were no less surprised when, in the course of further intercourse, he told us that all the contributors to the *Globe*, whose wisdom, moderation, and high degree of cultivation, we had often admired, were only young people like himself.

"I can well comprehend," said I, "that a person may be young and may still produce something of importance—like Mérimée, for instance, who wrote excellent pieces in his twentieth year; but that anyone at so early an age should have at his command such a comprehensive view, and such deep insight, as to attain such mature judgment as the gentlemen of the *Globe*, is to me something entirely new."

"To you, in your Heath,"[1] returned Goethe, "it has not been so easy; and we others also, in Central Germany, have been forced to buy our little wisdom dearly enough. Then we all lead a very isolated miserable sort of life! From the people, properly so called, we derive very little culture. Our talents and men of brains are scattered over the whole of Germany. One is in Vienna, another in Berlin, another in Königsberg, another in Bonn or Düsseldorf—all about a hundred miles apart from each other, so that personal contact and personal exchange of thought may be considered rarities. I feel what this must be, when such men as Alexander von Humboldt come here, and in one single day lead me nearer to what I am seeking, and what I require to know, than I should have attained in years in my own solitary way.

"But now conceive a city like Paris, where the highest talents of a great kingdom are all assembled on one spot, and, by daily intercourse, strife, and emulation, mutually instruct and advance each other; where the best works, of both nature and art, from all the kingdoms of the earth, are open to daily inspection—conceive this metropolis of the world, I say, where every walk over a bridge or across a square recalls some mighty past, and where some historical event is connected with every corner of a street. In addition to all this, conceive not the Paris of a dull spiritless time, but the Paris of the nineteenth century, in which, during three generations, such men as Molière, Voltaire, Diderot, and the like, have kept up such a current of intellect as cannot be found twice on a single spot in the whole world; and you will comprehend that a man of talent like Ampère, who has grown up amid such abundance, can easily be something in his four-and-twentieth year."

[1] This doubtless refers to the Heath country in which Eckermann was born.—J. O.

"You said just now," said Goethe, "that you could well understand how anyone in his twentieth year could write pieces as good as those of Mérimée. I have nothing to oppose to this; and I am, on the whole, of your opinion that good productiveness is easier than good judgment in a young man. But in Germany, it is better not, when so young as Mérimée, to attempt anything so mature as his pieces of *Clara Gazul*. It is true, Schiller was very young when he wrote his *Robbers*, his *Love and Intrigue*, his *Fiesco*; but, to speak the truth, all three pieces are rather the utterances of an extraordinary talent than signs of mature cultivation in the author. This, however, is not Schiller's fault, but rather the result of the state of culture of his nation and the great difficulty we all experience in assisting ourselves on our solitary way.

"On the other hand, take up Béranger. He is the son of poor parents, the descendant of a poor tailor; at one time a poor printer's apprentice, then placed in some office with a small salary: he has never been to a classical school or university; and yet his songs are so full of mature cultivation, so full of wit and the most refined irony, and there is such artistic perfection and masterly handling of the language, that he is the admiration, not only of France, but of all civilized Europe.

"But imagine this same Béranger—instead of being born in Paris and brought up in this metropolis of the world—the son of a poor tailor in Jena or Weimar; let him commence his career, in an equally miserable manner, in such small places; and ask yourself what fruit would have been produced by this same tree grown in such a soil and in such an atmosphere.

"So I repeat: if a talent is to be speedily and happily developed, the great point is that a great deal of intellect and sound culture should be current in a nation.

"We admire the tragedies of the ancient Greeks. But, to take a correct view of the case, we ought rather to admire the period and the nation in which their production was possible than the individual authors; for, though these pieces differ a little from each other, and though one of these poets appears somewhat greater and more finished than another, still, taking all together, only one decided character runs through the whole: grandeur, fitness, soundness, human perfection, elevated wisdom, sublime thought, pure strong intuition, et cetera. But when we find all these qualities, not only in the dramatic works that have come down to us, but also in lyrical and epic works—in the philosophers, the orators, and the historians, and in an

equally high degree in the works of plastic art that have come down to us—we must feel convinced that such qualities did not merely belong to individuals, but were the current property of the nation and the whole period.

"Now, take up Burns. How is he great, except through the circumstance that all the songs of his predecessors lived in the mouth of the people—that they were, so to speak, sung at his cradle; that, as a boy, he grew up amongst them, and the high excellence of these models so pervaded him that he had therein a living basis on which he could proceed further? Again, why is he great, but from this: his own songs at once found susceptible ears amongst his compatriots; sung by reapers and sheaf-binders, they at once greeted him in the field; and his boon-companions sang them to welcome him at the ale-house? *That* surely was the way something could be done!

