

from the time of the *Robbers*, which never quite left him even in his prime. I recollect that in the prison scene in my *Egmont*, where the sentence is read to him, Schiller would have made Alva appear in the background, masked and muffled in a cloak, enjoying the effect the sentence would produce on Egmont. Thus Alva was to show himself insatiable in revenge and malice. I, however, protested, and prevented the apparition. He was a great, odd man.

“Every week he became different and more finished; each time I saw him he seemed to me to have advanced in learning and judgment. His letters are the fairest memorials of him that I possess, and they are also among the best of his writings. His last letter I preserve as a sacred relic.” He rose and fetched it. “See and read it,” said he, giving it to me.

It was a very fine letter, written in a bold hand. It contained an opinion of Goethe’s notes to *Rameau’s Nephew*, which exhibit French literature at that time, and which he had given Schiller to look over. I read the letter aloud to Riemer. “You see,” said Goethe, “how apt and consistent is his judgment, and that the handwriting nowhere shows trace of weakness. He was a splendid man, and went from us in all the fulness of his strength. This letter is dated the 24th of April, 1805. Schiller died on the 9th of May.”

We looked at the letter by turns, and were pleased with the clear style and fine handwriting. Goethe gave further affectionate reminiscence of his friend, until it was nearly eleven o’clock, and we departed.

Thursday, February 24, 1825.

“If I were still superintendent of the theatre,” said Goethe, this evening, “I would bring out Byron’s *Doge of Venice*. The piece is indeed long, and would require shortening. Nothing, however, should be cut out; but the import of each scene should be taken, and expressed more concisely. The piece would thus be brought closer together, without being damaged by alterations; and it would gain powerful effect, without essential loss of beauty.”

This opinion of Goethe’s gave me a new view as to how we might proceed on the stage, in a hundred similar cases; it requires, however, a fine intellect—nay, a poet, who understands his vocation.

We talked more about Lord Byron; and I mentioned how, in his conversations with Medwin, he had said there was some-

thing extremely difficult and unthankful in writing for the theatre. "The great point is," said Goethe, "for the poet to strike into the path which the taste and interest of the public have taken. If the direction of his talent accords with that of the public, everything is gained. Houwald hit this path with his *Bild* (Picture), and hence the universal applause he received. Lord Byron, perhaps, would not have been so fortunate, as his tendency was not that of the public. The greatness of the poet is not the main requisite. On the contrary, one who is little elevated above the general public may gain the most general favour precisely on that account."

We continued about Byron, and Goethe said: "That which I call invention I never saw in anyone in the world to a greater degree. His manner of loosing a dramatic knot is always better than one would anticipate."

"That," said I, "is what I feel about Shakespeare—especially when Falstaff has entangled himself in a net of falsehoods, and I ask myself what I should do to help him out; for I find Shakespeare surpasses all my notions. That you say the same of Lord Byron is the highest praise. Nevertheless," I added, "the poet who takes a clear survey of beginning and end, has by far the advantage with the biassed reader."

Goethe agreed with me, and laughed to think that Lord Byron, who in practical life could never adapt himself and never even asked about a law, finally subjected himself to the stupidest of laws—that of the *three unities*.

"He understood the purpose of this law," said he, "no better than the rest of the world. *Comprehensibility*¹ is the purpose, and the three unities are only so far good as they conduce to this end. If the observance of them hinders the comprehension of a work, it is foolish to treat them as laws. Even the Greeks, from whom the rule was taken, did not always follow it. In the *Phaeton* of Euripides, and in other pieces, there is a change of place; and it is obvious that good representation of their subject was with them more important than blind obedience to law, which in itself is of no great consequence. The pieces of Shakespeare deviate, as far as possible, from the unities of time and place; but they are comprehensible—nothing more so—and on this account the Greeks would have found no fault in them. The French poets have endeavoured to follow most

¹ We unwillingly adopt this uncouth word as the equivalent for "das Fassliche." The American translator uses the word "illusion," but this would be rather a result of "das Fassliche" than the thing itself.—J. O.

rigidly the laws of the three unities—but they sin against comprehensibility; for they solve a dramatic law, not dramatically, but by narration.”

[Eckermann calls to mind Houwald's *Feinde* (Enemies), spoiled by adherence to “the unities”—as contrasted with the success achieved in *Goetz von Berlichingen*, wherein the unities are disregarded.]

Goethe continued to talk of Lord Byron. “With that disposition,” said he, “which always leads him into the illimitable, the restraint he imposed upon himself by the observance of the three unities becomes him. If he had but known how to endure moral restraint also! That he could not was his ruin; it may be said he was destroyed by his own unbridled temperament.

“But he was too much in the dark about himself. He lived impetuously for the day, and neither knew nor thought what he was doing. Permitting everything to himself, and excusing nothing in others, he necessarily put himself in a bad position, and made the world his foe. At the very beginning, he offended the most distinguished literary men by his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. To be permitted only to live after this, he was obliged to go back a step. In his succeeding works, he continued in the path of opposition and fault-finding. Church and State were not left unassailed. This reckless conduct drove him from England, and would in time have driven him from Europe also. Everywhere it was too narrow for him, with the most perfect personal freedom he felt confined; the world seemed a prison. His Grecian expedition was the result of no voluntary resolution; his misunderstanding with the world drove him to it.

“Not only did the renunciation of what was hereditary and patriotic cause the personal destruction of this distinguished man; but his revolutionary turn, and the constant mental agitation with which it was combined, did not allow his talent a fair development. Moreover, his perpetual negation and fault-finding is injurious even to his excellent works. For not only does the discontent of the poet infect the reader, but the end of all opposition is negation; and negation is nothing. If I call *bad* bad, what do I gain? But if I call *good* bad, I do a great deal of mischief. He who will work aright must never rail, must not trouble himself at all about what is ill done, but only do well himself. The great point is, not to pull down, but to build up; in this humanity finds pure joy.

“Lord Byron,” continued Goethe, “is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great talent. His good qualities belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer, his talent is incommensurable.

“All Englishmen are, as such, without reflection, properly so called; distractions and party spirit will not permit them to perfect themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men.

“Thus, Lord Byron could never attain reflection on himself, and on this account his maxims in general are not successful, as is shown by his creed, ‘much money, no authority,’ for much money always paralyses authority.¹

“But where he will create, he always succeeds; with him inspiration supplies the place of reflection. He was obliged to go on poetizing; and then everything that came from the man, especially from his heart, was excellent. He produced his best things as women do pretty children, without thinking about it or knowing how it was done.

“He is a great talent, a born talent, and I never saw the true poetical power greater in any man. In the apprehension of external objects, and a clear penetration into past situations, he is quite as great as Shakespeare. But, as a pure individuality, Shakespeare is his superior. This was felt by Byron; and on this account he does not say much of Shakespeare, although he knows whole passages by heart. He would willingly have denied him altogether; for Shakespeare’s cheerfulness is in his way, and he feels that he is no match for it. Pope he does not deny, for he had no cause to fear him: on the contrary, he mentions him, and shows him respect when he can; for he knows well enough that Pope is a mere foil to himself.”

Goethe seemed inexhaustible on the subject of Byron. After a few digressions, he proceeded thus:

“His high rank as an English peer was very injurious to Byron; for every talent is oppressed by the outer world—how much more, then, when there is such high birth and so great a fortune? A middle rank is much more favourable to talent, so we find all great artists and poets in the middle classes. Byron’s predilection for the unbounded could not have been nearly so dangerous with more humble birth and smaller means. As it was, he was able to put every fancy into practice, and this involved him in innumerable scrapes. Besides, how could one of such high rank be inspired with awe and respect by any

¹ This paragraph, somewhat incomprehensible, seems to be a faithful rendering of the German.

rank whatever? He spoke out whatever he felt, and this brought him into ceaseless conflict with the world.

"It is surprising to remark," continued Goethe, "how large a portion of the life of a rich Englishman of rank is passed in duels and elopements. Lord Byron himself says, that his father carried off three ladies. And let any man be a steady son after that.

"Properly speaking, he lived perpetually in a state of nature, and with his mode of existence the necessity for self-defence floated daily before his eyes. Hence his constant pistol-shooting. Every moment he expected to be called out.

"He could not live alone. Hence, with all his oddities, he was very indulgent to his associates. He one evening read his fine poem on the death of Sir John Moore,¹ and his noble friends did not know what to make of it. This did not move him, but he put it away again. As a poet, he really showed himself a lamb. Another would have commended them to the devil."

(Sup.) Tuesday, March 22, 1825.

Last night, soon after twelve o'clock, we were awoken by an alarm of fire; we heard cries, "The theatre is on fire!" I threw on my clothes, and hastened to the spot. Only a few hours before, we had been delighted by the excellent acting of La Roche in Cumberland's *Jew*, and Seidel had excited universal laughter by his good humour and jokes. And now, in the place so lately the scene of intellectual pleasures, raged the most terrible element of destruction.

The fire, which was occasioned by the heating apparatus, appears to have broken out in the pit; it soon spread to the stage and the dry lath-work of the wings, and, as it fearfully increased by the great quantity of combustible material, it was not long before the flames burst through the roof, and the rafters gave way.

There was no deficiency of preparations for extinguishing the fire. The building was, by degrees, surrounded by engines, which poured an immense quantity of water upon the flames. All, however, was without avail. The fire raged upwards as before, and threw up to the dark sky an inexhaustible mass of glowing sparks and burning particles of light materials, which then, with a light breeze, passed sideways over the town. Loud

¹ Medwin, who reported the conversations of Byron, apparently believed that Charles Wolfe's poem *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, was by Byron himself. Goethe depends upon Medwin, presumably.

was the noise of the cries and calls of the men working the fire-ladders and engines. All seemed determined to subdue the flames. On one side, as near to the spot as the fire allowed, stood a man in a cloak and military cap, smoking a cigar with the greatest composure. At the first glance, he appeared to be an idle spectator; but there were several persons to whom, in a few words, he gave commands, which were immediately executed. It was the Grand Duke Charles Augustus. He had soon seen that the building itself could not be saved; he therefore ordered that it should be left to fall, and that all the superfluous engines should be turned upon the neighbouring houses, which were much exposed to the fire. He appeared to think with princely resignation:

Let *that* burn down,
With greater beauty will it rise again.

He was not wrong. The theatre was old, by no means beautiful; and for a long time it had been too small to accommodate the annually increasing public. Nevertheless, it was lamentable to see it thus irreparably destroyed, with so many reminiscences of a past time, illustrious and endeared to Weimar.

I saw in beautiful eyes many tears which flowed for its downfall. I was no less touched by the grief of a member of the orchestra, who wept for his burnt violin. As the day dawned, I saw many pale countenances. I remarked several girls and women of high rank, who had watched the fire all night, and who now shivered in the cold morning air. I returned home to take a little rest, and in the forenoon I called upon Goethe.

The servant told me he was unwell and in bed: still, he had me called to his side. He stretched out his hand to me. "We have all sustained a loss," said he; "what is to be done? My little Wolf came early this morning to my bedside. He seized my hand, and looking full at me said, 'So is it with *human things*.' What more can be said, than these words of my beloved Wolf's? The theatre, the scene of my love-labours for nearly thirty years, lies in ashes. But, as Wolf says, 'so is it with human things.' I have slept but little during the night; from my front windows I saw the flames rising towards the sky.

"You can imagine that many thoughts of old times, of my many years' exertions with Schiller, and of the progress of many a favourite pupil, passed through my mind, not without causing emotion. Hence, I intend to remain in bed to-day."

I praised him for his forethought. Still, he did not appear to me in the least weak or exhausted, but in a very pleasant and serene mood. This lying in bed seemed to me to be an old stratagem of war, which he is accustomed to adopt on any extraordinary event, when he fears a crowd of visitors.

Goethe begged me to be seated on a chair before his bed, and to stay there a little time. "I have thought much of you, and pitied you," said he. "What will you do with your evenings now?"

"You know," returned I, "how passionately I love the theatre. When I came here, two years ago, I knew nothing at all, except three or four pieces which I had seen in Hanover. All was new to me, actors as well as pieces; and since, according to your advice, I have given myself up entirely to the impression of the subject, without much thinking or reflecting, I can say with truth, that I have, during these two winters, passed at the theatre the most harmless and most agreeable hours that I have ever known. I was, moreover, so infatuated with the theatre, that I not only missed no performance, but also obtained admission to the rehearsals; nay, not contented with this, if, as I passed in the day-time, I found the doors open, I would enter, and sit for half an hour upon an empty bench in the pit, imagining scenes that might be played there."

