

FAMILY HISTORY

Margarethe Maria von Glehn Luther

1980

For her sons,

Lars Christian

Holger Paul Martin

File: *mulife.doc*

The Glehns

Near to Dusseldorf is an old castle surrounded by water which is called Glehn. Va has visited it and read the history in an old book there. The story runs like that: In the year 1120 Peter von Glehn got that castle from a prince or the emperor (I don't know which) and was made the knight of this castle. But lacking funds he turned to be a robber baron and 150 years later (I do not remember the exact date; Walti has the whole story and pedigree up-to-date) the archbishop of Fulda or Main (that differs too in the retelling) the Glehns were besieged and the castle burnt down. They fled and resettled at Aachen, became merchants and went to Lubeck where they joined the Hanseatic League and around 1550 went to Reval.. There they became a senator family pretty soon. Peter v. Glehn led the Blackheads as their Major to meet Peter the Great when he visited Reval. Va still belongs to that Club. Now it is just a social club, like a country club.

My great-grandfather Glehn was a physician. He already at his time thought: "It is all in your minds." and never prescribed anything else but castor oil and sugar water (to calm down nerve stress) as the vicious gossip tells He saw once in a house a beautiful seamstress, Emilie Rosenbaum, and decided to marry her (which was a scandal at his time). But in reality she was a bastard daughter of a Baron Rosen. At least, she had to study French and they got married. She must have been very charming; everybody loved her and the great painter Kaulbach painted a life-size picture of her and a second one - much more beautiful - in an Italian straw hat with a rose, which I loved.

.They had two sons, Edmund, my grandfather whom I never knew, and Alfred. Alfred was a cellist, married first a Polish "street girl" according to Tante Agnes, got divorced and married then a Russian girl, Kathryn - I do not know her family name - who was a singer. At the Russian Revolution they fled from Moscow to Berlin where he joined the German Philharmonic orchestra and she gave singing lessons. There were no children.

My grandfather Edmund became a business man, went to England and loved England. He spent there many years and was sent also to Manila for a long time. The main part of the Glehns live in England and he fell in love with his cousin Isabel. But she refused him. He returned to Reval and married the daughter of a very rich court jeweller (fore-runner of Faberge) by the name of Safftigen, who had emigrated to St. Petersburg from Meran, Austria, with his

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family. The jeweller's wife was of Swiss origin. They had two daughters: beautiful Agnes and merry Julia. Edmund married Julia. (Agnes remained unmarried because she was not allowed to marry the man she loved.) They had ten children: two were still births and two died very young:

- 1) My father Felix was the oldest. He studied chemistry and music. He was a concert player, first rate, but quit because of stage fright.
- 2) Agnes, who was supposed to raise me. She was a pianist, had graduated from the conservatory and played very well. She was a piano teacher. She was the most unselfish, angelic creature I know.
- 3) Einmy. She was a secretary, very clever, cunning and, alas, very selfish.
- 4) Alice. Beautiful. Studied French in Switzerland and tutored people in that language. Married Uncle Erwin Bernhard, my mother's brother, and got divorced because of my grandmother Bernhard.
- 5) Roman called Romo. Studied economy at Leipzig. Had to interrupt his studies because of World War I. Served in the Russian army. Nearly died from typhoid fever (fleckfieber) but survived, came back to Reval, started as a worker at a cellulose plant and as he was very capable and intelligent, he worked his way up to be a director or as you would say here, vice president of the plant. He married Grittel Koch, "The rose of Estonia" as she was called. He was either killed or shot himself during their flight from East Germany to the West. World War II. They had five children. The oldest boy died as a baby. Then there was Roma who died from kidney trouble, Gita who is in a wheelchair, Amata who is a secretary, and Andreas, their only son, who is a businessman. They all live in Stockholm, Sweden.
- 6) Walter called Walti, my special friend. He graduated from Gymnasium and had to go to World War I right away. The Bolshevists caught him and debated behind the door of the room where he was imprisoned which way they would kill him. He jumped out of the window and managed to come back to Reval. He married first Karin Baroness Stackelberg of Ingermanland. Had two children: Kay (boy) and May (girl). Had to divorce his wife on the command of his father-in-law and went to Berlin to study

conducting. He played the violin and the viola very well. He was a very good chamber musician.

Then he married Dora Baroness Stackelberg of Fegtfeuer who was a concert pianist and had studied with Claudio Arrau. Her mother was Spanish from Argentina, a de Vedia. Under her mother's name she played jazz for the American military officers. They had two children, Mark Olaf and Barbara. Mark Olaf lives now with his widowed mother - as far as I know Barbel, as she was called, married first a musician. This marriage was unhappy, but before they separated, he died. Now she is married to a Count de St. Simon Durkheim who is an art teacher. I do not know either her or him.

Walti's first wife, Karin, married a Mr. Glinka. They moved to South Africa. She was very happy with him. Kay stayed with his mother, married an artist from Riga, Latvia, who is a very famous engraver. She even had a one-man show in Rome. May married a Finnish gentleman by the name of Frank von Veh. They have two boys. Olaf, Va's brother, knows them. I do not.

Dora Glehn, called Dotzi, took up painting in her later years, abstract style, had a one-man show and got a very good report. Sold a lot of paintings. She is also writing plays for radio. She is eminently gifted. When she was young - she was a celebrated beauty. Some people get everything - but still are unhappy.

My grandfather Edmund v. Glehn was American consul. When I was born the stars and stripes were flying over our mansion. He was a composer of light music - dances, especially waltzes; when I still could play the piano, I played his waltzes by ear. Now, alas, I cannot play any more. Many people have told me how wonderful it was, when they had a party and my grandfather settled down at the piano and played his waltzes. They were very elegant and spirited. He was also a painter. In our small salon was a painting of his; it was very well done, as far as I can remember.

