1824

(Sup.) Friday, January 2, 1824.

DINED at Goethe's, and enjoyed cheerful conversation. Mention was made of a young beauty belonging to the Weimar society, when one of the guests remarked that he was on the point of falling in love with her although her understanding could not exactly be called brilliant.

"Pshaw," said Goethe, laughing, "as if love had anything to do with the understanding. The things that we love in a young lady are something very different from the understanding. We love in her: beauty, youthfulness, playfulness, trustingness, her character, her faults, her caprices, and God knows what '*je ne sais quoi*' besides; but we do not *love* her understanding. We respect her understanding when it is brilliant, and by it the worth of a girl can be infinitely enhanced in our eyes. Understanding may also serve to fix our affections when we already love; but the understanding is not that which is capable of firing our hearts, and awakening a passion."

After dinner, and when the rest of the party had departed, I remained sitting with Goethe.

We discoursed upon English literature, on the greatness of Shakespeare; and on the unfavourable position held by all English dramatic authors who had appeared after that poetical giant.

"A dramatic talent of any importance," said Goethe, "could not forbear to notice Shakespeare's works; nay, could not forbear to study them. Having studied them, he must be aware that Shakespeare has already exhausted the whole of human nature in all its tendencies, in all its heights and depths, and that in fact there remains for him, the aftercomer, nothing more to do. And how get courage only to put pen to paper, if conscious, in an earnest appreciating spirit, that such unfathomable and unattainable excellences were already in existence!

"It fared better with me fifty years ago in my own dear Germany. I could soon come to an end with all that then existed; it could not long awe me, or occupy my attention. I soon left German literature behind me, and turned to life and

to production. So on and on I went in my own natural development, and at every step my standard was not much higher than what at such step I was able to attain. But had I been born an Englishman, and had all those numerous masterpieces been brought before me in all their power, at my first dawn of youthful consciousness, they would have overpowered me, and I should not have known what to do. I could not have gone on with such fresh light-heartedness; but should have had to bethink myself, and look about for a long time, to find some new outlet."

I turned the conversation back to Shakespeare. "When he is disengaged from English literature," said I, "and considered as transformed into a German, his greatness seems a miracle. But in the soil of his country, and the atmosphere of his century; studied with his contemporaries and immediate successors —Ben Jonson, Massinger, Marlowe, and Beaumont and Fletcher —Shakespeare, though still a being of the most exalted magnitude, appears in some measure accessible. Much is due to the powerfully productive atmosphere of his time."

"You are right," returned Goethe. "It is with Shakespeare as with the mountains of Switzerland. Transplant Mont Blanc at once into the large plain of Luneburg Heath, and we should find no words to express our wonder at its magnitude. Seek it, however, in its gigantic home; go to it over its immense neighbours, the Jungfrau, the Finsteraarhorn, the Eiger, the Wetterhorn, St. Gothard, and Monte Rosa; Mont Blanc will indeed still remain a giant, but it will no longer produce in us such amazement.

"Besides, let him who will not believe," continued Goethe, "that much of Shakespeare's greatness appertains to his great vigorous time, only ask himself the question, whether a phenomenon so astounding would be possible in the present England of 1824, in these evil days of criticizing and hair-splitting journals?

"That undisturbed, innocent, somnambulatory production, by which alone anything great can thrive, is no longer possible. Our talents lie before the public. Daily criticisms in fifty different places, and gossip caused by them, prevent the appearance of any sound production. He who does not keep aloof from all this, and isolate himself by main force, is lost. Through the bad, chiefly negative, æsthetical and critical tone of the journals, a sort of half-culture finds its way into the masses; but to productive talent it is a noxious mist, a dropping

poison, which destroys the tree of creative power—from the ornamental green leaves, to the deepest pith and the most hidden fibres.

"And then how tame and weak has life itself become during the last two shabby centuries. Where do we now meet an original nature? where is the man with strength to be true, and to show himself as he is? This, however, affects the poet; who must find all within himself, while he is left in the lurch by all without."

The conversation now turned on *Werther*. "That," said Goethe, "is a creation which I, like the pelican, fed with the blood of my own heart. It contains so much from the innermost recesses of my breast that it might easily be spread into a novel of ten such volumes. Besides, I have only read the book once since its appearance, and have taken good care not to read it again. It is a mass of congreve-rockets. I am uncomfortable when I look at it; and I dread lest I should once more experience the peculiar mental state from which it was produced."

I reminded him of his conversation with Napoleon, of which I knew by the sketch amongst his unpublished papers, which I had repeatedly urged him to give more in detail. "Napoleon," said I, "pointed out to you a passage in *Werther*, which, it appeared to him, would not stand a strict examination; and this you allowed. I should much like to know what passage he meant."

"Guess!" said Goethe, with a mysterious smile.

"Now," said I, "I almost think it is where Charlotte sends the pistols to Werther, without saying a word to Albert, and without imparting to him her misgivings and apprehensions. You have given yourself great trouble to find a motive for this silence, but it does not appear to hold good against the urgent necessity where the life of the friend was at stake."

"Your remark," returned Goethe, "is really not bad; but I do not think it right to reveal whether Napoleon meant this passage or another. However, be that as it may, your observation is quite as correct as his."

I asked whether the great effect produced by the appearance of *Werther* were really to be attributed to the period. "I cannot," said I, "reconcile to myself this view, though it is so extensively spread. *Werther* made an epoch because it appeared—not because it appeared at a certain time. There is in every period so much unexpressed sorrow—so much secret discontent and disgust with life, and in single individuals there are so many

disagreements with the world—so many conflicts between their natures and civil regulations, that *Werther* would make an epoch even if it appeared to-day for the first time."

"You are quite right," said Goethe; "it is on that account that the book to this day influences youth of a certain age, as it did formerly. It was scarcely necessary for me to deduce my own youthful dejection from the general influence of my time, and from the reading of a few English authors. Rather was it owing to individual and immediate circumstances which touched me to the quick, and gave me a great deal of trouble, and indeed brought me into that frame of mind which produced *Werther*. I had lived, loved, and suffered much—that was it.

"On considering more closely the much-talked-of *Werther* period, we discover that it belongs, not to the course of universal culture, but to the career of every individual who, with an innate free natural instinct, must accommodate himself to the narrow limits of an antiquated world. Obstructed fortune, restrained activity, unfulfilled wishes, are the calamities not of any particular time but of every individual man; and it would be bad indeed if everybody had not, once in his life, known a time when *Werther* seemed as if it had been written for him alone."

(Sup.) Sunday, January 4, 1824.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe went with me through a portfolio of works by Raphael. He often busies himself with Raphael, in order to keep up intercourse with what is best. At the same time, it gives him pleasure to introduce me to such things.

We afterwards spoke about the *Divan* [1]—especially about the "book of ill-humour," in which much that he carried in his heart against his enemies is poured forth.

"I have, however," continued he, "been very moderate: if I had uttered all that vexed me or gave me trouble, the few pages would soon have swelled to a volume.

"People were never thoroughly contented with me, but always wished me otherwise than it has pleased God to make me. They were also seldom contented with my productions. When I had long exerted my whole soul to favour the world with a new work, it still desired that I should thank it into the bargain for considering the work endurable. If anybody

[1] Goethe's *West-östliche* (west-eastern) *Divan*, one of the twelve divisions of which is entitled *Das Buch des Unmuths* (The Book of Ill-Humour). —J. O.

praised me, I was not allowed to receive it as a well-merited tribute; but people expected from me some modest expression, humbly setting forth the total unworthiness of my person and my work. I should have been a miserable hypocrite if I had so tried to lie and dissemble. Since I was strong enough to show myself in my whole truth, just as I felt, I was deemed proud, and am considered so to the present day.

"In religious, scientific, and political matters, I generally brought trouble upon myself, because I was no hypocrite, and had the courage to express what I felt.

"I believed in God and in Nature, and in the triumph of good over evil; but this was not enough for pious souls: I was also required to believe other points, which were opposed to the feeling of my soul for truth; besides, I did not see that these would be of the slightest service to me.

"It was also prejudicial to me that I discovered Newton's theory of light and colour to be an error, and that I had the courage to contradict the universal creed. I discovered light in its purity and truth, and I considered it my duty to fight for it. The opposite party, however, did their utmost to darken the light; for they maintained that *shade is a part of light*. It sounds absurd when I express it; but so it is: for they said that *colours*, which are shadow and the result of shade, *are light itself*, or, which amounts to the same thing, *are the beams of light, broken now in one way, now in another*."

Goethe was silent, whilst an ironical smile spread over his expressive countenance. He continued:

"And now for political matters. What trouble I have taken, and what I have suffered, on that account, I cannot tell you. Do you know my *Aufgeregten*[1]?"

"Yesterday, for the first time," returned I, "I read the piece, in consequence of the new edition of your works; and I regret from my heart that it remains unfinished. But, even as it is, every right-thinking person must coincide with your sentiments."

"I wrote it at the time of the French Revolution," continued Goethe; "and it may be regarded as my political confession of faith at that time. I have taken the countess as a type of the nobility; and, with the words put into her mouth, I have expressed how the nobility really ought to think. The countess has just returned from Paris; she has there been an eye-witness of the revolutionary events, and has drawn, therefore, for

[1] *Die Aufgeregten* (The Agitated, in a political sense) is an unfinished drama by Goethe.—J. O.

herself, no bad doctrine. She has convinced herself that the people may be ruled, but not oppressed, and that the revolutionary outbreaks of the lower classes are the consequence of the injustice of the higher classes. 'I will for the future,' says she, 'strenuously avoid every action that appears to me unjust, and will, both in society and at court, loudly express my opinion concerning such actions in others. In no case of injustice will I be silent, even though I should be cried down as a democrat.'

"I should have thought this sentiment perfectly respectable," continued Goethe; "it was mine at that time, and it is so still; but as a reward for it, I was endowed with all sorts of titles, which I do not care to repeat."

"We need only read *Egmont*," answered I, "to discover what you think. I know no German piece in which the freedom of the people is more advocated."

"Sometimes," said Goethe, "people do not like to look on me as I am, but turn their glances from everything that could show me in my true light. Schiller, on the contrary—who, between ourselves, was much more of an aristocrat than I am, but who considered what he said more than I—had the wonderful fortune to be looked upon as a particular friend of the people. I give it up to him with all my heart, and console myself with the thought that others before me have fared no better.

"It is true that I could be no friend to the French Revolution; its horrors were too near me, and shocked me daily and hourly, whilst its benefits were not then apparent. Neither could I be indifferent to the endeavours of Germans to bring about, here, artificially, such scenes as were, in France, the consequence of a great necessity.

"But I was as little a friend to arbitrary rule. Indeed, I was perfectly convinced that a great revolution is never a fault of the people, but always of the government. Revolutions are utterly impossible as long as governments are constantly just and constantly vigilant; so that they may anticipate them by improvements at the right time, and not hold out until they are forced to yield by the pressure from beneath.

"Because I hated the Revolution, the name of the '*Friend of the established order*' was bestowed upon me. That is, however, a very ambiguous title, which I beg to decline. Since, with much that is good, there is also much that is bad, unjust, and imperfect, a friend of the established order means often little less than the friend of the obsolete and bad.

"But human affairs wear every fifty years a different aspect; so that an arrangement which in the year 1800 was perfection may perhaps in the year 1850 be a defect.

"And, furthermore, nothing is good for a nation but that which arises from its own core and its own general wants, without apish imitation of another; since what to one race of people, of a certain age, is nutriment, may prove poison for another. All endeavours to introduce any foreign innovation, the necessity for which is not rooted in the core of the nation itself, are therefore foolish; and all premeditated revolutions of the kind are unsuccessful, *for they are without God, who keeps aloof from such bungling*. If, however, there exists an actual necessity for a great reform amongst a people, God is with it, and it prospers. He was visibly with Christ and his first adherents; for the appearance of the new doctrine of love was a necessity to the people. He was also visibly with Luther; for the purification of the doctrine corrupted by the priests was no less a necessity. Neither of the great powers whom I have named was, however, a friend of the established order; much more were both of them convinced that the old leaven must be got rid of, and that it would be impossible to go on and remain in the untrue, unjust, and defective way."

Tuesday, January 27, 1824.

Goethe talked with me about the continuation of his memoirs, with which he is now busy. He observed, that this later period of his life would not be narrated with such minuteness as the youthful epoch of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.[1] "I must," said he, "treat this later period more in the fashion of annals: my outward actions must appear rather than my inward life. Altogether, the most important part of an individual's life is that of development, and mine is concluded in the detailed volumes of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Afterwards begins the conflict with the world, and that is interesting only in its results.