"You are a madman," returned Goethe, laughing; "but that is what I like. Would to God that the whole public consisted of such children! And in fact you are right. Anyone who is sufficiently young, and who is not quite spoiled, could not easily find any place that would suit him so well as a theatre. Nobody asks you any questions; you need not open your mouth unless you choose; on the contrary, you sit quite at your ease like a king, and let everything pass before you, and recreate your mind and senses to your heart's content. There is poetry, there is painting, there are singing and music, there is acting, and what not besides! When all these arts, and the charm of youth and beauty heightened to an important degree, work in concert on the same evening, it is a bouquet to which no other can compare. But, even when part is bad and part is good, it is still better than looking out of window, or playing a game at whist in a close party amid the smoke of cigars. The theatre at Weimar is, as you feel, by no means to be despised; it is still an old trunk from our best time, to which new talents have attached themselves; and we can still produce something that pleases, and at least gives the appearance of an organized whole."

“Would I had seen it twenty or thirty years ago,” answered I. “That was certainly a time,” replied Goethe, “when we were assisted by great advantages. The tedious period of French taste had not long gone by; the public was not yet spoiled by over-excitement; the influence of Shakespeare was in all its first freshness; the operas of Mozart were new; and lastly, the pieces of Schiller were first produced here year after year, and were given at the theatre of Weimar in all their first glory, under his own superintendence. Consider all this, and you will imagine what a fine banquet was given to old and young. We always had a grateful public.”

I remarked, “Older persons, who lived in those times, cannot praise that period of the Weimar theatre highly enough.”

“I will not deny that it was something,” returned Goethe. “The main point, however, was this, that the Grand Duke left my hands quite free; I could do just as I liked. I did not look to magnificent scenery and a brilliant wardrobe; I looked to good pieces. From tragedy to farce, every species was welcome; but a piece was obliged to have something in it to find favour. It had to be great and clever, cheerful and graceful, and at all events healthy and containing some pith. All that was morbid, weak, lachrymose, and sentimental, as well as all that was frightful, horrible, and offensive to decorum, was excluded; I should have feared, by such expedients, to spoil both actors and audience.

“By means of good pieces, I raised the actors; for the study of excellence, and the perpetual practice of excellence, must necessarily make something of a man whom nature has not left ungifted. I was also constantly in contact with the actors. I attended the first rehearsals,¹ and explained to everyone his part; I was present at the chief rehearsals, and talked with the actors as to any improvements that might be made; I was never absent from a performance, and I pointed out the next day anything that seemed wrong. By these means I advanced them in their art.

“But I also sought to raise the whole class in the esteem of society, by introducing the best and most promising into my own circle, and thus showing that I considered them worthy of social intercourse with myself. The result was, that the rest of the higher society in Weimar did not remain behind

¹ The word “Leseprobe,” which is here used, answers exactly to the English stage technicality—the “reading.” The chief rehearsals, “Hauptproben,” are by us simply called “rehearsals.”—J. O.

me, and that actors and actresses gained admission into the best circles. By all this, they acquired a great internal as well as external culture. My scholar Wolf, in Berlin, and our Dürand, are people of the finest tact in society. Oels and Graff have enough of the higher order of culture to do honour to the best circles.

“Schiller proceeded in the same spirit: he had a great deal of intercourse with actors and actresses. Like me, he was present at every rehearsal; and after every successful performance of one of his pieces, it was his custom to invite the actors, and to spend a merry day with them. All rejoiced together at whatever had succeeded, and discussed how anything might be done better next time. But, even when Schiller joined us, he found both actors and the public already cultivated to a high degree; and it is not to be denied that this conduced to the rapid success of his pieces.”

“This burning of the house,” said I, “in which you and Schiller, during a long course of years, effected so much good, closes a great epoch, which will not soon return for Weimar. You must have experienced great pleasure in your direction of the theatre, and its extraordinary success.”

“And not a little trouble and difficulty,” returned Goethe, with a sigh.

“It must be difficult,” said I, “to keep such a many-headed being in proper order.”

“A great deal,” said Goethe, “may be done by severity; more by love; but most by clear discernment and impartial justice, which pays no respect to persons. I had to beware of two enemies, which might have been dangerous to me. One was my passionate love of talent, which might easily have made me partial. The other I will not mention, but you can guess it. At our theatre there was no want of ladies, who were beautiful and young, and who were possessed of great mental charms. I felt a passionate inclination towards many of them, and sometimes it happened that I was met half-way. But I restrained myself, and said, No farther! I knew my position, and also what I owed to it. I stood here, not as a private man, but as chief of an establishment the prosperity of which was of more consequence to me than a momentary gratification. If I had involved myself in any love affair, I should have been like a compass which cannot point right when under the influence of a magnet at its side. By thus keeping myself clear, and remaining master of myself, I also remained master of the theatre,

and I always received that respect without which all authority is very soon at an end."

This confession of Goethe's deeply impressed me. I had already heard something of this kind about him from others, and I rejoiced now to hear its confirmation from his own mouth.

I returned to the scene of the fire, where flames and columns of smoke were rising from the great heap of ruins. People were still occupied in extinguishing and pulling to pieces. I found near the spot a burnt fragment of a written part. It contained passages from Goethe's *Tasso*.

(Sup.) Thursday, March 24, 1825.

I dined with Goethe. The loss of the theatre was almost the exclusive subject of conversation. Frau von Goethe and Fräulein Ulrica recalled to mind the happy hours they had enjoyed in the old house. They had been getting some relics from amongst the rubbish—which they considered invaluable; but which were, after all, nothing but stones and burnt pieces of carpet. Still, these were from the precise spot in the balcony where they had been used to sit.

"The principal thing is," said Goethe, "to recover oneself, and get in order as soon as possible. I should like the performances to recommence next week, in the palace or in the great town-hall, no matter which. Too long a pause must not be allowed, lest the public should seek some other resource for its tedious evenings."

"But," it was observed, "there are scarcely any of the decorations saved."

"There is no need of much decoration," returned Goethe. "Neither is there a necessity for great pieces. It is not even necessary to perform whole pieces at all, much less a great whole. The main point is, to choose something in which no great change of scene takes place: perhaps a one-act comedy, or a one-act farce, or operetta. Then, perhaps, some air, duet, or finale, from a favourite opera; and you will be very passably entertained. We have only to get through April, for in May you have the songsters of the woods.

"In the meantime," continued Goethe, "you will, during the summer months, witness the spectacle of the rearing of a new house. This fire appears to me very remarkable. I will now confess to you, that, during the long winter evenings, I have occupied myself with Coudray in drawing the plan of a new handsome theatre suitable to Weimar. We had sent for the

ground-plans and sections of some of the principal German theatres; and by taking what was best, and avoiding what appeared defective, we made a sketch that will be worth looking at. As soon as the Grand Duke gives permission, the building may be commenced, and it is no trifle that this accident found us so wonderfully prepared."

We received this intelligence of Goethe's with great joy.

"In the old house," continued Goethe, "the nobility were accommodated in the balcony, and the servants and young artisans in the gallery. Most of the well-to-do middle class were not well provided for; when, at certain performances, the students occupied the pit, these respectable persons did not know where to go. The few small boxes behind the pit, and the few stalls, were not sufficient. Now we have managed much better. We have a whole tier of boxes running round the pit; and another tier, of the second rank, between the balcony and the gallery. By these means we gain a great many places, without enlarging the house too much."

We rejoiced at this communication, and praised Goethe for his kind consideration of the theatre and the public.

To lend my assistance to the future theatre, I went after dinner with my friend Robert Doolan to Upper Weimar, and, over a cup of coffee at the inn, began to make the libretto of an opera, after the *Issipile* of Metastasio. The first thing was to write a programme, so as to cast the piece with all the favourite singers (male and female) belonging to the Weimar theatre. This gave us pleasure almost as if we were again seated before the orchestra.

We then set to work in good earnest, and finished a great part of the first act.

(Sup.) Sunday, March 27, 1825.

I dined at Goethe's with a large party. He showed us the design for the new theatre. It was as he had told us a few days ago; the plan promised a very beautiful building, externally and internally.

It was remarked that so pretty a theatre required beautiful decorations, and better costumes than the former one. We were also of opinion that the company had gradually become incomplete, and that some distinguished young members should be engaged—both for drama and for opera. At the same time, we recognized that all this would be attended with greater expense than the present state of the treasury would allow.

“I know very well,” said Goethe, “that under pretext of sparing the treasury, some insignificant persons will be engaged who will not cost much. But we cannot expect to benefit the treasury by such means. Nothing injures the treasury more. Our aim must be to have a full house every evening; and a young singer, male or female, a clever hero, and a clever young heroine with some beauty, will do much towards this end. Ay, if I still stood at the head of the direction, I would now go a step farther for the benefit of the treasury, and I should not be without the money required.”

Goethe was asked what he meant by this.

“I would have performances on Sundays. I should thus have the receipts of at least forty more evenings, and it would be hard if the treasury did not thus gain ten or fifteen thousand dollars a year.”

This expedient was thought very practical. It was mentioned, that to the great working-class, who are usually occupied until late at night on week-days, Sunday is the only day of recreation, when they would prefer the more noble pleasures of a play to a dance and beer at a village inn. It was also the general opinion, that all the farmers and landowners, as well as the officials and wealthy inhabitants of the small towns in the neighbourhood, would consider the Sunday as a desirable day to go to the theatre at Weimar. Besides, at the present time, a Sunday evening at Weimar was very dreary and tedious for everyone who did not go to court, or was not a member of a happy family circle or a select society; isolated individuals did not know where to go.

Goethe's idea of permitting Sunday performances, according to the custom in all other German towns, was greeted as a very happy one. Only a slight doubt arose, as to whether the court would approve of it.

“The court of Weimar,” returned Goethe, “is too good and too wise to oppose any regulation which would conduce to the benefit of the town and an important institution. The court will certainly make the small sacrifice of altering its Sunday soirées to another day. But if this were not agreeable, we could find for the Sundays enough pieces which the court does not like but which would suit the common people and would fill the treasury.”

The conversation then turned upon actors, and much was said about the use and abuse of their powers.

“I have, during my long practice,” said Goethe, “found that

the main point is never to allow any play, or scarcely an opera, to be studied, unless with some certainty of a good success for years. The expenditure of power demanded for the study of a five-act play, or even an opera of equal length, is not sufficiently considered. Much is required before a singer has thoroughly mastered a part through all the scenes and acts, much more before the choruses go as they ought.

“I am horrified, when I hear how lightly people give orders for the study of an opera of the success of which they truly know nothing and of which they have only heard through some very uncertain newspaper notice. As we in Germany already possess very tolerable means of travelling, and are even beginning to have diligences, I would, on learning of any new opera being produced and praised, send to the spot the *Regisseur* or some other trustworthy member of the theatre, that by his presence at an actual representation he might be convinced how far it was good for anything, and whether our forces were sufficient for it. The expense of such a journey would be inconsiderable in comparison with the enormous advantage, and mistakes would be avoided.

“And then, when a good play or a good opera has once been studied, it should be represented at short intervals—be allowed to ‘run’ as long as it draws. The same plan would be applicable to a good old play, or a good old opera; which has perhaps been long laid aside, and which now requires not a little fresh study to be reproduced with success. Such a representation should be repeated at short intervals, as frequently as the public shows any interest in it. The craze for something new, for seeing a good and most painfully studied play or opera, only once, or at the most twice—even allowing six or eight weeks to elapse between such repetitions, in which time a new study becomes necessary—is a real detriment to the theatre, and an unpardonable misuse of the talents of the performers engaged in it.”

Goethe appeared to consider this matter very important; and it seemed to lie so near his heart that he became more warm than, with his calm disposition, is usual.

“In Italy,” continued Goethe, “they perform the same opera every evening for four or six weeks, and the great Italian children by no means desire any change. The polished Parisian sees the classical plays of his great poets so often that he knows them by heart and has a practised ear for the accentuation of every syllable. Here in Weimar they have done me the honour to perform my *Iphigenia* and my *Tasso*, but how often? Scarcely

once in three or four years. The public finds them tedious. Very probably. The actors are not in practice to play the pieces, and the public is not in practice to hear them. If through frequent repetitions the actors entered so much into the spirit of their parts that their representation gained life, as if it were not the result of study and everything flowed from their own hearts, the public would assuredly no longer be uninterested and unmoved.

“I really had the notion once that it was possible to form a German drama. Nay, I even fancied I myself could contribute to it, and lay some foundation-stones for such an edifice. I wrote my *Iphigenia* and my *Tasso*, with a childish hope that thus it might be brought about. But there was no emotion or excitement—all remained as it was before. If I had produced an effect, and had met with applause, I would have written a round dozen of pieces such as *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*. There was no deficiency of material. But, as I said, actors to represent such pieces with life and spirit were lacking, as was a public to hear and receive them with sympathy.”

