CHILDREN IN UNIFORM

Adapted from the same play as

Mädchen in Uniform

by

CHRISTA WINSLOE

English Adaptation by

BARBARA BURNHAM

French's

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BURNHAM, B.
Children's

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CHILDREN IN UNIFORM

Produced at the Duchess Theatre, London, W.C.2, on October 7th, 1932, with the following cast of characters:

Fräulein von Nordeck (Headmistress)		*Cathleen Nesbitt.*
Excellency von Ehrenhardt (Manuela's Aunt)		*Lola Duncan.*
Grand Duchess (Patroness of the School)		*Barbara Everest.*
Countess Kernitz		*Lilian Lisle.*
Fräulein von Bernburg	Mistresses.	*Joyce Bland.*
Fräulein von Gaerschner	Mistresses.	*Jean Stirling.*
Fräulein von Kesten	Mistresses.	*Ethel Ramsay.*
Mlle. Alaret	Mistresses.	*Minnie Blagden.*
Miss Gibson	Mistresses.	*Mollie Rangken.*
Fräulein von Atams.	Mistresses.	*Margaret Davidge.*
Manuela	Pupils	*Jessica Tandy.*
Marga	Pupils	*Isobel Scaife.*
Ilse	Pupils	*Betty Davies.*
Treischke	Pupils	*Ursula Hirst.*
Lilli	Pupils	*Carol Coombe.*
Oda	Pupils	*Enid Morgan.*
Edelgard	Pupils	*Roona Blake.*
Anneliese	Pupils	*Eve Lynett.*
Mia	Pupils	*Daphne Courtney.*
Paula	Pupils	*Yollande Terrell.*
José	Pupils	*Mavis Edwards.*
Maria	Pupils	*Joan Butterfield.*
Grete	Pupils	*Ann Vosper.*
Anna.	Pupils	*Margery Morris.*
Frau Alden (Dancing Mistress)		*Katie Johnson.*
Frau Lehmann (Portress)		*Mildred Orme.*
Martha (Sewing Woman)		*Pollie Emery.*
Hanni (Nurse)		*Helen Goss.*
Johanna		*Yvette Pienne.*

Children of the School: Betty Thomas, Sylvia Rye, Mary Payne, Doris Mann, Dorothy Gibson, Felicity Lawford, Rosette Duveen, Moira Hayes.

Play Produced by Leontine Sagan.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

ACT I

SCENE 1.—The Reception Hall.
SCENE 2.—The Wardrobe Room.
SCENE 3.—The Reception Hall.
SCENE 4.—A Dormitory.

ACT II

(Some weeks later)

SCENE 1.—The Girls' Common Room.
SCENE 2.—Fräulein von Bernburg's Room.
SCENE 3.—The Girls' Common Room.

ACT III

(Next morning)

SCENE 1.—The Sick Room.
SCENE 2.—The Reception Hall.
SCENE 3.—Fräulein von Bernburg's Room.

TIME.—To-day.
PLACE.—A Town in North Germany.

NOTE.—Christa Winsloe's German play was performed in Germany under the title of *Gestern und Heute*.



To face page 5—ACT I, SCENE 1—*Children in Uniform.* (The actual scene represented is on page 24)

Photograph by Pollard Crowther

CHILDREN IN UNIFORM

ACT I

SCENE 1

SCENE.—*The Reception Hall.*

There is a door down R. *leading into the* HEADMISTRESS'S *room: another door leads off down* L. *A carved old German chest stands* C. *Against the wall* R. *is a high standard clock with its loud tick and deep chime. There is a prie-Dieu against the wall* L. *At the back are three arches and beyond these a bare corridor. On the left side of the pillar* L.C. *there is a hanging bell.*

(*See Photograph of Scene.*)

As the CURTAIN *rises,* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER *is heard giving orders off up* R. "Form two's. . . . Left, right, left, right!" *Then she heads the procession of girls across the stage, marching two by two from* R. *to* L. *across back. As the sound of their footsteps fades away,* FRAU LEHMANN, *the Portress, shows in* HER EXCELLENCY VON EHRENHARDT *and the latter's niece,* MANUELA, *from up* L.

FRAU LEHMANN (*indicating the chest*). Please wait here, madam. I will take your card in to the Headmistress at once.

(*She crosses and exits down* R. AUNT *looks round, while* MANUELA *stands up* L.)

AUNT (*after looking round*). The place is beautifully kept. Everything so well scrubbed and polished. (*Crossing to clock* R.) That clock's in very good taste; shows real distinction.

(FRAU LEHMANN *re-enters from down* R., *bows and exits up* L.)

And that woman gives a good impression. Didn't you think so, Manuela?

MANUELA (*as though awakening, and looking round*). How bare it is! So cold!

AUNT. Cold? Nonsense. (*Crossing and sitting on the chest.*) When I was your age I never felt cold. Why, we used to wear socks right through the winter.

MANUELA (*mechanically, joining her on her* L.). Yes, Aunt.

AUNT. Aren't you pleased that we've got you a free entrance

into such a fine school? It wasn't easy, you know. But I managed it! (*Complacently.*) . . . Well, aren't you pleased?

MANUELA. Pleased? I can't tell what it will be like yet.

AUNT. You are an ungrateful child. I make a great effort to get you into the most select school in Prussia, of which the Grand Duchess herself is the honourable patroness. Where Her Royal Highness comes to inspect the school—even sends her daughter to play here—and you are not even pleased!

MANUELA (*absent-mindedly*). Yes, Aunt. Of course I am pleased. (*She crosses behind chest to* R.)

(AUNT *gives a shrug of annoyance at* MANUELA'S "*lack of concentration*" *and would begin again, but at that moment* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *enters down* R. *She wears a grey narrow-fitting dress to the ground. From the left and right shoulders hangs a wide blue band which ends behind in a point, and in front over the breast is an order: a cross of St. John with a wreath of stars. On her smooth hair, done in a chignon, is a small white lace cap. She keeps her elbows tightly pressed to her body and hands folded over her chest. She keeps this characteristic pose throughout the play. She is fair, a poor little expressionless figure, always creeping in the shadow of the* HEAD. *Her walk is silent and servile.* AUNT *rises.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*crossing to chest*). Pray don't get up, your Excellency.

AUNT. Won't you sit down?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. After you.

(*They sit.* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN R. *of* AUNT.)

I am Fräulein von Kesten. I have come to tell your Excellency that the Headmistress regrets that she is engaged. The Headmistress would have liked to have received your Excellency herself. She begs you to excuse her.

AUNT. Of course. Please tell the Headmistress I am extremely sorry that I cannot present my niece to her myself. (*She indicates* MANUELA *as if the child were an object of discussion, merely—not a person.*) Manuela, curtsy.

(MANUELA, *who is at this moment looking off up* R., *comes down stage to* R. *of* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *and takes the latter's outstretched hand without curtsying.* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *appears not to notice this omission.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. So you are our new pupil? You are a tall girl for fourteen.

MANUELA (*correcting her—quite simply*). Fifteen.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Nearly a grown-up lady! We have many girls younger than you here.

AUNT. Now, Fräulein von Kesten, there is *just* one thing I wanted to ask you——

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Why, of course, your Excellency——

AUNT. I am not sure how to put it. What I really want to know is . . . if the children who are now here are—as they always were—er—who are they ?

(MANUELA *is not listening.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*realizing what is in the other's mind*). Your Excellency need have no fear. We have no children of war profiteers in our school. As it was in nineteen-fourteen—so it is in nineteen-thirty-two.

AUNT. That is a weight off my mind. I was anxious.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Your Excellency need not worry. But we have had to make sacrifices to keep up our great tradition.

AUNT. Sacrifices ? In what way ?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Well, most of our pupils come from the country. And as your Excellency will know, landowners are ruined to-day.

AUNT. Yes ! Ruined ! I know !

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. And when one thinks into whose pockets the gold is poured ! Profiteers and syndicalists who sow the seeds of destruction—— Then again, the Officers' Army Corps is bankrupt. We have had so many applications from those who have the right to send us their daughters, but who are no longer in a position to pay us our fees. So that now, even this institution is not self-supporting. And hard as it is, we are forced to accept aid from the government.

AUNT. How embarrassing to have to accept anything from such people !

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. But at least we use their money in a great cause. The end is so much more than the means. To know that we can still train our children in the old tradition—that is worth any sacrifice.

(MANUELA *walks up stage* R.)

AUNT. But you are still under Royal Patronage ?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Yes and no. You see, it was like this . . .

AUNT (*sharply, to* MANUELA, *who is standing up stage rather bored*). Manuela, listen to this.

(MANUELA *comes down to* R. *of* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN.)

These are matters of vital importance. You must know where people like us stand to-day.

MANUELA (*mechanically*). Yes, Aunt.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Well, when the old grand duchess died, we were placed in a great dilemma. It seemed to us we had lost our protectress, and at one moment we were faced with the alterna-

tive of having a pers—a lady belonging to the present government interfering in our affairs——

Aunt. Good gracious! You couldn't have that happen!

Fräulein von Kesten. No, we couldn't. And we found a way of preventing it. We joined the League of Prussian Women, whose president is, as you know, the *young* grand duchess. And in that way she naturally became our protectress. So our great tradition is still a fact—as well as a symbol.

Aunt (*amused, as if at a clever joke*). A very clever move. Excellent. So now my mind is quite at rest.

Fräulein von Kesten. It really can be, Excellency. (*Turning to* Manuela.) Well, child, how far have you progressed in your studies?

Aunt. Don't expect too much there, Fräulein von Kesten. You see, Manuela has no mother. And, consequently, her studies have been very neglected. My brother-in-law's a delightful fellow, but you know what army officers are! Light-hearted and gay! How can they understand the education of a young girl? My poor sister died too soon . . .

(Manuela *has turned away so that they cannot see her face.*)

Fräulein von Kesten (*noticing this*). Well, we shall see to all that.

(*She draws* Manuela *to her, who, unnerved by this, begins to sob.*)

There, there, child. Cry a little if you must. Crying is harmless. You'll settle down here quickly enough and feel at home.

(Manuela *moves away from her to* r. *wall, struggling for composure.*)

Aunt (*shocked*). Manuela! A soldier's daughter . . . and crying! Pull yourself together, please. I am ashamed of you . . . (*To* Fräulein von Kesten.) Manuela is a little sensitive . . . highly-strung, you know . . . too easily upset . . . never able to concentrate . . . head always in the clouds——

(*A loud bell rings here.*)

Fräulein von Kesten (*rising*). The bell . . . you must excuse me. (*Edging up stage,* r. *of chest.*) . . . A sensitive child, you say? She'll outgrow it.

Aunt (*rising and following her*). Fräulein von Kesten, just one more question.

Fräulein von Kesten (*obviously in a hurry*). And that is—if you please?

Aunt. I have got Manuela a free entrance here. . . . She won't be at any disadvantage?

Fräulein von Kesten. Oh no. There are too many in the same boat. We hold it a sacred duty to look after our Officers' children: to train them in the true tradition. If we did not do

that here, who would! (*Making off.*) But I must go up now, please excuse me. (*She is now at the* C. *arch.*)

AUNT. Of course. I won't detain you. And indeed it's much better to say good-bye quickly. (*Turning.*) Good-bye, Manuela. Remember, a soldier's daughter! Be a good, industrious, obedient and honourable child, so that all my efforts for your future have been worth while. You promise?

MANUELA (*icy*). Yes, Aunt.

AUNT. Good girl. Give me a kiss.

(MANUELA *crosses to her and does so without tenderness.*)

Good-bye, Fräulein von Kesten. (*She goes up to her.*) And (*laughing*) many thanks. I am so happy to leave her with you.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Not at all. . . . (*Stepping aside to allow* AUNT *to go first.*) Allow me.

(*They start to go off.*)

(*To* MANUELA *over her shoulder.*) I will send you your foster-mother at once—Marga von Rasso. It will be her duty to tell you just what to do.

(*They go off up* L. MANUELA *is alone on the scene for a moment. She takes off her hat, wipes her eyes, blows her nose, then walks across the stage and up* L. *Hearing footsteps, she comes down and sits on the chest.* MARGA VON RASSO *enters from up* L. MARGA *is about a year older than* MANUELA, *is bigger, rather heavy, fair, downright, rather soldier-like, but good-natured. She wears the school uniform: a black and white striped dress, black apron and an Eton collar, coarse grey stockings, and clumsy shoes. Smooth hair with a pinned-up plait.*)

MARGA (*coming down to* L. *of chest*). Hi! You! Get up! You're not allowed to sit there, you know.

(MANUELA, *bewildered, rises.*)

So you're the new girl? (*She comes close and stares at* MANUELA *stolidly.*) How do you do? My name is Marga von Rasso.

MANUELA. How do you do?

(*They shake hands.*)

Why mustn't I sit on the chest?

MARGA. Because it's for them . . .

MANUELA. Them?

MARGA (*answering* MANUELA'S *puzzled look and query*). The govs . . . the Staff, you know. The mistresses. (*She touches her own forehead.*) Got it? You'll see them all soon enough . . . and the Head. They all sit on that seat every evening, and they watch us while we walk up and down. That's why we call it the Dragon's Rock.

(MANUELA *is amused.*)

Thank the Lord you're not blubbing. That's one to you, anyway. Most new kids howl their eyes out when they first come in. (*Importantly.*) I'm your foster-mother. I've got to shove you round. Explain things, and all that.

MANUELA. Thank you.

MARGA. Oh, you needn't thank me. I'm told off to do it. Besides, you've got to help me in return. Fag for me, you know. Get my shoes out of the boot-room. Fetch me hot water. Any old thing I want.

MANUELA (*softly*). Yes.

MARGA (*thinking, taking* MANUELA'S *arm and moving away* L.). There's your uniform to fit, and your box to unpack . . . (*She stops.*) I'd better see to your box first . . . give us your keys so that I can start on that right away. (*Rather bossily.*) You are in Fräulein von Bernburg's dormitory . . .

(*There are sounds of approaching footsteps and whispering, etc.* TREISCHKE'S *head pops round the corner up* L.)

Pull yourself together, kid. The others are coming.

TREISCHKE (*off*). Yes! She's come!

LILLI (*off*). In the Hall, you idiot! . . .

ILSE (*off*). Wait for me.

LILLI. Well, buck up! . . .

(*Immediately on this* ILSE VON WESTHAGEN, LILLI VON KATTNER *and* ILSE VON TREISCHKE *steal in from up* L. ILSE *comes to* C., *above chest,* LILLI *to down* L., TREISCHKE *to* R.C. MANUELA *and* MARGA *are* L.C. *The three arrivals, pupils at the school, speak almost simultaneously.*)

TREISCHKE. Hullo! Here's the new girl. So you've arrived!

LILLI. How are you!

ILSE. What's your name?

(*They are all curious, and quickly friendly. Dressed like* MARGA, *in the school uniform, there is at first sight little to distinguish them, but in a very short time* ILSE'S *personality must become strikingly apparent.*)

MARGA (*importantly*). *I'll* introduce you. Manuela von Meinhardis—Ilse von Treischke——

(TREISCHKE *comes forward and shakes hands.*)

. . . Lilli von Kattner——

(LILLI *shakes hands, then crosses* R. *with* TREISCHKE.)

ILSE (*breaking in eagerly, as she always does, coming round* R. *of chest and seizing* MANUELA *by the arm,* C.). And I'm Ilse von Westhagen, Manuela! That's an absolutely new name here. How perfectly thrilling! We've never had a Manuela before!

MARGA (*cross at the interruption*). Take no notice of her—babbles on for ever. Give me the key of your box, Manuela.

(*While* MANUELA *fumbles for this in her bag,* EDELGARD, *another pupil, comes quietly in from up* L., *and stands a little apart down* L.)

(*When she has the key.*) Stay there, and I shan't be more than a tick.

(*She exits up* L.)

ILSE (*pulling a face after her*). Exit the boss!
LILLI (*always ready to appreciate fun*). *And* good riddance!

(*They laugh.* ILSE *joins* TREISCHKE *and* LILLI. MANUELA *doesn't know whether to join in or not; at that moment* EDELGARD *comes close to her and says softly:*)

EDELGARD. My name is Edelgard. Can I help you in any way?

(*They shake hands.* MANUELA *warms to her at once.*)

MANUELA. Thanks . . . thanks most awfully . . .

ILSE. And enter the Saint! (*Chattering on.*) Edelgard is a countess, Manuela (*she steps forward to* C.) . . . we have a princess too, you know, but between you and me she's frightfully vulgar. Whenever we want to make a good impression—we produce Edelgard, like a conjurer pulls a rabbit out of a hat! And *voilà*!

EDELGARD (*though she can't help laughing*). Oh, do shut up, Ilse.

(TREISCHKE, *who has been giggling privately with* LILLI, *now comes up to* MANUELA, *and says in a loud whisper.*)

TREISCHKE. Got anything to eat in your pocket? You know, chocs from the train . . . or even a left-over sandwich.

MANUELA (*rather puzzled, but hunting hard in her bag and her pockets*). Well, I believe I did have some chocolate—— (*She finds some.*)

(*The others take it, and cross* R. *with it, giggling.*)

TREISCHKE. Ah, thanks. They keep us pretty short of grub here, you know.

(MARGA *re-enters from up* L. *and comes down to* L. *of* MANUELA. TREISCHKE, *seeing* MARGA, *quickly hides the chocolate.*)

MARGA (*very important*). I've had a squint at your things. There's heaps of stuff that's taboo. You know that sweets are not allowed.

(*Here* TREISCHKE *and* LILLI *are, of course, convulsed in giggles . . .* MARGA *turns to them suspiciously. They stop eating for a moment.*)

Nothing to grin at, you two! School rules are school rules, aren't they? (*To* MANUELA.) Got any money?

MANUELA (*alarmed*). Yes . . . a little . . . why?

Marga (*holding her hand out*). Give it up.
Manuela. But why?

(Manuela *gives up her purse.*)

Marga. Forbidden. They take care of it for you. When you are allowed out, they give it you back—but you'll have to keep the most careful accounts.

Manuela (*in a small voice*). Shall I?

Marga (*with something like relish*). Books too. No books are allowed. You've got a stack of them.

Manuela. But they are all good books!

(*The others laugh.*)

Not just . . . rubbish. I mean, my father gave me those specially . . . and . . . and there's a travel book that belonged to my mother.

Marga. Nothing doing! Forbidden! We aren't allowed to read for pleasure. Except on Sundays.

Ilse. Good Lord, Marga! Do leave the poor kid alone. Give her a chance! (*She puts an arm round* Manuela.)

Marga (*furious*). Mind your own business! I'm her foster-mother, not you. She's my new girl, isn't she? Not yours. Butting in where you aren't wanted.

(*She goes out angrily up* L., *carrying* Manuela's *purse.*)

Ilse (*tantalizingly, shouting after her*). Keep your hair on, angel! I'm only trying to save the poor child from brain-fever. She can't learn everything at once! (C.) I must now introduce her to our celebrities. The Cabinet . . . Our Head, Manuela—— (*She takes her walk off, etc.*) Then, the Kesten—— (*She cannot resist taking her off too.*) "Stand up for prayers, girls! Who's that chattering behind!" . . . Then Mademoiselle, "Tiens-toi droite, Ilse. Tiens-toi droite . . . Oh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu, ces enfants terribles!" . . . And little Gibson, our English Miss, who is so swe-et—and walks just like this! (*She takes off* Miss Gibson's *walk—very long strides—clockwise round the chest, finally joining* Treischke *and* Lilli R.C.)

Edelgard (*helpless with laughter like the others*). Ilse, for heaven's sake—*stop*! Do you know what dormitory you are in, Manuela?

Manuela. I think Marga said—in—Fräulein von—Bernburg's.

(Treischke *whistles.*)

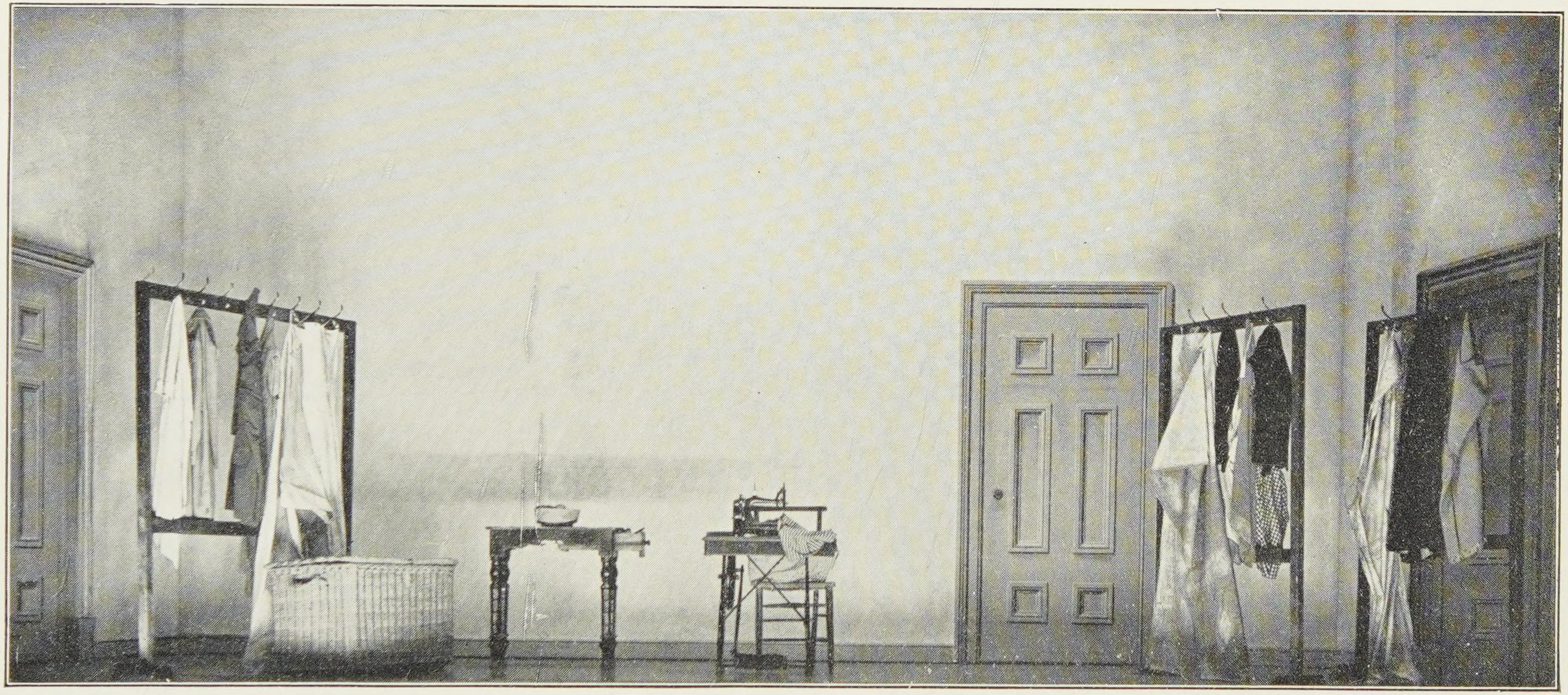
Ilse. I'm there too! Well, look out. Don't catch it!

