Jacobi, and the Stolbergs. Correspondence led to personal intercourse. Klopstock arrived in Frankfurt in this October 1774, just before *Werther* appeared. Goethe saw him, read the fragments of *Faust* to him, and discussed skating with him. But the great religious poet was too far removed from the strivings of his young rival to conceive that attachment for him which he felt for men like the Stolbergs, or to inspire Goethe with any keen sympathy.

In June, Lavater also came to Frankfurt. This was a few months before Klopstock's visit. He had commenced a correspondence with Goethe on the occasion of the *Briefe des Pastors*. Those were great days of correspondence. Letters were written to be read in circles, and were shown about like the last new poem. Lavater pestered his friends for their portraits, and for ideal portraits (according to their conception) of our Saviour, all of which were destined for the work on *Physiognomy* on which he was then engaged. The artist who took Goethe's portrait sent Lavater the portrait of Bahrdt instead, to see what he would make of it; the physiognomist was not taken in; he stoutly denied the possibility of such a resemblance. Yet when he saw the actual Goethe he was not satisfied. He gazed in astonishment, exclaiming "*Bist's?* Art thou he?" "*Ich bin's.* I am he," was the answer; and the two embraced each other. Still the physiognomist was dissatisfied. "I answered him with my native and acquired realism, that as God had willed to make me what I was, he, Lavater, must even so accept me."

The first surprise over, they began to converse on the weightiest topics. Their sympathy was much greater than appears in Goethe's narrative, written many years after the characters of both had developed themselves: Goethe's into what we shall subsequently see; Lavater's into that superstitious dogmatism and priestly sophistication which exasperated and alienated many of his friends.

Lavater forms a curious figure in the history of those days: a compound of the intolerant priest, and the factitious sentimentalist. He had fine talents, and a streak of genius, but he was ruined by vanity. In his autobiographic sketch [1] he has represented himself indicating as a child the part he was to play as a man. Like many other children, he formed for him-

[1] See GESSNER'S *Biographie Lavaters.*

self a peculiar and intimate relation with God, which made him look upon his playfellows with scorn and pity, because they did not share his "need and use of God." He prayed for wonders, and the wonders came. God corrected his school exercises. God concealed his many faults, and brought to light his virtuous deeds. In fact, Lavater was said to have been "from the beginning the friend of Lies, who stooped to the basest flatteries to gain influence." To this flattering cringing softness he united the spirit of priestly domination. His first works made a great sensation. In 1769 he translated Bonnet's *Palingénésie*, adding notes in a strain of religious sentimentalism then very acceptable. At a time when the critics were rehabilitating Homer and the early singers, it was natural that the religious world should attempt a restoration of the early Apostolic spirit. At a time when belief in poetic inspiration was a first article of the creed, belief in prophetic inspiration found eager followers. I have already touched on the sentimental extravagance of the time. The lovely Countess Branconi writes to him: "O toi chéri pour la vie, l'âme de mon âme! Ton mouchoir, tes cheveux, sont pour moi ce que mes jarretières sont pour toi!" &c., which is surpassed by what he allowed to be addressed to him by another admirer: "Oh that I could lie on thy breast in Sabbath holy evening stillness —oh thou angel!" This kind of rhodomontade went all round. They wept, and were wept on.

At the time of his arrival in Frankfurt, Lavater was in the first flush of renown. Goethe was peculiarly attracted to him, not only by the singularity of his character, but by a certain community of religious *sentiment*. Community of creed there was not, and could not be. What Goethe *felt* we may gather from his attachment to Fräulein von Klettenberg; what he *thought* may be seen in such letters as this to Pfenninger, a friend of Lavater's: "Believe me, dear brother, the time will come when we shall understand each other. You talk to me as a sceptic, who wishes to *understand*—to have all *demonstrated*—who has had no experience. The contrary of all this is the fact. Am I not more resigned in matters of Understanding and Demonstration than you are? I am, perhaps, a fool to express myself in your language to please you. I ought, by a purely experimental psychology, to place my inmost being before you to show that I am a man, and hence can only feel as other men feel, and that all which appears contradiction between us is only dispute about words, arising from my

inability to feel things under other combinations than those actually felt by me, and hence, in expressing their relation to me, I name them differently, which has been the eternal source of controversy, and will for ever remain so. And yet you always want to oppress me with *evidences*. Wherefore? Do I need evidence of my own existence? Evidence that I feel? I only treasure, love, and demand evidences which convince me that thousands (or even one) have felt before me that which strengthens and invigorates me. And thus to me the word of man becomes like unto the word of God. With my whole soul, I throw myself upon the neck of my brother: Moses, Prophet, Evangelist, Apostle, Spinoza, or Machiavelli! To each, however, I would say: Dear friend, it is with you as it is with me. Certain details you apprehend clearly and powerfully, but the whole can no more be conceived by you than by me."

He names Spinoza in this very remarkable passage; and the whole letter seems like a reproduction of the passage in the *Ethics*, where that great thinker, anticipating modern pyschology, shows "that each person judges of things according to the disposition of his brain, or rather accepts the affections of his imagination as real things. It is no wonder therefore (as we may note in passing) that so many controversies have arisen among men, and that these controversies have at last given birth to scepticism. For although human bodies are alike in many things, there are more in which they differ, and thus what to one appears good, to another appears evil; what to one appears order, to another appears confusion; what to one is pleasant, to another is unpleasant."[1]

It is unnecessary to interrupt the narrative here by more closely scrutinising his studies of Spinoza; enough, if the foregoing citation has made present to our minds the probable parentage of Goethe's opinions. The contrast between Lavater's Christianity and the Christianity of Fräulein von Klettenberg interested him, and gave him matter for thought. He agreed somewhat with both, but he agreed perfectly with neither. The difference between Faith and Knowledge he

[1] "Quæ omnia satis ostendunt, unumquemque *pro dispositione cerebri de rebus judicasse*, vel potius imaginationis affectiones pro rebus accepisse. Quare non mirum est (ut hoc etiam obiter notemus) quod inter homines tot, quot experimur, controversiæ ortæ sint ex quibus tandem Scepticismus. Nam quamvis humana corpora in multus conveniunt, in plurimis tamen discrepant, et ideo id quod uni bonum alteri malum videtur; quod uni ordinatum, alteri confusum; quod uni gratum, alteri ingratum est."—*Ethices: Pars* i. *Append.*

thus reconciled: "In Faith everything depends on the fact of believing; *what* we believe is quite secondary. Faith is a profound sense of security, springing from confidence in the All-powerful, Inscrutable Being. The strength of this confidence is the main point. But *what* we think of this Being depends on other faculties, or even on other circumstances, and is altogether indifferent. Faith is a holy vessel, into which every man may pour his feelings, his understanding, and his imagination, as entirely as he can. Knowledge is the antipode of Faith. Therein the point is not *whether* we know, but *what* we know, *how much* we know, and *how well* we know it. Hence men may dispute about knowledge, because it can be widened, corrected; but not about Faith."

So strong was the attraction of Lavater's society that Goethe accompanied him to Ems. The journey was charming; beautiful summer weather, and Lavater's cheerful gaiety formed pleasant accompaniments to their religious discussions. On returning to Frankfurt, another and very different celebrity was there to distract his attention—Basedow, the education reformer. No greater contrast to Lavater could have been picked out of the celebrities of that day. Lavater was handsome, clean, cheerful, flattering, insinuating, devout; Basedow ugly, dirty among the dirty, sarcastic, domineering, and aggressively heterodox. One tried to restore Apostolic Christianity; the other could not restrain the most insolent sarcasms on the Bible, the Trinity, and every form of Christian creed. One set up as a Prophet, the other as a Pedagogue.

Basedow (born 1723) was also early in indicating his future part. At school the wild and dirty boy manifested rebellious energy against all system and all method; studied in a desultory, omnivorous manner, as if to fit himself for everything; ran away from home, and became a lackey in a nobleman's house; caught up Rousseau's doctrine about a state of nature, which he applied to Education; wrote endless works, or rather incessant repetitions of one work; shouted with such lusty lungs that men could not but hear him; appealed to the nation for support in his philanthropic schemes; collected "a rent" from philanthropists and dupes; attacked established institutions, and parenthetically all Christian tenets; and proved himself a man of restless energy, and of vast and comprehensive ignorance. He made considerable noise in the world; and in private lived somewhat the life of a restless hog who has taken to philanthropy and freethinking.

Much as such a character was opposed to his own, Goethe, eager and inquiring, felt an attraction towards it, as towards a character to study. Like many other studies, this had its drawbacks. He was forced to endure the incessant smoking, and incessant sarcasms of the dirty educationist. The stench he endured with firmness; the anti-Christian tirades he answered with paradoxes wilder than any he opposed. "Such a splendid opportunity of exercising, if not of elevating, my mind," he says, "was not to be thrown away; so prevailing on my father and friends to undertake my law business, I once more set off for the Rhine in Basedow's company." Basedow filled the carriage with smoke, and killed the time with discussions. On the way they fell in with Lavater, and the three visited several chateaux, especially those of noble ladies, everywhere anxious to receive the literary Lions. Goethe, we may parenthetically note, is in error when he says that he was on this voyage greatly pestered by the women wanting to know all about the truth of *Werther;* the fact being that *Werther* did not appear until the following October; for although the exigencies of my narrative have caused a certain anticipation in chronology, this journey with Lavater and Basedow, here made to follow the publication of *Werther*, came *before* it in Goethe's life. If we are not to believe that the women crowded round him with questions about Lotte, we can readily believe that children crowded round him, begging him to tell them stories.

Wild and "genius-like" was his demeanour. "Basedow and I," he says, "seemed to be ambitious of proving who could behave the most outrageously." Very characteristic is the glimpse we catch of him quitting the ball-room, after a heating dance, and rushing up to Basedow's room. The Philanthropist did not go to bed. He threw himself in his clothes upon the bed, and there, in a room full of tobacco smoke and bad air, dictated to his scribe. When fatigue overcame him, he slept awhile, his scribe remaining there, pen in hand, awaiting the awakening of the Philanthropist, who, on opening his eyes, at once resumed the flow of his dictation. Into such a room sprang the dance-heated youth, began a fierce discussion on some problem previously mooted between them, hurried off again to look into the eyes of some charming partner, and before the door closed, heard Basedow recommence dictating.

This union of philosophy with amusement, of restless theo-

rising with animal spirits, indicates the tone of his mind. "I am contented," he said to Lavater, "I am happy. That I feel; and yet the whole centre of my joy is an overflowing yearning towards something which I have not, something which my soul perceives dimly." He could reach that "something" neither through the pious preaching of Lavater, nor through the aggressive preaching of Basedow. Very graphic and ludicrous is the picture he gives of his sitting like a citizen of the world between a prophet on the right and a prophet on the left hand—

Prophete rechts, Prophete links,
Das Welt-Kind in der Mitten—

quietly eating a chicken while Lavater explains to a country parson the mystery of the Revelations, and Basedow astonishes a dancing-master with a scornful exposure of the inutility of baptism.[1]

Nor could he find this "something" in Jacobi, with whom he now came into sentimental intimacy. He could to some extent sympathise with Jacobi's sentimental cravings, and philosophic, religious aspirations, for he was bitten with the Wertherism of the epoch. He could gaze with him in uneasy ecstasy upon the moonlight quivering on the silent Rhine, and pour forth the songs which were murmuring within his breast. He could form a friendship, believing it to rest upon an eternal basis of perfect sympathy; but the inward goad which drove him onwards and onwards, was not to be eradicated until fresh experience had brought about fresh metamorphoses in his development. It is the Youth we have before us here, the Youth in his struggles and many-wandering aims, not the Man grown into clearness.

Jacobi thought that in Goethe he had at length found the man his heart needed, whose influence could sustain and direct him. "The more I consider it," he wrote to Wieland, "the more intensely do I feel how impossible it is for one who has not seen and heard Goethe, to write a word about this extraordinary creation of God's. One needs to be with him but an hour to see that it is utterly absurd to expect him to think and act otherwise than as he does. I do not mean that there is no possibility of an improvement in him; but nothing else is possible with his nature, which develops itself as the flower

[1] See the poem *Diné zu Coblentz.*

does, as the seed ripens, as the tree grows into the air and crowns itself."

Goethe's wonderful *personality* seems almost everywhere to produce a similar impression. Heinse, the author of *Ardinghello*, writes of him at this period to Gleim: "Goethe was with us, a beautiful youth of five-and-twenty, who is all genius and strength from head to foot, his heart full of feeling, his soul full of fire and eagle-winged; I know no man in the whole History of Literature who at such an age can be compared to him in fulness and completeness of genius." Those, and they are the mass, who think of him as the calm and stately minister, the old Jupiter throned in Weimar, will feel some difficulty perhaps in recognising the young Apollo of this period. But it must be remembered that not only was he young, impetuous, bursting into life, and trying his eagle wings with wanton confidence of strength; he was, moreover, a Rhinelander, with the gay blood of that race stimulated by the light and generous wine of the Rhine—not a Northern muddled with beer. When I contrast young Goethe with a Herder, for example, it is always as if a flask of Rhenish glittered beside a seidel of Bavarian beer.