(Sup.) Wednesday, March 30, 1825.

This evening to a great tea-party at Goethe's, where I found a young American, besides the young Englishmen. I also had the pleasure of seeing the Countess Julia von Egloffstein, and of conversing with her pleasantly on various subjects.

(Sup.) Wednesday, April 6, 1825.

Goethe's advice has been followed, and a performance has taken place this evening, for the first time, in the great hall of the town-house, consisting of small things and fragments, which were in accordance with the confined space and the want of decorations. The little opera, *Das Hausgesinde* (The Domestic Servants), went quite as well as at the theatre. Then a favourite quartet, from the opera *Graf von Gleichen* (Count von Gleichen), by Eberwein, was received with approbation. Our first tenor, Herr Moltke, then sang a well-known song from *Die Zauberflöte*; and, after a pause, the grand finale to the first act of *Don Juan* came in with powerful effect, and nobly concluded this first substitute for an evening at the theatre.

(Sup.) Sunday, April 10, 1825.

Dined with Goethe. “I have the good news,” said he, “that the Grand Duke has approved of our design for the new theatre, and that the foundation will be laid immediately.”

“We had to contend with all sorts of obstacles; we are at last happily through them. We owe many thanks to the Privy Counsellor, Schweitzer; who stood true to our cause. The sketch is signed in the Grand Duke’s handwriting, and is to undergo no further alteration. Rejoice, then; for you will obtain a very good theatre.”

(Sup.) Thursday, April 14, 1825.

This evening at Goethe’s. Since conversation upon the theatre and theatrical management was now the order of the day, I asked him upon what maxims he proceeded in the choice of a new member of the company.

“I can scarcely say,” returned Goethe; “I had various modes of proceeding. If a striking reputation preceded the new actor, I let him act, and saw how he suited the others; whether his style disturbed our *ensemble*, or whether he would supply a deficiency. If, however, he was a young man who had never trodden a stage before, I first considered his personal qualities; whether he had about him anything attractive, and, above all things, whether he had control over himself. For an actor who possesses no self-possession, who cannot appear before a stranger in his most favourable light, has, generally speaking, little talent. His whole profession requires continual self-denial, and a continual existence in a foreign mask.

“If his appearance and his deportment pleased me, I made him read, in order to test the power and extent of his organ, as well as the capabilities of his mind. I gave him some sublime passage from a great poet, to see whether he was capable of feeling and expressing what was really great; then something passionate and wild, to prove his power. I then went to something marked by sense and smartness, something ironical and witty; to see how he treated such things, and whether he had sufficient freedom. Then I gave him something representing the pain of a wounded heart, the suffering of a great soul; that I might learn whether he could express pathos.

“If he satisfied me in all these, I had a hope of making him an important actor. If he appeared more capable in some particulars than in others, I remarked the line to which he was adapted. I also now knew his weak points, and, above all, endeavoured to work upon him so that he might strengthen and cultivate himself here. If I remarked faults of dialect, provincialisms, I urged him to lay them aside, and recommended to him social intercourse and friendly practice with some

member of the stage who was entirely free from them. I then asked him whether he could dance and fence; and if this were not so, I would hand him over for some time to the dancing and fencing masters.

“If he were now sufficiently advanced to make his appearance, I gave him at first such parts as suited his individuality, and desired nothing but that he should represent himself. If he now appeared to me of too fiery a nature, I gave him phlegmatic characters; if too calm and tedious, I gave him fiery and hasty characters, that he might thus learn to lay aside himself, and assume foreign individuality.”

The conversation turned upon the casting of plays, upon which Goethe made, among others, the following observations:

“It is a great error to think,” said he, “that an indifferent piece may be played by indifferent actors. A second- or third-rate play can be incredibly improved by the employment of first-rate powers, and be made something really good. But if a second- or third-rate play be performed by second- or third-rate actors, no wonder if it is utterly ineffective.

“Second-rate actors are excellent in great plays. They have the same effect that the figures in half-shade have in a picture; they serve to show off those that have the full light.”

(Sup.) Saturday, April 16, 1825.

Dined at Goethe's with D'Alton, whose acquaintance I made last summer at Bonn. D'Alton is quite after Goethe's own heart; there is also a very pleasant relation between them. In his own science he appears of great importance, so that Goethe esteems his observations and honours every word he utters. Moreover, D'Alton is, as a man, amiable and witty, while in eloquence and abundance of flowing thoughts few can equal him.

Goethe, who in his endeavours to investigate nature would willingly encompass the Great Whole, stands in a disadvantageous position in regard to every scientist of importance who has devoted a whole life to one special object and has mastered a kingdom of endless details. Goethe lives more in the contemplation of great universal laws: hence, always upon the track of some great synthesis, but (from the want of knowledge of single facts) lacking confirmation of his presentiments, he seizes upon and retains every connection with important scientists; for in them he finds what he himself wants. He will be eighty in a few years; but he is not tired of inquiries and experiments. In none of his tendencies has he come to a

standstill; he is still learning and learning—a man endowed with perpetual, imperishable youth.

These reflections were awakened to-day, by his animated conversation with D'Alton. D'Alton talked about Rodentia, and the formation and modifications of their skeletons, and Goethe was unwearied in hearing new facts.

Wednesday, April 20, 1825.

Goethe showed me this evening a letter from a young student, who begs of him the plan for the second part of *Faust*, with the design of completing the work himself. In a straightforward, good-humoured, and candid tone, he freely sets forth his wishes and views; and at last, without reserve, utters his conviction that all other literary efforts of later years have been naught, but that in him a new literature is to bloom afresh. . . . I think I may observe that this presumptuousness, now so common in Germany, which audaciously strides over all the steps of gradual culture, affords little hope of future masterpieces.

“The misfortune in the state,” said Goethe, “is, that nobody can enjoy life in peace, but that everybody must govern; and in art, that nobody will enjoy what has been produced, but everybody wants to reproduce on his own account. Again, nobody thinks to be furthered in his own way by a work of poetry, but everybody will do the same thing over again. There is, besides, no earnestness to approach the Whole, no willingness to do anything for the sake of the Whole; each one tries to make his own Self observable, and to exhibit it as much as possible to the world. People imitate the modern musical virtuosi, who do not select those pieces that give the audience pure musical enjoyment, so much as those in which they can gain admiration by their dexterity. Everywhere is the individual who wants to show off, nowhere honest effort to subserve the Whole. Hence a bungling mode of production is unconsciously acquired. As children, people make verses; and they fancy, as youths, they can do something—until, at last, manhood gives them insight into the excellence that exists, and then they look back in despair on the years they have wasted on a false and futile effort: though there are many that never attain a knowledge of what is perfect and of their own insufficiency, and go on doing things by halves to the end of their days.

“If all could early be made to feel how full the world is of excellence, and how much must be done to produce anything worthy of being placed beside what has already been done—of

a hundred youths now poetizing, scarcely one would have courage, perseverance, and talent, to work quietly for the attainment of a similar mastery. Many young painters would never have taken their pencils in hand, if early enough they could have felt, known, and understood, what really produced a master like Raphael."

The conversation turned upon false tendencies in general, and Goethe continued:

"My tendency to painting was really a false one, for I had not natural talent from which anything of the sort could be developed. A certain sensibility to the surrounding landscapes was one of my qualities, consequently my first attempts were really promising. The journey to Italy destroyed this pleasure in practice. A broad survey took its place, but the talent of love was lost; and, as an artistic talent could neither technically nor æsthetically be developed, my efforts melted away into nothing.

"It is justly said," continued Goethe, "that the communal cultivation of all human powers is desirable and excellent. But the individual is not born for this; everyone must form himself as a particular being—seeking, however, to attain that general idea of which all mankind are constituents."¹

I here thought of that passage in *Wilhelm Meister*, where it is likewise said that all men, taken together, are requisite to constitute humanity, and that we are only so far worthy of esteem as we know how to appreciate.

I thought, too, of the *Wanderjahre*, where Jarno advises each man to learn only one trade; and says that this is the time for one-sidedness, and that he is to be congratulated who understands this, and, in that spirit, works for himself and others.

* * * * *

Culture is to be distinguished from practical activity. Thus it belongs to the cultivation of the poet that his eye should be practised for the apprehension of external objects. And if Goethe calls his practical tendency to painting a false one, it was still of use in cultivating him as a poet.

"The objectivity of my poetry," said he, "may be attributed to this great attention and discipline of the eye; and I ought highly to prize the knowledge I have attained in this way."

But we must take care not to place the limits of our culture too far off.

¹ "Den Begriff zu erlangen suchen, was alle zusammen sind." The word "Begriff" (rendered not quite correctly "idea") is here used in the sense of the Hegelian school.—J. O.

“The investigators into nature,” said Goethe, “are most in danger of this, because a general harmonious culture of the faculties is really required for the adequate observation of nature.”

On the other hand, everybody should strive to guard himself against one-sidedness and narrow views with respect to the knowledge indispensable to his own department. A poet who writes for the stage must have a knowledge of the stage; that he may weigh the means at his command, and know generally what is to be done, and what is to be left alone: the opera-composer, in like manner, should have some insight into poetry; that he may know how to distinguish the bad from the good, and not apply his art to something impracticable.

“Carl Maria von Weber,” said Goethe, “should not have composed *Euryanthe*. He should have seen at once that this was a bad material, of which nothing could be made. So much insight we have a right to expect of every composer, as belonging to his art.”

Thus, too, the painter should be able to distinguish subjects: for it belongs to his department to know what he has to paint, and what to leave unpainted.

“But, when all is said,” observed Goethe, “the greatest art is to limit and isolate oneself.”

Accordingly, he has, while I have been with him, constantly endeavoured to guard me against all distractions, and to keep me to a single department. If I showed an inclination to penetrate the secrets of natural science, he always advised me to leave it alone, and to confine myself to poetry for the present. If I wished to read a book that he thought would not advance me in my present pursuits, he always advised me to refrain, saying it was of no practical use to me.

“I myself,” said he one day, “have spent too much time on things that did not belong to my department. When I reflect what Lopez de Vega accomplished, the number of my poetical productions seems very small. I should have kept more to my own trade.”

“If I had not busied myself so much with stones,” said he, another time, “but had spent my time on something better, I might have won the finest ornament of diamonds.”

For the same cause he esteems and praises his friend Meyer for having devoted his whole life exclusively to the study of art, and thus having obtained beyond a doubt the highest degree of penetration in his department.

“I also grew up with this tendency,” said Goethe, “and passed almost half my life in the contemplation and study of works of art, but in a certain respect I am not on a par with Meyer. I therefore never venture to show him a new picture at once, but first see how far I can get on with it myself. When I think I am fully acquainted with its beauties and defects, I show it to Meyer; who sees far more sharply into the matter, and who in many respects gives new lights. Thus I am ever convinced anew how much is needed to be thoroughly great in any *one* thing. In Meyer lies an insight into art belonging to thousands of years.”

[Eckermann here, in view of Goethe's own discursiveness, reminds us (as Goethe himself does elsewhere) of the all-round low state of German culture in Goethe's youth.]

(Sup.) Wednesday, April 27, 1825.

Towards the evening to Goethe, who had invited me to take a drive to the lower garden. “Before we go,” said he, “I will give you a letter from Zelter, received yesterday, wherein he touches upon the affairs of our theatre.”

“‘That you are not the man,’ he writes, amongst other things, ‘to found a drama for the people of Weimar, I could have seen long ago. He that makes himself green, the goats will eat. Other high folks should take this into consideration, who would cork wine during its fermentation.

“‘Friends, we have lived to see it; yes, lived to see it.’”

Goethe looked at me, and we laughed. “Zelter is a capital fellow,” said he; “but sometimes he does not quite understand me, and puts a false construction on my words.

“I have devoted my whole life to the people and their improvement, and why should I not also found a drama? But here in Weimar, in this small residence, which, as people jokingly say, has ten thousand poets and a few inhabitants, how can we talk about the people, to say nothing of a theatre for the people? Weimar will doubtless become, at some time, a great city; but we must wait some centuries before the people of Weimar will form a mass sufficient to found and support a drama.”

The horses were now put to, and we drove to the lower garden. The evening was calm and mild, rather sultry; and large clouds appeared gathering in tempestuous masses. We walked up and down the dry gravel path. I listened to the notes of the blackbird and thrush, which, upon the tops of

the still leafless ash-trees, beyond the Ilm, sang against the gathering tempest.

