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Peter and Paul. Outline of a Novel.

Mann, Klaus

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PETER AND PAUL

OUTLINE OF A NOVEL

BY MARTIN LAROCHE

1. (1935...) Paul (20; dark-haired, sensitive, ascetic...) in his Massachusetts home-town, on vacation from Harvard. Good New England family, Puritan tradition. He declares that he will not marry his fiancée, Irene -- young lady of equally distinguished stock, but wealthier than Paul's people. Parents puzzled, Irene grieved. Paul explains reason for his decision: He has discussed his nervous troubles with a psychiatrist in Boston, is now sure of his homosexual disposition. Launches crusading speech about "Hellenic love" -- quoting Plato, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Oscar Wilde, etc. Irene heart-broken, parents furious; throw him out. He decides to "live his own life" in New York, rushes to railway station. Waiting for the next train, he drops in at a movie theatre but can stand the show just for a few minutes; then he leaves -- restless, irritated.
2. In the same theatre, Peter (18; of poor Polish family; blonde, athletic, high cheekbones, greyish-blue eyes...) Fascinated by the glamour displayed on the screen, he decides to attain the same kind of luxuries -- "at any price!" Contrast between the Hollywood dream world and the dreary reality of Peter's home. He quarrels with his family. Steals father's money; off to New York.
3. Peter on Times Square; delighted by colors, noises, but irritated by men staring at him. Paul on Times Square; disgusted with glaring lunapark atmosphere. Is on the point of going when noticing Peter. His type! "Coup de foudre!" Tries to talk to him; Peter -- taking him for a detective -- runs away.
4. Peter, hungry, alone in vast, merciless city. Returns to Times Square; meets a more initiated fellow -- Jonny, "one of the boys." Thanks to Jonny's guidance, Peter becomes acquainted with New York's homosexual underworld. Makes his first money by going to a squalid hotel with a pathetic old queen (schoolmaster from Providence). ... Paul, in the meantime, finds job as re-writer and proof-reader with one of the daily papers. Leads lonely life; keeps away from colleagues; thinks of the Times-Square boy...; Will he see him again?
5. Irene follows Paul, having decided to "save" him. Paul refuses to see her. She writes him that she will wait. ... Peter has become a regular member of the Times Square gang. Is introduced to all the low-class meeting places -- Turkish Baths, "Maisons de Rendezvous," special bars, and so forth. Description of types -- both "trade" and "customers." Incidents. ("Rolling;" holdups in Central Park; murder in Harlem, etc.)

6. Glowing summer in New York... Peter in a fix, as his favourite hangout ("Matti's") has been raided and closed following a murder. (Peter escaped over the roofs...) Broke and depressed, he meets Paul again. Follows him. They meet, find out they are from same town. Paul, romantically in love, takes him for a decent boy. They see each other repeatedly; nothing happens. Paul takes him out of the torrid city to spend a weekend on the beach. Does not dare touch him. Peter, insulted, leaves him in a huff; tells him what he is...

7. Paul, hurt and horrified by Peter's brutal disclosure, tries to forget the boy. Reconciliation between Paul and Irene. Paul makes a serious attempt to overcome his anomaly -- and fails. Peter is in his mind. He looks for him in all the "hot joints;" finds him in Sand Street bar. Takes him to his apartment. ... Irene suffers nervous breakdown when informed of changed situation.

8. Paul's life with Peter, who has solemnly promised to keep away from old pals (and actually lives up to his word, for a couple of weeks...) Paul introduces him to Irene. She mentions morphium which gave her so much comfort during her recent crisis. Peter, alone with Irene, tells her that he could easily get some heroine for her. She accepts his offer. Secret contact between the two on that business base.

9. Paul takes Peter to Europe -- having borrowed money from Irene. Continental panorama: Berlin where the Nazis persecute homosexuals, even though some of their leaders are notorious pederasts. (Special concentration camps for "Schule.") Peter has an affair with a SS bigshot. ... Paris where they come in contact with the "international set" in the "Boeuf Sur Le Toit;" Salzburg, where Peter flirts with a rich young Englishman; Vienna, where he continues the flirtation with the Englishman's boy friend; Budapest, the great brothel, where they meet all their old friends again and make plenty of new ones. Among them Baron Rattner, the Jewish sugar magnate, just coming from Berlin, where he has witnessed the torturing of young German workers in Gestapo headquarters, "just for the fun of it." Paul, revolted, quarrels with the Baron, who has already started a brisk flirtation with Peter. Peter abandons Paul to live with the wealthy Baron.