Manuela (*at a loss*). Catch what?

Ilse. You'll soon see, bright eyes! They all do. Poor mutts.

(Manuela *is more puzzled than before.* Ilse *comes to* C. *again.*)

(*Mimicking them.*) "Oh, Ilse! I'm so jealous! Darling, if only you and I could swop beds! Does she *really* kiss you good night



To face page 13—ACT I, SCENE 2—*Children in Uniform*

Photograph by Pollard Crowther

—every single night in the week? . . . Oh dear, how perfectly marvellous! . . . Lord, isn't she divine! . . ." But it's *not* all bliss, Manuela. Believe me! The woman is fiendishly strict. We all have to go to bed as quietly as mice . . . and a . . .

MANUELA (*laughing boyishly*). Oh, I'm not afraid. I've had a string of governesses, you know, and I found out how to get round them. The stricter they were the more fun I had.

ILSE (*more thoughtfully*). It isn't just that she's strict. It's . . . well . . . she's different from anyone else. You never know where you are with her, and you can never guess what she's thinking. At one moment she'll bite your head off--though I believe she puts that on a bit—while another time she'll be *terribly* sweet.

(*A bell rings.* TREISCHKE *and* LILLI, *who have been busy with the chocolate throughout this, pull themselves together and run off quickly up* L., *saying as they go.*)

TREISCHKE. That's the bell. We've got to rush. Come on.
LILLI. Thanks for the choc, Manuela. We're going to like you!

EDELGARD (*taking* MANUELA'S *arm*). That bell's for us to go upstairs. We had better find Marga for you. I expect she has told you about trying on your new uniform with old Martha, hasn't she?

MANUELA. Yes, thank you. Is it a long way up?

ILSE (*interrupting, taking* MANUELA'S *other arm*). Lord, yes! (*She turns, to drag* MANUELA *off up* L.) Three flights—Excelsior! Up we go!

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2

SCENE.—*The Wardrobe Room.*

It is a small, dark room, dimly lit by a lamp on the table R.C. *Three doors, one down* R., *one down* L., *and another* L.C. *back. Around the walls are dress stands on which hang uniforms and aprons, drearily alike. Also a hamper for dresses* R.

(*See Photograph of Scene.*)

When the CURTAIN *rises,* MARTHA, *the sewing woman, is seen sitting at her machine in the middle of the room, sewing. A box of coloured badges is by her side. Almost immediately* MANUELA *enters from down* R. MARTHA *speaks into the darkness until* MANUELA *comes into the circle of light thrown by the lamp on the table.*

MARTHA. Come along, come along, Number Fifty-five. (*As*

Manuela *hesitates.*) Yes, I'm speaking to you, my dear. I know you're there, and I know your number, and I know a deal more than that—I do. Old Martha sees more than she tells! (*She rises.*) Your uniform is quite ready. (*She crosses to the dress stand* L.C.) Come here now and try it on.

(Manuela *comes to just below* L. *of table.*)

Take off your dress. (*She has found a dress for* Manuela *and she puts it on the machine* C., *then she helps her off with her dress, looking at* Manuela *searchingly.*) Rather a frightened little lady. But there, it's always like that at first. Take off your skirt.

(Manuela *obeys. It is like a bad dream. For a moment she stands, white, slim, and fair, while* Martha *takes her dress away into the darkness and puts it into the hamper* R.)

Manuela (*following her, watching her anxiously*). What are you doing with my dress?

Martha (*kneeling at hamper*). Leave that to me, my poppet. I know what I'm doing. Every five weeks, or so—if you are a good little madam, out comes that dress again. (*She rises, comes back to* C., *places the chair* R. *of machine, then puts* Manuela *on the chair.*) You'll see . . . Now for the hair . . . (*She begins to brush her hair.*)

Manuela. What are you doing with my hair? (*She tries to remove the old woman's fingers. She cannot bear the feeling.*)

Martha. Sit still. (*She unconcernedly continues, hairpins in mouth and a comb in her hand.*)

(*Weak with disgust,* Manuela *obeys. Her hair is pulled back mercilessly.*)

Manuela. No! No! Please don't!

Martha. What must be—must.

(*She continues . . .* Manuela *suffers it . . .* Martha *plaits it and pins it up. Two little curls escape.*)

Manuela. But it hurts!

Martha. What does? (*She has turned away for something.*)

Manuela. Those hairpins. You've scraped it back so tightly.

Martha. That's the way you must wear it here. (*She goes on with the fixing.*)

Manuela. But it will give me an awful headache.

Martha. Oh, you'll soon get used to it, my dear. All the young ladies say the same at first . . . but in two or three days . . . (*She takes the dress from the machine.*) Now for the dress.

(*The door at* L.C. *back opens slowly and* Frau Alden *stands on the threshold. A very old woman,* Frau Alden. *Her feet are small, her bones little, she is tightly laced—her waist could be spanned with two hands—she has a big hook nose and is thickly powdered. She*

wears a red wig, dressed in the fashion of half a century ago. This gives her a fantastic appearance. She was the Ballet Mistress. She formerly arranged the State Balls. Her appearance is something of an apparition—her fine, thin hands are raised.)

FRAU ALDEN. Good evening.

MANUELA (*getting up and turning—frightened*). Oh! . . . (*She stands* R.C.)

MARTHA (*muttering rudely*). That old bag of bones! Don't mind her, my dear. She's . . . you know! (*Touches her forehead and nods and winks to* MANUELA *significantly.*) Wonder they think she's still worth her keep! (*She sits at machine, getting her chair from* R. *of same.*)

FRAU ALDEN (*again, looking only at* MANUELA *and curtsying*). Good evening. (*Approaching her.*) I have just come from the Headmistress. Our Headmistress has sent me up here to teach the new girl the Court compliments. (*Changing her tone.*) But, child! . . . Put in your stomach!

MANUELA (*confused*). I . . .

FRAU ALDEN. Deportment, young lady! Deportment! Stand straight! So! First position!

(MANUELA *tries to obey, but is confused.*)

MANUELA. I don't understand. . . .

FRAU ALDEN (*standing*). Like this—— (*She kicks her toes out.*)

(*She treats* MANUELA *like an automaton, turning her round, etc., when necessary.*)

And this . . . toes out . . . well out . . . first position. (*Suddenly turning unfriendly again.*) Come here.

(MANUELA *nervously obeys. They are now* R.C.)

The Court curtsy has six movements . . . Feet together. (*Showing her.*) Then—listen . . .

MANUELA. Yes?

FRAU ALDEN. One doesn't say merely—"Yes." I am Frau Alden.

MANUELA. Yes, Frau Alden.

FRAU ALDEN. Frau Alden, the Emperor's Ballet Mistress.

MARTHA (*rudely*). In the year one, mind you . . .

FRAU ALDEN (*unheedingly*). I taught the minuet at the Court Balls. I was merciless. The young girls shed tears till their feet obeyed me. And the young lieutenants groaned! But when Their Majesties appeared at the State-room door, all their pain was forgotten. The Emperor, in his Guards' uniform, my child, in his cloak with the Order of the Royal Eagle, and Her Royal Highness with her diamond crown, set with pearls! Her Majesty with her

long, long train! . . . Then, at that glorious moment, we sank down like swans at rest. (*She does the movement.*)

(Martha, *annoyed, starts her machine.* Manuela *imitates* Frau Alden *clumsily.*)

First position . . . feet together . . . second position, right foot turned out . . . third position, left foot forward . . . fourth position, left foot back . . . so . . . fifth down, slow . . . deep . . . deeper . . . don't waver . . . steady . . . sixth, up again . . . foot out . . . both together . . .

(Frau Alden *crosses to* L.C. Martha *stops the machine.*)

Then, those Gracious Ones passed by . . . radiant . . . greeting us all. (*She imitates this.*) Yes, child! Never forget the glory of those days . . . (*Changing.*) Now! Your turn to do it. Imagine that I am the Grand Duchess. Should she come here one morning, as she will, you must know how to make the Court curtsy!

(Manuela *goes up to her* L.C.—*makes it gracefully—kisses her hand, etc.*)

Not at all bad, my child. One can tell your parentage by that! Bravo! Bravo! The great past still lives while talents such as yours remain. (*She puts her hand under* Manuela's *chin.*) Now you must learn the Emperor's minuet. (*She hums the air—raising her dress, and pointing her feet, etc.*) "Compliment—pas à gauche—pas à droite, tournez—compliment!"

(*She takes* Manuela's *hand and dances.* Manuela *is now loving it. She dances as gentleman to the old lady.*)

Martha (*contemptuously, rising and breaking in between them*). Mummery! That's all it is! (*She pulls* Manuela *away.*) We've got to get on, if you'll excuse me, Frau Alden. (*Pushing* Manuela *across* R. *and starting to dress her.*) I'll never get through at this rate.

Frau Alden (L. *of machine—to* Manuela *with an expressive gesture*). Servants—to-day! My dear, you have talent. Real talent. You should be a lady-in-waiting. You have a real vocation for it.

Martha. A lady-in-waiting! In a republic! What an idea to-day!

Frau Alden (*sharply, turning on her for the first time*). To-day? What is to-day? Who can tell what to-morrow will bring?

(*She goes out* L.C., *humming the minuet.*)

Martha (*crossing to get apron from dress stand* L.C.). I wonder they don't embalm her . . .

Manuela (*half dressed—almost speechless*). But . . . look . . . surely you have made a mistake? This has been worn.

MARTHA (*crossing back to* MANUELA). Goodness! What did you think? A fresh outfit for each new girl? . . . Where's the saving in that? . . . Well I never! Tell that to Fräulein von Kesten, my girl. (*She goes on dressing* MANUELA.) She'd have something to say about it! No . . . no . . . those aren't our ways! One young lady leaves and the next one has her dress—until it's done with! And so it goes on. And why not? . . . Come, come. There's nothing wrong with the dress! A very nice young lady wore it . . . very clean in her ways. Nothing sticky in the pockets. Not so much as an ink-spot anywhere. (*Making a face.*) You should see some that I get.

(MANUELA *is dressed.* MARTHA *goes to the machine.*)

MANUELA (*fumbling with collar, looking at her*). But how do I put this on?

MARTHA (*crossing back to her, and fastening it round her neck*). Like this.

MANUELA (*in despair*). But it feels awfully scratchy.

MARTHA. Of course! It's not new. A little frayed, perhaps. What did you expect? But I've washed and starched it.

MANUELA. I shall get a sore place round my neck.

MARTHA. A dab of lanoline, dearie . . . soon cure that! . . . (*She moves her chair back to* R. *of machine at the same time picking up the badge box.*) There we are—all but the badge. You shall choose one for yourself. (*Giving the box to* MANUELA.) I know it must be a red one . . . Class III they call it.

MANUELA (*kneeling by her, as she looks at them*). Martha?

MARTHA. What is it now?

MANUELA (*showing the badge with the "heart"*). There is a heart on this one, with an arrow on the back, and the letters E . . . V . . . B . . . What do they mean?

MARTHA (*stooping to look*). E.V.B. Ah! Elizabeth von Bernburg. The last young lady who had that badge was sweet on your Fräulein von Bernburg. Therefore the heart . . .

MANUELA (*slowly, puzzled but intrigued*). Therefore, the heart . . .

(*Enter* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *from down* R. *Tall, straight, dark, aristocratic, strong, with beautiful brown eyes, and a direct look, a strong but sensitive mouth.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Now what is all this talk going on here?

(MANUELA *puts the badge back and stands up quickly.*)

MARTHA (*a little flustered*). We—we're just choosing a badge for the new young lady, Fräulein von Bernburg. (*She takes her chair to above machine and sits.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. So you are the new girl? Manuela

von Meinhardis . . . Let me see if everything is correct . . . Turn round . . . Yes. That's all right . . . But your hair must be different . . . (*She adjusts the curls.*) Your hair should be neater than this.

(*She lays a firm hand on* Manuela's *shoulder and turns her round.* Manuela *stares into her face, but* Fräulein von Bernburg *appears not to notice this.*)

You cannot be too tidy, you know . . . Why are you trembling? Do you feel nervous?

Manuela (*suddenly loud and clear*). No.

Fräulein von Bernburg. That's right. Is your box unpacked yet?

Manuela (*loud and firm, like a soldier*). Yes, Fräulein von Bernburg.

Fräulein von Bernburg. You have been told that you are to sleep in my dormitory. I insist on absolute order and cleanliness. Every morning before you leave the room, Manuela, you must come to me for inspection, showing me a clean brush and comb and perfect nails. You will fetch your boots from the boot-room and change your stockings every three days. Every morning you must strip your bed properly, and I allow no talking during dressing and undressing. Is that clear?

Manuela. Yes.

Fräulein von Bernburg. Remember, then. And hurry, Martha; if you dawdle like that you'll be late.

(*She goes out down* R. Manuela *stares after her.*)

Manuela. Why does she make me feel so afraid? (*But she is really asking herself that question.*)

Martha (*stitching hard*). She's not so bad, child. Her bark is worse than her bite. She can be honey-sweet—you'll see.

(Manuela *takes out the badge with the heart and holds it out in front of her.*)

Manuela (*loud and clear*). I will take this badge.

(*She pins it on.* Martha *starts her machine again.*)

Curtain.

Scene 3

Scene.—*The Reception Hall.*

As the Curtain *rises, the* Girls *are walking in two columns, one back stage and one front, two and two, in silence. The mistresses sit, back to back, on the chest :* Fräulein von Gaerschner *and* Mlle. Alaret r., *on the downstage side,* Fräulein von Atams *and* Miss Gibson l., *on the upstage side. The* Girls *walk with their hands clasped in front of them. During the marching* José von Bleicher *slips a note into the hand of* Mia, *who is walking in front of her. Occasionally the mistresses issue commands :* "Hold your heads up!" "Tiens-toi-droite, Ilse!" "Keep in step, girls!" *etc. As the two columns join and make a circle round the chest,* Fräulein von Gaerschner *says :*

Fräulein von Gaerschner. Girls, why don't you sing something?

Girls. What shall we sing?

Fräulein von Gaerschner. Sing the Miller's Song.

(*She leads them off the stage up* r., *singing the song. The other* Mistresses *go off at the same time up* l. Mlle. Alaret *off up* r.)

Manuela (*who has drawn* Edelgard *back, pulling her on to the stage*). Can't we sit down? I feel frightfully tired.

Edelgard. There's nowhere to sit, Manuela. To-morrow you'll be glad to walk. We spend so many hours at our desks.

Manuela (*in apprehension*). How many?

(*They walk down stage and across to down* l.)

Edelgard. Four in the morning, eight to twelve, then a very short walk. Dinner. Two hours again—from two to four . . . Coffee . . . Then we do needlework, while one of the mistresses reads aloud. Another walk—supper. Prayers, and then bed. So you see, there's an awful lot of sitting. And every day the same thing.

Manuela (*slowly, as if realizing what this means*). Every day the same thing!

(*They both cross to down* r.)

Edelgard. You'll find the time soon passes . . .

Manuela. Does it! I feel as if to-day will never come to an end.

(Ilse, Treischke, Lilli, Oda *and* Mia *come in from up* r. Oda *and* Mia *come down* r. *of chest to* Manuela. *The others cross to down* l.)

Oda (*loud and impudent*). So this is the new girl! (*She stares*

at MANUELA, *hard and embarrassingly.*) Hm! . . . not so dusty! D'you know any good stories?

(ILSE, TREISCHKE *and* LILLI *cross to* ODA *and* MIA. *The positions now are:* EDELGARD R., MANUELA *above and slightly to* L. *of her, the other five in a close diagonal line facing down* R. *corner.*)

MIA. Oh yes, tell us a story. We could do with some new ones . . . if they're really funny.

MANUELA (*thinking to please them*). Oh yes! I know some! Father used to tell me lots! Wait . . . just a moment . . . (*She screws her face up, thinking hard.*)

(*The* GIRLS *lean forward, expectant.*)

. . . I've got it now . . . There's this one! (*She begins.*) . . . A little girl went for a walk with her father. It had been raining hard, so of course the streets were quite wet. Her father slipped over a piece of orange-peel. (*She corrects herself quickly.*) No, over an orange; so the father said something he shouldn't. So when the little girl got home she said to her mother: "Mummy, how did father know it was a blood orange?"

(*The story falls quite flat.* EDELGARD *laughs a little out of kindness to* MANUELA. *The others look at each other and at* MANUELA *pityingly.*)

ODA (*in a cutting tone*). Is *that* what you call funny? Good Lord! Go back to the nursery, my child! . . .

(*They all run up* L. *in a line and laugh jeeringly.* ODA *has a strong influence, even on the kinder girls.*)

Did I ever tell you this one?

(*At this moment* MARIA, ANNELIESE *and* PAULA *and others come in from up* R. *and stroll across back. They are eager not to miss a word.* ODA *whispers with relish. Not a word is heard, but they are all convulsed.* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER *crosses at back here from* R. *to* L.)

FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER. Quiet, girls.

(*They curtsy and all go off up* L. *after* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER. MANUELA *is left out of it.*)

MANUELA (*discomforted—to* EDELGARD). I don't quite understand what they meant!

EDELGARD. Don't bother about them. Oda's always like that.

(*She takes* MANUELA'S *arm and they pass out up* R.)

(MARIA *approaches again from up* L. *with* ANNELIESE. *They come down* L. *and cross and recross front of stage during the following dialogue.*

At this point, also, other girls come on to the stage, and up to the

time when FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER *says*, " Back to your corridors ", *although taking no part in the audible dialogue, they are really talking all the time amongst themselves.*)

MARIA. So you see, Anneliese, to-morrow morning they'll be reading my letter at home, at breakfast time ! That the Head should want to censor what we write ! Mean old beast !

ANNELIESE. Do be careful, Maria !

MARIA. Well, isn't she ? To read our letters ? That butcher's boy was a sport. A real sport. In two ticks he twigged what I wanted. He stuffed the note in his basket, and winked ! Twice ! If that butcher's boy lets me down it'll kill my faith in human nature. But Mum and Dad are sure to take me away when they get it ! If they don't, I shall nip off, on my own . . .

ANNELIESE. Things aren't too bad. It's not worth while making a fuss . . .

MARIA (*indignantly*). Someone must make a fuss ! Or things will never get better !

(*They go off up* R. *At the other end of the stage,* PAULA *and* MIA, *who have come on from up* L., *are bending over a piece of paper.*)

PAULA (*running after* MIA *down* L.). Don't keep me in suspense . . .

MIA (*the frivolous and giggling kind, is now convulsed*). She just shoved it into my hand . . . Passed on as red as a beet . . .

PAULA. Who did ?

MIA. That little half-wit, José Bleicher . . .

PAULA (*in disgust*). Good Lord !

MIA. My dear, you'll scarcely believe it, but (*showing note*) you can see for yourself, I'm not kidding ! The child has started a " pash " on me !

PAULA. What rot ! She must be barmy ! But, let's see what she writes.

(*They move nearer* C.)

MIA (*looking round, cautiously*). Well, if you won't make such a din, I'll read it :

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *comes in from up* R. *and moves to down* R. *where she stands, occupied in some notebook or other. More* GIRLS *drift in from up* R.)

" Dearest, beloved Mia . . . From to-day Maria von Siervert is my best friend. Do you know why ? Because we can both talk of nothing but you. We are friends just for that very reason . . . "

PAULA (*unable to contain herself—loudly*). Lord ! Friends—just to talk about you !

(MLLE. ALARET *and* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER *have come into the room from up* R. *They sit on the chest facing up stage. Here* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *comes forward to* C.)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Paula, Mia, come here!

(*Confused and guilty,* MIA *and* PAULA *stand before her, hesitating. An interested crowd forms round them, as near as they dare. The other* MISTRESSES *turn and look on.*)

What is that paper you have in your hand, Mia?

MIA. N-nothing . . . please . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Let me see it.

(MIA *hesitates.*)

(*Sternly*). I'm waiting.

(MIA *puts her hand in her pocket, still hesitating.*)

How much longer must I wait?

(MIA *hands it over.*)

Thank you. (*She tears it up without looking at it.*) That is all I wanted. (*She hands the pieces back to* MIA.) Put those pieces in the waste-paper basket. And remember once and for all that passing notes to each other is strictly forbidden. If I catch anyone again there'll be trouble.