"On the other hand, what a pitiful figure is made by us Germans! Of our old songs—no less important than those of Scotland—how many lived among the people in the days of my youth? Herder and his successors first began to collect them and to rescue them from oblivion; then they were at least in print in the libraries. Then, later, what songs have not Bürger and Voss composed! Who can say they are more insignificant or less popular than those of the excellent Burns? but which of them so lives among us that it greets us from the mouth of the people?—they are written and printed, and they remain in the libraries, quite in accordance with the general fate of German poets. Of my own songs, how many live? Perhaps one or another of them may be sung by a pretty girl to the piano; but among the *people* they have no sound. With what sensations I remember when passages from Tasso were sung to me by Italian fishermen!

"We Germans are of yesterday. We have indeed been properly cultivated for a century; but a few centuries more must elapse before so much mind and elevated culture will become universal amongst our people that they will appreciate beauty like the Greeks, will be inspired by a beautiful song; before it will be said of them, 'it is long since they were barbarians.'"

(Sup.) Friday, May 4, 1827.

A grand dinner at Goethe's, in honour of Ampère and his friend Stapfer. The conversation was loud, cheerful, and varied. Ampère told Goethe a great deal about Mérimée,

Alfred de Vigny, and other talents of importance. A great deal also was said about Béranger, whose inimitable songs are daily in Goethe's thoughts. There was a discussion whether Béranger's cheerful amatory songs or his political ones merited preference; whereupon Goethe expressed his opinion that in general a purely poetical subject is as superior to a political one as the pure everlasting truth of nature is to party spirit.

"However," continued he, "Béranger has, in his political poems, shown himself the benefactor of his nation. After the invasion of the allies, the French found in him the best organ for their suppressed feelings. He directed their attention by various recollections to the glory of their arms under the Emperor; whose memory still lives in every cottage, and whose great qualities the poet loved without desiring a continuance of his despotic sway. Now, under the Bourbons, he does not seem too comfortable. They are, indeed, a degenerate race; and the Frenchman of the present day desires great qualities upon the throne, although he likes to take part in the government and put in his own word."

After dinner the company dispersed in the garden; and Goethe beckoned me to take a drive round the wood, on the road to Tiefurt.

While in the carriage he was very pleasant and affable. He was glad he had formed so pleasant an intimacy with Ampère; promising himself, as a result, the fairest consequences with respect to the acknowledgment and diffusion of German literature in France.

"Ampère," continued he, "stands so high in culture that the national prejudices, apprehensions, and narrow-mindedness of many of his countrymen lie far behind him; and in mind he is far more a citizen of the world than of Paris. But I see a time coming when there will be thousands in France who think like him."

(Sup.) Sunday, May 6, 1827.

A second dinner-party at Goethe's, to which the same people came as the day before yesterday. Much was said about *Helena* and *Tasso*. Goethe related to us that in the year 1797 he had formed the plan of treating the tradition concerning Tell as an epic poem in hexameters.

"In the same year," said he, "I visited the small cantons, and the lake of the four cantons; and this charming, magnificent, grand scenery made once more such an impression upon me,

that it induced me to represent in a poem the variety and richness of so incomparable a landscape. But, in order to throw more charm, interest, and life into my representation, I considered it good to people this highly-striking spot with equally striking human figures; for which purpose the tradition concerning Tell appeared to me admirably fitted.

"I saw Tell as a heroic man, possessed of native strength; but contented with himself, and in a state of childish unconsciousness. He traverses the canton as a carrier, and is everywhere known and beloved, everywhere ready with his assistance. He peacefully follows his calling, providing for his wife and child, and not troubling himself who is lord or who is serf.

"Gessler, on the contrary, I saw as a tyrant; but as one of the comfortable sort who occasionally do good when it suits them and occasionally harm when it suits them, and to whom the people with its weal and woe is as totally indifferent as if it did not exist.

"The higher and better qualities of human nature, on the contrary—the love of native soil; the feeling of freedom and security under the protection of the laws of the country; the feeling, moreover, of the disgrace of being subjugated, and occasionally ill-treated, by a foreign debauchee; and lastly, strength of mind matured to a determination to throw off so obnoxious a yoke—all these great and good qualities I had shared among the well-known noble-minded men: Walter Fürst, Stauffacher, Winkelried, and others; and these were my proper heroes, my higher powers, acting with consciousness—while Tell and Gessler, though occasionally brought into action, were, upon the whole, rather passive figures.