Such answer to his aspirations as the youth could at this period receive, he found in Spinoza. In his father's library there was a little book written against Spinoza, one of the many foolish refutations which that grand old Hebrew's misunderstood system called forth. "It made little impression on me, for I hated controversies, and always wanted to know *what* a thinker thought, and not what another conceived he *ought to have thought*." It made him, however, once more read the article Spinoza, in *Bayle's Dictionary*, which he found pitiable—as indeed it is. If a philosophy is to be judged by its fruits, the philosophy which guided so great and so virtuous a life as that of Spinoza, could not, Goethe thought, deserve the howls of execration which followed Spinozism. He procured the *Opera Posthuma* and studied them; with what fruit let the following confession indicate. He is speaking of his new friendship with Jacobi: "The thoughts which Jacobi imparted to me flowed immediately from his heart. How deeply was I moved when in unlimited confidence he revealed to me the deepest wants and aspirations of his soul. From so amazing a combination of mental wants, passion, and ideas, I could only gather presentiment of what might, perhaps, hereafter grow clearer to me. Fortunately, my mind had

already been prepared, if not thoroughly cultivated in this direction, having in some degree appropriated the results and style of thought of an extraordinary man, and though my study had been incomplete and hasty, I was yet already conscious of important influences derived from this source. This man, who had wrought so powerfully on me, and who was destined to affect so deeply my entire mode of thinking, was Spinoza. After looking around the world in vain for the means of developing my strange nature, I met with the *Ethics* of that philosopher. Of what I read *in* the work, and of what I read *into* it, I can give no account, but I found in it a sedative for my passions, and it seemed to unveil a clear, broad view over the material and moral world. But what especially riveted me to him, was the boundless disinterestedness which shone forth in every sentence. That wonderful sentiment, '*He who truly loves God must not require God to love him in return*,' together with all the preliminary propositions on which it rests, and all the consequences deduced from it, filled my mind.[1] To be disinterested in everything, but most of all in love and friendship, was my highest desire, my maxim, my practice, so that that saucy speech of *Philine's*, 'If I love thee, what is that to thee?' was spoken right out of my heart. Moreover, it must not be forgotten here that the closest unions rest on contrasts. The all-equalising calmness of Spinoza was in striking contrast with my all-disturbing activity; his mathematical method was the direct opposite of my poetic style of thought and feeling, and that very precision which was thought ill adapted to moral subjects made me his enthusiastic disciple, his most decided worshipper. Mind and heart, understanding and sense, sought each other with eager affinity, binding together the most different natures. But now all within was fermenting and seething in action and reaction Fritz Jacobi, the first whom I suffered to look into the chaos, and whose nature was also toiling in its own unfathomable depths, heartily responded to my confidence, and endeavoured to convert me to his own opinions. He, too, felt an unspeakable spiritual want; he, too, would not have it appeased by *outward* aid, but aimed at development and illumination from *within*. I could not comprehend what he communicated to me of the state of his mind; the less, indeed, as I could form no adequate conception of my own. Still, being far in advance

[1] The proposition to which Goethe refers is doubtless the xix. of Book v.: "*Qui Deum amat, conari non potest, ut Deus ipsum contra amet.*"

of me in philosophical thought, and even in the study of Spinoza, he was able to guide and enlighten my efforts."

Although he studied Spinoza much and reverently, he never studied him systematically. The mathematical form into which that thinker casts his granite blocks of thought, was an almost insuperable hinderance to systematic study on the part of one so impatient, so desultory, and so unmathematical as Goethe. But a study may be very fruitful which is by no means systematic; a phrase may fructify, when falling on a proper soil. It has doubtless happened to the reader in his youth to meet with some entirely novel and profoundly suggestive idea, casually cited from an ancient author; if so, he will remember the over-mastering influence it exercised, the longing it awakened for a nearer acquaintance with that author. The casual citation of a passage from Spinoza made my youth restless, and to this day I remember the aspect of the page where it appeared, and the revolution in thought which it effected. A few ideas determined the direction of Goethe's mind. Although he did not study the system of Spinoza with any view of adopting it as a system, he studied it to draw therefrom food which his own mind could assimilate and work into new forms. Spinoza was to him what Kant was to Schiller; but, with characteristic difference, Schiller studied systematically, and tried systematically to reproduce what he had studied.

Side by side with Spinozism, we have to note his struggles to gain clearness respecting Christianity. The influence of Fräulein von Klettenberg attracted him to the Moravians, who seemed to realise early Christianity; with his usual impressionability he studied their history and their doctrines, and gave them some hopes that he would become a convert; but his enthusiasm cooled down when he discovered the wide chasm that separated him from them. "That which separated me from this brotherhood," he says, "as well as from many other worthy Christians, was the very point which has more than once torn the Church with dissent. One party maintained that by the Fall, human nature had been so corrupted to its inmost core, that not a trace of good could be found in it; and that, therefore, man must renounce all trust in his own powers, and look only to the effect of grace. The opposite party, admitting the hereditary imperfections of man, ascribed to nature a certain internal germ of good which, animated by divine grace, was capable of growing up into a joyous tree of

spiritual happiness. This latter conviction penetrated to the depths of my soul all the time that I was, with tongue and pen, maintaining the opposite doctrine. But I had so dawdled along without thinking (*ich dämmerte so hin*) that I had never clearly stated the dilemma to myself."

In spite of all his differences, however, with this sect or that sect, nothing, as he says, could rob him of his love for the Holy Scriptures and for the Founder of Christianity. He therefore wrought out for his own private use a Christianity of his own; and as everything which took possession of his soul always assumed a poetic form, he now conceived the idea of treating epically the history of the *Wandering Jew*. "The legend ran that in Jerusalem there was a shoemaker named Ahazuerus. The shoemaker whom I had known in Dresden, supplied me with the main features of his character; and I animated them with the spirit and humour of an artisan of the school of Hans Sachs, ennobling him by a great love for Christ. In his open workshop he talked with the passers-by, and jested with them after the Socratic fashion; so that the people took pleasure in lingering at his booth. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees spoke to him; and our Saviour himself, and his disciples, often stopped before his door. The shoemaker, whose thoughts were altogether worldly, I nevertheless depicted as feeling a special affection for our Lord, which chiefly showed itself in a desire to convert this great man, whose mind he did not comprehend, to his own way of thinking. He therefore gravely incited Christ to abandon contemplation, to cease wandering through the country with such idlers, and drawing the people away from their work into the desert; because an assembled multitude, he said, was always excitable, and no good could come of such a life. Our Lord endeavoured by parables to instruct him in his higher views, but they were all thrown away on the rough shoemaker. As Christ grew into greater importance, and became a public character, the well-meaning workman pronounced his opinion still more sharply and angrily, declaring that nothing but disorder and tumult could result from such proceedings, and that Christ would at length be compelled to place himself at the head of a party, which certainly was not his design. And now when these consequences had ensued, Christ having been seized and condemned, Ahazuerus gives full vent to his indignation, as Judas, who in appearance had betrayed our Lord, enters the workshop in despair, with

loud lamentations, telling of the frustration of his plan. He had been, no less than the shrewdest of the other disciples, thoroughly persuaded that Christ would declare himself Regent and Chief of the people, and thought by this violence to compel him, whose hesitation had hitherto been invincible, to hasten the declaration.[1] In this persuasion he had roused the priesthood to an act from which they had hitherto shrunk. The disciples, on their side, were not unarmed; and probably all would have gone well, had not our Lord given himself up, and left them in the most helpless condition. Ahazuerus, by no means propitiated by this narrative, embitters the state of the wretched ex-apostle, who has no resource left but to hang himself. As our Saviour is led past the workshop of the shoemaker, on his road to execution, the well-known scene of the legend occurs. The sufferer faints under the burden of the cross, which Simon of Cyrene undertakes to carry. At this moment Ahazuerus steps forward; and, in the style of those harsh common-sense people who, seeing a man miserable through his own fault, feel no compassion, but rather, in their ill-timed justice, make the matter worse by reproaches, repeats all his former warnings, which he now turns into vehement accusations, springing, as it were, from his very love for the sufferer. Our Saviour answers not, but at that instant Veronica covers his face with a napkin, and there, as she removes it and raises it aloft, Ahazuerus sees depicted the features of our Lord, not in their present agony, but radiant with celestial life. Astounded at the sight, he turns away his eyes, and hears the words, 'Over the earth shalt thou wander till thou shalt once more see me in this form.' Overwhelmed by the sentence, he is some time before he recovers himself; *he then finds that every one has gone to the place of execution, and that the streets of Jerusalem are empty.* Unrest and yearnings drive him forth, and his wanderings begin."

This legendary conception he never executed. It lived within him for a long while, and during his travels in Italy he again thought of taking it up; but, like so many other plans, it remained a mere scheme, from the want of some external stimulus urging him to give it a shape.

[1] This new light thrown upon that strange history, though adverse from all tradition, is in strict accordance with our knowledge of human nature. It has been adopted by Archbishop Whately, to whom, indeed, it is generally attributed; and has furnished the subject of a miracle-play to R. H. Horne. See his *Judas Iscariot.*

Another subject also worthy of elaborate treatment is thus mentioned by him: "The common burthen of humanity which we have all to bear falls most heavily on those whose intellectual powers expand early. We may grow up under the protection of parents, we may lean for a while upon our brothers and friends, be amused by acquaintances, rendered happy by those we love, but in the end man is always driven back upon himself; and it seems as if the Divinity had so placed himself in relation to man as not always to respond to his reverence, trust, and love, at least not in the terrible moment of need. Early and often enough had I learned that the call to us is 'Physician, heal thyself'; and how frequently had I been compelled to exclaim in my pain, 'I tread the wine-press alone!' So now, looking round for support to my self-dependence, I felt that the surest basis on which to build was my own productive activity. For many years I had never known it fail me. What I had seen by day often shaped itself into magnificent dreams at night. My time for writing was early in the morning; but in the evening, or deep in the night, when wine and social intercourse had elevated my spirits, you might demand whatever you wanted; only let a subject with some character in it be proposed, and I was at once prepared and ready. In reflecting on this natural gift, I saw that it belonged to me *as my own*, and could neither be fostered nor hindered by any external circumstances; so I sought to make it the basis of my whole existence. This notion transformed itself into an image. The old mythological figure of Prometheus occurred to me; who, severed from the gods, peopled the world from his own workshop. I clearly felt that nothing important could be produced without self-isolation. My productions had been the children of solitude; and since I had formed wider relations with the world there had been no want of power or of *pleasure of invention*, but the *execution* halted, because I had neither in prose nor in verse, what could properly be called a style of my own, and thus with every new work had to begin at the beginning, and make experiments. As in this I had to exclude all aid from men, so, after the fashion of Prometheus, I separated myself from the gods also; and this the more naturally as, with my mode of thinking, one tendency always swallowed up and repelled every other.

"The fable of Prometheus lived within me. The old Titan web I cut up according to my own stature, and began to write

a play expressing the incongruous relation in which Prometheus stood with respect to Jupiter and the later gods, in consequence of his making men with his own hand, giving them life by the aid of Minerva, and thus founding a third dynasty. To this strange composition belongs the monologue which has become famous in German literature, because it called forth a declaration from Lessing against Jacobi on certain important matters of doctrine."[1]

Of this *Prometheus* we possess but a fragment, but the fragment is of such excellence as to make us regret that it never was completed. It lies there among his works, like the torso of the Theseus, enough to prove the greatness of the artist, if not enough to satisfy the spectator. Grand in conception, simple in style, luminous with great thoughts, it would have been an exemplar of the adaptation of an antique symbol to modern meanings, not the idle imitation of a bygone creed.

Nothing can be more unlike Æschylus. The Greek Titan glories in his audacity:

Ἑκὼν ἑκὼν ἥμαρτον, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι.

"Willingly, willingly I did it, never will I deny the deed!" but while glorying, he *complains:* the injustice of the tyrant wrings from him cries of pain, cries of physical and cries of moral agony. The whole tragedy is one wild outburst of sorrow. The first words he utters fling his clamorous sorrow on the air, call on the Divine Ether and the swift winged Winds, on the Sea Springs and the multitudinous laughter of the waves, on the Universal Mother, the Earth—and on the all-seeing Eye, the Sun, to witness what he, a god, must suffer. These are his opening words; the closing words carry the same burden. He wails over the pangs that are and are to be:—

Αἰ, αἰ τὸ παρὸν τὸ τ' ἐπερχόμενον
Πῆμα στενάχω.

This is antique. The Titan in Goethe utters *no* complaint. There is no bravado in his defiance; the defiance is uncompromising and sublime. His contempt for Zeus is founded

[1] He alludes to the discussion on Spinoza between Jacobi and Lessing, which gave rise to Jacobi's book, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinozas.* This feeble book made a great noise in its day.

on his knowledge of the subordination of Zeus to a higher power—Destiny. "Away," he exclaims, "I serve no slave."

Geh! Ich diene nicht Vasallen!

In this he resembles the Titan drawn by Shelley, in the *Prometheus Unbound*, who, to Mercury's warning of the years of coming torture, calmly and grandly answers:

"Perchance no thought can count them—yet they pass!"

On this conviction rests his self-reliance. He knows the reign of tyranny must end, and he awaits that end.

In Æschylus also, the Titan knows that Zeus must fall; he foresees his own release, and, foreseeing it, resolves to bear his fate as well as he can, "for it is vain to struggle against fate" (v. 105). Nevertheless, the knowledge of an end, and the philosophy which preaches acquiescence, does not prevent him from *complaining*. And this is very Greek. Homer makes even Mars, when wounded, howl with pain; and Sophocles has filled the *Philoctetes* with cries of physical pain. The Greeks had none of our modern notions respecting the effeminacy of complaint.