MIA (*stammering a grateful and almost incoherent thanks*). Th-thanks . . . most awfully. (*She and* PAULA *turn away up* L.)

(ANNELIESE *and* ODA *join them up* L., *giggling. As* MIA *moves away, the crowd of onlookers melts also . . . at the command of* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER.)

FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER. Back to your corridors.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *and the two other* MISTRESSES *go off up* L. *The* GIRLS *off up* R. MANUELA *and* EDELGARD, *who have been standing watching down* R., *but rather apart, are now alone.*)

MANUELA (*moving up to below chest*). What was that?

EDELGARD (*to* MANUELA, *following her up*). That really was most awfully decent of Fräulein von Bernburg. Any other mistress would not only have read that note, but would have gloated over it . . . Only Fräulein von Bernburg could have done what she did—but then she's like that. Always!

MANUELA (*eagerly*). Yes! I can see that she is! She's like one of the Knights of the Round Table! Oh, Edelgard, I do want her to like me! Do you think if I work awfully hard, and am very careful about all the school rules, she perhaps . . . might?

EDELGARD. Well, there again, it's hard to tell.

(*She takes* MANUELA'S *arm and they go slowly off and out up* R.)

She has no favourites at all. You can't discover whom she does like. And then, you see, she's so tremendously fair! . . . So don't hope too much . . .

(*As they go off* MLLE. ALARET *and* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *come in from up* L. *The latter sits on the chest, correcting exercise books. MLLE. ALARET comes down* R. *and stands sewing.*)

MLLE. ALARET. Pas mal la petite nouvelle, n'est-ce-pas? Very nice the little new girl.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*as if indifferent*). Is she?

MLLE. ALARET. But certainly! 'Ave you not regarded her?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I haven't had time . . .

MLLE. ALARET. Mais, tout de même, moi je la trouve charmante. What-you-say—a ver'—pretty—girl? . . . She has a little air spirituelle . . . n'est-ce-pas?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*with a slight shrug*). Possibly.

MLLE. ALARET (*teasingly, crossing to chest and sitting* R. *of* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG). Why not 'ave a little look . . . Oh, you need not be afraid to look. Votre influence here, ma chère, is so strong! . . . You 'ave always such . . . "good tone"—n'est ce pas? You are always so . . . égal . . . so juste . . . so . . . fair . . . Yes! I 'ave 'eard the girls say so!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*frowning a little*). But of course, one cannot consider one child apart from the others.

MLLE. ALARET (*laughing a little*). Oh, you will never make fault in that direction. But that little one . . . She 'as imagination, n'est-ce-pas? I am quick to read their faces. She will suffer, pauvre petite . . . School is a ver' hard place for a little girl.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. All education is hard. It is hard for the girls, but it is also hard for us. We must have the strictest discipline, even severity.

MLLE. ALARET. Discipline! Toujours votre discipline! Vous êtes un grand nation, vous allemands, and I admire you, but you haf too much discipline.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. We need discipline to keep us great.

MLLE. ALARET. And you organize your schools comme votre grande armée. For that great object little girls must suffer.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Don't think I can't see what they suffer! But for the sake of the school, we must uphold its policy . . . (*Slowly.*) If once we were weak, if once we were to give way to our feelings, we should be lost. (*Rising and moving down* L.) . . . I have no need to look twice at Manuela to know what her life will be like, not only for the next few weeks, but for many weeks to come. She will be hurt, bewildered, baffled, groping in the darkness that only a child can know. No one to turn to for comfort . . .

(MLLE. ALARET *rises and crosses down to her. She speaks rather teasingly again as they start to walk up* L.)

MLLE. ALARET. Oh, mais pourquoi pas vous, ma chère? You are so strong. And the strong should comfort the weak.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *looks at her and goes off up* L. *to deposit her exercise books.*)

(*At this moment* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *comes in from up* R. *to ring the bell. She carries a Bible. As she shakes the clapper violently to and fro she calls* "Silence." *The* GIRLS *drift in in groups from up* R. MLLE. ALARET *goes up* C. *at back and hurries them on.*)

MLLE. ALARET. Venez, venez, mes enfants . . .

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Girls! Line up for prayers. (*She stops ringing the bell and goes* L. *for the prie-Dieu, which she brings* C., *below the chest, placing the Bible on it.*)

(*The* GIRLS *obey; standing in two rows* L. *and* R., *leaving the* HEAD'S *doorway clear. The* MISTRESSES, *who have by now also come in, stand close together* C., *above the chest. Here, also, order is maintained. They stand in line and rank like officers and soldiers.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*crossing* R. *to* ODA). Oda, your apron is crooked. . . . Put it straight.

(ODA *has one strap off her shoulder; with a shrug she puts it up.*)

(FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *crosses* L.)

Mia, are those your new shoes?

MIA. Yes, Fraulein von Kesten.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Well, they don't look as they should. . . . Don't look at me like that. . . . Who is that chattering behind?

(ANNELIESE R. *giggles.*)

I have already asked for silence. (*She stands* L.C.)

(*The door opens and the* HEAD *comes in from down* R. *She wears a grey dress like the other ladies, a little cap and blue ribbon, but with a still larger badge on her bosom. She supports herself on a stick, which gives out a wooden sound with every step she makes. Her rubber-soled shoes are not heard—only the stick which sounds tok-tok-tok. The* HEAD *comes out and stands before the* GIRLS, *who curtsy —gives her stick to* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN, *and takes the thick Bible. The* MISTRESSES *bow.*)

HEAD. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost——

GIRLS. Amen . . .

HEAD. We will sing the first verse of Hymn 50. (*As mechanical as possible.*) "Take thou my hands."

(FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *gives them their note, verbally,* "So." *The* GIRLS *sing. She conducts with her right hand. At the end of the verse the* HEAD *continues.*)

I command you all to lift up your hearts in praise of your Maker, to cast away all impure thoughts, and ὼ beg divine pardon for any sins you may have committed.

(*The* GIRLS *bow their heads, fold hands and pray. There is a silence which lasts about a quarter of a minute.*)

(*Now business-like and military.*) I have something of the greatest importance to say.

(*The* GIRLS *look up.*)

It has come to my knowledge that some of you are breaking one of our most serious rules. . . . In spite of express orders, we find that letters have been posted to parents, letters containing unjust complaints and lies about the school. I will not have such behaviour, I have warned my servants to keep a strict look-out. Any girl sending a letter which has not been submitted for our approval will be most severely punished. I can promise you she will not escape detection. Her holiday leave will be cancelled, and she will no longer have the honour to wear the school uniform . . . Dismiss!

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. To your dormitories, girls! Quietly!

(*The* GIRLS *all go off up* R., *followed by* FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS. *The other* MISTRESSES *off up* L. *Only the* HEAD *and* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *remain. The latter gives the* HEAD *her stick, then puts the prie-Dieu away at the* L. *wall.*)

HEAD. Kesten——

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (L.). Here, Principal. (*She comes and stands* L. *of chest.*)

HEAD (C.). One word. The household expenses are too heavy. You must get them down. (*She crosses* R.)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. I have cut them down as much as possible. The children often complain of being hungry . . .

(*The* HEAD *grows angry, turns on her and crosses back to* C.)

HEAD. Hungry? Nonsense! I am surprised at you! Such humanitarian rubbish—from you!

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*timidly*). I was thinking——

HEAD (*ignoring her*). Don't think, Kesten. We Prussians are a spartan race. Never forget that. They must remember they are daughters of soldiers, and, God willing, they will be mothers of soldiers. What they need is discipline and self-control, not luxury and high living. (*She sits on the chest.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*just an echo at her elbow*). How true that is, how true!

HEAD (*not listening*). There is nothing to be ashamed of in poverty, Kesten. To-day it is even an honour. Think what the fathers and the brothers of our own girls here have sunk to! Bookkeepers, insurance agents—film supers even! Men who once wore the Emperor's uniform! If we pamper our children, Kesten, how can Prussia rise again? In our children lies the glory of the past

—the hope of the future. Never forget that. Only through self-denial, discipline and hunger can we again come into our own.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. No!—I mean . . . Yes . . . Principal!—I have been thinking.

HEAD. Don't think, Kesten; obey! Rule. You are too soft. Softness is our greatest enemy. (*She rises.*) We must economize more. What about the laundry bill?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. But, Principal——

HEAD (*unheeding*). If the children were to change their stockings once—instead of twice a week—would not that save a good deal?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*beaten*). Certainly, Principal.

HEAD. And let us reduce the heating. (*She starts to go off down* R.) Cold is extremely bracing.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*taking a step towards the* HEAD). Yes, Principal.

HEAD. And the sick-room expenses are absurd. I think some of the children are malingering. They report themselves sick too often.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*taking another step forward*). Yes, Principal.

HEAD. And see the girls don't make so much noise in the corridors. They can talk to each other without screaming. Lack of self-control again, Kesten. (*She is at her door down* R.)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*with yet another step towards her*). Yes, Principal.

HEAD. Remember. Stricter, Kesten, stricter!

(*She goes out.*)

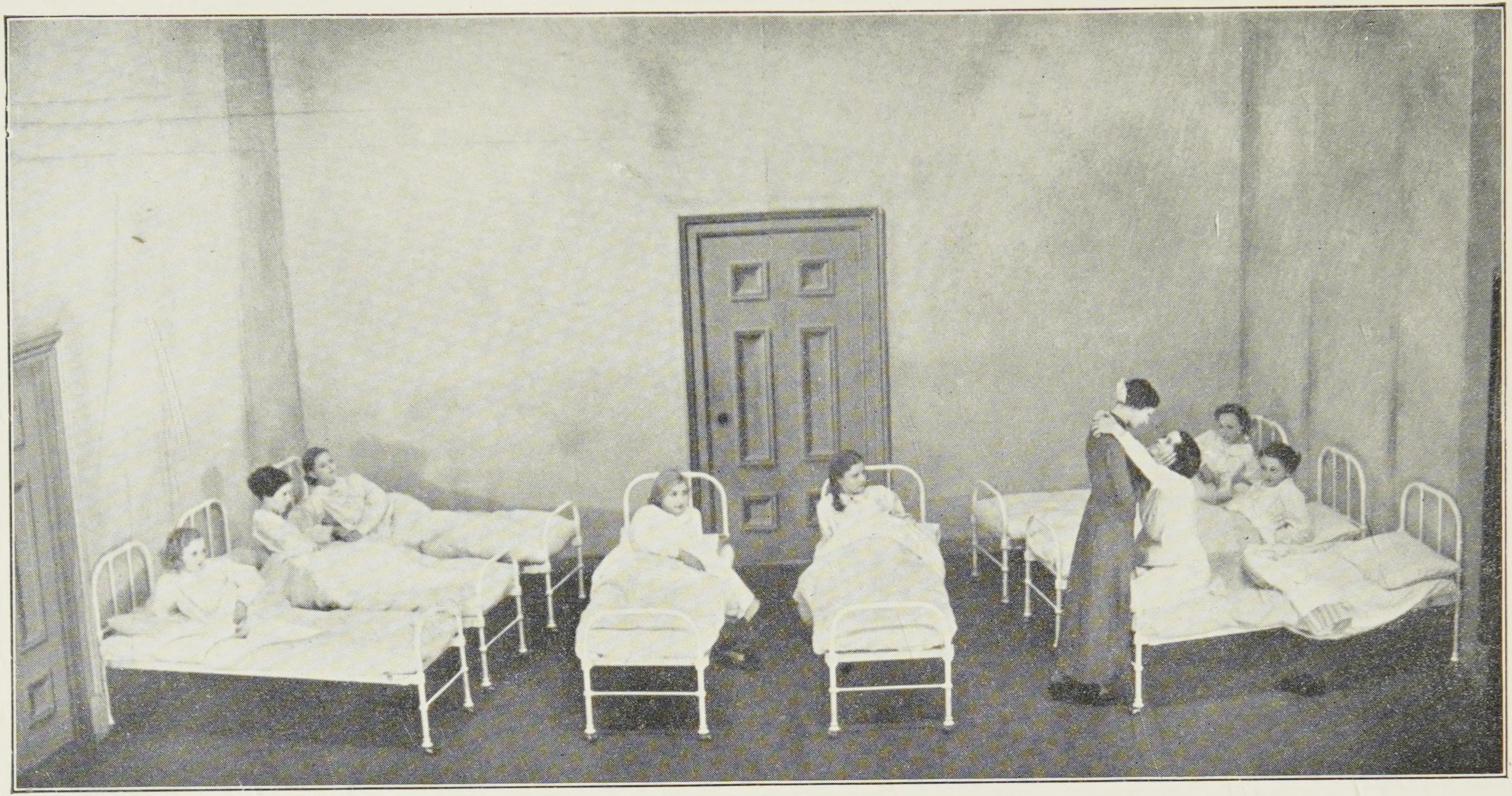
FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*in a whisper, as she goes off up* R.). Yes—stricter—stricter!

CURTAIN.

SCENE 4

SCENE.—*A Dormitory.*

It is a glaringly lighted white room, with eight institutional white beds. C. *back is a door into the bathroom. One hears movements. Another door down* L. *leads downstairs. Down* R. *is the door leading into* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *room. The beds are arranged: three against the* R. *wall, three against the* L. *wall, their feet pointing towards the* C., *and two in the middle of the room, these with their heads by the bathroom door and their feet facing down stage. They belong as follows:* MIA *up* R., ODA *centre* R., LILLI *down* R.,



To face page 26—ACT I, SCENE 4—*Children in Uniform*

Photograph by Pollard Crowther

TREISCHKE *up* L., ILSE *centre* L., MANUELA *down* L., MARGA *right* C., EDELGARD *left* C.

(*See Photograph of Scene.*)

At the rise of the CURTAIN, FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS *is discovered* C., *inspecting the beds. Two or three* GIRLS *with sponge-bags and nightgowns come in from down* L., *talking, but on seeing her immediately stop and curtsy. They pass through into the bathroom.* FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS *watches them go, then exits down* L. *After a short pause* LILLI *comes in down* L. *and crosses to her bed down* R. *She is quickly followed by* TREISCHKE, *who runs across to the door down* R. *and peeps through the keyhole.*

TREISCHKE. Lilli! Lilli!

LILLI (*at her bed*). What is it?

TREISCHKE. It's your turn to keep guard to-night. The Bernburg isn't up yet. So stand by the door, and when she comes, whistle.

LILLI. Right. Don't be long. (*She goes and stands by the door down* R., *keeping guard.*)

(TREISCHKE *goes on tiptoe to her bed up* L., *and puts chocolates, orange and sausage, etc., from her pocket to underneath the pillow.*)

Do buck up, Treischke. I'm all on edge to-night. Have you got my chocolates too?

TREISCHKE. Of course.

LILLI. Well, don't eat them.

TREISCHKE. I'm not.

LILLI. You are. Sh! *Cave!* (*She whistles and runs up* C., *to between the two beds.*)

TREISCHKE. What is it?

LILLI. I'm sure I heard something.

(TREISCHKE *walks to the bathroom door, as nonchalantly as possible.*)

(EDELGARD *and* MANUELA *come in down* L.)

Sorry, false alarm!

(*She follows* TREISCHKE *into the bathroom.*)

EDELGARD (*putting her hand on the bed down* L.). This is your bed, Manuela. (*She sits on her own bed* L.C., *and combs out her hair.*)

MANUELA (*looking round, then sinking down on to her bed, her feet down stage*). Goodness, I am tired. But I don't feel as if I shall sleep a wink. Is it like this every day?

EDELGARD. Every day.

MANUELA. Edelgard, how can you bear it?

EDELGARD. Wait till you get into bed. You'll be better when the light's off, and much better after Fräulein von Bernburg has kissed you good night.

MANUELA. Will she do that to-night?

EDELGARD. Of course she will. She always does. She comes round to each of our beds in turn.

MANUELA. I can't in the least imagine how she would kiss. And yet it must be just like a mother. I remember quite well how my mother kissed me. I was eleven when she died—she used to take me on her knee. (*She thinks hard.*) And then there was a smell of lavender—it was so sweet that after she died I used to take her clothes into bed with me—the scent lasted a long time.

(EDELGARD *comes and sits beside* MANUELA *on the bed down* L. *She sits* R. *of her with her feet up stage.*)

Now I won't know any more how my mother kissed me, but I shall be kissed by Fräulein von Bernburg. I wonder, will it be different? It must be, mustn't it, and yet I want it to be the same so much. I don't know how I can wait. I feel as if I shall choke—or scream—or——

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *has come into the room from down* R. *She crosses to them.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. What are you two talking about?

(*They look up frightened. Both stand up.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *goes up to them slowly.*)

EDELGARD. About . . . about Manuela's mother, Fräulein von Bernburg. She is dead.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Hurry up and undress, Edelgard, you will be late.

(EDELGARD *goes up and out into the bathroom.*)

(*Her manner is cold no longer.*) So you have no mother?

MANUELA. No . . . if I had I shouldn't be here. (*She looks round the room, almost in despair.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*sitting on the bed down* L. *and drawing* MANUELA *towards her*). Come, come, it isn't so bad—surely! Now listen. I want to tell you something that I think will help you. It's only natural that you should feel strange here, at first. It is something we all have to go through. Beginnings are never easy. I know what you are feeling only too well. But we must not give way to our feelings. We must learn how to control them. So don't keep on thinking how strange and uncomfortable it all is—it will only last longer if you do.

(MANUELA *can only feel the cool hands holding hers. She sighs deeply.*)

Well, . . . what is it? Something that troubles you? . . . Something you would like to ask me?

MANUELA (*with difficulty*). Please——

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*half laughing*). You can always ask, you know.

MANUELA. It's more understanding than asking . . . I find . . . there are so many things here that are forbidden . . . there are so many "don'ts" and "you mustn'ts" . . . I can't understand . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. You can't expect to understand all that to-day. And you are here to obey, not to ask questions. Try to believe that everything you are told to do is for your own good, and do it without murmuring. We all have to do that. The greatest Christian virtue is humility. You have learnt that already, haven't you?

MANUELA. Oh, yes.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Then if you are gentle and obedient you will find peace comes of itself. Will you try?

MANUELA. Yes, Fräulein von Bernburg.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Make up your mind that you are going to get on very well here, that everyone will like you, that you will be very happy. Promise me that.

MANUELA (*glad to promise anything*). Oh, yes. I will.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *gets up. She feels* MANUELA'S *excitement and so wants to calm her. She puts her hands on her shoulders.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. There. You are a sensible child, you see. Now go and get undressed. You haven't much time. I will come back to you later. (*She goes out to the bathroom calling:*) Girls! Don't dawdle so much! What's the matter with you all to-night?

(MANUELA *slowly follows her out.*)

(*Almost immediately* MARGA *comes in from down* L. *and starts to undress at her bedside* C. TREISCHKE, ODA, *then* LILLI *come laughing from the bathroom, suddenly subduing their laughter and talking to whispers.* ILSE *follows them almost at once. They go to their beds. As they start getting into bed,* MIA *comes in. The* GIRLS *are in their nightgowns, which they have put on in the bathroom.*)

TREISCHKE. And that's the end of another perfect day.

ODA. Not yet, the best part is still to come.

LILLI (*to* MARGA). You're very late, Marga! What have you been doing?

MARGA. Mind your own business.

(LILLI *comes down to her own bed—*TREISCHKE *throws her a sausage, which she has taken from under her pillow.* ANNELIESE *and* PAULA *come in from the bathroom giggling and sit on* ODA'S *bed, where they talk secretively. These last two are carrying their sponge-bags.*)

ILSE (*climbing on to* EDELGARD'S *bed as* MARGA *is undressing*). Girls! . . . I must show you something. (*Giggling.*) Marga, come here. (*She pulls* MARGA *to her.*)

(*The* GIRLS *crowd round.*)

MARGA (*protesting*). Oh, be quiet.

(JOSÉ *and* ANOTHER GIRL *run through from the bathroom carrying their sponge-bags.*)

ILSE. José, wait. Girls, I must show you how Marga can breathe . . . it's a perfect scream!

MARGA. Shut up.

ILSE. The girl's a positive Hercules! Marga, *do* show them!

MARGA. No, I don't want to.

ILSE. Oh, but you must! It's a marvellous sight! Girls, do come and look!

(*They crowd closer, giggling.* MARIA *comes in with her sponge-bag. Everybody, with the exception of* MARGA, *is wearing a nightgown.*)

LILLI. Show us what you can do!

ANNELIESE. Come on, Marga, don't be so modest!

PAULA. Why hide your great talents?

MARGA (*half gratified, half cross*). Oh, well.

ILSE. Now, Marga! One, two, three!

(MARGA *swells out her chest like a frog. The* GIRLS *giggle.*)

LILLI. Look, she is swelling!

ODA. Lord! What a sight!

ANNELIESE. She'll bust!

(MARGA *bursts the buttons of her bodice and hurries to the bathroom. The* GIRLS *are helpless with laughter. As the bathroom door opens they scuffle into bed with whispers:* "Cave, she's coming. Look out!" *Those who don't belong to the dormitory make a hurried exit down* L. *But it is only* EDELGARD *and* MANUELA. *They are in their nightgowns.* MANUELA'S *thoughts are all on the* "*Good night,*" *to come. As she reaches her bed,* ODA'S *head pops up.*)

ODA. Manuela, are you a film fan?

MANUELA. No, I don't think so really. (*She gets into bed.*)

(EDELGARD *gets into bed.*)

ODA. My poor child! What a lot you must miss! (*To others.*) I say, have you seen my latest? (*She sits up in bed, produces postcard-photographs from under her pillow, then swings her feet on to the floor, to face audience.*)

TREISCHKE. Got any new ones? Let's see.