"I was quite full of this beautiful subject, and was already humming my hexameters. I saw the lake in the quiet moonlight, illuminated mists in the depth of the mountains. I then saw it in the light of the loveliest morning sun—a rejoicing and a life in wood and meadow. Then I described a storm—a thunderstorm, which swept from the hollows over the lake. Neither was there any lack of the stillness of night, nor of secret meetings approached by bridges.

"I related all this to Schiller, in whose soul my landscapes and my acting figures formed themselves into a drama. And as I had other things to do, and the execution of my design was deferred more and more, I gave up my subject entirely to Schiller, who thereupon wrote his admirable play."

We were pleased with this communication, which was interesting to us all. I remarked that it appeared to me as if the splendid description of sunrise in the first scene of the second act of *Faust* written in Terza Rima, were founded upon the recalled impressions of the lake of the four cantons.

"I will not deny," said Goethe, "that these contemplations proceed from that source; nay, without the fresh impressions of those wonderful scenes, I could never have conceived the subject of that Terza Rima. But that is all I have coined from the gold of my Tell-localities. The rest I left to Schiller; who, as we know, made the most beautiful use of it."

The conversation now turned upon *Tasso*, and the idea Goethe had endeavoured to represent by it.

"Idea!" said Goethe, "as if I knew anything about it. I had the life of Tasso, I had my own life; and whilst I brought together two odd figures with their peculiarities, there arose in my mind the image of Tasso; to which I opposed, as a prosaic contrast, that of Antonio, for whom also I did not lack models. The further particulars of court life and love affairs were at Weimar as they were in Ferrara; and I can truly say of my production, *it is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.*

"The Germans are, certainly, strange people. By their deep thoughts and ideas, which they seek in everything and fix upon everything, they make life much more burdensome than is necessary. Only have the courage to give yourself up to your impressions: allow yourself to be delighted, moved, elevated; nay, instructed and inspired for something great: but do not imagine all is vanity, if it is not abstract thought and idea.

"They come and ask what idea I meant to embody in my *Faust*; as if I knew myself, and could inform them. *From heaven, through the world, to hell,* would indeed be something; but this is no idea, only a course of action. And further: that the devil loses the wager, and that a man continually struggling from difficult errors towards something better, should be redeemed, is an effective—and, to many, a good enlightening—thought; but it is no idea at the foundation of the whole, and of every individual scene. It would have been a fine thing indeed if I had strung so rich, varied, and highly diversified a life as I have brought to view in *Faust* upon the slender string of one pervading idea.

"It was, in short," continued Goethe, "not in my line, as a poet, to strive to embody anything *abstract*. I received in my mind impressions, and those of a sensuous, animated, charming,

varied, hundredfold kind—just as a lively imagination presented them; and I had, as a poet, nothing more to do than to round off and elaborate artistically such views and impressions, and by means of a lively representation so to bring them forward that others might receive the same impression in hearing or reading my representation of them.

"If I still wished, as a poet, to represent any idea, I would do it in short poems, where a decided unity could prevail, and where a complete survey would be easy; as, for instance, in the Metamorphosis of Animals, that of the plants, the poem *Bequest* (Vermächtniss), and many others. The only production of greater extent in which I am conscious of having laboured to set forth a pervading idea is probably my *Wahlverwandtschaften.* This novel has thus become comprehensible to the understanding; but I will not say that it is therefore better. I am rather of the opinion, that the more incommensurable, and the more incomprehensible to the understanding, a poetic production is, so much the better it is."

(Sup.) Tuesday, May 15, 1827.

Herr von Holtey, from Paris, has been here for some time, and has been well received everywhere, on account of his person and talent. A very friendly intimacy has also been formed between him and Goethe and his family.

Goethe has for some days been drawn into his garden, where he is very happy with quiet activity. I called upon him there to-day, with Herr von Holtey and Count Schulenburg; the former of whom took his leave, in order to go to Berlin with Ampère.

Wednesday, June 20, 1827.

The family table was covered for five; the rooms were vacant and cool; which was very pleasant, considering the great heat. I went into the spacious room next the dining-hall, where are the worked carpet and the colossal bust of Juno.

After I had walked up and down alone for a short time, Goethe came in from his work-room, and seated himself by the window. "Take a chair too," said he; "we will talk a little before the others arrive. I am glad that you have become acquainted with Count Sternberg at my house; he has departed, and I am now once more in my wonted state of activity and repose."