"And then the life of a learned German—what is it? What may have been really good in my case cannot be communicated, and what can be communicated is not worth the trouble. Besides, where are the hearers whom one could entertain with any satisfaction?

"When I look back to the earlier and middle periods of my life, and now in my old age think how few are left of those who

[1] *Poetry and Truth*, the title of Goethe's autobiography.—J. O.

were young with me, I think of a summer residence at a bathing-place. When you arrive, you make friends of those who have already been there some time, and who leave in a few weeks. The loss is painful. Then you turn to the second generation, with which you live a good while, and become most intimate. But this goes also, and leaves us alone with the third, which comes just as we are going away, and with which we have really nothing to do.

"I have ever been esteemed one of Fortune's chiefest favourites; nor will I complain or find fault with the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and I may say that, in all my seventy-five years, I have never had a month of genuine comfort. It has been the perpetual rolling of a stone, which I have always had to raise anew. My annals will render clear what I now say. The claims upon my activity, from both within and without, were too numerous.

"My real happiness was my poetic meditation and production. But how was this disturbed, limited, and hindered by my external position! Had I been able to abstain more from public business, and to live more in solitude, I should have been happier, and should have accomplished much more as a poet. But, soon after my *Goetz* and *Werther*, that saying of a sage was verified for me—'If you do anything for the sake of the world, it will take good care that you shall not do it a second time.'

"A wide-spread celebrity, an elevated position in life, are good things. But, for all my rank and celebrity, I am still obliged to be silent as to the opinion of others, that I may not give offence. This would be but poor sport, if by this means I had not the advantage of learning the thoughts of others without their being able to learn mine."

Sunday, February 15, 1824.

Goethe invited me to take a walk before dinner to-day. I found him at breakfast when I entered the room: he seemed in excellent spirits.

"I have had a pleasant visit," said he cheerfully. "A promising young Westphalian, named Meyer, has just been with me. He has written poems that warrant high expectations. He is only eighteen, and has made incredible progress.

"I am glad," continued he, smiling, "that I am not eighteen now. When I was eighteen, Germany was in its teens also,

and something could be done; but now an incredible deal is demanded, and every avenue is barred.

"Germany itself stands so high in every department, that we can scarcely survey all it has done; and now we must be Greeks and Latins, and English and French into the bargain. Not content with this, some have the madness of pointing to the East also; and surely this is enough to confuse a young man's head!

"I have, by way of consolation, shown him my colossal Juno, as a token that he had best stick to the Greeks, and find consolation there. He is a fine young man; and, if he takes care not to dissipate his energies, something will be made of him. However, as I said before, I thank Heaven that I am not young in so thoroughly finished a time. I could not stay here. Nay, if I sought refuge in America, I should come too late, for there is now too much light even there."

Sunday, February 22, 1824.

Dined with Goethe and his son. The latter related some pleasant stories of the time when he was a student at Heidelberg. He had often been with his friends on an excursion along the Rhine, in his vacations, and especially cherished the remembrance of a landlord at whose house he and ten other students had once passed the night and who provided them with wine gratis—merely that he might share the pleasures of a "Commerz." [1]

After dinner, Goethe showed us some coloured drawings of Italian scenery; especially that of Northern Italy, with the adjoining Swiss mountains, and the Lago Maggiore. The Borromean Isles were reflected in the water; near the shore were skiffs and fishing-tackle, which led Goethe to remark that this was the lake in the *Wanderjahre*. On the north-west, towards Monte Rosa, stood the hills bordering the lake in black-blue heavy masses, as we see them soon after sunset.

I remarked that, to me, who had been born in the plains, the gloomy sublimity of these masses produced an uncomfortable feeling, and that I by no means desired to explore such wild recesses.

"That feeling is natural," said Goethe. "Really that state alone is suitable to man, in which and for which he was born. He who is not led abroad by great objects is far happier at home. Switzerland, at first, made so great an impression upon

[1] The academical word for a students' drinking party.—J. O.

me, that it disturbed and confused me. Only after repeated visits—only in after years, when I visited those mountains merely as a mineralogist—could I feel at my ease among them."

Afterwards we looked at a long series of copperplates from pictures by modern artists in one of the French galleries. The invention displayed in these pictures was almost uniformly weak, and among forty we found barely four or five good ones. These were: a girl dictating a love-letter; a woman in a house to let, which nobody will take; "catching fish"; and musicians before an image of the Madonna. A landscape in Poussin's manner was not bad; on looking at this, Goethe said, "Such artists get a general idea of Poussin's landscapes, and work upon that. We cannot style their pictures good or bad: they are not bad, because through every part you catch glimpses of an excellent model. But you cannot call them good, because the artists usually want the great personal peculiarity of Poussin. It is just so among poets, and there are some who for instance would make a very poor figure in Shakespeare's grand style."

We ended by examining, and talking over for a long while, Rauch's model of Goethe's statue, which is designed for Frankfort.

Tuesday, February 24, 1824.

I went to Goethe's at one o'clock to-day. He showed me some manuscripts, which he had dictated for the first number of the fifth volume of *Kunst und Alterthum*. I found that he had written an appendix to my critique of the German *Paria*, in reference both to the French tragedy and to his own lyrical trilogy, by which this subject was to a certain extent completed.

"You were quite right," said he, "to avail yourself of the occasion of your critique to become acquainted with Indian matters, since in the end we retain from our studies only that which we practically apply."

I agreed with him, and said that I had made this experience at the university; since, of all that was said in the lectures, I had only retained that of which I could make a practical application; on the contrary, I had completely forgotten all that I had been unable to reduce to practice. "I have," said I, "heard Heeren's lectures on ancient and modern history, and know now nothing about the matter. But if I studied a period of history for the sake of treating it dramatically, what I learned would be safely secured to me for ever."

"Altogether," said Goethe, "they teach in academies far too

many things, and far too much that is useless. Then the individual professors extend their departments too much—far beyond the wants of their hearers. In former days lectures were read in chemistry and botany as belonging to medicine, and the physician could manage them. Now, both these have become so extensive that each of them requires a life; yet acquaintance with both is expected from the physician. Nothing can come of this; one thing must be neglected and forgotten for the sake of the other. He who is wise puts aside all claims that may dissipate his attention, confines himself to one branch, and excels there."

As to Byron's *Cain*, Goethe then showed me a short critique he had written.

"We see," he said, "how the inadequate dogmas of the church work upon a free mind like Byron's, and how by such a piece he struggles to get rid of a doctrine which has been forced upon him. The English clergy will not thank him; but I shall be surprised if he does not go on treating biblical subjects of similar import, and if he lets slip a subject like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah."

After these literary observations, Goethe directed my attention to plastic art, by showing me an antique gem of which he had expressed admiration the day before. I was enchanted to observe the *naïveté* of the design. I saw a man who had taken a heavy vessel from his shoulder to give a boy drink. But the boy finds it is not bent down conveniently for him; the drink will not flow; and while he has laid both his little hands on the vessel, he looks up to the man, and seems to ask him to incline it a little more towards him.

"Now, how do you like that?" said Goethe. "We moderns," continued he, "feel well enough the beauty of such a perfectly natural, naïve *motif*; we have the knowledge how such a thing is to be brought about, but we cannot do it; the understanding is always uppermost, and this enchanting grace is always wanting."

We looked then at a medal by Brandt of Berlin, representing young Theseus taking the arms of his father from under the stone. The attitude had much that was commendable, but we found the limbs not sufficiently strained to lift such a burden. It seemed, too, a mistake for the youth to have the arms in one hand while he lifted the stone with the other; for, according to the nature of things, he would first roll aside the heavy stone, and then take up the arms. "By way of contrast,"

said Goethe, "I will show you a gem whereon the same subject is treated by an ancient."

He bade Stadelmann bring a box containing several hundred copies of antique gems, which he had brought with him from Rome, on the occasion of his travels in Italy. I then saw the same subject, treated by an old Greek—and how different it was! The youth was exerting his whole strength upon the stone, and was equal to the task; for the weight was already visibly overcome, and the stone was raised to that point where it would soon be cast aside. All his bodily powers were directed by the young hero against the heavy mass; only his looks were fixed on the arms which lay beneath.

"Meyer," said Goethe, laughing, "always says, 'If thinking were not so hard.' And the worst is, that all the thinking in the world does not bring us to thought; we must be right by nature, so that good thoughts may come before us like free children of God, and cry, 'Here we are.'"

Wednesday, February 25, 1824.

To-day, Goethe showed me two remarkable poems; both highly moral in their tendency, but in their several *motifs* so unreservedly natural and true, that they are of the kind which the world styles immoral. On this account, he keeps them to himself, and does not intend to publish them.

"Could intellect and high cultivation," said he, "become the property of all, the poet would have fair play; he could be always thoroughly true, and would not be compelled to fear uttering his best thoughts. But, as it is, he must always keep on a certain level; must remember that his works will fall into the hands of a mixed society, and must therefore take care lest by over-great openness he may give offence to the majority of good men. Then, Time is a whimsical tyrant, which in every century has a different face for all that one says and does. We cannot with propriety say things that were permitted to the ancient Greeks; and the Englishmen of 1820 cannot endure what suited the vigorous contemporaries of Shakespeare, so that at the present day it is found necessary to have a Family Shakespeare."

"Then," said I, "there is much in the form also. Of these two poems, the one composed in the style and metre of the ancients would be far less offensive than the other. Isolated parts would displease, but the treatment throws so much grandeur and dignity over the whole that we seem to hear a

strong ancient and to be carried back to the age of the Greek heroes. But the other, being in the style and metre of Messer Ariosto, is far more hazardous. It relates an event of our day in the language of our day; and, as it thus comes quite unveiled into our presence, the particular features seem far more audacious."

"You are right," said he; "mysterious and great effects are produced by different poetical forms. If the import of my Roman elegies were put into the measure and style of Byron's *Don Juan*, the whole would be found infamous."

The French newspapers were brought. The campaign of the French in Spain under the duke D'Angoulême, which was just ended, had great interest for Goethe. "I must praise the Bourbons for this measure," said he; "they had not really gained the throne till they had gained the army, and that is now accomplished. The soldier returns with loyalty to his king; for he has, from his own victories and the discomfitures of the many-headed Spanish host, learned the difference between obeying one and many. The army has sustained its ancient fame, and shown that it is brave in itself and can conquer without Napoleon."

Goethe then talked of the Prussian army in the Seven Years' War; which, accustomed by Frederick the Great to constant victory, grew careless, so that in after days it lost many battles from over-confidence. All the minutest details were present to his mind, and I had reason to admire his excellent memory.

"I had the great advantage," said he, "of being born at a time when the greatest events that agitated the world occurred, and such have continued to occur during my long life; so that I am a living witness of the Seven Years' War, of the separation of America from England, of the French Revolution, and of the whole Napoleon era—with the downfall of that hero, and the events that followed. Thus I have attained results and insight impossible to those who are born now and must learn all these things from books that they will not understand.

"What the next years will bring I cannot predict; but I fear we shall not soon have repose. It is not given to the world to be contented; the great are not such that there will be no abuse of power; the masses not such that in hope of gradual improvement they will be contented with a moderate condition. Could we perfect human nature, we might also expect a perfect state of things; but, as it is, there will always be a wavering hither and thither; one part must suffer while the

other is at ease, envy and egotism will be always at work like bad demons, and party strife will be without end.

"The most reasonable way is for everybody to follow his own vocation, to which he has been born and which he has learned, and to avoid hindering others from following theirs. Let the shoemaker abide by his last, the peasant by his plough, and let the king know how to govern; for this also is a business which must be learned, and with which nobody who does not understand it should meddle."

Returning to the French papers, Goethe said—"The liberals may speak, for when they are reasonable we like to hear them; but with the royalists, who have the executive power in their hands, talking comes amiss—they should act. They may march troops, and behead and hang—that is all right; but attacking opinions, and justifying their measures in public prints, does not become them. If there were a public of kings, they might talk.

"For myself," he continued, "I have always been a royalist. I have let others babble, and have done as I saw fit. I understood my course, and knew my own object. If I committed a fault as a single individual, I could make it good again; but if I committed it jointly with three or four others, it would be impossible to make it good, for among many there are many opinions."

He showed me Frau von Spiegel's album, in which he had written some very beautiful verses. A place had been left open for him for two years, and he rejoiced at having been able to perform at last an old promise. After I had read the *Poem to Frau von Spiegel*, I turned over the leaves of the book, in which I found many distinguished names. On the very next page was a poem by Tiedge, written in the very spirit and style of his *Urania*. "In a saucy mood," said Goethe, "I was on the point of writing some verses beneath those; but I am glad I did not. It would not have been the first time that by rash expressions I had repelled good people and spoiled the effect of my best works.