(*She crosses to* R. LILLI *and* MIA *join her on* ODA'S *bed.*)

LILLI. What a divine moustache!
MIA. I like my men clean-shaven.
TREISCHKE. A new Garbo! How she clutches the men!
ILSE. Sh!

(*They all jump back into bed.* MARGA *enters from the bathroom in her nightgown. She takes off her shoes and gets into bed.*)

TREISCHKE. Oh!

(*Then the bathroom door opens slowly and* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *appears.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Are you all ready?
ALL. Yes . . . quite. Thank you. . . . Quite ready, Fräulein von Bernburg.

(*The* GIRLS *all kneel up at the ends of their beds, waiting.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *kisses each one in turn, beginning with* MIA *up* R., *then* ODA, LILLI, MARGA, EDELGARD, TREISCHKE. *Each* GIRL *gets back into bed after saying good night. During this* ILSE *turns to* MANUELA.)

ILSE. Manuela, between you and me, she's a darling! (*Quickly.*) I haven't a *real* crush on her. . . . But I'd stand on my head if she'd ask me. . . . Look out! Now it's my turn! . . .

(ILSE *puts her face right back to be kissed.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *laughs and kisses her on the cheek, then, as* ILSE *turns to scramble back into bed, gives her a playful tap.* MANUELA *waits in suspense, she cannot take her eyes off* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. *As the latter comes to her bed, she falls into her arms, as if her last strength had gone.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *gently releases herself, waits for a second before turning away from* MANUELA, *then makes for the door down* R. *As she gets there she says* "Good night, girls," *and switches out the light. The* GIRLS *answer her,* "Good night.")

CURTAIN.

ACT II

Scene 1

Scene.—*The* Girls' *Common Room. Some weeks later.*

It is a large bare room with two rows of desks, R. *and* C. *There is a piano and stool against the wall* L., *and two large maps hanging on the wall at back. Two pictures, Kaiser and Kaiserine on walls* L. *and* R. *Doors down* R. *and* L.

(*See Ground Plan of Scene on page* 77.)

At the rise of the Curtain, Edelgard *is walking to and fro across the back, sewing. You can see the dress she will wear in* Scene 3; *a veil and any other suitable accessories on the desk.* Manuela *is striding up and down* L.C., *book in hand, learning her part.* José *is playing dance music at the piano* L. Anneliese, *in stocking-feet, is dancing down* L.

Manuela. "Vous, le sang de vingt rois, esclave d'Orosmane."

(*She drys up.*)

Anneliese. She always sticks there. Go on, José.

(José *goes on playing, while* Anneliese *rehearses dancing steps.*)

Manuela. "Vous, le sang de vingt rois, esclave d'Orosmane. Parents de Louis, fille de Lusignan."

(Ilse *comes in down* R. *She is darning a stocking.*)

Ilse. D'you mean me?

(Manuela *looks at* Ilse *pathetically, then turns away and continues.*)

Manuela. "Vous, chrétienne et ma sœur, esclave d'Orosmane . . ."

Ilse (*sitting on desk-top down* R.). What drivel is this?

Manuela (*gaily*). It's not drivel; it's a play by Voltaire.

Ilse. What is it called?

Manuela. Zaire—(*indicating* Edelgard) behold her, my erring sister! (*With a flourish.*) And I am Nérestan. (*She sits on desk-top* C.)

Ilse. Nérestan?

Manuela. Yes, I am a knight, you wanton. And my sister wants to marry a Turk. Do you understand?

Ilse. Perfectly—Not one word! And you want to act *that*! Mademoiselle is dotty—Turks, with their harems, are impossible.

MANUELA. Oh, there I'm with you, for I am Nérestan, and that is just why I am scolding my sister. But it is really quite all right, because Zaire gets murdered before anything has happened.

ILSE. How tactful! (*Rising.*) But haven't you a frightful lot to learn? (*She crosses to* MANUELA *and looks at the book.*)

MANUELA. Reams, my dear, the man never stops talking!—Rather like someone else I know! (*Pointedly.*) And as we have only a week to do it in you had better push off and let me learn it. (*She turns to the book again, rises and strolls up* L.C.)

ILSE. Certainly. It's not my idea of fun!

(*She goes out down* R. EDELGARD *comes and sits at desk down* C.)

(*The piano and the dancing gets wilder and noisier.*)

MANUELA (*turning*). Oh, I can't possibly learn with all that noise! Couldn't you go somewhere else?

JOSÉ. No we can't, we've been turned out of the music-room.

MANUELA. Oh do, just for me, *please*, José!

JOSÉ. Oh all right—— Come on, Anneliese.

(ANNELIESE *stops and gives* MANUELA *a look, and tries to delay her departure by doing a few more steps.* JOSÉ *catches her unawares on one leg, however, and with a forceful shove pushes her through the door down* L. *Without so much as a turn of the head,* JOSÉ *follows.*)

MANUELA (*crossing to down* L., *her eyes on her book, so that she does not see* EDELGARD'S *face till she turns*). Edelgard, let's go over our scene . . . the first one. . . . Wait, till I find the place. . . . Here it is. . . . Let me see, I come in from the right. . . . Do you know your part yet?

EDELGARD (*dropping her sewing*). No, and I never shall. Oh, Manuela, I can't learn a thing! (*She begins to weep, at first quite quietly.*)

MANUELA (*rushing to her side*). Edelgard!—What's the matter? (*She sits* L. *of* EDELGARD.)

EDELGARD. I've tried so hard to keep it in . . . but to-day I'm so tired, and I feel I just can't go on.

MANUELA. But now when everything's so much nicer——

EDELGARD. It isn't—it's hateful, I tell you! I can't bear it . . .

MANUELA. Oh, it'll be all right.

EDELGARD. You don't understand, Manuela. You don't know what my home means to me and how I long to be back there. There's a chestnut avenue—you should see it when the trees are in bloom!--and you can run there, and run and run. And beyond the drive is the sea! Oh, if only now--at this moment—— (*But she cannot go on.*)

MANUELA (*sympathising*). You mean you could run there, and never come back! Is that what you wanted to say?

EDELGARD (*breaking down all the more because of* MANUELA'S

sympathy). And that awful bell! . . . it gets so on my nerves! . . . Always ringing when I want to be quiet. I can't bear it. It rings right through my head!

Manuela (*soothingly, with an arm round her*). Steady, old girl; don't let it get you down.

Edelgard. And those walks, Manuela, yoked together, like animals, two by two! And these horrible, horrible clothes! And every morning to wake up to that dormitory, so cold, so white, so bleak! (*She begins to sob again.*)

Manuela. Edelgard, can't you get away from here sooner than we can? It's different for you . . . I mean, I've no home to go to . . . but you——

Edelgard (*becoming much quieter*). No. Mother won't allow me to leave. I have written to ask her, telling her all I can—in letters. I had a letter from her this morning. (*She gets the letter from her pocket.*) She writes: "Be brave, my girl, and never never give in. Our country will soon need men and women of iron again, and it is our duty to subdue our feelings. A Prussian woman must know discipline, she must first learn to obey, so that later she can command. Hold out, endure to the end. We have all had to do that . . ." (*Turning to* Manuela.) At home, you know, they are always talking about the time that is coming when we shall need soldiers again, and mothers of soldiers. (*She sighs.*) If that is true, I can't let them down; I can't be a coward. I must just grin and bear it.

Manuela (*stroking* Edelgard's *hair*). Poor Edelgard! Forget all the horrid things, remember only what's nice—and lovely——

Edelgard. But, what is nice and lovely—here?

Manuela. Well, there's Fräulein von Bernburg.

Edelgard. Oh, of course she's nice enough—— (*She sighs again.*)

Manuela. But so remote—is that it?

Edelgard. Yes, she is so far off, so unapproachable. One can only think things about her——

Manuela (*eagerly*). But that is *just* what's so wonderful! to be able to think about her! Oh, I could do that all day long. To think how she looks, how she speaks. (*Dreamily.*) Have you ever noticed from what a long way off you can hear her step—such a strong, firm clear tread . . . just like her voice . . . It's strange, you know, but I always think of her as a leader—a ruler. Whenever she comes into the room, or steps on to the teacher's platform, I think of a member of Parliament—or, is she more like a judge? . . . As I watch her my heart nearly stops beating. She makes me feel so afraid.

Edelgard. Afraid! That's just it! Here we are always afraid of something. Now, at home, there is nothing.

Manuela (*breaking in*). Oh, I don't mean afraid in the way we are afraid of the Head, or Kesten, (*feeling for the right words*) awe—

is more what I mean. And do you know why? (*As if she had made a discovery.*) It's because she is unhappy.

EDELGARD. Why should she be unhappy? She is here of her own free will—not like us.

MANUELA (*trying to explain*). Well, I feel she has suffered in some way . . . that . . . there is another side to her quite different from the one she shows us.

EDELGARD. Different? How?

MANUELA (*with conviction*). She can be most frightfully loving——

EDELGARD. Loving? Oh, no, not a sign. Now, at home—my mother——

(*She begins to cry again, so* MANUELA *tickles her and recites—to divert her.*)

MANUELA. Edelgard! . . . (*She declaims—but as burlesque to distract* EDELGARD.) "Vous, le sang de vingt rois, esclave d'Orosmane . . ."

EDELGARD (*smiling through her tears*). Idiot! Do be serious!

MANUELA (*rising and crossing* L.C.). Serious! That's just what I can't be. I can never be serious again! (*She whirls round as she speaks.*) Oh, Edelgard, I'm so terribly happy, for now I shall be able to show her myself—as I really am! When I'm dressed in my silver armour, with my hair quite free, then, then she will see me properly for the very first time! And you know when someone says those lines:

"O brave Nérestan, chevalier genereux,
Vous, qui brisez les fers de tant de malheureux."

Then, then, she must like me!

EDELGARD. What a ridiculous baby you are!

MANUELA (*sitting on top of desk down* C.). I know, I know, but I don't care! (*Flinging her arms up.*) Let me dream I am a knight, a knight who has come to free her—to take her out of this prison, to flee far, far away. Alone, we two, quite alone! (*She stops short, and lowers her voice.*) Alone? But what good would that be! Whenever I *am* alone with her I can't say one word! Twenty times I have made up my mind to kiss her hands before doing it once in reality! No, she can't possibly like me! All she sees is a silly, dumb idiot before her. If she asks me a question in class, her voice makes me so nervous that everything goes out of my head! and I can only see her hand holding the pencil that is to give me another bad mark, and I hear only that hard "Again—nothing learnt!" (*She laughs to herself.*) But she hasn't the slightest suspicion how much I learn for her really—— (*With a comprehensive movement of the arms.*) Or of everything I could do!—

(ILSE *has drifted in again from down* L. *during the last sentence, and has caught a few words. She is still darning the stocking.*)

ILSE. Well, perhaps you could darn my stocking.

(MANUELA *laughs, crosses* L. *to her and rumples her hair.*)

MANUELA (*with an extravagant gesture*). Anything, anything, my angel!

(EDELGARD *continues her sewing.*)

ILSE. Save us! Is all this part of the play?

MANUELA (*going up* L.C., *laughing*). Yes! Now, everything's part of my play—this room, the school, the whole world—the future——

ILSE. Now, you've only got to say the Head—and I'll go——

MANUELA (*temperamentally*). No, not the Head. I hate her.

EDELGARD. That's not fair, Manuela! She has done nothing to you.

ILSE (*to* MANUELA). Rubbish! As a matter of fact, she likes you. Why, only the other day I heard her say (*mimicking* HEAD'S *voice*): "Dear me, the little Meinhardis looks just like a boy——"

MANUELA (*turning sharply*). That! She said that?

ILSE. Well, why not?

(MANUELA *comes down* L.)

. . . quite nice . . . What's up? Don't you want to look like a boy?

MANUELA (*turning away*). No, no, it isn't that! I'd like to look like a boy. But I don't want the Head to say it. I hate her! (*She flounces away up* L.C., *accidentally shaking out a letter which has been resting between the pages of her book.*)

ILSE (*her sharp eyes seeing it*). Hullo . . . you've dropped a letter.

(MANUELA . . . *busy with her part does not hear . . . so* ILSE *picks it up. She looks at the envelope.*)

"To—Fräulein von Meinhardis——"

MANUELA (*turning round and rushing down to her*). Give it to me, Ilse. At once!

(*She tries to get it, but* ILSE *darts up stage and down the* R. *side of desks.* MANUELA *follows.*)

ILSE (*behind* EDELGARD). Oh, no, this looks exciting! (*She looks at it.*) . . . No stamp—oho, a note! (*She starts taking it out of the envelope.*)

MANUELA (L. *of desk down* C., *dignified but firm*). Ilse, put that back in the envelope, and give it to me, at once. No gentleman reads other people's letters. It's not done.

ILSE (*regretfully, her head on one side*). I was afraid you would get me that way. I suppose I shall just have to be decent if you put it like that. (*She sighs.*) What a pity! (*She reluctantly gives the letter back to* MANUELA.)

MANUELA (*shortly*). Thanks. (*She puts it back into the envelope and then into her pocket. Then she turns away to the piano, sits on the stool and pretends to be engrossed in her book.*)

(EDELGARD *laughs.*)

ILSE (*sitting at desk beside* EDELGARD). Tell me, Edelgard, do you know who wrote her that letter?

EDELGARD (*shaking her head*). No. I haven't the vaguest.

(MANUELA *still pretends to be absorbed in her "part."*)

ILSE (*consumed by curiosity, to* EDELGARD). You ask her, she's more likely to tell you.

EDELGARD. I don't think she will.

(*They whisper together and laugh.*)

ILSE (*crossing* L. *to* MANUELA, *giving* EDELGARD *up as hopeless*). Oh, Manuela—let me see it.

MANUELA (*giving her the letter*). Oh, very well, take the thing!

ILSE (*delighted*). Thanks, I thought virtue must triumph. (*She crosses back to the desk, sits* L. *of* EDELGARD *again and opens it eagerly.*) First the signature . . . Helmut von Ellendorf! Our fencing master!

MANUELA (*annoyed*). If you must know—yes! (*She rises from the stool and goes and leans on upstage end of piano.*)

ILSE. "... You are nearly grown up; you are standing on the threshold of life—I gather that you have no parents, and so, in all humility, I would beg to offer my services . . ." Lord, how touching! . . . "my services . . . as friend, as comrade, as guardian, and if such great happiness could be mine—as husband." (*But at this she can no longer contain herself. She crosses and sits on piano stool.*) Manuela! Manuela! This is an offer of marriage.

MANUELA (*calmly*). All right, don't scream!

ILSE (*who cannot understand* MANUELA'S *unconcern*). But, Manuela, aren't you all over it?

MANUELA. No; why should I be?

ILSE. She's dotty! Now, if such a thing were to happen to me—— (*She whirls round on the stool.*)

MANUELA (R. *of* ILSE, *holding out her hand*). Please can I have it back——

(ILSE *gives it to her, and* MANUELA, *crossing* C., *tears it up.*)

There! That's done with. And now let's talk of something else.

ILSE (*gaping*). But aren't you going to answer it?

MANUELA. Of course not. It's bad enough to have to read it! And I've had to give up my fencing lessons.

ILSE (*rising*). Then, you are not going to see him again?

MANUELA. No—it would make me feel quite sick . . . Ilse, will you please leave us alone?

ILSE (*going, imitating the* HEAD). Stricter, Kesten, stricter, stricter, stricter! (*She goes out down* L.)

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2

SCENE.—FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *Room.*

The stage is divided into two parts. FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *room on the* R.; *with a door leading into a corridor, with a large Gothic window, on the* L. *There is another door from the corridor down* L. *The room is plainly furnished. A table and chair occupy the* C. *On the table is a small lamp with a green shade, also a bowl of flowers. At back is a chest of drawers;* R., *a bookcase and settee. The whole is more like a man's room than that of a schoolmistress. There is a cloister-like touch.*

(*See Photograph of Scene. The stool which is shown just* L. *of the chest of drawers is brought to down* L. *of table in this scene, but is replaced for Act III, Scene* 3.)

At the rise of the CURTAIN, FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *is seated at the table, writing. It is dark. Only the small table lamp is alight, but this throws a good light on to her work. Almost immediately* JOHANNA, *a housemaid, enters down* L. *with some laundry in a large basket. She crosses to the door* C. *and knocks.*

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Come in.

(JOHANNA *enters.*)

JOHANNA. Here is the laundry, Fräulein von Bernburg.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*without lifting her head*). Put it over there on the chest.

(JOHANNA *puts the laundry on ihe chest, then remains standing up stage.*)

JOHANNA. If you please, Fräulein——

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*still writing*). What is it? What do you want?

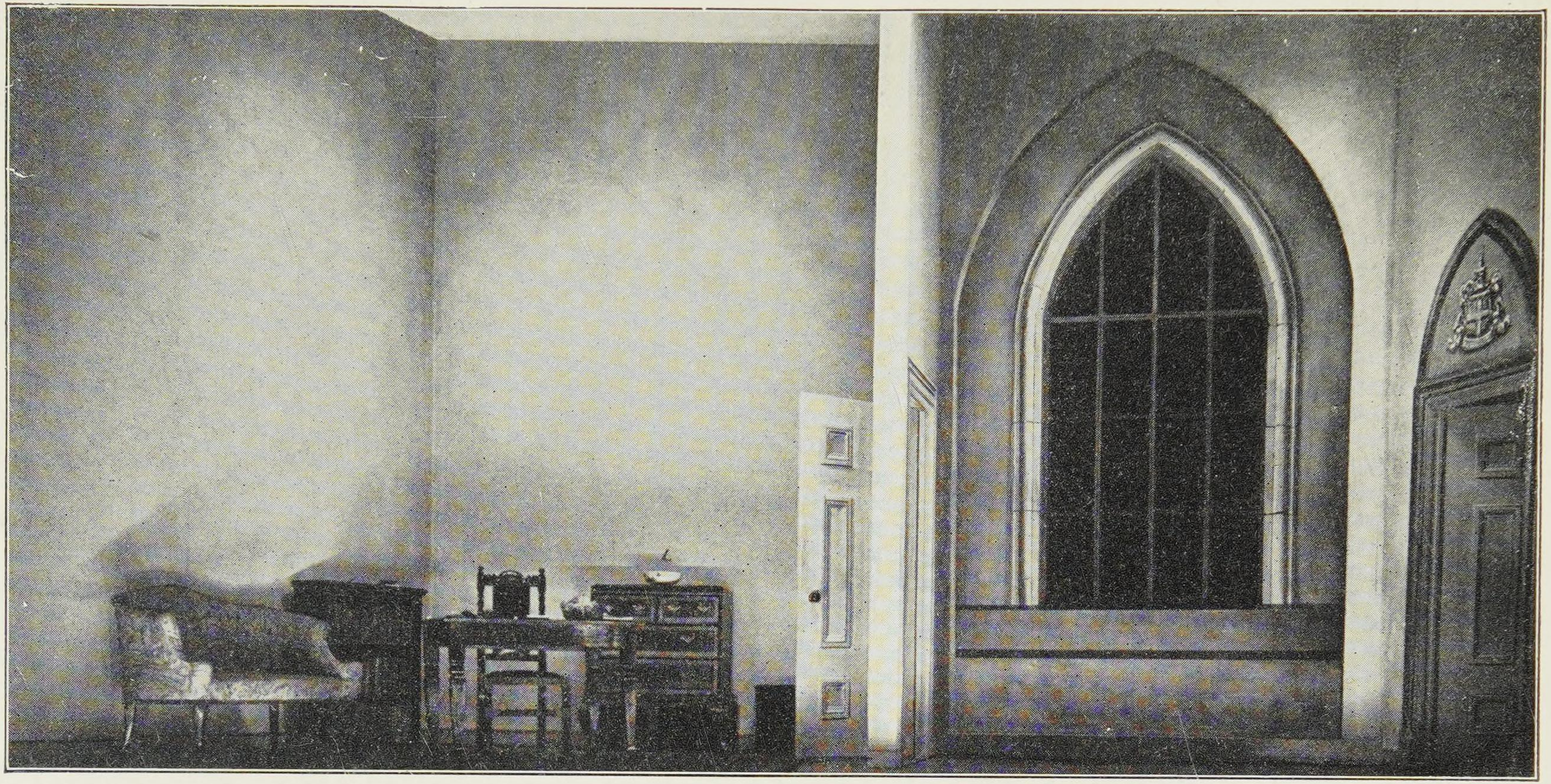
JOHANNA (*hesitatingly*). I only wanted to say I have put the young ladies' laundry in the dormitory—and——

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*as before*). Then, that's all right.

JOHANNA. And that Number Fifty-five's . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*turning round*). What about it?

JOHANNA (*coming down slightly*). Well, it's so threadbare, Fräulein; the young lady won't be able to darn it herself——



To face page 38—ACT II, SCENE 2—*Children in Uniform*

Photograph by Pollard Crowther

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*impatiently*). Very well, leave that to me.

JOHANNA (*knowing this request is unusual*). But . . . I should like . . . I mean . . . I should be pleased to do it for Fräulein Manuela, if you would let me, Fräulein . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. What an idea! You have quite enough work as it is.

JOHANNA (*still bravely pursuing the subject*). But, you see, Fräulein Manuela is . . . (*She is not sure how to put it.*) Well, I don't know . . . I'm sorry for her.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*rather sarcastically*). So you are sorry for her? And why, may I ask?

JOHANNA. Her pillow is always wet. I think she cries a good deal in the night.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*coldly*). How interesting!

JOHANNA (*going*). I expect she is home-sick.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Johanna, ask Fräulein von Meinhardis to come up here for a moment. I think you will find her in the Common Room.

JOHANNA. With pleasure, Fräulein.