My great grandfather Saftigen had our mansion built at the outskirts of Reval with a big Park behind it. At the sides were the two "cavalier houses": one for guests and the other for the laundry, kitchen and the living quarters of the footman and his wife. They were

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identical. My grandfather lived on the first floor and his daughter Julia with her family in the second floor. The third floor I never saw. There were guest rooms and rooms to store unwanted furniture. The kitchen was in the basement plus the living quarters for the cook and the maids. As a curiosity for our times:

I was not allowed to go into the kitchen, that my clothes should not attract kitchen odors. (Of course, I went from sheer curiosity,) There were endless rooms and cellars, and I had the feeling that it was a labyrinth where you could get lost forever. I write about the "laundry kitchen" because in olden days they cooked the white things (sheets, shirts, etc.) in soapsuds in huge kettles.

Margarethe Maria von Glehn Luther
September, 1980

Felix von Glehn
(My Father)

My father was the oldest of the ten children my grandparents, Edmund and Julie Saftigen, had. He was very handsome and very gifted, and my grandmother adored him. Grandma Glehn and Grandma Bernhard were close friends at this time, and their two children, Felix and Margarethe, were packed into one baby carriage, and the two mothers were always sticking together. They grew up together. My mother was the dearest friend of Tante Agnes. She was very annoyed about Grete; when she visited, my mother plunged into a book and got lost in her reading. But Felix and Grete both were determined to marry each other. My mother waited nine years until my father had finished his studies as a chemist and a violinist. He started to play as soloist. But he badly suffered from stage fright, and once his mind went blank from fear and he had to quit his concert. He never tried again.

My mother was courted by many young men, among them Dimitri Muschketoff, who was so rich that he did not know how much land he owned in Siberia. Grandma liked Dimitri; so did Uncle Erwin. They all tried to persuade my mother to choose him, but she wanted Felix only. Finally they got married, moved to St. Petersburg where he had a job as a chemist. Her first child, a boy, was a still birth. Pretty soon she was pregnant with me. She wanted to have her child in the house of her parents, and in her eighth month she traveled to Reval. But at Narva, at the frontier of Estonia, suddenly the premature birth started. She was brought into a hospital and I was born at 3 o'clock in the morning. After nine days she had a blood clot which entered her heart. She just bent over me - and fell over and was dead.

This blow my father never overcame. It literally was the end of his life. Often he sat down to the piano and played "The Death and the Maiden" by Schubert - the significance of it I understood much later. He was a broken man. His second sister Emmy somehow got him under her influence which became more and more total after we had to flee from Reval and lost everything. The end was a tragedy. He was but her baby and totally dependent on her. He first contracted tuberculosis of his lungs, which got healed, but a little later he miserably died from cancer of his stomach.

I shall not write up all the details of this tragedy - it hurts too much. He was a splendid musician, and Lo Cardinal still holds that she never heard anybody play Back's great Chaconne better than he did.

The Bernhards

According to Senta, the Bernhards came to Thuringia from Hungary around the year 1000 A.D.

Gottlieb Bernhard was a minister. He fought a duel which was forbidden by law and therefore he fled to Russia with his family. (He is my great-great grandfather.) They lived in great poverty, if it was eastern Estonia or already Russia, I do not know. Gottlieb died young.

His son, Theodore (or Bogdan in Russian) wanted to be an architect. He went to St. Petersburg to study. But as he was so poor he could not rent a room and slept under the bridge of the Neva River. The next I know about him is that he advanced to be the Private Architect of the Czar. He built churches all over Russia (Senta). I think his wife was a von Jaeger, but I have forgotten her first name. They had many children: the twins Erwin (my grandfather) and August (Senta's husband's father), and a daughter Ida (Senta's mother).

St. Peter's Church in Rome had a crack which no architect could repair. It broke open again and again. The Czar decided to send them his architect to help. Old Theodore looked the case over, discovered that one window of the Church had been closed and filled in with masonry. He decided that this caused a wrong pull on the wall, had the window reopened, the crack was mended and held tight. The Czar was so proud of his architect that he gave him the medal of St. Ann with four big diamonds and knighted him with a big title and great privileges. One of those privileges was that he did not need to carry a passport and had the liberty to travel wherever he wanted. (Aunt Alice Glehn Bernhard).

My grandfather Erwin Bernhard became an architect, too, and earned a title of Titular Rat (I have no idea what that meant.) His twin brother August studied music and became the President of the Conservatory at St. Petersburg, which was under the special protection of the Great Duchess Marja Alexandrovna. My grandmother Mathilde Smith-Bernhard was her lady-in-waiting.

My grandparents Erwin and Mathilde had two children: my mother, Margarethe Mathilde, and Erwin August (my beloved Uncle Erwin).

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They settled in Reval, now Tallinn on the map, the capital of Estonia, which at the time of the Czar was a Russian province. We all were Russian subjects. My grandfather was one of the two town architects. He died when I was four years old. I simply adored him; he was goodness and kindness in person. He was the one who first taught me music appreciation. Every morning he played the piano for me, and I danced through the whole apartment. When I was put to bed and was deadly afraid of the darkness alone, he played again the piano for me until I fell asleep, comforted and happy. He had his house built at the town wall, including one of the old towers. The view over the harbor and the Finnish sea is unforgettable to me. He chose for himself the highest level of his house, I think because of that magnificent view, and rented out the two other stories.

Grandma Bernhard was a highly educated and intelligent lady. She was an absolute perfectionist, what she did, she did perfectly. I think, she ruled the roost. She spoke fluently Russian, French, German, English and as much Estonian as she needed to converse with her maid - Lisa - who served her for thirty years and belonged to the family.

Uncle Erwin studied engineering. But he was a very good businessman. He worked for the Luther plywood plant first at St. Petersburg, later at Reval. He had the reputation of great intelligence, so that his Jewish friends said that he could easily be one of them. He was very witty and many people feared his sharp wit. He helped many, many people but never talked about it. He played the violin and had a collection of old Italian violins: a Stradivari, Amati, a Guarneri cello, a Ventapana viola, and others. He gave them to talented people to play his instruments, except his beloved Amati. He loved sailing. We went every summer sailing together. Tante Annemarie never went with us. He had the most beautiful yacht I ever have seen: it was built by Estlander, the best boat builder in Finland. Its name was "Ariel". In former times he went hunting. He read voraciously; I remember that he devoured a book a day. When something went wrong in the plant or office, he was called on. If something new had to be organized, he had to do it. He loved fun, and we two had endless fun together. I know that he loved me and was even proud (???) of me. Nothing was good enough for me. I loved to dance, but no ball was safe enough or decent enough for me to attend. Only one occasion was allowed - the annual ball of the Countess Stackelberg. (So I danced alone on the dining room table, to learn, not to fall off. Or I trained to dance the staircase up and down - of course, the waltz.)

