughs in a high, thin voice): "You would have knowledge of the pernicies, of the confutatio! I call that pert, I call it the erudite courage of youth! There is so much time for that yet, immeasurable time, and first comes so much excitation that you will have other things to do than to think on the end, or even simply to pay heed to the moment when it might be time to think on the end. But I would not refuse you the intelligence and need not dress it prettily, for how can you be fretted seriously by a thing still so far off? Except, it is not easy to speak of it actually—which is to say: Actually one cannot speak of it in any manner whatsoever, because the actuality is not congruous with the words; one may use and fashion a great many words, yet all of them are but representative, stand for names that do not exist, can make no claim to designate that which can never ever be designated and denounced in words. That is the secret delight and security of hell, that it cannot be denounced, that it lies hidden from language, that it simply is, but cannot appear in a newspaper, be made public, be brought to critical notice by words—which is why the words 'subterranean,' 'cellar,' 'thick walls,' 'soundlessness,' 'oblivion,' 'hopelessness,' are but weak symbols. One must, my good man, be entirely content with symbols when one speaks of hell, for there all things cease—not only the signifying word, but everything altogether—that is, indeed, its principal characteristic, and at the same time, just to say something of it very generally, is what the newcomer first experiences and what he at first cannot grasp with his, so to speak, healthy senses and will not understand because reason, or whatever limitation of the understanding it may be, prevents him from doing so, in short, because it is unbelievable, so unbelievable that it turns a man chalk-white, unbelievable, although in the very greeting upon arrival it is revealed in a concise and most forcible form that 'here all things cease,' every mercy, every grace, every forbearance, every last trace of consideration for the beseeching, unbelieving objection: 'You cannot, you really cannot do that with a soul'—but it is done, it happens, and without a word of accountability, in the sound-tight cellar, deep below God's hearing, and indeed for all eternity. No, it is bootless to speak of it, for it lies apart from an outside of language, which has nothing to do with it, has no relation to it, and that is also why language never rightly knows which tends to apply to it and makes shift to force with the future, for as it is said: 'There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Good, those are but a few quoted words, chosen from a rather extreme sphere of language, but for all that, mere weak symbols and with no real connexion to what 'shall be'—unaccountable, in oblivion, between thick walls. It is right to say that it will be quite loud in a sound-tight hell, loud beyond measure, filling the ear to more than overflowing with bawling and squalling, yowling, moaning, bellowing, gurgling, screeching, writhing, croaking, pleading, and exuberant tortured cries, so that none will hear his own tone, for it is smothered in the general, tight, dense, hellish jubilee and abject trilling extracted by the eternal infliction of the unbelievable and unanswerable. Nor to forget the monstrous groaning of lust commingled therein, because an endless torment to which no limit is set—no faltering in its travail, no collapse, no impotence—degenerates instead into obscene pleasure, which is indeed why those with some intuitive knowledge also speak of the 'lusts of hell.' Theroever, however, is linked the element of mockery and extreme ignominy that is bound up in the torment; for this hellish bliss is much the same as the most pitiable tainting of the immeasurable suffering and is accompanied by fingers pointed in scorn and whimpering laughter—whence the doctrine that the damned must bear mockery and shame together with their agony, indeed, that hell is to be defined as a monstrous combination of derision and entirely unbearable sufferings that are nonetheless to be eternally endured. They shall devour their tongues at so great a pain, yet form no fellowship against it, but rather are full of scorn and mockery for one another, and midst trills and groans call out filthiest curses each to each, whereby those most refined and proud, who never let a foul word pass their lips, are forced to employ the filthiest. A portion of their anguish and obscene lust consists in having to muse upon whatever is utterly filthy."

I: "I beg you, this is the first word you have told me concerning the manner of suffering that the damned have to endure there. Pray note that you have actually lectured me only on the effects of hell, not, however, on what in point of fact and deed the damned have to expect there."

