illegible in the twilight;" although I might learn from what I have felt, and from what others have felt about the *First Part*, not to be hasty in pronouncing judgment, nevertheless I must express my real convictions, and not withhold them on the chance that future enlightenment may cause me to alter them. What Channing says of opinions generally, is applicable to critical opinions: we are answerable for their *uprightness*, not for their *rightness*.

Moreover, comparing the impressions produced by *Faust* and by the *Second Part*, although it is true that in both cases a sense of disappointment is created, the kind of objection made to each is entirely different. In *Faust*, a want of familiarity with the work may cause it to appear fragmentary, discordant, irreverent, not sufficiently metaphysical, and so forth; but a single reading is enough to impress us with a sense of its interest, its pathos, its poetry, its strongly-marked character. In other words, the substance of the work lays hold of us; it is only the execution upon which criticism exercises itself. If we think it fragmentary, the fragments are at any rate of deep significance. If we think it deficient in taste, we never reproach it with want of power. The reverse is the case with this *Second Part*. Our objections are not raised by the details, but by the body of the poem; it is not the execution, but the whole conception, both in respect to the story itself, and to the mode of working out that story. What is the consequence? The consequence is that familiarity with *Faust* removes our objections and intensifies our admiration; but familiarity with the *Second Part* confirms our objections, and discloses their source.

If we remember that all Goethe's works are biographical, are parts of his life, and expressions of the various experiences he underwent, and the various stages of culture he passed through, there will be a peculiar interest in examining this product of his old age; and at the same time the reader will see the motive which made me reserve for this chapter what has to be said on the *Second Part*, instead of affixing it to the criticism of the *First Part;* for indeed the two poems are two, not two parts of one poem; the interval between them in conception and treatment is as wide as the interval of years between their composition. Taking up the biographical clue, we have seen in previous chapters the gradual development of a tendency towards mysticism and over-reflectiveness, which, visible as a germ in his earliest years, grew

with his growth, and expanded in the later years, till its overgrowth shadowed and perplexed his more vigorous concrete tendencies, and made this clearest and most spontaneous of poets as fond of symbols as a priest of Isis. To those—and they are many—who think the aim and purpose of Art is to create symbols for Philosophy, this development will be prized as true progress. Others who do not thus subordinate the artist to the thinker, must regard the encroachment of Reflection as a sign of decay. It is quite true that Modern Art, as representative of the complexity of Modern Life, demands a large admixture of Reflection; but the predominance of the reflective tendency is a sign of decay. It is true that for an organism of a certain degree of complexity, an internal osseous structure is necessary; but the increase of ossification is cause and consequent of decay of vital power.

With the two parts of *Faust* we have very much the same critical questions to debate as with the earlier and later books of *Wilhelm Meister;* questions too wide and deep for thorough discussion here, and which I must content myself with indicating. One cardinal consideration must, however, be brought forward, which lies at the very basis of all argument on the subject. It is this: If the artist desire to express certain philosophic conceptions by means of symbols, he must never forget that, Art being Representation, the symbols chosen must possess *in themselves* a charm independent of what they mean. The forms which are his materials, the symbols which are his language, must in themselves have a beauty, and an interest, readily appreciable by those who do not understand the occult meaning. Unless they have this they cease to be Art; they become hieroglyphs. Art is picture-painting, not picture-writing. Beethoven, in his Symphonies, may have expressed grand psychological conceptions, which, for the mind that interprets them, may give an extra charm; but if the strains in themselves do not possess a magic, if they do not sting the soul with a keen delight, then let the meaning be never so profound, it will pass unheeded, because the *primary requisite* of music is not that it shall present grand thoughts, but that it shall agitate the audience with musical emotions. The poet who has only profound meanings, and not the witchery which is to carry his expression of those meanings home to our hearts, has failed. The primary requisite of poetry is that it shall move us; not that it shall instruct us.

The *Second Part of Faust*, if the foregoing be correct, is a

failure, because it fails in the primary requisite of a poem. Whatever else it may be, no one will say it is interesting. The scenes, incidents, and characters do not *in themselves* carry that overpowering charm which masters us in the First Part. They borrow their interest from the meanings they are supposed to symbolise. Only in proportion to your ingenuity in guessing the riddle is your interest excited by the means. Mephisto, formerly so marvellous a creation, has become a mere mouthpiece; Faust has lost all traces of individuality, every pulse of emotion. The philosophic critics will point out how this change is necessary, because in the *Second Part* all that was individual has become universal. But this is only a description, not a justification; it is dignifying failure with a philosophic purpose. Goethe has himself declared this to have been his intention: "I could not help wondering," he says, "that none of those who undertook a continuation and completion of my fragment should have conceived the idea, which seemed so obvious, that the Second Part must necessarily be carried into a more elevated sphere, conducting Faust into higher regions under worthier circumstances." Right enough: but in changing the ground there was no necessity for such a change of treatment; to conduct Faust into a higher region it was not necessary to displace the struggles of an individual by representative abstractions; above all, it was not necessary to forsake the real domain of Art for that of Philosophy, and sacrifice beauty to meaning. The defect of this poem does not lie in its occult meanings, but in the poverty of poetic life, which those meanings are made to animate. No matter how occult the meaning, so that the picture be fine. A lion may be the symbol of wakefulness, of strength, of kingliness, of solitariness, and of many other things, according to the arbitrary fancy of the artist; and it matters comparatively little whether we rightly or wrongly interpret the artist's meaning; but his lion must be finely executed, must excite our admiration *as* a lion, if we are to consider it a work of Art.

Respecting the philosophic meaning of the *First Part* critics battle, and will battle perhaps for ever; but they are tolerably unanimous respecting its beauty. The passion, poetry, sarcasm, fancy, wisdom, and thrilling thoughts as from some higher world; the pathos and naïveté of Gretchen; the cruel coldness of Mephisto; the anguish of the restless student; these are what all understand, and, understanding, enjoy. We may baffle ourselves with the mystery; we all are enchanted with the

picture. We are moved by it as children are moved while reading the *Pilgrim's Progress*, believing all its allegorical persons and incidents to be real. When the child grows older, and learns to read beneath the allegory a series of grand representative abstractions, a new enjoyment is added; but even then the enjoyment depends less on the meaning than on the form. In all attempts at allegory which make the meaning prominent, and neglect the form, the effect is cold, lifeless, uninteresting. Allegory, which has been said to tell the story of a mind while seeming to tell the story of a life, is only acceptable on the condition of its story being interesting in itself. The *Second Part of Faust* fails in this first requisite; you must have the key to it. There is no direct appeal to the emotions. There is no intrinsic beauty in the symbols. In saying this I speak of it as a whole; in detail there are many passages of exquisite beauty, some lines of profound thought, and some happy sarcasm; but there is no incident, no character, no one scene which lives in the memory like the incidents, characters, and scenes of the *First Part*.

The work opens with Faust on a flowery turf trying to calm his restlessness in sleep. It is twilight, and around him hover celestial spirits. Ariel sings, accompanied by an Æolian harp; the other spirits join in chorus, and Faust, awakened by the sun-rise, pours forth his feelings in beautiful verse. This may represent the awakening from the dark Night of his soul which has followed on the death of Margaret, and which now vanishes as Time, the consoler, brings round the Day, and as the fresh morning air inspires fresh energies.

> Du regst und rührst ein kräftiges Beschliessen
> Zum höchsten Daseyn immerfort zu streben.

The scene changes to the Emperor's court. Things are in a bad state. The Lord Chancellor complains that the laws are disregarded; the Generalissimo complains of the army; and the First Lord of the Treasury complains of the empty exchequer. This is a very amusing scene, full of sarcasm and sly wisdom. Mephisto appears in the guise of a Court Fool, and the Emperor asks his advice. Gold, says Mephisto, is abundant in the earth, and can be brought to light by man's nature and spiritual power. No sooner are these words Nature and Spirit pronounced than the Lord Chancellor, with sensitive orthodoxy prescient of heresy, exclaims:

> Natur und Geist—so spricht man nicht zu Christen.
> Desshalb verbrennt man Atheisten.

"Nature and Spirit—words not fit for Christian ears. It is for such words we burn Atheists." He adds, that there are but two classes who worthily support the throne:—the clergy and aristocracy: they withstand the storm,—and take Church and State in payment of their services. The fun of this scene would be more relished if it were visibly woven into the plot; but one fails to see any connecting link: the more so as Faust is not even present. The next scene is equally obscure. It is a mask got up for the Emperor, and is as wild and variegated as may be. It contains some light happy verses and some satire; but the reader is bewildered. The next scene is the Emperor's pleasure grounds: a satire on Law's scheme of paper money is introduced. Mephisto has declared man's mind will bring money to light; and this is proved by man resolving to attach the value of gold to paper. The people, thus suddenly enriched with cheap wealth, run into the wildest extravagances. Fine material for the commentator here; but the reader is not greatly elated. In the next scene, Faust has drawn Mephistopheles apart, much to the devil's surprise, who asks him if there has not been amusement enough for him in the motley throng; but Faust has promised the Emperor to show him Helen of Troy, and calls upon Mephisto to fulfil that promise. Mephisto says he has no power over the heathen world; and Helen is not so easily brought on the stage as paper money is. But there is nevertheless a way: Faust must seek The Mothers who dwell in terrible solitudes:

Ins Unbetretene
Nicht zu Betretende.

Faust departs. The scene changes, and again presents the court. Mephisto there removes the freckles from a fair one's face, cures another of lameness, gives a philtre to a third. The lights begin to burn dimly in the hall, and the spectacle commences. Faust appears on the stage and calls up Paris, who is variously criticised by the company; then Helen appears, and Mephisto, who sees her for the first time, confesses she is beautiful, but not exactly to his taste. But Faust is in uncontrollable rapture, and expresses what may be interpreted as the feelings of a German Artist brought into the presence of Grecian Art. He is jealous of Paris, and interferes. Then follows an explosion: the spirits disappear, and Faust is borne off senseless by Mephisto. Thus closes the first act.

If we disregard for a moment the symbolical significance of

these scenes, and the occasional charm of the writing, there will be little to admire; and this consideration is all important, because even if the symbolism be accepted by us, as it is by certain critics, if we marvel at the profound thought and searching sarcasm underlying the phantasmagoria, we are still only admiring the Philosopher, and have not the Artist before us; we are praising the poem for other than poetic qualities. Nor must we be surprised if readers, who do not perceive the meaning intended to be conveyed, or seeing it, do not highly esteem it, are lukewarm in their admiration.

In the second act Faust is discovered lying in bed in his old Study, Mephisto by his side. A servant comes in, from whom we learn that Wagner has taken Faust's place, and acquired almost as great a reputation. He has long been busied in attempts to discover the vital principle, by means of which he will create a man. Our old friend the Student now enters: he whom Mephisto instructed years ago. He is an Idealist, and presents an occasion for some quizzing of Fichte's philosophy. We are then led into Wagner's laboratory. He has just completed his manufacture of an Homunculus, which he keeps in a bottle. There is very admirable writing in this scene; especially quaint and characteristic is the language of Wagner, who, in the pride of science, declares the old methods of generation to be idle and frivolous:

Wie sonst das Zeugen Mode war
Erklären wir für eitel Possen.

It may be all very well for animals, but man with his high gifts must have a purer, higher origin.

The Homunculus, however, turns out to be an imp, and a very irreverent imp, who undertakes to instruct Mephisto, and conducts him and Faust into the Classical Walpurgis Night, which occupies the rest of the act. This Walpurgis Night, which is a classical pendant to the Brocken scene in the *First Part*, is a sort of olla podrida. It contains the gathered fragments of many years, thrown together without much care, and with infinite obscurity. It is an inexhaustible field for Commentators. A capital touch is that of making Mephisto feel quite a stranger among the classical figures, and very humorous his disapprobation of the Antique Nude!

Zwar sind auch wir von Herzen unanständig,
Doch das Antike find' ich zu lebendig!