Goethe cast his glances around: now towards the clouds; now upon the verdure bursting forth everywhere—on the sides of the path and on the meadows, as well as on the bushes and hedges. “A warm thunder-shower, which the evening promises,” said he, “and spring will reappear in all her splendour and abundance.”

The clouds became more threatening, a low peal of thunder was heard, some drops of rain also fell, and Goethe thought it advisable to drive back into the town. “If you have no engagement,” said he, as we alighted at his dwelling, “go upstairs, and spend an hour or so with me.” This I did.

Zelter’s letter still lay upon the table. “It is strange, very strange,” said Goethe, “how easily one falls into a false position with respect to public opinion. I do not know that I ever joined in any way against the people; but it is now settled, once for all, that I am no friend to the people. I am, indeed, no friend to the revolutionary mob: whose object is robbery, murder, and destruction; and who, behind the mask of public welfare, have their eyes only upon the meanest egotistical aims. I am no friend to such people, any more than I am a friend of a Louis XV. I hate every violent overthrow, because as much good is destroyed as is gained by it. I hate those who achieve it, as well as those who give cause for it. But am I therefore no friend to the people? Does any right-minded man think otherwise?”

“You know how greatly I rejoice at every improvement, of which the future gives us some prospect. But, as I said, all violent transitions are revolting to my mind, for they are not conformable to nature.

“I am a friend to plants; I love the rose, as the most perfect flower which our German nature can produce; but I am not fool enough to desire that my garden should produce them now, at the end of April. I am satisfied if I now find the first green leaves, satisfied if I see how one leaf after another is formed upon the stem, from week to week; I am pleased when in May I perceive the buds, and am happy when at last in June the rose itself appears in all its splendour and fragrance. If anybody cannot wait, let him go to the hot-houses.¹

¹ In the same spirit, in conversation with Soret (Dec. 20, 1830), Goethe laid down the comfortable principle: “We leave some evils untouched that something may remain upon which mankind can further develop their powers.”

“It is further said that I am a servant, a slave to princes; as if that were saying anything. Do I then serve a tyrant—a despot? Do I serve one who lives at the cost of the people, only for his own pleasures? Such princes and such times lie, God be praised, far behind us. I have been intimately connected with the Grand Duke for half a century, and during half a century have striven and worked with him; but I should lie if I were to say that I have known a single day in which the Grand Duke has not thought of doing something tending to benefit the land and to improve the condition of people. What has he from his princely station, but toil and trouble? Is his dwelling, his apparel, or his table better appointed than that of any wealthy private man? Only go into our seaport towns, and you will find the kitchen and cellar of any considerable merchant better appointed than his.

“This autumn,” continued Goethe, “we are going to celebrate the day when the Grand Duke will have governed for fifty years. But this government of his—what has it been but a servitude to the welfare of his people? If then I must perforce be the slave of a prince, it is at least my consolation that I am still only the slave of one who is himself a slave to the common weal.”

(Sup.) Friday, April 29, 1825.

The building of the new theatre had advanced very rapidly; the foundation walls had already risen on every side, and gave promise of a very beautiful building.

But to-day, on going to the site, I saw to my dismay that the work was discontinued; and I heard it reported that another party, opposed to Goethe and Coudray's plan, had at last triumphed; that Coudray had retired from the direction of the building, and that another architect was going to finish it after a new design, altering the foundation already laid.

I was deeply grieved; for I had rejoiced with many others at the prospect of seeing arise in Weimar a theatre executed according to Goethe's practical view and cultivated taste. But I also grieved for Goethe and Coudray, who must both feel hurt.

(Sup.) Sunday, May 1, 1825.

Dined with Goethe. It may be supposed that the alteration in the building of the theatre was the first subject we talked upon. I had, as I said, feared that this most unexpected measure would deeply wound Goethe's feelings; but there was no sign of it. I found him in the mildest and most serene frame of mind, raised above all sensitive littleness.

“They have,” said he, “assailed the Grand Duke on the side of expenditure and the great saving of expense which will be effected by the change of plan for the building, and they have succeeded. I am quite content. A new theatre is, in the end, only a new funeral pile which some accident will sooner or later set on fire. I console myself with this. Besides, a trifle more or less is not worth mentioning. You will have a very tolerable house, if not exactly such a one as I wished and imagined. You will go to it, and I shall go to it too, and in the end all will turn out well enough.

“The Grand Duke,” said Goethe, “disclosed to me his opinion, that a theatre need not be of architectural magnificence, which could not be contradicted. He further said that it was nothing but a house for the purpose of getting money. This view appears, at first sight, rather material; but, rightly considered, it is not without a higher purport. For if a theatre is not only to pay its expenses, but is besides to make and save money, everything about it must be excellent. It must have the best management at its head; the actors must be of the best; and good pieces must continually be performed, that the attractive power required to draw a full house every evening may never cease. But that is saying a great deal in a few words—almost what is impossible.”

“The Grand Duke’s view,” said I, “of making the theatre gain money, appears to be very practical, since it implies a necessity of remaining continually on a summit of excellence.”

“Even Shakespeare and Molière,” returned Goethe, “had no other view. Both of them wished, above all things, to make money by their theatres. In order to attain this, their principal aim, they strove that everything should be as good as possible, and that besides good old plays there should be some clever novelty to please and attract. The prohibition of *Tartuffe* was a thunderbolt to Molière; but not so much for the poet as for the director Molière, who had to consider the welfare of an important troupe and to find bread for himself and his actors.

“Nothing,” continued Goethe, “is more dangerous to the well-being of a theatre than when the director is so placed that a greater or less receipt at the treasury does not affect him personally, and he can live on in careless security—knowing that, however the receipts at the treasury may fail in the course of the year, at the end of that time he will be able to indemnify himself from another source. It is a property of human nature soon to relax, when not impelled by personal advantage or

disadvantage. Now, it is not to be expected that a theatre in such a town as Weimar should support itself, and that no contribution from the Prince's treasury should be necessary. Still, everything has its limits; and a thousand dollars yearly, more or less, is no trifling matter, particularly as diminished receipts and deteriorations are dangers natural to a theatre—so that there is a loss not only of money, but also of honour.

“If I were the Grand Duke, I would in future, on any change in the management, once for all appoint a fixed sum for an annual contribution. I would strike the average of the contributions during the last ten years; and, according to that, I would settle a sum sufficient to be regarded as a proper support. With this sum the house must be kept. But then I would go a step further, and say that if the director and his *Regisseurs* contrived by means of judicious and energetic management to have an overplus in the treasury at the end of the year, this overplus should be shared as a remuneration by the director, the *Regisseurs*, and the principal members of the company. Then you would see what activity there would be, and how out of its inevitably overtaking drowsiness the establishment would wake up.

“Our theatrical laws,” continued Goethe, “contain various penalties; but there is no single law for the encouragement and reward of distinguished merit. This is a great defect. For if, with every failure, I have a prospect of a deduction from my salary, I should also have the prospect of a reward whenever I do more than can be properly expected of me. And it is by everybody's doing more than can be hoped or expected of him, that a theatre rises.”

Frau von Goethe and Fräulein Ulrica now entered, both gracefully clothed in summer attire on account of the beautiful weather. During dinner we spoke about various parties of pleasure during the past week, and about similar plans for the following one.

“If we continue to have fine evenings,” said Frau von Goethe, “I shall give a tea-party in the park, where we can listen to the song of the nightingale. What do you say, dear father?”

“That would be very pleasant,” returned Goethe. “And you, Eckermann,” said Frau von Goethe, “how do you feel disposed? May you be invited?” “But, Ottilia,” rejoined Fräulein Ulrica, “how can you invite the doctor? He will not come; and if he does come, he sits as if upon thorns, anybody can see that his mind is elsewhere and that the sooner he

is gone the better he would like it." "To speak the plain truth," returned I, "I would certainly rather ramble about the fields with Doolan. Tea, tea-parties, and tea-conversation, are so contrary to my nature, that I feel uncomfortable even when I think of them." "But, Eckermann," said Frau von Goethe, "at a tea-party in the park, you are in the open air, and quite in your element." "On the contrary," said I, "when I am so near Nature, that I scent all her fragrance, and yet cannot thoroughly enjoy it, it is as unendurable as it would be to a duck to be brought near to the water and yet prevented from plunging in." "You might say, too," remarked Goethe, laughing, "that you would feel like a horse, who, on raising his head in the stable, sees other horses running wild upon an extensive plain. He scents the delights and freedom of fresh Nature, but cannot partake of them. Let Eckermann alone; he is as he is, you cannot alter him. But tell me, my good friend, how do you employ yourself with that Doolan of yours, in the open fields, these long fine afternoons?" "We look out for some retired grove," said I, "and shoot with bows and arrows."

[Here Eckermann takes the conversational lead, and tells how he bought a model arrow for a franc in 1814 when in Flanders (where archery is practised at all the public-houses), intending to introduce the sport into Germany. Goethe warns him that it will be a hard and long job, replacing the Philistine amusements of the skittle-ground. Eckermann praises the gracefulness of archery. Goethe says it would be well suited to German gymnastic institutions, and might be made popular in twenty years—by training the young generation to it: several gymnastic societies combining, and importing a teacher from Brabant or sending one of their own teachers thither. Goethe adds he was sorry when politics crept into German gymnastic exercises and they had to be restrained: German youths especially need them—especially the students, destitute of physical equilibrium.

Eckermann tells how he made arrows—trying poplar, pine, birch, and finally linden wood, for the shaft; and cutting a piece from the kernel of a horn, for the tip. The feathering needed skill: as Goethe surmised, it is done with glue—a special kind, the best being isinglass steeped in water for some hours and then dissolved with spirit into a jelly over a gentle charcoal fire. Suitable feathers are the red ones from the wings of a peacock, the large feathers of a turkey-cock, or (best of all) wing-feathers of eagle or bustard.

Goethe, surprised at his friend's "lively" tendencies, inquires about the bow. Eckermann confesses to bungling it at first: trying young ash, which proved of too coarse a grain at the centre; then, on advice to take a stem strong enough to split straight (to avoid the cutting of twisted fibres), doing so, and finding the ash of

Nohra—famous for cart-fittings—best, and that of Ettersberg about the worst. Wood growing on the north side of a declivity is best—its fibres growing straighter in the effort to get into the sunlight. And the wood on the north side of the stem is superior to that on the south side, being closer; so that cartwrights choose it, calling it the “winter side.” A bow made from the split north side of an ash-stem served for a time, but then began to weaken and curve; so he tried walnut (which was better), and at last the fine-leafed maple termed *Masholder*. Goethe knows the wood in hedges, but objects that the young stems are knotty. Eckermann tells him that in the mature wood the knots are easily removable or (if the tree be growing in a thicket) disappear. A stem two to three inches in diameter when knots are removed,¹ if allowed to go on growing will in from fifty to eighty years have six inches of sound wood free from knots, encasing the knotty interior. From this wood a plank is to be sawn, and a piece taken from a part of the plank near the bark is most suitable for a bow. The *Masholder* is to be sawn, for it is so close-grained and interwoven that it will not split straight.

Goethe commends his friend’s practical way of getting knowledge, and asks which form is best: the straight bow of the Scots, or the bow curved at the ends. Eckermann believes curving the ends backward strengthens the bow. The curve is made by keeping the end for an hour in six inches of boiling water, and then screwing it into a mould of the required curve—formed by two blocks—and leaving it a day and a night.]

“What do you think?” said Goethe, with a mysterious laugh. “I believe I have something for you which will not be unacceptable. Suppose we went down together, and I were to put a genuine Baschkir bow² in your hands.”

“A Baschkir bow!” exclaimed I, full of animation, “and a genuine one?”

“Yes, mad fellow, a genuine one,” said Goethe. “Come along.” We went down into the garden. Goethe opened the under chamber of a small outhouse, the tables and walls of which appeared crammed with rarities and curiosities of every description. I cast only a transient glance at these treasures; my eyes sought the bow. “Here it is,” said Goethe, as he took it from a corner. “I see it is in the same condition as when it was presented to me in the year 1814, by a Baschkir chief. Now, what do you say?”

I was delighted to hold the precious weapon in my hands. It appeared quite uninjured, and even the string appeared perfectly serviceable. I tried it in my hands, and found that it was still tolerably elastic. “It is a good bow,” said I. “The

¹ *Quære*, the external protuberances of the knots.

² The Baschkiren are a Tatar race subject to Russia.—J. O.

form especially pleases me, and for the future it shall serve me as a model."

"Of what wood is it made, do you think?"