"The present appearance and manner of the Count," said I,

"seemed to me remarkable, as well as his great attainments. Whatever the conversation turned on, he was always at home, and talked about everything with the greatest ease though with thoroughness and discretion."

"Yes," said Goethe, "he is a highly remarkable man, and his influence and connections in Germany are extensive. As a botanist, he is known throughout Europe by his *Flora Subterranea*, and he also stands high as a mineralogist. Do you know his history?"

"No," said I, "but I should like to hear something about him. I saw him as a count and a man of the world, and also a person profoundly versed in various branches of science. This is a riddle I should like to see solved."

Goethe told me the Count in his youth had been destined for the priesthood, and had commenced his studies at Rome; but afterwards, when Austria had withdrawn certain favours, he had gone to Naples. Goethe then proceeded, in the most profound and interesting manner, to set forth a remarkable life, which would have adorned the *Wanderjahre*, but which I do not feel I can repeat here. The conversation now turned upon the Bohemian schools, and their great advantages—especially for a thorough æsthetic culture.

Frau von Goethe, young Goethe, and Fräulein Ulrica, now came in; and we sat down to table. The conversation was gay and varied, the pietists of some cities in Northern Germany being a subject. It was remarked that these pietistical separations had destroyed the harmony of whole families.

I was able to give an instance of the kind, having nearly lost an excellent friend because he could not convert me to his opinions. He, as I stated, was thoroughly convinced that good works and one's own merits are of no avail, and that man can only win favour with the Deity by the grace of Christ.

"A female friend," observed Frau von Goethe, "said something of the sort to me; but even now I scarcely know what is meant by grace and what by good works."

"According to the present course of the world, in conversing on all such topics," said Goethe, "there is nothing but a medley; and perhaps none of you knows whence it comes. I will tell you. The doctrine of good works—namely, that man, by good actions, legacies, and beneficent institutions, can avoid the penalty of sin, and rise in the favour of God—is Catholic. But the reformers, out of opposition, rejected this doctrine, and declared in lieu of it that man must seek solely to recognize the

merits of Christ and become a partaker of his grace; which, indeed, leads to good works. But nowadays all this is mingled together, and nobody knows whence a thing comes."

I remarked, more in thought than openly, that difference of opinion in religious matters had always sown dissension among men, and made them enemies; nay, that the first murder had been caused by a difference in the mode of worshipping God. I said that I had lately been reading Byron's *Cain*, and had been particularly struck by the third act, and the manner in which the murder is brought about.

"It is indeed admirable," said Goethe. "Its beauty is such as we shall not see a second time in the world."

"*Cain*," said I, "was at first prohibited in England; but now everybody reads it, and young English travellers usually carry a complete Byron with them."

"It was folly," said Goethe; "for in fact there is nothing in the whole of *Cain* that is not taught by the English bishops themselves."

The Chancellor was announced. He came in and sat down with us at table. Goethe's grandchildren, Walter and Wolfgang, also came in, jumping one after the other. Wolf pressed close to the Chancellor.

"Bring your album," said Goethe, "and show the Chancellor your princess, and what Count Sternberg wrote for you."

Wolf sprang up and brought the book. The Chancellor looked at the portrait of the princess, with the verses annexed by Goethe. Turning over the leaves, he came to Zelter's inscription, and read aloud, *Lerne gehorchen* ("Learn to obey").

"Those are the only rational words in the whole book," said Goethe, laughing. "Indeed, Zelter is always majestic and to the point. I am now looking over his letters with Riemer; and they contain invaluable things. Those letters he has written me on his travels are especially of worth; for he has, as a sound architect and musician, the advantage that he can never want interesting subjects for criticism. As soon as he enters a city, the buildings stand before him, and tell him their merits and their faults.

"Then the musical societies receive him at once, and show themselves to the master with their virtues and their defects. If a shorthand writer could but have recorded his conversations with his musical scholars, we should possess something unique. In such matters is Zelter great and genial, and always hits the nail on the head."

Thursday, July 5, 1827.

Towards evening, I met Goethe in the park, returning from a ride. As he passed he beckoned to me to come and see him. I went immediately to his house, where I found Coudray. Goethe alighted, and we went up the steps with him. We sat down to the round table in the so-called Juno-room, and had not talked long before the Chancellor came in and joined us. The conversation turned on political subjects—Wellington's embassy to St. Petersburg and its probable consequences, Capo d'Istria, the delayed liberation of Greece, the restriction of the Turks to Constantinople, and the like.