It may be objected perhaps to the foregoing view of the Titan, that Æschylus has in the first scene made him imperturbably silent, disdaining to answer the taunts of Power and the pity of Vulcan, as they bind him to the rock. These draw from him no groan, no word, no gesture; he has no defiance for the one, nor friendly gratitude for the other. It is not until he is left alone that he appeals to Earth, Air, and Ocean. This silence followed by this passion, produces a sublime effect. But the sublimity was *not* the poet's intention; it is an accidental effect. The silence was simply a *stage-necessity*, as I have elsewhere shown. Whether owing to some eurhythmic tendency in the construction of Greek plays, as Gruppe,[1] and after him Bode,[2] have maintained; or, more probably from motives of economy with respect to the actors, as Geppert asserts;[3] certain it is that in the plays of Æschylus more than *two speakers* were never together on the stage, with one trivial exception in the *Choëphoræ*, where Pylades says a few words. Hence scholars have been puzzled to account for the distribution of the *Prometheus* into parts. In the first scene the

[1] *Ariadne: oder die tragische Kunst der Griechen*, p. 143.
[2] *Geschichte der Hellen, Dichtkunst*, iii. p. 233.
[3] *Alt-Griechische Bühne*, p. 58.

protagonist would take Power and the deuteragonist Vulcan. Prometheus therefore *must* be silent, for there is no one to speak for him. Here comes the difficulty: If Prometheus is necessarily silent during the prologue, how does he become eloquent immediately on being left alone? Welcker[1] supposes that Prometheus was represented by a picture, and the protagonist at the close of the prologue got behind it, and spoke through it; an explanation accepted by Hermann,[2] but shown by Schömann[3] to be full of difficulties. Let that point be settled as it may, the fact remains that the silence of Prometheus was forced by stage necessities, and was *not* meant as an indication of his self-reliance; the further proof of which is to be seen in his wailings and writhings throughout the play—notably in the scene with Mercury (v. 905), where Prometheus is scurrilously fluent.

Shelley never makes his Titan flinch. He stands there as the sublime of *endurance*:

> "To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy power which seems omnipotent;
> To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent."

This is grand; but grander far the conception of Goethe, whose Titan knows that he is a god, and that if he be true to himself no power can trouble or destroy his heritage of life and activity:

Das was ich habe können sie nicht rauben,
Und was *sie* haben mögen sie beschützen;
Hier Mein und Dein,
Und so sind wir geschieden.

EPIMETHEUS.

Wie vieles ist denn Dein?

PROMETHEUS.

Der Kreis den meine Wirksamkeit erfüllt.[4]

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[1] *Opusc.* ii. p. 146. [2] *Trilogie*, p. 30. [3] *Prometheus*, p. 85.
[4] That which I have they cannot rob me of; that which they have, let them guard. Here mine, here thine; and thus are we distinguished.

EPIMETHEUS.

What, then, is thine?

PROMETHEUS.

The circle my activity doth fill!

This is a profound truth strikingly brought out. Godlike energy is seen only in creation; what we can *do* we *are*: our strength is measured by our plastic power. Thus the contempt of Prometheus for the idleness, the uncreativeness of the gods is both deep and constant.

Curtain thy heavens, Zeus,
With clouds, with mist!
And, like a boy that crushes thistle-tops,
Loosen thy rage on oaks and mountain ridges.
Yet must thou leave
Me my earth standing;
My hut, which myself built;
My hearth, with its bright flame,
Which thou dost envy.
I know nought so pitiful
Under the sun as ye gods!
Scantily nourishing
With the forced offerings
Of tremulous prayer
Your divinity!
Children and beggars,
And fools hope-deluded,
Keep ye from starving!
Who gave me succour
From the fierce Titans?
Who rescued me
From slavery?
Thou, thou, my soul, glowing
With holiest fire!
Yet didst thou, credulous,
Pour forth thy thanks to him
Who slumbers above!

I reverence thee? Wherefore?
Hast lightened the woes
Of the heavily laden?
Hast *thou* dried the tears
Of the troubled in spirit?
Who fashioned me man?
Was it not almighty Time—
And Fate eternal,
Thy lords and mine?
Here I sit and shape
Man in my image:
A race like myself,
That will suffer and weep,
Will rejoice and enjoy,
And scorn thee,
As I!

Even in this rough plaster-cast of translation, does not the grandeur and beauty of the original shine through?

CHAPTER VII

LILI

"I MUST tell you something which makes me happy; and that is the visit of many excellent men of all grades, and from all parts, who, among unimportant and intolerable visitors, call on me often, and stay some time. We first know that we exist, when we recognise ourselves in others (*man weiss erst dass man ist, wenn man sich in andern wiederfindet*)." It is thus he writes to the Countess Augusta von Stolberg, with whom he had formed, through correspondence, one of those romantic friendships which celebrated men, some time in their lives, are generally led to form. This correspondence is among the most characteristic evidences we have of his mental condition, and should be read by every one who wishes to correct the *tone* of the Autobiography. Above all, it is the repository of his fluctuating feelings respecting Lili, the woman whom, according to his statement to Eckermann, he loved more than any other. "She was the first, and I can also add she is the last, I truly loved; for all the *inclinations* which have since agitated my heart, were superficial and trivial in comparison."[1] There is no statement he has made respecting a matter of feeling, to which one may oppose a flatter contradiction. Indeed we find it difficult to believe he uttered such a sentence, unless we remember how carelessly in conversation such retrospective statements are made, and how, at his very advanced age, the memory of youthful feelings must have come back upon him with peculiar tenderness. Whatever caused him to make that statement, the statement is very questionable. I do not think that he loved Lili more than Frederika; and we shall hereafter have positive evidence that his love for the Frau von Stein, and for his wife, was of a much deeper and more enduring nature. "My love for Lili," he said to Eckermann, "had something so peculiar and delicate that even now it has influenced my style in the narrative of that painfully-happy epoch. When you read the fourth volume of my *Autobiography*, you will see that my love was something quite different from love in novels."

[1] *Gespräche*, iii. p. 299.

Well, the fourth volume is now open to every one, and he must have peculiar powers of divination who can read any profound passion in the narrative. A colder love-history was never written by a poet. There is no emotion warming the narrative; there is little of a loving recollection, gathering all details into one continuous story; it is, indeed, with great difficulty one unravels the story at all. He seems to seize every excuse to interrupt the narrative by general reflections, or by sketches of other people. He speaks of himself as "the youth of whom we now write!" He speaks of her, and her circle, in the vaguest manner; and the feelings which agitated him we must "read between the lines."

It is very true, however, that the love there depicted is unlike the love depicted in novels. In novels, whatever may be the amount of foolishness with which the writers adumbrate their ideal of the passion, this truth, at least, is everywhere set forth, that to love we must render up body and soul, heart and mind, all interests and all desires, all prudences and all ambitions, identifying our being with that of another, in union to become elevated. To love is for the soul to choose a companion, and travel with it along the perilous defiles and winding ways of life; mutually sustaining, when the path is terrible with dangers, mutually exhorting, when it is rugged with obstructions, and mutually rejoicing, when rich broad plains and sunny slopes make the journey a delight, showing in the quiet distance the resting-place we all seek in this world.

It was not such companionship he sought with Lili; it was not such self-devotion which made him restlessly happy in her love. This child of sixteen, in all the merciless grace of maidenhood, proudly conscious of her power, ensnared his roving heart through the lures of passionate desire, but she never touched his soul; as the story we have to tell will sufficiently prove.

Anna Elizabeth Schönemann, immortalised as Lili, was the daughter of a great banker in Frankfurt, who lived in the splendid style of merchant princes. She was sixteen when Goethe first fell in love with her. The age is significant. It was somewhat the age of Frederika, Lotte, Antoinette, and Maximiliane. An age when girlhood has charms of grace and person, of beauty and freshness, which even those will not deny who profoundly feel the superiority of a developed woman. There is poetry in this age; but there

is no depth, no fulness of character. Imagine the wide-sweeping mind of the author of *Götz*, *Faust*, *Prometheus*, *The Wandering Jew*, *Mahomet*, in companionship with the mind of a girl of sixteen!

Nor was Lili an exceptional character. Young, graceful, and charming, she was confessedly a coquette. Early in their acquaintance, in one of those pleasant hours of overflowing egotism wherein lovers take pride in the confession of faults (not without intimation also of nobler qualities), Lili told him the story of her life; told him what a flirt she had been; told him, moreover, that she had tried her spells on him, and was punished by being herself ensnared. Armida found herself spell-bound by Rinaldo; but this Rinaldo followed her into the enchanted gardens more out of adventurous curiosity than love.

There was considerable difference in their stations; and the elegant society of the banker's house was every way discordant to the wild youth, whose thoughts were of Nature, and unconstrained freedom. The balls and concerts to which he followed her were little to his taste. "If," he writes to Augusta von Stolberg, "If you can imagine a Goethe in braided coat, from head to foot in the gallantest costume, amid the glare of chandeliers, fastened to the card table by a pair of bright eyes, surrounded by all sorts of people, driven in endless dissipation from concert to ball, and with frivolous interest making love to a pretty blonde, then will you have a picture of the present Carnival-Goethe." In the following poem he expresses Lili's fascination and his uneasiness; the translation aims at accuracy of meaning rather than poetry, because the meaning is here the motive for my citing the poem:

Wherefore so resistlessly dost draw me
  Into scenes so bright?
Had I not enough to soothe and charm me
  In the lonely night?

Homely in my little room secluded,
  While the moon's bright beams
In a shimmering light fell softly on me,
  As I lay in dreams.

Dreaming thro' the golden hours of rapture
  Soothed my heart to rest,
As I felt thy image sweetly living
  Deep within my breast.

Can it be I sit at yonder table,
Gay with cards and lights,
Forced to meet intolerable people,
Because 'tis *she* invites?

Alas! the gentle bloom of spring no longer
Cheereth my poor heart,
There is only spring, and love, and nature,
Angel, where thou art!

The real Goethe is thus drawn in contrast by himself in his letter to Augusta. "But there is another, who in grey beaver coat, with boots, and a brown silk neckerchief, who, ever living in himself, working and striving, now throwing the innocent feelings of youth into little poems, now the strong spices of life into dramas, sketching his friends in chalk, asking neither right nor left what will be thought of his doings, because he always rises through work a step higher, because he springs at no ideal, but lets his nature develop itself fighting and playing." Here the true chord vibrates. Born for poetry, and not to pass his life in ball-rooms dangling after a pretty blonde who coquetted with him and with others, he feels that his passion is a folly. Now when a man feels that—"Cupid may have tapped him on the shoulder, but I warrant him heart whole." Read this poem, and read in it the struggle:

Heart, my heart, what is this feeling,
That doth weigh on thee so sore?
What new life art thou revealing,
That I know myself no more?
Gone is all that once was dearest,
Gone the care that once was nearest,
Gone the labour, gone the bliss,
Ah! whence comes such change as this?
Art thou spell-bound by the beauty
Of a sweetly blooming face;
Beauteous shape, and look so truthful,
And an all-resistless grace?
When the bonds I strive to sever,
Man myself to flee for ever,
Vain are all my efforts, vain!
And but lead me back again.

With such magic-web she binds me,
To burst through I have no skill;
All-absorbing passion blinds me,
Paralyses my poor will.
In her charmèd sphere delaying,
I must live, her will obeying:
Great, oh! great to me the change!
Love, oh! free me! let me range![1]

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[1] No one can be more sensible than I am of the inadequacy of this translation, but the English reader would rather have a poor translation than an original he could not understand; and the German reader has only to turn to the original, if it does not linger in his memory.

Lili coquetted, and her coquetry seems to have cooled his passion for a while, though she knew how to rekindle it. She served him as he served poor Käthchen, in Leipsic; and as in Leipsic he dramatised his experience under the form of *Die Laune des Verliebten*, so here he dramatises the new experience in an opera, *Erwin und Elmire*, wherein the coquetry of a mistress brings a lover to despair—a warning to Lili, which does not seem to have been altogether without effect.

Not only had he to suffer from her thoughtlessness, but also from the thoughtfulness of parents on both sides. It was not a marriage acceptable to either house. The banker's daughter, it was thought, should marry into some rich or noble family. A poet, who belonged to a well-to-do yet comparatively unimportant family, was not exactly the bridegroom most desired. On the other hand, the proud, stiff old Rath did not greatly rejoice in the prospect of having a fine lady for his daughter-in-law. Cornelia, who knew her father, and knew his pedantic ways, wrote strongly against the marriage. Merck, Crespel, Horn, and other friends, were all decidedly opposed to so incompatible a match. But of course the lovers were only thrown closer together by these attempts to separate them.

A certain Demoiselle Delf managed to overcome objections, and gain the consent of both families. "How she commenced it, how she got over the difficulties I know not, but one evening she came to us bringing the consent. 'Take each other's hands,' she cried in a half pathetic, half imperious manner: I advanced to Lili and held out my hand: in it she placed hers, not indeed reluctantly, yet slowly. With a deep sigh we sank into each other's arms greatly agitated." No formal betrothal seems to have taken place. Indeed, the consent which was obtained seems in nowise to have altered the feeling of friends and relatives. The nearer marriage seemed, the more impracticable it appeared. To Goethe, after the first flush of joy had subsided, the idea of marriage was in itself enough to make him uneasy, and to sharpen his sense of the *disparity* in station. The arrival of the two Counts Stolberg, and their proposal that he should accompany them in a tour through Switzerland, gave an excuse for freeing himself from Lili, "as an experiment to try whether he could renounce her."