"It is, as you see, so covered with birch bark," replied I, "that very little of the wood is visible, and only the curved ends remain exposed. Even these are so embrowned by time that one cannot well distinguish what the wood is. At the first glance, it looks like young oak, and then again like nut-tree. I think that it is nut-tree, or a wood that resembles it. Maple or *Masholder* it is not. It is a wood of coarser fibre; besides, I observe signs of its having been split (*geschlachtet*)."

"Suppose you were to try it now," said Goethe. "Here you have an arrow. But be cautious with the iron point, it may be poisoned."

We went again into the garden, and I bent the bow. "Now, where will you shoot?" said Goethe. "Into the air at first, I think," said I. "Go on, then," said Goethe. I shot up towards the sunny clouds in the blue sky. The arrow supported itself well, then turned round, came whizzing downwards, and stuck into the ground. "Now let me try," said Goethe. I gave him the bow, and fetched the arrow.

Goethe placed the notch of the arrow upon the string, and held the bow right, but was some time before he could manage it properly. He now aimed upwards, and drew the string. There he stood like an Apollo, with imperishable youth of soul, although old in body. The arrow only attained a very moderate height, and then fell to the ground. I ran and fetched the arrow. "Once more," said Goethe. He now took aim along the gravel path of the garden. The arrow supported itself about thirty paces tolerably well, then fell, and whizzed along upon the ground. Goethe pleased me beyond measure, by thus shooting with the bow and arrow. I thought of the verses:

Does old age leave me in the lurch?
Am I again a child?

I brought him back the arrow. He begged me to shoot once in a horizontal direction, and gave me for mark a spot in the window-shutter of his workroom. I shot. The arrow was not far from the mark; but penetrated so deep into the soft wood that I could not get it out again. "Let it stick there," said Goethe, "it shall serve me for some days as a remembrance of our sport."

We walked up and down the garden, enjoying the fine weather; we then sat upon a bench with our backs against the young

leaves of a thick hedge. We spoke about the bow of Ulysses, about the heroes of Homer, then about the Greek tragic poets, and lastly about the widely diffused opinion that Euripides caused the decline of the Greek drama. Goethe was by no means of this opinion.

“Altogether,” said he, “I am opposed to the view that any single man can cause the decline of an art. Much, not easy to set forth, must co-operate. The decline of the tragic art of the Greeks could no more have been caused by Euripides than could that of sculpture by any great sculptor who lived in the time of Phidias but was inferior to him. For when an epoch is great it proceeds in the path of improvement, and an inferior production is without results. But what a great epoch was the time of Euripides! It was the time, not of a retrograde, but of a progressive taste. Sculpture had not yet reached its highest point, and painting was still in its infancy.

“If the pieces of Euripides, compared to those of Sophocles, had great faults, it was not necessary that succeeding poets should imitate these faults and be spoilt by them. But if they had great merits, so that some of them were even preferable to plays of Sophocles, why did not succeeding poets strive to imitate their merits; and why did they not thus become at least as great as Euripides himself?

“But if, after the three celebrated tragic poets, there appeared no equally great fourth, fifth, or sixth—this is, indeed, a matter difficult to explain; nevertheless, we may have our own conjectures, and approach the truth in some degree.

“Man is a simple being. And however rich, varied, and unfathomable he may be, the cycle of his situations is soon run through.

“If the same circumstances had occurred as with us poor Germans—for whom Lessing has written two or three, I myself three or four, and Schiller five or six passable plays—there might easily have been room for a fourth, fifth, and sixth tragic poet.

“But with the Greeks and the abundance of their productions—for each of the three great poets has written a hundred or nearly a hundred pieces; and the tragical subjects of Homer, and the heroic traditions, were some of them treated three or four times—with such abundance of existing works, I say, it can well be imagined that by degrees subjects were exhausted, and that any poet who followed the three great ones would be puzzled how to proceed.

“For what purpose should he write? Was there not enough for a time? And were not the productions of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, of that kind and of that depth that they might be heard again and again without being esteemed trite or put aside? Even the few noble fragments that have come down to us are so comprehensive and of such deep significance, that we poor Europeans have already busied ourselves with them for centuries and shall find nutriment and work in them for centuries still.”

Thursday, May 12, 1825.

Goethe spoke with much enthusiasm of Menander. “I know nobody, after Sophocles,” said he, “whom I love so well. He is thoroughly pure, noble, great, and cheerful; and his grace is beyond rivalry. It is certainly to be lamented that we possess so little of him; but that little is invaluable and highly instructive to gifted men.

“The great point is, that he from whom we would learn should be congenial to our nature. Now, Calderon, for instance, great as he is, and much as I admire him, has exerted no influence over me for good or for ill. But he would have been dangerous to Schiller—he would have led him astray; and hence it is fortunate that Calderon was not generally known in Germany till after Schiller’s death. Calderon is infinitely great in the technical and theatrical—Schiller, on the contrary, far more sound, earnest, and great, in his intention; and it would have been a pity if he had lost any of these virtues without after all attaining the greatness of Calderon in other respects.

“Molière,” said Goethe, “is so great that he astonishes anew every time he is read. He is a man by himself—his pieces border on tragedy; they are apprehensive; and nobody has the courage to imitate them. His *Miser*, where the vice destroys all the natural piety between father and son, is especially great, and in a high sense tragic. But when, in a German paraphrase, the son is changed into a relation, the whole is weakened and loses its significance. They feared to show the vice in its true nature as he did; but what is tragic there, or indeed anywhere, except what is intolerable?”

“I read some pieces of Molière’s every year—just as, from time to time, I contemplate the engravings after the great Italian masters. For we little men are not able to retain the greatness of such things within ourselves; we must therefore return to them from time to time, and renew our impressions.

“People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and this goes on to the end. What can we call our own except energy, strength, and will? If I could give an account of all that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in my favour.

“However, the time of life in which we are subjected to a new and important personal influence is by no means a matter of indifference. That Lessing, Winckelmann, and Kant were older than I, and that the first two acted upon my youth, the last on my advanced age—this circumstance was for me very important. Again, that Schiller was so much younger than I, and engaged in his freshest strivings just as I began to be weary of the world—just, too, as the brothers von Humboldt and Schlegel were beginning their career under my eye—was of the greatest importance. I derived from it unspeakable advantages.”

After these remarks respecting the influence important persons had had upon him, the conversation turned on the influence he had exerted over others; and I mentioned Bürger, whose case appeared to me problematical, since his purely natural tendency showed no trace of influence on the part of Goethe.

“Bürger,” said Goethe, “had an affinity to me as a talent; but the tree of his moral culture had its root in a wholly different soil, and took a wholly different direction. Each man proceeds as he has begun, in the ascending line of his culture. A man who in his thirtieth year could write such a poem as *Frau Schnips*, had obviously taken a path that deviated a little from mine. He had also, by his really great talents, won for himself a public which he perfectly satisfied; and he had no need for troubling himself about a contemporary who did not affect him at all.

“Everywhere, we learn only from those whom we love. There is a favourable disposition towards me in the young talents now growing up, but I very rarely found it among my contemporaries. Nay, I can scarcely name one man of any weight who was perfectly satisfied with me. Even with *Werther* people found so much fault that, if I had erased every passage that was censured, scarcely a line of the whole book would have been left. However, all the censure did me no harm; for these subjective judgments of individuals, important as they may

be, are at least rectified by the masses. He who does not expect a million readers should not write a line.

“For twenty years the public has been disputing which is the greater, Schiller or I; and it ought to be glad that it has got a couple of fellows about whom it *can* dispute.”

(Sup.) Monday, June 5, 1825.¹

Goethe related to me that Preller had been with him, and had taken leave, as he is going to spend some years in Italy.

“As a parting word,” said Goethe, “I counselled him not to allow himself to be distracted, but to confine himself particularly to Poussin and Claude Lorraine, and above all to study the works of these two great men—that he might plainly see how they regarded Nature, and used her for the expression of their artistic views and feelings.

“Preller is an important talent, and I have no fear for him. He appears to me, besides, to be very earnest. I am almost certain he will rather incline to Poussin than to Claude Lorraine; still, I have particularly recommended him to study the latter—and not without reason; for it is with the cultivation of an artist as with the cultivation of every other talent. Our strong points, to a certain extent, develop themselves; but those germs of our nature which are not in daily exercise, and are therefore less powerful, need particular care, in order that they also may become strong. So may a young singer, as I have often said, possess certain natural tones that leave nothing to be desired; while other tones in his voice may be found less strong, clear, and full. But even these he must by constant exercise seek to bring to equal perfection.

“I am certain Preller will one day succeed admirably in the solemn, the grand, and perhaps also the wild. Whether he will be equally happy in the cheerful, the graceful, and the lovely, is another question; therefore have I especially recommended to him Claude Lorraine, that by study he may acquire what does not lie in the actual tendency of his nature.

“There is one thing more to which I called his attention. I have seen many of his studies from nature: they were excellent, and executed with great energy and life; but they were all isolated objects, of which little can afterwards be made when it comes to individual inventions. I have advised him never in future to delineate an isolated object—such as single trees,

¹ In the original this is dated 1826, but from its position in the volume it may be conjectured that this is a misprint.—J. O.

single heaps of stones, or single cottages—but always to add a background and some surrounding objects.

“And for the following reasons. In nature we never see anything isolated; everything is in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it, and over it. A single object may strike us as particularly picturesque: it is not, however, the object alone which produces this effect; it is the connection in which we see it, with that which is beside, behind, and above it—all of which contribute to that effect. Thus during a walk I may see an oak, the picturesque effect of which surprises me. But if I represent it alone, it will perhaps no longer appear as it did, for want of that which contributed to and enhanced the picturesque effect in nature. Thus, too, a wood may appear beautiful through the influence of one particular sky, one particular light, and one particular situation of the sun; but, if I omit all these in my drawing, it will perhaps appear without force, and as something indifferent.

“Further; there is in nature nothing beautiful which is not produced (*motivirt*) as *true*, in conformity with the laws of nature. In order that that truth of nature may also appear true in the picture, it must be accounted for by the introduction of the influential circumstances.

“I find by a brook well-formed stones, the parts of which exposed to the air are picturesquely covered with green moss. Now it is not alone moisture which has caused this formation; but perhaps also a northerly aspect, or the shade of trees and bushes, have co-operated. If I omit these influential causes in my picture, it will be without truth, and without the proper convincing power.

“Thus, the situation of a tree, the kind of soil beneath it, and other trees behind and beside it, have a great influence on its formation. An oak standing exposed to the wind on the western summit of a rocky hill will acquire a form quite different from that of one growing in the moist ground of a sheltered valley. Both may be beautiful in their kind; but they will have a very different character, and can therefore, in an artistically conceived landscape, only be used for such a situation as they occupied in nature. So the delineation of surrounding objects, by which any particular situation is expressed, is of high importance to the artist. On the other hand, it would be foolish to attempt to represent prosaic accidents that have had as little influence upon the form of the principal objects as upon its picturesque effect for the moment.

“I have imparted the substance of all these little hints to Preller, and I am certain that they will take root and thrive in him—as a born genius.”

Saturday, June 11, 1825.

To-day Goethe talked much at dinner about Major Parry's book on Lord Byron. He gave it unqualified praise; remarking that Lord Byron in this account appeared a far more complete character, and far more clear as to himself and his views, than in anything else written about him.

“Major Parry,” continued Goethe, “must be an elevated—a noble person; so fully to have conceived, and so perfectly to have described his friend. One passage in his book has pleased me particularly; it is worthy of an old Greek—of a Plutarch. ‘The noble lord,’ says Parry, ‘was destitute of all those virtues which adorn the bourgeois class, and which he was prevented from attaining by his birth, education, and mode of life. Now all his unfavourable judges are from the middle class; and these censoriously pity him, because they miss in him that which they have reason to prize in themselves. The good folks do not reflect that for his own high station he possessed virtues of which they can form no conception.’ How do you like that?” said Goethe: “we do not hear so good a thing every day.”

“I am glad,” said I, “to see publicly expressed an opinion by which all the puny censors and detractors of a man higher than themselves must be at once disabled and overthrown.”

We then discussed subjects of universal history in relation to poetry, and how far the history of one nation may be more favourable to the poet than that of another.

“The poet,” said Goethe, “should seize the Particular; and he should, if there be anything sound in it, thus represent the Universal. English history is excellent for poetry; because it is something genuine, healthy, and therefore universal, which repeats itself over and over again. French history, on the contrary, is not for poetry; as it represents an era that cannot come again. The literature of the French, so far as it is founded on that era, stands as something of merely particular interest, which must grow old with time.