Uncle Erwin's first wife was my father's youngest sister, Alice, whom he adored. She was beautiful but, regrettably, lacked intelligence. The whole thing went wrong. They got divorced because Grandma demanded it - as far as I know. They both continued, especially Uncle Erwin, to love each other. One of those tragedies.

Later he married Annemarie, Baroness Stackelberg from Hordel. There were hundreds of Stackelbergs, and they were ordered or put into pigeonholes according to their estates. Tante Annemarie was very intelligent, very charming, a real grande dame but perfectly natural and with a kind of democratic attitude. Not like the rest of those aristocrats on their small kingdoms of estates who looked at you through their nostrils only. She was that which you call in this country straight-forward. This little story, which she told me herself, shows that best. After the Germans had taken Reval in World War I, the brother of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Prince Heinrich, was to visit Reval. The big house or mansion of Tante Annemarie's grandmother - always called in French "grandmaman" - was chosen to house the Prince. Tante Annemarie was put into charge to see that everything was tip-top in grandmaman's mansion. As she was one day there to look after things, she opened the door to leave the bedroom and found herself right in front of the Prince. According to etiquette she should have dropped into a court bow (Hof-knicks). Instead, she threw up her hands and exclaimed, "My God, are you tall, how will you fit into Grandmaman's bed" The Prince laughed, and they had a very pleasant conversation about the extermination of bedbugs and fleas. At the end the Prince bowed to her, kissing her hand. Proudly she said to me, "I was the only lady in Reval whose hand the Prince has kissed."

Tante Annemarie was clairvoyant. I have lived up strange things with her, and she has told me others. But these stories I shall tell separately. They had two sons: Erwin (3rd) and Jurgen. Erwin became a businessman, and Jurgen studied architecture. I lost track of them.

The third brother of my grandfather was Wilhelm. I do not know his profession, but he collected fairy stories and had one thousand volumes. Besides, he was a very good water color painter. His daughter visited with Senta at Paradox in her last years. He had a son, too, who was a minister. More I do not know about him.

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Grandma Smith Bernhard was the daughter of John Smith, an English teacher at the court. My great-grandmother was a Baroness Tiesenhausen. She married John Smith. She had two daughters: my grandmother and Victoria, who was hunchbacked and married a Russian officer. I forgot his name. My great grandmother had two unmarried sisters: Emilie and Mathilde (or Mary?). They both were ladies-in-waiting to the Czarina. My great grandmother died very young so the two aunts Tiesenhausen brought up the two girls. They grew up at the court. Grandma once showed me where she had lived with her aunts in one of the cavalier houses at the castle, which Peter the Great had built for his wife, "Cathrinthal", at the outskirts of Reval. Otherwise, they lived at St. Petersburg, Czarskoje Celo or in the Crimea. The golden chain I gave you for your wedding belonged to great-great aunt Emilie Tiesenhausen.

The father of John Smith, also John Smith, had eloped with the daughter of a Scottish earl. He was an English sea captain, and they settled at St. Petersburg. Why, I do not know. My great grandmother, Marie Smith Tiesenhausen, painted miniature portraits and cut portrait silhouettes.

Margarethe Mathilde Bernhard
(My Mother)

As I never saw her, I can only tell you what other people said about her. Grandma did not talk about her. I think it hurt too much, and Uncle Erwin never mentioned her for the same reason. As far as I know, she must have been a very extraordinary person, everybody loved her. I never heard a bad word about her, and Reval excelled in nasty gossip (small town habit). Everybody who talked about her to me (being her daughter) praised her beauty, her intelligence, her great kindness and helpfulness (her main habit was to say, "Ich hab, ich kann dir geben" (I have it, I can give it to you).

Tante Agnes said that she was her dearest friend - but constantly frustrated her. When she visited with her, she grabbed a book, retired into a corner and read. The rest of the world did no more exist for her. She told me, too, that she was a very fine Mozart player. When she went to the opera she came home and played by ear everything she had liked in that opera. Tante Agnes said that she played the entire opera, but that was probably an exaggeration.

Her minister, who confirmed her, said that when she entered a room, the room lit up. Fred's aunt, Mirjam Mickwitz, raved about her enormous dark blue eyes, like cornflowers. An elderly gentleman, Herr von Benckendorf, had tears in his eyes when he learned that I was her daughter. (I always felt very miserable, as I certainly was by no means a worthy replica of her. I think that is also the reason why my father abandoned me. I do not blame him.) She dressed with great care. My father once showed me a picture of her - very small - wearing a white dress and a very beautiful white hat with white ostrich feathers; she looked gorgeous.

Of course, she had scores of suitors. To get rid of them (she wanted my father and no one else) she promised to each one a rendezvous on different places - and never showed up (Tante Agnes). She had auburn hair, long, so that she could sit on it and very thick. She wore it sometimes like a crown or crow's nest. Once, at a big party at Moscow the tresses fell into her soup plate. That was a splash!

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She had the most beautiful hands I have ever seen, in reality or in pictures, very slender, long and snow white. She could not buy gloves, she had to have them extra made for her. At Paris at the occasion of a big affair of a party, a gentlemen could not take his eyes off her hands (Tante Agnes). Sometimes she could be mischievous. Aunt Mary von Husen, my godmother and my mother's very dear friend, told me that once at school they got into an argument. My mother put Mary into a waste basket and hung her out of the window. (How she did that, Aunt Mary did not tell me.) Grandma was very ambitious, she know how intelligent her daughter was, and when she brought home a B from school, Grandma took her down.

My father adored her. I still see him at the piano playing Schubert's "The Death and the Maiden", his eyes looking far, far away into the realm where she might be now. Of course, I was nothing compared to her, I understand him very, very well. Believe me, her death was sudden. She bent over me, her baby, and dropped dead from a blood clot.

The greatest praise I ever got in my life was from Grandma. Once she said to me, shortly before her death, "Outwardly you do not resemble your mother, but in your ways you resemble her (I do not believe it!) She was just kind but still, it is the greatest praise for me.