Before accompanying him on his journey, it is necessary to cast a retrospective glance at some biographical details, omitted while the story of Lili was narrated. The mornings

were devoted to poetry, the middle of the day to jurisprudence. Poetry was the breathing-room of his heart. In it he sought to escape from the burden of intolerable doubts. "If I did not write dramas I should be lost," he tells Augusta von Stolberg. Among these dramas we must place *Stella*, for which, as we learn from a letter to Merck, the publisher offered twenty dollars,—that is to say, three pounds sterling. What an insight this gives into the state of Literature; the author of two immensely popular works is offered three pounds for a drama in five acts! Poor Schiller, subsequently, was glad to write histories and translate memoirs for fifteen or eighteen shillings a sheet of sixteen pages.

In *Stella* I can trace no biographical element, and perhaps the absence of this element makes the weakness of the drama. A poorer production was never owned by a great poet; although there have not been wanting critics to see in this also the broad handling of a master. It is the old story of the Count von Gleichen and his two wives. Fernando has deserted his wife, and formed an attachment to Stella; but the peculiarity of the situation is, that he quitted Cecilia, his wife, from no assignable cause, without even having outlived his love for her. He has indeed every reason to respect and cherish her as the mother of his child, and as a high-principled, virtuous woman; but he flies from her like a coward, flies to one more passionate, because she gives him the transports of passion in exchange for his wife's calm affection. The two women meet, and discover their love for the same man.

Here is a fine dramatic collision. On the one side Fernando sees Duty in the shape of a noble, suffering wife, and an engaging daughter; on the other, Passion in the shape of a fascinating mistress. But with this suggestive subject Goethe has done little. He shows us the contemptible weakness of the wavering Fernando, but the subject he has not powerfully wrought out. As I cannot recommend any one to read this play, the two masterly touches it contains may here be cited. The following is delicately observed:

We women believe in men! *In the ardour of passion they deceive themselves, how then can we help being deceived by them?*

This also is charming: Ferdinand returns to Stella after a long absence, and in their endearments she says:

Stella. How we love you! We do not think of the grief you cause us!
Fernando (*stroking her hair*). And has the grief made your hair grey? It

is fortunate your hair is so golden . . . nay, none seems to have fallen out! (*Takes the comb from her hair, which falls on her shoulders. He then twines the hair round his arm, exclaiming:*) Rinaldo once more in the ancient chains!

Artists complain of the dearth of subjects; will no one try his hand at that? Originally the dénouement of this "Play for lovers" (as it was called) solved the difficulty by a romantic piece of bigamy. Fernando is about to fly with Cecilia—about to return to his duty, when his wife—compassionating the situation of Stella, if Fernando should leave her—resolves to sacrifice her conjugal claims, and to *share* him with Stella! The curtain falls as he embraces them both, exclaiming, "Mine! mine!"

This roused vehement opposition. It was said to be a plea in favour of bigamy. The public dimly felt that instead of being a proper solution of the problem, it was on the whole rather ridiculous. Still more unsatisfactory however, if deeply considered, is the dénouement which was added when the play was produced at Weimar, and which now takes the place of the original in his collected works. Therein Fernando, unable to quit Stella, and unable to quit his wife, weeps with both, and blows his brains out. This is an *evasion* of the difficulty, not a solution.

In 1798, a feeble translation of *Stella* was published in England, and suggested to Canning his admirable caricature, *The Rovers*, familiar to all readers of the *Antijacobin*. Among the ludicrous passages of this parody is the famous vow of friendship:

"*Matilda.* A sudden thought strikes me. Let us swear an eternal friendship.

"*Cecilia.* Let us agree to live together."

But this is really a very slight variation from the original:

Stella. Madame! Da fährt mir ein Gedanke durch den Kopf—Wir wollen einander das seyn, was sie uns hätten werden sollen! Wir wollen beisammen bleiben!—Ihre hand!—Von diesen Augenblick an, lass' ich Sie nicht!

Besides *Stella*, he seemed to have worked at *Faust*, and to have written the opera of *Claudine von Villa Bella*, several passages for Lavater's *Physiognomy*, and many smaller poems.

The Stolbergs, with whom the Swiss journey was made, were two ardent admirers of Klopstock, and two specimens of the defiant "genius" class which scorned convention. They

hated imaginary tyrants; outraged sober citizens by their reckless recurrence to a supposed state of nature; and astonished sensible citizens by their exaggerated notions of friendship. Merck was pitiless in his sarcasms and warnings. He could not tolerate the idea of Goethe's travelling with these *Burschen*. But Goethe had too much of kindred devilry in him, breaking out at moments, to object to the wildness of his companions; though he began to suspect all was not right when, after violating every other *convenance*, they insisted on bathing in public. Nature having nothing to say against naked youths in the bright sunshine, what business had old Humdrum to cover its eyes with modest hands, and pretend to be shocked? However, so little prepossessed was Humdrum in favour of the Nude, that stones were showered upon these children of Nature; a criticism which effectively modified their practice, if it failed to alter their views.

Drinking the health of Stolberg's mistress, and then dashing the glasses against the wall to prevent their being desecrated by other lips after so solemn a consecration (a process which looked less heroic when *item'd* in the bill next day), and otherwise demeaning themselves like true children of "genius," they passed a wild and merry time. This journey need not longer detain us. Two visits alone deserve mention. One was to Karl August, who was then in Karlsruhe arranging his marriage with the Princess Luise, and who very pressingly invited the poet to Weimar. The other was to his sister Cornelia, who earnestly set before him all the objections to a marriage with Lili. "I made no promises," he says, "although forced to confess that she had convinced me. I left her with that strange feeling in my heart with which passion nourishes itself; for the boy Cupid clings obstinately to the garment of Hope even when she is preparing with long strides to depart." The image of Lili haunted him amid the lovely scenes of Nature:

Dearest Lili, if I did not love thee
How entrancing were a scene like this!
Yet, my Lili, if I did not love thee,
What were any bliss?

It was her image which endeared him to his native land. His father, always desirous he should see Italy, was now doubly anxious he should go there, as the surest means of a separation from Lili. But "Lombardy and Italy," says the poet, "lay before me a strange land; while the dear

home of Germany lay behind, full of sweet domesticities, and where—let me confess it—*she* lived who so long had enchained me, in whom my existence was centred. A little golden heart, which in my happiest hours I had received from her, still hung round my neck. I drew it forth and covered it with kisses."

On his return to Frankfurt he learned that Lili's friends had taken advantage of his absence, to try and bring about a separation, arguing, not without justice, that his absence was a proof of lukewarmness. But Lili remained firm; and it was said that she had declared herself willing to go with him to America. A sentence from the *Autobiography* is worth quoting, as a specimen of that love "so unlike the love to be found in novels," which he declared had given a peculiar tone to his narrative. It is in reference to this willingness of Lili to go to America: "the very thing which should have animated my hopes depressed them. My fair paternal house, only a few hundred paces from hers, was after all more endurable and attractive than a remote, hazardous spot beyond the seas!" A sentence which recalls Gibbon's antithesis, on his resignation of his early love: "I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son."

He was restless and unhappy during these months, for he was not strong enough to give up Lili, nor sufficiently in love to marry her; jealous of those who surrounded her, hurt by her coldness, he was every now and then led captive by her tenderness. There were moments when bygone days seemed once more restored, and then instantly vanished again. His poem of *Lili's Menagerie* expresses his surly disgust at the familiar faces which surround her. The Bear of the menagerie is a portrait of himself.

Turning to Art for consolation, he began the tragedy of *Egmont*, which he completed many years afterwards in Italy. It was a work which demanded more repose than could be found in his present condition, and I hasten to the dénouement of an episode, which, amid fluctuations of feeling, steadily advanced to an end that must have been foreseen. The betrothal was cancelled. He was once more free. Free, but not happy. His heart still yearned for her, rather because there lay in his nature a need of loving, than because she was the woman fitted to share his life. He lingered about the house o' nights, wrapped in his mantle, satisfied if he could catch a glimpse of her shadow on the blind, as she moved

about the room. One night he heard her singing at the piano. His pulses throbbed, as he distinguished his own song :—

Wherefore so resistlessly dost draw me
Into scenes so bright?—

the song he had written in the morning of their happiness! Her voice ceased. She rose, and walked up and down the room, little dreaming that her lover was beneath her window.

To give decision to his wavering feelings, there came, most opportunely, a visitor to Frankfurt. This was in September. Karl August, with his bride, on his way to Weimar, once more pressed him to spend a few weeks at his court. The rapid inclination which had sprung up between the Prince and the Poet—the desire to see something of the great world—the desire, moreover, to quit Frankfurt, all combined to make him eagerly accept the invitation. His father, indeed, tried to dissuade him; partly because he did not like the intercourse of plain citizens with princes; partly because the recent experience of Voltaire with Frederick the Great seemed to point to an inevitable termination in disgrace, if not evaded by servility. His consent was extorted at last, however, and Goethe quitted for ever the paternal roof.

BOOK THE FOURTH

1775 TO 1779

"Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?
Quem sese ore ferens! quam forti pectore et armis!
Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum."
—*Virgil.*

"Tolle Zeiten hab' ich erlebt und hab' nicht ermangelt,
Selbst auch thöricht zu sein wie es die Zeit mir gebot."

CHAPTER I

WEIMAR IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

On the 7th of November 1775, Goethe, aged twenty-six, arrived at the little city on the banks of the Ilm, where his long residence was to confer on an insignificant Duchy the immortal renown of a German Athens.

Small indeed is the space occupied on the map by the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar; yet the historian of the German courts declares, and truly, that after Berlin there is no court of which the nation is so proud.[1] Frederick the Great and Wolfgang Goethe have raised these courts into centres of undying interest. Of Weimar it is necessary we should form a distinct idea, if we would understand the outward life of the poet.

Klein ist unter den Fürsten Germaniens freilich der meine,
Kurz und schmal ist sein Land, mässig nur was er vermag.

"Small among German princes is mine, poor and narrow his kingdom, limited his power of doing good." Thus sings Goethe in that poem, so honourable to both, wherein he acknowledges his debt to Karl August. The geographical importance of Weimar was, and is, small; but we in England have proud reason to know how great a place in the world can be filled by a nation whose place is trivial on the map.

[1] Vehse: *Geschichte der Deutschen Höfe seit der Reformation*, vol. xxviii. p. 3.

We know, moreover, that the Athens, which it is the pride of Weimar to claim as a patronymic, was but a dot upon the surface of Europe, a dot of earth, feeding some twenty thousand freemen, who not only extended the empire of their arms from Eubœa to the Thracian Bosphorus, but who left their glories in Literature, Philosophy, and Art, as marvels and as models for the civilised world. It is interesting therefore to know how small this Duchy of Saxe-Weimar was, that we may appreciate the influence exercised by means so circumscribed. We must know how absurdly scant the income of its generous prince, who, as I am credibly informed, would occasionally supply the deficiencies of his purse by the princely unprinceliness of selling to the Jews a diamond ring, or ancestral snuff-box, that he might hand the proceeds to some struggling artist or poet. I mention this lest it should be supposed that a sarcastic spirit has dictated the enumeration of unimposing details, in the following attempt to reconstruct some image of Weimar and its court.

Weimar is an ancient city on the Ilm, a small stream rising in the Thuringian forests, and losing itself in the Saal, at Jena; this stream on which the sole navigation seems to be that of ducks, meanders peacefully through pleasant valleys, except during the rainy season, when mountain-torrents swell its current, and overflow its banks. The Trent, between Trentham and Stafford—"the smug and silver Trent" as Shakspeare calls it—will give an idea of this stream. The town is charmingly placed in the Ilm valley, and stands some eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. "Weimar," says the old topographer, Mathew Merian, "is *Weinmar*, because it was the wine market for Jena and its environs. Others say it was because some one here in ancient days began to plant the vine, who was hence called *Weinmayer*. But of this each reader may believe just what he pleases."[1]

On a first acquaintance, Weimar seems more like a village bordering a park, than a capital with a court, having all courtly environments. It is so quiet, so simple; and although ancient in its architecture, has none of the picturesqueness which delights the eye in most old German cities. The stone-coloured, light-brown, and apple-green houses have high-peaked slanting roofs, but no quaint gables, no caprices

[1] *Topographia Superioris Saxoniæ Thuringiæ*, &c., 1650, p. 188.

of architectural fancy, none of the mingling of varied styles which elsewhere charms the traveller. One learns to love its quiet simple streets, and pleasant paths, fit theatre for the simple actors moving across the scene; but one must live there some time to discover its charm. The aspect it presented, when Goethe arrived, was of course very different from that presented now; but by diligent inquiry we may get some rough image of the place restored. First be it noted that the city walls were still erect; gates and portcullis still spoke of days of warfare. Within these walls were six or seven hundred houses, not more, most of them very ancient. Under these roofs were about seven thousand inhabitants—for the most part not handsome. The city gates were strictly guarded. No one could pass through them in cart or carriage without leaving his name in the sentinel's book; even Goethe, minister and favourite, could not escape this tiresome formality, as we gather from one of his letters to the Frau von Stein, directing her to go out alone, and meet him beyond the gates, lest their exit together should be known. During Sunday service a chain was thrown across the streets leading to the church, to bar out all passengers, a practice to this day partially retained: the chain is fastened, but the passengers step over it without ceremony. There was little safety at night in those silent streets; for if you were in no great danger from marauders, you were in constant danger of breaking a limb in some hole or other; the idea of lighting streets not having presented itself to the Thuringian mind. In the year 1685, the streets of London were first lighted with lamps; in 1775 Germany had not yet ventured on that experiment. If in 1854 Weimar is still innocent of gas, and perplexes its inhabitants with the dim obscurity of an occasional oil-lamp slung on a cord across the streets, we can understand that in 1775 it had not even advanced so far. And our supposition is exact.[1]

The palace, which now forms three sides of a quadrangle, and is truly palatial in appearance, was in ashes when Goethe arrived. The ducal pair inhabited the Fürstenhaus, which stands opposite. The park was not in existence. In its place

[1] In a decree made at Cassel, in 1775, this sentence is noticeable: "In every house as soon as the alarum sounds at night, every inhabitant must hold out a lighted lantern, in order that the people may find their way in the streets." Quoted by BIEDERMANN: *Deutschland in 18ten Jahrhundert*, i. p. 370.

there was the *Welsche Garten*, a garden arranged after the pattern of Versailles, with trees trimmed into set shapes, with square beds, canals, bridges, and a Babylonic spiral tower called *Die Schnecke*, in which the people assembled to hear music, and to enjoy punch and sweet cakes. To the left of this garden stood the nucleus of the present park, and a wooded mass stretching as far as Upper Weimar.