10. Back in the U.S., Paul, having returned alone, plunges himself into anti-Fascist activities: his European experiences have made him politically conscious. He comes in contact with left-wing organizations, attends meeting, etc. Peter, occupying a suite at the Waldorf with Baron Rattner, is a success in New York's most swanky homosexual set: the milieu of the Russian Ballet, the snobbish art galleries, the Park-Avenue cocktail parties. (Portraits of characters like Cecil Beaton, Tshelitsheff, etc.)

11. Paul, on the point of joining the Communist Party, quarrels with radical friends about the newly established anti-homosexual law in the Soviet Union. Fed-up with sexual intolerance of left-wingers, he

quits political activities; is completely isolated again. Once more he tries to become "normal" -- or at least to lead outwardly a normal life ~~47~~ with Irene as his wife. She, in her turn, makes a desperate effort to liberate herself from the drug to which she is addicted. She undergoes a cure (to be described in detail), but to no avail. Her power of resistance is gone. A hopeless dope-fiend, she has to reject Paul's proposal.

12. Peter, by now a well-known figure at "Twenty-One," "The Monte-Carlo" and similar places, makes friends with the great Hollywood producer, Robert Maggentosch, who falls in love with him. He leaves the Baron and goes with Robert to Hollywood. His first part is that of a young prize fighter in a C-picture.

13. Irene, having caught a pneumonia, dies in a New York hospital. Paul is all alone. He sees Peter in the prize-fighter film, writes to him, but receives no answer. ... Peter, while actually living with Maggentosch, has an "alibi" romance with a Hollywood glamour girl. He keeps on appearing in "He-man" parts, becomes more and more popular.

14. Pearl Harbor... Paul ⁴ is eager to join the Army. Questioned by the psychiatrist about his sex life, he lies -- for the first time in his life. ... Peter plays American heroes in propaganda films sponsored by the War Department. He drops Maggentosch; starts flirtation with great heiress (Barbara Hutton type). ~~Contrast between his glamorous life and Paul's existence as a private doing KP in a training camp.~~

direct commission: major.

Estimate
15. Paul ready to go overseas. While in New York on furlough, he contacts one of Peter's former pals -- Jonny -- in the hope to obtain news. Jonny happens to be present as "George's Saloon" is raided by FBI. (Political scandal: Senator involved.) The police find Paul's address in Jonny's note book. He is investigated. His Communist past makes him suspicious. Arrest.

16. Court martial. Paul accused of having lied to the psychiatrist. Having no other friends, he has claimed the now famous Peter as his only character reference. Peter appears: testifies against Paul. Consequence: Dishonorable Discharge, jail.

17. Peter -- a national figure -- marries heiress. Paul in jail.

*Psychiatrist does not believe him.
Hysterical scene. He is rejected.*

GENERAL TREATMENT:

Too often the theme of aberrational love has been described in fiction either in terms of crude, pathological burlesque or lurid, tongue-clacking compassion. The result has done little social, psychiatric or literary justice to the "problem."

Various tendencies in modern life -- the recent shock of the war; the apparent instability of the peace; the fear of the atom bomb; the increasing morbidity and insecurity of the part of a public which has made a kitch-hobby out of psycho-analysis and turned homicidal mania into a greater profit for Hollywood than it ever was for the Borgias -- have created an audience with sufficient curiosity, if not tolerance, to view a forthright version of the subject.

The author's intention is to treat homosexuality, on the one hand, as a basic, if exceptional, form of human love and passion; on the other hand, as a symptom of social unrest and personal anarchy. Both aspects of the phenomenon are of equal relevance and import. The hero of WINDY NIGHT, RAINEY MORROW follows the example of many a genius as he indulges in his anomaly; but by doing so he violates a taboo of modern society and makes an outcast, a paria of himself.