She had a hunch that she would die young. Tante Mary told me that she once said to her, "I have to be good to Felix (my father) because I shall not live very long. She died when she was thirty-three years old. The darlings of the gods die young said the Greeks.

Erwin Bernhard
(my mother's only brother)

Uncle Erwin was younger than my mother. As all Bernhards were, he was very intelligent. He loved to read. School was boring, of course. He found a way out of that dilemma. In the morning he left the house and carried besides his schoolbooks a volume of Dostoevsky, a candle and matches. He re-entered the house through the courtyard, went into the old tower on the winding staircase, lit his candle and read until the time school was over. Then he came home looking as innocent as possible.

During the warmer season Erwin went bird hunting (instead of to school). His rifle he must have been hidden somewhere in the darkest corner of the tower.

All this went on until a letter arrived from the school president that Erwin could not be transferred to the next class, if he should miss one more school day. Next year he was more conscious about the amount of days he could be absent.

Uncle Erwin had one deadly enemy among his co-students. The two boys decided to fight it out in a duel (not with weapons). The duel was to be carried out at the slope of the "Domberg" (the mountain which was crowned with ruins of the castle of the Templars). This duel was a wild fight until both boys rolled down the slope, but Erwin got the victory, as Grandma Bernhard said, who told the story. How proud was she of her Erwin!

He studied engineering at Riga, Latvia, and belonged to the famous Fraternitas Baltica. My mother was often invited to their dances. He led a merry life there and loved to remember those days.

He also liked to remember the times when he was in charge together with other scientists to measure a lake in Siberia. They lived on a float, probably for safety against bears. Once as he was enjoying some wild raspberries, he saw suddenly a big brown bear at the other side of the raspberry bush eating away.

The wall over his cot was richly decorated with pictures of beautiful girls. They teased him endlessly because of that.

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It comes suddenly to my mind that at Riga he roomed together with his friend, Gustav Baron Pal. He trained to be a good pistol marksman. He shot the flies from the wall. (I wonder about their landlady!)

Later he worked at the "Lutherma", the plywood concern which had plants all over northern Europe and belonged to Martin Luther, Va's uncle. Uncle Erwin worked at St. Petersburg.

When Aunt Alice decided to marry Erwin he carried her in his arms through all three stories at Grandpa's house. For a time they lived at St. Petersburg, but the whole thing went wrong. Grandma demanded the divorce - as far as I know. Erwin and Alice regretted it all their life long. Aunt Alice once said to me, "Gretel, never get divorced, you hear me!". Uncle Erwin stood before her photo, which I had on my writing table (she was beautiful) and stared at her picture with great sadness. I removed the picture. (Mothers-in-law, keep out of the lives of your children, that I learned from this tragedy.)

World War I broke out, but Erwin was exempt from being drafted as he was his mother's only son. This was a law in Imperial Russia. Then the Bolsheviks came and naturally Erwin was arrested and put into prison. At this time he had been living alone with his servant-cook Leni from Reval, an Estonian girl, who adored him. Leni managed - nobody ever knew how - to bring his food every day. When she was sure enough of the guards, she took his beloved Stradivari violin along, warm clothes and food and managed to get him out of prison - nobody ever knew how she did that - and set him on his way to Finland - to freedom. So he walked with his violin under his arm in the midst of Russian winter over the Finnish border. Finnish farmers gave him food and shelter - they hated the Russians and still do - until he finally arrived at Helsinki. From there he called up his parents and returned home. Leni followed him, probably by train. Leni stayed with the Bernhards during all her life, she was the concierge, occupied a small apartment at the basement of the house together with her sister and her nephew. She watched over the house and all the belongings of Uncle Erwin like a tiger. All his tenants feared her more than the police or the Bolsheviks.

Va's father, who was Vice President of the Reval plant, managed for Erwin a job at the old Marine harbor, where the birch logs were kept in a basin or first piled up to high mountains. He was in charge of that place and in charge of sending the right amount

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to the plant. There he had some tame wild geese he loved and a tame crane by the name of Jurri (Estonian word for *George*). Erwin always shared his lunch with Jurri. He was seated on a birch log at the foot of the gigantic mountain of logs. One day at lunch Jurri was restless, he refused to eat, ran away, came back, and ran away again. Something was very wrong, Erwin felt, got up and followed Jurri, who evidently wanted to tell him something. In this moment the mountain of logs collapsed and slid down like an avalanche into the water. Erwin would have been killed without Jurri's warning.

Later he was transferred to the office of the plant and put in charge of buying everything the plant needed. Above that he always was called to straighten things out when something went wrong or to organize new enterprises of the plant.

The German lords and the Estonians, who were still kept in a condition of serfs and peasants, were at odds with each other. Erwin knew that this had to be altered, that the Estonians should be regarded as equal human beings with the same human rights as the German overlords. Therefore, he created a cooperative business company where Germans and Estonians collaborated under equal rights. Va was also one of them. It worked fine and was the beginning of a totally different democratic attitude between the two peoples living in the same country and calling it their home country. Va worked in Erwin's department. There were great friends (long before me).

Uncle Erwin loved horseback riding. He had his horse "Violet" in the Maneje where Tante Annemarie had a horse, too. There they met and later on got married. (I named my rocking horse after his horse, "Violet".)

Probably at that time he started his collection of ancient Italian string instruments. He had his Stradivari, Amati, Guarneri cello, Ventapana viola, etc. He bought also antique furniture, ruby glasses, brocades and other things he valued. He kept some of these treasures in an antique cupboard with an oval glass window.

To my dismay Tante Annemarie used it for filling with all kind of real junk. But Uncle Erwin laughed at her ignorance about those things.

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When I came back to Reval and lived with him and Tante Annemarie, he was a loner, his friends of yore having died or been shot by the Bolsheviks.

It was the time of the "Agrar Reform" in Estonia, when the big estates of the aristocracy were taken away from them and the land was distributed to the people. Many of these lords found themselves beggars overnight, many of them became real farmers; others had no jobs. Uncle Erwin helped many of them to get jobs - but he never talked about it. People honored him but feared him at the same time because of his superior intelligence and sharp wit. With one witty sentence he could straighten out some scoundrels or stuck-up dumbbells.