In the Brocken scene of the *First Part* we had the German world of Witchcraft, and the German ideal of female loveliness and simplicity in Gretchen. In this *Second Part* we have the Classical world of Supernaturalism, and the Greek ideal of loveliness in Helen. The third act is occupied with *Helena*, which was originally published as a separate poem, and was reviewed at some length by Carlyle in the *Foreign Review*.[1] He says of it truly enough that "it by no means carries its significance written on its forehead, so that he who runs may read; but on the contrary, it is enveloped in a certain mystery, under coy disguises, which to hasty readers may be not only offensively obscure, but altogether provoking and impenetrable." We should not quarrel with its obscurity, if the opaque forms themselves had transcendent beauty: an alabaster vase may give as much delight as a vase of crystal. Carlyle, indeed, is forced to add that the "outward meaning seems unsatisfactory enough, were it not that ever and anon we are reminded of a cunning, manifold meaning which lies hidden under it; and incited by capricious beckonings to evolve this more and more completely from its quaint concealment." The question at issue here rests entirely on the share to be allotted to Meaning in a work of Art. Carlyle refers to Bunyan as "nowise our best theologian; neither unhappily is theology our most attractive science; yet which of our compends and treatises, nay which of our romances and poems, lives in such mild sunshine as the good old *Pilgrim's Progress* in the memory of so many men." But this, if I have not altogether mistaken the point, is a condemnation; for who can say that the memories of men are fondly occupied with the *Second Part of Faust* in general, or with *Helena* in particular?

But while I am thus thrown into a position of antagonism both with respect to the work itself and to its eulogists, I must guard against the supposition that I do not admire this *Helena*. The style of Art is one which requires for perfect success qualities absent from the whole *Second Part;* but no lover of poetry will fail to recognise the poetry and the charm here to a great degree thrown away. To those who love riddles, to those who love interpretations, the work is inexhaustible; to those who love beautiful verses, and glimpses of a deeply meditative mind, the work is, and always will be, attractive; but those who open it expecting a masterpiece will, I think,

[1] Subsequently reprinted in his *Miscellanies*, vol. i.

be perpetually disappointed. Some minds will be delighted with the allegorical Helen embracing Faust, and in the embrace leaving only her veil and vest behind, her body vanishing into thin air—typical of what must ever be the embrace of the defunct Classical with the living Romantic, the resuscitated Past with the actual Present—and in their delight at the recognition of the meaning, will write chapters of commentary. But the kiss of Gretchen is worth a thousand allegories.

The analysis need not be prolonged, the more so as nothing worthy of special notice occurs in the two last acts. Faust, who has viewed many of the aspects of life, is now grown jealous of the encroachments of the sea, and determines to shut it out. He is old, sad, reflective. Four grey old women —Want, Guilt, Misery, and Care—appear to him. On Care asking him if he has ever know her, he answers: "I have gone through the world, seized every enjoyment by the hair—that which did not satisfy me I let go, that which ran away from me I would not follow. I have only wished and realised my wish, and wished again, and thus have stormed through life: first great and mighty; but now I take things wisely and soberly. I know enough of this life, and of the world to come we have no clear prospect. A fool is he who directs his blinking eyes *that* way, and imagines creatures like himself above the clouds! Let him stand firm and look round him here, the world is not dumb to the man of real sense. What need is there for him to sweep eternity? All he can know lies within his grasp." These concluding words contain Goethe's own philosophy, and I must quote the original:

> Thor! wer dorthin die Augen blinzend richtet
> Sich über Wolken seines Gleichen dichtet!
> Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um;
> Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm.
> Was braucht er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen!
> Was er erkennt lässt sich ergreifen.

Faust refusing to recognise the omnipotence of Care, she breathes on him, and blinds him; but, blind though he be, he resolves that the work he has planned shall be concluded. "A marsh," he says, "extends along the mountain's foot, infecting all that is already won: to draw off the noisome pool would be a crowning success. I lay open a space for many millions to dwell upon, not safely it is true, but in free activity. . . . Yes, heart and soul am I devoted to this wish; this is the last resolve of wisdom. He only deserves freedom and

life who is daily compelled to conquer them for himself; and thus here, hemmed round by danger, bring childhood, manhood, and old age their well-spent years to a close. I would fain see such a busy multitude stand upon free soil with free people. I might then say to the moment, 'Stay, thou art fair!' The trace of my earthly days cannot perish in centuries. In the presentiment of such exalted bliss, I now enjoy the most exalted moment." He has thus said to the passing moment, "Stay! thou art fair," and with this he expires.

Venit summa dies et ineluctabile fatum,—

the troubled career is closed. And as far as the problem of *Faust* can receive a solution more general than the one indicated at the close of the criticism on the *First Part*, the solution is I think given in this dying speech; the toiling soul, after trying in various directions of *individual* effort and *individual* gratification, and finding therein no peace, is finally conducted to the recognition of the vital truth that man lives for man, and that only in as far as he is working for Humanity can his efforts bring permanent happiness.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CLOSING SCENES

The spring of 1830 found Goethe in his eighty-first year, busy with *Faust*, writing the preface to Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, and deeply interested in the great philosophical contest which was raging in Paris, between Cuvier and Geoffroy St. Hilaire, on the question of Unity of Composition in the Animal Kingdom. This question, one of the many important and profound questions which are now agitated in Biology, which lies indeed at the bottom of almost all speculations on Development, had for very many years been answered by Goethe in the spirit which he recognised in Geoffroy St. Hilaire; and it was to him a matter of keen delight to observe the world of Science earnestly bent on a solution of the question. The anecdote which M. Soret narrates in the supplemental volume to Eckermann's conversations, is very characteristic.

"Monday, 1st August 1830. The news of the Revolution of July reached Weimar to-day, and set every one in com-

motion. I went in the course of the afternoon to Goethe. 'Now,' exclaimed he, as I entered, 'what do you think of this great event? The volcano has come to an eruption; everything is in flames.' 'A frightful story,' I answered; 'but what could be expected otherwise under such notoriously bad circumstances and with such a ministry, than that the whole would end in the expulsion of the royal family.' 'We do not appear to understand each other, my good friend,' said Goethe; 'I am not speaking of those people, but of something quite different. I am speaking of the contest so important for science between Cuvier and Geoffroy St. Hilaire, which has come to an open rupture in the Academy.' This expression of Goethe's was so unexpected that I did not know what to say, and for some minutes was perfectly at a standstill. 'The matter is of the highest importance,' he continued; 'and you can form no conception of what I felt at the intelligence of the *séance* of the 19th July. We have now in Geoffroy a powerful and permanent ally. I see how great must be the interest of the French scientific world in this affair; because, notwithstanding the terrible political commotion, the *séance* of the 19th July was very fully attended. However, the best of it is that the synthetic manner of looking at Nature, introduced by Geoffroy into France, cannot be kept back any longer. From the present time Mind will rule over Matter in the scientific investigations of the French. There will be glances of the great maxims of creation—of the mysterious workshop of God! Besides, what is all intercourse with Nature, if we merely occupy ourselves with individual material parts, and do not feel the breath of the spirit which prescribes to every part its direction, and orders or sanctions every deviation by means of an inherent law! I have exerted myself in this great question for fifty years. At first I was alone, then I found support, and now at last to my great joy I am surpassed by congenial minds.'"

Instead of exclaiming against the coldness of the man who at such a moment could turn from politics to science, let us glance at a somewhat parallel case. Englishmen will be slow in throwing stones at the immortal Harvey; let them hear what Dr. Ent reports. Soon after the most agitating event in English history—the execution of Charles I.—Dr. Ent called on Harvey, and found him seeking solace in anatomical researches. "Did I not," said the great philosopher, "find a balm for my spirit in the memory of my observations of

former years, I should feel little desire for life. But so it has been that this life of obscurity, this vacation from public business, which causes tedium and disgust to so many, has proved a sovereign remedy to me."

Goethe was not a politician, and he was a biologist. His view of the superior importance of such an event as the discussion between Geoffroy and Cuvier, to the more noisy but intrinsically less remarkable event, the Revolution of July, is a view which will be accepted by some philosophers, and rejected by all politicians. Goethe was not content with expressing in conversation his sense of the importance of this discussion; he also commenced the writing of his celebrated review of it, and finished the first part in September.

In November another great affliction smote him: it was the last he had to bear: the news arrived that his only son, who had a little while before gone to Italy in failing health, had died in Rome on the 28th of October. The sorrowing father strove, as usual, to master all expression of emotion, and to banish it by restless work. But vain was the effort to live down this climbing sorrow. The trial nearly cost him his life. A violent hæmorrhage in the lungs was the result. He was at one time given over; but he rallied again, and set once more to work, completing the *Autobiography* and continuing *Faust*.

Ottilie von Goethe, the widow of his son, and his great favourite, devoted herself to cheer his solitude. She read Plutarch aloud to him; and this, with Niebuhr's Roman History, carried him amid the great pageantries of the past, where his antique spirit could wander as among friends. Nor was the present disregarded. He read with the eagerness of youth whatever was produced by remarkable writers, such as Béranger, Victor Hugo, Delavigne, Scott, or Carlyle. He received the homage of Europe; his rooms were constantly brightened by the presence of illustrious visitors, among whom the English were always welcome.

Rambling over the wild moors, with thoughts oftentimes as wild and dreary as those moors, the young Carlyle, who had been cheered through his struggling sadness, and strengthened for the part he was to play in life, by the beauty and the wisdom which Goethe had revealed to him, suddenly conceived the idea that it would be a pleasant and a fitting thing if some of the few admirers in England forwarded to Weimar a trifling token of their admiration. On reaching home, Mrs.

Carlyle at once sketched the design of a seal to be engraved: the serpent of eternity encircling a star, with the words *ohne Hast ohne Rast* (unhasting, unresting), in allusion to the well-known verses:

Wie das Gestirn,
Ohne Hast
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

"Like a star, unhasting, unresting, be each one fulfilling his God-given hest." Fifteen English admirers subscribed to have a handsome seal made, on the golden belt of which was engraved: *To the German Master: From friends in England: 28th August* 1831. This letter accompanied it:—

"*To the Poet Goethe, on the 28th August* 1831.

"Sir,—Among the friends whom this so interesting anniversary calls round you, may we English friends, in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present ourselves to offer you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honour to accept this little Birthday Gift, which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value.

"We said to ourselves: As it is always the highest duty, and pleasure, to show reverence where reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor, is he who by act and word instructs us in wisdom; so we, undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually-taught towards their spiritual teacher, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common; for which end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift, proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching birthday; so that while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and we think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting.

"And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties!

"We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious, that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to accomplish your high task, even as it has hitherto pro-

ceeded, like a star, without haste yet without rest.—We remain, Sir, your friends and servants,

"FIFTEEN ENGLISHMEN."[1]

The sentiment expressed in this letter, which every one will see comes from Carlyle, namely, the reverence felt for the spiritual teacher by the spiritually-taught, is a manifestation that Goethe's teaching had already borne fruit, and that even in distant lands men discerned the quality in which his works are pre-eminent above those of any modern writer—the quality of deep and far-reaching insight.

The English tribute was extremely gratifying, because for England and Englishmen his admiration was very hearty. Among the English who lived at Weimar during those days was a youth whose name is now carried in triumph wherever English Literature is cherished—I allude to William Makepeace Thackeray; and Weimar Albums still display with pride the caricatures which the young satirist sketched at that period. He has kindly enabled me to enrich these pages with a brief account of his reminiscences, gracefully sketched in the following letter:—

"LONDON, 28*th April* 1855.

"DEAR LEWES,—I wish I had more to tell you regarding Weimar and Goethe. Five-and-twenty years ago, at least a score of young English lads used to live at Weimar for study, or sport, or society; all of which were to be had in the friendly little Saxon capital. The grand-duke and duchess received us with the kindliest hospitality. The court was splendid, but yet most pleasant and homely. We were invited in our turns to dinners, balls, and assemblies there. Such young men as had a right, appeared in uniforms, diplomatic and military. Some, I remember, invented gorgeous clothing: the kind old Hof Marschall of those days, M. de Spiegel (who had two of the most lovely daughters eyes ever looked on), being in nowise difficult as to the admission of these young Englanders. Of the winter nights we used to charter sedan chairs, in which we were carried through the snow to those pleasant court entertainments. I for my part had the

[1] The names of these Englishmen, as far as I have been able to ascertain, are Carlyle and his brother Dr. Carlyle, Walter Scott, Lockhart, Wordsworth, Southey, Churchill, Frazer, Professor Wilson, Jerdan, Heraud, Lord Leveson Gower, and Procter (Barry Cornwall).

good luck to purchase Schiller's sword, which formed a part of my court costume, and still hangs in my study, and puts me in mind of days of youth the most kindly and delightful.