"However," continued Goethe, "I have had to endure not a little from Tiedge's *Urania*; for at one time nothing was sung and nothing was declaimed but this same *Urania*. Wherever you went, you found *Urania* on the table. *Urania* and immortality were the topics of every conversation. I would by no means dispense with the happiness of believing in a future existence, and indeed would say with Lorenzo de Medici that

those are dead even for this life who hope for no other. But such incomprehensible matters lie too far off to be a theme of daily speculation. Let him who believes in immortality enjoy his happiness in silence, he has no reason to give himself airs about it. The occasion of Tiedge's *Urania* led me to observe that piety, like nobility, has its aristocracy. I met stupid women, who plumed themselves on believing, with Tiedge, in immortality; and I was forced to bear much dark examination on this point. They were vexed by my saying I should be well pleased if after the close of this life we were blessed with another, only I hoped I should hereafter meet none of those who had believed in it here. For how should I be tormented! The pious would throng around me, and say, 'Were we not right? Did we not predict it? Has not it happened just as we said?' And so there would be ennui without end even in the other world.

"This preoccupation with immortality," he continued, "is for people of rank, and especially ladies, who have nothing to do. But an able man, who has something regular to do here, and must toil and struggle and produce day by day, leaves the future world to itself, and is active and useful in this. Thoughts about immortality are also good for those who have not been very successful here; and I would wager that, if the good Tiedge had enjoyed a better lot, he would also have had better thoughts."

Thursday, February 26, 1824.

I dined with Goethe. After the cloth had been removed, he bade Stadelmann bring in some large portfolios of copper-plates. Some dust had collected on the covers, and, as no suitable cloths were at hand to wipe it away, Goethe was much displeased, and scolded Stadelmann. "I tell you for the last time," said he, "if you do not go this very day to buy the cloths for which I have asked so often, I will go myself to-morrow; and you shall see that I will keep my word." Stadelmann went.

"A similar case occurred to me with Becker, the actor," added Goethe to me, in a lively tone, "when he refused to take the part of a trooper in *Wallenstein*. I gave him warning that, if he would not play the part, I would play it myself. That did the business; for they knew me at the theatre well enough, and were aware that I did not understand jesting in such matters, and also that I was mad enough to keep my word."

"And would you really have played the part?" asked I.

"Yes," said Goethe, "I would have played it, and would have eclipsed Herr Becker too, for I knew the part better than he did."

We then opened the portfolios. "This," said Goethe, "is the way to cultivate taste. Taste is only to be educated by contemplation, not of the tolerably good, but of the truly excellent. I show you only the best works; and, when you are grounded in these, you will have a standard for the rest, which you will know how to value, without overrating them. And I show you the best in each class, that you may perceive that no class is to be despised, but that each gives delight when a man of genius attains its highest point. For instance, this piece, by a French artist, is *galant*, to a degree you see nowhere else, and is therefore a model in its way."

Goethe handed me the engraving: a beautiful room in a summer residence, with open doors and windows looking into a garden, where the most graceful figures were visible. A handsome lady, aged about thirty, was sitting with a music book, from which she seemed to have just sung. Sitting by her, a little farther back, was a girl of about fifteen. At the open window behind stood another young lady, holding a lute, which she seemed still to be sounding. At this moment a young gentleman was entering, to whom the eyes of the ladies were directed. He seemed to have interrupted the music; and his slight bow gave the notion that he was making an apology, which the ladies were gratified to hear.

"That, I think," said Goethe, "is as *galant* as any piece of Calderon's; and you have now seen the very best thing of this kind. But what say you to this?"

He handed me some etchings by Roos, the famous painter of animals; they were all of sheep, in every posture and situation. The simplicity of their countenances, the ugliness and shagginess of the fleece, were represented with the utmost fidelity to nature.

"I always feel uneasy," said Goethe, "when I look at these beasts. Their state, so limited, dull, gaping, and dreaming, excites in me such sympathy, that I fear I shall become a sheep, and almost think the artist must have been one. At all events, it is most wonderful how Roos has been able to think and feel himself into the very soul of these creatures, so as to make the internal character peer with such force through the outward covering. Here you see what a great talent can do

when it keeps steady to subjects which are congenial with its nature."

"Has not, then," said I, "this artist also painted dogs, cats, and beasts of prey, with similar truth; nay, with this great gift of assuming a mental state foreign to himself, has he not been able to delineate human character with equal fidelity?"

"No," said Goethe, "all that lay out of his sphere; but the gentle grass-eating animals—sheep, goats, cows, and the like—he was never weary of repeating; this was the peculiar province of his talent, which he did not quit during the whole course of his life. And in this he did well. A sympathy with these animals was born with him, a knowledge of their psychological condition was given him, and thus he had so fine an eye for their bodily structure. Other creatures were perhaps not so transparent to him, and therefore he felt no impulse to paint them."

By this remark of Goethe's, much that was analogous was revived within me, and was presented in all its liveliness to my mind. Thus, he had said to me, not long before, that knowledge of the world is inborn with the genuine poet, and that he needs not much experience or varied observation to represent it adequately. "I wrote *Goetz von Berlichingen*," said he, "at two-and-twenty, and was astonished ten years later at the truth of my delineation. I had not experienced nor seen anything of the kind, and therefore I must have acquired the knowledge of various human conditions by way of anticipation.

"Generally, I only took pleasure in painting my inward world before I became acquainted with the outer one. But when I found, in actual life, that the world was really just what I had fancied, it vexed me, and I no more felt delight in representing it. Indeed, I may say that if I had waited till I knew the world before I represented it, my representation would have had the appearance of persiflage.

"There is in every character," said he, another time, "a certain necessity, a sequence, which, together with this or that leading feature, causes secondary features. Observation teaches this sufficiently; but with some persons this knowledge may be innate. Whether with me experience and innate faculty are united, I will not inquire; but this I know, if I have talked with any man a quarter of an hour, I will let him talk two hours."

Goethe had likewise said of Lord Byron, that the world to him was transparent and that he could paint by way of anticipation. I expressed some doubts whether Byron would succeed

in painting, for instance, a subordinate animal nature; for his individuality seemed too powerful for him to give himself up to such a subject. Goethe admitted this, and replied that the anticipation only went so far as the objects were analogous to the talent; and we agreed that, in proportion as the anticipation is confined or extended, the representing talent is of greater or smaller compass.

"If your excellency," said I, "maintains that the world is inborn with the poet, you of course mean only the interior world, not the empirical world of appearances and conventions; if the poet is to give a representation of this also, an investigation into the actual will surely be requisite."

"Certainly," replied Goethe; "the region of love, hate, hope, despair, or by whatever other names you may call the moods and passions of the soul, is innate with the poet, and he succeeds in representing it. But it is not born with him to know by instinct how courts are held, or how a parliament or a coronation is managed; and, if he will not offend against truth while treating such subjects, he must have recourse to experience or tradition. Thus, in *Faust*, I could by anticipation know how to describe my hero's gloomy weariness of life, and the emotions of love in the heart of Gretchen; but the lines,

> *Wie traurig steigt die unvollkommne Scheibe*
> *Des späten Monds mit feuchter Glut heran!*
>
> How gloomily does the imperfect disk
> Of the late moon with humid glow arise!

required some observation of nature."

"Yet," said I, "every line of *Faust* bears marks, not to be mistaken, of a careful study of life and the world; nor is it for a moment doubted that the whole is only the result of the amplest experience."

"Perhaps so," replied Goethe; "yet, had I not the world already in my soul through anticipation, I should have remained blind with seeing eyes, and all experience and observation would have been unproductive labour. The light is there, and the colours surround us; but, if we had no light and no colours in our own eyes, we should not perceive the outward phenomena."

Saturday, February 28, 1824.

"There are," said Goethe, "excellent men, who are unable to do anything impromptu, or superficially, but whose nature demands that they should quietly and deeply penetrate into

every subject they may take in hand. Such minds often make us impatient, for we seldom get from them what we want at the moment; but in this way alone the noblest tasks are accomplished."

I turned the conversation to Ramberg. "He," said Goethe, "is an artist of quite a different stamp, of a most genial talent, and indeed unequalled in his power of impromptu. At Dresden, he once asked me to give him a subject. I gave him Agamemnon, at the moment when, on his return home from Troy, he is descending from his chariot, and is seized with a gloomy feeling, on touching the threshold of his house. You will agree that this is a subject of a most difficult kind, and, with another artist, would have demanded the most mature deliberation. But the words had scarcely passed my lips, before Ramberg began to draw, and I was struck with admiration to see how correctly he at once apprehended his subject. I cannot deny that I should like to possess some drawings by Ramberg."

We talked then of other artists, who set to work in a superficial way, and thus degenerated into mannerism.

"Mannerism," said Goethe, "is always longing to have done, and has no true enjoyment in work. A really great talent, on the other hand, finds its greatest happiness in execution. Roos is unwearied in drawing the hair and wool of his goats and sheep; and you see by his infinite details that he enjoyed the purest felicity in doing his work, and had no wish to bring it to an end.

"Inferior talents do not enjoy art for its own sake; while at work they have nothing before their eyes but the profit they hope to make when they have done. With such worldly views and tendencies, nothing great was ever yet produced."

Sunday, February 29, 1824.

At twelve o'clock, I went to Goethe, who had invited me to take a drive before dinner. I found him at breakfast when I entered, and, taking my seat opposite him, turned the conversation upon those productions which occupy us both on account of the new edition of his works. I counselled him to insert both his *Gods, Heroes, and Wieland*, and his *Letters of a Pastor*, in this new edition.

"I cannot," said Goethe, "from my present point of view, judge of those youthful productions. You younger people may. Yet I will not find fault with those beginnings; I was, indeed, then in the dark, and struggled on, unconscious of what I was

seeking so earnestly; but I had a feeling of the right, a divining-rod, that showed me where gold was to be found."

The horses had, in the meanwhile, been put to, and we rode towards Jena. Goethe mentioned the last French newspapers. "The constitution of France," said he, "belonging to a people who have within themselves so many elements of corruption, rests upon a basis very different from that of England. Everything may be done in France by bribery; indeed the whole French Revolution was directed by such means."

He then spoke of the death of Eugene Napoleon (Duke of Leuchtenberg), the news of which had arrived that morning. "He was one of those great characters," said Goethe, "which are becoming more and more rare; and the world is once more one important man the poorer. I knew him; only last summer I was with him at Marienbad. He was a handsome man, about forty-two; though he looked older, which was not to be wondered at when we call to mind all he went through, and how, through all his life, one campaign and one great deed pressed on another. At Marienbad he conversed with me much on the union of the Rhine with the Danube, by means of a canal—a gigantic enterprise, when you consider the obstacles offered by the locality. But to a man who has served under Napoleon, and with him shaken the world, nothing appears impossible. Charlemagne had the same plan, and even began the work, but it soon came to a standstill. The sand would not hold, the banks were always falling in on both sides."

Monday, March 22, 1824.

To-day, before dinner, I went with Goethe into his garden.

The situation of this garden, on the other side of the Ilm, near the park, and on the western declivity of a hill, is most inviting. It is protected from the north and east winds, but open to the cheering influences of the south and west; which makes it a most delightful abode, especially in spring and autumn.

You are so near the town, which lies north-west, that you can be there in a few minutes; and yet you cannot see the top of a building, or even a spire; the tall and thickly-planted trees of the park shut out every other object on that side. Under the name of the "Star," they go to the left, towards the north, close to the carriage-way, which leads immediately from the garden.

Towards the west and south-west, there is a free view over a spacious meadow, through which, a bow-shot away, the Ilm

winds silently. On the opposite side of the river, the bank rises like a hill; on the summit and sides of which spreads the broad park, with the mixed foliage of alders, ash-trees, poplars, and birches, bounding the view at an agreeable distance on south and west.

This view of the park over the meadow gives a sense, especially in summer, of being near a wood that extends for leagues. Every moment it seems possible that there will be deer bounding out upon the meadows. It is as the peace of the deepest natural solitude; the silence often uninterrupted, except by the notes of the blackbird, or the frequently-suspended song of the wood-thrush.

Out of this dream of profound solitude, we are, however, awakened by the striking of the tower-clock, the screaming of the peacocks from the park, or the drums and horns of the military in the barracks. And this is not unpleasant; for such tones comfortably recall the neighbourhood of the friendly city, which had seemed many miles distant.