He: "Your curiosity is boyish and indiscreet. I note that first and foremost, but am very well aware, my good man, of what lies hid behind it. You undertake to interrogate me in order to be set affright, af-
fright of hell. For thoughts of turning about and rescue, of so-called salvation and a retreat from your promise, lurk at the rear of your mind, and you endeavour to draw upon the attrition cordis—that is, the heart’s anguish at conditions there—about which you may have heard that through it a man can achieve the state of so-called blessedness. Be informed that is a fully antiquated theology. The doctrine of attrition is scientifically obsolete. What has been proven necessary is contritio, the real and true Protestant remorse of sin, which means not merely the fearful penitence of churchly ritual, but inner, religious conversion—and whether you are capable of that, do but ask yourself, and your pride will hasten to answer. The longer, the less will you be able and willing to condescend to contritio, inasmuch as the extravagant existence that you will lead is a great pampering, from which willy-nilly one does not find a way back to wholesome mediocrity. Therefore, to your consolation, let it be said that hell will have nothing essentially new to offer you—only that to which you are more or less accustomed, proudly customed. In its fundament it is merely a continuation of your extravagant existence. To put it in but two words: Its essence, or if you will, its point is that it allows its denizens only the choice between extreme cold and fire that could bring granite to melt—between these two conditions they flee yowling to and fro, for within each the other ever appears a heavenly balm, but is at once, and in the most hellish sense of the word, unbearable. The extremes of it must please you.

I: “It pleases me. Meanwhile I would warn you not to feel all too sure of me. A certain shallowness in your theology could tempt you to it. You depend upon my pride’s preventing me from the remorse necessary to salvation, yet do not make account of there being a prideful remorse—that of Cain, who was of the fast opinion that his sin was greater than could e’er be forgiven him. Contritio without hope and as utter unbelief in the possibility of grace and forgiveness, as the sinner’s deep-rooted conviction that he has behaved too grossly and that even unending goodness will not suffice to forgive his sins—only that is the true remorse, and I would remember you that it is to redemption most proximate, to goodness most irresistible. You will admit that grace can have only a workaday concern for the workaday sinner. In his case the act of grace has little impulsion, is but a dull enterprise. Mediocrity leads no theological life whatsoever. A sinfulness so hopeless that it allows its man fundamentally to despair of hope is the true theological path to salvation.”

He: “Sly cap! And where will the likes of you find the simpless, the naïve candour of despair that were the presumption for this hopeless path to salvation? Is it not clear to you that pursued speculatio on the charm that great guilt exercises upon goodness renders the very act of its grace utterly impossible?”

I: “And yet it is only by means of this non plus ultra that one arrives at the highest enhancement of dramatically theological existence which is to say: at the most reprobate guilt and, through it, at the last and irresistible provocation of infinite goodness.”

He: “Not bad. Truly ingenious. And now I shall tell you that precisely minds of your sort constitute the population of hell. It is not easy to enter into hell; we would long since suffer a want of space if every Tom and Tib were let in. But your theological type, such an arrogant desperado who speculates upon speculation, because speculation is in his blood from his father’s side—if he were not the Devil’s, why, he would surely be old craft.”

As he says it, and indeed somewhat before, the fellow changes yet again, as clouds are wont to do, and yet by his own account knows it not: sits no longer on the arm of the great chair before me in the hall but once again in its corner as the male bawd, the cheese-pale master pimp in his cap, with reddened eyes. And says to me in his nasal, slow player’s voice:

“That we come to an end and conclusion is surely agreeable to you. I have devoted much time and tarrying to deliberate this thing with you—would hope you own as much. You are however an attractive case, I admit it freely. From early on we had an eye on you, on your nimble, haughty mind, on your excellent ingenium and memoriam. They induced you to study divine sciences, as in your conceit you had devised, but soon you wished no longer to call yourself a theologian but shoved Holy Writ under the bench and thenceforth held entirely to the figuris, characteribus, and incantationibus of music, which pleased us not a little. For you, haughtiness’s great longing was for thing elemental, and you thought to achieve it in the form most conformable to you, there where as algebraic magic it is wed to concordant cunning and calculation and yet all the while is daringly aimed against reason and common sense. But did we not know even then that you are too prudent and cold and chaste for what is elemental, and did we not know that in your coy prudence you would find there only vexation and pitiable dullness? And so we were diligent that you should run into our arms, which is to say: the arms of my little one, of Esmeralda and that you should come by it, by that illumination, the aphrodisias of the brain, after which you so very desperately longed with body and soul and mind. In short, betwixt us there need be no four crossways in
the Spessar Forest and no circles. We are in league and in business—
with your blood you have certified it and promised yourself to us and
are baptized ours—this visit of mine is intended merely for confor-
mation. From us you have taken time, genius time, high-flying time, a full
twenty-four years *ab dato recessi*, which we set as your bound. And
when they are over and their course run, the flame cannot be foreseen,
and such a time is likewise an eternity—you shall be fetched. In re-
compense of which we will meanwhile be subject and obedient to you
in all things, and hell shall profit you, if you but renounce all who live,
all the heavenly host and all men, for that must be.”

"I (blown hard by utter cold): “How? That is new. What would this
clause say?”

*He: “It would say renounce. What else? Do you think jealousy is at
home only in the heights and not in the depths as well? You, fine crea-
ture well-created, are promised and betrothed to us. You may not love.”

"I (must truly laugh): “Not love! Poor Devil! Would you attest to
your reputed stupidity and bell yourself as a cat, by wanting to found
your business and promise on so pliant, so captious a term as—love?
Does the Devil propose to prohibit lust? If not, then he must chance
sympathy and even caritas, else he is betrayed in consummate fashion.
That which I have come by, the very reason you allege that I am
promised to you—what is its source, pray tell, but love, though poi-
soned by you at God’s leave? The league in which you claim we stand,
hast itself to do with love, you ninny. You allege that I wanted it so
and went into the forest, to that four-crossway, for the sake of the work.
But it is indeed said that the work itself has to do with love.”

*He (laughing through his nose): “Do, re, mi! Rest assured that your
psychological stratagems will not snare me any better than do your theo-
logical! Psychology—merciful God, you still hold with that? It is
but a poor, bourgeois, nineteenth-century thing! The epoch is wretch-
edly sick of it, 'twill soon be a red flag to it, and he who would disrupt
life with psychology will simply earn a thwack on the head. We are en-
tering an age, dear boy, that will not wish to be harried by psychol-
ogy... This but in passing. My proviso was clear and upright,
ordained by hell's legitimate zeal. Love is forbidden you insofar as it
warms. Your life shall be cold—hence you may love no human. What
can you be thinking? The illumination leaves your intellect's powers
unsullied to the last, indeed at times enhances them to dazzling rapture—
what in the end should be its object but the sweet soul and the
precious life of the affections? A total chilling of your life and of your
relations to humans lies in the nature of things—indeed it already lies
in your nature, verily, we impose nothing new, the small folk mak
a lukewarm one. Do I have your hand on it? You shall enjoy it for
work-filled eternity of a human life. And should the hour-glass run
out, I shall have good dominion to lead and to rule, after my fashion
at my pleasure to do and to deal with the fine creature well-created
with it all, being body, soul, flesh, blood and goods in all eternity..."

There it was again, the incontinent loathing that had seized me one
before, that shook me, together with an even mightier glacial wave of
frost off the tight-trousered bawd pressing gainst me anew. I forgot
myself in my wild disgust, it was like to a swooning. And then from
the corner of the couch I heard Schildknapp's voice saying leisurely:

“...You missed nothing, of course. Giornali and two games of billiard
a round of Marsala, and the doughy fellows hauled the *governo* over
the coals.”

I was indeed sitting in my summer suit, by my lamp, the Christian
book upon my knees! Can be naught else: in my indignation, my
must have chased the bawd away and borne my covers to the adjacent room
before my companion arrived.