

“Sunday, November 18th. It seems as if I could not properly realize the idea that I am really to set out, and that in three months’ time. Sometimes I delude myself with charming dreams of my return home after toil and victory, and then all is clear and bright. Then these are succeeded by thoughts of the uncertainty and deceptiveness of the future and what may be lurking in it, and my dreams fade away like the northern lights, pale and colorless.

“‘Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten.’

“Ugh! These everlasting cold fits of doubt! Before every decisive resolution the dice of death must be thrown. Is there too much to venture, and too little to gain? There is more to be gained, at all events, than there is here. Then is it not my duty? Besides, there is only one to whom I am responsible, and she . . .? I shall come back, I know it. I have strength enough for the task. ‘Be thou true unto death, and thou shalt inherit the crown of life.’

“We are oddly constructed machines. At one moment all resolution, at the next all doubt. . . . To-day our intellect, our science, all our ‘Leben und Treiben,’ seem but a pitiful Philistinism, not worth a pipe of tobacco; to-morrow we throw ourselves heart and soul into these very researches, consumed with a burning thirst, to absorb everything into ourselves, longing to spy out fresh paths, and fretting impatiently at our inability to solve