At certain seasons these meadows are the reverse of lonely. Sometimes country people are going to Weimar to market, or to work, and returning thence; sometimes loungers of all sorts are walking along the windings of the Ilm, especially in the direction towards Upper Weimar, which is on certain days much visited. The hay-making season also animates the scene very agreeably. In the background, flocks of sheep are grazing, and sometimes the stately Swiss cows of the neighbouring farm.

To-day, however, there was no trace of these summer phenomena. On the meadows, some streaks of green were scarcely visible; the trees of the park as yet could boast nothing but brown twigs and buds; yet the note of the finch, with the occasional song of the blackbird and thrush, announced the approach of spring. A very mild south-west wind was blowing. Small isolated thunder-clouds passed along the clear sky; high above might be observed the dispersing cirrus-streaks. The massive clouds of the lower region were likewise dispersing; from which Goethe inferred that the barometer must be rising.

Goethe then spoke much about the rising and falling of the barometer, which he called the affirmative and negative of water. He spoke of the inhaling and exhaling processes of the earth, according to eternal laws; of a possible deluge, if the "water-affirmative" continued. He said, besides, that, though each place has its proper atmosphere, there is great uniformity in

the state of the barometer throughout: Europe Nature, he said, was incommensurable; and, with her great irregularities, it was often difficult to find her laws.

While he thus instructed me on such high subjects, we were walking up and down the broad gravel-walk of the garden. We came near the house,[1] which he bade the servant open, that he might show me the interior. Without, the whitewashed walls were covered with rose-bushes, on espaliers, to the roof. I went round the house, and saw on the branches of these rose-bushes, against the wall, a great number of birds' nests, there since the preceding summer, and, now that the bushes were bare of leaves, exposed to the eye. There were especially to be observed the nests of the linnet and of various kinds of hedge-sparrows, built high or low according to the habits of the birds.

Goethe then took me inside the house, which I had not seen since last summer. In the lower story I found only one habitable room, on the walls of which were hung some charts and engravings; besides a portrait of Goethe, as large as life, painted by Meyer shortly after the return of both friends from Italy. Goethe here appears in the prime of his powers and his manhood, very brown, and rather stout. The expression of the countenance is not very animated, and is very serious; that of a man on whose mind lies the weight of future deeds.

We ascended the stairs to the upper rooms. I found three, and one little cabinet; but all very small, and not very convenient. Goethe said that in former years he had passed a great deal of his time here with pleasure, and had worked very peacefully.

These rooms were rather cool, and we returned into the open air, which was mild. As we walked up and down the chief pathway in the noonday sun, our conversation turned on modern literature, Schelling, and some new plays by Count Platen.

We soon returned to the natural objects. The crown-imperials and lilies were already far advanced; the mallows on both sides of the park were already green.

The upper part of the garden, on the declivity of the hill, is covered with grass, and here and there a few fruit-trees. Paths run along the summit, and then return to the foot; which made me wish to ascend them and look about me. Goethe walked swiftly before me, and I was rejoiced to see how active he was.

[1] The garden-house.

On the hedge above we found a pea-hen, which seemed to have come from the prince's park; and Goethe remarked that, in summer time, he was accustomed to allure the peacocks with their favourite food.

Descending on the winding path on the other side of the hill, I found a stone, surrounded by shrubs, on which was carved this line from the well-known poem:

> *Hier im stillen gedachte der Liebende seiner Geliebten*;
> Here in silence reflected the lover upon his beloved.

and I felt as if I were on classic ground.

Near this was a thicket of half-grown oaks, firs, birches, and beech-trees. Beneath the firs, I found the castings of a bird of prey. I showed these to Goethe, who said he had often seen such in this place. I concluded that these firs were an abode of owls, frequently seen in this place.

Passing round this thicket, we found ourselves once more on the broad path near the house. The oaks, firs, birches, and beeches, which we had just gone round, being mingled together, here form a semicircle, overarching like a grotto the inner space, in which we sat down on little chairs, placed about a round table. The sun was so strong that the shade even of these leafless trees was agreeable. "I know," said Goethe, "no better refuge, in the heats of summer, than this spot. I planted all the trees, forty years ago, with my own hand; I have had the pleasure of watching their growth, and have now for a long time enjoyed their refreshing shade. The foliage of these oaks and beeches is impervious to the most potent sun. In hot summer days, I like to sit here after dinner; and often over the meadows and the whole park such stillness reigns, that the ancients would say, 'Pan sleeps.'"

We now heard the town-clock striking two, and returned to the house.

Tuesday, March 30, 1824.

This evening I was with Goethe alone; we talked, and drank a bottle of wine. We spoke of the French drama, as contrasted with the German.

"It will be very difficult," said Goethe, "for the German public to come to a right judgment, as they do in Italy and France. We have a special obstacle, in the circumstance that on our stage a medley of all sorts of things is represented. On the same boards where we saw Hamlet yesterday, we see Staberl [1]

[1] A Viennese buffoon.—J. O.

to-day; and, if to-morrow we are delighted with *Zauberflöte*, the day after we shall be charmed with the oddities of the next lucky wight. Hence the public becomes confused, mingling together various species, which it never learns rightly to appreciate and to understand. Furthermore, everyone has his own demands and personal wishes, and returns to the spot where he finds them realized. On the tree where he has plucked figs to-day, he would pluck them again to-morrow, and would make a long face if sloes had grown in their stead during the night. If anyone is a friend to sloes, he goes to the thorns.

"Schiller had the happy thought of building a house for tragedy alone, and of giving a piece every week for the male sex exclusively. But this notion presupposed a large city, and could not be realized with our humble means."

We talked about the plays of Iffland and Kotzebue, which, in their way, Goethe highly commended. "From this very fault," said he, "that people do not perfectly distinguish between *kinds* in art, the pieces of these men are often unjustly censured. We may wait a long time before a couple of such popular talents come again."

I praised Iffland's *Hagestolz* (Old Bachelor), with which I had been highly pleased on the stage. "It is unquestionably Iffland's best piece," said Goethe; "it is the only one in which he goes from prose into the ideal."

He then told me of a piece he and Schiller had made as a continuation to the *Hagestolz*; that is to say, in conversation, without writing it down. Goethe told me the progress of the action scene by scene; very pleasant and cheerful.

Goethe then spoke of some new plays by Platen. "In these pieces," said he, "we may see the influence of Calderon. They are very clever, and, in a certain sense, complete; but they want specific gravity, a certain weight of import. They are not of a kind to excite in the mind of the reader a deep and abiding interest; the strings of the soul are touched but lightly and transiently. They are like cork, which swims on the water, making no impression.

"The German requires a certain earnestness, a certain grandeur of thought, and a certain fulness of sentiment. It is on this account that Schiller is so highly esteemed by all. I do not in the least doubt the abilities of Platen; but those, probably from mistaken views of art, are not manifested here. He shows distinguished culture, intellect, pungent wit, and

artistical completeness; but these, especially in Germany, are not enough.

"Generally, the personal character of the writer influences the public rather than his talents as an artist. Napoleon said of Corneille, '*S'il vivait, je le ferais prince*'; yet he never read him. Racine he read, but did not say this of him. La Fontaine, too, is looked upon with a high degree of esteem by the French —on account, not of his poetic merits, but of the greatness of character manifested in his writings."

We then talked of the *Elective Affinities* (Wahlverwandtschaften); and Goethe told me of a travelling Englishman, who meant to be separated from his wife when he returned to England. He laughed at such folly, and gave me several examples of persons who had been separated, and afterwards could not let each other alone.

"The late Reinhard of Dresden," said he, "often wondered that I had such severe principles with respect to marriage, while I was so tolerant in everything else."

This expression of Goethe's was remarkable to me, because it clearly showed what he really intended by that often misunderstood work (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*).

We then talked about Tieck, and his personal relation to Goethe.

"I entertain the greatest kindness for Tieck," said Goethe; "and I think that, on the whole, he is well disposed towards me. Still, there is something not as it ought to be in his relation to me. This is neither my fault nor his, but proceeds from causes altogether foreign.

"When the Schlegels began to make themselves important, I was too strong for them; and, to balance me, they were forced to look about for some man of talent whom they might set up in opposition. They found Tieck; and so that, when placed in contrast to me, he might appear sufficiently important in the eyes of the public, they were forced to make more of him than he really was. This injured our mutual relation; for Tieck, without being properly conscious of it himself, was thus placed in a false position with respect to me.

"Tieck is a talent of great importance, and nobody can be more sensible than myself of his extraordinary merits; only when they raise him above himself, and place him on a level with me, they are in error. I can speak this out plainly; it matters nothing to me, for I did not make myself. I might just as well compare myself to Shakespeare, who likewise did

not make himself, and who is nevertheless a being of a higher order, to whom I must look up with reverence."

Goethe was this evening full of energy and gaiety. He brought some manuscript poems, which he read aloud. Not only did the original force and freshness of the poems excite me to a high degree; but also, by his manner of reading them, he showed himself to me in a phase hitherto unknown but highly important. What variety and force in his voice! What life and expression in the noble countenance, so full of wrinkles! And what eyes!

Wednesday, April 14, 1824.

I went out walking with Goethe about one. We discussed the styles of various writers.

"On the whole," said Goethe, "philosophical speculation is an injury to the Germans, as it tends to make their style vague, difficult, and obscure. The stronger their attachment to certain philosophical schools, the worse they write. Those Germans who, as men of business and actual life, confine themselves to the practical, write the best. Schiller's style is most noble and impressive whenever he leaves off philosophizing; as I observe every day in his highly interesting letters, with which I am now busy.

"There are likewise, among the German women, genial beings who write a really excellent style, and indeed in that respect surpass many of our celebrated male writers.

"The English almost always write well; being born orators and practical men, with a tendency to the real.

"The French, in their style, remain true to their general character. They are of a social nature, and therefore never forget the public whom they address; they strive to be clear, that they may convince their reader—agreeable, that they may please him.

"Altogether, the style of a writer is a faithful representative of his mind; therefore, if any man wish to write a clear style, let him be first clear in his thoughts; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul."

Goethe then spoke of his antagonists as a race that would never become extinct. "Their number," said he, "is legion; yet they may be in some degree classified. First, there are my antagonists from stupidity—those who do not understand me, and find fault with me without knowing me. This large company has wearied me much in the course of my life; yet shall they be forgiven, for they knew not what they did.

"The second large class is composed of those who envy me. These grudge me the fortune and the dignified station I have attained through my talents. They pluck at my fame, and would like to destroy me. If I were poor and miserable, they would assail me no more.

"There are many who have been my adversaries, because they themselves have failed. In this class are men of fine talent, but they cannot forgive me for casting them into the shade.

"Fourthly, there are my antagonists from *reasons*. For, as I am a human being, and as such have human faults and weaknesses, my writings cannot be free from them. Yet, as I was constantly bent on my own improvement, and always striving to ennoble myself, I was in a state of constant progress, and it often happened that they blamed me for faults I had long since left behind. These good folks have injured me least of any, as they shot at me when I was already miles distant. Generally, when a work was finished, it became uninteresting to me; I thought of it no more, but busied myself with some new plan.

"Another large class comprises those who are adversaries because they differ from me in their views and modes of thought. It is said of the leaves on a tree, that you will scarcely find two perfectly alike; and thus, among a thousand men, you will scarce find two who harmonize entirely in their views and ways of thinking. This being allowed, I ought less to wonder at having so many opponents, than at having so many friends and adherents. My tendencies were opposed to those of my time, which were wholly subjective; while, in my objective efforts, I stood alone to my own disadvantage.

"Schiller had, in this respect, great advantage over me. Hence, a certain well-meaning general once gave me plainly to understand, that I ought to write like Schiller. I replied by analysing Schiller's merits, for I knew them better than he. I went quietly on in my own way; not troubling myself further about success, and taking as little notice as possible of my opponents."

We returned, and had a very pleasant time at dinner. Frau von Goethe talked much of Berlin, where she had lately been. She spoke with especial warmth of the Duchess of Cumberland, who had shown her much kindness. Goethe, with particular interest, remembered this princess, who when very young had passed some time with his mother.

In the evening, I had a musical treat of a high order at

Goethe's house; where some fine singers, under the superintendence of Eberwein, performed part of Händel's *Messiah.* The Countess Caroline von Egloffstein, Fräulein von Froriep, with Frau von Pogwisch and Frau von Goethe, joined the female singers, and thus kindly gratified a wish which Goethe had entertained long since.

Goethe, sitting at some distance, wholly absorbed in hearing, passed a happy evening, full of admiration at this noble work.