When his younger son, Jurgen, contracted tuberculosis of his bone (one leg), he decided to buy a house in suburbia where the air was more favorable because of the wide forests of pines. It was a duplex and an acre of garden land - better say sand - went with the house. Then he became a gardener. But the soil was poor and had to be improved by compost. In one corner was a big heap of compost. The Luther plant made its glue for its veneer out of blood which the plant bought from slaughter houses in Hamburg, Germany. Sometimes such an iron barrel with blood went rotten and could no more be used in the plant. These barrels Erwin bought as fertilizer for his compost heap. I remember a certain barrel which arrived in the garden and had to be emptied on the compost. Jochen and his friend Jurgen Matthisson - called Pima-Onkel-, because he worked at Hordel for the Stackelbergs with their cows, milk and cheese production - Minnie the housemaid and Ants, the garden maid, were also there for the big event of opening the prop of the barrel. As Pima-onkel touched it, the whole thing exploded - the prop was never found - and a geyser of red stinking lava hit everybody - it was such an odor that I fled into the windowless toilet and shut myself up there. The others needed days to get rid of the mess. But Onkel Erwin had his fertilizer.

When Hitler came into power, Onkel Erwin said one morning to me when we had breakfast together, "Gretel, go take your Aunt's paint box with oil paints and go and paint Hitler's face on the big pumpkin on the compost pile. Let him look towards the street." I was enchanted that was fun! I painted Hitler, and I must have done it pretty well because all the neighbors, who were pro-Hitler, were furious. The pumpkin grew larger and larger and Hitler's face was distorted to the grimace he really was. It was a muffled scandal. Onkel Erwin despised and hated Hitler. But he had the laughter for himself together with all of us.

Onkel Erwin had a genuine Caucasian tulip. it was a wild flower. Brilliantly red (I never have seen such a red color in my whole life), the leaves were speckled with purple. This tulip was his baby. He did not want it to be fertilized with the pollen of other tulips. So he took a fine brush and fertilized it with its own pollen. But to avoid insects to bring other pollen to it, he needed some fine net to prevent that. He demanded my bridal veil for that purpose. I gave it to him, of course, but I regretted it because I wanted to keep it forever.

One evening when we had our usual evening tea with Jochen as a guest, Erwin suddenly said, "Don't be fooled, the Russians will claim the Baltic States back, they need the harbors of the Baltic Sea." We all were very upset because of this remark, we all knew his intelligence, but at that time there was no sign of this purpose. I soon did not remember it any more - but soon after his death it all came to pass.

One year after Tante Annemarie's death Erwin died of cancer of his lungs. Professor Sauerbruch, a celebrity in Germany, performed the operation. But his heart did not stand it, and a few days after the operation, he died. He was cremated in Germany, and the urn was sent back to Reval. I remember myself staring at the open grave with the urn in it and on top of it his cap of the Fraternitas Baltica. I sort of died with him. He was dearer to me than any other of my relatives. Later, when we had to leave Estonia, I was grateful that this terrible event was spared to him.

The cemetery where all my dear ones were buried was ploughed and destroyed. There is no trace left of them all.

Tante Annemarie Baroness Stackelberg Bernhard

Tante Annemarie was the only daughter of George Stackelberg and his wife Marie Baroness Toll Stackelberg. They had five sons, beside her. They lived at the estate or small kingdom of Hordel (see my silhouette), a castle which had been built by the same architect who had built Versailles, France. Her father wished her to be a good horsewoman, and when she was four years old she was placed on a horse without saddle or bridle and had to learn how to sit on a horse. She became a fabulous horsewoman and used to ride a very noble but very capricious horse which walked more on its hind legs than on its four legs. But it had Arabian blood, and she used to say that she was flying on her horse.

They had a neighbor at walking distance, the Baron Staelgreifenklan. He was very interested in history. Every day Annemarie was walking over to visit with him and read history with him. He used to praise her intelligence. Her profile was nearly identical with that of the famous Egyptian Queen Nefertiti. If she would have worn her headdress and painted her face like Nefertiti, there would have been little difference, like twin sisters. She studied painting at Geneva and painted exceedingly well. But when she got married, she saw that she could not be a good wife and mother and an artist so she stopped it entirely. She never more touched a brush again (very regrettably!). But she urged me to continue with my silhouettes and saw to it that I got lessons in art. I studied then with a Russian painter, Anatole Kaygarodoff, of great renown at his studio. There I learned a lot.

Tante Annemarie was broad-minded, exceedingly intelligent, had a wonderful sense of humor, and was a charming person. As she had never learnt housekeeping, her house was in a devastating state of disorder. She was accustomed to a personal maid (Gurtelmajd) who was in charge to pick up her clothes when she changed and looked after everything. As she did not have that after she married, her house drowned in dust. But she did not mind. She cheerfully put all kind of junk into a costly cupboard with a glass window - all kind of junk, odds and ends - where Uncle Erwin kept his precious antique ruby glasses and other treasures. Her silk stockings turned up in her paint box and other such happenings. Uncle Erwin enjoyed her total ignorance with laughter of all such things. He loved and enjoyed her just as she was. First thing, when he arrived at the plant, was to call her up to inquire how she was.

She was totally unmusical. But she loved to sing (unbearable for Uncle Erwin because she sang off-key). So she decided to sing in the bathroom. These old houses had no bathroom.

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It was later installed in the basement, and you had to walk down ninety-nine steps on a winding staircase in the old town tower which Grandpa Bernhard had included into his house. There, in the warm bath, Tante Annemarie sang. Unfortunately, the staircase had a marvelous acoustic, and her singing could be heard at the third floor. Uncle Erwin had a fit of laughter. Yet she loved to listen when he played his Amati violin.

She was a charming and interesting and witty hostess; nearly every evening some people - mostly her relatives - flocked in for tea after supper.

Her youngest brother, Jochen, (who was for years my boyfriend) nearly came every day. He was a splendid entertainer and used to tell anecdotes and amuse the whole company. Sometimes "Vogeltante" came too (her name was Else Alisch - but about her I shall have to write a special chapter).