Saxe-Weimar has no trade, no manufactures, no animation of commercial, political, or even theological activity. This part of Saxony, be it remembered, was the home and shelter of Protestantism in its birth. Only a few miles from Weimar stands the Wartburg, where Luther, in the disguise of Squire George, lived in safety, translating the Bible, and hurling his inkstand at the head of Satan, like a roughhanded disputant as he was. In the market-place of Weimar stand, to this day, two houses from the windows of which Tetzel advertised his indulgences, and Luther afterwards in fiery indignation fulminated against them. These records of religious struggle still remain, but are no longer suggestions for the continuance of the strife. The fire is burnt out; and perhaps in no city of Europe is theology so placid, so entirely at rest. The Wartburg still rears its picturesque eminence over the lovely Thuringian valleys; and Luther's room is visited by thousands of pilgrims; but in this very palace of the Wartburg, besides the room where Luther struggled with Satan, the visitors are shown the Banqueting Hall of the Minnesingers, where poet challenged poet, and the *Sängerkrieg*, or Minstrels' Contest, was celebrated. The contrast may be carried further. It may be taken as a symbol of the intellectual condition of Saxe-Weimar, that while the *relics* of Luther are simply preserved, the Minstrel Hall is now being restored in more than its pristine splendour. Lutheran theology is crumbling away, just as the famous *inkspot* has disappeared beneath the gradual scrapings of visitors' penknives; but the minstrelsy of which the Germans are so proud, daily receives fresh honour and adulation. Nor is this adulation a mere revival. Every year the Wartburg saw assembled the members of that numerous family (the Bachs) which, driven from Hungary in the early period of Reform, had settled in Saxony, and had given, besides the great John Sebastian Bach, many noble musicians to the world. Too numerous to gain a livelihood in one city, the Bachs agreed to meet every year at the Wartburg. This custom, which was continued till the close of the eighteenth

century, not only presented the singular spectacle of one family consisting of no less than a hundred and twenty musicians, but was also the occasion of musical entertainments such as were never heard before. They began by religious hymns, sung in chorus; they then took for their theme some popular song, comic or licentious, varying it by the improvisations of four, five, or six parts; these improvisations were named *Quolibets*, and are considered by many writers to have been the origin of German opera.

The theologic fire has long burnt itself out in Thuringia. In Weimar, where Luther preached, another preacher came, whom we know as Goethe. In the old church there is one portrait of Luther, painted by his friend Lucas Kranach, greatly prized, as well it may be; but for this one portrait of Luther, there are a hundred of Goethe. It is not Luther, but Goethe, they think of here; poetry, not theology, is the glory of Weimar. And, corresponding with this, we find the dominant characteristic of the place to be no magnificent church, no picturesque ancient buildings, no visible image of the earlier ages, but the sweet serenity of a lovely park. The park fills the foreground of the picture, and always rises first in the memory. Any one who has spent happy hours wandering through its sunny walks and winding shades, watching its beauties changing through the fulness of summer, and the striking contrasts of autumn as it deepens into winter, will easily understand how Goethe could have been content to live in so small a city, which had, besides its nest of friends, so charming a park. It was indeed mainly his own creation; and as it filled a large space in his life, it demands more than a passing allusion here.

Southwards from the palace it begins, with no obstacle of wall or iron gate, servant or sentinel, to *seem* to shut us out, so let us enter and look round. In the dew of morning, and in the silence of moonlight, we may wander undisturbed as if in our own grounds. The land stretches for miles away without barrier; park and yellow cornlands forming one friendly expanse. If we pass into it from the palace gates, a winding path to the right conducts us into the Belvedere Allée: a magnificent avenue of chestnut trees, two miles long, stretching from the new street to the summer palace of Belvedere. This affords a shaded promenade along the park, in summer grateful for its coolness, in autumn looking like an avenue of golden trees. It terminates in the gardens of the Belvedere, which

has its park also beautifully disposed. Here the Weimarians resort, to enjoy the fresh air after their fashion, namely, with accompaniments of bad beer, questionable coffee, and detestable tobacco.

If, instead of turning into the Belvedere Allée, we keep within the park, our walks are so numerous that choice becomes perplexing. Let us cross the *Stern Brücke*, a bridge leading from the palace. Turning to our right we pass along through noble trees, charmed by

"The sound of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
Which to the quiet trees all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

We reach the broad road leading to Upper Weimar. On this road, which skirts a meadow washed by the Ilm, we shall pass Goethe's *Gartenhaus* (Garden House, to be described hereafter), and then winding round the meadow, cross another bridge, and enter a shadowy path, picturesque with well-grouped trees—the solemn pine, the beech, whose dark green patches of moss increase the brilliancy of its silver bark, the weeping birch with its airy elegance of form, the plane tree, the elm, the chestnut and the mountain ash, brilliant with berries hanging like clusters of coral against the deep blue of the sky. One steep side of this path is craggy with masses of moss-covered rock; beneath the other flows the Ilm. A few paces from the bridge which leads us here, stands the *Borkenhaus* (Bark House), a hermit's hut, erected by Goethe for a fête of the duchess, and subsequently the favourite residence of the duke. It is only twenty feet long and fourteen deep, built entirely of wood, and plastered (so to speak) with the bark of trees. It rests against a rock amid the trees, and is surrounded by a wooden gallery, reached by rough wooden steps. Where is the prince who would live in such a hut nowadays? Where are the ministers who would attend council in such a hut? Yet, here Karl August lived alone, glad to escape from the tedium of etiquette, and the palling pleasures of a little court. Here he debated affairs of state, not less momentous to him because they were trivial in European politics. Here he bathed in the Ilm running beneath. Here he could see the Garden House of his poet, and telegraph to him across the Park. In this single room, which was at once dining-room, council-chamber, study, and bedroom, the manly duke lived alone for months.

From the *Borkenhaus* a small flight of stone steps conducts us to a mimic Ruin, and thence a narrow winding path leads to a stone monument, interesting as a witness to the growth of a mythos. It is an antique column, four feet high, round which a serpent winds, in the act of devouring the offering cakes on the top. The inscription says, *Genio Loci.* But the Weimer *plebs*, disregarding antique symbols, and imperfectly acquainted with Virgil, has a legend to tell; a legend sprung, no one knows whence, rapid and mysterious as the growth of fungi, like most legends, to satisfy the imperious craving for *explanations;* a legend which certifies how, formerly, a huge serpent dwelt in this spot, the terror of Weimar, until a cunning baker bethought him of placing poisoned cakes within the monster's reach; and when the greedy ignorance of the serpent had relieved Weimar of the monster, a grateful people erected this monument to an energetic and inventive baker. *Et voilà, comme on écrit l'histoire.*

I will not fatigue the reader by dragging him all over this much loved park, which must be enjoyed directly, not through description;[1] enough for present purposes if it be added that while the summer palace of Belvedere is connected with Weimar by the chestnut avenue, the summer palace and park of Tiefurt is also connected with Weimar by a richly-wooded road, the Webicht. This Tiefurt is a tiny little place, quite a curiosity of diminutiveness. The park, through which runs a branch of the Ilm, is tiny but picturesque. The upper story of the palace is a labyrinth of tiny rooms, some of them so small that, standing with your back against one wall, you can touch the opposite wall with your hand. It was here the Duchess Amalia lived.

"I have lived here fifty years," said Goethe to Eckermann, "and where have I not been? but I was always glad to return to Weimar." The stranger may wonder wherein lies the charm; but a residence at Weimar soon reveals the secret. Among the charms are the environs. First there is Etters-burg, with its palace, woods, and park, some seven miles distant. Then there is Bercka with its charming valley, dear to all pedestrians, within half-a-dozen miles; a little farther is Jena and its enchanting valley, from whose heights we look down on the sombre city, rendered illustrious by so many

[1] If a fuller description be desired, the reader will find one in the charming pages of Stahr's *Weimar und Jena*, to which I take this occasion of acknowledging a large debt.

sounding names. Jena was to science what Weimar was to poetry. Assembled there were men like Griesbach, Paulus, Baumgarten-Crusius, and Danz, to teach theology; Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, Reinhold, and Fries to teach philosophy; Loder, Hufeland, Oken, Döbereiner, to teach science; Luden, Schultz, and others, for history. The Schlegels and the Humboldts also lent their lustre to the place. Besides Jena, we must mention Ilmenau, Eisenach, the Thuringian forests, and the valley of the Saal: environs attractive enough for the most restless wanderer.

Having thus sketched the main features of the *place*, it will now be desirable to give some indication of the *times*, that we may understand the atmosphere in which Goethe lived. Difficult as the restoration of Weimar has been to me, and only possible through the aid of what still remains from the old time, the difficulty has been tenfold with regard to the more changing aspects of society and opinion. Curiously enough the Germans, famous for writing on all subjects, have produced no work on the state of manners and the domestic conditions of this much-be-written period. The books on Goethe are endless; there is not one which tells us of the outward circumstances among which he moved. From far and wide I have gathered together some details which may aid in forming a picture.

Remember that we are in the middle of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution is as yet only gathering its forces together; nearly twenty years must elapse before the storm breaks. The chasm between that time and our own is vast and deep. Every detail speaks of it. To begin with Science—everywhere the torch of civilisation—it is enough to say that Chemistry did not then exist. Abundant materials indeed existed, but that which makes a Science, viz. the power of *prevision* based on *quantitative* knowledge, was still absent; and Alchemy maintained its place among the conflicting hypotheses of the day. Goethe in Frankfurt was busy with researches after the "virgin earth." The philosopher's stone had many eager seekers. In 1787, Semler sent to the Academy of Berlin his discovery that gold grew in a certain atmospheric salt, when kept moist and warm. Klaproth, in the name of the Academy, examined this salt, and found indeed gold leaf in it—which had been put there by Semler's servant to encourage his master's credulity. This age, so incredulous in religion, was credulous in science. In spite of

all the labours of the encyclopedists, in spite of all the philosophic and religious "enlightenment," in spite of Voltaire and La Mettrie, it was possible for Count St. Germain and Cagliostro to delude thousands: and Casanova found a dupe in the Marquise d'Urfé, who believed he could restore her youth, and make the moon impregnate her! It was in 1774 that Mesmer astonished Vienna with his marvels of mystic magnetism. The secret societies of Freemasons and Illuminati, mystic in their ceremonies and chimerical in their hopes—now in quest of the philosopher's stone, now in quest of the perfectibility of mankind—a mixture of religious, political, and mystical reveries, flourished in all parts of Germany, and in all circles.

With Science in so imperfect a condition, we are sure to find a corresponding poverty in material comfort and luxury. High-roads, for example, were only found in certain parts of Germany; Prussia had no chaussée till 1787. Milestones were unknown, although fingerposts existed. Instead of facilitating the transit of travellers, it was thought good political economy to obstruct them, for the longer they remained the more money they spent in the country. A century earlier, stage-coaches were known in England; but in Germany, public conveyances, very rude to this day in places where no railway exists, were few and miserable; nothing but open carts with unstuffed seats. Diligences on springs were unknown before 1800; and what they were, even twenty years ago, many readers doubtless remember. Then as to speed. In 1754 there was "the flying coach" running from Manchester to London, but taking four days and a half on the journey. In 1763 there was a coach between Edinburgh and London, once a month; it passed twelve or fourteen days on the road; though even in our own stage-coach days the distance was performed in forty-eight hours. And as England was a busy nation, always in a hurry, we may gather from these details some idea of the rapidity of German travel. Germans were not flurried by agitations as to loss of time: if you travelled post, it was said with pride that seldom more than an hour's waiting was necessary before the horses were got ready,—at least on frequented routes. Mail travelling was at the rate of five English miles in an hour and a quarter. Letters took nine days from Berlin to Frankfurt, which in 1854 required only twenty-four hours. So slow was the communication of news that, as we learn from the Stein correspondence, the death of Frederick the Great was only known in Carlsbad as

a rumour a week afterward. "By this time," writes Goethe, "you must know in Weimar if it be true." With these obstacles to locomotion, it was natural that men travelled but rarely, and mostly on horseback. What the inns were may be imagined from the infrequency of travellers, and the general state of domestic comfort.