Monday, April 19, 1824.

The greatest philologist of our time, Friedrich August Wolf, from Berlin, is here, on his way towards the south of France. Goethe gave, to-day, on his account, a dinner to his Weimar friends; at which General Superintendent Röhr, Chancellor von Müller, Oberbau-Director Coudray, Professor Riemer, Hofrath Rehbein, and myself, were present. The conversation was very lively. Wolf was full of witty sallies, Goethe being his opponent. "I cannot," said Goethe to me afterwards, "get on with Wolf at all, without assuming the character of Mephistopheles. Nothing else brings out his hidden treasures."

The *bon mots* at table were too evanescent, and too much the result of the moment, to bear repetition. Wolf was very great in witty turns and repartees, but nevertheless it seemed to me that Goethe always maintained a certain superiority over him.

The hours at table flew by as if with wings, and six o'clock came before we were aware. I went with young Goethe to the theatre, where *Zauberflöte* was played. Afterwards I saw Wolf in the box, with the Grand Duke Carl August.

Wolf remained in Weimar till the 25th, when he set out for the south of France. The state of his health was such that Goethe did not conceal the greatest anxiety about him.

Sunday, May 2, 1824.

Goethe reproved me for not having visited a certain family of distinction. "You might," said he, "have passed there, during the winter, many delightful evenings, and have made the acquaintance of many interesting strangers; all which you have lost from God knows what caprice."

"With my excitable temperament," I replied, "and with my disposition to a broad sympathy with others, nothing can be more burdensome and hurtful to me than an overabundance

of new impressions. I am neither by education nor by habit fitted for general society. My situation in earlier days was such that I feel as if I had never lived till I came near you. All is new to me. Every evening at the theatre, every conversation with you, makes an era in my existence. Things perfectly indifferent to persons of different education and habits, make the deepest impression on me; and, as the desire of instructing myself is great, my mind seizes on everything with energy, and draws from it as much nourishment as possible. In this state of mind, I had quite enough in the course of this winter, from the theatre and my connection with you; and I should not have been able to give myself up to other connections and engagements without disturbing my mind."

"You are an odd fellow," said Goethe, laughing. "Well, do as you please; I will let you have your way."

"And then," continued I, "I usually carry into society my likes and dislikes, and a certain need of loving and being beloved; I seek a nature which may harmonize with my own; I wish to give myself up to this, and to have nothing to do with the others."

"This natural tendency of yours," replied Goethe, "is indeed not of a social kind; and what would be the use of culture if we did not try to control our natural tendencies? It is a great folly to hope that other men will harmonize with us; I have never hoped this. I have always regarded each man as an independent individual, whom I endeavoured to understand with all his peculiarities, but from whom I desired no further sympathy. In this way have I been enabled to converse with every man, and thus alone is produced the knowledge of various characters and the dexterity necessary for the conduct of life. For it is in conflict with natures opposed to his own that a man must collect his strength to fight his way through; and thus all our different sides are brought out and developed, so that we soon feel ourselves a match for every foe. You should do the same; you have more capacity for it than you imagine; indeed, you must at all events plunge into the great world, whether you like it or not."

I took due heed of these good and kind words.

Towards evening, Goethe invited me to take a drive. Our road lay over the hills through Upper Weimar, by which we had a view of the park towards the west. The trees were in blossom, the birches already in full leaf; and the meadows were one green carpet, over which the setting sun cast a glow. We

sought out picturesque groups, and could not look enough. We remarked that trees full of white blossoms should not be painted, because they make no picture, just as birches with their foliage are unfit for the foreground of a picture, because the delicate leaf does not sufficiently balance the white trunk; there are no large masses for strong effects of light and shade. "Ruysdael," said Goethe, "never introduced the birch with its foliage into his foregrounds, but only birch trunks broken off, without any leaves. Such a trunk is perfectly suited to a foreground, as its bright form comes out with most powerful effect."

After some slight discussion of other topics, we came upon the mistake of those artists who make religion art, whereas for them art should be religion. "Religion," said Goethe, "stands in the same relation to art as any other of the higher interests in life. It is merely to be looked upon as a material, with claims similar to those of any other vital material. Faith and want of faith are not the organs with which a work of art is to be apprehended: powers and capacities of a totally different character are required. Art must address itself to those organs with which we apprehend it; otherwise it misses its effect. A religious material may be a good subject for art, but only in so far as it possesses general human interest. The Virgin with the Child is on this account an excellent subject; one that may be treated a hundred times, and always seen with pleasure."

Meanwhile, we had gone round the thicket (the Webicht), and had turned by Tiefurt into the Weimar road, where we had a view of the setting sun. Goethe was for a while lost in thought; he then said to me, in the words of one of the ancients:

"*Untergehend sogar ist's immer dieselbige Sonne.*"

"Still it continues the self-same sun, e'en while it is sinking."

"At seventy-five," continued he, with much cheerfulness, "one must of course think sometimes of death. But this thought never gives me uneasiness; for I am convinced that our spirit is indestructible, and that its activity continues from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which seems to set only to our earthly eyes, but which in reality never sets but shines on unceasingly."

The sun had meanwhile sunk behind the Ettersberg; we felt in the wood the chill of the evening, and drove all the quicker to Weimar, and to Goethe's house. Goethe urged me to go in with him for a while, and I did so. He talked a great deal

about his theory of colours, and of his obstinate opponents; remarking that he was sure that he had done something in this science.

"To make an epoch in the world," said he, "two conditions are notoriously essential—a good head, and a great inheritance. Napoleon inherited the French Revolution; Frederick the Great, the Silesian War; Luther, the darkness of the Popes; and I, the errors of the Newtonian theory. The present generation has no conception of what I have accomplished in this matter, but posterity will grant that I have by no means come into a bad inheritance!"

Goethe had sent me this morning a roll of papers relative to the theatre, among which I had found the rules and studies he had made with Wolff and Grüner to qualify them as good actors. I proposed to put them together, and make from them a sort of theatrical catechism. Goethe consented, and we discussed the matter. This gave us occasion to speak of some distinguished actors who had been formed in his school; and I took the opportunity to ask some questions about Frau von Heigendorf. "I may," said Goethe, "have influenced her, but properly speaking she is not my pupil. She was, as it were, born on the boards, and was as decided, ready, and adroit in anything as a duck in the water. She needed not my instruction; but did what was right instinctively, and perhaps without knowing it."

We then talked of the many years he had superintended the theatre, and the time thus lost to literary production. "Yes," said he, "I may have missed writing many a good thing; but, when I reflect, I am not sorry. I have always regarded all I have done solely as symbolical; and, in fact, it has been tolerably indifferent to me whether I have made pots or dishes."

(Sup.) Wednesday, May 5, 1824.

The papers containing the studies Goethe prosecuted with the actors Wolff and Grüner have occupied me the last few days; and I have succeeded in bringing them into a sort of form. I spoke with Goethe about this work to-day, and we went through the topics in detail. The remarks concerning pronunciation, and the laying aside of provincialisms, appeared particularly important.

"I have, in my long practice," said Goethe, "become acquainted with beginners from all parts of Germany. The pronunciation of the North German leaves little to be desired:

it is pure, and may in many respects be looked upon as a model. On the contrary, I have often had a great deal of trouble with native Suabians, Austrians, and Saxons. The natives of our beloved town, Weimar, have also given me a great deal to do. Among these have arisen the most ridiculous mistakes; because in schools here they are not forced to distinguish, by a marked pronunciation, *b* from *p*, and *d* from *t*. One would scarcely believe that *b*, *p*, *d*, and *t*, are generally considered to be *four* different letters; for they only speak of a hard and a soft *b*, and of a hard and a soft *d*, and thus seem tacitly to intimate that *p* and *t* do not exist. With such people, *Pein* (pain) sounds like *Bein* (leg), *Pas* (pass) like *Bass* (bass), and *Teckel*[1] like *Deckel* (cover)."

"An actor of this town," added I, "who did not properly distinguish *t* from *d*, lately was playing a lover, who had been guilty of a little infidelity; whereupon the angry young lady showered violent reproaches upon him. Growing impatient, he had to exclaim, '*O ende!*' (O cease!); but being unable to distinguish the *t* from the *d*, he exclaimed, '*O ente!*' (O duck!),[2] which excited laughter."

"The circumstance is very quaint," returned Goethe, "and will do well to mention in our *Theatrical Catechism*."

"Lately, a young singer, likewise of this town," continued I, "who could not make the distinction between the *t* and the *d*, had to say, '*Ich will dich den Eingeweihten übergeben*' (I will give you up to the initiated); but as she pronounced the *t* as *d*, it sounded as if she said, '*Ich will dich den Eingeweiden übergeben*' (I will give you up to the bowels). Again, an actor of this town who played the part of a servant, had to say to a stranger, '*Mein Herr ist nicht zu Haus, er sitzt im Rathe*' (my master is not at home, he sits in council); but as he could not distinguish the *t* from the *d*, it sounded as if he said, '*Mein Herr ist nicht zu Haus, er sitzt im Rade*' (my master is not at home, he sits in the wheel)."

"These incidents," said Goethe, "are not bad, and we will notice them. Thus, if anyone who does not distinguish the *p* from the *b*, has to call out, '*Packe ihn an!*' (seize him), but, instead of this, exclaims, '*Backe ihn an!*' (stick him on), it is very laughable.

"In a similar manner," said Goethe, "the *ü* is frequently

[1] A provincial word for a terrier.

[2] This blunder had not even the appositeness that "duck" would have had in English; for the secondary meaning of *Ente* is not "darling" but "canard."

pronounced like *i*, which has been the cause of not a few scandalous mistakes. I have frequently heard said, instead of *Küstenbewohner* (inhabitant of the coast), *Kistenbewohner* (inhabitant of the box); instead of *Thürstück* (a painting over a door), *Thierstück* (animal-picture); instead of *Gründlich* (well-grounded), *Grindlich* (scurfy); instead of *Trübe* (gloomy), *Triebe* (impulses); and instead of *Ihr müsst* (you must), *Ihr misst* (you miss);—never without a hearty laugh."

"I lately noticed at the theatre," said I, "a very ludicrous case of the kind, in which a lady, in a critical situation, has to follow a man, whom she had never seen before. She had to say, '*Ich kenne Dich zwar nicht, aber ich setze mein ganzes Vertrauen in den Edelmuth Deiner Züge*' (I do not know you, but I place entire confidence in the nobility of your countenance); but as she pronounced the *ü* like *i*, she said, '*Ich kenne Dich zwar nicht, aber ich setze mein ganzes Vertrauen in den Edelmuth Deiner Ziege*' (I do not know you, but I place entire confidence in the nobility of your goat)."

"Not bad," returned Goethe, "we will notice that also. *G* and *k* are here frequently confounded; possibly from uncertainty whether the letter should be hard or soft, a result of the doctrine so much in vogue here. You have probably often heard, or will hear, in our theatre, *Kartenhaus* (card-house) instead of *Gartenhaus* (garden-house), *Kasse* (chest) instead of *Gasse* (lane), *Klauben* (to pick out) instead of *Glauben* (to believe), *bekränzen* (to enwreathe) instead of *begrenzen* (to bound), and *Kunst* (art) instead of *Gunst* (favour)."

"I have already heard something similar," returned I. "An actor of this town had to say, '*Dein Gram geht mir zu Herzen*' (Thy grief touches my heart). But he said very distinctly, '*Dein Kram geht mir zu Herzen*' (Thy goods[1] touch my heart)."

"Besides," answered Goethe, "we hear this substitution of *g* for *k*, not merely amongst actors, but even amongst theologians. I once experienced an incident of this sort. When I, some five years ago, stayed at Jena, and lodged at the Fir Tree, a theological student one morning presented himself. After he had conversed with me very agreeably, he made, as he was just going, a request of a most peculiar kind. He begged me *to allow him to preach in my stead on the next Sunday*. I saw which way the wind blew, and that the hopeful youth was one of those who confound *g* with *k*. I therefore answered that I

[1] Or lumber.—J. O.

could not personally assist; but that he would be sure to attain his object if he would apply to Archdeacon Koethe."

Thursday, May 6, 1824.

When I came to Weimar last summer, it was not, as I have said, my intention to remain here; I only intended to make Goethe's personal acquaintance, and then to visit the Rhine, where I intended to live some time. However, I had been detained in Weimar by Goethe's remarkable kindness, and my relation to him had become more and more practical, as he drew me into his own interest and gave me work to do, preparatory to a complete edition of his works. Thus, in the course of last winter, I collected several divisions of "tame Xenia" (*zahme Xenien*) from the most confused bundles of paper, arranged a volume of new poems, and the *Theatrical Catechism*, and also the outlines of a treatise on Dilettantism in the different arts. I had, however, never forgotten my design of seeing the Rhine; and Goethe himself, that I might not carry within me the sting of an unsatisfied desire, advised me to devote some months of this summer to that region.