"We knew the whole society of the little city, and but that the young ladies, one and all, spoke admirable English, we surely might have learned the very best German. The society met constantly. The ladies of the court had their evenings. The theatre was open twice or thrice in the week, where we assembled, a large family party. Goethe had retired from the direction, but the great traditions remained still. The theatre was admirably conducted; and besides the excellent Weimar company, famous actors and singers from various parts of Germany performed *Gastrolle*[1] through the winter. In that winter I remember we had Ludwig Devrient in Shylock, Hamlet, Falstaff, and *The Robbers;* and the beautiful Schröder in *Fidelio.*

"After three-and-twenty years' absence, I passed a couple of summer days in the well-remembered place, and was fortunate enough to find some of the friends of my youth. Madame de Goethe was there, and received me and my daughters with the kindness of old days. We drank tea in the open air at the famous cottage in the Park,[2] which still belongs to the family, and had been so often inhabited by her illustrious father.

"In 1831, though he had retired from the world, Goethe would nevertheless very kindly receive strangers. His daughter-in-law's tea-table was always spread for us. We passed hours after hours there, and night after night with the pleasantest talk and music. We read over endless novels and poems in French, English, and German. My delight in those days was to make caricatures for children. I was touched to find that they were remembered, and some even kept until the present time; and very proud to be told, as a lad, that the great Goethe had looked at some of them.

"He remained in his private apartments, where only a very few privileged persons were admitted; but he liked to know all that was happening, and interested himself about all strangers. Whenever a countenance struck his fancy, there was an artist settled in Weimar who made a portrait of it. Goethe had quite a gallery of heads, in black and white, taken

[1] What in England are called "starring engagements."
[2] The *Gartenhaus.*

by this painter. His house was all over pictures, drawings, casts, statues, and medals.

"Of course I remember very well the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long expected intimation that the Herr Geheimrath would see me on such a morning. This notable audience took place in a little antechamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long grey or drab redingot, with a white neck-cloth and a red ribbon in his buttonhole. He kept his hands behind his back, just as in Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark,[1] piercing and brilliant. I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero of a certain romance called *Melmoth the Wanderer*, which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a Certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained these eyes in all their awful splendour. I fancied Goethe must have been still more handsome as an old man than even in the days of his youth. His voice was very rich and sweet. He asked me questions about myself, which I answered as best I could. I recollect I was at first astonished, and then somewhat relieved, when I found he spoke French with not a good accent.

"*Vidi tantum*. I saw him but three times. Once walking in the garden of his house in the *Frauenplan;* once going to step into his chariot on a sunshiny day, wearing a cap and a cloak with a red collar. He was caressing at the time a beautiful little golden-haired granddaughter, over whose sweet fair face the earth has long since closed too.

"Any of us who had books or magazines from England sent them to him, and he examined them eagerly. *Frazer's Magazine* had lately come out, and I remember he was interested in those admirable outline portraits which appeared for awhile in its pages. But there was one, a very ghastly caricature of Mr. Rogers, which, as Madame de Goethe told me, he shut up and put away from him angrily. 'They would make me look like that,' he said; though in truth I can fancy nothing more serene, majestic, and *healthy* looking than the grand old Goethe.

"Though his sun was setting, the sky round about was calm and bright, and that little Weimar illumined by it. In every

[1] This must have been the effect of the position in which he sat with regard to the light. Goethe's eyes were dark brown, but not very dark.

one of those kind salons the talk was still of Art and letters. The theatre, though possessing no very extraordinary actors, was still conducted with noble intelligence and order. The actors read books, and were men of letters and gentlemen, holding a not unkindly relationship with the *Adel*. At court the conversation was exceedingly friendly, simple and polished.

"The grand-duchess (the present grand-duchess dowager), a lady of very remarkable endowments, would kindly borrow our books from us, lend us her own, and graciously talk to us young men about our literary tastes and pursuits. In the respect paid by this court to the Patriarch of letters, there was something ennobling I think, alike to the subject and sovereign. With a five-and-twenty years' experience since those happy days of which I write, and an acquaintance with an immense variety of human kind, I think I have never seen a society more simple, charitable, courteous, gentlemanlike than that of the dear little Saxon city, where the good Schiller and the great Goethe lived and lie buried.—Very sincerely yours,

"W. M. THACKERAY."

Thackeray's testimony is not only borne out by all that I learn elsewhere, but is indeed applicable to Weimar in the present day, where the English visitor is received by the reigning grand-duke and duchess with exquisite grace of courtesy; and where he still feels that the traditions of the classic period are *living*.

To return to Goethe: His last secretary, Kräuter, who never speaks of him but with idolatry, describes his activity even at this advanced age as something prodigious. It was moreover systematic. A certain time of the day was devoted to his correspondence; then came the arrangement of his papers, or the completion of works long commenced. One fine spring morning, Kräuter tells me Goethe said to him: "Come, we will cease dictation; it is a pity such fine weather should not be enjoyed, let us go into the Park and do a bit of work there." Kräuter took the necessary books and papers, and followed his master, who, in his long blue overcoat, a blue cap on his head, and his hands in the customary attitude behind his back, marched on, upright and imposing. Those who remember Rauch's statuette will picture to themselves the figure of the old man in his ordinary attitude; but perhaps they cannot fully picture to themselves the imposing effect of that Jupiter-head which, on this occasion, arrested an old

peasant, and so absorbed him, that leaning his hands upon his rake, and resting his chin upon his hands, he gazed on the spectacle in forgetfulness so complete that he did not move out of the way, but stood gazing immovable, while Kräuter had to step aside to pass.

It is usually said indeed that Goethe showed no signs of age; but this is one of the exaggerations which the laxity of ordinary speech permits itself. His intellect preserved a wonderful clearness and activity, as we know; and indeed the man who wrote the essay on Cuvier and Geoffroy's discussion, and who completed his *Faust* in his eighty-second year, may fairly claim a place among the Nestors for whom remains

> Some work of noble note,
> Not unbecoming men who strove with gods.

But the biographer is bound to record that in his intellect, as in his body, the old man showed unmistakably that he was old. His hearing became noticeably impaired; his memory of recent occurrences was extremely treacherous; yet his eye-sight remained strong, and his appetite good. In the later years of his life he presented a striking contrast to the earlier years, in his preference for close rooms. The heated and impure atmosphere of an unventilated room was to him so agreeable that it was difficult to persuade him to have a window open for the purpose of ventilation. Always disliking the cold, and longing for warmth like a child of the south, he sat in rooms so heated that he was constantly taking cold. This did not prevent his enjoyment of the fresh air when he was in the country. The mountain air of Ilmenau, especially, seemed to give him health and enjoyment. It was to Ilmenau he went to escape from the festivities preparing for his last birthday. He ascended the lovely heights of the Gickelhahn, and went into the wood hut where so many happy days had been spent with Karl August. There he saw on the wall those lines he had years before written in pencil:—

> Ueber allen Gipfeln
> Ist Ruh,
> In allen Wipfeln
> Spürest du
> Kaum einen Hauch;
> Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
> Warte nur, balde
> Ruhest du auch.

And wiping the tears from his eyes, tears which rose at the

memory of Karl August, Charlotte von Stein, and his own happy youth, he repeated the last line, "*Ja, warte nur, balde ruhest du auch*—Yes, wait but a little, thou too soon wilt be at rest."

That rest was nearer than any one expected. On the 16th of March following, his grandson, Wolfgang, coming into his room as usual to breakfast with him, found him still in bed. The day before, in passing from his heated room across the garden, he had taken cold. The physician on arriving, found him very feverish, with what is known in Weimar as the "nervous fever," which acts almost like a pestilence. With the aid of remedies, however, he rallied towards evening, and became talkative and jocose. On the 17th he was so much better that he dictated a long letter to W. von Humboldt. All thought of danger ceased. But during the night of the 19th, having gone off into a soft sleep, he awoke about midnight with hands and feet icy cold, and fierce pain and oppression of the chest. He would not have the physician disturbed, however, for he said there was no danger, only pain. But when the physician came in the morning, he found that a fearful change had taken place. His teeth chattered with the cold. The pain in his chest made him groan, and sometimes call out aloud. He could not rest in one place, but tossed about in bed, seeking in vain a more endurable position. His face was ashen grey ; the eyes, deep sunk in the sockets, were dull, and the glance was that of one conscious of the presence of death. After a time these fearful symptoms were allayed, and he was removed from his bed into the easy chair, which stood at his bedside. There, towards evening, he was once more restored to perfect calmness, and spoke with clearness and interest of ordinary matters; especially pleased he was to hear that his appeal for a young artist, a protégé, had been successful ; and with a trembling hand, he signed an official paper which secured a pension to another artist, a young Weimar lady, for whom he had interested himself.

On the following day, the approach of death was evident. The painful symptoms were gone. But his senses began to fail him, and he had moments of unconsciousness. He sat quiet in the chair, spoke kindly to those around him, and made his servant bring Salvandy's *Seize Mois, ou la Révolution et les Révolutionnaires*, which he had been reading when he fell ill; but after turning over the leaves, he laid it down, feeling himself too ill to read. He bade them bring him the

list of all the persons who had called to inquire after his health, and remarked that such evidence of sympathy must not be forgotten when he recovered. He sent every one to bed that night, except his copyist. He would not even allow his old servant to sit up with him, but insisted on his lying down to get the rest so much needed.

The following morning—it was the 22nd March 1832—he tried to walk a little up and down the room, but, after a turn, he found himself too feeble to continue. Reseating himself in the easy chair, he chatted cheerfully with Ottilie on the approaching Spring, which would be sure to restore him. He had no idea of his end being so near.

The name of Ottilie was frequently on his lips. She sat beside him, holding his hand in both of hers. It was now observed that his thoughts began to wander incoherently. "See," he exclaimed, "the lovely woman's head—with black curls—in splendid colours—a dark background!" Presently he saw a piece of paper on the floor, and asked them how they could leave Schiller's letters so carelessly lying about. Then he slept softly, and on awakening, asked for the sketches he had just seen. These were the sketches seen in a dream. In silent anguish the close now so surely approaching was awaited. His speech was becoming less and less distinct. The last words audible were: *More light!* The final darkness grew apace, and he whose eternal longings had been for more Light, gave a parting cry for it, as he was passing under the shadow of death.

He continued to express himself by signs, drawing letters with his forefinger in the air, while he had strength, and finally, as life ebbed, drawing figures slowly on the shawl which covered his legs. At half-past twelve he composed himself in the corner of the chair. The watcher placed a finger on her lip to intimate that he was asleep. If sleep it was, it was a sleep in which a great life glided from the world.