If the Hellenic "Eros" first meant to him an ideal, almost a religion -- the form of love glorified by Plato and Michelangelo, Shakespeare and Whitman --, he will soon find out what becomes of that lofty passion under the relentless pressure of contemporary prejudice. A sensitive and gifted young man of good American stock, he will be compelled to live among neurotics and criminals. For the homosexual, under present conditions, either develops a guilt complex and morbid sense of self-castigation, or else he goes to the other extreme and turns opportunistic, reckless, cynical -- ignoring the code of normal morality out of ~~the~~ a

defiant desire to punish society for its prejudice.

The homosexuals, in this country as in any other modern community, constitute a curious kind of ghetto. A tourist of the heart with no public resting-place or acknowledged passport, the sexual pervert is a member of an underprivileged minority, the inhabitant of an underworld of love who must be prepared at any moment to pay the social and psychological penalties for committing his "crimes against nature."

This strange nether world of erotic outlaws comprises men and women from all ways of life -- gangsters, petty bourgeois', snobs, artists, intellectuals. However motley and incongruous that milieu may be -- they stick together like conspirators: they are all in the same boat. This peculiar freemasonry of the homosexuals cannot but have certain consequences affecting society in general. Their intrigues and tragedies may involve completely normal individuals; their predilections and animosities are not without influence, far beyond the sphere of the purely sexual.

This whole island- and ghetto world with its crazy antics and its human drama has been depicted by certain European novelists, notably by such French writers as Marcel Proust, André Gide, and Jean Cocteau. But if intelligent readers have the opportunity to get acquainted with this particular aspect of the "Human Comedy," so far as France is concerned, there is no novel as yet dealing with the corresponding milieu in the United States. It would be a mistake to believe, however, that the problem of homosexuality is less timely or less pregnant with dramatic material in the New York of 1946 than it was in the Paris or Berlin of the Twenties.

The success of Mr. Jackson's recent novel, The Fall of Valor, seems to indicate that both the literary press and the reading public realize the significance of the subject. But if Mr. Jackson chose to discuss homosexuality in an extremely cautious, indirect fashion, WINDY NIGHT, RAINY

MORROW will tackle the same ~~problem~~ problem more candidly and realistically. It is the author's ambition to present the first complete, unbiassed picture of a certain aspect of American life neglected or distorted, so far, by American writers.

The book is not supposed to have an explicit message, unless through its dramatic reportage and informal documentation it happens to convey an insight and intelligent tolerance of a problem as "human" and as misunderstood in our time as Adultery was in the days of Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter."

1)

9. Even though his "ménage" with Peter seems to be a reasonably happy one, Paul remains nervous and distrustful -- always & afraid his young friend might relapse into bad old habits and get himself into trouble. Haunted by jealousy and all sorts of hypochondriac misgivings, Paul decides that both he and his darling need a change of air. As a young boy he used to go to Europe with his family but has not been there since his sixteenth year. How wonderful it would be to see the Continent again, in Peter's company! What a thrill, to show and explain to him the treasures of European art and architecture! -- Peter, with whom Paul discusses the idea, is all for it. He has heard so much about places like Paris and Berlin, Vienna and Budapest! And he has seen them in the movies. It will be fun to see the real thing at last... But what about the financial problem? Paul overcomes his pride and composes a lengthy letter to his mother, to the effect that he has used up the little money he had, so would she please lend him something like \$ 3000? She answers, promptly and affectionately, that, "as you know quite well," she does not have any bank account of her own; the whole fortune belongs to "your father," who will not allow her even to mention Paul's name in his presence. Right now, the old gentleman is more angry and adamant than ever, according to Mrs. Bromley's report; for he was recently informed by New York friends that his son shares his apartment with a young man of extremely bad reputation. "It's all too sad for words," Mrs. B. concludes her letter -- blessing her boy "in spite of everything" and enclosing three \$ 20 bills, "which is all I can do for you," ~~my poor boy, for the time being.~~

Paul is deeply hurt and disappointed. Will he have to renounce the European trip? But Peter has an idea. Why not ask Irene for a little loan? She must have plenty of dough! (Peter should know, having seen her spend thousands of dollars for the drug to which ^{she} is becoming addicted...) -- Paul is reluctant at first, but in the end gets over his scruples. After all, there is nothing wrong with a loan! Naturally, he will refund every penny he now accepts from his former fiancée. He will write articles in Europe and sell them to the Saturday Evening Post -- \$ 1000 a piece! Three magazine stories, and the loan will be taken care of! -- Without hesitation, and seemingly without surprise, Irene ~~writes~~ ^{makes} out the check. ~~"If you are short of money, why didn't you come to me before? You know I'm always happy to help you." That is all she has to say.~~ (Peter, by the way, makes ~~a nice~~ some pocket money for himself by providing Irene with fresh "dope" supplies large enough to last for six months or so.)