It was, however, decidedly his wish that I should return to Weimar. He observed that it was not good to break ties scarcely formed, and that everything in life to be of value must have a sequence; and he intimated that he had selected Riemer and me, not only to aid him in preparing a new and complete edition of his works, but also to take the whole charge of it in case he should be suddenly called away, as might naturally happen at his advanced age.

He showed me this morning immense packages of letters, laid out in what is called the Chamber of Busts (*Büsten-Zimmer*). "These," said he, "are all letters which I have received since 1780, from the most distinguished men of our country. There lies hoarded in these a rich treasure of thoughts, which it shall some time be your office to impart to the public. I am now having a chest made, in which these letters will be put, with the rest of my literary remains. I wish you, before you set out on your journey, to put them all in order, that I may feel easy about them, and have a care the less."

He then told me that he intended to visit Marienbad this summer, but not till the end of July. He expressed a wish that I should be back before his departure.

A few weeks afterwards, I visited my friends in Hanover,

then stopped during the months of June and July on the Rhine; where, especially at Frankfort, Heidelberg, and Bonn, I made many valuable acquaintances among Goethe's friends.[1]

(Sup.) Tuesday, May 18, 1824.

This evening at Goethe's, in company with Riemer.

Goethe talked about an English poem on geology. He made an impromptu translation of it, with so much spirit, imagination, and good humour, that every object stood before us, with as much life as if it were his own invention at the moment. The hero of the poem, King *Coal*, was seen, in his brilliant hall of audience, seated upon his throne; his consort, *Pyrites*, by his side, waiting for the nobles of the kingdom. Entering according to their rank, they appeared one by one to the king, and were introduced as Duke *Granite*, Marquis *Slate*, Countess *Porphyry*, and so on with the rest, who were all characterized by some excellent epithet and joke. Then followed Sir Lorenzo *Chalk*, a man of great possessions, and well received at court. He excuses his mother, the Lady *Marble*, on the ground that her residence is rather distant. She is a very polished and accomplished lady, and a cause of her non-appearance at court is that she is involved in an intrigue with *Canova*, who likes to flirt with her. *Tufa*, whose hair is decked with lizards and fishes, appears rather intoxicated. Hans *Marl* and Jacob *Clay* do not appear till the end; the last is a particular favourite of the queen, because he has promised her a collection of shells. Thus the whole went on for a long time in the most cheerful tone; but the details were too minute for me to note the further progress of the story.

"Such a poem," said Goethe, "is calculated to amuse people of the world, while at the same time it diffuses a quantity of useful information. A taste for science is thus excited amongst the higher circles; and nobody knows how much good may ultimately result from such an entertaining half-joke. Many a clever person may be induced to make observations himself, within his own immediate sphere. And such individual observations, drawn from the natural objects with which we are in contact, are often the more valuable the less the observer professionally belongs to the particular department of science."

"You appear, then, to intimate," returned I, "that the more one knows, the worse one observes."

[1] This short statement, though attached to the conversation of 6th May in the first volume, will be read more properly after 26th May [p. 68], which is taken from the supplemental volume.—J. O.

"Certainly," said Goethe, "when the knowledge that is handed down is combined with errors. As soon as anybody belongs to a certain narrow creed in science, every unprejudiced and true perception is gone. The decided Vulcanist always sees through the spectacles of a Vulcanist; and every Neptunist, and every professor of the newest elevation-theory, through his own. The contemplation of the world, with all these theorists, has lost its innocence, the objects no longer appear in their natural purity. If these learned men, then, give an account of their observations, we obtain, notwithstanding their love of truth as individuals, no actual truth with reference to the objects; we always get the taste of a strong subjective mixture.

"I am, however, far from maintaining that an unprejudiced correct knowledge is a drawback to observation. I am much more inclined to support the old truth, that we have only eyes and ears for what we know. The musician by profession hears, in an orchestral performance, every instrument and every single tone; whilst one unacquainted with the art is wrapped up in the massive effect of the whole. A man merely bent upon enjoyment sees in a green or flowery meadow only a pleasant plain, whilst the eye of a botanist discovers an endless detail of the most varied plants and grasses.

"All have their measure and goal; and, as it has been said in my *Goetz von Berlichingen*, that the son, from pure learning, does not know his own father, so in science do we find people who can neither see nor hear, through sheer learning and hypothesis. Such people look at once within; they are so occupied by what is revolving in themselves, that they are like a man in a passion, who passes his dearest friends in the street without seeing them. The observation of nature requires a certain purity of mind that cannot be disturbed or preoccupied by anything. The beetle on the flower does not escape the child; he has devoted all his senses to a single simple interest; and it never strikes him that at the same moment something remarkable may be going on in the formation of the clouds to distract his glances in that direction."

"Then," returned I, "children and the child-like would be good hod-men in science."

"Would to God!" exclaimed Goethe, "we were all nothing more than good hod-men. It is just because we will be more, and carry about with us a great apparatus of philosophy and hypothesis, that we spoil all."

Then followed a pause, which Riemer broke by mentioning

Lord Byron and his death. Goethe thereupon gave a brilliant elucidation of his writings, and was full of the highest praise and the purest acknowledgment.

"However," continued he, "although Byron has died so young, literature has not suffered an essential loss. Byron could, in a certain sense, go no farther. He had reached the summit of his creative power, and whatever he might have done in the future, he would have been unable to extend the boundaries of his talent. In the incomprehensible poem, his *Vision of Judgment,*[1] he has done the utmost of which he was capable."

The discourse then turned upon the Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, and his resemblance to Lord Byron; when Goethe could not conceal the superiority of the Englishman, in spirit, grasp of the world, and productive power. "We cannot," continued he, "compare these poets with each other, without annihilating one by the other. Byron is the burning thorn-bush which reduces the holy cedar of Lebanon to ashes. The great epic poem of the Italian has maintained its fame for centuries; yet, with a single line of *Don Juan*, the whole of *Jerusalem Delivered* could be poisoned."

(Sup.) Wednesday, May 26, 1824,

To-day I took leave of Goethe, to visit my friends in Hanover, and thence to proceed to the Rhine, according to plan. Goethe was very affectionate, and pressed me in his arms. "If at Hanover you should meet, at Rehberg's, Charlotte Kestner, the old friend of my youth, remember me to her kindly. In Frankfort, I commend you to my friends Willemers, the Count Reinhardt, and the Schlossers. Then, in both Heidelberg and Bonn, you will find friends devoted to me, to whom you will be welcome. I did intend again to spend some time at Marienbad this summer; but I shall not go until after your return."

The parting with Goethe was very trying to me; though I went away firmly convinced I should see him again, safe and sound, at the end of two months.

[1] "Seines jüngsten Gerichts" (his Doomsday Tribunal). An interesting example of the necessity for cultivating a British sense of humour before criticizing English literature. Goethe's humour was purely German. Byron's *Vision of Judgment* is not beyond the comprehension of the simplest English reader who has a rough notion of the reign of George III. It was written to ridicule a pompous poem of the same name by the poet-laureate Southey.

Nevertheless, I felt very happy next day when the carriage conveyed me towards my beloved home in Hanover, to which my heartiest longings are constantly directed.

Tuesday, August 10, 1824.

About a week ago, I returned from my tour on the Rhine. Goethe expressed much joy at my arrival; and I was not less pleased to be with him again. He had a great deal to say to me; so that for the first few days I stirred but little from his side. His design of going to Marienbad is abandoned; he does not intend to travel this summer. "Now you are again here," he said, "I may have a very pleasant August."

A few days ago, he put into my hands the beginning of a continuation of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, written on quarto leaves, and scarcely a finger's breadth thick. Part is complete, but the greater part consists of mere indications. However, it is already divided into five books; and the leaves containing the sketch are so arranged that the general import can be seen.

The portion finished appears to me so excellent, and the import of the sketched portion so valuable, that I regret exceedingly to see a work that promises so much instruction and enjoyment come to a standstill, and I shall urge Goethe to continue and complete it.

The whole has much of the character of a novel. A graceful, tender, passionate love-affair, cheerful in its origin, idyllic in its progress, tragic at the end through a tacit but mutual renunciation, runs through four books, and combines them in an organized whole. The charm of Lili's character, described in detail, is of a sort to captivate every reader; just as it did the lover who could only save himself by repeated flight.

The epoch of life set forth is highly romantic—at least, as developed in the principal character. But its importance is, that, as preceding the position at Weimar, it is decisive for the whole life. If any section of Goethe's life raises a wish for detailed description, it is this.

To excite in Goethe a new ardour for this work, which has been interrupted and has lain untouched for years, I have not only talked with him on the subject, but also sent him the following notes, that he may see at once what is finished and what has still to be worked out and arranged.[1]

[1] The last five books of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* were afterwards published in Goethe's posthumous works, but Eckermann's arrangement was not adopted.—J. O.

FIRST BOOK

* * * * * *

I suggest that the relation to Lili, which runs through the four following books, should begin in this first book, and continue as far as the excursion to Offenbach. Thus, too, this book would gain in compass and importance, and too great an increase of the second would be prevented.

SECOND BOOK

The idyllic life at Offenbach would then open this second book, and would go through with the happy love-affair; till it begins to assume a doubtful, earnest, and even tragical character.

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THIRD BOOK

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Whether the plan of *Faust* is to be communicated or kept back is a doubtful point, which cannot be resolved until we examine the fragments now ready, and make up our minds whether the hope of a continuation of *Faust* is to be given up or not.

FOURTH BOOK

The third book would terminate with the attempt at a separation from Lili. This fourth book, therefore, very aptly begins with the arrival of the Stolbergs and of Haugwitz, by which the journey into Switzerland and the first flight from Lili are brought about.

* * * * * *

FIFTH BOOK

This beautiful book is likewise nearly finished—at least as to the latter part, to the conclusion, which touches on the unfathomable nature of fate; only a little is wanting for the introduction, of which there is already a clear sketch. The working-out is, however, the more necessary and desirable, as the first mention is made of the Weimar affairs, and thus our interest for them is excited.

Monday, August 16, 1824.

My conversations with Goethe have lately been very abundant in matter, but I have been so much engaged with other things that I have been unable to write down anything of importance. Only the following detached sentences are found noted down in my diary; the connection between them, and the occasion that gave rise to them, I have forgotten.

Men are swimming pots, which knock against each other.

In the morning we are shrewdest, but also most anxious; for even anxiety is a species of shrewdness, though only a passive one. Stupidity is without anxiety.

We must not take the faults of our youth into our old age; for old age brings with it its own defects.

Court-life is like music, in which everybody must keep time.

Courtiers would die of ennui, if they could not fill up their time with ceremonies.

It is not right to counsel a prince to give way, even in the most trivial matter.

He who would train actors must have infinite patience.

Tuesday, November 9, 1824.

I passed this evening with Goethe. We talked of Klopstock and Herder.

"Without those powerful precursors," said Goethe, "our literature could not have become what it now is. When they appeared, they were before their age, and were obliged to drag it after them; but now the age has far outrun them, and they who were once so necessary and important have now ceased to be *means to an end.* A young man who would take Klopstock and Herder for his teachers nowadays would be far behindhand."

We talked over Klopstock's *Messiah* and his Odes, touching on their merits and their defects. We agreed that he had no

faculty for observing and apprehending the visible world, or for drawing characters; and that he therefore wanted the qualities most essential to the epic and dramatic poet—or, perhaps it might be said, to the poet generally.

"An ode occurs to me," said Goethe, "where he makes the German Muse run a race with the British; and indeed, when one thinks what a picture it is, where the two girls run one against the other, throwing about their legs, and kicking up the dust, one must assume that the good Klopstock had not really before his eyes pictures of what he wrote, else he could not have made such mistakes."

I asked how he had felt towards Klopstock in his youth.

"I venerated him," said Goethe; "I looked upon him as an uncle. I revered whatever he had done, and never thought of reflecting upon it, or finding fault with it. I let his fine qualities work upon me; for the rest, I went my own way."

We came back to Herder, and I asked Goethe which of his works he thought the best. "His *Ideas for the History of Mankind*," replied Goethe, "are undoubtedly the best. In after days, he took the negative side, and was not so agreeable."