INDEX

ÆSCHYLUS, his Prometheus compared with the fragment of Goethe's Prometheus, 181
Age, old, relative character of, 538; vitality of Goethe's, 552
Ahasuerus the shoemaker, legend of, 178
Alchemy, Goethe's studies in, 64, 68, 202; valuable as preparations for Faust, 65
Amalia, the Dowager Duchess, her character, 209–10; her death, 510
Amor der Schalk, one of the Roman Elegies, 329
Analysis of Clavigo, 166; of the Iphigenia, 273; of Egmont, 313; of Wilhelm Meister, 410; of Hermann und Dorothea, 423; of Faust, 469; of Calderon's El Magico Prodigioso, 488; of the Bride of Corinth, 498; of Wahlverwandtschaften, 520; of the second part of Faust, 561
Anatomy, Goethe's discovery of the intermaxillary bone, 295, 354; the comparative method which led to the discovery, 355; first principles of morphology, 358; the notion of metamorphoses replaced by the notion of differentiation, 364–5; Goethe's efforts to create the science of philosophic anatomy, 367; his Introduction to comparative anatomy, 369; Goethe's claim to the discovery of the vertebral theory discussed, 374; intemperate and equivocal character of Oken's accusation, 375; Goethe the originator of the vertebral theory, but Oken the discoverer, 377
Annchen. *See* Schönkopf
Apolda, effect on Goethe of the famine at, 253
Apples, rotten, their scent beneficial to Schiller, 395
Architecture, Gothic, Goethe's appreciation of, 97; studies in, 254–5; his Italian studies, 302
Aristophanes' Birds, representation of, in the private theatre at Ettersburg, 242
Aristotle, real or objective character of his philosophy as opposed to the ideal or subjective philosophy of Plato, 51, 52
Art, Goethe's studies in, 131; Christian and Greek compared, 158; necessity for the co-operation of a nation with individual genius, 207; its effect upon a nation, 208; universal appreciation of art in Greece and Rome, *ib.*; difference between ancient and modern art, 281; objective tendency in ancient art recognised by Goethe, 309; Goethe's earnestness in art, 397, 416, 528, 531; style of German criticism on, 406–7; examination of the charge that Goethe "looked on life as an artist," 531; his enthusiasm for Greek art, 541
Artern, town of, 3
Atheism, artistic, in Wilhelm Meister, 413
Athens, co-operation of the nation with individual genius, 207
Aufgeregten, Goethe's comedy, 392
Augereau, Marshal, quartered in Goethe's house at Weimar, 504
Authors, instance of what the public requires from them, 135

BACH, family, annual meeting of, at the Wartburg, 198
Basedow, the educational reformer, his character, 172; his acquaintance with Goethe, *ib.*; his wild and genius-like demeanour, 173
Bathing, Goethe's fondness for, 236
Bayle's criticism on Bruno, Goethe's notes on, 71
Beaumarchais, mémoire of, turned by Goethe into the play of Clavigo, 166–7
Beethoven, his ostentatious independence compared with Goethe's supposed servility, 518–9; his acquaintance with Goethe, 527; indignan-

at Goethe's supposed neglect, 527–8
Behrisch, his pranks and extravagances with Goethe, 49
Beiträge zur Optik, publication of, 343
Berlin, Goethe's visit to, 253; his contempt for the court of, *ib.*
Bertuch, 213; his Gartenhaus given to Goethe, 233–4
Bettina, her visit to Goethe at Weimar, 510; unauthen icity of her correspondence, 512–4; true nature of her intercourse with Goethe, 514; forbidden Goethe's house, *ib.*
Bible studies of Goethe, 28, 59; his belief in the New Testament, 535
Biology, Goethe grasps the laws of, 367
Blinde Kuh, Goethe's love poem, 76
Blumenbach, disbelieved in the existence of the intermaxillary bone in man, 354
Bode, one of the Weimar notabilities, 213
Böhme, Hofrath, the Leipsic professor, 38; his coolness towards Goethe, 55
Böhme, Frau, her influence on Goethe, 40; her death, 55
Boerhaave, an example of the instability of an author's reputation, 65
Boisserée, Sulpiz, 97
Borkenhaus, Karl August's retreat, 200
Bossuet, his study of anatomy, 296
Botany, Goethe's studies in, 296; his metamorphoses of plants, 338; German scientific opinion of Goethe's studies in, 338; Goethe's history of his botanical studies, 339; first principles of morphology, 358–9; Goethe's hypothesis of elaborated sap opposed to Wolff's hypothesis of deficient sap, 364; law of vegetation and law of reproduction clearly perceived by Goethe, 364–5. *See* Morphology and Metamorphoses
Branconi, Countess, her sentimental address to Lavater, 170
Breitkopf family, Goethe's acquaintance with, 56
Brentano, his marriage with Maximiliane Laroche, 143
Brentano, Bettina. *See* Bettina
Bride of Corinth, 498; analysis of, *ib.*
Briefe aus der Schweitz, 284
Brion, Frederika, Goethe introduced to her family in disguise, 84; Goethe falls in love with her, 85; his letter to her, 87; her visit to Strasburg, 90; parting with Goethe, 98; his anguish, 101; reason why he did not marry her, 102; her love for the poet Lenz, 103; Goethe's interview with her in 1779, 283
Brocken, Goethe's journey to, 247
Bruno, Giordano, Goethe's defence of, 70; account of, 70–1; Goethe's notes on Bayle's criticism, 71
Buff, Charlotte, betrothed to Kestner, 123; Goethe falls in love with her, *ib.*; sudden departure of Goethe from Wetzlar, 127, 128; his farewell note to her, 129; letters to, 137; her marriage with Kestner, 140; birth of a son, 147; receives a copy of Werther, 148; her indignation, 159; Goethe obtains her forgiveness, 161; her visit to Goethe in her old age, 542. *See* Kestner
Buonaparte, Napoleon, his entry into Weimar, 503–4; his reception by the Duchess Luise, 505; his intemperate rage against Karl August, *ib.*; congress of Erfurt, 514; his friendly reception of Karl August, Goethe, and Wieland, 515; his criticism on Werther, 516, 517; his presence at Weimar, 516; his opinion of Shakespeare, *ib.*
Bürger, Goethe opens a subscription for his translation of Homer, 224; anecdote of his visit to Goethe, 452
Bürgergeneral, Goethe's comedy of, 392
Byron's Manfred, Goethe's review of, 547

CAGLIOSTRO, Lavater's belief in, 299; Goethe visits his parents at Palermo, 306
Calderon's El Magico Prodigioso, analysis of, 488
Camel, story of the, 406
Campaign in France, Goethe's diary of, 383
Camper, his theory concerning the intermaxillary bone, 354
Canning, his caricature of Goethe's Stella, 191
Cannon fever, 385
Capua, Goethe's visit to, 306
Carlyle, his criticism on Werther,

157; his definition of poetry, 228; his denunciation of Goethe's calumniators, 264–5; his sarcasm against the pietists who lamented Goethe's want of religion, 537–8 (*note*); his translation of Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, 548; his review of Helena, 564; originates the tribute of fifteen Englishmen, 569
Carus, his testimony as to Goethe's anatomical discoveries, 365–6
Catholicism, tendency of the Romanticists to, 418
Character, how far formed by circumstances, 20. *See* Circumstance
Charlotte. *See* Buff
Christiane Vulpius. *See* Vulpius
Christianity, the Neoplatonic, of Goethe, 65
Circumstance, its modification of character, 20; its inability to create a faculty, 21
Clavigo, history of its composition, 164; its construction, 167; specimens of, *ib.*; Merck's criticism on, 168
Cohn, Ferdinand, his remark on Linnæus, 360
Coleridge, his hesitation to turn Goethe's Prologue in Heaven into English, 467; his inability to recognise any unity in Faust, 481; his criticisms on Faust compared with Goethe's own observations, 495
Colours, Newtonian theory of, misunderstood by Goethe, 341; Goethe's theory of, 344; abstract of Newton's theory and Goethe's theory, 346; source of Goethe's error in his rejection of every mathematical explanation, 350, 352. *See* Refraction
Comparative anatomy, Goethe's Introduction to, 369
Confessions of a Beautiful Soul in Wilhelm Meister, 415
Constantine, Prince, of Weimar, 146
Copyright protection of Goethe's by the Bundestag, 555
Cornelia. *See* Goethe, Cornelia
Court of Weimar, 209
Criticism, German philosophical, absurdities of, 406; the camel story, *ib.*
Crystallisation, mental, 266
Cumberland, his West Indian represented at Weimar, 243
Cuvier, contest with Geoffroy St. Hilaire in respect to the unity of composition in the animal kingdom, 567

Dancing-lessons, Goethe's, 77; story of Lucinda and Emilia, *ib.*
Delf, Demoiselle, overcomes the objections to Goethe's marriage with Lili, 189
Derones, introduces the boy Goethe behind the scenes at the Frankfort theatre, 26; mock duel with Goethe, *ib.*; condemns Goethe's play, 27
Development, principle of, grasped and applied by Goethe, 367–8
Devrient, his description of Goethe as theatrical manager, 438; his account of the actors' salaries at Weimar, 439; his observations on the Weimar school, 440
Dialogues, Goethe's early compositions, 15, 16
Diamond necklace, story of, dramatised by Goethe, 379
Diary, Goethe's, of the campaign in France, 383
Döbereiner, story of Goethe's keeping his bar of platinum, 547
Dodd's "Beauties of Shakespeare," its influence in Germany, 56
Dogs, performing, refused admittance on the Weimar stage, 449
Drama, Greek, traditional errors concerning, 270; necessary calmness of evolution mistaken for calmness of life, 271
Dramatists, Unacted, error of, 436
Drawing, Goethe's efforts to attain facility in, 304, 307
Dresden, Goethe's visits to, 57, 402
Drusenheim, 84

Eckermann, Goethe's letter to, from Weimar, 228; his account of the extension of Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, 549–50
Egmont, Herder's criticism of, 308; character of the work, 311; a universal favourite but not a masterpiece, *ib.*; a novel in dialogue, not a drama, *ib.*; character of Egmont a type of humanity, 312; analysis of the play, 313; Schiller's and Gervinus's opinion of, 311, 317
Einsiedel, character of, 212

Elective affinities, 520 *ff.*
Electricity, Goethe's studies in, 67
Elgin Marbles, effect of their discovery on Goethe, 541
Emilia and Lucinda, story of, 77
Engravings by Goethe, 58
Enthusiasm, Goethe's, character of, 34
Erfurt, congress of, 514; magnificent theatricals, 515; reception of Karl August, Goethe, and Wieland by Napoleon, *ib.*
Erl-King, the, 500; supposed to be suggested by a Danish ballad, *ib.*
Erwin und Elmire, composition of, 189; set to music by the Duchess Amalia, 209
Esenbeck, Nees von, recognises Goethe's discovery respecting the metamorphoses of plants, 339
Euripides, parallel between his Iphigenia and that of Goethe, 273

FABRICIUS, Goethe's comment on a chapter in, 72
Faith, general want of, in the eighteenth century, 136; Goethe's idea of, in connection with knowledge, 172
Farbenlehre, Goethe's work on colour, 341, 342, 346, 347
Faust, Goethe's studies in alchemy a preparation for, 65; gradual development and progress, 461–2; the problem of our intellectual existence and picture of our social existence, 463; resemblance between Faust and Hamlet, 463–4; popularity and prodigality of Faust, 464; the Idea, 464–5; analysis of the first part, 465 *ff.*; the Theatre Prologue, 465; the Prologue in Heaven, 467; necessity for the two prologues, 470; first scene of Faust in his study, *ib.*; the scene before the gate, 472; Faust's study, 474; Auerbach's cellar, 475; the witches' kitchen, *ib.*; meeting with Margaret, 476; wood and cavern, 477; the Walpurgisnacht, 479; causes of the early disappointment and after fascination of the readers of Faust, 481; Coleridge's criticisms compared with Goethe's own observations, 495; compared with the second part, 557
Faust, Second Part of, embarrassment in expressing a faithful opinion of, 557; comparison of the impressions produced by the first and second parts, 558; character of the second part, 559–60; causes of its failure, 561; analysis, 561 *ff.*
Faustus, Marlowe's, analysis of, 486
Fellow-Sinners, the, Goethe's drama of, 50; represented in the private theatre at Weimar, 242
Fischerin, die, Goethe's operetta of, 241
Fisherman, the, Goethe's ballad, 236
Fire-brigade instituted at Weimar at the instance of Goethe, 282
Frankfort Journal, extract from one of Goethe's articles in, 132
Frankfort-on-the-Main, the native place of Goethe, 11; its two-fold character, 12; its occupation by the French, 25; their departure, 27; Goethe's desire to escape from, 64; his renewed studies at, 131; visits of Karl August, 194, 282; Goethe's visit to, in 1814, 540; his ovation at, *ib.*
Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen, the organ of the Storm and Stress party, 107
Frederick the Great, literary tendencies of, opposed to Goethe, 254; his opinion of Götz von Berlichingen, *ib.*; his indirect influence on literature, *ib.*
Frederika. *See* Brion
French Revolution, doctrines of, 380; Goethe's attitude towards, 381–2, 399; opposed by Wieland and Schiller, 399
Friday evenings held at Weimar, 379