is
This May, 1936 -- just about a year has passed since Peter and Paul first met. Now the two young men embark on a French liner -- Paul as happy and excited as he has not been for a long time; Peter a little peevish, as he would have preferred to travel First Class, ~~while his friend insisted on "Tourist."~~ ~~"It's so much cheaper, you know! And besides, the people are nicer there..."~~ -- Paul remains in high spirits throughout the trip; Peter is less enthusiastic. He does not think the Tourist-Class crowd attractive. "Not glamorous enough!" While Paul makes friends with a young American couple, Robert and Mary X., Peter spends most of the day sleeping on his deck chair. Robert is a young painter who has been living in Paris for years. Peter finds his conversation "dull like hell." Besides he suspects Robert of radical leanings: the guy keeps talking about Fascism and does not respect the rich. Is he a Communist, or what? ~~Peter dislikes~~

2)
~~Paul's new associates.~~ The antipathy seems to be mutual; Robert and his wife -- earnest, straightforward people -- obviously do not care for the handsome, but lazy and ~~ambitious, young man,~~ selfish boy.

Sit down in
The first days in Paris are rather disappointing. Paul, staying with Peter in a small left-bank hotel, feels that his friend does not respond to the charm of the glorious city. Whatever he ~~wants to show him,~~ Peter declares that he has already seen it in the movies, and that it was more impressive on the screen than it is in reality. It is with Robert and Mary, not with Peter, that Paul goes to the Louvre and other art galleries. Peter prefers to hang out at the Café Select, Montparnasse, in the Ritz Bar and similar places. There he meets Americans whom he captivates with his gaiety and his looks. One of his new acquaintances, a slick fashion-designer from Hollywood, takes him to the "Boeuf sur le Toit" -- a smart night club of the somewhat excentric type, ~~and~~ meeting-place of what is known as the "International Set." Consisting of snobbish Americans, doubtful Russian noblemen, South-American gigolos, and over-dressed French "tapêtes," the fast crowd spends the early part of the evening at the "Boeuf," then proceeds to certain more obviously "special" establishments in Montmartre -- "Chez ma Belle-Sœur," where effeminate youths dance with Negro pugilists, and cocky sailors from ~~Marseilles and Toulon~~ are courted by fat, flabby cavaliers, ~~from Amsterdam or Melbourne;~~ and "La Petite Chaumière," an even more colorful and more exclusive place specializing in youthful entertainers dressed up in fancy costumes, as Hellenic ephebi or as eighteenth-century courtesans, with powdered wig, luscious décolleté and all. -- Paul, who occasionally joined Peter in such escapades, is somewhat disturbed by his friend's intimacy with the Californian fashion-designer. He decides to shorten the Paris stay. After a couple of weeks or so, the two are on their way to Berlin.

Lives
This time, Peter has insisted on a first-class hotel, so they stop at the "Eden," near the Kurfürstendamm. Paul finds Berlin depressing, but Peter ~~is impressed with~~ its orderly traffic, its cleanness, its jolly head-waiters, its many parades, its beer, ~~and~~ its "Gemütlichkeit." There does not seem to be much of "gay life;" but the young American is willing to forgive the German capital even for that shortcoming: "The Fuehrer just don't like such filthy goings-on in his nice, clean city," he says approvingly -- oblivious of the fact that his own life was centered, for the past year or so, around "goings-on" of that sort. A despondent-looking, sallow-faced little man whom the two meet in the bar of the Eden Hotel tells them, in English and in a timidly lowered voice, that homosexuals are indeed having a terrible time under the Nazi regime. Special concentration camps have been established where the "schwule Brüder" (a German slang expression meaning sexual perverts) are subjected to all kinds of humiliations and cruelties. Many of them have already left the country or are waiting for an opportunity to escape. "There are indeed three ~~types~~ persecuted minorities in the Third Reich," the sorry little ^{man} whispers, in the comparatively safe hotel room of his new American friends. "The Jews, the political opponents, and the homosexuals. The last group has been less publicized than the two others; but that is not to say that its predicament is less tragic." -- Peter is soon to find out, however, that some high-ranking Nazis are not without understanding for this officially outlawed form of love. In one of the sumptuous Kurfürstendamm cafés he makes the acquaintance ^(of a) of a dashing young SS officer -- an "Obergruppenführer," martial