The absence of comfort and luxury (luxury as distinguished from ornament) may be gathered from the Memoirs of the time, and from such works as Bertüch's *Mode Journal*. Such necessities as good locks, doors that shut, drawers opening easily, tolerable knives, carts on springs, or beds fit for a Christian of any other than the German persuasion, are still rarities in Thuringia; but in those days, when sewers were undreamed of, and a post-office was only a vision, much that we moderns consider as comfort was necessarily wanting. The furniture, even of palaces, was extremely simple. In the houses of wealthy bourgeois, chairs and tables were of common fir; not until the close of the eighteenth century did mahogany make its appearance. Looking-glasses followed. The chairs were covered with a coarse green cloth; the tables likewise; and carpets are only now beginning to loom upon the national mind as a possible luxury. The windows were hung with woollen curtains, when the extravagance of curtains was ventured on. Easy chairs were unknown; the only arm chair allowed was the so-called *Grandfather's chair*, which was reserved for the dignity of grey hairs, or the feebleness of age.

The *salon de reception*, or drawing-room, into which greatly-honoured visitors were shown, had of course a kind of Sunday splendour, not dimmed by week-day familiarity. There hung the curtains; the walls were adorned with family portraits or some work of native talent; the tables alluring the eye with china, in guise of cups, vases, impossible shepherds and very allegorical dogs. Into this room the honoured visitor was ushered; and there, no matter what the hour, refreshment of some kind was handed. This custom—a compound product of hospitality and bad inns—lingered until lately in England, and perhaps is still not unknown in provincial towns.

On eating and drinking was spent the surplus now devoted to finery. No one then, except gentlemen of the first water, boasted of a gold snuff-box; even a gold-headed cane was an unusual elegance. The dandy contented himself with a

silver watch. The fine lady blazoned herself with a gold watch and heavy chain; but it was an heirloom! To see a modern dinner service glittering with silver, glass, and china, and to think that even the nobility in those days ate off pewter, is enough to make the lapse of time very vivid to us. A silver teapot and teatray were held as princely magnificence.

The manners were rough and simple. The journeymen ate at the same table with their masters, and joined in the coarse jokes which then passed for hilarity. Filial obedience was rigidly enforced; the stick or strap not unfrequently aiding parental authority. Even the brothers exercised an almost paternal authority over their sisters. Indeed, the position of women was by no means such as our women can hear of with patience; not only were they kept under the paternal, marital, and fraternal yoke, but society limited their actions by its prejudices still more than it does now. No woman of the better class of citizens could go out alone; the servant girl followed her to church, to a shop, or even to the promenade.

The coarseness of language may be imagined from our own literature of that period. The roughness of manners is shown by such a scene as that in *Wilhelm Meister*, where the *Schöne Seele* in her confessions (speaking of high, well-born society) narrates how, at an evening party, forfeits were introduced; one of these forfeits is, that a gentleman shall say something gallant to every lady present; he whispers in the ear of a lady, who boxes his ears, and boxes it with such violence that the powder from his hair flies into a lady's eyes; when she is enabled to see again, it is to see that the husband of the lady has drawn his sword, and stabbed the offender, and that a duel, in the very presence of these women, is only prevented by one of the combatants being dragged from the room.

The foregoing survey would be incomplete without some notice of the *prices* of things; the more so as we shall learn hereafter that the pension Karl August gave Schiller was 200 thalers—about £30 of our money; that the salary of Seckendorff as *Kammerherr* was only 600 thalers, or about £100; and that the salary Goethe received, as Councillor of Legation, was only 1200 thalers, about £200 per annum. It is necessary I should indicate something like the real relation of these sums to the expense of living. We find, in Schiller's correspondence with Körner, that he hires a riding-horse for sixpence

a day (vol. i. p. 84), and gets a manuscript fairly copied at the rate of three halfpence a sheet of sixteen pages (vol. i. p. 92); with us the charge is twopence for every seventy-two words; the whole of *Don Carlos* cost but three and sixpence for copying. He hires a furnished apartment, consisting of two rooms and a bedroom, for two pounds twelve and sixpence a quarter (Charlotte von Kalb writing to Jean Paul, November 1776, says his lodgings will only cost him ten dollars, or thirty shillings a quarter); while his male servant, who in case of need can act as secretary, is to be had for eighteen shillings a quarter (vol. i. p. 111). Reckoning up his expenses he says, "Washing, servants, the barber, and such things, all paid quarterly, and none exceeding six shillings: so that, speaking in round numbers, I shall hardly need more than four hundred and fifty dollars" (vol. ii. p. 94)—that is, about £70 a year. Even when he is married, and sees a family growing round him, he says, "With eight hundred dollars I can live here, in Jena, charmingly—*vecht artig*" (vol. ii. p. 153).

It is evident that in Weimar they led no very sumptuous life. A small provincial town overshadowed by a court, its modes of life were the expression of this contrast. The people, a slow, heavy, ungraceful, ignorant, but good-natured, happy, honest race, feeding on black bread and sausages; rising higher, there were the cultivated classes of employés, artists, and professors; and, higher still, the aristocracy. In the theatre, until 1825, the nobility alone were allowed admission to the boxes; and when the Jena students crowded the pit, elbowing out the Weimar public, that public was forced to return home, or jostle with the students for seats in pit and gallery. Even when the theatre was rebuilt, and the bourgeoisie was permitted a place in the boxes, its place was on the left side of the house, the right being vigorously reserved for the *Vons*. This continued until 1848; since that year of revolutions the public has had the place it can pay for.

It is quite true, the Weimar court but little corresponded with those conceptions of grandeur, magnificence, and historical or political importance, with which the name of court is usually associated. But just as in gambling the feelings are agitated less by the greatness of the stake than by the variations of fortune, so in the social gambling of court intrigue, there is the same ambition and agitation, whether the green cloth be an empire or a duchy. Within its limits Saxe-Weimar displayed all that an imperial court displays in larger proportions: it had

its ministers, its army, its chamberlains, pages, and sycophants. Court favour, and disgrace, elevated and depressed, as if they had been imperial smiles, or autocratic frowns. A standing army of six hundred men, with cavalry of fifty hussars, had its War Department, with war minister, secretary, and clerk.[1]

As the nobles formed the predominating element of Weimar, we see at once how, in spite of the influence of Karl August, and the remarkable men he assembled round him, no real public for Art could be found there. Some of the courtiers played more or less with Art, some had real feeling for it; but the majority set decided faces against all the *beaux esprits*. When the Duchess Amalia travelled with Merck in 1778, Weimar was loud in anticipatory grumblings: "She will doubtless bring back some *bel esprit* picked up *en route!*" was the common cry. And really when we have learned, as we shall learn in a future chapter, the habits of these *beaux esprits*, and their way of making life "genial," impartiality will force us to confess that this imperfect sympathy on the part of the *Vons* was not without its reason.

Not without profound significance is this fact that in Weimar the poet found a Circle, but no Public. To welcome his productions there were friends and admirers; there was no Nation. Germany had no public; nor has it to this day. It was, and is, a collection of cities, not a Nation. To appreciate by contrast the full significance of such a condition we must look at Greece and Rome. There the history of Art tells the same story as is everywhere told by the history of human effort. It tells us that to reach the height of perfection there must be the co-operation of the Nation with individual Genius. Thus it is necessary for the development of science that science should cease to be the speculation of a few, and become the minister of the many; from the constant pressure of unsatisfied *wants*, science receives its energetic stimulus; and its highest reward is the satisfaction of those wants. In Art the same law holds. The whole Athenian Nation co-operated with its artists; and this is one cause why Athenian Art rose into unsurpassed splendour. Art was not the occupation of a few, ministering to the luxury of a few; it was the luxury of all. Its triumphs were not hidden in galleries and museums; they blazed in the noonday sun; they were admired and criticised by the

[1] Lest this should appear too ridiculous, I will add that one of the small German princes (the Graf von Limburg Styrum) kept a corps of hussars, which consisted of a colonel, six officers, and two privates!

whole people; and, as Aristotle expressly says, every free citizen was from youth upwards a critic of Art. Sophocles wrote for all Athens, and by all Athens was applauded. The theatre was open to all free citizens. Phidias and Praxiteles, Scopas and Myron, wrought their marvels in brass and marble, as expressions of a national faith, and the delights of a national mind. Temples and market-places, public groves and public walks, were the galleries wherein these sculptors placed their works. The public treasury was liberal in its rewards; and the rivalry of private munificence was not displayed to secure work for private galleries, but to enrich the public possessions. In this spirit the citizens of Gnidos chose to continue the payment of an onerous tribute rather than suffer their statue of Venus to quit their city. And when some murmurs rose against the expense which Pericles was incurring in the building of the Parthenon, he silenced those murmurs by the threat of furnishing the money from his private purse, and then placing his name on the majestic work.

Stahr, who has eloquently described the effects of such national co-operation in Art, compares the similar influence of publicity during the Middle Ages, when the great painters and sculptors placed their works in cathedrals,—open all day long, in council-houses and market-places, whither the people thronged,—with the fact that in our day Art finds refuge in the galleries of private persons, or in museums closed on Sundays and holidays.[1]

Nor is this all. The effect of Art upon the Nation is visible in the striking fact that in Greece and Rome the truly great men were crowned by the public, not neglected for any artist who pandered to the fashion and the tastes of the few, or who flattered the *first* impressions of the many. It was young Phidias whom the Athenians chose to carve the statue of Pallas Athene, and to build the Parthenon. Suppose Phidias had been an Englishman, would he have been selected by government to give the nation a statue of Wellington, or to build the Houses of Parliament? The names most reverenced by contemporaries in Greece, and in Italy, are the names which posterity has declared to be the highest. Necessarily so. The verdict of the public, when that public includes the whole intelligence of the nation, *must* be the correct verdict in Art.

[1] See his *Torso*, pp. 147–151.

CHAPTER II

THE NOTABILITIES OF WEIMAR

HAVING endeavoured to reconstruct some image of Weimar and its people, we may now descend from generals to particulars, and sketch rapidly the principal figures which will move across that scene, during the first years of Goethe's residence.

The Dowager DUCHESS AMALIA is a very interesting figure. She had the Brunswick blood, with its capriciousness, love of pleasure, and frivolity; but she had also a mind well cultivated, not poorly gifted, and ready in appreciating men of talent. Although a niece of Frederick the Great, she did not follow the princely fashion of the day, and turn her eyes away from German literature, to fix them only upon France. She chose Wieland as the tutor of her son, and made him her own dear friend. Schiller, a rash judge of persons, and not very keen in his perception of woman's character, wrote to Körner, after his first interview with the duchess: "She has made no conquest of me. I cannot like her physiognomy. Her intellect is extremely limited, nothing interests her but what is based on the sensuous: hence the taste she has, or affects to have, for music, painting, and the rest. She is a composer herself, and has set Goethe's *Erwin und Elmire* to music. She speaks little; but has, at any rate, the merit of throwing aside all the stiffness of ceremony." Schiller's verdict cannot be accepted by any one who reflects, that, besides her appreciation of men of talent, who found delight in her society, she learned Greek from Wieland, read Aristophanes, and translated Propertius, was a musical composer, a tolerable judge of art, discussed politics with the Abbé Raynal and Greek and Italian Literature with Villoison; that, moreover, with all her multifarious reading and enjoyments, she contrived to superintend the education of her sons, and manage her kingdom with unusual success. This is not to be done by an "extremely limited intellect."

The "sensuous basis" alluded to by Schiller was certainly there. One sees it in her portraits. One sees it also in the glimpses of her joyous, pleasure-loving existence. Biographers and eulogists omit such details; for in general the biographical mind moves only through periods of rhetoric, which may be

applied with equal felicity to every prince or princess of whom it is the cue to speak. But it is by such details that the image of the duchess can alone be made a *living* one. Here, for example, is a sketch of her, given by an anonymous traveller.[1] "She is small in stature, good-looking, with a very *spirituelle* physiognomy; she has the Brunswick nose, lovely hands and feet, a light yet princely gait, speaks well but rapidly, and has something amiable and fascinating in her nature. . . . This evening there was a redoute, tickets one gulden (*two francs*) each. The court arrived at eight. The duchess was magnificent, *en domino*, and brilliant with jewels. She dances well, lightly, and gracefully. The young princes, who were attired as *Zephyr* and *Amour*, also danced well. The masquerade was very full, lively, and varied. A faro table was laid out: the smallest stake being half a gulden. The duchess staked dollars and half-louis, played generously and lost. But as she was glad to dance, she did not play long. She danced with every mask who invited her, and stayed till nearly three o'clock, when almost every one had gone home." The same writer also speaks of another redoute. "The duchess appeared *en reine grecque*, a very beautiful costume, which suited her well. The ball was very brilliant; some students from Jena were there. At the last ball of the season, the duchess sent me one of her own Savoyard dresses, and I was *frisé* and dressed like a woman by the Countess von Görtz's maid. The young count was likewise dressed as a woman, and we went to court so, dined there, and drove thence to the ball, which lasted till six o'clock."