GALEN, indicated the existence of the intermaxillary bone in man, 354
Gall, his visit to Jena, 502; Goethe's appreciation of his theory, 503
Gartenhaus, the, 233–4; given to Goethe by Karl August, *ib.*
Geheime Legations Rath, Goethe elected to the post of, 221
Genius, the hereditary transmission of, 2; the "genial period," 220
Geology, progress of Goethe's speculations in, 296
German, culture of Goethe, 80; manners in the eighteenth century, 203–4; laxity of morals, 218; based on sentimentalism, *ib.*; compared with French morals, *ib.*;

German substitute for fresh air and exercise, 235; German wit, 251; German language, Goethe plagued with pecularities of pronunciation, 442; German drama, 443–4
Germany, its condition in the eighteenth century, 202 *ff.*; no nation, 207, 529; Goethe's opinion concerning, 529–30. *See* Weimar
Gerock, Anna Antoinette, Goethe's love for, 139, 140; lottery marriage with Goethe, 165; induces him to write Clavigo, *ib.*
Gervinus, his criticism on Wilhelm Meister, 408
Geschwister, die, Goethe's, play of, 242
Gleim, story of his first meeting with Goethe, 224
Göchhausen, Mdlle., her character, 211; prank of Karl August and Goethe, *ib.*
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, character and extent of his claim to greatness, 2; hereditary transmission of qualities, *ib.*; his ancestry, 3; silence concerning his grandfather the tailor, *ib.*; genealogical table of the Goethe and Textor families, 5, 6; character of his father and mother, 4, 7; his subjection of emotions to reason, 9; feeling for Italy, 12; moderate elevation of his social status, *ib.*; his precccious babyhood, 13; his love for his sister Cornelia, *ib.*; youthful escapade, 13, 14; his love of story-telling, 14; his grandmother and grandfather Textor, 15; his early compositions in Latin and German, 15; character of his precocity, 17; his school life, 18, 19; early religous doubts awakened by the Lisbon earthquake, 21; early symbolical representation of the soul's aspirations to the Deity, 22; the Seven Years' War, 23; invention of little stories, 24; occupation of Frankfurt by the French, 25; visits to the theatre, *ib.*; acquires French, 26; mock duel with Derones, *ib.*; his early play, 27; entertains a profound contempt for the unities, *ib.*; resumption of study on the departure of the French, 27; writes a polyglot romance, 27, 28; masters Hebrew, 28; dictates a biblical poem on Joseph and his brethren, *ib.*; mixes with all classes in Frankfurt, 30; influence on him of Fräulein von Klettenberg, 31; early love for Gretchen, *ib.*; his disappointment, 32; fascination of his nature, 33; characteristics of his childhood, 34; his manysidedness, *ib.*; his seriousness, formality, and rationality, *ib.*; rational character of his enthusiasm, *ib.*; his impatient susceptibility, 35; commences his collegiate life at Leipsic, 37; wearies of logic and jurisprudence, 38; his appearance in society, *ib.*; conversation at Hofrath Ludwig's, 39; acquaintance with Frau Böhme, 40; tires of society, *ib.*; literary society at the table d'hôte of Herr Schönkopf, 41, 42; falls in love with Anna Katharina Schönkopf, *ib.*; description of Goethe in Horn's letters to Moors, 43–46; composition of Die Laune des Verliebten, 46; works of Goethe, an embodiment of his experiences, 47, 48; pranks and extravagances with Behrisch, 49; his experiences of Leipsic society, *ib.*; composition of the Fellow-sinners, 50; objective character of Goethe's genius, 53; concrete tendency in his works, *ib.*; compared with Shakspeare, 54; his moral toleration, 55; neglects his collegiate studies, *ib.*; his love songs, 56; joins Oeser's drawing class, 57; trips to Dresden, 57, 388; learns engraving, 58; serious illness, 58; state of religious doubt, 59; returns to Frankfurt, *ib.*; his reception, 59, 60; letters to Käthchen Schönkopf, 60; unpleasant relations with his father, 64; studies in alchemy, *ib.*; religion, 64, 539; proceeds to Strasburg University, 66; description of his person, *ib.*; general progress, 67; his disgust at the Système de la Nature, 68; his exasperation at the pictures exhibited to Marie Antoinette, 68, 69; mystical metaphysical studies, 70; early tendency to nature-worship, *ib.*; notes on Bayle's criticism of Giordano Bruno, 71; comment on a chapter in Fabricius, 72; improved deportment, 73; increased circle of friends,

74; acquaintance with Stilling and Lerse, *ib.*; conquers his irritability and sensitiveness, 75, 76; two love poems, 76; dancing lessons at Strasburg, 77; story of Emilia and Lucinda, the dancing master's daughters, 77–80; his German culture, 80; acquaintance with Herder, 81; Herder's opinion of him, 82; strange introduction to the Brion family, 84; falls in love with Frederika, 85; his letter to her, 87; obtains his doctor's degree, 90; his oration on Shakspeare, 93; his appreciation of Gothic architecture, 97; parting with Frederika, 98; his reception by his father, 99; his reluctance to appear in print, 100, 101; his anguish at having renounced Frederika, 101; his studies, 106; his father's anxiety about him, 107–8; composition of Götz von Berlichingen, 108; Kestner's description of him, 118; his acquaintance with Götter, 119; his connection with the Göttingen school, 120 *n.*; falls in love with Charlotte Buff, 123; visit to Höpfner, 127; introduces Merck to Lotte, *ib.*; melancholy departure from Wetzlar, 127, 128; his farewell note to Lottchen, 129; interrogates Fate if he should become an artist, 130; visits Frau von Laroche and flirts with her daughter, 130, 131; studies at Frankfurt, 131; rewrites Götz, 132; his reasons for rewriting it, *ib.*; Merck's advice to him, 133; publication of Götz, *ib.*; its success, 134; a magnificent order from a bookseller, 135; letters to Kestner and Charlotte, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 145; coquetting with suicide, 138; state of his mind, *ib.*; falls in love with Antoinette Gerock, 139, 140; meditates a drama on Mahomet, 142; dangerous intimacy with Maximiliane Brentano, 143, 144; publication of Götter, Helden und Wieland, 144, 145; first acquaintance with Karl August, 146; composition of Werther, 147; distinction between Werther and Goethe, 154; prodigious effect of its publication, 157; Kestner's letter to him, 160; Goethe obtains the forgiveness of Kestner and Charlotte, 161; his monument at Wetzlar, 164; composition of Clavigo, 164; his lottery marriage, 165; acquaintance with Klopstock and Lavater, 169; his opinion of Lavater, 170; studies Spinoza, 171, 175; religious opinions, 171, 172; acquaintance with Basedow, 172; journey with Basedow to the Rhine, 173; acquaintance with Jacobi, 174; Goethe's personality, 175; contrasted with Herder, 175; the Moravian doctrines, 177; idea of an epic on the Wandering Jew, 178; fragment of Prometheus, 181; affection for Lili, 185; Erwin und Elmire, 189; objections to his marriage with Lili, 189; composition of Stella, 190; Canning's burlesque of Stella, 191; tour in Switzerland, 191, 192; separation from Lili, 193; accepts Karl August's invitation to Weimar, 194; compared with Karl August, 214; their intimacy, 216, 219, 220; Goethe's disinterestedness toward Herder, 216; his costume at Weimar, 218; his love intrigues, 219; his wild pranks at Weimar, *ib.*; elected to the post of Geheime Legations Rath, 221; breach with Klopstock, 223–4; Gleim's anecdote of Goethe, 224–5; charge of having sacrificed his genius to the court, 226; falls in love with Frau von Stein, 230; his letters to her, 231–2, 246; his Gartenhaus, 233–4; his fondness for fresh air and water, 235; Ballad of the Fisherman, 236; appearance in the character of a water-sprite, 237; useful influence at Weimar, 238; theatricals, 238–9; his acting, 242–3; general amusements and occupation, 244; love and ambition, 245; takes charge of a Swiss peasant-boy, 246; letters to him from sentimental youths, 247; grows ashamed of Werther, *ib.*; composition of Triumph der Empfindsamkeit, *ib.*; journey to the Harz in disguise, *ib.*; interview with Plessing, 248; his realism, 249; suicide of Fräulein von Lassberg, *ib.*; increased hatred of Wertherism, 250; manifold employment, 252; the famine at Apolda, 253; his journey to Berlin, 253; his contempt for the Prussian

court, *ib.*; excites the ill-will of the Berlin literati, *ib.*; his activity after returning to Weimar, 254–5; story of his protégé Kraft, 256; mental crystallisation, 266; dawning of a new life, 267; composition of the Iphigenia in prose, 268; review of the Iphigenia, 269 *ff.*; his official duties, 281–2; institutes a fire-brigade at Weimar, 282; made Geheimrath, *ib.*; journey with Karl August to Frankfurt and Strasburg, *ib.*; interviews with Frederika and Lili, 282–4; visits his sister's grave, 284; passionate study of science, 286, 299, 340; changes in his mode of life, 287–8; is ennobled, 288; increased affection for Frau von Stein, *ib.*; occasional discords with Karl August, 289; poem of Ilmenau, 292; his efforts as controller of finance, 293; journey in the Harz with Fritz von Stein, 294; prepares the Planet Dance, *ib.*; oration on the reopening of the Ilmenau mines, *ib.*; discovers the intermaxillary bone, 295; studies in natural history, 296; salary increased by Karl August, 297; Goethe's charities, *ib.*; changes in Weimar society, *ib.*; his various studies, 299; secret departure for Italy, 300; his residence in Italy, 301 *ff.*; his narrow escape from shipwreck, 307; falls in love with a young Milanese, 309; returns to Weimar, 310; review of Egmont, 311; of Tasso, 317; his letter to Karl August, 319; relieved from his official duties, 320; his first acquaintance with Schiller, 322; Goethe's change in reference to the Sturm und Drang movement, *ib.*; recommends Schiller to a professorship at Jena, 325; his connexion with Christiane Vulpius, 325 *ff.*; Roman Elegies, 328; Goethe's history of his botanical studies, 339; character of Goethe as a man of science, 340; his theory of colours, 344; his optical studies, *ib.*; his ignorance of mathematics and physical science, 350; his aptitude for dealing with physical science, 351; despises the pedantry of professional men, 355; his merit, that of a "thinker in science," 367; second visit to Italy, 378; visits the camp in Silesia, *ib.*; campaign in France, 379–80; Goethe's diary of the campaign, 383; description of his house in the Frauenplan, 389–91; the Bürgergeneral, 392; the Aufgeregten, *ib.*; Reinecke Fuchs, *ib.*; history and character of his friendship with Schiller, 394 *ff.*; Goethe contrasted with Shakspeare, 398; review of Wilhelm Meister, 406 *ff.*; Goethe's influence on Schiller, 416; review of Hermann und Dorothea, 422 *ff.*; history of Goethe's management of the Weimar theatre, 434; his mode of life at Weimar, 450–1; last years of Schiller, 450 *ff.*; review of Faust, 461; review of the Lyrical Poems, 497 *ff.*; battle of Jena, 502 *ff.*; his outburst against Napoleon, 505; marriage with Christiane Vulpius, 506; nature of his acquaintance with Bettina Brentano, 512; interview with Napoleon, 515; noticed in the *Moniteur*, *ib.*; receives the cross of the Legion of Honour, 517; Goethe's supposed servility, 518; his passion for Minna Herzlieb, 520; review of the Wahlverwandtschaften, 520 *ff.*; acquaintance with Beethoven, 528; indifference to politics, but earnestness in art, *ib.*; not true that he "looked on life as an artist," 531; character of his religion, 533; his morals, 537; character of his old age, 538; his oriental studies, 539; the West-östliche Divan, *ib.*; ovation at Frankfurt, 540; publication of the Kunst und Alterthum, 541; growing tendency towards mysticism, 541–2; visit of Lottchen to Weimar, 542; death of Christiane, *ib.*; anecdote of his enlargement of the Jena library, 543; quarrel with the Landtag, 544; charged with stealing an ingot of gold, 546; story of the hundred engravings borrowed from Knebel, 547; his varied occupations, *ib.*; review of Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, 549; spread of his fame, 551; vitality of his old age, 552; his passion for Fräulein von Lewezow, *ib.*; Madame Szymanowska "madly in love" with him, 553; his jubilee at Weimar, *ib.*; protection of his copyright in Germany, 555; receives the order

of the Grand Cross of Bavaria, *ib.*; death of Karl August, *ib.*; finishes the Wanderjahre, 557; review of the second part of Faust, 557 *ff.*; closing scenes, 566 *ff.*; his eighty-first year, *ib.*; indifference to the revolution of 1830 in comparison with the scientific contest between Cuvier and St. Hilaire, 567; death of his only son, 568; tribute from fifteen Englishmen, 569; Thackeray's letter describing Goethe and Weimar, 570–3; activity of his old age, 574; signs of decay, *ib.*; his death, 575–6