Every Friday she joined her club of girlfriends. it was not a club in the American sense, but a bunch of ladies who were friends. This bunch of ladies called themselves the "Dalfac" a word composed of their first names. Uncle Erwin hated that. This reunion took place alternately in the homes of the members. When it was at our place, Uncle Erwin took me to the movies. He was furious about all the commotion with baking cakes, all the silver on the table including his silver samovar with the bowl with the two peacocks. "Weiber sind schadlich" (Women are harmful), he used to say and took off with me. Once, I remember, we came back from the movies, and the ladies were still there chattering. He made me climb a ladder and peek through a window at the top of one door and report to him everything I saw. Then he went to bed grumbling. Jealousy? Probably.

Tante Annemarie was clairvoyant by nature. it happened often in our country - my godmother, Mary v. Husen, was too, all the Stenbocks, etc. Once long before World War I she was riding her capricious horse. Suddenly, she saw Hordel mansion in total ruins - just as it looked after the Agrar Reform. When I was visiting with Va to listen to the Thomaner Choir on the radio, she suddenly said to Uncle Erwin, "Just now Gretel is getting engaged" (It was true.) Uncle Erwin laughed at this kind of nonsense.

Once we made a tour on Jochen's motorcycle, Tante Annemarie and I. She was seated in the van and I was perched behind Jochen.

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We rode along the coast of Tante Estonia to the East, then turned south to visit a famous monastery built into a rock with marvelous icons. After that we visited a convent in the wilderness. There was a church service, and Tante Annemarie said that she wanted to go for a few minutes into the church and light a candle, as it was her habit, before a chosen icon. We waited and waited with Jochen about three fourths of an hour, until she finally came back - in tears, white in her face. "You know it", she sobbed "I see things sometimes, but I have seen something too awful to tell you." he was very sick. We rushed home as quickly as possible. She never told us what she had seen - but later it was clear to me that she had seen the disaster of our Baltic people, that we all had to leave and that the Bolsheviks, would take over. She never recovered from that night. As I once complained about something, she said to me: "Do you know how good you have it now!" I always remembered this exclamation later. She contracted tuberculosis of her lungs and died in 1937. One year later Uncle Erwin died from cancer of his lungs. At that time I was totally crushed - but later I was grateful that they did not have to leave the country they loved both so dearly. She ordered to be buried without any church ceremony at 5 o'clock in the morning- Her oldest son took her coffin to the cemetery and there she was buried - nobody present - as she had wished.

P.S. An anecdote.

As I had mentioned, she was totally unmusical. Once there was a great event at Reval. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra was to play and Eugen Jochem. It was in January, and it was ice cold - 25 Celsius below zero. The box-office was supposed to open at eight o'clock in the morning. Reval was a music-loving town. People queued up before the concert hall in the middle of the night. Tante Annemarie went at six o'clock, and I had to replace her at eleven o'clock. When the box-office opened, people bought fifty tickets at once. Three people were still before me, then the box-office closed - sold-out. A woman had a nervous breakdown. Later came the news that who would house a member of the orchestra would get one ticket. Of course, we housed one., and Uncle Erwin housed another one. We all rallied for tea at Uncle Erwin's the day before the concert. Suddenly, Tante Annemarie asked, "Have you also a lyre in your orchestra?" The two musicians were stunned about her total ignorance (she meant a harp). Uncle Erwin silently took his ticket out of his pocket and handed it over to me, saying: "If she asks such questions, she is not prepared for the concert." We had fought all day long with Va, who should go. I said he should go, and he said I should go. Now we both could go. It was magnificent. But Tante Annemarie did not mind it one bit.

Vogel Tante (Bird-aunt)

(her real name was Else Alisch)

I include her into my memories about the family story because of the funny stories we lived up with her. She is a remote cousin of Uncle Erwin. Don't ask me how.

She got the name of "Vogel Tante" because she called all her nieces and nephews "Vogelchen" (birdie). She was stout, even fat, had a rather broad face but her eyes were sparkling with vivacity and intelligence. Her hands accompanied everything she said. Her fingers and arms were loaded with rings with diamonds and other precious stones and always five or six bracelets which were ringing like small bells when she talked. She had been living at St. Petersburg, but fled because of the Bolsheviks. She owned an old, old house at Reval three doors from Uncle Erwin's house. The front door was studded with big iron nails and there was a door knocker from heavy iron. When you opened the door you came into a hall with a floor of thick stone slabs about a square yard wide, which had been tilted this way and that because of their age. You had to walk very carefully not to break your legs. A small window domed into the street with a stone seat at one side for the lady of the house to watch the traffic while spinning yarn.

In the rear of the hall were a staircase on each side which led to the second story. A long gallery united the two. Both sides ended in a long corridor. From there you entered the living rooms, bedrooms, etc. The key to her house was as long, maybe even longer, than this sheet of paper is wide and heavy.

Her father had been a famous architect. She had one sister only. This sister was a little deranged, as I feel, she talked in a strange way, setting the letter K before each word which started with a vowel. She was in rapport with some spirits (I do not know how) and these spirits sent me this message: If I remain courageous I shall have always help of any kind.

Vogel Tante had spirit, a fabulous courage and know-how. She was the curator of the famous Eremitage Museum at St. Petersburg. When the Bolsheviks stormed the Ermitage to destroy it, she stood there like a block of granite, screaming at them and chased them out. She

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stood there on guard until the Bolsheviks finally understood what a Museum of such treasures is. Then the "government" took over, and she left for Reval. But thanks to her the Eremitage was saved from destruction. Knowing her so well, I am sure that this was true. She has not told me that story - (maybe she did) but I think somebody else did it who had seen it.

She liked to talk to men only; women were too stupid for any real interesting conversation, usually politics. She loved to talk to Uncle Erwin usually she did the talking - he listened with an expression in his face which was a mixture of arrogance, humor and kindness to people who were not to be taken too seriously.

When I poured tea for her, she always said in Russian: nalej, nalej, ne shaley poor, pour, don't be stingy!) Her cup had to be filled to the very brim.