We talked, too, of Napoleon's times; especially about the Duke d'Enghien, whose incautious revolutionary conduct was much discussed.

We then came to more pacific topics, and Wieland's tomb at Osmannstedt was a fruitful subject. Coudray told us he was engaged on an iron enclosure for the tomb. He gave us a clear notion of his intention, drawing the form of the iron railing.

When the Chancellor and Coudray departed, Goethe asked me to stay. "For one who, like me, lives through ages," said he, "it always seems odd when I hear about statues and monuments. I can never think of a statue erected in honour of a distinguished man without already seeing it cast down and trampled upon by future warriors. Already I see Coudray's iron railing about Wieland's grave forged into horseshoes, and shining under the feet of future cavalry; and I may even say that I have witnessed such a case at Frankfort. Wieland's grave is, besides, much too near the Ilm; the stream in less than a hundred years will have so worn the shore by its sudden turn, that it will have reached the body."

We had some good-humoured jests about the terrible inconstancy of earthly things, and then, returning to Coudray's drawing, were delighted with the delicate and strong strokes of the English pencils, which are so obedient to the draughtsman that the thought is conveyed immediately to the paper without the slightest loss. This led the conversation to drawing; and Goethe showed me a fine one by an Italian master, representing the boy Jesus in the temple with the doctors. He then showed me an engraving after the finished picture on this subject; and many remarks were made, all in favour of drawings.

"I have lately been so fortunate," said he, "as to buy, at a reasonable rate, many excellent drawings by celebrated masters.

Such drawings are invaluable—not only because they give, in its purity, the mental intention of the artist; but also because they bring immediately before us the mood of his mind at the moment of creation. In every stroke of this drawing of the boy Jesus in the temple, we perceive the great clearness and quiet serene resolution in the mind of the artist; and this beneficial mood is extended to us while we contemplate the work. The arts of painting and sculpture have, moreover, the great advantage that they are purely objective, and attract us without violently exciting our feelings. Such a work either speaks to us not at all, or speaks in a very decided manner. A poem, on the other hand, makes a far more vague impression—exciting in each hearer different emotions."

"I have," said I, "been lately reading Smollett's excellent novel of *Roderick Random*. It gave me almost the same impression as a good drawing. It is a direct representation of the subject, without a trace of a leaning towards the sentimental; actual life stands before us as it is—often repulsive and detestable enough, yet as a whole giving a pleasant impression on account of the decided reality."

"I have often heard the praises of *Roderick Random*, and believe what you say of it, but have never read it. Do you know Johnson's *Rasselas*? Just read it, and tell me what you think of it."

I promised to do so.

"In Lord Byron," said I, "I frequently find passages that merely bring objects before us, without affecting our feelings otherwise than the drawing of a good painter. *Don Juan* is especially rich in such passages."

"Yes," said Goethe, "here Lord Byron was great; his pictures have an air of reality, as lightly thrown off as if they were improvised. I know but little of *Don Juan*; but I remember passages from his other poems—especially sea scenes, with a sail peeping out here and there; which are quite invaluable, for they make us feel the sea-breeze blowing."

"In his *Don Juan*," said I, "I have particularly admired the representation of London, which his careless verses bring before our very eyes. He is not very scrupulous whether an object is poetical or not; he seizes and uses all just as they come before him, down to the wigs in the haircutter's window and the men who fill the street-lamps with oil."

"Our German æsthetical people," said Goethe, "are always talking about poetical and unpoetical objects; and in one

respect they are not quite wrong, yet at bottom no real object is unpoetical if the poet knows how to use it properly."

We then spoke of the *Two Foscari*, and I remarked that Byron drew excellent women.

"His women," said Goethe, "are good. Indeed, this is the only vase into which we moderns can pour our ideality; nothing can be done with the men. Homer has got all beforehand in Achilles and Ulysses, the bravest and the most prudent."

"There is something terrible in the *Foscari*," I continued, "on account of the frequent recurrence of the rack. It is hard to conceive how Lord Byron could dwell so long on this torturing subject, for the sake of the piece."

"That sort of thing," said Goethe, "was Byron's element: he was always a self-tormentor; hence such subjects were his darling theme, as you see in all his works—scarcely one has a cheerful subject. But the execution of the *Foscari* is worthy of great praise—is it not?"

"Admirable!" said I; "every word is strong, significant, and subservient to the aim; indeed, I have hitherto found no weak lines in Byron. I always fancy I see him issuing from the sea-waves, fresh, and full of creative power. The more I read him, the more I admire the greatness of his talent; and I think you were right to present him with that immortal monument of love in *Helena*."