Goethe family, genealogical table of, 5

Goethe, Johann Caspar, father of the poet, 3, 4; his character, 7; his method of education, 15; dissatisfied with his son's progress at Leipsic, 59; his harshness to his daughter Cornelia, 64; his pride in his son, but distress at his manners, 99; doubts as to his son's acquaintance with the princes of Weimar, 146; his death, 287

Goethe, Katharina, Elizabeth, mother of the poet, 4; her character, 7; her stories to her children, 14; her reception of Goethe on his return from Leipsic, 60; her description of her son skating, 144; Goethe's letter to her from Weimar, 227; her missing letter, 388; her death, 527

Goethe, Cornelia, sister of the poet, his love for her, 13; her father's harshness, 64; her marriage, 141; her objections to Goethe's marriage with Lili, 189, 192; her death, 246; Goethe visits her grave, 284

Goethe, Frederick, 3

Goethe, Hans Christian, 2

Goethe, Jacob, early death of, 24

Goethe, Ottilie von. *See* Pogwisch, Ottilie von

Gold, ingot of, Goethe charged with stealing one, 546

Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," translated by Goethe and Götter, 120

Gotha, Duke of, places at Goethe's disposal, a magnificent laboratory, 342

Gothic architecture, Goethe's appreciation of, 97

Gott und die Bajadere, 499

Götter, 118; Goethe's acquaintance with him, 119

Gottfried of the Iron Hand, history of, 109

Götter, Helden und Wieland, 144, 145; reviewed by Wieland, 145; circumstances under which it was written, *ib.*

Göttling, his discovery respecting phosphorus, 403

Götz von Berlichingen, three versions of, 108; Goethe's own account of its composition, *ib.*; character of Gottfried of the Iron Hand, 109; the characters in Götz von Berlichingen, 110; Götz a dramatic chronicle, not a drama, 111; singularly un-Shakespearian in construction, *ib.*; in the presentation of character, 112; in the language, *ib.*; the first-born of the Romantic School, 113; its injurious influence on dramatic art, *ib.*; its originality denied by Hegel, 113; its scenes, 114; rewritten, 132; Goethe's reasons for rewriting it, *ib.*; Merck's advice, 133; its publication, *ib.*; its effect upon the public, 134; the representative of the Sturm und Drang movement, 135; Frederick the Great's opinion of Götz von Berlichingen, 254; Sir Walter Scott's translation, 422

Goué, instituted the Round Table at Wetzlar, 117; his rumoured suicide, 138

Greek art compared with Christian art, 158; Goethe's enthusiasm for, 541

Greek drama, traditional errors concerning, 270; necessary calmness of evolution mistaken for calmness of life, 271

Gretchen, story of Goethe's early love for, 31, 32

Gross Kophta, der, 379

Grünn, Karl, 136 *n*

Guizot, his epigram on our age, 149

HAMILTON, Lady, captivates Goethe, 305

Hamlet, Wilhelm Meister's criticism on, 415; twofold causes of its popularity: intellectual sublimity and dramatic variety, 463–4; compared with Faust, 464

Hardenberg, a fellow-student of Goethe's, 57

Harz, Goethe's journeys in, 247, 294
Harzreise in Winter, poem of, 247
Hegel, his criticism of Götz, 113, 114; his remark on heroes and valets, 255; a convert to Goethe's erroneous theory of refraction, 350; on Hermann und Dorothea, 433
Heine, anecdote of his interview with Goethe, 452
Heinse, his description of Goethe, 175
Helena, Carlyle's review of, 564; its character, 564–5
Herculaneum, Goethe's visit to, 306
Herder, his acquaintance with Goethe, 81, 82; his opinion of Goethe, *ib.*; his influence on him, 83; his reception of Götz von Berlichingen, 134; contrasted with Goethe, 175; drawn to Weimar by Goethe, 216; Goethe's disinterestedness towards him, *ib.*; called to Weimar as court chaplain, 238; his opinion of Goethe quoted by Schiller, 264; closer intimacy with Goethe, 286; his jealousy of Schiller, 456; his death, *ib.*
Hereditary transmission of qualities, 2
Hermann und Dorothea, foundation of Goethe's poem, 423; analysis, *ib.*; character of the poem, 430; objective delineation of characters and scenes, 431; pure human existence represented in the subject matter, 432; clearness and significance of the style, 432–3; German criticisms on, 433
Herzlieb, Minna, Goethe's passion for, 520; his sonnets to her, *ib.*; heroine of Die Wahlverwandtschaften, *ib.*
Hooker, Dr., his appreciation of Linnæus, 360
Höpfner, Goethe's visit to, 127
Horen, die, publication of, 400; a failure, 404
Horn, his description of Goethe to Moors, 43–6; his description of the character of Goethe's genius, 53
Humboldts, their acquainance with Goethe, 403; letter to Goethe relating the death of Karl August, 555–6
Huxley, his criticism on the vertebral theory of the skull, 373
Ideal, or subjective, intellects contrasted with real, or, objective intellects, 51
Ideas constructed out of the depth of moral consciousness, 406; the camel story, *ib.*; the Idea of Faust, 464
Ilmenau, Goethe's poem of, 292; his oration on the reopening of the mines, 294; his last visit to, 574
Imbaumgarten, Peter, Goethe's protégé, 246, 259
Imperial court of justice at Wetzlar, 116
Infusoria, Goethe's studies of, 299
Intellect, distinction between the subjective and objective, 51
Intermaxillary bone, discovered by Goethe, its biographical significance, 295; a bone of contention among anatomists, 354; its existence indicated by Galen, but generally supposed to be absent from man, *ib.*; recognised by Loder, Spix, and Sömmering, 355; the comparative method which led to the discovery, *ib.*; the claim of Vicq d'Azyr to the discovery of, 356. *See* Metamorphoses, Morphology
Interpretation, symbolical, extensive application of, 457–8
Iphigenia represented at Weimar, 243; first composed in prose, 268; comparison of the prose with the poetic version, 269; Schlegel's error in calling it an echo of Greek song, *ib.*; not a Greek but a German play, 272; Schiller's criticism, *ib.*; not a drama but a dramatic poem, *ib.*; analysis of, 273 *ff.*; Miss Swanwick's translation of, 274 *n.*
Irony, principle of, 418
Italiänische Reise, character of the book, 301–2
Italian pictures, Goethe's appreciation of, 58
Italy, Goethe's love for, 12; his first visit under an assumed name, 301; Goethe's delight in the present and not in the past, 302; effect of Goethe's residence in, 308; his second visit to, 378

Jacobi, Frau, Goethe's letter to, 144
Jacobi, his acquaintance with Goethe, 174; discussion with Lessing, 181; his tone and opinions disliked by

Goethe, 298; his animadversions on Wilhelm Meister, answered by Schiller, 414; his visit to Goethe at Weimar, 502
Jean Paul, his impression of Goethe, 452; of Schiller, 453
Jena, the home of science, 202; students, their appearance at the Weimar theatre, 437
Jena, battle of, 502
Jena library, anecdote of Goethe's enlargement of it, 543
Jerusalem, his philosophical essays, edited by Lessing, 125; his unhappy passion, 126; his suicide, 139; abridgment of Kestner's account of, 149
Jery und Bätely, 284
Jubilee, Goethe's celebration of, at Weimar, 553

KARL AUGUST, his first acquaintance with Goethe, 146; invites Goethe to Weimar, 193; visits Frankfurt, 194; Goethe accepts his invitation to Weimar, *ib.*; his trick on Mdlle. Göchhausen, 211; his character, 214; compared with Goethe, *ib.*; Goethe's description of him, 215; his close intimacy with Goethe, 216, 219, 220; elects Goethe to the post of Geheime Legations Rath, 221; silences the protest of the Court, 221–2; presents Goethe with the Gartenhaus, 233–4; his theatrical troupe and its wanderings, 239; his journey with Goethe to the Harz, 247; makes Goethe Geheimrath, 282; his journey with Goethe to Frankfurt and Strasburg, *ib.*; Goethe's occasional discords with him, 289; his letter to Merck, 292; releases Goethe from his more onerous official duties, 305; commands a Prussian regiment during the campaign in France, 380; dismisses Goethe from the management of the Weimar stage, 449; Napoleon's intemperate rage against him, 505; Goethe's outburst, *ib.*; Napoleon's friendly reception of him at Erfurt, 515; his visits to Goethe, 548; his death, 555
Karsten and his performing dogs, 448
Käthchen. *See* Schönkopf
Kaufmann, Angelica, Goethe's acquaintance with her, 303, 307
Kestner, Goethe's correspondence with, 116 *n.*; his description of Goethe at Wetzlar, 117; betrothed to Charlotte Buff, 123; his account of Charlotte and Goethe, 124, 125; extracts from his diary, 127; Goethe's letters to, 137, 138, 139, 140, 145, 148; his marriage with Charlotte, 140; his account of Jerusalem's suicide, 150; his indignation at Werther, 159; his letter to Goethe, 160; forgives Goethe, 161; his letter to Hennings, giving an account of Werther, 162
Kieser recognises Goethe's discovery respecting the metamorphoses of plants, 339
Klettenberg, Fräulein von, her influence on Goethe, 30, 65, 106, 177; Goethe's letter to her, 67; attracted Goethe towards the Moravians, 177, 534
Klopstock, made skating illustrious, 219; his acquaintance with Goethe, 169; his letter of remonstrance about the Duke of Weimar, 222–3; breach with Goethe, 223–4
Knebel, Major von, 146, 216; Goethe's letter to, on the discovery of the intermaxillary bone, 295; Goethe carries off his engravings, 547
Knowledge, Goethe's idea of, in connection with faith, 172
Kotzebue, his appearance on the Weimar stage, 242–3; his unsuccessful effort to create a coolness between Goethe and Schiller, 454
Kotzebue, Amalia, 219, 242
Kraft, Goethe's protégé, story of, 256; Goethe's letters to him, 256–63
Kräuter, Goethe's secretary, 573; his anecdote of Goethe, *ib.*
Kunst und Althertum, its publication, 541; its leaning towards the Romantic School, *ib.*

LAGRANGE-CHANCEL, his Oreste et Pylade, 275 *n.*
Lamb, Charles, his mean opinion of Faust, 482
Landtag, Goethe's quarrel with, concerning the accounts of the Commission of Art and Science, 544–5
Langer, his influence on Goethe, 59
Laokoon, Lessing's, its influence on Goethe and Macaulay, 57