One evening Tante Annemarie's younger brother, Olaf came for a visit. He was a lawyer and lived at Perrsan. Perrsan was known for her fine smoked eels. He had brought one. Tante Annemarie took me aside and said, "We two girls shall just take a small piece of that eel and leave it for the two men, who love it". Jochen, her younger brother was there too. When the eel was served, Tante Annemarie took a small piece, I let it pass by and handed it to Vogel Tante. She looked at the platter, looked around at everybody at the table. Then she wiped all the eel cuts on her plate. Evidently she loved that dish!

Jochen Stackelberg had a close friend who was known under the name of Piima Onkel (milk uncle). (His real name was Jurgen Matthisson.) He had once been at Hordel taking care of their cows, milk, cheese, etc. He was even taller than Jochen, broader in his shoulders - but the size of his skull was very small. He had a girl friend by the name of Licky (last name I never knew). Licky had rented a room at Vogel Tante's. One evening when Piima Onkel brought her home, they heard Vogel Tante yelling for help. The sound came from the bathroom. They both ran to her assistance. There was Vogel Tante stark naked in the bathtub, the water was gone and she was stuck in it. The heat of the water had made her fat swell and she was stuck and could not move! They pulled, pushed, but they could not get her out. Then Piima Onkel had a brilliant idea: being strong like a couple of oxen, he pulled out the plumbing and rolled the bathtub over and spilled Vogel Tante on the floor. Rescued a la fess, do you think that she was embarrassed?

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Oh no, not Vogel Tante. She took things as they came - Bolshevists or bathtub so what!

But there was one thing she dreaded: MICE! One day she announced that there was a MOUSE in her kitchen and that she desperately needed help. Now, I was known as a good mouse catcher. We had practiced mouse hunting with Lo at Zigahnen (the name of their estate). When the grain was threshed from the big "Staken" (towers of tightly packed grain sheaves), we went there and caught the mice with our hands. We became rather efficient at this sport. It had been discussed at some occasion. So, Vogel Tante gave a mouse dinner. Silver, candles, fine food and all. The guests were Jochen and I, Piima Onkel and Lickie. After dinner we all were led to her kitchen where the mouse was stationed. There was also an iron bed for a maid - in case she would need one. I spied the mouse running along the wall, Lickie screamed and jumped on a chair, Vogel Tante disappeared. The mouse fled under the bed., I too, and there I caught her. I passed the mouse to Jochen who carried it outside. I was feted like a queen.

Twice a week Vogel Tante taught me Russian. She was a fine teacher, but meticulous with my pronunciation. "I want you to learn good Russian - po Moskowsky - you do not say: a a - A - A - A". I was not allowed to read Russian books alone; I had to read aloud to her because of the good Moskow pronunciation. We had wonderful hours together with Turgenieff and others. I remember her with gratitude, admiration and laughter.

My grandfather, Erwin Bernhard, and his twin brother August (Senta's husband's father) looked exactly alike until their old age, not even their brides could tell them apart, as they had the nasty habit of even dressing alike. The brides always embraced the wrong one - as fama tells.

One day they had special fun. August went every morning to the Conservatory. He passed his hat and his fur coat to the Butler and went into his office. Five minutes later my grandfather walked in giving the same hat and fur coat to the butler looking exactly like the President and walked into the office. The poor butler blacked out.

One Sunday Grandpa Bernhard visited one of his supervisors to talk things over with him. The supervisor was just sitting at his lunch table, eating- a goose - all alone. He invited Grandpa to sit down and said, "Will der Herr Architekt auch so ne kleine Vogel essen?" (Mr. Architect, would you too like to eat such a little bird?)

I had one very dear friend in Reval, that was Ilse Baronesse Schilling, commonly known as Schilse. I called her "Fox", because she skipped just as merrily along always having fun and laughter just as my fox terrier used to do, using three of his four legs only. We met regularly once a week either in my home or hers. Often we met also at a little cheap cafe which Va called: "Die Fuhrmann's Kneipe" because it was situated in a little lane called "Fuhrmann's Gasse" (Horsedriver's Lane) and "Kneipe" means a saloon. It was not a bad place, but a cheap one, fifteen cents a glass of good coffee. Tea and coffee was served in such places the Russian way, in glasses. Fox was very democratic, she talked to everybody and was kind to everybody. Once she asked the night watchman of his office if it was not very tedious to walk around the building all night long. He replied, "Yes, now it is tedious since the misters von Glehn (Romo and Walti) are no more around. Then it was always fun. But now - no. Walti and Romo did awful things during the nights when they had been drinking too much.

Once she had friends overnight at her home. it was the Baron and the Baronesse Rarisch von Traubenberg,. The Baronesse was the daughter of a humble innkeeper in the country - but Fox did not make any difference. She loved her. We had been together for our ritual evening. When we came home she saw to her dismay and fury that her dear girlfriend was attacked by a drunkard. She ran to her help and placed her fist into his face. "But Schilse," said her friend, "this was Andrea!" (her husband) She had hit the wrong one. She was a fine poetess. You will find some of her poems among my "leftovers" when I am gone.

Some Anecdotes

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The annual ball of the Countess Stackelberg, was a big event. It was a "Wohltatigkeits Ball"; the tickets were expensive and the money went to the poor. That was a ball everybody had to attend. Tante Annemarie decked me out in my mother's ball dress from Turkish silk (altered according to fashion). I put on some rubbers not to get wet feet. The whole thing was very ceremonial. First you had to bow low to the Countess, her daughter and son (both were short-witted as the evil fama told) and then you were free to dance. The ball took place in the Clubhouse of the Aristocracy. As I started to dance, I was dismayed that the floor (parquet) was not polished, it was nearly impossible to move on it. After awhile I looked at my feet - I had still my rubbers on. No wonder! Fox was having a vivid conversation with Baron Pillar, lost her hankie, stooped to pick it up and fell over with the chair. Next morning, when Uncle Erwin went to his barber, he entertained him with the events of that famous ball. "It was glorious," he said, "one lady danced in her galoshes and another one fell down with her chair and all." It was, of course, the talk of that little gossiping town.