"I could not," said Goethe, "make use of any man as the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is the greatest genius of our century. Again, Byron is neither antique nor romantic, but like the present day itself. This was the sort of man I required. Then he suited me on account of his unsatisfied nature and his warlike tendency, which led to his death at Missolonghi. A treatise upon Byron would be neither convenient nor advisable; but I shall not fail to pay him honour and to allude to him at proper times."

Goethe spoke further of *Helena*, now it had again become a subject of discourse. "I at first intended a very different close," said he. "I modified it in various ways, and once very well, but I will not tell you how. Then this conclusion with Lord Byron and Missolonghi was suggested to me by the events of the day, and I gave up all the rest. You have observed the character of the chorus is quite destroyed by the mourning song: until this time it has remained thoroughly antique, or has never belied its girlish nature; but here of a

sudden it becomes nobly reflecting, and says things such as it has never thought or could think."

"Certainly," said I, "I remarked it; but, since I have seen Rubens's landscape with the double shadow, and have got an insight into the idea of fiction, such things do not disturb me. These little inconsistencies are of no consequence, if by their means a higher degree of beauty is obtained.[1] The song had to be sung somehow or other; and, as there was no other chorus present, the girls were forced to sing it."

"I wonder," said Goethe, laughing, "what the German critics will say? Will they have freedom and boldness enough to get over this? Understanding will be in the way of the French; they will not consider that the imagination has its own laws, to which the understanding cannot and should not penetrate.

"If imagination did not originate things that must ever be problems to the understanding, there would be but little for the imagination to do. It is this which separates poetry from prose—in which understanding always is, and always should be, at home."

I now took leave, for it was ten o'clock. We had been sitting without candles; the clear summer evening shining from the north over the Ettersberg.

Monday evening, July 9, 1827.

I found Goethe alone, examining the plaster-casts from the Stosch cabinet. "My Berlin friends," said he, "have had the kindness to send me this whole collection to look at. I am already acquainted with most of these fine things; but now I see them in the instructive arrangement of Winckelmann. I use his description, and consult him in cases where I am doubtful."

We had not long talked before the Chancellor came in. He told us the news from the public papers: among other things, of a keeper of a menagerie, who, out of a longing for lion's flesh, had killed a lion, and dressed a large piece of him.

"I wonder," said Goethe, "he did not rather try an ape; that would have been a tender relishing morsel."

We talked of the ugliness of these beasts, remarking that they were the more unpleasant the more they were like men.

"I do not understand," said the Chancellor, "how princes can keep these animals near them and even take pleasure in them."

[1] Goethe had evidently succeeded in convincing Eckermann that the faults of genius are additional merits. The remark that follows the figure in the text is worthy of Mr. Puff in *The Critic*.

"Princes," said Goethe, "are so much tormented by disagreeable men that they regard these more disagreeable animals as a means of balancing the other unpleasant impressions. We common people naturally dislike apes and the screaming of parrots, because we see them in circumstances for which they were not made. If we could ride upon elephants among palm-trees, we should there find apes and parroquets quite in their place, perhaps pleasant. But, as I said, princes are right to drive away one repulsive thing with something still more repulsive.

"On this point," said he, "a scrap of verse occurs to me, which perhaps you do not remember:

> If men should ever beasts become,
> Bring only brutes into your room,
> And less disgust you'll surely feel:
> We all are Adam's children still."

Goethe laughed. "Yes," said he, "that is so. A coarseness can only be driven out by another that is stronger. I am reminded of an incident from my earlier time (when, among the aristocracy, here and there, were some very beastly gentlemen), that at table in a superior company and in presence of women, a rich nobleman used very clumsy language—to the embarrassment and vexation of all, who were obliged to hear him. There was nothing in mere terms by which he could be reproved. A determined, important-looking gentleman, who sat opposite him, therefore chose another means: he began very loudly a gross impropriety that frightened everybody, including that same boor, so that he felt quenched and did not open his mouth again. From that moment the conversation took a pleasant cheerful turn, to the happiness of all present; and that determined gentleman received much thanks for his unexampled courage, in consideration of the excellent result obtained."

After we had enjoyed this lively anecdote, the Chancellor turned the conversation on the present state of the opposition and the ministerial party at Paris; repeating, almost word for word, a powerful speech that an extremely bold democrat had made against the minister, in defending himself before a court of justice. We had an opportunity once more to marvel at the happy memory of the Chancellor. There was much conversation upon this subject, especially upon the censorship of the press, between Goethe and the Chancellor; the theme proved

fertile, Goethe showing himself as usual a mild aristocrat, and his friend as usual apparently taking the side of the people.