This pleasure-loving duchess, who knew so well how to manage her kingdom, cared little for the dignities of her state. According to Wieland, she lived sometimes in student fashion, especially at Belvedere, where student-songs, not always the most decorous, rang joyously through the moonlit gardens. Driving once with seven friends in a haycart from Tiefurt, and overtaken by a storm, she made no more ado but drew over her light clothing Wieland's great coat, and in *that* costume drove on.

Her letters, especially those to Goethe's mother, several of which I have seen, have great heartiness, and the most complete absence of anything like formality. In one of them, I remember, she apologises for not having written for some time,

[1] Quoted from BERNOUILLI by VEHSE: *Geschichte der Deutschen Höfe*, vol. xxviii. p. 60.

not from want of friendship, but lack of news: to show that she has been thinking of *Frau Aja*, she sends her a pair of garters worked by herself. "*Liebe Frau Aja!*" she writes on another occasion, "my joy at the receipt of your letter is not easily described, nor will I attempt it, for true feelings are too sacred to be set down in black and white. You know, dear mother, what you are to me, and can believe how infinitely your remembrance of me has rejoiced me."[1]

Beside the figure of the Duchess Amalia, we see that of the merry little humpbacked GÖCHHAUSEN, her maid of honour, by intimates named *Thusnelda*. One sees not why this sprightly little *démon de bonne compagnie* should have been named after the wife of Arminius. She was a great favourite with Amalia, with Karl August also, who was constantly engaged in "wit combats" with her, not always of the mildest. She animated society with her devices, and kept up a voluminous correspondence with wits and notabilities in other cities. She was very fond of Goethe, and wrote constantly to his mother. But Karl August was her darling; perhaps because he plagued her so incessantly. As a sample of the lengths to which tricks were carried, consider the following anecdote, which I have from Frau von Goethe, who had it from her father-in-law, an accomplice in the deed. One night as *Thusnelda* came up the stairs leading to her bedroom, her candle was blown out. Not much heeding this, she went on, reached the gallery into which her bedroom opened, and walked on, *feeling* for the door. There is no great difficulty in finding the door of your own room in the dark, yet Thusnelda groped, and groped, and groped in vain: no lock met her hand, a smooth blank wall allowed her hand to pass and repass over it with increasing confusion. Where was the door? Where was she? After groping some time, her perplexity growing into undefined alarm, she descended to the duchess's room; but she found that closed; the duchess was asleep; and her gentle knockings were not answered. Upstairs she went again, again to pass her hands along the wall, but still to find no door. The night was cold, and she was half-frozen with cold and fear before the mystery was explained: the duke and Goethe had removed her door, and built up the wall in its place.

[1] Here is another extract, which I leave in the original: "Ach Mutter, Mutter!—sie errathen wohl meine Gedanken! was macht der alte Vater? er sollte ja nicht wohl seyn. Grüssen sie ihn von mir, und das tausendmal. Leben Sie wohl, beste Mutter; behalten Sie mir lieb und denken fleissig an ihre Freundin. *Amalia.*"

WIELAND had established his paper, the *Teutsche Merkur*, which was not without its influence. When he ceased to be the prince's tutor, he remained the valued friend of the duchess. He was in all the pleasure parties. So also was EINSIEDEL, who, at first court page, became chamberlain to the Duchess Amalia in 1776. A jovial, careless epicurean; everywhere known as *l'ami*, from his good-nature and eccentricity; filling the mouth of gossip with his extravagances; poet and musician in a small way; actor and inventor of amusements, his name meets us on every page of the Weimar chronicles.

Einsiedel makes us think of CORONA SCHRÖTER, the *Hofsängerin* (singer to the court—we have no such word, because we have no such thing). Goethe had known this beautiful and accomplished creature while he was a student at Leipsic, and when, shortly after his arrival at Weimar, he made an expedition to Leipsic with the duke, he saw her there again, and induced her to come to Weimar. She was the grace of their private theatricals, and the original personator of Iphigenia.

"Als eine Blume zeigt sie sich der Welt,"

says Goethe of her, in that passage wherein he has immortalised her and Mieding.[1] What a description!

She, like a flower, opens to the world.

Corona painted, sang, played, was learned in music, and declaimed with peculiar elegance,—

"The Muses lavished on her every art."

According to Karl August, she was "marble-beautiful, but marble-cold"; Goethe says of her:—

"Und hoch erstaunt, seht Ihr in ihr vereint
Ein Ideal, das Künstlern nur erscheint."[2]

There is a notion current, originating with Riemer, but shown by Schöll to be very improbable, that Goethe had a *liaison* with Corona. I not only agree with Schöll's reasoning, but can corroborate it by the testimony of the Frau von Goethe, who assured me her father-in-law expressly and emphatically

[1] See the poem *Mieding's Tod*.
[2] And gently awed, you feel in her combined
What is Ideal in the artist's mind.

told her that he never had a passion for any actress. Varnhagen von Ense suspects that Corona was privately married to Einsiedel; if not, her letters, still extant although inedited, prove that they were on the footing of lovers.

Another chamberlain, poet, and musician was SECKENDORF, who translated *Werther* into French, a year after Goethe's arrival (*Les Souffrances du Jeune Werther.* Par le B. S. d. S. Erlangen, 1776); and to these gay companions must be added BODE, the translator of Smollett; BERTUCH, the treasurer and the translator of Cervantes; and MUSÆUS, a passionate lover of gardening, who gave Weimar its pleasant *Erholung*, and who might be seen daily crossing the quiet streets with a cup of coffee in one hand, his garden tools in the other, trudging along to that loved retreat. At other times he might be seen plying the ex-drummer, Rüppler, with inspiring *schnapps* to unlock the casket of his memory, wherein were stored the legends and superstitions of the peasantry which Musæus afterwards dressed up in his own style in his celebrated *Volksmärchen.* There was much humour in Musæus; he furnished his Weimar friends with many a pleasant quip and crank. Heinrich Schmidt tells the following. One day Musæus, after a long illness, came to dine with the Schmidts. Every one was amazed at his healthy aspect. He received their reiterated compliments with perfect gravity, till his wife, unable longer to contain herself, confessed that before setting out he had rouged his cheeks![1]

These are the principal figures of Amalia's court. We may now glance at the court of the reigning duke and duchess—Karl August and Luise.

Of the DUCHESS LUISE no one ever speaks but in terms of veneration. She was one of those rare beings who, through circumstances the most trying, as well as through the ordinary details of life, manifest a *noble character.* The Queen of Prussia and the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar are two of the great figures in modern German history; they both opposed the chief man of the age, Napoleon, and were both admired by him for that very opposition. Luise was of a cold temperament, somewhat rigid in her enforcement of etiquette (unlike the dowager), and wore to the last the old costume which had been the fashion in her youth; apt in the early years of her marriage to be a little querulous with her husband, but showing throughout their lives a real and noble friendship for him.

[1] SCHMIDT: *Errinerungen eines weimarischen Veteranen*, p. 21.

And he was worthy of that friendship, much as his strange, and in many respects opposite nature, may have tried her. KARL AUGUST, whom Frederick the Great pronounced, at fourteen, to be the prince, of all he had seen, who gave the greatest promise, was in truth a very mixed, but very admirable, character. He can afford to be looked at more closely and familiarly than most princes. He was a man whose keen appreciation of genius not only drew the most notable men of the day to Weimar, but whose own intrinsically fine qualities *kept* them there. It is easy for a prince to assemble men of talent. It is not easy for a prince to make them remain beside him, in the full employment of their faculties, and in reasonable enjoyment of their position. Karl August was the prince who with the smallest means produced the greatest result in Germany. He was a man of restless activity. His eye was on every part of his dominions; his endeavours to improve the condition of the people were constant. The recently published correspondence shows how active were his intellectual sympathies. In his tastes no man in Germany was so simple, except his dearest friend, Goethe, with whom, indeed, he had many cardinal points in common. I remember, on first seeing their busts together, being struck with a sort of faint family resemblance between them. Karl August might have been a younger brother, considerably "animalised," but still belonging to the family. They had both, on the paternal side, Thuringian blood in their veins; and in many respects Amalia and Frau Aja were akin. But while Karl August had the active, healthy, sensuous, pleasure-loving temperament of his friend, he wanted the *tact* which never allowed Goethe, except in his wildest period, to overstep limits; he wanted the tenderness and chivalry which made the poet so uniformly acceptable to women. He was witty, but his *bon-mots* are mostly of that kind which, repeated after dinner, are not considered fit for drawing-room publication. Very characteristic is it of him, who had bestowed unusual pains in collecting a *Bibliotheca Erotica*, that when Schiller wrote the *Maid of Orleans* he fancied Schiller was going to give another version of *La Pucelle*, and abetted his mistress, the Frau von Heygendorf, in her refusal to play the part of the rehabilitated Maiden! He was rough, soldierly, brusque, and imperious. He was at home when in garrison with Prussian soldiers, but out of his element when at foreign courts, and not always at ease in his own. Goethe describes him longing for his pipe at

the court of Brunswick in 1774: "De son coté notre bon Duc s'ennuie terriblement, il cherche un interet, il n'y voudrait pas etre pour rien, la marche très bien mesurée de tout ce qu'on fait ici le gene, il faut qu'il renonce a sa chere pipe et une fee ne pourroit lui rendre un service plus agreable qu'en changeant ce palais dans une cabane de charbonnier."[1]

In a letter (unprinted), he writes to Goethe, then at Jena, saying he longs to be with him to watch sunrise and sunset, for he can't see the sunset in Gotha, hidden as it is by the crowd of courtiers, who are so *comme il faut,* and know their "fish duty" with such terrible accuracy, that every evening he feels inclined to give himself to the devil. His delight, when not with soldiers, was to be with dogs, or with his poet alone in their simple houses, discussing philosophy, and "talking of lovely things that conquer death." He mingled freely with the people. At Ilmenau he and Goethe put on the miners' dress, descended into the mines, and danced all night with peasant girls. Riding across country, over rock and stream, in manifest peril of his neck; teazing the maids of honour, sometimes carrying this so far as to offend his more princely wife; wandering alone with his dogs, or with some joyous companion; seeking excitement in wine, and in making love to pretty women, without much respect of station; offending by his roughness and wilfulness, though never *estranging* his friends—Karl August, often grieving his admirers, was, with all his errors, a genuine and admirable character. His intellect was active, his judgment, both of men and things, sound and keen. Once, when there was a discussion about appointing Fichte as professor at Jena, one of the opponents placed a work of Fichte's in the duke's hands, as sufficient proof that *such* a teacher could not hold a chair. Karl August read the book—and appointed Fichte. He had great aims; he also had the despotic will which bends circumstances to its determined issues. "He was always in progress," said Goethe to Eckermann; "when anything failed, he dismissed it at once from his mind. I often bothered myself how to excuse this or that failure; but he ignored every shortcoming in the cheerfullest way, and always went forward to something new."

Such was Karl August, as I conceive him from the letters of the period, and from the reports of those who knew him.

[1] *Briefe an Frau von Stein*, iii. p. 85. The French is Goethe's, as also the spelling and accentuation, or rather want of accentuation.

Eight years younger than Goethe, he attached himself to him as to a brother. We shall see this attachment and its reciprocal influence in the following pages; clouds sometimes gather, quarrels and dissatisfaction are not absent (from what long friendship are they absent?); but fifty years of mutual service, and mutual love, proved the genuineness of both their characters.

Among the Weimar notables, FRAU VON STEIN must always have conspicuous eminence. In a future chapter we shall learn more of her. Enough for the present to say that she was *Hofdame* (Lady of Honour) to the Duchess Amalia, and for many years passionately loved by Goethe. Beside her we may mention the COUNTESS VON WERTHER, who was to Karl August what the Baroness von Stein was to Goethe. She, as is well known, is the original of the charming Countess in *Wilhelm Meister*, and her husband was still more eccentric than the eccentric Count. It is related of him that once when the duke and some other illustrious guests were in his chateau, he collected several of his peasants, dressed them in his livery, and blacked their faces to make them pass as negroes!

To close this list we have MAJOR VON KNEBEL, the translator of Lucretius and Propertius, an honest, upright, satirical republican, the intimate friend of Karl August and Goethe, the "philanthropic Timon," as Herder called him, severe against all shams and insincerities, but loving the human nature he declaimed against. As one looks upon his rough, genial, Socratic head, one seems to hear the accents of an independent thoroughly honest nature give weight to what he says.

I have omitted HERDER. He did not come to Weimar till after Goethe, and indeed was drawn thither by Goethe, whose admiration for him, begun at Strasburg, continued unabated. The strange bitterness and love of sarcasm in Herder's nature, which could not repel the young student, did not alter the affection of the man. In one of Goethe's unpublished letters to the Duchess Amalia, there is an urgent appeal on behalf of Herder, whose large family had to be supported on very straitened means; the duke had promised to provide for one of the children, and Goethe writes to Amalia, begging her to do the same for another. No answer coming to this appeal, or at any rate no prompt notice being taken, he writes again more urgently, adding, that if she does not provide for

the child, he (Goethe), out of his small income, will! And this was at a time when Herder was most bitter against Goethe. Well might Merck exclaim: "No one can withstand the disinterestedness of this man!"