3)
and attractive in his tight black uniform. He finds Peter "the ideal type of Nordic youth," buys him several drinks, and invites him to spend an evening with him and some of his friends in an exclusive club on the picturesque Wannsee. There Peter is treated to an exquisite meal, a lot of Rhine wine, and an extensive lecture on Nazi ideology. The racial sermon sounds convincing enough to him -- especially since the crusaders spice their sermon with flatteries and intimations of a more personal kind. Peter stays over night in the lovely country house of his SS friend, Norbert von Wellendorf. When Norbert begins making love to him, the young American cannot help laughing. "And to think that people go about saying that you Nazis persecute homosexuals!" As Norbert seems to be interested in this remark, Peter tells him all about the sad-looking little chap he met at the Eden Hotel. Before bidding him farewell, the next morning, Herr von Wellendorf begs his new lover to promote the lofty cause of Nazism in the United States. Peter promises him to do so. ~~Back at the "Eden," he has to stand a scene with Paul who has been waiting for him all night. Peter tells him about the interesting contacts he made and the exciting things he heard -- which seems to make Paul even angrier.~~

The next day, our two friends leave for Austria. As soon as they are gone, the sorry little man at the "Eden" -- a Baron von Zimpeltitz, formerly attached to the German Embassy in Paris -- is arrested by the Gestapo.

Paul would like to get out of Germany as quickly as possible, but Peter wants to see certain Nazi monuments in Munich -- the Brown House, the beer cellar where Hitler started his first putsch, and other hallowed places. So they stop at the "Capital of the Movement." A ~~very pleasant~~ young opera singer -- a "Heldentenor" (heroic tenor) to whom Peter was introduced by Wellendorf -- gives them a ride in his Mercedes car to the Austrian frontier. Peter admires both the well-kept "Autobahn" and the tenor's metallic voice. He thinks Nazi Germany a grand country.

In Salzburg, where they stay at the Hotel "Oesterreichischer Hof," Paul enjoys the Festivals -- Max Reinhardt's "Jederman," Mozart's "Don Giovanni" conducted by Bruno Walter, "Die Meistersinger" under Toscanini. Peter, in the meantime, has drinks in the "Café Basar" on the Salzach river. The young Englishman at the table next to him turns out to be a lot of fun. Fair-haired and almost indecently pretty, he seems to spend all his time travelling about with his boy friend -- an Irish sailor who deserted His Majesty's Navy to follow his wealthy, aristocratic lover from St. Moritz to Biarritz, from the South Sea Islands to Rio de Janeiro, from Berlin to Salzburg. The sailor looks a little like Peter -- less attractive, though (in Peter's opinion). Peter amuses himself by flirting with the glamorous English globetrotter, just to find out if he couldn't take him away from that boorish ex-sailor. But Harry, the Irishman, who happens to be really fond of his ~~girlish~~ companion, has no use for any intruders. He knocks Peter down, right in front of the Hotel "Oesterreichischer Hof." Paul finds his friend with a black eye, and has to believe ~~the~~ somewhat fantastic story about a drunk Austrian in leather breeches who attacked innocent Peter, without any reason, just for the fun of it. his

Their next stop is at the Hotel Imperial in Vienna (Peter wouldn't condescend to any smaller hotel any more). While Paul discusses ~~the~~ po=

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litics with Austrian friends to whom he was introduced by Robert and Mary (they are afraid of an imminent Nazi coup and deplore Chancellor Schuschnigg's lack of determination), Peter meets in the hotel lobby a wealthy matron from Buenos Aires who wants to fly to Cairo with him without any delay. He rejects this proposition, considering the advanced age and the enormous proportions of the inflammable Latin lady. Later he will remind Paul, again and again, of "that beautiful Spanish princess who wanted to marry me. And I, foolishly, gave her up -- for your sake!"