"I have no fears for the French," said Goethe; "they stand on such a height from a world-historical point of view that their mind cannot by any means be suppressed. The law restraining the press can have only a beneficial effect; especially as its limitations concern nothing essential, but are only against personalities. An opposition that has no bounds is a flat affair; while limits sharpen its wits, and this is a great advantage. To speak out an opinion directly and coarsely is only excusable when one is perfectly right; but a party, for the very reason that it is a party, cannot be wholly in the right; therefore the indirect method in which the French have ever been great models is the best. I say to my servant plainly, 'Hans, pull off my boots,' and he understands; but if I am with a friend, and wish the service from him, I must not speak so bluntly, but must find some pleasant friendly way, to ask him to perform this kind office. This necessity excites my mind; and, for the same reason as I have said, I like some restraint upon the press. The French have always had the reputation of being the most *spirituel* of nations, and they ought to preserve it. We Germans speak out our opinions without ceremony, and have not acquired much skill in the indirect mode.

"The parties at Paris would be still greater if they were more liberal and free, and understood each other better. They stand on a higher grade, from a world-historical point of view, than the English; whose parliament consists of strong opposing powers that paralyse one another, and wherein the great penetration of an individual has a difficulty in working its way—as we see by Canning, and the many annoyances besetting that great statesman."

We rose to go, but Goethe was so full of life that the conversation was continued awhile standing. At last he bid us an affectionate farewell, and I accompanied the Chancellor home.

Sunday, July 15, 1827.

I went at eight o'clock this evening to see Goethe, whom I found just returned from his garden.

"See what lies there?" said he; "a romance, in three volumes; and by whom, think you? by Manzoni."

I looked at the books; which were very handsomely bound, and inscribed to Goethe. "Manzoni is industrious," said I. "Yes, there is movement there," said Goethe.

"I know nothing of Manzoni," said I, "except his ode to Napoleon, which I lately read again in your translation, and have admired. Each strophe is a picture."

"You are right," said Goethe, "the ode is excellent; but do you find anyone who speaks of it in Germany? It might as well not have existed, although it is the best poem made upon the subject."

Goethe continued reading the English newspapers, with which I had found him engaged when I came in. I took up that volume of Carlyle's translation of *German Romance* which contains Musæus and Fouqué. The Englishman, who is intimately acquainted with our literature, had prefixed to every translation a memoir and a criticism of the author. I read that upon Fouqué; remarking with pleasure that the biography was written with much thought and profundity, and that the critical point of view from which this favourite author was to be contemplated was indicated with great understanding and a tranquil penetration into poetic merits. At one time, the clever Englishman compares Fouqué to the voice of a singer that has no great compass and but few notes, but those few are good and beautifully melodious. To illustrate his meaning further, he takes a simile from ecclesiastical polity; saying that Fouqué does not hold in the poetic church the place of a bishop or dignitary of the first rank, but rather satisfies himself with the duties of a chaplain and looks very well in this humble station.

While I was reading this, Goethe had gone into the back chamber. He sent his servant, who invited me to come to him there.

Said he, "A new translation of Sophocles has arrived. It reads well, and seems to be excellent; I will compare it with Solger. Now, what say you to Carlyle?"

I told him what I had been reading upon Fouqué.

"Is not that very good?" said Goethe. "Aye, there are clever people over the sea, who know us and can appreciate us.

"In other departments," continued Goethe, "there is no lack of good heads even among us Germans. I have been reading, in the Berlin *Register*, the criticism of a historian upon Schlosser, which is very great. It is signed by Heinrich Leo, a person of whom I never heard but about whom we must inquire. He stands higher than the French—which, from a historical point of view, is saying something. They stick too much to the real, and cannot get the ideal into their heads; the German has this quite at his command. Leo has admirable

views upon the castes of India. Much is said of aristocracy and democracy; but the whole affair is simply this: in youth, when we either possess nothing, or know not how to value tranquil possession, we are democrats; but when, in a long life, we have acquired property, we wish not only to be secure of it ourselves, but also that our children and grandchildren shall be secure of inheriting it, and quietly enjoying it. Therefore in old age we are always aristocrats, to whatever opinions we may have been inclined in youth. Leo speaks with a great deal of thought upon this point.

"We are weakest in the æsthetic department, and may wait long before we meet such a man as Carlyle. It is pleasant to see that intercourse is now so close among the French, English, and Germans, that we shall be able to correct one another. This is the greatest use of a world-literature, which will show itself more and more.