“The present era of French literature,” said Goethe afterwards, “cannot be judged fairly. The German influence causes a great fermentation there, and we probably shall not know the result for twenty years.”

We then talked of the æsthetic writers, who labour to express the nature of poetry and the poet in abstract definitions, without arriving at any clear result.

“What need of much definition?” said Goethe. “Lively feeling of situations, and power to express them, make the poet.”

Wednesday, October 12, 1825.

I found Goethe in a very elevated mood this evening. We talked about the state of the newest literature, when Goethe expressed himself as follows:

“Deficiency of character in individual investigators and writers is the source of all the evils of our newest literature.

“In criticism especially, this defect produces mischief to the world; for it either diffuses the false instead of the true, or by a pitiful truth deprives us of something great that would be better.

“Till lately, the world believed in the heroism of a Lucretia—of a Mucius Scævola—and suffered itself by this belief to be warmed and inspired. But now comes your historical criticism, and says that those persons never lived, but are to be regarded as fables and fictions divined by the great mind of the Romans. What are we to do with so pitiful a truth? If the Romans were great enough to invent such stories, we should at least be great enough to believe them.

“Till lately, I was always pleased with a great fact in the thirteenth century, when the Emperor Frederick the Second was at variance with the Pope, and the north of Germany was open to all sorts of hostile attacks. Asiatic hordes had actually penetrated as far as Silesia, when the Duke of Liegnitz terrified them by one great defeat. They then turned to Moravia, but were there defeated by Count Sternberg. These valiant men had on this account been living in my heart as the great saviours of the German nation. But now comes historical criticism, and says that these heroes sacrificed themselves quite uselessly, as the Asiatic army was already recalled and would have returned of its own accord. Thus is a great national fact crippled and destroyed, which seems to me most abominable.”¹

Goethe spoke of another class of seekers and literary men.

“I could never,” said he, “have known so well how paltry men are, and how little they care for really high aims, if I had not tested them by my scientific researches. Thus I saw that

¹ It would be interesting to know whether some humour of Goethe was here (and elsewhere) lost upon the more solemn Eckermann.

most men only care for science so far as they get a living by it, and that they worship even error when it affords them a subsistence.

“In *belles lettres* it is no better. There, too, high aims, and genuine love for the true and sound and for their diffusion, are very rare phenomena. One man cherishes and tolerates another, because he is by him cherished and tolerated in return. True greatness is hateful to them; they would fain drive it from the world, so that only such as they might be of importance in it. Such are the masses; and the prominent individuals are no better.

“——’s great talents and world-embracing learning might have done much for his country. But his want of character has deprived the world of such great results, and himself of the esteem of the country.

“We want a man like Lessing. For how was he great, except in character—in firmness? There are many men as clever and as cultivated, but where is such character?

“Many are full of esprit and knowledge, but they are also full of vanity; and, that they may shine as wits before the short-sighted multitude, they have no shame or delicacy—nothing is sacred to them. Madame de Genlis was therefore perfectly right when she declaimed against the freedoms and profanities of Voltaire. Clever as they all may be, the world has derived no profit from them; they afford a foundation for nothing. Nay, they have been of the greatest injury; since they have confused men, and robbed them of their needful support.

“After all, what do we know, and how far can we go with all our wit? Man is born, not to solve the problems of the universe, but to find out where the problem applies, and then to restrain himself within the limits of the comprehensible. His faculties are not sufficient to measure the actions of the universe; and an attempt to explain the outer world by reason is, with his narrow view, vain. The reason of man and the reason of the Deity are two very different things.

“If we grant freedom to man, there is an end to the omniscience of God; for if the Divinity knows how I shall act, I must act so perforce. I give this merely as a sign how little we know, and to show that it is not good to meddle with divine mysteries.

“Moreover, we should only utter higher maxims so far as they can benefit the world. The rest we should keep within

ourselves, and they will diffuse over our actions a lustre like the mild radiance of a hidden sun."

Sunday, December 25, 1825.

I went to Goethe this evening at six. I found him alone, and passed with him some delightful hours.

"My mind," said he, "has of late been burdened. So much good has been flowing in to me on all sides, that the mere ceremony of returning thanks has prevented me from having any practical life. The privileges respecting the publication of my works have been gradually coming in from the different courts; and, as the position was different in each case, each required a different answer. Then came the proposals of innumerable booksellers, which also had to be considered, acted upon, and answered. Then my Jubilee has brought me such thousandfold attentions that I have not yet got through my letters of acknowledgment. I cannot be content with hollow generalities, but wish to say something appropriate to everyone. Now I am gradually becoming free, and feel again disposed for conversation.

"I have of late made an observation, which I will impart to you.

"Everything we do has a result. But that which is right and prudent does not always lead to good, nor the contrary to what is bad; frequently the reverse takes place. Some time since, I made a mistake in one of these transactions with booksellers, and was sorry that I had done so. But now circumstances have so altered, that, if I had not made that very mistake, I should have made a greater one. Such instances occur frequently in life; and hence we see men of the world, who know this, going to work with great freedom and boldness."

This remark was new to me. I then turned the conversation to some of his works, and we came to the elegy *Alexis and Dora*.

"In this poem," said Goethe, "people have blamed the strong passionate conclusion, and would have liked the elegy to end gently and peacefully without that outbreak of jealousy; but I could not see that they were right. Jealousy is so manifestly an ingredient of the affair that the poem would be incomplete if it were not introduced. I myself knew a young man who, in the midst of his impassioned love for an easily-won maiden, cried out, 'But would she not act to another as she has acted to me?'"

I agreed; and then mentioned the peculiar situations in this elegy, where, with so few strokes and in so narrow a space, all

is so well delineated that we think we see the whole life and domestic environment of the persons engaged in the action. "What you have described," said I, "appears as true as if you had worked from actual experience."

"I am glad it seems so to you," said Goethe. "There are, however, few men who have imagination for the truth of reality; most prefer strange countries and circumstances, of which they know nothing, and by which their imagination may be cultivated wondrously."

"Then there are others who cling altogether to reality, and, as they wholly lack the poetic spirit, are too severe in their requirements. For instance, in this elegy, some would have had me give Alexis a servant to carry his bundle—never thinking that everything poetic and idyllic in the situation would thus have been destroyed."

From *Alexis and Dora*, the conversation then turned to *Wilhelm Meister*. "There are odd critics in this world," said Goethe; "they blamed me for letting the hero of this novel live so much in bad company. But by considering this so-called bad company as a vase, into which I could put everything I had to say about good society, I gained a poetical frame, and a varied one into the bargain. Had I, on the contrary, delineated good society by the so-called good society, nobody would have read the book."

"In the seeming trivialities of *Wilhelm Meister*, there is always something higher at bottom; and nothing is required but eyes and knowledge of the world, and power of comprehension, to perceive the great in the small. For those who are without such qualities, let it suffice to receive the picture of life as real life."

Goethe then showed me a very interesting English work, which illustrated all Shakespeare in copper plates. Each page embraced, in six small designs, one piece with some verses written beneath; so that the leading idea, and the most important situations of each work, were brought before the eyes. All these immortal tragedies and comedies thus passed before the mind like processions of masks.

"It is even terrifying," said Goethe, "to look through these little pictures. Thus are we first made to feel the infinite wealth and grandeur of Shakespeare. There is no *motif* in human life which he has not exhibited and expressed! And all with what ease and freedom!

"But we cannot talk about Shakespeare; everything is

inadequate. I have touched upon the subject in my *Wilhelm Meister*, but that is not saying much. He is not a theatrical poet; he never thought of the stage; it was far too narrow for his great mind; nay, the whole visible world was too narrow.

“He is even too rich and too powerful. A productive *nature*¹ ought not to read more than one of his dramas in a year, if it would not be wrecked entirely. I did well to get rid of him by writing *Goetz* and *Egmont*²; and Byron did well by not having too much respect and admiration for him, but going his own way. How many excellent Germans have been ruined by him and Calderon!

“Shakespeare gives us golden apples in silver dishes. We get, indeed, the silver dishes by studying his works; but, unfortunately, we have only potatoes to put into them.”

I laughed.

Goethe then read me a letter from Zelter, describing a representation of *Macbeth* at Berlin, where the music could not keep pace with the grand spirit and character of the piece—as Zelter set forth by various intimations. By Goethe’s reading, the letter gained its full effect, and he often paused to admire with me the point of some single passage.

“*Macbeth*,” said Goethe, “is Shakespeare’s best acting play, the one in which he shows most understanding with respect to the stage. But would you see his mind unfettered, read *Troilus and Cressida*, where he treats the materials of the *Iliad* in his own fashion.”

The conversation turned upon Byron—the disadvantage to which he appears when placed beside the innocent cheerfulness of Shakespeare, and the frequent and generally not unjust blame that he drew upon himself by his manifold works of negation.

“If Lord Byron,” said Goethe, “had had an opportunity of working off all the opposition in his character by a number of strong parliamentary speeches, he would have been much more pure as a poet. But, as he scarcely ever spoke in parliament, he kept within himself all his feelings against his nation; and to free himself from them he had no other means than poetry. I could call a great part of Byron’s works of negation ‘suppressed parliamentary speeches.’”

We then mentioned one of our most modern German poets,

¹ Vide p. 75, where a remark is made on the word *nature*, as applied to a person.—J. O.

² These plays were intended to be in the Shakespearian style; and Goethe means that by writing them he freed himself from Shakespeare, just as by writing *Werther* he freed himself from thoughts of suicide.—J. O.

who had lately gained a great name and whose negative tendency was likewise disapproved. "We cannot deny," said Goethe, "that he has many brilliant qualities, but he is wanting in—*love*. He loves his readers and his fellow-poets as little as he loves himself, and thus we may apply to him the maxim of the apostle—'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love (charity), I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.' I have lately read the poems of —, and cannot deny his great talent. But, as I said, he is deficient in *love*, and thus he will never produce the effect which he ought. He will be feared, and will be the idol of those who would like to be as negative as himself but have not his talent."

Sunday evening, January 29, 1826.

THE most celebrated German improvisatore, Dr. Wolff of Hamburg, has been here several days, and has already given public proof of his rare talent. On Friday evening he gave a brilliant display to a large audience, in the presence of the court of Weimar. The same evening he received from Goethe an invitation to come to him next day at noon.

I talked with him yesterday evening, after he had improvised before Goethe. He was much delighted, and declared that this hour would make an epoch in his life; for Goethe, by a few words, had opened to him a wholly new path, and, when he had found fault with him, had hit the right nail on the head.

This evening, when I was at Goethe's, the conversation turned immediately on Wolff. "Dr. Wolff is very happy," said I, "that your excellency has given him good counsel."

"I was perfectly frank with him," said Goethe; "and if my words have made an impression on him and incited him, that is a very good sign. He is a decided talent without doubt, but he has the general sickness of the present day—subjectivity—and of that I would fain heal him. I gave him a task to try him: 'Describe to me,' said I, 'your return to Hamburg.' He was ready at once, and began immediately to speak in melodious verses. I could not but admire him, yet I could not praise him. It was not a return to Hamburg that he described, but merely the emotions on the return of a son to his parents, relations, and friends; and his poem would have served just as well for a return to Merseburg or Jena, as for a return to Hamburg. Yet what a remarkable, peculiar city is Hamburg! and what a rich field was offered him for the most minute description, if he had known or ventured to take hold of the subject properly!"

I remarked that this subjective tendency was the fault of the public, which decidedly applauds all sentimentality.

"Perhaps so," said Goethe; "but the public is still more pleased if you give it something better. I am certain that, if somebody with Wolff's talent at improvisation could faithfully

describe the life of great cities—such as Rome, Naples, Vienna, Hamburg, or London—and that in such a lively manner that his hearers would believe they saw with their own eyes, everybody would be enchanted. If he breaks through to the objective, he is saved—the stuff is in him; for he is not without imagination. Only he must make up his mind at once, and strive to grasp it.”

“I fear,” said I, “that this will be harder than we imagine, since it demands entire regeneration of his mode of thought. Even if he succeed, he will at all events come to a momentary standstill with his production, and long practice will be required to make the objective a second nature.”

“The step, I grant, is very great,” said Goethe; “but he must take courage, and make his resolution at once. It is, in such matters, like the dread of water in bathing—we must jump in at once, and the element is ours.

“If a person learns to sing,” continued Goethe, “all the notes that are within his natural compass are easy to him, while those beyond the compass are at first extremely difficult. But, to be a vocalist, he must have them all at command. Just so with the poet—he deserves not the name while he only speaks out his few subjective feelings; but as soon as he can appropriate to himself, and express, the world, he is a poet. Then he is inexhaustible, and can be always new; while a subjective nature has soon talked out his little internal material, and is at last ruined by mannerism. People always talk of the study of the ancients; but what does that mean, except that it says, turn your attention to the real world, and try to express it—for that is what the ancients did.”