(*She goes out of the room and through the door down* L. *For a time* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *goes on with her writing, then she puts down the pen, holds her head on her hand and sighs deeply. She rises, goes to the washing on the chest and takes up one piece after another, holding each up to the light to see the damage. She shakes her head again and smiles. She arranges the laundry on the chest, puts her own away in one of the drawers, then looks at* MANUELA'S *again, then brings it to the table and puts it on the up* L. *corner. She sits once more, takes up her pen, and appears to be absorbed in her work. While she is doing all this the scene between* MANUELA *and* EDELGARD *is being played in the corridor.*

MANUELA *and* EDELGARD *enter from down* L. *They stop outside* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *door.* MANUELA *is very frightened.*)

MANUELA. What do you think she can want me for?

EDELGARD. I've no idea.

MANUELA. My heart's beating so fast!

EDELGARD. I say, calm down, old thing.

MANUELA. I feel awfully sick.

EDELGARD (*laughing a little*). That's always the way. Come on, get it over. (*She moves nearer the door.*)

MANUELA. Oh, if only I knew what it was!

EDELGARD (*laughing*). That wouldn't make the slightest difference. Come on. (*She knocks on the door.*)

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *calls*: "Come in.")

MANUELA. Oh, heavens.

(EDELGARD *gives her a push, and* MANUELA *enters the room slowly and timidly.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*without looking up*). Come over here.

(MANUELA, *trembling and anxious, approaches* L. *of the table.*)

Just look at these.

(*She pushes the laundry over to her, which* MANUELA, *deeply shocked, takes.*)

Tell me, child, didn't they give you a new outfit when you came to school?

MANUELA (*very embarrassed*). No, Fräulein von Bernburg.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Well, never mind. Where were you before you came here?

MANUELA. With my aunt, in Goslar.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Oh, with your aunt. (*She takes up a chemise and holds it up to the light.*) Look at that, it's full of holes—quite done.

MANUELA (*confused*). Aunt Ehrenhardt thought it would do for a bit.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*smiling*). And what do you think?

MANUELA (*thawing a little*). That it won't do, Fräulein von Bernburg.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*laughing*). I agree with you, Manuela. It won't do. (*She rises.*) Come here a minute. (*She goes to the chest of drawers, and brings out one of her own chemises, which she measures against* MANUELA.) Here is one of mine, it will be rather big for you, but you can put some tucks in the shoulders.

MANUELA (*suddenly, quite beside herself*). For me? Oh no! For me?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Yes. (*She nods.*)

MANUELA (*overcome*). Oh, this is too wonderful!

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG, *a little flattered, laughs, and lays her hand on* MANUELA'S *head.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. You silly child!

MANUELA. A thousand thousand thanks! (*She suddenly throws her arms round* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *neck, then she begins to sob.*)

(MANUELA *sobs overwhelmingly. It is a nerve storm.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *is really alarmed. She takes her by the shoulders and seats her on the small stool down* L. *corner of table.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. You are an excitable little girl. (*She sits at her table.*)

MANUELA (*trying hard to control herself*). Oh dear! . . . (*But she is fighting for breath.*) How silly this is . . . I'm so sorry . . .

it . . . it'll be over in a minute . . . I don't know why I'm crying . . . it's really absurd . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Tell me, Manuela, are you home-sick?

MANUELA. Home-sick? Oh no, but there are times when I feel I must cry.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*laughing a little at this*). And you don't know why! Or is there some reason you can't confide in me?

MANUELA (*looking up*). Oh no, to you I could confide anything in the world! . . . but this is so difficult to say . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*putting her hand on* MANUELA'S). But perhaps you will try, Manuela, when I tell you how very much I should like to hear it.

MANUELA (*first stammeringly, afterwards more freely*). I don't quite know how to say it . . . but every time you say good night to me, and then go away, and shut the door of your room, I feel so terribly lost . . . I stare at your door through the darkness . . . I keep on staring and staring . . . and I long to get up . . . open your door, creep up to your bed, and kneel beside it.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *gently removes her hand.*)

I want to take your hand, and . . . and tell you . . . But I know I mustn't, so I have to clutch hard to my bed—I grip it so tight that it hurts . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*as lightly as possible*). You really are a baby, little Manuela.

MANUELA (*going on*). And I can only go to sleep because I know I shall see you again in the morning. . . . Then, I remember that I shall get older, and that one day I shall have to leave school—and, perhaps, never see you again.

(*There is a pause, while* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *rises and walks to the back of the room.*)

Oh, I love you! I love you like my mother. But you are always so far away, so distant. I can never talk to you, never come into your room, never, never be near you . . . (*She nearly breaks down again.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*coming to* L. *of her, anxiously trying to calm her*). Now, now, my child, things aren't as bad as all that. You are letting your imagination run away with you! Pull your-self together, my dear; you are too highly-strung, you know. (*She takes her hand.*) Now, listen, just forget you are a school-girl for a moment, and then we can talk as friends . . . like two good comrades.

(MANUELA *dries her eyes, and looks up.*)

You know I mustn't make any distinction between one girl and

another, because that might lead to jealousy, don't you? That I mustn't single anyone out?

(MANUELA *nods.*)

(*Very earnestly.*) But I want you to know this, Manuela, that I think about you very, very much. I see more than you imagine, and sometimes I am grieved about you, while at other times I am glad. But I mustn't show all this, you know that, don't you, my dear?

MANUELA (*in delight*). Yes, yes, indeed I do!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. And you won't cry any more?

MANUELA. No, never again! (*Jumping up.*) Oh, you are so terribly, terribly sweet and kind to me!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*crossing to above table and sitting, laughing*). And I will be sweet and kind if that will help you, and keep you happy.

MANUELA (*going nearer* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG). May I ask you something?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*laughing*). Of course.

MANUELA. Are you happy here?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Whatever makes you ask that?

MANUELA (*solemnly*). Well, I have been meditating.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*laughing*). Well, you meditate on something else.

MANUELA. No, only on that.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*seeing what is in* MANUELA'S *mind*). You can't understand why I stay on here?

MANUELA. Yes, that.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Can't you understand the joy I get in living for you children?

MANUELA. Yes, but you have so little say here.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I know. But one does not work only for the present.

MANUELA. You mean when you are headmistress?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Yes, when I am headmistress. (*She looks into space.*)

(MANUELA *looks at her wonderingly. There is a little pause, as though they both had a vision of the future. Then* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *pulls herself together and says:*)

Well, now, you know if you are in any real trouble you can always come to me.

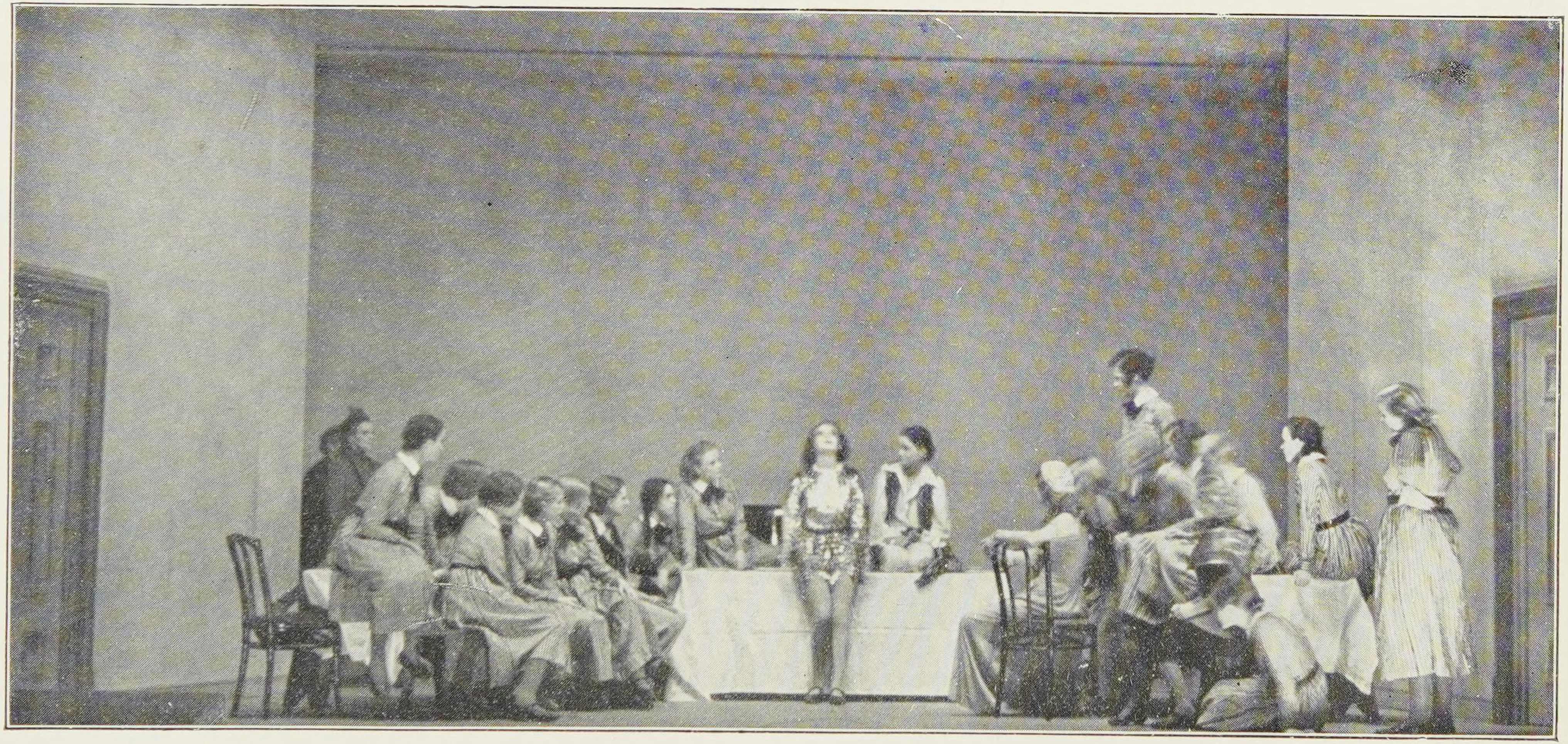
MANUELA. Yes. Thank you a thousand times!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*rising*). Now, run down to the others, and take your laundry with you.

MANUELA (*softly*). Thank you!

(*She picks up her things from the table, then turns to go.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *looks after her.*)

CURTAIN.



To face page 43—ACT II, SCENE 3—*Children in Uniform*

Photograph by Pollard Crowther

Scene 3

Scene.—*The* Girls' *Common Room.*

The desks have been taken out and the piano moved to c. *against the back wall to make room for the supper tables. These, three in number, are set* c., r. *and* l. *There are chairs and forms for the* Girls *to sit on.*

(*See Photograph of Scene, and Ground Plan on page* 78.)

The Curtain *rises on an empty stage. The two side tables are bare, the one up* c. *is partially laid. It has its cloth, two jam-tarts and one or two plates. Off* r. *can be heard the last lines of the play.*

Manuela (*as Nérestan, declaiming*). Parle, à ce prix encore je benis mon trépas.

Treischke (*as Orosmane*). Zaire!

(Johanna *and two girls,* Anna *and* Grete, *enter from down* l. *with two table-cloths, plates, spoons, forks, and two bowls of trifle. They stop for a moment, entranced, to listen. Then they begin laying the tables, every now and again stopping to hear some more.* Johanna *takes the* c. *table,* Anna *the* l., *and* Grete *the* r.)

Manuela (*as Nérestan*). Qu'ordonnes-tu, barbare?

Treischke (*as Orosmane*). Qu'on détache ses fers, ecoutez, Nérestan
Dis que je l'adore, et que je l'ai vengée
Respectez ce hero, et conduisez ses pas.

(*He kills himself. There is a sound of a groan . . . then clapping . . . then "Sh!" from others in the audience.*)

Johanna (c., *to* Anna). Oh, Fräulein, is that the end?

Anna (*down* l., *hurriedly*). No, Johanna; listen.

(Manuela *is speaking now. She speaks the very last lines.* Johanna *goes on laying the table, as quietly as she can. During* Manuela's *final speech she says the following:*)

Johanna. Fräulein Manuela is a dream! In that lovely silver armour—just like an Angel from Heaven. Give me a hand with these plates, Fräulein . . .

Manuela (*she speaks these last lines very impressively*). Guides-moi, Dieu puissant! Je ne me connais pas
Faut-il qu'a t'admirer ta fureur me contraigne
Et que dans mon malheur ce soit moi qui te plaigne!

(*There is a great outburst of cheers and clapping . . . excited cries of "Bravo! Bravo! Manuela! Manuela! Manuela!" etc. To all of this* Johanna *and the girl helpers listen thrilled.*)

Anna (l.). That's the end!

GRETE (R., *breaking out excitedly*). Listen to them cheering Manuela!

ANNA. There's never been anything like it! Oh, I wish I could have stayed to the end!

GRETE. I'm going to congratulate her.

(*She goes out up* R. *The cheers and shouts grow even more frenzied.*)

JOHANNA. . . . Of course, I don't know what she was saying. French is such queer talk . . . but she gave me a shiver down the spine just like in any real theatre!

ANNA (*at the table* L.). Yes! Her voice sounded so deep . . . not a bit like her own voice . . . I should never have believed she could do it!

JOHANNA (*going to table* L.). Oh, I shouldn't say that, Fräulein . . . (*referring to plates which* ANNA *is laying*) here if you please, Fräulein . . . Fräulein Manuela is different . . . I always said she was different. But excuse me, Fräulein, they'll be coming.

(*The noise dies down.*)

ANNA. Then I'll help you bring in the glasses . . .

(*They go off down* L., *just before* MANUELA *and* ILSE *burst into the room from up* R. *as the clapping dies down.* ILSE *drags* MANUELA *to above table* C. MANUELA *is in her "silver armour" and "unbound hair." She is speechless with excitement.* ILSE *is wearing her ordinary uniform.*)

ILSE (*excitedly*). I must talk to you before the mob arrives. My dear, you've sent the whole crowd raving mad, I tell you! There's never been anything like it! You were absolutely *IT*!

(MANUELA *can only look at her.* ILSE *moves round* L. *and sits on the inside edge of the table* L., *her feet up on the form.* MANUELA *comes down* R.)

—Of course, I couldn't see a thing! I had a perfectly vile seat—just behind the Head——

MANUELA (*who has found her tongue*). Ilse, I was in such a panic that I might forget my lines!

ILSE. Not you! Why, you stood up there with all the nerve in the world, and spoke just like a book, and a French book, too.

MANUELA (*crossing to* ILSE *and sitting on the form, above her*). Could you hear everything I said?

ILSE. Lord, yes! Why, you roared like a bull!

MANUELA. Oh, get away with you, Ilse.

ILSE. If I were to tell you *all* I heard——

MANUELA. Well, what did the Head say?

ILSE. She was quite carried away! (*Mimicking her.*) "Really, most extraordinary, Kesten! . . . Strange, how children surprise

one! . . . Remarkable . . . quite remarkable, Kesten! . . . pretty too . . . really, quite pretty! . . . pretty legs . . ."

(MANUELA *rises, stamps her foot, then crosses and leans on downstage end of table* R.)

What's up? Why shouldn't she say you have pretty legs?

MANUELA (*angrily*). It's nothing to do with the play.

(ILSE *guffaws.*)

ILSE. Let me tell you, don't you despise pretty legs . . . I didn't know *you* had pretty legs . . . (*She looks at them and then at her own.*)

MANUELA. Leave my legs alone.

ILSE. Certainly, they aren't important.

MANUELA (*hesitatingly—she wants to know so much that she dare not ask*). Ilse . . . tell me——

ILSE (*refusing to help her out*). Tell you what?

MANUELA. What . . . the . . . other mistresses said?

ILSE (*wilfully misunderstanding*). Oh, the others? Well, the Gaerschner said that your costume wasn't quite decent, but that you had learnt your lines well.

MANUELA. She would! . . . and . . .

ILSE. Well, the little Gibson, who doesn't understand a word of French, of course couldn't say very much, but every now and then —in a *very* loud voice—she came out with—(*mimicking her*) "Oah, how swee-et . . . Oah, isn't she a *darling*? Oah!"

MANUELA. Well—and——? (*She drops down on to the form* L. *of table* R.)

ILSE (*with a sidelong glance*). The Bernburg?

(*But* MANUELA *dare not look up. She is fiddling with her armour . . . almost as if she were praying . . . then she looks up for the verdict.*)

That was a queer do! The Bernburg never said a word.

(MANUELA *shrinks.*)

But she looked, my dear! Oh, she looked . . . Her eyes!

(EDELGARD *and* TREISCHKE, *both in costume, come in up* R. EDELGARD *looks charming in a long dress and neat lace cap.* TREISCHKE *wears sheet armour, and a lot of brown paint.* MANUELA *rises.*)

EDELGARD (*running round* L. *to* C.). Darling! You were perfect! You were really too lovely for words! I must kiss you! (*She throws her arms round* MANUELA'S *neck.*)

TREISCHKE (*who has run round* R. *to* C.). And now, my turn, Manuela, that is, if you don't mind my beard——

ILSE (*interrupting*). No, no! (*Getting off the table.*) Treischke,

you can't! Men don't kiss each other! Besides, you with all that filthy brown paint!

TREISCHKE (*bowing ironically*). I bow to higher orders.

MANUELA (*to* EDELGARD). Was I really all right?

EDELGARD. All right! You were terrific! I didn't know you had it in you. I was in a blue funk the whole time.

MANUELA. But that was quite right for you—you were sweet.

(ANNELIESE, PAULA *and three others come in up* R. *and rush to* MANUELA C. *They turn her round and round till she bumps into* MARGA *coming in down* L. ANNELIESE *and* PAULA *are dressed as Turks.*)

PAULA. Darling, you were wonderful!

ANNELIESE. Yes, you were wonderful!

MARGA (*down* L.C.). I hope you're not getting your head turned. A bit of acting won't carry you far . . .

ILSE (C., *nudging* TREISCHKE). She's jealous! (*She turns and moves up to the table* C.)

MARGA (*going on*). But really, you weren't too bad.

MANUELA. Thanks.

MARGA. At least, you didn't stick . . . (*She turns away to inspect the tables* L. *and* C.)

PAULA. Jolly fine actress!

ANNELIESE. Congratulations, Manuela. I thought you were marvellous!

MANUELA. Thanks . . . thanks . . . ever so much . . . it's awfully nice of you all!

(*They draw near the tables.* ODA *comes in down* R. *and crosses to* MANUELA C.)

ODA (*embracing* MANUELA). Oh, darling, you look so lovely! You must be friends with me, Manuela. Let me sit by you for supper. I must!

MANUELA (*taking* ODA'S *arms from her shoulders*). No, Oda, please don't. And I'm afraid I'm engaged for supper. Edelgard sits on one side—and Marga, my foster-mother, must sit on the other.

ODA (*annoyed, turning on her heel*). Oh, very well then, don't!

TREISCHKE. I say, girls, aren't they going to give us some grub?

ILSE (*below table* C.). Rather! Fête-day food. A tart——

TREISCHKE. And what before that?

ILSE (*picking up a bowl of trifle*). Oh, some sort of mess *en masse*. (*She flops it about with the spoon.*)

(JOHANNA *comes in down* L. *with two glass jugs of "punch". ANNA follows with the glasses. All the other* GIRLS *rush on from up* R. *There is a lot of shouting as* JOHANNA *puts the jugs on the table up* C. *and goes off again down* L. *By now, all the* GIRLS *are standing at their tables—only* MANUELA *is left, standing alone, in front.*

MLLE. ALARET *comes in from down* R. *and goes straight up to* MANUELA. *The* GIRLS *nudge each other and watch expectantly.* MANUELA *stands as if benumbed.*)

MLLE. ALARET (*giving* MANUELA *her hand*). Mais, grand merci, ma petite—many, many thanks you's. You did your part very well . . . Trés bien joué, trés bien parlé . . .

ANNELIESE (*behind* MARIA *down* R., *mimicking her*). Trés bien joué, trés bien parlé . . .

MLLE. ALARET (*turning*). Hein? (*Then continuing.*) A real actress . . . Rien à dire, quite splendid. Où est Edelgard—— (*She goes round* L. *of tables to* EDELGARD *up* C.)

MANUELA. Thank you very much, Mademoiselle.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *comes in down* R. *and goes to* MANUELA C. *and takes her hand.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*simply and sincerely*). You have a great deal of talent, my child, and a voice of which something could be made. If you worked hard you might become a fine actress, and that gives me great pleasure . . .

(MANUELA *is speechless.*)

(*Going round up* R. *and turning to the others.*) Enjoy your supper, children, and don't make too much noise.

ALL. Thank you very much.

MLLE. ALARET (*at back, waving her hand to them*). Bon appétit, mes enfants.

ALL. À vous, Mademoiselle . . .

(*The two* MISTRESSES *go out up* R.)

TREISCHKE (*going to* MANUELA). Manuela, our hero, in the centre!

(*The* GIRLS *clap.* MANUELA *runs round* L. *of tables to up* C. *They all take their seats at the tables and begin their meal. The positions are as follows:* MANUELA *is in the* C. *chair above table* C., MARGA *is on her right and* EDELGARD *on her left.* ILSE *is at the* R. *end of the table, and* TREISCHKE *at the* L. *end. On the form* L. *of table* L., *reading from up stage, are* LILLI, PAULA, MIA, *and another* GIRL. JOSÉ, *and three others seated below her, are on the form* R. *of the table.* ODA, *then* ANNELIESE *occupy the upstage places on the form* L. *of the table* R. MARIA, *with* ANNA *and two other* GIRLS *above her are on the form* R. *of the table. There is a* GIRL *on each of the chairs at the downstage end of the tables* L. *and* R. *Thus it will be seen that all chairs are occupied, and that there are four* GIRLS *on each form.*)

(MARGA *stands and pours out the punch.*)

PAULA. What's that foul-looking drink?