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST WILD WEEKS AT WEIMAR

This was the circle into which Goethe entered in all the splendour of youth, beauty, and fame: Youth, which, according to the fine conception of the Greeks, is "the herald of Venus"; Beauty, which those Greeks adored as the splendour of Truth; and Fame, which has at all times been a halo dazzling to mortal eyes. Thus equipped for conquest, how can we wonder that he conquered? Even Amalia, angry with him for having ridiculed her darling Wieland, could not withstand the magic of his presence. Her love of genius left her no choice. She was fascinated by his wild ways, and by his splendid talents. One moment he startled her with a paradox, the next moment he sprang from his seat, waltzing and whirling round the room with antics which made her scream with laughter. And Wieland?—he was conquered at once. He shall speak for himself, in a letter written after their first interview: "How perfectly I felt, at the first glance, he was a man after my own heart! How I loved the magnificent youth as I sat beside him at table! All that I can say (after more than one crisis which I have endured) is this: since that morning my soul is as full of Goethe as a dewdrop of the morning sun. . . . I believe the Godlike creature will remain longer with us than he intended; and if Weimar *can* do anything, his presence will accomplish it." This is very honourable to Wieland: Nestor gazes with unenvious delight upon young Achilles. Heroic eyes are always proud to recognise heroic proportions.

After Wieland and the duchess, the rest were easy to conquer. "He rose like a star in the heavens," says Knebel. "Everybody worshipped him, especially the women." In the costume of his own *Werther*, which was instantly adopted by the duke, he seemed the ideal of a poet. To moderns there are no very sentimental suggestions in a costume which was

composed of blue coat and brass buttons, topboots, and leather breeches, the whole surmounted by powder and pig-tail; but in those days this costume was the suggestion of everything tender and romantic. Werther had consecrated it.[1] The duke not only adopted it, but made all around him adopt it also, sometimes paying the tailor's bill himself. Wieland alone was excepted; he was too old for such masqueradings.

Thoroughly to appreciate the effect of Goethe's influence with women, we must remember the state of feeling and opinion at the time. Those were the days of gallantry, the days of

"Puffs, paints, and patches, powders, billets doux."

The laxity of German morals differed from the more audacious licentiousness of France: it had sentimentalism, in lieu of gaiety and luxuriousness, for its basis. The heart of a French marquise was lost over a supper table sparkling with champagne and *bon-mots;* the heart of a German Gräfin yielded more readily to moonlight, melancholy, and a copy of verses. Wit and audacity were the batteries for a Frenchwoman; the German was stormed with sonnets, and a threat of suicide. For the one, Lothario needed sprightliness and *bon ton;* for the other, turbulent disgust at all social arrangements, expressed in interjectional rhetoric, and a deportment outrageous to all conventions. It is needless to add that marriage was to a great extent what Sophie Arnould with terrible wit called it—"the sacrament of adultery"; and that on the subject of the sexes the whole tone of feeling was low. Poor, simple, earnest Schiller, whom no one will accuse of laxity, admired *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and saw no reason why women should not read it; although to our age the infamy of that book is so great as to stamp a brand upon the society which produced and applauded it. Yet even Schiller, who admired this book, was astounded at the condition of women at Weimar. "There is hardly one of them," he writes to Körner, "who has not had a *liaison*. They are all coquettes. . . . One may very easily fall into an 'affair of the heart,' though it will not *last* any time." It was thought, apparently, that since Eros had wings, he must use them—and fly.

[1] It should be remembered, that in Germany, at that time, *boots* were only worn in very bad weather; and in the presence of women no one ever appeared except in shoes and silk stockings.

With this tone of society we can understand how, as Goethe in after-life confessed to Eckermann, the first years at Weimar were "perplexed with love affairs." A great admirer of women, and greatly admired by them, it was natural he should fall into their snares. Many charmers are named; among them, Fräulein von Kalb, Corona Schröter, and Kotzebue's sister, Amalia: but I am bound to say that, after the most diligent inquiry, I can find *no* reliable evidence for believing any one of those named to have been really loved by him. We must content ourselves with the fact of his having flirted considerably: making love to every bright pair of eyes which for a moment could make him believe what he said.[1]

For the first few months he gave himself up to the excitement of this new life. Among other things he introduced skating. Weimar had hitherto seen no gentleman on the ice; but now, Klopstock having made skating famous by his poetry, Goethe made it fashionable by his daring grace. The duchess soon excelled in the art. Skating on the *Schwansee* became "the rage." Sometimes the banks were illuminated with lamps and torches, and music and fireworks animated the scene. The duchess and ladies, masked as during carnival, were driven in sledges over the noisy ice. "We are somewhat mad here," Goethe writes to Merck, "and play the devil's own game." Wieland's favourite epithet for him was *wüthig*—outrageous; and *wüthig* he was. Strange stories are told of him, now dashing across the ice, now loosening his long hair in Bertuch's room, and, with locks flowing over his shoulders, whirling round in mad Bacchante waltz; and finally, standing in the Jena market-place with the duke, by the hour together, smacking huge sledge whips for a wager. Imagine a duke and a poet thus engaged in a public market-place!

His constant companion, and in all devilries and dissipation his most jovial associate, was Karl August. All ceremony was laid aside between them. They dined together, often shared the same bedroom, and called each other by the brotherly *thou*. "Goethe will never leave this place again," writes Wieland; "K. A. can no longer swim or wade without him. The court, or rather his liaison with the duke, wastes his time, which is really a great pity—and yet—with so magnificent and godlike a creature nothing is ever lost!" Weimar

[1] "Ich log und trog mich bei allen hübschen Gesichtern herum, und hatte den Vortheil immer ein Augenblick zu glauben was ich sagte," he says in a letter to the Frau von Stein, vol. i. p. 5.

was startled in its more respectable circles by the conduct of these two, and their associates: conduct quite in keeping with the period named "the *genial*." [1] In their orgies they drank wine out of skulls (as Byron and his friends did in their wild days), and in ordinary intercourse exhibited but a very mitigated respect for *meum* and *tuum*, borrowing handkerchiefs and waistcoats which were never returned. The favourite epithet of that day was "infinite": Genius drank infinitely, loved infinitely, and swallowed infinite sausages.

But the poet's nature soon wearies of such scenes. After some two months of dissipation, in masking, skating, hunting, drinking, and dicing, the want to be once more among simple people and lovely scenes drove him away from Weimar to Waldeck. Amid the crowded tumult of life he ever kept his soul sequestered; and from the hot air of society be broke impatiently away to the serenity of solitude. While on this journey along the pine-clad mountains, there came over him a feeling of the past, in which the image of Lili painfully reappeared.

He was called back to Weimar by the duke, impatient of his absence; and, while debating in his own mind whether he should accept a place there, or return to Frankfurt, he began to take his seat, as a guest, in the Privy Council. He had tried the court, and now he was about to try what virtue lay in government. "I am here as if at home," so runs one of his letters, "and the duke daily becomes dearer to me." Indeed his father's prognostications had failed. The connection between his son and the duke was of a totally different kind from that between Voltaire and Fritz. In secret, Voltaire despised the verses of his patron, as his patron in secret despised the weakness of Voltaire. A few unguarded expressions were enough to snap the link which bound them together; but a lifetime only deepened the regard of Goethe and Karl August. Nor must it be supposed that their friendship was merely that of boon-companions. Both had high aims and strong wills. Prince Hal might recreate himself with Falstaff, Pistol, Bardolph and the rest; but while chucking Mrs. Quickly under the chin, he knew he was one day to be England's lord. Karl August and Goethe were not the men to lose themselves in the fleeting hours of dissipation; serious, steady business

[1] It is difficult to find an English word to express the German *genial*, which means pertaining to genius. The genial period was the period when every extravagance was excused on the plea of genius.

was transacted almost the moment before some escapade. In their retreat at Ilmenau the poet writes :

> Mein Carl und ich vergessen hier
> Wie seltsam uns ein tiefes Schicksal leitet.
> Und ach ! ich fühl's, im stillen werden wir
> Zu neuen Scenen vorbereitet.

"My Karl and I here forget the strange mysterious Fate which guides us ; and I feel that in these quiet moments we are preparing for new scenes." Yes, they learned "in the happy present to forecast the future."

The duke knew what he was doing when he overstepped all precedent, and, in June 1776, elected Goethe to the post of Geheime Legations Rath, with a seat and voice in the Privy Council, and a salary of 1200 thalers. In writing to Goethe's father, the duke intimated that there was absolute freedom of leaving the service at will, and that indeed the appointment was a mere formality, no measure of his affection. "Goethe can have but one position—that of my friend. All others are beneath him."

The post of Geheime Legations Rath at Weimar is not a very magnificent post ; and the salary of 1200 thalers (about £200) seems still less magnificent when we remember that at that period the King of Prussia gave the Barberini, an Italian dancer, exactly *ten* times the sum. But, such as it was, the appointment created great noise. Weimar was thunderstruck. The favour shown to Wieland had not passed without scandal ; but alarming indeed was this elevation of a Frankfurt bourgeois. A poet, who had gone through none of the routine of business, whose life was anything but "respectable," to be lifted suddenly over the plodding heads of legitimate aspirants ! If *this* was to be, what reward could meritorious mediocrity expect ? what advantage had slowly-acquired routiniary knowledge ?

So murmured scandalised officials and their friends. At last these murmurs expressed themselves distinctly in the shape of a protest. The duke thought the act worthy of a deliberate justification, and with his own hand added these words to the protocol of the acts of his ministry : "Enlightened persons congratulate me on possessing such a man. His genius and capacity are well known. To employ a man of such a stamp in any other functions than those in which he can render available the extraordinary gifts he possesses, is to abuse them. As to the observation that persons of merit may

think themselves unjustly passed over: I observe, in the first place, that nobody to my knowledge, in my service, has a right to reckon on an equal degree of favour; and I add that I will never consent to be governed by mere length of service or rotation in my choice of a person whose functions place him in such immediate relation to myself, and are so important to the happiness of my people. In such a case I shall attend to nothing but the degree of confidence I can repose in the person of my choice. The public opinion which perhaps censures the admission of Dr. Goethe to my council without having passed through the previous steps of Amtmann, Professor, Kammerath, or Regierungsrath, produces no effect on my own judgment. The world forms its opinion on prejudices; but I watch and work—as every man must who wishes to do his duty—not to make a noise, not to attract the applause of the world, but to justify my conduct to God and my conscience."

Assuredly we may echo M. Dumont's sentiment, that "the prince, who, at nineteen, wrote those words, was no ordinary man." He had not only the eye to see greatness, he had also the strong Will to guide his conduct according to his views, untrammelled by routine and formulas. "Say what you will, it is only like can recognise like, and a prince of great capacity will always recognise and cherish greatness in his servants."[1] People saw that the duke was resolved. Murmurs were silenced; or only percolated the gossip of private circles, till other subjects buried them, as all gossip is buried.

The mode of life which the *genial* company led was not only the subject of gossip in Weimar, it grew and grew as scandals grow, *not* losing substance on the way, and reached the ears of distant friends. Thus, only a month before the appointment, Klopstock wrote to Goethe a letter which scandal extorted from friendship.

"HAMBURG, *8th of May* 1776.

"Here is a proof of my friendship, dearest Goethe! It is somewhat difficult, I confess, to give it, but it must be given. Do not fancy that I wish to preach to you about your doings; or that I judge harshly of you because you have other views than mine. But your views and mine quite set aside, what will be the inevitable consequence if your present doings

[1] Goethe in *Eckermann*, iii. p. 232.

continue. The duke, if he continues to drink as he does, instead of strengthening, as he says, his constitution, will ruin it, and will not live long. Young men of powerful constitutions—and that the duke is not—have in this way early perished. The Germans have hitherto, and with justice, complained that their princes would have nothing to do with authors. They now gladly make an exception in favour of the duke. But what a justification will not the other princes have, if you continue your present tone? If only that should happen which I feel will happen! The duchess will perhaps still subdue her pain, for she has a strong, manly intellect. But that pain will become grief! And can *that* be so suppressed? Louisa's grief, Goethe! . . . I must add a word about Stolberg. He goes to Weimar out of friendship for the duke. He must also live well with him. But how? In *his* style? No! unless he, too, becomes altered, he will go away. And then what remains for him? Not in Copenhagen, not in Weimar. I must write to Stolberg; what shall I say to him? You may please yourself about showing this letter to the duke. I have no objection against it. On the contrary; for he is assuredly not yet arrived at that point when he will not listen to the honest word of a friend. KLOPSTOCK."

Goethe's answer, dated the 21st of May, a fortnight later, therefore, runs thus:

"In future, spare us such letters, dear Klopstock! They do no good, and only breed bad blood. You must feel yourself that I have no answer to make. Either I must, like a schoolboy, begin a *Pater peccavi*, or sophistically excuse, or as an honest fellow defend, and perhaps a mingling of all these might express the truth, but to what purpose? Therefore, not a word more between us on this subject. Believe me I should not have a moment's rest if I replied to all such admonitions. It pained the duke a moment to think it was Klopstock. He loves and honours you; you know I do the same. Goodbye. Stolberg must come all the same. We are no worse; and with God's help will be better than what he has seen us."

To this Klopstock indignantly replied:—

"You have much misunderstood the proof of my friendship, which was great, precisely because of my reluctance to mix myself unasked in the affairs of others. And as you include *all* such letters and *all* such admonitions (your expressions are