"Considering the great weight of Herder," said I, "I cannot understand how he had so little judgment on some subjects. For instance, I cannot forgive him, especially at that period of German literature, for sending back the manuscript of *Goetz von Berlichingen* without any praise of its merits, and with taunting remarks. He must have utterly wanted organs to perceive some objects."

"Yes, Herder was unfortunate in this respect," replied Goethe; "nay," added he, with vivacity, "if his spirit were present at this conversation, it would not understand us."

"On the other hand," said I, "I must praise Merck, who urged you to print *Goetz*."

"He was indeed an odd but important man," said Goethe. "'Print the thing,' quoth he, 'it is worth nothing, but print it.' He did not wish me to make any alteration in it, and he was right; it would have been different, but not better."

Wednesday, November 24, 1824.

I went to see Goethe this evening, before going to the theatre. He inquired about the young Englishmen who are here. I told him that I proposed reading with Mr. Doolan a German translation of Plutarch. This led the conversation to Roman and Grecian history; and Goethe expressed himself as follows:

"Roman history is no longer suited to us. We have become too humane for the triumphs of Cæsar not to offend our feelings. Neither are we much charmed by the history of Greece. When this people turns against a foreign foe, it is indeed great and glorious; but the division of the states, and their eternal wars with one another, where Greek fights against Greek, are insufferable. Besides, the history of our own time is thoroughly great and important; the battles of Leipzig and Waterloo stand out with such prominence, that that of Marathon and others like it are gradually eclipsed. Neither are our individual heroes inferior to theirs; the French Marshals, Blücher, and Wellington, vie with any of the heroes of antiquity."

We then talked of the late French literature, and the daily increasing interest in German works manifested by the French.

"The French," said Goethe, "do well to study and translate our writers; for, limited as they are in both form and motives, they can only look without for means. We Germans may be reproached for a certain formlessness; but in matter we are their superiors. The theatrical productions of Kotzebue and Iffland are so rich in motives that they may pluck them a long time before all is used up. But, especially, our philosophical Ideality is welcome to them; for every Ideal is serviceable to revolutionary aims.

"The French have understanding and esprit, but neither a solid basis nor piety. What serves the moment, what helps his party, seems right to the Frenchman. Hence they praise us, never from an acknowledgment of our merits, but only when they can strengthen their party by our views."

We then talked about our own literature, and of the obstacles in the way of some of our latest young poets.

"Most of our young poets," said Goethe, "have no fault but this, that their subjectivity is not important, and that they cannot find matter in the objective. At best, they only find a material similar to themselves, which corresponds to their own subjectivity; but as for taking the material on its own account, when it is repugnant to the subjectivity, merely because it is poetical, such a thing is never thought of.

"Still, if we only had important personages, formed by great studies and situations in life, it might go well with us, at least as far as our young lyric poets are concerned."

Friday, December 3, 1824.

There has lately reached me a proposal to write for an

English periodical. I was much inclined to accept, but thought it would be good first to talk over the affair with Goethe.

I went to him this evening. The curtains were down, and he was seated before a table, on which dinner had been served, and on which burned two lights which illuminated at once his own face and a colossal bust before him on the table, at which he was looking. "Now," said Goethe, pointing at the bust, "who is this?" "Apparently a poet, and an Italian," I replied. "It is Dante," said he: "it is well done; a fine head, yet not very pleasing. He seems old, bowed down, and peevish; the features are lax, and drawn down, as if he had just come from hell. I have a medal struck during his life, and there everything appears much better."

He rose and brought the medal. "Do you see what power there is in the nose and the swell of the upper lip, the energy of the chin, and its fine blending with the cheek bone? The part about the eyes and the forehead are the same in this bust; but all the rest is weaker and older. Yet I will not find fault with the new work, which deserves praise."

Goethe then inquired what I had been doing and thinking about of late. I told him I had had a proposal to write for an English periodical, on very advantageous terms, monthly notices of the newest productions of the German prose *belles lettres*, and that I was inclined to accept the offer.

Goethe's face, which had hitherto worn so friendly an expression, clouded at these words, and I could read in every movement his disapproval.

"I wish," said he, "your friends would leave you in peace. Why should you trouble yourself with things quite out of your way and contrary to your tendencies? We have gold, silver, and paper money, and each has its own value; but, to do justice to each, you must understand the exchange. And so in literature. You understand the metallic, but not the paper currency: you are not equal to this; your criticisms will be unjust, and do hurt. If you wish to be just, to give everything its proper place, you must first become acquainted with our middle literature, and make up your mind to a study by no means trifling. You must look back and see what the Schlegels proposed and performed, and then read all our later authors—Franz Horn, Hoffmann, Clauren, etc. Even this is not enough. You must also take in all the journals of the day, from the *Morgenblatt* to the *Abend-Zeitung*, in order that no news may escape you; and thus you will spoil your best

days and hours. Then all new books, which you would criticize with any profundity, you must not only skim over, but study. How would you relish that? And, finally, if you find that what is bad is bad, you must not say so, if you would not run the risk of being at war with all the world.

"No; decline the proposal; it is not in your way. Generally, beware of dissipating your powers, and strive to concentrate them. Had I been so wise thirty years ago, I should have done very differently. How much time I lost with Schiller on his *Horen* and *Musen-Almanachs*! Now, when I have been looking over our correspondence, I feel this most forcibly, and cannot think without chagrin on those undertakings, which made the world abuse us, and which were entirely without result for ourselves. Talent thinks it can do whatever it sees others doing; but this is not so, and it will have to repent its *Faux-frais* (idle expenses). What good does it do to curl up your hair for a single night? You have paper in your hair, that is all; next night, it is straight again.

"The great point," he continued, "is to make a capital that will not be exhausted. This you will acquire by the study of the English language and literature, which you have already begun. Keep to that, and continually make use of the advantages you now possess in the acquaintance of the young Englishmen. You studied the ancient languages but little during your youth; therefore, seek now a stronghold in the literature of so able a nation as the English. And, besides, our own literature is chiefly the offspring of theirs! Whence have we our novels, our tragedies, but from Goldsmith, Fielding, and Shakespeare? And in our own day, where will you find in Germany three literary heroes who can be placed on a level with Lord Byron, Moore, and Walter Scott? Once more, ground yourself in English, concentrate your powers for something good, and give up everything that can produce no result of consequence and is not suited to you."

I rejoiced that I had thus made Goethe speak. I determined to comply with his advice in every respect.

Chancellor von Müller was now announced, and sat down with us. The conversation turned once more on the bust of Dante, which stood before us, and on his life and works. The obscurity of this author was especially mentioned—how his own countrymen had never understood him, so that it would be impossible for a foreigner to penetrate such darkness. "To you," said Goethe, turning towards me, with a friendly air,

"the study of this poet is hereby absolutely forbidden by your father confessor."

Goethe also remarked that the difficult rhyme is, in a great measure, the cause of his obscurity. For the rest, he spoke of Dante with extreme reverence; and I observed that he was not satisfied with the word *talent*, but called him a *nature*, as if thus wishing to express something more comprehensive, more full of prescience, of deeper insight, and wider scope.[1]

Thursday, December 9, 1824.

I went this evening to Goethe. He greeted me with praises of my poem *Schellhorn's Jubilee*. I told him that I had written to refuse the proposal from England.

"Thank Heaven!" said he; "then you are free and at peace once more. And now let me warn you against something else. The composers will come and want an opera; but you must be steadfast and refuse them, for that is a work that leads to nothing, and only loses time."

He then told me that he had sent the author of the *Paria*, who is now at Bonn, the play-bill, through Nees of Esenbeck, that the poet might see his piece had been played here. "Life is short," he added; "we must try to do one another a good turn."

The Berlin journals lay before him, and he told me of the great inundation at Petersburg. He gave me the paper to read, and talked about the bad situation of Petersburg, laughing approvingly at an expression of Rousseau's, who said that we could not hinder an earthquake by building a city near a burning mountain. "Nature goes her own way," said he, "and all that to us seems an exception is really according to order."

We then talked of the great tempests that had raged on every coast, and of other violent outbreaks of nature, mentioned in the journals; and I asked Goethe whether it was known how such things were connected. Goethe replied: "We have scarcely a suspicion respecting such mysteries, much less can we speak about them."

Coudray and Professor Riemer were announced. Both joined us, and the inundation of Petersburg was again discussed. M. Coudray, by drawing the plan of that city, showed us the position of the Neva, and the rest of the locality.

[1] Personality, perhaps.

1825

Monday, January 10, 1825.

GOETHE, with his great interest for the English, has desired me to introduce to him the young Englishmen here at present. At five o'clock this afternoon, he expected me with Mr. H., the English engineer officer. We were conducted by the servant to a pleasant well-warmed apartment, where Goethe usually passes his afternoons and evenings. Three lights were burning on the table, but he was not there; we heard him talking in the adjoining saloon.

Mr. H. looked about him for a while, and observed, besides the pictures and a large chart of the mountains which adorned the walls, a book-case full of portfolios. These, I told him, contained many drawings from the hands of celebrated masters, and engravings after the best pictures of all schools, which Goethe had been gradually collecting.

After we had waited a few minutes, Goethe came in. He said to Mr. H., "I presume I may address you in German, as I hear you are already well versed in our language." Mr. H. answered with a few polite words, and Goethe requested us to be seated.

Mr. H.'s manners and appearance must have made a good impression on Goethe; for his sweetness and mild serenity were manifested towards the stranger in their real beauty. "You did well," said he, "to come hither to learn German; for here you will quickly and easily acquire a knowledge not only of the language but also of the elements on which it rests—our soil, climate, mode of life, manners, social habits, and constitution —and carry it away with you to England."

Mr. H. replied, "The interest taken in the German language is now great, so that there is scarcely a young Englishman of good family who does not learn German."

"We Germans," said Goethe, good-humouredly, "have, however, been half a century before your nation in this respect. For fifty years I have been busy with the English language and literature; so that I am well acquainted with your writers,

your ways of living, and the administration of your country. If I went to England, I should be no stranger there.

"But, as I said, your young men do well to come to us and learn our language; for, not only does our literature merit attention on its own account, but he who now knows German well can dispense with many other languages. Of the French, I do not speak; it is the language of conversation, and indispensable in travelling, because everybody understands it, and in all countries we can get on with it instead of a good interpreter. But as for Greek, Latin, Italian, and Spanish: we can read the best works of those nations in such excellent German translations, that, unless we have some particular object in view, we need not spend much time upon the toilsome study of those languages. It is in the German nature to honour after its kind everything produced by other nations, and to accommodate itself to foreign peculiarities. This, with the great flexibility of our language, makes German translations thoroughly faithful and complete. And in general you get on very far with a good translation. Frederick the Great did not know Latin, but he read Cicero in the French translation with as much profit as we who read him in the original."

Then, turning the conversation on the theatre, he asked Mr. H. whether he went frequently thither. "Every evening," he replied, "and find that I thus gain much towards the understanding of the language."

"It is remarkable," said Goethe, "that the ear, and generally the understanding, gets the start of speaking; so that a man may very soon comprehend all he hears, but by no means express it all."

"I experience daily," said Mr. H., "the truth of that. I understand very well whatever I hear or read; I even feel when an incorrect expression is used in German. But when I speak, nothing will flow, and I cannot express myself as I wish. In light conversation at court, jests with the ladies, a chat at balls, and the like, I succeed pretty well. But, if I try to express an opinion on any important topic, to say anything peculiar or luminous, I cannot get on."

"Be not discouraged by that," said Goethe, "since it is hard enough to express such uncommon matters in one's own mother tongue."

He then asked what Mr. H. read in German literature. "I have read *Egmont*," he replied, "and found so much pleasure in the perusal that I returned to it three times. *Torquato*

Tasso, too, has afforded me much enjoyment. Now, I am reading *Faust,* but find that it is somewhat difficult."

Goethe laughed at these last words. "Really," said he, "I would not have advised you to undertake *Faust.* It is mad stuff, and goes quite beyond all ordinary feeling. But since you have done it of your own accord, without asking my advice, you will see how you will get through. Faust is so strange an individual, that only few can sympathize with his internal condition. Then the character of Mephistopheles is, on account of his irony, and also because he is a living result of an extensive acquaintance with the world, also very difficult. But you will see what lights open upon you. *Tasso,* on the other hand, lies far nearer the common feelings of mankind, and the detail of its form is favourable to easy comprehension."

"Yet," said Mr. H., "*Tasso* is thought difficult in Germany, and people have wondered to hear me say that I was reading it."

"What is chiefly needed for *Tasso,*" replied Goethe, "is that one should be no longer a child and should have been in good society. A young man of good family, with sufficient mind and delicacy, and also with outward culture such as will be produced by intercourse with accomplished men of the higher class, will not find *Tasso* difficult."