Anneliese. I bet it's only red ink.

Oda (*standing on the form and raising her glass*). To Manuela! our beautiful heroine—— (*Correcting herself.*) No, I mean—hero!

Manuela. Oh, beautiful—— (*She laughs deprecatingly.*)

Oda. If I say beautiful—you are beautiful! Your health! Manuela!

All. Your health, Manuela! Health, Mana! *etc.*

(*They all run up to her to clink glasses, then go back to their places and drink.*)

Marga (*pulling a long face, and putting her glass down first*). What filthy muck! What pig-wash has our precious kitchen concocted now! Really, this takes the cake!

(*The others, sipping, also pull faces and cough and splutter, then sit.* Manuela *remains standing.*)

Anneliese. Cabbage water!

José. Pig-wash it is!

Ilse. The Head's hair-oil!

Oda. Punch, did they say? Holy Moses!

Paula. I thought *my* stomach was strong—but—really!

Edelgard. One can't possibly drink it!

Lilli. One certainly can't get tight on it!

Mia. Perhaps if we drank a lot——

Oda. Who *could*?

Paula. And they call *this* a Fête-day supper. Help!

Edelgard. But, Manuela, you have emptied your glass!

Manuela (*excited*). Well, it's a drink; it does one good . . . I feel like drinking something strong—so I shut my eyes and then I don't taste it! Really, it's not too bad. (*She drains another glassful.*)

José. Good Lord! Just look at the child!

Ilse (*mimicking the* Head *again*). "Most extraordinary, Kesten! Strange how children surprise one!"

(*They all laugh.*)

Edelgard. Manuela, how *can* you drink it?

Treischke. Well, if you *really* like this stuff you can have mine—and welcome! (*She pushes her glass towards* Manuela.)

Ilse
Lilli
Others } (*together*). And mine.

(*They pass up their glasses.*)

Manuela. You are all such darlings! I don't care a hang how it tastes. It does one good. I feel terribly happy already! (*She sits on the back of her chair.*) You know, girls, school life isn't half as bad as we all make out—sometimes it's really beautiful . . .

especially—— (*She laughs, pulls herself up, and gets off the chair.*) Oh, what am I saying? Edelgard, my partner in crime! Your health! (*She drinks.*)

JOSÉ. By Jove, she's going it!

PAULA. Beats me how the stuff goes down.

TREISCHKE. It sticks in my throat . . .

ANNELIESE (*passing her glass*). Perhaps you'd like my glass too!

OTHERS (*who have not passed her their glasses before*). And mine! And mine, Manuela! And mine!

MANUELA (*laughing*). A thousand, thousand thanks! All contributions gratefully received! (*She drinks again, then puts her arm round* EDELGARD—*who draws back a little.*) Well, girls . . . I propose the health of our dear Edelgard—doesn't she look sweet to-night?

(EDELGARD *pulls* MANUELA *down into her chair.*)

ALL. Rather! Of course she looks sweet!

MARGA. But she's not such a good actress as you are—not by a long chalk.

MANUELA (*confused*). But, Marga . . .

ODA (*leaning across*). You know, don't you, Manuela, that if once you become an actress, you will be no longer fit for society——?

ILSE. Oh, Manuela doesn't give a fig for that!

MANUELA. No, I don't—for myself. But then, there's father to consider——

ODA. And, of course, you couldn't marry, either.

MANUELA (*shaking her head*). That wouldn't worry me. I shan't marry, anyway.

EDELGARD (*rather out of her depth*). But, Manuela, would you honestly like to be an actress?

MANUELA (*dreamily*). Yes, I should! It's strange—you are yourself, and not yourself. You are really another person, yet you laugh and cry like yourself.

ILSE. Well, you can laugh and cry without acting.

MANUELA. No, Ilse, never . . . enough!

ILSE. But why not?

MANUELA. Because one must never show what one feels——

ILSE. I don't get that.

MANUELA. Well, in the first place it's not well bred. Father says to me: "Never show your feelings. It's not even decent."

ODA. Is that so—well then, *you* must have indecent feelings.

MANUELA (*surprised*). I? *In*decent feelings?

MARGA (*reprovingly*). Oda, you must be mad! Don't judge others by your own standards!

ANNA. Really! What does she mean?

TREISCHKE. Keep your wool on, Marga.

JOSÉ. No . . . she's right . . . Oda shouldn't say things like that!

TREISCHKE. Girls, don't make a row!

MANUELA (*topping them*). Nobody's making a row! We're all good friends here, aren't we? And if Oda wants to know, I only understand beautiful and ugly feelings. What indecent feelings are I don't know. (*Rising.*) Your health, Oda!

ODA (*rising*). Your health, Manuela!

(*They drink each other's health.* ODA *sits again.*)

MANUELA (*getting more intoxicated*). To-night I have only wonderful, beautiful, exquisite feelings, to-day I love you all. (*She laughs.*) Yes, all of you, (*she looks round*) and you, Marga, I forgive you all the good you have done me.

(ILSE *gets up and slaps* MARGA *on the back at this. The others laugh.*)

ILSE (*raising her glass*). Your health, Prima donna. (*She drinks and makes a face.*) Ugh! Girls, let's have some music. Come on, José—you play.

ALL. Yes, yes, let's dance . . . come on . . . José.

JOSÉ. Always me! I want to dance. Oh, well, I don't mind. (*She goes up and sits at the piano.*) Well, what shall I play?

ANNA. Play something soft and dreamy—a waltz.

(JOSÉ *plays a waltz—they listen.*)

PAULA. Anneliese, you dance with Lilli, you dance so beautifully together.

(ANNELIESE *and* LILLI *dance* C., *and then round* R. *and back.* MARGA *begins to clear.* ODA *watches the couple dancing, following them round.*)

ILSE (*at the piano*). Oh, stop this rubbish—let's have something jolly——

(JOSÉ *starts a polka.*)

ODA (*pushing across to* MANUELA *up* C.). Please don't be cross with me any more.

MANUELA. Oh, to-night I'm not cross with anyone! (*Pulling her between the tables to down* C.) Come and dance.

(*They dance* C. *No sooner do they start than others come up.*)

LILLI. Let me have a turn——

(MANUELA *changes to* LILLI. *They dance.* ANNELIESE *and* ODA *polka down* R. ILSE *runs round* C., *asking everybody to dance.* MARGA *and one or two other* GIRLS *clear the tables, taking the things off down* L. *By the end of the dance nothing is left on the tables but the cloths.*)

ILSE. Dance with me——

ANNELIESE } (*together*). You can't dance—Go away.
ODA }

ILSE. Dance with me, Manuela!
MANUELA. Of course!

(*They dance. The music gets faster and faster.* ILSE *whirls* MANUELA *round.*)

(*Calling.*) Stop, stop, no more . . .

(*The music stops with a bang.* MANUELA *tumbles into a place on the form* L. *of table* R.)

Oh, I'm so giddy!

(*They all flop down exhausted. All look at her, expecting a speech.*)

ILSE (*banging a glass on the table* L. *and calling*). Speech! Speech!

(MANUELA *grasps this.*)

ALL. Speech! Speech, Manuela!
MANUELA (*rising*). Shall I give you a speech?
ALL. Yes, Mana! A speech! Fire ahead, Manuela!

(*They gather round.* ILSE *gets the chair from downstage end of table* L. *and puts it* C. *for her.*)

MANUELA (C., *arrogantly*). Very well, I will—and I can—to-day; to-day, I can do anything! (*She puts one knee up on the chair and faces down* R., *talking over the back of the chair.*) Well, then, my dear, worthy, honoured . . . gentlemen and ladies . . .

(*They laugh, not quite knowing how to take her.* ODA *is the first to perceive the truth.*)

ODA. Isn't she a scream?

MANUELA (*imitating a preacher*). On this solemn day, let us remember (*little pause, then softer*)—those we love——
ALL (*laughing and clapping*). Bravo! Bravo, Manuela!

(FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *appears from up* R. *She stops and listens unnoticed.*)

MANUELA (*beyond herself*). Girls . . . shall I tell you a secret?
ALL (*curious*). What? Tell us? What is it?
MANUELA. She gave me a present.
ALL. Who? What present?
MANUELA (*boastfully*). A chemise! And I have it on!
ODA (*down* L.). A chemise? Whose? What d'you mean?
MARGA (*down* L.). What on earth! Is it a joke? . . .
MANUELA. Fräulein von Bernburg's. I can feel it on me now! —a present from her—to me . . .

(FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *exits up* R.)

now—I know! I could only act to-night because I knew it. All

the time you were talking I knew it . . . (*She gets muddled.*) Now I really—really know it!

Edelgard (*crossing to her and sitting on chair*). But *what* do you know, Manuela?

Manuela (*getting off chair and going up to table* c.). I can't keep it to myself any longer . . . it's too wonderful . . . I am so happy, so . . . so blissfully happy . . . because now, I know for certain —*she loves me* . . .

Anna. Loves you? Who?

Manuela. Fräulein von Bernburg! loves me! (*She staggers a little, and leans on table* c.) She . . . she opened her wardrobe . . . and took out a chemise . . . one of her own! . . . and gave it me! I was to wear it and think of her. (*Softly.*) She didn't say that . . . (*Aloud.*) But she doesn't need to tell me anything. Her hand on my head tells me everything—sweet, good, dear white hand, that can hold so tenderly . . .

(*The* Girls *are puzzled and amazed. Enter* Fräulein von Kesten *and the* Head *up* r. *They stand transfixed.* Manuela *stretches out her arms.*)

(*Smiling blissfully on them all.*) Nothing can happen to me now —nothing can touch me—nothing in the whole world. . . . She loves me! I know it—I feel it—it gives me strength. . . . (*Softly.*) From now on I will be quite different, I will have only good pure thoughts . . . and I will serve her . . . life has no other meaning . . .

Head (*coming down*). Has the child gone mad?

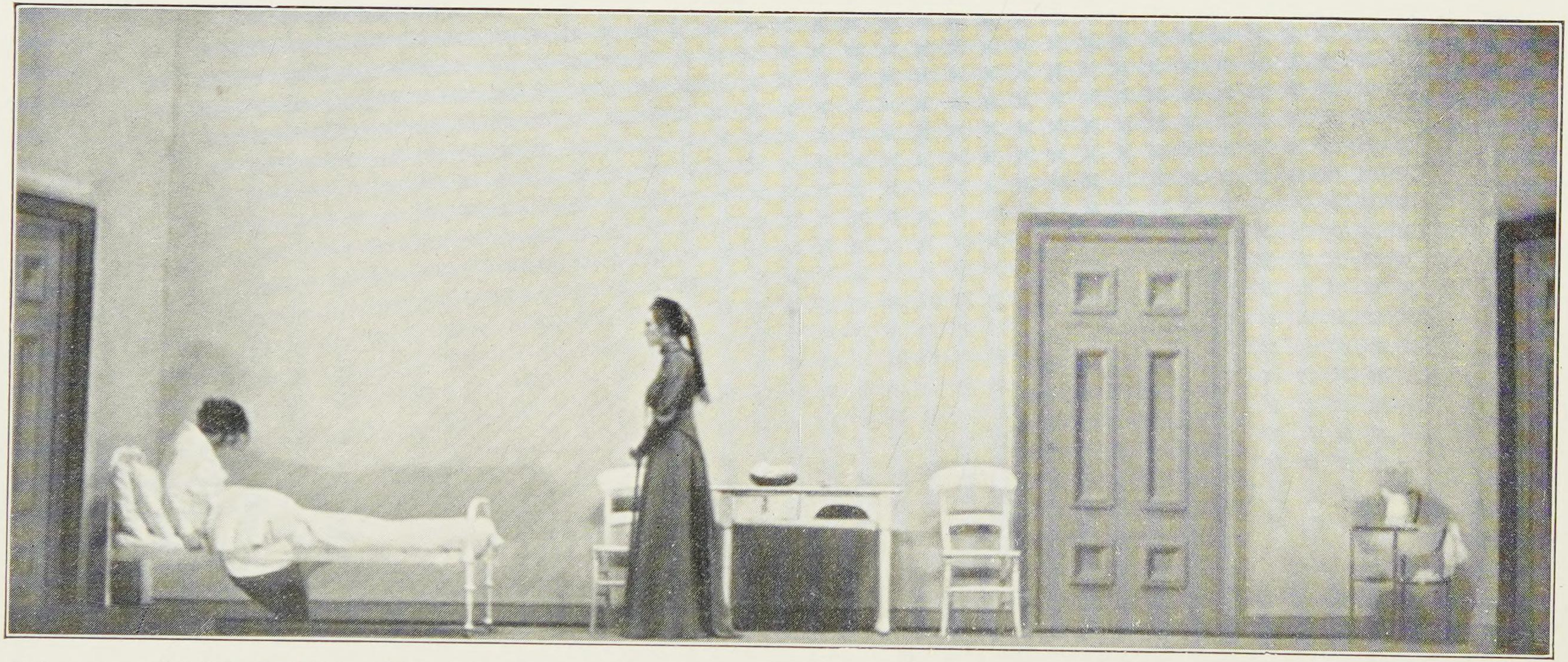
(*All the* Girls *shrink back down* l. *and down* r. Manuela *looks round, frightened at the stillness, at the staring eyes turned on her. Then she, also, sees the* Head. *She picks up her glass, raises it above her head, and shouts to them all. The* Girls *shrink back.*)

Manuela. To our beloved, glorious, wonderful Fräulein von Bernburg! (*She shouts louder to give herself courage.*) Long may she live! (*She staggers.*)

(Manuela *falls down to the floor. Gradually the* Girls *with frightened glances at the* Head, *steal away, slowly, too scared too whisper even, down* l. *and down* r.)

Head (*to* Fräulein von Kesten, *almost beside herself*). Revolting! Scandalous!

Curtain.



To face page 53—ACT III, SCENE "—*Children in Uniform*

Photograph by Pollard Crowther

ACT III

SCENE 1

SCENE.—*The Sick-room.*

Everything is clean, white and hygienic; yet the room has a bare and scanty appearance. There are doors down R. *and down* L. *and another at* L.C. *back. The bed is* R., *just above the door. A table with a chair on either side is up* C. *There is an iron washstand up* L.
(*See Photograph of Scene.*)

MANUELA *is asleep in bed when the* CURTAIN *rises. After a very short while she wakes, shakes her head slowly, then looks round and says.*

MANUELA. Ugh!

(*Enter* SISTER HANNI *down* L. *She crosses to below the head of the bed.*)

HANNI. Well, and how is the patient?

(MANUELA *opens her eyes in bewilderment; she cannot think where she is—then she says softly:*)

MANUELA. Sister Hanni?
HANNI. And how are we feeling?
MANUELA. Horribly sick.
HANNI (*with a teasing suggestion*). Would you like some breakfast?

MANUELA. Oh no—nothing to eat! But I'm terribly thirsty!
HANNI. I'll get you some water.

(*She goes to the table up* C., *pours some water from a bottle into a glass, then comes back to* MANUELA, *above bed. Meanwhile* MANUELA *lifts herself slowly, still looking round in bewilderment. She holds her head in her hands as if trying to remember what happened; but she can't.*)

There we are! (*She gives the glass to* MANUELA.)

(MANUELA *gulps it down at one draught.*)

(*Laughing*). That's better, isn't it?

MANUELA (*laughing in response*). Yes, thank you, Sister Hanni.

(HANNI *removes the glass to the table, then sits sewing* R. *of table.*)

(*Following her movement.*) Sister Hanni, I want to ask you something.

HANNI. Well?

Manuela (*with difficulty—she feels so fuddled*). I feel so frightfully funny . . . I can't think properly, and I've got a fearful headache . . . Hanni, how did I get here? I can't remember *anything* . . . What happened?

Hanni (*smiling broadly at this*). They brought you up here last night.

Manuela. Who did?

Hanni. Marga, Edelgard and Ilse.

Manuela (*astonished*). Brought me up here! But why?

Hanni. Because you were taken ill.

Manuela. Was I? I don't remember! Oh, I feel awful. What was it? (*She tries to think, then is somewhat enlightened.*) I remember, it was that horrible punch! It was frightful stuff! (*She lies back against the propped-up pillow.*)

Hanni (*laughing a little*). Yes, it must have been that!

Manuela. But what actually happened? (*Uneasily.*) Hanni, am I very ill?

Hanni (*laughing outright at this*). No, Manuela, you're not really ill at all. Don't you see, my dear, you were tight!

Manuela. Tight, Hanni!

Hanni (*laughing*). I should say so! It was like this; they brought you straight up here, in your lovely silver armour, and we laid you on the bed. You had passed out completely! Then, Kesten sent for the lady doctor.

Manuela (*impatiently*). And then?

Hanni. Well, when she came, she felt your pulse, smelt your breath, and then burst out laughing. She laughed till I thought she would choke. At last she just managed to get out "Drunk! Just very, very drunk!"

Manuela. I, drunk?

Hanni. Yes, drunk!

Manuela (*holding her head*). Oh dear! This is an awful business!

Hanni. Dr. Markkart was awfully nice. She only asked me how on earth it could have happened, but I knew nothing about it. Tell me now, Manuela, just what was this wretched stuff you drank?

Manuela. Fruit punch.

Hanni. What a thing to give you! But I suppose it had a marvellous taste?

Manuela. No, filthy!

Hanni. Then, whatever made you drink it?

Manuela. I felt that I had to drink.

Hanni. That's right, I know that feeling! I like a little drink myself sometimes! (*Remembering that* Manuela *is, after all, only a child.*) But you, Manuela, why should you feel you must drink?

(Manuela *looks down and does not answer.*)

Oh, well, it's none of my business, and I really don't want to know anything about it. What we've got to do now is to get you on to your feet again as soon as we can. There isn't much of the poison left in you now—does your head still ache?

MANUELA. Yes, and I feel so giddy.

HANNI (*laughing again*). Well, I can't do much for that complaint. Nature must run her course. But I'd like to give the cook a piece of my mind——

(*One can just hear the approaching knocking of the* HEAD'S *stick.*)

HEAD (*off up* R.). If anyone asks for me I'm in the sick-room.

HANNI (*jumping up*). My stars! (*Excitedly.*) It's the Head! She's coming!

MANUELA (*terrified*). Oh Heavens, stay with me, Hanni! (*She sits up as much as she can.*)

(*Very slowly and majestically the* HEAD *comes in at back.* HANNI *hovers at the bed uncertainly, till the* HEAD *commands:*)

HEAD. Leave us.

(HANNI *goes out down* R. *The* HEAD *stays near the door, if a glance could kill, hers would. Her voice cuts like ice.*)

Are you not ashamed?

(MANUELA *cannot look up.*)

In the whole history of this house there has never been such a scandal. (*She crosses to* L. *end of bed.*) You are the wickedest girl who has ever been received into the school. . . . If you were not too big, you should be whipped!

(MANUELA *begins to sob.*)

Look at me!

(MANUELA *does not.*)

Ah! Then you still have a little shame left. You dare not raise your eyes.

(MANUELA *has become quieter, her hands clutch the mattress, but she now looks straight at the* HEAD.)

I would not have believed that any pupil of mine could have behaved like the lowest wretch out of the streets. You boasted, you screamed, so that everyone might hear, glorying in your depravity.

(MANUELA'S *eyes widen so that the* HEAD *perceives her astonishment.*)

You have brought shame upon the house. How can her Imperial Highness send the Princess here when the girls drink, and make vulgar speeches? Wickedness like yours is accursed . . . it must be rooted out!

(MANUELA *trembles uncontrollably. With an effort the* HEAD *regains her poise, her voice grows quiet.*)

You will know later what your punishment will be. How you have sinned against Fräulein von Bernburg you yourself must know. She will never forgive you. Now think over your sin and repent.

(*The* HEAD *turns and goes out at back.* MANUELA *trembles as though in a frenzy, tries to keep back her sobs, but does not succeed. Suddenly she turns to face down stage, throws back her bed-clothes and gives a shriek like an animal in pain.* HANNI *rushes in from down* R. *and goes and sits on the downstage edge of the bed.*)

HANNI. Darling. (*She takes* MANUELA *into her arms.*) Don't, don't, child; for Heaven's sake, be quiet! . . . don't take it so to heart. Be quiet, my dear. You mustn't excite yourself like this, it won't do any good. Good Heavens, what am I to do?

MANUELA. Hanni, Hanni, help me . . . I don't understand. What is it that I have done? What happened? (*She holds her head.*) I have forgotten everything. . . . Why is the Head so angry? Why does she say such terrible things? . . . What have I done to Fräulein von Bernburg? . . . I love her so. I would do nothing, nothing in the world to distress her.

HANNI. Be quiet, Manuela, somebody's coming. (*She tucks* MANUELA *into bed again, then goes round and stands above it.*)

(MANUELA *lies face downwards in bed.* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *comes in at back.* MANUELA *turns and faces her before she speaks.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. This is a nice state of affairs! You could have prevented it all if you had behaved yourself decently. Sister Hanni, I have to tell you from the Head that, whatever happens, Manuela must be well this afternoon. Her Highness has announced her intention to visit the school, and is certain to ask after Manuela. The girl must be up to meet her.

HANNI. I shall do my best, Fräulein von Kesten.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. These are orders, Sister Hanni . . . (*To* MANUELA.) To you I shall not speak again, you will know your punishment later, and I do not need to tell you how shameful your behaviour has been.

(FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *goes out at back.* MANUELA *is quieter.*)

MANUELA (*throwing her arms round* HANNI). You see, Hanni, I'm getting up . . . then I shall see her . . . and then everything will be all right. I shall beg her to forgive me for having drunk so much . . . she must be kind. I have done nothing wicked, have I, Hanni? She can't be angry, she has no reason to be.

(MARTHA, *the sewing woman, comes in down* L., *carrying a white dress, and stockings and shoes. She gives a sly glance at* MANUELA. HANNI *gets a brush from* C. *table and brushes* MANUELA'S *hair.*)

MARTHA (C., *to* MANUELA). Well, little lady, are you better? Not feeling too grand, eh? . . . Lord, how we've laughed downstairs over this little—sickness . . . of yours . . . (*This is a little malicious.*) Well, never mind, it happens in the best families . . .

HANNI. That's enough, Martha. What do you want?

MARTHA (*to* HANNI). This is the white dress for this afternoon, and the young lady's shoes. Shall I put the dress on the chair?

(*She puts the stockings on the end of the bed, and the shoes on the floor. Then she fetches the chair* R. *of the table and brings it down* C. *slightly. She hangs the dress neatly over the back of the chair.*)

HANNI. Please, Martha. Now you can go.

MARTHA. All in good time . . . I know . . . Servants are always in the way, whenever there's something up! (*She sits on the chair, well forward so as not to crush the dress.*) But, dearie me, such a fuss about a drop of drink and a careless tongue . . . they're slips as old as the hills.

HANNI. Run along, Martha. (*She helps* MANUELA *to put on her stockings.*)

MARTHA. All right, all right, I know! You needn't rush me! And now Her Highness is coming! So we have to get cut the holiday clothes! Come sun, come rain, Her Royal Highness must be met with a smile. (*She shrugs.*) Lord, yes! Her Royal Highness here, Her Royal Highness there, but never the smell of a tip! No, nothing like that (*she rises*), no one gets anything out of it except Her Royal Highness. (*She starts to go.*) And all to make Her Royal Highness feel that she is a Royal Highness.

(*She goes out down* L.)

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2

SCENE.—*The Reception Hall.*

The chest and the prie-Dieu have been removed. FRAU LEHMANN, *in her best black silk and little cap, and* JOHANNA *are laying down a red strip of carpet. This stretches from off up* R., *down through the* C. *arch, and from here runs parallel to an imaginary line drawn from the pillar up* L.C. *to the down* L. *corner of the stage, i.e. the line the* GIRLS *take up later on in the Scene.* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *enters hurriedly from down* R., *busy and fussed.* JOHANNA *gets her mop, which is leaning against the wall just above the door down* L., *and mops across the front of the stage.*

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (R.C.). Frau Lehmann!

FRAU LEHMANN (C.). Yes, madam ?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Has the red carpet been laid right down to the entrance ?

FRAU LEHMANN. It has, madam.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. And are all three drive entrances open ?

FRAU LEHMANN. Since three o'clock, madam.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. And have all the main steps been washed ?

(JOHANNA *accidentally brushes into* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN'S *feet.*)

FRAU LEHMANN. But of course, madam !

(JOHANNA *makes her way out down* L.)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*crossing to* C.). Well, go down now, and as soon as you catch sight of the car, ring up. Her Royal Highness has announced her arrival for three-thirty, and her Royal Highness is always punctual . . .

(FRAU LEHMANN *hurries out up* R. FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *is going towards up* L., *when* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *comes in from up* L. *pulling on her gloves.* MLLE. ALARET *follows her at a distance, and during the following stands down* R.)

(*Turning.*) Ah, Fräulein von Bernburg, I have a message for you from the Head.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (R. *of* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN). Has she come to any decision about Manuela ?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*stiffly*). My message concerns Manuela. The Head asks you to ignore her completely. The Head wishes to tell the girl her intentions regarding her future herself. She wishes no other person to address Manuela.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Then, does that mean that her punishment is complete isolation ?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Yes ! The other children must run no further risk of contamination.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I see. And even private religious instruction ?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*putting on her gloves*). Certainly, with the chaplain ; but of course, one other trustworthy girl will act as chaperon. Excuse me, I have all the arrangements to make for the reception.

(*She goes out up* R.)

(MLLE. ALARET *comes up to* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG C.)

MLLE. ALARET. Ma chère. Permettez-moi . . . I advise you to be more careful in your defence of this child.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Oh, no good advice, if you please. (*She moves down* L.C., *her back to* MLLE. ALARET.) And I'm tired of

being careful. With it all, what good do I do here ? I'm beginning to doubt.

MLLE. ALARET (*following her and talking over* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *shoulder*). But, ma chère, you are not going to risk your own interests for the sake of this child—you risk very much . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I can't consider that now.

MLLE. ALARET. But do not tell me you would go so far as to leave on account of Manuela ?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I might.

MLLE. ALARET. Mais pourquoi, ma chère, pourquoi ? What for ?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Because I cannot bear to see her treated unjustly. Because I love her as if she were my own child.

(*She goes off down* L. MLLE. ALARET *shrugs her shoulders.* ILSE, MARGA *and a few of the other* GIRLS *drift in from up* R. *and up* L. *They curtsy to her as she goes off up* R. ILSE *pulls* MARGA *to front of pillar* R.C.)

ILSE. Marga, I want to ask you something.

MARGA. Well ?

ILSE (*lowering her voice*). What's up with Manuela ? Is she coming down ?

MARGA. Don't ask me.

ILSE. D'you know what they are going to do to her ?

MARGA. No idea . . . Dock her uniform, I suppose . . . no badge, and all that. She may try and hop it . . .

ILSE. Not a chance. She'd only have the whole pack after her. No hope at all, poor devil. I'm awfully sorry for her.

MARGA. And d'you think I'm not ? Lord ! If I'd had the slightest inkling the kid was getting blotto—I'd have drunk all that foul stuff myself.

ILSE (*walking down stage and round* L.). So would I ! We all would ! And, you know, the Bernburg was quite knocked up. Said good night to no one—except from her door, and poor Edelgard cried all night.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*off stage up* R.). Line up ! Line up ! Line up !

(*She comes in and rings the bell. The* GIRLS, *in their white dresses and gloves, form their columns* L. *The front rank consists of* ANNELIESE, *against the pillar* L.C., *then* TREISCHKE, LILLI, ILSE, MARGA, EDELGARD, ODA, *and* MIA ; *the latter is down* L. *The others line up behind and also on the far side of the pillar* L.C., *according to the number of* GIRLS.)

(*Walking down the line.*) Marga, why can't you stand properly. Edelgard, forward one pace—no, not so much—Ilse, don't fidget. Her Royal Highness may be here at any minute.

(*She goes out up* L., *pushing* ANNELIESE *out of the way.*)

Ilse (*after a long pause—during which they stand stiffly at attention*). Marga, do you think our High and Mighty one will bring anything with her?

Marga. Something to eat, you mean?

Ilse. What else should I mean?

Marga (*considering*). I don't think so. It wouldn't be like her.

Ilse. Yes, but the last time there was a cake.

Marga. Idiot, that was from the Prince. He has more understanding.

Ilse (*sighing*). Yes, men have—about food. Then, as far as I'm concerned—this whole affair's a wash-out.

(*There is another pause.*)

Marga. How much longer have we got to stand here? We always have to line up too soon. The last time three fainted . . .

(*Several* Girls *squat on their heels.*)

Anneliese. It's just like this in the army. Whenever there's an inspection at eleven, father has to get up at five. Do you think we could escape?

Marga. Nothing doing. I wish I could take my shoes off! They're much too tight. They're giving me hell!

Oda (*looking at them*). Blame the foot, my love, not the shoe.

Marga. Are you trying to be insulting?

(Fräulein von Kesten *returns from up* L. *They all stand up straight.*)

Fräulein von Kesten. Silence in the ranks! (*Coming forward.*) Before the Grand Duchess arrives I have an important announcement to make.

(*The* Girls *look apprehensive.*)

A serious and extreme case of unbalanced behaviour has occurred in our midst—a case entirely without precedent. The Headmistress desires to spare you all possible contact with the girl in question, but on account of the visit of her Royal Highness, a special exception must be made. Manuela von Meinhardis is now on her way down from the sick-room. The Headmistress relies upon your good feeling and tact, but has issued a strict order that you are to leave her entirely alone, and under no circumstances are you to speak to her. Any girl who disregards this strict injunction lays herself open to severe punishment. . . . Stand to attention!

(*She goes out up* R. *At once the* Girls *begin to talk excitedly.*)

Treischke. Of all the mean things! I shall speak to Manuela as soon as I see her.

Lilli. Don't be a fool. . . . Manuela would only get the blame.

Treischke (*crossing down to* Ilse). But to treat her like this!

It's awful! Such a thing's never happened here—and it can't possibly last!

ILSE. I shall tell the Grand Duchess.

ODA. Yes—do——

JOSÉ (*who is at the far side of the pillar*). The govs! Look out——

(*They line up again quickly.* MISS GIBSON, FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER *and* FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS *enter from up* L., *and cross* R. MLLE. ALARET *joins them from up* R. *They line up:* MISS GIBSON *just above the door down* R., MLLE. ALARET *above her, then* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER, *then* FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS. FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *comes last from down* L., *making her way through the* GIRLS *between* EDELGARD *and* ODA. *She takes her place at the upstage end of the* MISTRESSES, *above* FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS. *Then, slowly, and amidst a tense silence,* MANUELA, *white as death, comes in from up* L. *She can hardly walk. All eyes are turned on her, but of course no one speaks. Hesitatingly she goes to her place between* EDELGARD *and* ODA, *down* L. *A bell rings, and all start to even stricter attention. There is a sound of running footsteps, and then* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *re-enters from up* R., *excited and breathless.*)

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*above* C. *arch*). Her Royal Highness!

(*She goes out again up* R. *There is a short pause, then the* GRAND DUCHESS *enters; fresh-faced, white hair, and wearing a grey summer dress and hat. She is followed by* COUNTESS KERNITZ, *a haggard attendant, the* HEAD *and* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. *The* MISTRESSES *bow. They go down the ranks like generals, the* GIRLS *curtsying to the ground in succession.*)

GRAND DUCHESS (*as she goes down*). Good afternoon—Good afternoon——

(*As she gets to* ILSE *the latter takes a half-step forward, intending to tell the* GRAND DUCHESS *all about* MANUELA, *but she loses courage, and after an almost imperceptible hesitation, curtsies to the ground like the others. The* GRAND DUCHESS *appears hardly to notice it as she continues on her way to the end of the line. Here she turns and addresses the* HEAD.)

Well, Head, are we our full number?

HEAD (*who lurks behind the* GRAND DUCHESS, L. *of her*). Only one girl is missing, your Royal Highness, and that is due to unavoidable family affairs.

GRAND DUCHESS. And all are well?

HEAD. Certainly, your Highness.

GRAND DUCHESS. No infectious illness? You know how nervous I am of such complaints?

HEAD. None at all, your Highness. This year the health record is particularly good. (*Turning and moving* C.) May I present our new English Mistress, Miss Gibson, to your Royal Highness?

(*The* Grand Duchess *crosses to* Miss Gibson r. *The* Head *follows. The* Grand Duchess *holds out her hand:* Miss Gibson *kisses it and makes a clumsy curtsy.* Countess Kernitz *and* Fräulein von Kesten *remain* c.)

Grand Duchess. I hope you will be happy here.
Miss Gibson. Oah, thank you very much, your Royal Highness.
Grand Duchess (*passing on*). Ah, mademoiselle, je vous félicite sur le progrès que vous avez fait faire à ma fille, depuis que vous avez entrepris ses études françaises. Je vous remercie.

Mlle. Alaret (*curtsying*). Oh, trop d'honneur, your Royal Highness.

Grand Duchess (*passing on*). Good day, Fräulein von Gaerschner! (*She stretches out her hand.*) And you, Fräulein von Atams, is the housekeeping going quite well? (*She doesn't wait to hear.*) Good . . . I am very glad. And Fräulein von Bernburg, how are you?

Fräulein von Bernburg (*curtsying*). Very well, thank you, your Royal Highness.

(*The* Grand Duchess *turns away to* c., *and* Countess Kernitz *comes to her side and whispers something on her* r. *The* Head *stands* l. *of the* Grand Duchess *and a little above her,* Fräulein von Kesten l. *and a little above the* Head.)

Grand Duchess. Yes, yes, my dear Kernitz . . . no, no, I had not forgotten. My dear Head, I should so like a word with the little Beckendorf . . . I know her mother . . .

(Anneliese *is fetched by* Fräulein von Kesten.)

So you are the little Beckendorf?—and how do you like being here? (*She doesn't wait for an answer.*) . . . Of course, very much . . .

(Anneliese *is hurried away by* Fräulein von Kesten. *She goes back to her place.*)

. . . Of course . . . it's really an inspiring sight to see so many happy children. Now let me see, there was another, Kernitz? . . .

(Countess Kernitz *whispers again.*)

Oh, yes, yes, yes . . . the little Meinhardis.

(Fräulein von Kesten *beckons, and* Manuela *comes forward. She makes her curtsy with difficulty and kisses the outstretched hand.*)

Yes, yes, you are very like your father, a charming man your father, . . . a very popular man. I also knew your mother—she was a very devout woman. I hope you will try hard to be like her. But you look pale, extremely pale.

(Fräulein von Kesten *motions her to go back to her place.*)

(*Anxiously to the* Head.) But not ill, my dear Head?

HEAD. No, Your Highness.

(*The* GRAND DUCHESS *follows* MANUELA *to her place* L.)

GRAND DUCHESS. A charming child, most charming and most sympathetic. She will bring honour to the school. . . . I can see that at a glance. . . . and from such distinguished parents . . . but pale . . . (*She turns away.*)

HEAD (*who has also gone* L.). Manuela has been somewhat indisposed.

GRAND DUCHESS. But nothing infectious, my dear Head? When one has so many young children oneself, one naturally feels anxious.

HEAD (*grimly*). No, certainly nothing infectious.

GRAND DUCHESS (C.). I should so like a word with you on the subject of the crèche.

HEAD. Certainly, your Royal Highness. If you would be so good as to come to my room.

(*The* HEAD *crosses to down* R. *and holds the door open.*)

GRAND DUCHESS. Good-bye, children—

(*The* GIRLS *curtsy to the ground. The* MISTRESSES *bow.*)

—good-bye, I shall send my daughter to play with you to-morrow.

(*She goes out down* R. *with the* HEAD. COUNTESS KERNITZ *beckons* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *to her*, C.)

COUNTESS KERNITZ. Fräulein von Kesten, would you see that when the Princess comes to-morrow, she wins in all the games? The last time, one of your girls permitted herself to run faster than her Royal Highness; that of course is impossible, you understand.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Of course, Countess, of course, naturally! I will instruct the girls again . . .

COUNTESS KERNITZ. I thank you, Fräulein von Kesten, one can always rely upon you. (*To the other* MISTRESSES.) Thank you, ladies.

(*The* MISTRESSES *bow.*)

(*Looking round.*) You can send the children away now.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Dismiss, children.

(*The* GIRLS *curtsy and break line.*)

COUNTESS KERNITZ. Good-bye, children——

(*The* GIRLS *just bob to her.*)

(*To* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN.) And if you will allow me, I will accompany you up in your room while her Royal Highness takes her rest.

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*leading the way up* R.). This way, Countess.

(*They exit up* R.)

(*The* MISTRESSES *follow almost immediately:* MISS GIBSON, MLLE. ALARET *and* FRÄULEIN VON GAERSCHNER *up* L., FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *up* R. FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS *stands at back hurrying the* GIRLS *on. They move off up* L. *and up* R. *as slowly as they dare. They look at* MANUELA, *but dare not speak to her.*)

ODA (*to* ILSE *as they go off up* R.). Well, why didn't you say something?

ILSE. I was brought up a lady.

ODA. You're a coward.

FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS. Ilse! Oda!

(*She follows them off up* R.)

(MANUELA *has followed the other* GIRLS *out, but now runs back from up* R. *to hide behind the pillar, up* L.C., *in order to waylay* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. FRÄULEIN VON ATAMS *crosses the back of the stage from up* R. *to up* L.—*while* MANUELA *hides behind the pillar. Then* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *comes quietly in from up* R. MANUELA *waylays her* C.)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*simulating displeasure*). What do you want? You can go now.

MANUELA. I . . . must . . . (*She can't say any more, she drops to her knees.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. No more play-acting, please. We have had quite enough of that. (*But she cannot bear to see the misery on* MANUELA'S *face.*) Well, what is it?

MANUELA (*getting it out only with difficulty*). I must speak to you.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. No, I don't want to hear anything from you.

(MANUELA *throws her arms round her knees.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *cannot bear this. She has to relent, so she says quite softly:*)

Go upstairs to my room and wait for me there.

MANUELA (*almost inaudibly*). Thank you—thank you so much.

(*She goes out up* L. FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *goes slowly out down* L.)

CURTAIN.

Scene 3

Scene.—Fräulein von Bernburg's *Room.*

The light is out and the scene is dark.
When the Curtain *rises we can just see* Manuela *sitting on the settee waiting for* Fräulein von Bernburg. *Almost immediately* Edelgard *appears in the corridor from down* L. *She does not dare to enter the room, and hovers about the door. Suddenly* Fräulein von Kesten *appears down* L.

Fräulein von Kesten (*to* Edelgard). Edelgard! What are you doing here?

Edelgard (*guiltily*). I? Oh, nothing! (*She looks down ashamed.*)

Fräulein von Kesten. Come here.

(Edelgard *goes to her.*)

You can't deceive me. I know what you are waiting for. You hope to see Manuela. Is that true?

Edelgard (*unwillingly*). Yes, Fräulein von Kesten.

Fräulein von Kesten (*a little appeased*). So, you see, lying is useless.

Edelgard. But——

Fräulein von Kesten. You must have been extremely anxious to speak to Manuela, since you disregard the Headmistress's orders? (*Watching her hard.*) Perhaps she has got you up here to smuggle for her? Have you a letter?

Edelgard. No, Fräulein von Kesten, Manuela does not know I am here.

Fräulein von Kesten. You are very zealous in defending your *friend.* (*Changing her tone.*) Let me tell you something, Edelgard. Manuela is a lost girl.

(Edelgard *makes a movement of protest.*)

Edelgard (*courageously*). But Manuela is not bad, Fräulein von Kesten——

Fräulein von Kesten. No . . . no—not in the usual sense. I told you you could not understand. Manuela is—well—to put it mildly . . . morbid.

Edelgard. Morbid?

Fräulein von Kesten. Yes. But now forget it. Run down and join the others.

Edelgard (*her last effort*). May I not speak to her just for one moment?

Fräulein von Kesten. Certainly not! Obey me at once, if you please.

Edelgard (*regretfully going*). Yes, Fräulein von Kesten.

(FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN *watches her go off down* L., *then follows her. The corridor is empty for a moment, and then* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *enters hurriedly from down* L. *and goes through into her room.* MANUELA *jumps up from the settee into which she had sunk, feeling too weak to wait standing.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *crosses to the table and switches on the lamp.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*above the table, sharply*). Well, you had something to say to me?

MANUELA (*whispering*). Yes——

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. What is it?

MANUELA (*in agony*). I want to beg . . . your forgiveness for the wrong I did you yesterday—— (*She begins to sob, without crying.*) . . . I . . . I shall try to atone with . . . with fasting and mortification, so as to be worthy of your love again . . . I shall beg that of God.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *does not look at her. The effort is too much;* MANUELA *falls, half swooning, on to the settee.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *rushes to pick her up, then sits on the settee, above her.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*trying to sooth her*). Manuela! For Heaven's sake, child!

(MANUELA *opens her eyes; she gives a great sob, which she controls while* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *speaks.*)

Quiet, Manuela. This will never do . . . you must not cry like that . . . you must be brave. . . . Come, come that's enough. (*She rises and stands over* MANUELA, *her hands on* MANUELA'S *shoulders.*)

(MANUELA *grows calmer;* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *hands have had a soothing influence. Once more she sobs heartbreakingly.*)

Now, you've got to be a sensible girl, and show me how brave you can be. You will need all your courage . . . (*Crossing* L.) You realize what you have done?

(MANUELA *nods sadly; but, of course, she doesn't.*)

You are quite clear as to what you did to me?

(MANUELA *lowers her head.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *moves up to above the table.*)

Well, we needn't talk about that.

(MANUELA *raises her eyes and looks fixedly at* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG.)

You know, of course, that you will be punished? And your punishment has been decided.

(MANUELA *leans forward at this.*)

Until further notice you are to undergo solitary confinement.

(MANUELA *jumps up.*)

No, not like a prison. You will live in the isolation room.

MANUELA (*growing beside herself*). Away from you? I am not to sleep in your dormitory any more!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Manuela, be quiet, and listen.

(MANUELA *sits on the settee again.*)

You will not be really alone. There will be—someone—with you . . .

MANUELA. Someone with me? . . . (*Understanding, and growing hysterical.*) Someone to watch me, you mean? . . . to guess my thoughts, to spy on me day and night . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*crossing down to her a little*). No, Manuela, a friend. Don't upset yourself so. (*Quiet and friendly.*) Nothing has been settled yet. You will have your lessons with the other girls. But you must not speak to them.

(MANUELA *shrugs her shoulders, as though this part of it meant nothing to her.*)

You will take your meals alone. And during recreation time and walks you will have punishment lessons, and prayers to learn by heart. (*She checks a sign of compassion.*) So you see, you will have much to do, so the time won't really seem long. And the Chaplain will often come to see you.

(MANUELA *makes an impatient movement.*)

Manuela, don't be headstrong. They are dealing very lightly with you. At first you were going to be expelled. But after a great deal of consideration the Head has now decided against it. So, you see, mercy is tempered with justice. (*She sits above table.*)

(MANUELA *has not heard all this properly, as a new and terrible thought has occurred. She speaks brokenly, softly, but impressively.*)

MANUELA (*rising*). Fräulein von Bernburg.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*noticing her terribly strained expression with half-concealed anxiety*). Yes?