Laroche, Frau von, Goethe's visit to her, 130; reviews her novel, *ib.*
Laroche, Maximiliane von, Goethe's flirtation with, 131; her marriage with Brentano, 143; her dangerous intimacy with Goethe, 143, 144; Goethe's letter to Frau Jacobi, 144. *See* Bettina
Lassberg, Fräulein von, suicide of, 249
Laune des Verliebten, die, Goethe's drama of, 46
Lauth, the two ladies at Strasburg, 67
Lavater, his acquaintance with Goethe, 169; their meeting, *ib.*; Lavater's character, 170; the enthusiasm of his admirers, *ib.*; Goethe's opinion of him, *ib.*; his superstition and hypocrisy deprive him of Goethe's friendship, 299
Leipsic University, Goethe's residence at, 37, 38; society there, 38, 39; Goethe's expenses at, 39
Lenz, Reinhold, 92; his love for Frederika, 104, 283; insists on the printing of Götter, Helden und Wieland, 145
Lerse, Franz, Goethe's first acquaintance with, 74; disputes with Goethe, 90
Lessing, his Laokoon, 57; Goethe neglects to see him, 58; his friendship with Jerusalem, 125; his objections to Werther, 158–9; his discussion with Jacobi, 181; his death, 286
Lewezow, Fräulein von, Goethe's passion for her, 552
Library, Jena, anecdote of Goethe's enlargement of, 543
Liebig, his character of the Rhinelander, 451 *n.*
Lili, Goethe's affection for her, 185; her position and character, 186; his verses to her, 187; her coquetry, 189; objections to her marriage with Goethe, 189; the betrothal, *ib.*; cancelling of the betrothal, 193; Goethe's subsequent interview with her, 282–4; his strange meeting with her son, 504
Lili's Menagerie, Goethe's poem of, 193
Linnæus, the constant companion of Goethe, 296; threw out a phrase suggesting the doctrine of the metamorphoses of plants, 360–1
Lisbon earthquake, awakens religious doubts in Goethe, 21
Loder, Goethe studies anatomy under, 287
Lotte. *See* Buff
Lotteries, marriage, 165
Louis XVI., invasion of France for his restoration, 379
Love songs, Goethe's, 56
Lucinda and Emilia, story of, 77 *ff.*
Luden, his testimony to Goethe's patriotism, 529; his account of Goethe's quarrel with the Landtag, 544–5; his interview with the Duchess Luise, 545
Luise, the Duchess, her character, 213; Goethe's admiration for her, 289; her courage on Napoleon's entry of Weimar, 505; her death, 557
Luther, his room in the Wartburg, 198
Lutz, Sebastian, 3
Lyrics, Goethe's, witchery of, 498; sincerity of their style, *ib.*; story of the Bride of Corinth, *ib.*; Gott und die Bajadere, 499; the Erl-King, 500

MACBETH, travestied and represented at the Weimar theatre, 443
Mahomet, drama on, projected by Goethe, 143; its conception, *ib.*; Voltaire's, translated by Goethe, 443
Mainz, capitulation of, 392
Man, characteristics of, to be traced in the moral lineaments of the child, 34
Manfred, Goethe reviews Byron's, 547
Manners of the Germans in the eighteenth century, 205
Manzoni, Goethe's defence of his Carmagnola, 551
Marie Antoinette, her visit to Strasburg, 68; ominous pictures foreshadowing her destiny, *ib.*; Goethe's recollection of her, 69
Marlowe's Faustus, analysis of, 486
Marriage lotteries, 165
Mars, difference between the Greek and Roman conceptions of, 396
Masterpieces create disappointment, 481
Mathematics, Goethe's want of training in, the cause of his mistaken notions respecting refraction, 350

Mayer of Lindau, letter to Dr. Salzmann, 100
Menzel, his attack on Goethe, 264
Merck, account of, 106; introduced by Goethe to Charlotte Buff, 127; excursion with Goethe up the Rhine, 131; his advice to Goethe in reference to Götz von Berlichingen, 133; his approval of Goethe's position at Weimar, 229, 237–8
Metamorphoses of plants, publication of, by Goethe, 338; its cold reception, *ib.*; theory of, previously announced by Wolff, 339; recognition of the theory by St. Hilaire, Kieser, Voigt, Esenbeck and Sprengel, *ib.*; first principles of morphology, 358–9; Goethe's hypothesis of elaborated sap opposed to Wolf's hypothesis of deficient sap, 364; law of vegetation and law of reproduction clearly perceived by Goethe, 365
Metaphysical studies of Goethe, 70
Method, *a priori*, employed by Goethe, 353; clearness of Goethe's ideas on method, 366
Milne-Edwards, Goethe anticipates his zoological discoveries, 368
Mind, the period of its greatest development, 538
Minerva's birth, life, and deeds, representation of, at Weimar, 240
Minna Herzlieb. *See* Herzlieb
Minnesingers, banqueting hall at the Wartburg, 198
Miracle plays, their coarse buffoonery, 468
Mitschuldigen, die, Goethe's drama of, 50; represented in the private theatre at Weimar, 242
Monti, Goethe's acquaintance with, 304
Moors, his remonstrance with Goethe, 44
Moral toleration of Goethe, 55; his system of morals, 537
Morals, German laxity of, in the eighteenth century, 218; based on sentimentalism, *ib.*
Moravians, their history and doctrines studied by Goethe, 177
Morgenblatt, account of Goethe's engravings in, 58
Morphology, first principles of, 358–9; the notion of metamorphosis replaced by the notion of differentiation, 364–5
Müller, Chancellor von, his description of the relations of Goethe with the Weimar actors, 439
Musæus, anecdote of, 213
Mystical studies of Goethe, 70
Mysticism prized by the Romantic School, 418; and by Goethe, 541
Mythology, efforts of the Romantic School to create one, 418

NÄKE, the philologist, his visit to Sesenheim, 98
Naples, Goethe's residence at, 305, 307
Napoleon. *See* Buonaparte
National co-operation with individual genius, necessity of, in art, 207
Nature, tendency of Goethe to nature worship, 70, 537; his studies in, 351–2
Natürliche Tochter, 457
Newton's theory of light misunderstood by Goethe, 341; abstract of Goethe's theory of colour and Newton's theory, 344 *ff.*; source of Goethe's error in his rejection of every mathematical principle, 350
Nicolai, his parody of Werther, 159; Goethe's answer, *ib.*
Note-book, Goethe's, 67; strange revelations of Goethe's mystical studies in it, 70
Novalis, his criticisms on Wilhelm Meister, 413

OBJECTIVE intellect, its tendency, 51, 52; the characteristic of Goethe's genius, 53
Oersted, his visit to Goethe in reference to his discovery in electromagnetism, 552
Oeser the drawing master, his influence on Goethe, 57
Oken, his charge against Goethe respecting Goethe's claim to the discovery of the vertebral theory, 374; his claim to the discovery of the vertebral structure of the skull discussed, 375; equivocal character of Oken's accusation, *ib.*
Old age, relative character of, 538; the vitality of Goethe's, 552
Optics, Goethe's unfortunate studies in, 340; misunderstands Newton's theory of light, 341; publication of the Beiträge zur Optik, 343; Goethe's obstinacy and irritability concerning, *ib.*; abstract of the

Newtonian theory of colours and of Goethe's theory, 344 *ff.*; Goethe's explanation of the phenomena of refraction, *ib.*; source of his error in his rejection of every mathematical explanation, 350
Oration on Shakspeare, Goethe's, 93; on the opening of the Ilmenau mines, 294
Organic sciences, Goethe's place in, 353
Oriental studies, Goethe's, 539
Owen, his definition of a discoverer in organic science, 356; countenances Oken's charge against Goethe, 373

PAESTUM, Goethe's visit to, 306
Palermo, Goethe's visit to, 306; the birth-place of Cagliostro, *ib.*
Palladio, Goethe's enthusiasm for, 302
Pantheism, Goethe's views on, 70, 71
Paoli, the Corsican patriot, 65
Patriotism, Goethe's, 380–1, 538
Paul, Jean, his impression of Goethe, 453; of Schiller, *ib.*
Pfenniger, Goethe's letter to, 170
Philosophy, its injurious effects in Germany, 407, 417
Phrenology, Goethe's ideas concerning, 503
Pilgrim's Progress, Carlyle's opinion of, 564
Planet Dance, a masked procession prepared by Goethe, 294
Plant metamorphoses, theory of, 359. *See* Botany, Metamophoses and Morphology
Platinum, the story of a bar of, 546
Plato, ideal or subjective character of his philosophy, as opposed to the real or objective philosophy of Aristotle, 51, 52
Players, the Weimar strolling company of, 239
Plessing, the misanthrope, Goethe's interview with him, 248; outlives his melancholy, *ib. n.*
Pliny the younger, his idea of justice, 55
Plutarch, the Bible of Schiller, 397
Poetry, inadequacy of all translations, 485
Pogwisch, Ottilie von, her marriage with Goethe's son, 543; death of her husband, 568; her care for Goethe, 568, 576
Politics, Goethe's general indifference for, 380, 528; Luden's testimony to his patriotism, 529; his refusal to write war songs, 530–1
Pompeii, Goethe's visit to, 306
Precocity not necessarily a sign of disease, 17; Quintilian's observation on, *ib.*
Prometheus, Goethe projects a play on, 180; comparison of the extant fragment with the Prometheus of Æschylus and of Shelley, 181, 182; Shelley's idea of, 183
Pronunciation, German stage, 442
Prose mania in Germany, 268
Prussian court, Goethe's contempt for, 253
Public, none in Germany, 207
Pustkuchen, his parody of Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, 551

QUINTILIAN, his observation on precocity, 17

RAPHAEL'S cartoons, seen with enthusiasm by Goethe, 68
Rauch, the sculptor, 66 *n.*
Real, or objective intellects contrasted with ideal or subjective intellects, 51; Goethe a realist, 53, 395, 396
Reflection, a sign of decay, 542
Refraction, phenomena of, Goethe's explanation of, 349, 350–1; Hegel applauds his theory of, 351; source of Goethe's error in his rejection of every mathematical explanation, 350, 352
Reinecke Fuchs, 392
Religion, Goethe's, 65, 533
Repetent, meaning of, 67
Republican principles, absurdities of, in the eyes of Goethe, 381
Reuss, Prince of, 385
Revolution, French, Goethe's opposition to, 380; absurdities, 381; opposed by Wieland and Schiller, as well as Goethe, 399
Rhine, Goethe's journey up the, 130
Richter, his impression of Goethe, 452; of Schiller, 453
Riemer, his charges against Bettina, 512, 513
Riese, Goethe's letter to, from Leipsic, 40
Roman Elegies, composition of, 328
Romantic School in Germany, character of, 417; the philosophers of, 418; tendency to catholicism,

ib.; enthusiasm for mysticism, 418–19; its services, 420; Goethe's later tendency towards it, 541
Rome, Goethe's residence at, 303, 308
Romeo and Juliet, Goethe's attempt to recast, 444; character of Shakspeare's play, 444–5; Goethe's injurious alterations, 445–7
Rosenkrantz, his criticism on Werther, 156; on Clavigo, 168; his criticism on Hermann und Dorothea, 433
Rousseau, his crucial test of salvation, 130 *n.*
Round table and knights at Wetzlar, 117
Ruskin, on character, 20 *n.*

