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THE DIARIES OF
FRANZ KAFKA
1914-1923

EDITED BY Max Brod

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meant "gluttony, drunkenness, unchastity, lying, perjury, usury, fee-taking for confessions and mass"—punishable by death. One faction even wanted to grant each and every individual the right to exact the death penalty on the spot whenever he saw anyone besmirching himself with one of these sins.

Is it possible that reason and desire first disclose the bare outlines of the future to me, and that I actually move step by step into this same future only under their tugs and blows?

We are permitted to crack that whip, the will, over us with our own hand.

October 18. From a letter to F.:

The matter is not so simple that I can accept without correction what you say of your mother, parents, flowers, the New Year, and the dinner company. You say that for you too it "would not be the greatest of pleasures to sit at table at home with your whole family." Of course, you merely express your own opinion when you say this, and are perfectly right not to consider whether or not it pleases me. Well, it doesn't please me. But it would certainly please me even less had you written the contrary. Please tell me as plainly as you can in what this unpleasantness consists and what you regard as its reasons. I know that we have already often spoken of the matter from my side, but it is difficult to grasp even a little of the truth of the matter.

Baldly put—hence with a harshness that doesn't quite correspond to the truth—my position is about as follows: I, who for the most part have been a dependent creature,

of my unhappiness, in all likelihood with my head still smarting from unhappiness, sit down and write to someone: I am unhappy. Yes, I can even go beyond that and with as many flourishes as I have the talent for, all of which seem to have nothing to do with my unhappiness, ring simple, or contrapuntal, or a whole orchestration of changes on my theme. And it is not a lie, and it does not still my pain; it is simply a merciful surplus of strength at a moment when suffering has raked me to the bottom of my being and plainly exhausted all my strength. But then what kind of surplus is it?

Yesterday's letter to Max. Lying, vain, theatrical. A week in Zürau.

In peacetime you don't get anywhere, in wartime you bleed to death.

Dreamed of Werfel: He was saying that in Lower Austria, where he is stopping at present, by accident he lightly jostled against a man on the street, whereupon the latter swore at him shamefully. I have forgotten the precise words, I remember only that one of them was "barbarian" (from the World War), and that it ended with "you proletarian Turch." An interesting combination: "Turch" is a dialect word for "Turk"; "Turk" is a curse word apparently still part of a tradition deriving from the old wars against the Turks and the sieges of Vienna, and added to that the new epithet, "proletarian." Excellently characterizes the simplicity and backwardness of his insulter, for today neither "proletarian" nor "Turk" is a real curse word.

September 21. F. was here, traveled thirty hours to see