MANUELA. Shall I . . . (*She stammers.*) Will you . . . shall I be allowed to come and see you? (*She waits as if for a death sentence.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*shaking her head*). No, Manuela.

MANUELA. Not even for religious instruction?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. No, you will have that privately with the Chaplain.

MANUELA. But—you will come to me sometimes? Won't you?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. No, Manuela, I can't do that. (*As*

if excusing herself as she sees the child's terribly beseeching expression.) It is better for you if I don't.

MANUELA (*suddenly realizing it fully*). I'm never . . . to see you again.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*seeing danger in this*). Come, Manuela, don't exaggerate. . . . Never is a long time! . . . Not just at first.

(MANUELA *looks at her, distrustfully; suddenly, her strength comes back. She speaks loudly and clearly.*)

MANUELA. That's not true, I can see it's not true! You are saying that just to comfort me. (*Moving up to the bookcase.*) They want to part me from you, to part you from me for ever. Yes! That's the punishment they have planned. Banishment would be a mercy compared to this.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*trying to check her*). Manuela!

(*But she cannot restrain her. Great strength sustains her small body, and her indictment rings loudly through the room.*)

MANUELA. They want to kill me slowly . . . inch by inch . . . They want to tear me away from you because they know that then I shall bleed to death! (*Moving down* R. *again.*) And that's what you call mercy!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*rising*). Manuela, I may not listen to this!

MANUELA. You may not—but you know that I cannot live and endure such a punishment!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*taking hold of her, making a last great effort to say what she "ought" to say*). But, Manuela, you must not let your imagination run away with you. Do not think such things, much less say them.

MANUELA (*falling on her knees*). Fräulein von Bernburg, dear beloved, good, beautiful Fräulein von Bernburg, have pity! Tell me, quite softly. Say: "I will come to you," then I can bear anything, I will go away quite quietly, I will do everything they tell me, I will be good, patient and obedient—but say it!

(*There is no answer.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *is fighting with herself.*)

(*Quite quietly and firmly.*) Please—I beg of you, I implore you! Don't send me away from you . . . don't forsake me.

(*There is a pause.*)

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*at last*). I cannot, I may not, Manuela.

MANUELA (*quietly*). You must.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*desperate in her denial*). You don't understand, Manuela. I cannot! (*More slowly.*) I shall never see you again!

(MANUELA *loosens her hold of* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *knees and*

sinks on the floor. FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *crosses to above table.*)

I do not wish to see you again! That is the only way to bring you to your senses. For you must come to your senses. By some means, no matter how strong, you must be healed.

MANUELA. Healed? From what?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*painfully*). You must not love me so much. It is wrong, it is harmful—it is a sin.

MANUELA (*rising, dazed*). I must not love you so much?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. No, Manuela, you must not.

MANUELA. *You* say that?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I say it, Manuela, and I mean it. Believe me it is better so. It is better for you. I am doing this for you.

(MANUELA *is broken. Her mind is now made up.*)

MANUELA (*to herself*). I may not see you again. It is a sin to love you so much.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. You must go now. (*After a long pause.*) Please obey me, Manuela.

MANUELA (*going* L.). Yes, I will obey you . . . I must go now. There is nothing left but to obey you. . . . (*At the door she turns.*) Good-bye, dear Fräulein von Bernburg.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *does not look up.* MANUELA *goes out into the corridor.* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *struggles with herself for a moment, then feels she must call the child back. She jumps to her feet to do this, and cries "* Manuela *" as she opens the door: but at this moment the knocking of the* HEAD'S *stick can be heard approaching, and then the* HEAD *appears in the corridor, walking rapidly towards* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *room.* MANUELA *makes a mechanical ghost-like curtsy and wanders to the window-seat . . . she stands there, looking out. The* HEAD *ignores her and goes straight into the room.* MANUELA *drifts out of sight down* L., *murmuring "The Lord's Prayer."*)

HEAD (*shutting the door behind her*). Fräulein von Bernburg, I have come for your explanation.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Certainly, Head, won't you sit down?

(*The* HEAD *crosses* R. *and sits on the settee.*)

HEAD. Now, please, give me your reasons for speaking to Manuela against my instructions?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I thought it better to tell the child about her punishment myself. She was in such a pitiful state.

HEAD. But I told you not to see her again.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. I felt justified in disregarding your

orders, but everything I said to her was in strict accordance with your own ideas.

Head. It was my duty to prevent any further contact between you.

Fräulein von Bernburg. And for duty's sake, and for the sake of the school, (*sitting above table*) and because I thought it was best for Manuela I have just put an end to that contact.

Head (*relaxing a little*). That may pass then. But another time, please, carry out my wishes more completely. Do not think I am dissatisfied with you. You have a great deal of influence over the girls, and they prefer you to any other mistress——

Fräulein von Bernburg. It's kind of you to say so——

Head. I am merely stating a fact. And against that I was about to make another observation when you interrupted me——

Fräulein von Bernburg. I beg your pardon.

Head. It is this. In a community like ours, absolute unity and equality are essential. (*She pauses, and looks hard at* Fräulein von Bernburg.)

Fräulein von Bernburg. You mean by that?

Head. That one child should not be more favoured than the rest. And that no mistress should take precedence over another.

Fräulein von Bernburg. But I do my duty here. I keep strictly to all your rules. Is that not enough?

Head (*glad to pounce on this*). May I ask if it is part of the rules for a mistress to give her chemise to a girl?

Fräulein von Bernburg. With my chemises I do as I please.

Head (*annoyed*). Not at all. If a girl brings inadequate underclothing it is your duty to write to the girl's mother and tell her.

Fräulein von Bernburg. In this case the child had no mother.

Head (*growing angry*). Then to her aunt, or whoever it is. That is beside the point. What matters is that from now on, not only Manuela, but all the children must be treated with far greater severity.

(Fräulein von Bernburg *rises quickly and puts her chair under the table. There is a pause.*)

Fräulein von Bernburg. Head, may I say something?

Head. Certainly.

Fräulein von Bernburg. Forgive me if I speak quite freely, but I cannot see this as you see it. If you will allow me to say so, I understand not only Manuela, but all the girls better than you do.

Head (*brushing this aside, as of no importance*). Very possibly, what of it?

Fräulein von Bernburg. I am much nearer to the girls than you are. I love them. I cannot think of them just in the mass. To me they are individuals.

Head (*sarcastically*). Oh, so then, in your opinion, we should modify our rules for each child—perhaps, even change them?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*quietly*). Yes, that is what I think.

HEAD (*rising and going up* R.). Then, Fräulein von Bernburg, you entirely misunderstand our purpose. Such ridiculous treatment as you suggest—would destroy all we stand for. Have you forgotten the great military tradition on which this institution was founded ?

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Of course not. (*She crosses to down* L. *corner of table, her back to the* HEAD.)

HEAD. In this school, tradition is more sacred than life. The revolution, thank God, has passed us by. It has left no trace. Here, Fräulein von Bernburg, we remain true to the ideals that made Prussia great and will make her great again. (*Moving down* R. *again.*) Here it is our sacred duty to rear Spartan women, not weaklings.

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Excuse me, Head, but the spirit of Sparta was different. In Sparta the boys and girls competed together naked !

HEAD. This is a Christian community.

(*There is a pause. The* HEAD *walks up and down.*)

Fräulein von Bernburg, you wilfully misunderstand me ! Here, we also have our heroic traditions. Parents send us their girls to be taught discipline, order, self-control, and obedience. Those who have not learned to obey can never command. If one should assert herself at the community's expense she must be crushed—rooted out——

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. But this is constraint, not self-control ; this is not education, it is suppression !

HEAD. Fräulein von Bernburg, I take back my words ! I was wrong when I praised your influence over the girls. I see now, it is dangerous, subversive ! (*Banging her stick on the floor.*) As long as I rule over this house I will crush out such revolutionary sentiments. (*Crossing down* R.) You go too far. You endanger your position here——

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*crossing to* HEAD). I am not thinking of my position. But of other more important matters. You cannot subjugate me in that way ; try that on those whose spirit is already broken. I teach here because I love my work, and because I love the children. The children need someone to love them, someone whom they can trust, and look up to, someone to guide them ; obedience and fear are not enough !

HEAD. Pride, conceit, arrogance ! (*She moves above table to up* L.). And where does it lead ? Church, kitchen, children ! the saying of our Imperial house—teach that, and follow it !

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*turning up to her*). I will not endure

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HEAD (*crossing down* L., *to face her*). *You* can no longer endure !

—Insubordination, rebellion! From you! Think of your forefathers who served Prussian Kings!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. The free lords of Bernburg were leaders, not servants! Here—you train women for sergeants, not mothers of generals! Here no leader could rise, no Joan of Arc in her shining armour——

HEAD. Do not remind me of that horrible sight. (*She impatiently moves upstage.*) The memory of last night's revolting incident will never leave me as long as I live. When that depraved girl cried out her sin and perversity . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*turning and leaning over* R. *end of table*). She cried out her longing! Her longing for warmth and affection! She has not yet become crushed and stupid. Sin! Why, she does not know its meaning! When a feeling is strong enough it moves the world! Now, before I leave here, I will tell you the whole truth, the truth that till now I have hid even from myself! This house is a rat-trap. It is a house of death. You kill the soul, the spirit! This galvanized suppression is spiritual death. Only women can do such terrible things to women!

(*Footsteps approach.* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN, *white as death, rushes in from down* L., *crosses the corridor and flings open the door of* FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG'S *room.*)

HEAD (*venting her rage on her*). What does this mean? How dare you burst in!

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN (*leaning on* L. *end of table*). I have some terrible news . . .

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG (*in an agony of apprehension*). Manuela?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Manuela has thrown herself out of the window.

HEAD. What!

FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG. Dead?

FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN. Dead.

(FRÄULEIN VON BERNBURG *rushes from the room and out down* L. *with one cry of* "Manuela.")

(*The* HEAD *crosses slowly down* R. *and stands as if struck.*)

HEAD (*to herself*). What shall I tell the Grand Duchess? (*To* FRÄULEIN VON KESTEN.) We shall tell her there has been an accident.

(*She pulls herself together and begins to go.*)

CURTAIN.

FURNITURE AND PROPERTY PLOT

ACT I

Scene 1

On Stage.—Oak chest C.
Prie-Dieu L.
Grandfather clock R.
Bell fixed at L. side of pillar L.C.

Off Stage L.—Visiting-card for Frau Lehmann.
Handbag with keys, chocolate and purse, for Manuela.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Loud bell off L. Twice.

Scene 2

On Stage.—Treadle sewing-machine C. *On it:* Cardboard box with badges in it, material, needles, etc.
Small table with drawer, R. of machine. *In drawer:* Brush and comb, hairpins, rubber bands.
Oil lamp on table.
Clothes hamper R.C.
3 stands with pegs—covered with sheets, one L., one L.C., and another R.
Manuela's uniform and apron on stand L.C.

Off Stage L.—Nil.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Nil.

Scene 3

On Stage.—Same as Scene 1 *except:* Pile of exercise-books for Miss Gibson, sewing for Mlle. Alaret, knitting for Fräulein von Atams, book for Fräulein von Gaerschner, note for José.

Off Stage L.—Note for Mia.
Exercise-books and pencil for Fräulein von Bernburg.

Off Stage R.—Notebook and pencil for Fräulein von Bernburg.
Bible for Fräulein von Kesten.

Noise Effects.—Nil.

SCENE 4

On Stage.—8 beds.
Postcard photographs under ODA'S pillow, bed centre R.

Off Stage L.—Sponge-bags, nightgowns, brushes and combs, for GIRLS.
Chocolate, orange, sausage, etc., for TREISCHKE.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Nil.

ACT II

SCENE 1

On Stage.—6 double desks.
Piano and stool against the wall L.
2 large maps on back wall.
2 pictures, Kaiser and Kaiserine, on wall L. and R.
Sewing-basket, material and needle for EDELGARD, on C. desk.
Music on piano.
2 copies of "Zaire" by Voltaire, for EDELGARD and MANUELA.
Letter for MANUELA in book.
Letter for EDELGARD in her pocket.

Off Stage L.—Nil.

Off Stage R.—Stocking and needle for ILSE.

Noise Effects.—Nil.

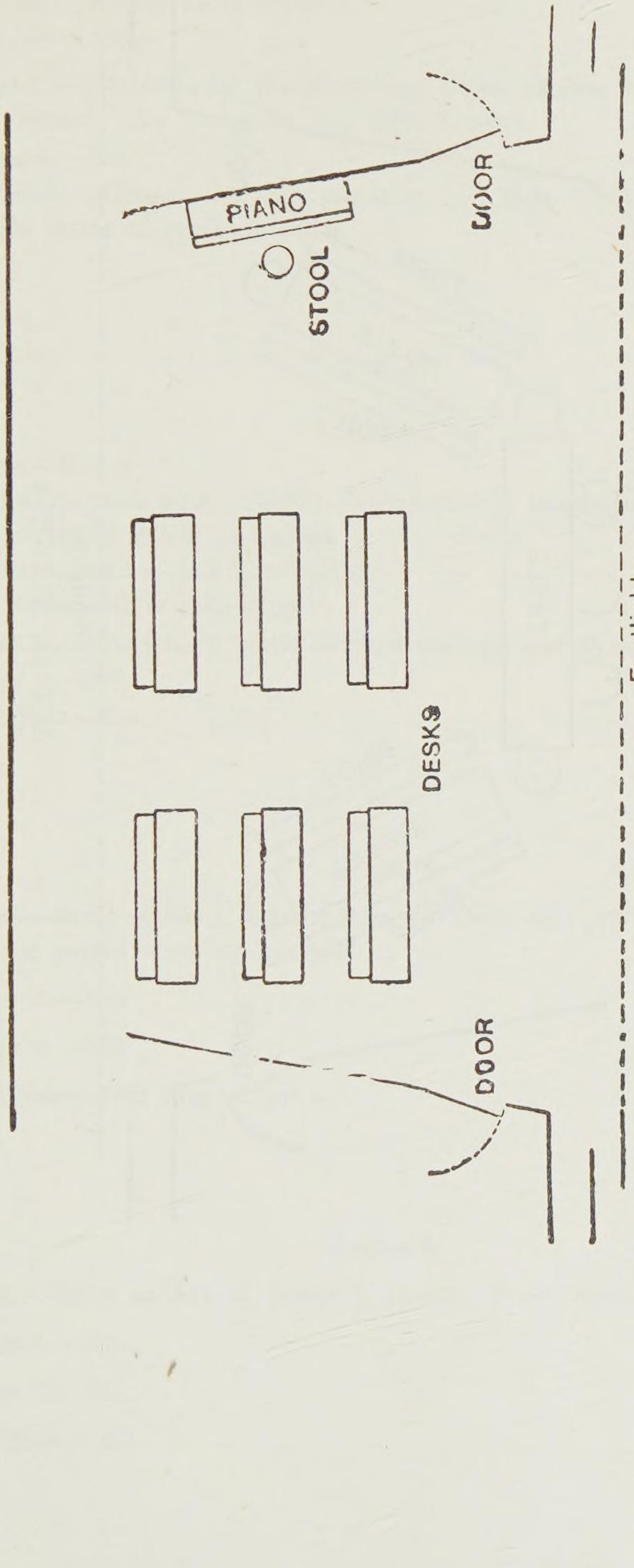
SCENE 2

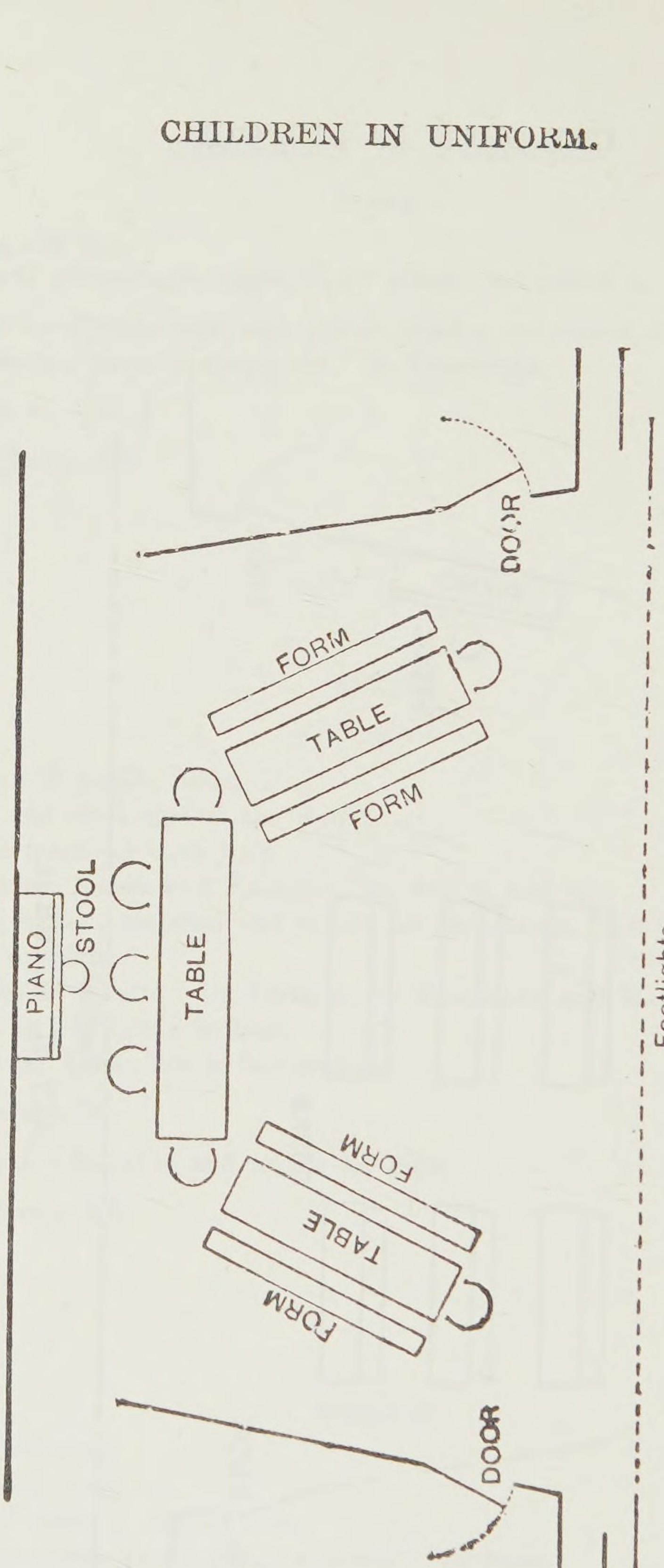
On Stage.—Carpet.
Table and chair C.
Stool at down L. end of table.
Chest of drawers at back. *In drawer:* Chemise.
Bookcase up R.
Settee down R.
Reading-lamp, books, papers, flowers, etc., on table.
Bowl of flowers on chest of drawers.

Off Stage L.—Large basket with laundry and torn chemise, for JOHANNA.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Nil.


PIANO
DOOR
STOOL
DESKS
Footlights
ACT II, SCENE 1
DOOR



ACT II. SCENE 1

Scene 3

On Stage.—3 tables. *On* c. *table :* Cloth, one or two plates, two jam tarts.
4 forms.
7 chairs.
Piano and stool.
Maps and pictures as in Scene 1.
Music on piano.

Off Stage L.—2 tablecloths, plates, spoons, forks, glasses, bowls of trifle, jugs of "punch," for Johanna and Girl helpers.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Groan . . . then clapping . . . then "Ssh" off R.
Various forms of applause off R.

ACT III

Scene 1

On Stage.—Bed R.
Small white table up C. *On it :* Sewing-basket, bandages, brush and comb, water-bottle (filled) and glass.
2 white chairs, R. and L. of table.
Iron washstand in corner up L.

Off Stage L.—Manuela's white dress, stockings and shoes, for Martha.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Nil.

Scene 2

On Stage.—Same as Act I, Scene 1. *except :* Chest and prie-Dieu struck; roll of red carpet, mop against wall L.

Off Stage L.—Nil.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Bell ring off up R.

Scene 3

On Stage.—Same as Act II, Scene 2, *except :* Stool against back wall.

Off Stage L.—Nil.

Off Stage R.—Nil.

Noise Effects.—Nil.

LIGHTING PLOT

ACT I

Scene 1

Battens and Floats.—1 circuit white, 2 amber: all check to ¾ up. Blue and white Floods on back wall.

Scene 2

Floats, c. section only.—White, check ½.

2 *Spots.*—Amber, check ½: one on machine c. and other on table R.C.

Scene 3

Same as Scene 1

Scene 4

Battens and Floats.—White and amber, both FULL UP.

ACT II

Scene 1

Same as Act 1, Scene 1, with 1 circuit pink, check ½.

Scene 2

Fräulein von Bernburg's *Room.*—3 *Spots.*—Dark amber, check ½.
R. *section of Floats.*—Dark amber, check ½.
Corridor.—*No Floats.*
L. *Batten.* White, check less than ½.

Scene 3

Same as Act II, Scene 1.

ACT III

Scene 1

Same as Act I, Scene 1.

Scene 2

Same as Act I, Scene 1.

Scene 3

Fräulein von Bernburg's *Room.*—Black Out.

Corridor.—L. *Batten.*—White check ½.

At cue: Switch on reading lamp.—3 *Spots.*—Dark amber, check ½.
R. *section of Floats.*—Dark amber, check ½.

CHRISTA WINSLOE

CHILDREN IN UNIFORM

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