Paul wavers whether to go from Vienna to Venice or rather to Budapest. ^{But} ~~have a few days to make up their minds; for~~ first of all they have to wait for the arrival of a money order -- another little "loan" Paul ~~has~~ requested from his former ~~and~~ fiancée. The money comes through at last, with apologies from Irene for the delay: "I was in a hospital when you cabled me," she says in her message -- a remark which sounds more puzzling to Paul than it does to Peter. -- They go to Budapest as Peter has been told that it is now by far the "gayest" city in Europe -- at least as uproariously lascivious as Berlin was in the Twenties.

~~Peter is not to be disappointed.~~ The Hungarian capital -- as picturesque as usual, and more corrupt than ever -- is indeed something like a colossal brothel where tourists can satisfy their most fastidious or eccentric ^{Peter} appetites for a handful of "pengös." ~~The boy from the New England slum~~ has the time of his life, ~~deli~~ drinking champagne in night clubs which boast such distinguished clients as the Prince of Wales and his lady friend; revelling in gypsy music, visiting the elaborate baths for which the city is famed -- natural wells of hot water around which orgies of truly antique-Oriental dimensions take place almost in public. Of course, Paul is overjoyed to see his companion happy. At the same time, however, he cannot help noticing certain unsavoury features of Hungarian life -- the glaring contrast between the misery prevailing in the villages and the opulence of the city; the impudent frivolity of the upper classes; the hypocrisy and obscurantism of a semi-Fascist, feudal regime. Also, ~~some~~ of the people with whom Peter chooses to spend his nights begin to get on Paul's nerves. There are some of the snobs and debauchees they first met in Paris, then saw in Salzburg and Vienna again. There are a few new faces, too -- not less disagreeable.

^{Paul} The one ~~Paul~~ dislikes the most, his pet animosity, is a certain Baron Rolf Rattner -- a Jewish sugar magnate of considerable wealth. He has only just returned from Berlin where his German friends, among them Norbert von Wellenbach, treated him most politely: "I think they don't even know that I am not purely Aryan..." Besides, the Nazis are not really as anti-Semitic as all that, and, in any case, the Baron prefers them to those hideous Reds who threaten European civilization, to say nothing of the ~~Baron's~~ Baron's sugar factories. -- Paul implores Peter to keep away from Rattner, who courts him in the most ostentatious and distasteful manner. Peter shrugs off Paul's admonitions, laughs at what he calls his "crazy jealousy." The clash between Paul and Rattner occurs ~~one night~~ in a swanky night club when the Baron, in his drunkenness -- and, perhaps, to impress Peter --, boasts of a "thrilling experience" he allegedly had in Berlin. It was Von Wellenbach, "our dear Norbert," who took him along to Gestapo Headquarters where he was invited to witness, disguised as a doctor, the "interrogation" of "one of those red bastards," a young German worker and member of the Communist Party. "They certainly fixed him up," the Baron cried, still in raptures as he recalled the spectacle. "Oh boy, oh boy! They really let him

^{don't}

victim

have it! I've never seen anything so exciting in my whole life." Peter laughs as the Baron goes on describing the tortures to which the ~~boy~~ was subjected -- until Paul, unexpectedly, jumps up, white with disgust and fury. "You swine!" he cries. "You dirty rat! You... you... Nazi..." He slaps the Baron's face and rushes away.

his face

Back at the Hotel Hungaria, he has to wait for hours before Peter comes back -- very drunk and extremely angry. Paul, he asserts, has insulted a gentleman without any reason or provocation. Paul is "hysterical," "nuts," "a radical," "just a jealous fool;" Paul has "no manners," "no heart," "no sense of humor;" in short, Peter is "sick and tired" of him, and will never see him again, unless ^{he} apologizes officially to Baron von Rattner for his objectionable behaviour. Paul, still shaking with excitement, retorts that he will certainly not do anything of the kind. "You will drop Rattner," he tells his friend, "or lose me, for good." Which seems to be exactly what Peter wanted to hear. Rattner, he says, understands him; Rattner is a sound, well-balanced man, a practical man, a real fellow. He has asked Peter to stay with him, as his guest. ("You know the beautiful house he has up there, in Buda!") Peter is going to accept his invitation: in fact, he will go there right now. "This is the end!" Paul cries. And Peter, calmly and cruelly, "That's right, brother. I'm through with you."