Goethe arose and walked to and fro, while I remained seated at the table as he likes to see me. He stood a moment at the stove; and then, like one who has reflected, came to me, and, with his finger on his lips, said:

“I will now tell you something you will often find confirmed in your experience. All eras in a state of decline and dissolution are subjective; on the other hand, all progressive eras have an objective tendency. Our present time is retrograde, for it is subjective: we see this not merely in poetry, but also in painting, and much besides. Every healthy effort, on the contrary, is directed from the inward to the outward world; as you see in all great eras, which were really in a state of progression and all of an objective nature.”

These remarks led to a most interesting conversation, in

which especial mention was made of the great period of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The conversation now turned upon the theatre, and the weak, sentimental, gloomy character of modern productions.

“Molière is my strength and consolation at present,” said I; “I have translated his *Avare*, and am now busy with his *Médecin malgré lui*. Molière is indeed a great, a genuine (*reiner*) man.”

“Yes,” said Goethe, “a genuine man; that is the proper term. There is nothing distorted about him. He ruled the manners of his day; while, on the contrary, our Iffland and Kotzebue allowed themselves to be ruled by theirs, and were limited and confined in them. Molière chastised men by drawing them just as they were.”

“I would give something,” said I, “to see his plays acted in all their purity! Yet such things are much too strong and natural for the public, so far as I am acquainted with it. Is not this over-refinement to be attributed to the so-called ideal literature of certain authors?”

“No,” said Goethe, “it has its source in society itself. What business have our young girls at the theatre? They do not belong to it—they belong to the convent, the theatre is only for men and women, who know something of human affairs. When Molière wrote, girls were in the convent, and he was not forced to think about them. But now we cannot get rid of these young girls; and pieces which are weak, and therefore *proper*, will continue to be produced. Be wise and stay away, as I do. I was really interested in the theatre only so long as I could have a practical influence upon it. It was my delight to bring the establishment to a high degree of perfection; and, when there was a performance, my interest was not so much in the pieces as in observing whether the actors played as they ought. The faults I wished to point out I sent in writing to the *Regisseur*, and I was sure they would be avoided on the next representation. Now that I can have no practical influence in the theatre, I feel no call to enter it; I should be forced to endure defects without being able to amend them, and that would not suit me. And with the reading of plays, it is no better. The young German poets are eternally sending me tragedies; but what am I to do with them? I have never read German plays except with the view of seeing whether I could stage them; in every other respect they were indifferent to me. What am I to do now with the pieces of these young people?”

I can gain nothing for myself by reading how things ought *not* to be done; and I cannot assist the young poets in a matter already finished. If, instead of their printed plays, they would send me the plan of a play, I could at least say, 'Do it,' or 'Leave it alone,' or 'Do it this way,' or 'Do it that'; and in this there might be some use.

"The whole mischief proceeds from this, that poetical culture is so widely diffused in Germany that nobody now ever makes a bad verse. The young poets who send me their works are not inferior to their predecessors; and, since they see these praised so highly, they cannot understand why they also are not praised. And yet we cannot encourage them, when talents of the sort exist by hundreds; we ought not to favour superfluities while so much that is useful remains to be done. Were there a single one who towered above all the rest, it would be well, for the world can only be served by the extraordinary."

Thursday, February 16, 1826.

I went at seven this evening to Goethe, whom I found alone in his room. I sat down by him at the table, and told him that yesterday I had seen at the inn the Duke of Wellington, who was passing through on his way to St. Petersburg. "Indeed!" said Goethe, with animation; "what was he like?—tell me all about him. Does he look like his portrait?"

"Yes," said I; "but better, with more of marked character. If you look at his face, all the portraits are naught. To see him once is never to forget him. His eyes are brown, and of the serenest brilliancy; his glance is felt; his mouth speaks, even when it is closed; he looks a man who has had many thoughts and has lived through the greatest deeds, who now can handle the world serenely and calmly, and whom nothing more can disturb. He seemed to me as hard and as tempered as a Damascus blade. By his appearance, he is far advanced in the fifties; upright, slim, not very tall or stout. I saw him getting into his carriage to depart. There was something uncommonly cordial in his salutation as he passed through the crowd; bowing slightly, he touched his hat with his finger." Goethe listened to my description with visible interest. "You have seen one hero more," said he; "that is something."

We then talked of Napoleon, and I lamented that I had never seen him.

"Certainly," said Goethe, "that also was worth the trouble. What a compendium of the world!" "Did he look like some-

thing?" asked I. "He *was* something," replied Goethe; "and he looked what he was—that was all."

I had brought with me for Goethe a very remarkable poem, of which I had spoken to him some evenings before—a poem of his own, written so long since that he had quite forgotten it. It was printed in the beginning of the year 1776, in *Die Sichtbaren* (The Visible), a periodical published at the time in Frankfort, and had been brought to Weimar by an old servant of Goethe's, through whom it had fallen into my hands. Undoubtedly it is the earliest known poem of Goethe's. The subject was the descent of Christ into Hell; and it was remarkable to observe the readiness of the young author with his religious images. The purpose of the poem might have suited Klopstock; but the execution was different; it was stronger, freer, and easier, and had greater energy and better arrangement. Extraordinary ardour recalled strong boisterous youth. Through a want of subject-matter, it constantly reverted to the same point, and it was too long.

I placed before Goethe the yellow worn-out paper, and as soon as he saw it he remembered his poem. "It is possible," said he, "that Fräulein von Klettenberg induced me to write it: the heading shows that it was written by desire, and I know not any other friend who could have desired such a subject. I was then in want of materials, and was rejoiced when I got anything that I could sing. Lately I came across a poem of that period which I wrote in English and in which I complained of the dearth of poetic subjects. We Germans are really ill off in that respect; our earliest history lies too much in obscurity, and the later is without general native interest, through the want of one ruling dynasty. Klopstock tried Arminius, but the subject lies too far off; nobody feels any connection with it or knows what to make of it, accordingly it has never been popular or produced any result. I made a happy hit with my *Goetz von Berlichingen*; that was at any rate bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, and something could be done with it.

"For *Werther* and *Faust* I was, on the contrary, obliged to draw upon my own bosom; what was handed down to me did not go far. I made devils and witches but once; I was glad when I had consumed my northern inheritance, and turned to the tables of the Greeks. Had I earlier known how many excellent things have been in existence for hundreds and thousands of years, I should not have written a line, but should have done something else."

Easter Day, March 26, 1826.

To-day, at dinner, Goethe was in one of his pleasantest moods. He had received something he highly valued, Lord Byron's manuscript of the dedication to his *Sardanapalus*. He showed it to us after dinner, at the same time teasing his daughter to give him back Byron's letter from Genoa. "You see, my dear child," said he, "I have now everything that relates to my connection with Byron; even this valuable paper comes to me to-day in a remarkable manner, and now nothing is wanting but that letter."

However, the amiable admirer of Byron would not restore the letter. "You gave it to me once, dear father," said she, "and I shall not give it back; and if you wish, as is fit, that like should be with like, you had better give me the precious paper of to-day, and I will keep them all together." This was still more repugnant to Goethe, and the playful contest lasted for some time.

After we had risen from table and the ladies had gone upstairs, I remained with Goethe alone. He brought from his work-room a red portfolio, took it to the window, and showed me its contents. "Look," said he, "here I have everything that relates to my connection with Lord Byron. Here is his letter from Leghorn; this is a copy of his dedication; this is my poem; and here is what I wrote for Medwin's *Conversations*; now, I only want the letter from Genoa, and she will not give it me."

Goethe then told me of a friendly request this day made to him from England with reference to Lord Byron, which had pleased him. His mind was just now full of Byron; and he said a thousand interesting things about him, his works, and his talents.

"The English," said he, among other things, "may think of Byron as they please; but this is certain, that they can show no poet who is to be compared to him. He is different from all the others, and for the most part greater."

Monday, May 15, 1826.

I talked with Goethe to-day about St.¹ Schütze, of whom he spoke very kindly. "When I was ill a few weeks since," said he, "I read his *Heitere Stunden* (Cheerful Hours) with great pleasure. If Schütze had lived in England, he would have

¹ i.e. Stephan (not "Saint").

made an epoch; for, with his gift of observing and depicting, nothing was wanting but the sight of life on a large scale."

Thursday, June 1, 1826.

Goethe spoke of the *Globe*.¹ "The contributors," said he, "are men of the world: cheerful, clear in their views, bold to the last degree. In their censure they are polished and *galant*; whereas our German *literati* always think they must hate those who do not think like themselves. I consider the *Globe* one of our most interesting periodicals, and could not do without it."

Wednesday, July 26, 1826.

This evening I had the pleasure of hearing Goethe say a great deal about the theatre.

I told him that one of my friends intended to arrange Lord Byron's *Two Foscari* for the stage. Goethe doubted his success.

"It is indeed a temptation," he said. "When a piece makes a deep impression on us in reading, we think it will do the same upon the stage, and that we could obtain such a result with little trouble. But this is by no means so. A piece that is not originally, by the intent and skill of the poet, written for the boards, will not succeed; but, whatever is done to it, will always remain something unmanageable. What trouble have I taken with my *Goetz von Berlichingen*! yet it will not go right as an acting play, but is too long; and I have been forced to divide it into two parts, of which the last is indeed theatrically effective, while the first is to be looked upon as a mere introduction. If the first part were given only once as an introduction, and then the second repeatedly, it might succeed. It is the same with *Wallenstein: The Piccolomini* does not bear repetition; but *Wallenstein's Death* is always seen with delight."

I asked how a piece must be constructed so as to be fit for the theatre.

"It must be symbolical," replied Goethe; "that is to say, each incident must be significant in itself, and lead to another still more important. The *Tartuffe* of Molière is, in this respect, a great example. Only think what an introduction is the first scene! From the very beginning everything is highly significant, and leads us to expect something still more important. The beginning of Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* is also admirable;

¹ The celebrated French paper.—J. O.

but that of the *Tartuffe* comes only once into the world: it is the greatest and best thing that exists of the kind."

We then came to the pieces of Calderon.

"In Calderon," said Goethe, "you find the same perfect adaptation to the theatre. His pieces are throughout fit for the boards; there is not a touch in them not directed towards the required effect. Calderon is a genius who had also the finest understanding."

"It is singular," said I, "that the dramas of Shakespeare are not theatrical pieces, properly so called, since he wrote them all for his theatre."

"Shakespeare," replied Goethe, "wrote those pieces direct from his own nature. Then, too, his times, and the existing arrangements of the stage, made no demands upon him; people were forced to put up with whatever he gave them. But if Shakespeare had written for the court of Madrid, or for the theatre of Louis XIV, he would probably have adapted himself to a severer theatrical form. This, however, is by no means to be regretted; for what Shakespeare has lost as a theatrical poet he has gained as a poet in general. Shakespeare is a great psychologist, and we learn from his pieces the secrets of human nature."¹

We then talked of the difficulties in managing a theatre.

"The knotty point," said Goethe, "is so to deal with contingencies that we are not tempted to deviate from our higher maxims. Among the higher maxims is this: to keep a good repertoire of excellent tragedies, operas, and comedies, which may be regarded as permanent. Among contingencies, I reckon a new piece about which the public is anxious, a 'starring' character (*Gastrolle*), and so forth. We must not be led astray by things of this kind, but always return to our repertoire. Our time is so rich in really good pieces that nothing is easier to a connoisseur than to form a good repertoire; but nothing is more difficult than to maintain one.

"When Schiller and I superintended the theatre, we had the great advantage of playing through the summer at Lauchstedt. There we had a select audience, who would have nothing but what was excellent; so we always returned to Weimar thoroughly practised in the best plays, and could repeat all our summer performances in the winter. Besides, the Weimar

¹ "Wie den Menschen zu Muthe ist." The above is only an approximation.—J. O.

public had confidence in our management; and, even in things they could not appreciate, they were convinced that we acted best.

“When the nineties began,” continued Goethe, “the proper period of my interest in the theatre was already past; I wrote nothing for the stage, but wished to devote myself to epic poetry. Schiller revived my extinct interest; and, for the sake of his works, I again took part in the theatre. At the time of my *Clavigo*, I could easily have written a dozen theatrical pieces. I had no want of subjects, and production was easy to me. I might have written a piece every week, and I am sorry I did not.”

Wednesday, November 8, 1826.

