

# The Windmill

On the hill the mill stood proudly; indeed, it was quite proud.

"I am not at all proud!" it said. "But I am very enlightened, both inside and out. The sun and the moon are at my service for both internal and external use; besides, I have in reserve stearine candles, whale-oil lamps, and tallow candles. I dare say that I am enlightened! I am a thinking being and so well constructed that it is simply delightful. In my breast I have an excellent millstone, and on my head, right under my hat, four wings. Birds have only two wings, and they carry them on their backs! I am Dutch by origin—this is evident from my figure—a 'Flying Dutchwoman'! The 'Flying Dutchman,' I know, is a supernatural phenomenon, but there is nothing unnatural about me! Around my waist runs an entire gallery, and in the lower part there are living quarters. There dwell my thoughts. The chief one, who manages everything, is called by the other thoughts the Master. He knows what he wants, stands far above bran and flour, yet he too has his equal; she is called the Mistress. She is the soul of the whole affair; her lip is no fool, she too knows what she wants and knows what she is capable of; she is gentle as a breeze, strong as a storm, and knows how to achieve her goals gradually. She is my sensitive side, while the Master is the positive one; but both of them constitute, in essence, one and call each other their half. They also have little ones, small thoughts, which may in time grow up. These little ones sometimes raise such a commotion! The other day, when I wisely and reasonably allowed the Master and his assistant to inspect the millstones and wheels in my breast—I felt that something was amiss there, and yet one must know what is happening within oneself! So then, the little ones raised such a commotion! And this is inappropriate when one stands as high as I do! One must remember that one stands in plain sight and in full illumination; human judgment is the same as illumination! Yes, what, by the way, did I want to say? Ah, yes—the terrible commotion of the little ones! The youngest climbed up to my hat and began chattering his tongue so much that it tickled me inside. But small thoughts can grow, I have experienced that; and thoughts can come from outside too, not quite of my own kind; as far as I look around, I see nowhere anyone like myself, no one except myself! Yet even in wingless houses, where grinding is done without millstones, by tongues alone, thoughts also dwell. These thoughts come to mine and marry them, as they call it. Amazing! Yes, there is much that is amazing in the world. For instance: something has happened with me or within me; something seems to have changed in the mechanism. The miller seems to have exchanged his 'half' for a more tender, young, pious one, and thereby his soul has become softer; his 'half' seems to have

changed, yet in essence remained the same, only softened over the years. And so all bitterness has evaporated, and affairs have gone even better. Days follow days, ever onward, to joy and happiness, and finally—yes, this has been spoken and written in books—a day will come when I shall be no more, and yet I shall remain! I shall crumble to rise again in an even better form; I shall cease to exist and yet continue to exist. I shall become different and at the same time remain myself! It is hard for me to understand this, however enlightened I am by the sun, the moon, stearine, whale oil, and tallow! But I firmly know that my old beams and bricks will rise from the rubble. I hope that I shall retain my old thoughts: the Master, the Mistress, all the big and small ones, the whole family, as I call them, the entire thinking company—without them I cannot manage! I hope too that I shall remain myself, just as I am, with a millstone in my breast, wings on my head, and a gallery around my waist, otherwise I shall not recognize myself, and others will not recognize me either and will no longer say: 'There on the hill the mill stands proudly, but it itself is not at all proud!'

That is what the mill said; it said much more besides, but this was the main point.

And days followed days, and the last of them was its last.

The mill caught fire; the flame flared up, rushed outward, inward, licked the beams and planks, and then devoured them all. The mill collapsed, and only ash remained of it; the burn site still smoked, but soon the wind scattered the smoke.

Nothing happened to the living inhabitants of the mill on this occasion—they only gained. The miller's family—one soul, many heads forming a single whole—acquired a new, wonderful mill, with which they could be fully satisfied. The mill looked exactly like the old one, and people said of it too: 'There on the hill the mill stands proudly!' But this one was built better, more modernly—for everything moves forward. The old beams, eaten by worms, rotted away, turned to dust, to ash, and the body of the mill did not rise from the dust, as it had thought. It understood everything said in a literal sense, yet one cannot understand everything literally!