St. Hilaire, Geoffroy, his testimony to Goethe's labours in organic science, 357; his discoveries nearly contemporary with Goethe's, 369; his guide in anatomical research, 371; contest with Cuvier on the question of unity of composition in the animal kingdom, 567
Salzmann, Dr., 67, 73, 74, 75, 91, 100, 107, 122
Sand, George, her remark on art, 156 *n.*
Saxe-Weimar. *See* Weimar
Schellhorn, Frau Cornelia, 3
Schiller, his scant literary income, 190; his admiration for "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," 218; his opinion of Goethe, 265; his remarks on the difference between prose and poetic writing, 268–9; his criticism on Goethe's Iphigenia, 272; first sight of Goethe, 284; his description of Goethe to Körner, 305; Goethe holds aloof from him, 322–4; his misunderstanding of Goethe, 323; his difficult circumstances, 324; unrecognised at Weimar, 325; his friendship with Goethe, 394; their profound dissimilarity, 394–5; Schiller's unhealthy practice of literature, 395; the representative of idealism, 395–6; his earnestness in art, 397; phases of his development, 397–8; his influence on Goethe, 398, 402, 416; receives the diploma of French citizenship, 399; publication of Die Horen, 400; his opinion of Goethe's theory of metamorphoses, 401; publication of Xenien, 404; his opinion of Wilhelm Meister, 409; his reply to Jacobi's animadversions, 414; extracts from his criticism, 415–6; discussions with Goethe, 420; obtains from Goethe a plan of William Tell, 421; attempts to create an ideal drama for the cultivated few, 435; his last years, 450 *ff.*; Jean Paul Richter's impression of him, 453; partizanship of the admirers of Goethe and Schiller, 454; Kotzebue's unsuccessful effort to create a coolness, 455; Herder's jealousy of Schiller, 456; last illness and death, 460
Schlegel and Tieck's translation of Shakspeare, 418
Schlegel, F., representative of the Romantic School in Germany, 417–8
Schlosser, his influence on Goethe at Leipsic, 41, 106
Schöll, his publication of Goethe's notebook, 67
Schönemann, Anna Elizabeth, Goethe's affection for her under the name of Lili, 185. *See* Lili
Schönkopf, Herr, literary society at his table d'hôte, 41, 42
Schönkopf, Anna Katharina, Goethe's love for her, 42, 43; lovers' quarrels, 46; continuation of a friendly intercourse, 56; Goethe's letters to her from Frankfurt, 60; her engagement to Dr. Kanne, 61; his letter to her, 62
School life of Goethe, 18, 19
Schröter, Corona, the Hofsängerin, account of, 212, 288
Science, Goethe's passionate studies in, 286, 299, 340. *See* Botany, Optics, Mathematics, Anatomy
Scott, Walter, translates Götz von Berlichingen, 422; his letter to Goethe, 555
Scripture, Goethe's belief in the Four Gospels, 535
Seckendorf, 213
Sentiment, the age of, 135–6
Sesenheim, 83, 88
Seven Years' War, its effect on Goethe, 23
Shakspeare, difference between him and Goethe, 54; the elastic character of his genius, *ib.*; Dodd's Beauties of Shakspeare and Wieland's translations, 56; Shakspeare bigots, 92; Goethe's oration on Shakspeare, 93; composed no eulo-

gies on his friends, 398; Wilhelm Meister's criticism on Hamlet, 415; translated by Tieck and Schlegel, 418; Macbeth as represented at the Weimar theatre, 443; Schiller's misconception of the witches, *ib.*; Goethe's attempt to recast Romeo and Juliet, 444; character of Shakespeare's play, and Goethe's injurious alterations, 446–7; Napoleon's opinion of Shakspeare, 516
Shelley, his idea of Prometheus compared with Goethe's, 181, 182
Skating made illustrious by Klopstock, 219; Goethe's fondness for it, *ib.*; his exhibition before Maximiliane and his mother, 144; he introduces skating at Weimar, 219
Sleep, Goethe's talent for, 450
Soret translafes into French the Metamorphoses of Plants, 557
Spinoza, 71; Goethe's studies of, 170, 175; passage from the Ethics, 171; his influence on Goethe, 175, 298, 536
Sprengel recognises Goethe's discovery respecting the metamorphoses of plants, 339
Stael, Madame de, her visit to Weimar, 458; reason of Goethe's coldness towards her, 459; her criticism of Faust, 467
Stein, Fritz von, accompanies Goethe to the Harz, 294; Goethe's letter to him from Dresden, 402
Stein, Frau von, 185; Goethe's love for her, 216; account of her position and character, 229; Goethe falls in love with her, 230; his letters to her, 231; her influence on him, 245; her coquetry, *ib.*; his letter to her relating his interviews with Frederika and Lili, 284; his devotion, 285; his departure for Italy, 300; his coolness, 321; her reproaches, *ib.*; her indignation at his liaison with Christiane, 331; his answers to her reproaches, *ib.*; the final rupture, 334; her letter concerning him twelve years afterwards, *ib.*; her death, 555
Stella, composition of, 190; specimens from, *ib.*; subject for an artist, *ib.*; Canning's caricature, 191
Stilling, Jung, Goethe's first acquaintance with, 74; Goethe's friendship for, *ib.*; Goethe opens a subscription for his relief, 224
Stirbt der Fuchs so gilt der Balg, Goethe's love poem, 76
Stock, the engraver, his acquaintance with Goethe, 58
Stolberg, Countess Augusta von, Goethe's romantic friendship for, 185; his letters to her, 187, 188, 535–6
Stolberg, the two counts, their tour in Switzerland with Goethe, 189, 191–2
Storm and Stress period, approach of, 99; Goethe's revulsion from the Sturm und Drang movement, 322
Strasburg, Goethe's residence at, 66; the Cathedral, 67; visit of Marie Antoinette, 68; amusements at Strasburg, 73; the German character of, *ib.*; influences of Frederika, Herder, and the Cathedral, 97
Stuttgart, Goethe's visit to, in company with Karl August, 285
Subjective intellect, its tendency, 51, 52
Suicide coquetted with by Goethe, 138
Swanwick, Miss, her translation of the Iphigenia, 274 *n.*
Switzerland, Goethe's tour in, with the two counts Stolberg, 189, 191–2; Goethe's third visit to, 421
Sylvius, his theory that man had lost the intermaxillary bone through luxury, 354
Symbolical interpretation, extensive application of, 457
Symbolism in the second part of Faust, 542; Goethe's later tendencies towards it, *ib.*
Système de la Nature, Goethe's disgust at it, 68
Szymanowska, Madame, her enthusiastic love for Goethe, 553

TALMA performs at the congress of Erfurt, 515
Tasso, a series of faultless lines, but no drama, 317
Teutsche Haus at Wetzlar, 116
Textor, alderman, death of, 388
Textor family, genealogical table of, 6
Textor, the grandmother and grandfather of Goethe, 15
Textor, Katherina Elizabeth, mother of Goethe, 4; her character, 7; her stories to her children, 14; her

death, 527. *See* Goethe, Katharina Elizabeth
Thackeray, W. M., his letter to the author concerning Weimar and Goethe, 510
Theatre, court, at Weimar, management of, undertaken by Goethe, 379; history of its management, 434; its confined and pernicious influence, 434–5; error of Goethe and Schiller, 435; Goethe's contempt of public opinion, 436; influence of the Jena students, 437; Goethe's despotism over the public and actors, 438; difficulties in the management, 439; performance of Wallenstein, 440; Devrient's critical observations on the Weimer stage, *ib.*; Goethe's refusal to admit performing dogs, 449; dismissal of Goethe by Karl August, *ib.*; performances at the congress of Erfurt, 515
Theatricals, private, at Weimar, 238; their excessive popularity, *ib.*; open air performances, 239
Thorane, Count de, 25
Thraseas, maxim of, 55
Tieck and Schlegel's translation of Shakspeare, 418
Tiefurt, theatricals at, in honour of Goethe's birthday, 240
Toleration, moral, 54–5
Tragedy, rehabilitation of French at Weimar, 443
Translations of poetry, inadequacy of, 485; examples, *ib.*
Travelling, German, in the eighteenth century, 203
Triumph der Empfindsamkeit, Goethe's extravaganza of, 247; its representation, 250
Troost, Herr, 74
Type, importance of a recognition of, in biological speculation, 360; interesting application of the idea of, 369

UNACTED Dramatists, error of, 436
Unities, erroneously supposed to be inseparable from the Greek drama, 270
Unity of composition in the animal kingdom, great philosophical contest between Cuvier and St. Hilaire concerning, 567; importance of the doctrine recognised by Goethe, 568

VALMY, defeat at, 387
Venetian epigrams, 378
Venice, Goethe's visit to, 303
Verdun, bombardment of, 384–5
Vertebral theory, 369; Goethe's claim to its discovery discussed, 375; equivocal character of Oken's accusation, *ib.*; Goethe the originator of the idea, but Oken the discoverer, 377
Vesalius on the intermaxillary bone, 354
Vesuvius, Goethe's visit to, 305
Voigt recognises Goethe's discovery respecting the metamorphoses of plants, 339
Voss, his "Luise" compared with "Hermann und Dorothea," 433
Vulpius, Christiane, her petition to Goethe in behalf of her brother, 325; her position, education, and character, 326; her subsequent connection with Goethe, 327; Goethe's love for her, 328, 331; indignation of Weimar and the Frau von Stein, 331; Goethe introduces her to his mother, 421; her serious faults, 507; marriage with Goethe, 508; her death, 542

WAHLVERWANDTSCHAFTEN, the plot and character of, 520 *ff.*; various opinions on, 524–5
Wahre Genuss, der, Goethe's poem, of, 46
Wallenstein, extent of Goethe's co-operation in, 421; the effect of its representation at the Weimar theatre, 440, 442
Wandering Jew, legend of, 178; Goethe's idea of treating it epically, *ib.*
Wanderjahre, Wilhelm Meister's, review of, 549
War songs, Goethe's refusal to write them, 531
Wartburg, the, 198; annual meeting of the Bach family at, *ib.*
Water-sprite, Goethe's appearance as, 237
Weber, Karl Julius, 4
Weimar in the eighteenth century, description of, 195–6; the Wartburg, 198; banqueting hall of the Minnesingers, *ib.*; annual meeting of the Bachs, *ib.*; the park, 199; its charms, 201; environs, *ib.*; state of science in the eighteenth

century, 202; absence of comfort and luxury, 203; rough and simple manners, 205; prices, *ib.*; condition of the people, 206; the court and government, 206–7; no real public for art, 207; notabilities of Weimar, 209; morals in the eighteenth century, 218; Goethe introduces skating, 219; he is elected Geheime Legations Rath, 221; private theatricals at, 238; Goethe organises a fire-brigade, 282; indignation at Goethe's obtaining the place of Geheimrath, *ib.*; rejoicings at the birth of a crown prince, 291; grumblings at Goethe's absence in Italy, 304–5; establishment of a court theatre. *See* Theatre. Description of Goethe's house in the Frauenplan, 389–391; freedom of Weimar from European troubles, 399; history of Goethe's management of the theatre, 434*ff.*; his mode of life at, 450–1; entered by the French after the battle of Jena, 503–4; Goethe's strange meeting with Lili's son, 504; Napoleon's presence in, 505, 516; restoration of peace, 510; Goethe's jubilee, 553

Werther, Countess von, 216

Werther, preparations for, 128, 129; the expression of its time, 135; period of its composition, 148; account of Jerusalem's suicide, 149; character of Werther, 154; Werther not Goethe, *ib.*; simplicity of the construction of Werther, 156; its prodigious effect, 157; criticism of Rosenkrantz and Carlyle, 156, 157; anecdotes in reference to, 158; objections of Lessing, *ib.*; parody of Nicolai, 159; indignation of Kestner and Charlotte, *ib.*; Kestner's account of, to Hennings, 162; Goethe grows ashamed of Werther, 247; suicide of Fräulein von Lassberg, 249; subsequent alterations in Werther, 291; Napoleon's criticism on, 376, 517

Werther, Goethe appears in Weimar in the costume of, 217–18

West Indian, Cumberland's, represented at Weimar, 243

West-östliche divan, its character, 539

Wetzlar, meagre account of, in Goethe's autobiography, 115; the imperial court of justice, 116; the Teutsche Haus, *ib.*; the round table and its knights, 117; Goethe's melanchoiy departure from, 127, 128; sensations produced by Jerusalem's suicide, 154; monument to Goethe, 164

Weyland introduces Goethe to the Brion family, 84

Wieland, his prose translations of Shakspeare, 55; his review of Götter, Helden und Wieland, 145; tutor of Karl August and friend of the Duchess, 209, 212; his description of Goethe at Weimar, 217, 226, 282; Napoleon's friendly reception of him, 515; receives the cross of the Legion of Honour, 517; his death, 528

Wilhelm Meister, 402, 406; efforts to discover its meaning, 407; origin and progress of the work, 407–8; Gervinus's criticism on, 408; its twofold purpose, dramatic and educational, 409–10; description of the characters, 410; artistic atheism of, 413; its supposed immorality, 414; its deep and healthy moral meaning, *ib.*; extract from Schiller's criticism, 415–6

Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, review of, 549

William Tell, Goethe's plan of an epic on, 421

Winckelmann, his influence on Goethe, 57

Wolf's Prolegomena to Homer studied by Goethe, 420

Wolff, Caspar Frederic, his early announcement of the theory of the metamorphoses of plants, 339; his theory not borrowed by Goethe, 362; his hypothesis of deficient sap opposed to Goethe's hypothesis of elaborated sap, 364

XENIEN, its publication, 404; causes a tremendous sensation, 405; a weak production, *ib.*

ZIMMERMANN writes about Goethe to Frau von Stein, 230

Zoology. *See* Botany, Metamorphoses, Morphology, and Anatomy

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