To-day, Goethe spoke again of Lord Byron with admiration. “I have,” said he, “read once more his *Deformed Transformed*, and to me his talent appears greater than ever. His devil was suggested by my Mephistopheles; but it is no imitation—it is thoroughly new and original; close, genuine, and spirited. There are no weak passages—not a place where you could put the head of a pin, where you do not find invention and thought. Were it not for his hypochondriacal negative turn, he would be as great as Shakespeare and the ancients.” I expressed surprise.

“Yes,” said Goethe, “you may believe me. I have studied him anew, and am confirmed in this opinion.”

In conversation some time ago, Goethe had remarked that Byron had too much *empeiria*.¹ I did not well understand what he meant; but I forbore to ask, and thought of the matter in silence. However, I got nothing by reflection, and found that I must wait till my improved culture or some happy circumstance should unlock the secret. Such a one occurred when an excellent representation of *Macbeth* at the theatre produced a strong effect upon me, and the next day I took up Byron's works to read his *Beppo*. Now, I felt I could not relish this poem after *Macbeth*; and the more I read, the more I became enlightened as to Goethe's meaning.

In *Macbeth*, I had been impressed by a spirit whose grandeur, power, and sublimity could have proceeded from none but Shakespeare. There was the innate quality of a high and deep nature, which raises its possessor above all mankind, and makes him a great poet. Whatever has been given to this

¹ The import of this Greek word for “experience,” and its cognate word “empiric,” has nothing in common with the notion of “quackery.” The general meaning is, that Byron is too *worldly*.—J. O.

piece by knowledge of the world or experience was subordinate to the poetic spirit and served only to make this speak out and predominate. The great poet ruled us and lifted us up to his own point of view.

While reading *Beppo*, on the contrary, I felt the predominance of a nefarious empirical world, with which the mind that introduced it to us had in a certain measure associated itself. I no more found the great and pure thoughts of a highly-gifted poet: by frequent intercourse with the world, the poet's mode of thought seemed to have acquired the same stamp. He seemed to be on the same level with all intellectual men of the world of the higher class; being only distinguished from them by his great talent for representation, so that he might be regarded as their mouthpiece.

So I felt, in reading *Beppo*, that Lord Byron had too much *empeiria*; not because he brought too much real life before us, but because his higher poetic nature seemed to be silent, or even expelled by an empiric mode of thought.

Wednesday, November 29, 1826.

I had now also read Lord Byron's *Deformed Transformed*, and talked with Goethe about it after dinner.

"Am I not right?" said he; "the first scenes are great—poetically great. The remainder, when the subject wanders to the siege of Rome, I will not call poetical, but it must be averred that it is very clever."

"To the highest degree," said I; "but there is no art in being clever when nothing is respected."

Goethe laughed. "You are not quite wrong," said he. "We must, indeed, confess that the poet says more than ought to be said. He tells us the truth; but it is disagreeable, and we should like him better if he held his peace. There are things in the world which the poet should rather conceal than disclose; but this openness lies in Byron's character, and you would annihilate him if you made him other than he is."

"Yes," said I, "he is in the highest degree clever. How excellent, for instance, is this passage!—

The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deemed;
He hath an ignorant audience."

"That is as good and as free as one of my Mephistopheles' sayings."

"Since we are talking of Mephistopheles," continued Goethe,

“I will show you something Coudray has brought me from Paris. What do you think of it?”

He laid before me a lithograph, representing the scene where Faust and Mephistopheles, on their way to free Margaret from prison, are rushing by the gallows at night on two horses. Faust rides a black horse; which gallops with all its might, and seems, like its rider, afraid of the spectres under the gallows. They ride so fast that Faust can scarcely keep his seat; the wind has blown off his cap, which, fastened by straps about his neck, flies far behind him. He has turned his fearful inquiring face to Mephistopheles, to whom he listens. Mephistopheles, on the contrary, sits undisturbed, like a being of a higher order: he rides no living horse, for he loves not what is living; indeed, he does not need it, for his will moves him with the swiftness he requires. He has a horse merely because he must look as if he were riding, and it has been quite enough for him to take a beast that is a mere bag of bones, from the first field he came to. It is of a bright colour, and seems to be phosphorescent in the darkness of night. It is neither bridled nor saddled. The supernatural rider sits easily and negligently, with his face turned towards Faust in conversation. The opposing element of air does not exist for him; neither he nor his horse feels anything of it. Not a hair of either is stirred.

We expressed much pleasure at this ingenious composition. “I confess,” said Goethe, “I myself did not think it out so perfectly. Here is another. What say you to this?”

I saw a representation of the wild drinking scene in Auerbach’s cellar, at the all-important moment when the wine sparkles up into flames and the brutality of the drinkers is shown in the most varied ways. All is passion and movement; Mephistopheles alone maintains his usual composure. The wild cursing and screaming, and the drawn knife of the man who stands next him, are to him nothing. He has seated himself on a corner of the table, dangling his legs. His upraised finger is enough to subdue flame and passion.

The longer this excellent design was looked at, the greater seemed the intelligence of the artist; who made no figure like another, but in each one expressed some different part of the action.

“M. Delacroix,” said Goethe, “is a man of great talent, who found in *Faust* his proper aliment. The French censure his wildness, but it suits him well here. He will, I hope, go through

all *Faust*, and I anticipate a special pleasure from the witches' kitchen and the scenes on the Brocken. We can see he has a good knowledge of life, for which a city like Paris has given him the best opportunity."

I observed that these designs greatly conduce to the comprehension of a poem.

"Undoubtedly," said Goethe; "for the more perfect imagination of such an artist constrains us to think the situations as beautiful as he conceived them himself. And if I must confess that M. Delacroix has in some scenes surpassed my own notions, how much more will the reader find all in full life and surpassing his imagination!"

Monday, December 11, 1826.

I found Goethe in a very happy mood. "Alexander von Humboldt has been some hours with me this morning," said he. "What a man he is! Long as I have known him, he ever surprises me anew. He has not his equal in knowledge and living wisdom. He has a many-sidedness such as I have found nowhere else. On whatever point you approach him, he is at home, and lavishes upon us his intellectual treasures. He is like a fountain with many pipes, under which you need only hold a vessel; refreshing and inexhaustible streams are ever flowing. He will stay here some days; and I already feel that it will be with me as if I had lived for years."

Wednesday, December 13, 1826.

At table, the ladies praised a portrait by a young painter. "What is most surprising," they added, "he has learned everything by himself." This could be seen particularly in the hands, which were not correctly and artistically drawn. "We see," said Goethe, "that the young man has talent; however, you should not praise, but rather blame him, for learning everything by himself. A man of talent is not born to be left to himself, but to devote himself to art and good masters who will make something of him. I have lately read a letter from Mozart, in reply to a baron who had sent him his composition: he writes somewhat in this fashion:

"'You dilettanti must be blamed for two faults, since two you generally have: either you have no thoughts of your own, and take those of others; or, if you have thoughts of your own, you do not know what to do with them.'

“Is not this capital? and does not this fine remark, which Mozart makes about music, apply to all other arts?”

Goethe continued: “Leonardo da Vinci says, ‘If your son has not sense enough to bring out what he draws by a bold shadowing, so that we can grasp it with our hands, he has no talent.’ And further, ‘If your son is a perfect master of perspective and anatomy, send him to a good master.’

“And now,” said Goethe, “our young artists scarcely understand either when they leave their masters. So much have times altered.

“Our young painters,” continued Goethe, “lack heart and intellect. Their inventions express nothing and effect nothing: they paint swords that do not cut, and arrows that do not hit; and I often think, in spite of myself, that all intellect has vanished from the world.”

“And yet,” I replied, “we should naturally think that the great military events of latter years would have stirred the intellect.”

“They have stirred the will more than the intellect,” said Goethe, “and the poetical intellect more than the artistic; while all naïveté and sensuousness are lost. Without these two great requisites, how can a painter produce anything in which we can take any pleasure?”

I said I had lately, in his *Italian Travels*, read of a picture by Correggio, which represents a “weaning,” and in which the Infant Christ in Mary’s lap is in doubt between his mother’s breast and a pear held before him, and does not know which of the two to choose.

“Aye,” said Goethe, “there is a little picture for you! There are mind, naïveté, sensuousness, all together. The sacred subject is endowed with a universally human interest, and stands as a symbol for a period of life we must all pass through. Such a picture is immortal, because it grasps backwards at the earliest times of humanity, and forwards at the latest. On the contrary, if Christ were painted suffering the little children to come unto him, it would be a picture that expressed nothing—at any rate, nothing of importance.

“For above fifty years,” continued Goethe, “I have watched German painting—not merely watched it, but endeavoured to exert some influence on it; and now I can say that, as the matter now stands, little is to be expected. Some great talent must come, which will at once appropriate all that is good in the period, and thus surpass everyone. The means are at hand, and the way is pointed out. We have now the works

of Phidias before our eyes, whereas in our youth nothing of the sort was to be thought of. Nothing is wanting but a great talent, and this I hope will come; perhaps it is already in its cradle, and you will live to see its brilliancy."

Wednesday, December 20, 1826.

I told Goethe after dinner, that I had made a discovery which afforded me much pleasure: I had observed in a burning taper that the lower transparent part of the flame exhibits a phenomenon analogous to that of the blue sky, since in both we see darkness through a lighted but dense medium.

I asked Goethe whether he knew this phenomenon of the taper, and had mentioned it in his *Theory of Colours*.

"Certainly," said he. He then took down a volume of the *Theory of Colours*, and read me paragraphs in which were described all that I had seen. "I am glad," said he, "that you have been struck with this phenomenon, without learning it from my *Theory*; for you have now comprehended it, and may say that you possess it. Moreover, you have thus gained a point of view from which you can proceed to the other phenomena. I will show you a new one now."

It was about four o'clock: the sky was clouded over, and twilight was beginning. Goethe lighted a candle, and went with it to a table near the window. He then set it on a white sheet of paper, and placed a small stick so that the light of the candle threw a shadow from the stick towards the daylight. "Now," said Goethe, "what do you say of this shadow?" "The shadow is blue," replied I. "There you get your blue again," said Goethe. "But what do you see on the other side of the stick towards the taper?" "Another shadow." "But of what colour?" "The shadow is a reddish yellow," I replied; "but whence proceeds this double phenomenon?" "There is a point for you!" said Goethe: "see if you can work it out. There is a solution, but it is difficult. Do not look at my *Theory of Colours* until you have given up all hopes of finding it out yourself." I made this promise willingly.

"The phenomenon of the lower part of the taper," said Goethe, "where a transparent flame stands before darkness and produces a blue colour, I will now show you on a larger scale." He took a spoon and poured into it some spirit, which he set on fire. A transparent flame was again produced; through this the darkness appeared blue. If I held the burning spirit against the darkness, the blue increased in intensity;

but if I held it against the light, the blue became fainter or vanished altogether.

I was delighted with this phenomenon. "Yes," said Goethe, "this is the grandeur of Nature, that she is so simple, and that she always repeats her greatest phenomena on a small scale. The law by which the sky is blue may likewise be observed in the lower part of a burning taper, in burning spirits, and also in the bright smoke that rises from a village with dark mountains in the background."

"But how do the disciples of Newton explain this extremely simple phenomenon?" "That you must not know," answered Goethe. "Their explanation is too stupid, and a good head-piece is incredibly damaged when it meddles with stupidities. Do not trouble yourself about the Newtonians; but be satisfied with the pure doctrine, and you will find it quite enough for you."

"An occupation with that which is wrong," said I, "is perhaps in this case as unpleasant and as injurious as taking up a bad tragedy to illustrate it in all its parts and to expose it in its nudity."

"The case is precisely the same," said Goethe, "and we should not meddle with anything of the sort without actual necessity. I receive mathematics as the most sublime and useful science, so long as they are applied in their proper place; but I cannot commend the misuse of them in matters which do not belong to their sphere, and in which, noble science as they are, they seem to be mere nonsense. As if, forsooth! things only exist when they can be mathematically demonstrated. It would be foolish for a man not to believe in his mistress's love because she could not prove it to him mathematically. She can mathematically prove her dowry, but not her love. The mathematicians did not find out the metamorphosis of plants. I have achieved this discovery without mathematics, and the mathematicians were forced to put up with it. To understand the phenomena of colour, nothing is required but unbiassed observation and a sound head; but these are scarcer than folks imagine."

"How do the French and English of the present day stand with respect to the theory of colour?" asked I. "Each of the two nations," replied Goethe, "has its advantages and disadvantages. With the English, it is a good quality, that they make everything practical, but they are pedants. The French have good brains; but with them everything must be positive, and if it is not so they make it so. However, with respect to