The Koch's were a highly estimated Patrician family at little Reval (where everybody knew everybody and everybody was somehow related to everybody). Onkel Nicolai Koch had married Ida von Glehn from England. She never learned to talk German right. As a true Glehn she loved music. Every once in a while my father and Tante Agnes had to visit and to play Bach for her. Once as this happened again, Onkel Nicolai was sitting in his easy chair half asleep. Tante Ida asked, "Nicolai, langweilst Du Dich? (are you bored)?" He answered, "zu Toode (to DEATH). A little later there was a tremendous crashing and bumping on the staircase. Aunt Ida limped in and said, "i4icolai, I just fell down the staircase., and you do not move a bit?" "Ach meine Liebe, ich dachte, es sei Sophie (Ah, my dear, I thought it was Sophie)!" Sophie was his sister!

Sophie had married Roman von Antropoff. They had an estate somewhere in the country. She was rather scatterbrained, and he was really witty. Once, shortly before Christmas, Aunt Sophie had decided to throw a big party and invite all Estonia. The invitations were sent out (probably by her secretary) and poor Sophie forgot all about it and took off to St. Petersburg for Christmas shopping. When the guests arrived from all over Estonia in their horse-drawn sleighs, the house was dark. Only some servants were there. Tableau.

Some Anecdotes

It was the custom of the Aristocracy in the country to come to Reval in Fall to sell their products and have fun, parties, theater, etc. at the same time. Most of them had houses or even mansions on the "Domberg", the mountain where the ruins of the castle of the Templars stood. In English you say to fly a kite, in German it is: einen Draclien fliegen lassen (to fly a dragon). Roman and Sophie Autropoff walked up the steep Domberg when they met a friend. "What are you doing here ?" asked the friend. "Ich lasse meinen Drachen steigen!" said Roman. (In German the wife is referred to as the house dragon.) It means, I fly my house dragon.

But the wildest story happened in the country. Roman and Sophie were invited to a party and as the weather turned to a snow storm, the guests stayed overnight. The guest rooms were usually in a room on the second or third floor. One of the guests overheard the following conversation between Roman and Sophie:

Sophie: Roman, give me the chamberpot.
Roman: Why do you want the chamberpot?
Sophie: I want to brush my teeth.
Roman: Better use water.

Tante Annemarie's friend, the Baron Stael von Greifenklau came to Reval too to the big parties and events. He owned a house on the Domberg. His sleeping room was on the third floor and boasted a small balcony. Every morning the Baron stood stark naked on that balcony to take an air bath. He wore rubbers only. Some friends had noticed this habit and reproached him for doing so. "People will see you there stark naked!" they said. Calmly he replied: "Des Menschen Augen sind Erdbunden." (The eyes of men are earth bound.) and continued his habit.

I have to add a story which happened to me with the curator of the Reval Museum, Baron Stael von Holstein. I took heraldry with him. He was very gracious to me, taught me well and one day took me to his own home to show me his collection of ancient books of heraldry. There was a particular one which I loved, it was gloriously done and contained all the family crests of those families who were vassals of the Emperor. His own crest was among them. But at the end the herald had inverted the crests of the three Holy Kings who went to adore the Christ Child. (The book dated back to 1400.) Above this bonus, he invited me to give me a special tour through the Reval Museum.

Some Anecdotes

Naturally I was elated about this honor. The Baron was short and stout. The Museum mostly contained Roccoco furniture (Louis XVI) with spindly golden legs and backs upholstered with embroidered silk. When he started to talk about these treasures he allowed himself to plump down on one of these fairy chairs. I was in a frenzy that these delicate fairy chairs would collapse under his weight. I did not dare to say a word, but I kept praying in my heart,

"Dear Lord, please do not allow the dear old man to come to grief." So we walked through many rooms and it was always the same. At the end of the tour the old Baron kissed my hand and said, "Miss Glehn, you are the only lady who has not asked silly questions when I took her through the Museum." I still feel guilty. Because at school I drove my German teacher nuts with my questions. It was only that I had to pray for him which shut up my silly mouth.

Though I decided not to talk about myself, I shall add this story which happened when I was at School in Unterprima (L,ars will know). It is one of those stories which were tragic at first and ended up well:

Our history teacher, Dr. Bayreuther, was very severe. We were sore afraid of him. It was Friday before the first of Advent and we all felt Christmas approaching. It had started to snow and soon the window sills had big cushions of fresh snow - white snow. At recess we were allowed to stay in the classroom and open the windows for fresh air. Suddenly a wild snow ball battle started; the balls were flying everywhere, snow was tugged into our necks and ran down our spines. Christmas spirit made things even worse - it really was an Alexanderschlacht which we fought. Then the bell rang. Next lesson: History with Dr. Bayreuther. We shuddered as we came to our senses. The whole floor was a pattern of puddles and melting snow. Our desks were under water and our books swam around like boats. We were wet to the bones. Dr. Bayreuther stood at the entrance petrified when he saw this mess. Then I discovered that right over his desk a big snowball was sticking to the ceiling melting away in occasional droplets, which would hit his totally bald head. Dr. Bayreuther fumed about the mess, settled down on his desk - pitch, there came the first drop. He jumped to his feet, looked up, saw the snowball, pushed his desk more to the windows and screamed, "You all will have a three for your bad behavior for Christmas." That meant, Christmas was out. A three in Behavior in the Report was as much as a knock-out. We all spent a sad and dreary weekend. All the joy of Christmas was gone. It was the saddest first Advent Sunday I have ever experienced.

Monday morning first lesson History with Dr. Bayreuther: Helga and I were sitting in the last row at the window and beside us was the Advent wreath hanging with one red candle. When Dr. Bayreuther walked in, he seemed to sleepwalk as if he was somewhere else. He settled down at his desk, bent his head and shut his eyes. Our class speaker got up and said, "We have permission to sing a Christmas carol at Monday morning during Advent time." He grunted. We looked at each other and burst into singing the longest Christmas carol we knew. Dr. Bayreuther fell asleep - he even snored a little. Surely, he had been at a party and was still under the influence of heavy drinking. So we continued singing one carol after the other. We had an excellent Music teacher, we knew lots of songs. So we kept on singing until the bell rang - for recess. Dr. Bayreuther woke up with a jerk like a frightened rabbit. He smiled sheepishly and vanished. We kept our mouths shut and so did he. We had a "One" in behavior. Christmas was saved and double as wonderful as ever.