The conversation turning upon *Egmont,* he said, "I wrote *Egmont* in 1775—fifty years ago. I adhered closely to history. Ten years afterwards, when I was in Rome, I read in the newspapers that the revolutionary scenes in the Netherlands there described were exactly repeated. I saw from this that the world remains ever the same, and that my picture must have some life in it."

Amid this and similar conversation, the hour for the theatre had come.

As we went homeward, I asked Mr. H. how he was pleased with Goethe. "I have never," said he, "seen a man who, with all his attractive gentleness, had so much native dignity. However he may condescend, he is always the great man."

Tuesday, January 18, 1825.

I went to Goethe about five o'clock. I had not seen him for some days, and passed a delightful evening. I found him sitting in his working-room, and talking, during the twilight, with his son and Hofrath Rehbein his physician. I seated myself at the table with them. We talked a while in the dusk;

then lights were brought in, and I had the happiness to see Goethe looking fresh and cheerful.

As usual, he inquired with interest what had happened to me of late, and I replied that I had made the acquaintance of a poetess. I was able to praise her talent; and Goethe, who was likewise acquainted with some of her productions, agreed.

"One of her poems," said he, "in which she describes the country near her home, is peculiar. She has a good tendency towards outward objects, and is besides not destitute of valuable internal qualities. We might indeed find much fault with her; but we will not disturb her in the path her talent will show her."

Hofrath Rehbein remarked that the poetical talent of ladies often seemed to him as a sexual instinct of the intellect. "Hear him," said Goethe, laughing, and looking at me; "sexual instinct, indeed! how the physician explains it!"

"I know not," said Rehbein, "whether I express myself right; but it is something of the sort. Usually, these beings have not been fortunate in love, and they now seek compensation in intellectual pursuits. Had they been married in time, and borne children, they would never have thought of poetical productions."

"I will not inquire," said Goethe, "how far you are right in this case; but, as to the talents of ladies in other departments, I have always found that they ceased on marriage. I have known girls who drew finely; but so soon as they became wives and mothers it was all over: they were busy with their children, and never touched a pencil.

"But our poetesses," continued he, with much animation, "might write and poetize as they pleased if only our men would not write like women. This is what does not please me. Look at our periodicals and annuals; see how all becomes weaker and weaker. Were a chapter of Cellini now printed in the *Morgenblatt*, what a figure it would make!

"However, let us forget all that, and rejoice in our brave girl at Halle, who with masculine spirit introduces us into the Serbian world. These poems are excellent. There are some among them worthy of comparison with Solomon's Song, and that is saying something. I have finished my essay on them, and it is already in type." With these words he handed me the first four proof-sheets of a new number of *Kunst und Alterthum,* containing the essay. "I have," said he, "characterized these poems according to their chief subjects, and I think you will be pleased with the valuable *motifs*. Rehbein, too, is not

ignorant of poetry—at least as to its import and material—he may like to hear you read this aloud."

I read slowly the subjects of the single poems. The situations indicated were so marked and expressive, that at each word a whole poem was revealed to my eye—the following especially:

1. Modesty of a Serbian girl, who never raises her beautiful eyelashes.

2. Conflict in the mind of a lover, who, as groomsman, is obliged to conduct his beloved to another.

3. Being distressed about her lover, the girl will not sing, lest she should seem gay.

4. Complaint of the corruption of manners; how youths marry widows, and old men virgins.

5. Complaint of a youth that a mother gives her daughter too much liberty.

6. Confidingly joyous talk of a girl with the steed, who betrays to her his master's inclinations and designs.

7. The maiden will not have him she cannot love.

8. The fair barmaid: her lover is not among the guests.

9. Finding and tender awakening of the beloved.

10. What trade shall my husband be?

11. Joys of love lost by babbling.

12. The lover comes from abroad, watches her by day, surprises her at night.

I remarked that these mere *motifs* excited in me such lively emotions, that I felt as if I were reading the poems themselves, and had no desire for the details.

Said Goethe, "Here you see the great importance of *motifs*, which people cannot be got to understand. Our women have no notion of it. 'That poem is beautiful,' they say; and by this they mean nothing but the feelings, the words, the verses. Nobody dreams that the true power of a poem consists in the situation—in the *motifs*. And for this very reason, thousands of poems are written, where the *motif* is nothing at all, and which merely through feeling and sounding verse reflect a sort of existence. Dilettanti, and especially women, have very weak ideas of poetry. They usually think, if they could but get quit of the technical part, they would have the essential, and would be quite accomplished; but they are much mistaken."

Professor Riemer was announced, Rehbein took leave, and Riemer sat down with us. The conversation still turned on the

motifs of the Serbian love-poems. Riemer was acquainted with the topic, and said that, according to the table of contents given above, not only could poems be made, but the same *motifs* had been already used by the Germans without any knowledge that they had been treated in Serbia. He mentioned some poems of his own, and I mentioned some poems by Goethe, which had occurred to me during the reading.

"The world," said Goethe, "remains always the same; situations are repeated; one people lives, loves, and feels like another; why should not one poet write like another? The situations of life are alike; why then should those of poems be unlike?"

"This very similarity in life and sensation," said Riemer, "makes us all able to appreciate the poetry of other nations. If this were not the case, we should never know what foreign poems were about."

Said I, "That is why I am always surprised at the way the learned seem to suppose that poetizing proceeds, not from life to the poem, but from the book to the poem. They are always saying, 'He got this here; he got that there.' If, for instance, they find passages in Shakespeare which are also to be found in the ancients, they say he must have taken them from the ancients. Thus there is a situation in Shakespeare, where, on the sight of a beautiful girl, the parents are congratulated who call her daughter, and the youth who will lead her home as his bride. And because the same thing occurs in Homer, Shakespeare forsooth has taken it from Homer.[1] How odd! As if we had to go so far for such things, and they were not before our eyes, felt, and uttered, every day."

"Ah, yes," said Goethe, "it is very ridiculous."

"Lord Byron, too," said I, "is no wiser, when he takes *Faust* to pieces, and thinks you found one thing here, the other there."

"The greater part of those fine things cited by Lord Byron," said Goethe, "I have never even read; much less did I think of them when I was writing *Faust*. But Lord Byron is only great as a poet; as soon as he reflects, he is a child. He knows not how to help himself against stupid attacks of the same kind made upon him by his own countrymen. He ought to have expressed himself more strongly against them. 'What is there is mine,' he should have said; 'and whether I got it from a book or from life, is of no consequence; the only point

[1] Eckermann here shows acquaintance with a method since rendered familiar by Baconians.

is, whether I have made a right use of it.' Walter Scott used a scene from my *Egmont*, and he had a right to do so; and because he did it well, he deserves praise. He has also copied the character of my Mignon in one of his romances; but whether with equal judgment, is another question. Lord Byron's transformed Devil[1] is a continuation of Mephistopheles, and quite right too. If, from the whim of originality, he had departed from the model, he would certainly have fared worse. Thus, my Mephistopheles sings a song from Shakespeare, and why should he not? Why should I give myself the trouble of inventing one of my own, when this said just what was wanted? Also, if the prologue to my *Faust* is something like the beginning of Job, that is again quite right, and I am rather to be praised than censured."

Goethe, in the best humour, sent for a bottle of wine, and filled for Riemer and me; he himself drank Marienbad water. He seemed to have appointed this evening for looking over, with Riemer, the manuscript of the continuation of his autobiography, perhaps in order to improve it here and there, in point of expression. "Let Eckermann stay and hear it too," said Goethe; and he then laid the manuscript before Riemer, who began to read, commencing with the year 1795.

In the course of the summer, I had had the pleasure of repeatedly reading and reflecting on the still unpublished record of those years, down to the latest time. But now, to hear them read aloud in Goethe's presence afforded a new enjoyment. Riemer paid especial attention to the mode of expression; and I had occasion to admire his great dexterity and his affluence of words and phrases. But in Goethe's mind the epoch of life described was revived; he revelled in recollections, and, on the mention of single persons and events, filled out the written narrative with oral details. That was a memorable evening! The most distinguished of his contemporaries were talked over; but the conversation always came back to Schiller, who was so interwoven with this period, from 1795 to 1800. The theatre had been the object of their united efforts, and Goethe's best works belong to this time. *Wilhelm Meister* was completed; *Hermann und Dorothea* planned and written; *Cellini* translated for the *Horen*; the *Xenien* written by both for Schiller's *Musen-*

[1] This, doubtless, means the *Deformed Transformed*; and the fact that this poem was not published till January 1824, rendering it probable that Goethe had not actually seen it, accounts for the inaccuracy of the expression.—J. O.

Almanach;—every day brought with it points of contact. Of all this we talked, and Goethe had full opportunity for the most interesting reminiscences.

"*Hermann und Dorothea*," said he, "is almost the only one of my larger poems that still satisfies me; I can never read it without strong interest. I love it best in the Latin translation; there it seems to me nobler, and as if it had returned to its original form."

Wilhelm Meister was often a subject of discourse. "Schiller blamed me for interweaving tragic elements which do not belong to the novel. Yet he was wrong, as we all know. In his letters to me, there are most important views and opinions with respect to *Wilhelm Meister*. But this work is one of the most incalculable productions; I myself scarcely have the key to it. People seek a central point; that is hard, and not even right. I should think a rich manifold life, brought close to our eyes, would be enough without any express tendency; which, after all, is only for the intellect. But if anything of the sort is insisted upon, it will perhaps be found in the words Frederic at the end addresses to the hero: 'Thou seem'st to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom.' Keep to this; for, in fact, the whole work seems to say nothing more than that man, despite all his follies and errors, being led by a higher hand, reaches some happy goal at last."

We then talked of the high degree of culture that had become general among the middle classes of Germany during the last fifty years, and Goethe ascribed this not so much to Lessing as to Herder and Wieland. "Lessing," said he, "was of the very highest understanding, and only one equally great could truly learn of him. To a half-faculty he was dangerous." He mentioned a journalist who had formed himself on Lessing, and, at the end of the last century, had played a part indeed—but far from a noble one, he was so inferior to his predecessor.

"All Upper Germany," said he, "is indebted to Wieland for its style. It has learned much from him; not least the capability of expressing itself correctly."

On mention of the *Xenien*,[1] he especially praised those of Schiller, which he called sharp and biting, while he called his own innocent and trivial.

"The *Thierkreis* (Zodiac), which is by Schiller," said he,

[1] It need scarcely be mentioned that this is the name given to a collection of sarcastic epigrams by Goethe and Schiller.—J. O.

"I always read with admiration. The good effects which the *Xenien* had upon the German literature of their time are beyond calculation." Many persons against whom the *Xenien* were directed were mentioned on this occasion, but their names have escaped my memory.

After we had read and talked over the manuscript to the end of the year 1800, interrupted by these and innumerable other observations from Goethe, he put aside the papers, and had a little supper placed at one end of the table at which we were sitting. We partook of it, but Goethe did not touch a morsel; indeed, I have never seen him eat in the evening. He sat down with us, filled our glasses, snuffed the candles, and regaled us intellectually. His remembrance of Schiller was so lively that the conversation during the latter part of the evening was devoted to him alone.

Riemer spoke of Schiller's personal appearance. "The build of his limbs, his gait in the street, all his motions," said he, "were proud; his eyes only were soft."

"Yes," said Goethe, "everything else about him was proud and majestic, only the eyes were soft. And his talent was like his outward form. He seized boldly on a great subject, and turned it this way and that. But he saw his object only on the outside; a quiet development from its interior was not within his province. His talent was more desultory. Thus he was never decided—could never have *done*. He often changed a part just before a rehearsal.

"And, as he went so boldly to work, he did not take sufficient pains about *motifs*. I recollect what trouble I had with him, when he wanted to make Gessler, in *Tell*, abruptly break an apple from the tree, and have it shot from the boy's head. This was quite against my nature, and I urged him to give at least some motive to this barbarity, by making the boy boast to Gessler of his father's dexterity, and say that he could shoot an apple from a tree at a hundred paces. Schiller, at first, would have nothing of the sort; but at last he yielded to my arguments and intentions, and did as I advised him. I, on the other hand, by too great attention to *motifs*, kept my pieces from the theatre. My *Eugenie*[1] is nothing but a chain of *motifs*, and this cannot succeed on the stage.

"Schiller's genius was really made for the theatre. With every piece he progressed, and became more finished; but, strange to say, a certain love for the horrible adhered to him

[1] *Die Natürliche Tochter* (The Natural Daughter).—J. O.