"Carlyle has written a life of Schiller, and judged him as it would be difficult for a German to judge him. On the other hand, we are clear about Shakespeare and Byron, and can perhaps appreciate their merits better than the English themselves."

Wednesday, July 18, 1827.

"I must announce to you," was Goethe's first salutation at dinner, "that Manzoni's novel soars far above all we know of the kind. I need say to you nothing more, except that the interior life—all that comes from the soul of the poet, is absolutely perfect; and that the outward—the delineation of localities, and the like, is in no way inferior. That is saying something." I was astonished and pleased to hear this. "In reading," continued Goethe, "we are constantly passing from emotion to admiration, and again from admiration to emotion; so that we are always subject to one of those great influences: higher than this, I think, we cannot go. In this novel we have first seen what Manzoni is. Here his perfect interior is exhibited, which he had no opportunity to display in his dramatic works. I will now read the best novel by Sir Walter Scott—perhaps *Waverley*, which I do not yet know—and I shall see how Manzoni will come out in comparison with this great English writer.

"Manzoni's internal culture here appears so high that scarcely anything can approach it. It satisfies us like perfectly ripe fruit. In his treatment and exhibition of details, he is as clear as the Italian sky itself."

"Has he any marks of sentimentality?" said I.

"He has sentiment," replied Goethe, "but is perfectly free from sentimentality; his feeling for every situation is manly and genuine. But I will say no more to-day. I am still in the first volume; soon you shall hear more."

Saturday, July 21, 1827.

When I came into Goethe's room this evening, I found him reading Manzoni's novel.

"I am in the third volume already," said he, as he laid aside the book, "and am thus getting many new thoughts. You know Aristotle says of tragedy, 'It must excite fear, if it is to be good.' This is true, not only of tragedy, but of many other sorts of poetry. You find it in my *Gott und die Bayadere*. You find it in every good comedy, even in the *Sieben Mädchen in Uniform* (Seven Girls in Uniform), as we do not know how the joke will turn out for the dear creatures.

"This fear may be of two sorts; it may exist in the shape of alarm (*Angst*), or in that of uneasiness (*Bangigkeit*). The latter feeling is awakened when we see a moral evil threatening and gradually overshadowing the personages; as, for instance, in the *Elective Affinities*. But alarm is awakened, in reader or spectator, when the personages are threatened with physical danger; as, for instance, in the *Galley Slave*, and in *Der Freyschütz*—nay, in the scene of the Wolf's-glen, not only alarm, but a sense of annihilation, is awakened in the spectators. Now, Manzoni makes use of this alarm with wonderful felicity, by resolving it into emotion, and thus leading us to admiration. Alarm is of a material character, and will be excited in every reader; but admiration is excited by a recognition of the writer's skill, and only the connoisseur will be blessed with this feeling. What say you to these æsthetics of mine? If I were younger, I would write something according to this theory, though perhaps not so extensive a work as this of Manzoni.

"I am now really curious to know what the gentlemen of the *Globe* will say to this novel. They are clever enough to perceive its excellences; and the whole tendency of the work is so much grist to the mill of these liberals, although Manzoni has shown himself very moderate. Nevertheless, the French seldom receive a work with such pure kindliness as we: they cannot readily adapt themselves to the author's point of view; but, even in the best, always find something not to their mind, which the author should have done otherwise."

Goethe then described some parts of the novel, to show me in what spirit it was written.

"There are four things," said he, "that have contributed especially to the excellence of Manzoni's works. First, he is an excellent historian, and consequently gives his inventions a depth and dignity which raise them far above what are commonly called novels. Secondly, the Catholic religion is favourable to him, giving him many poetical relations that he could not have had as a Protestant. Thirdly, it is to the advantage of the book that the author has suffered much in revolutionary collisions; which, if they did not affect *him*, have wounded his friends and sometimes ruined them. Fourthly, it is in favour of this novel that the scene is laid in the charming country near Lake Como, which has been stamped on the poet's mind from youth upwards and which he therefore knows by heart. Hence arises also that distinguishing merit of the work—its distinctness and wonderful accuracy in describing localities."

Monday, July 23, 1827.

When I asked for Goethe, about eight o'clock this evening, I heard that he had not yet returned from the garden. I therefore went to meet him, and found him in the park, sitting on a bench in the shade of the lindens; his grandson Wolfgang at his side. He motioned me to sit down by him. We had no sooner exchanged salutations, than the conversation again turned upon Manzoni.

"I told you lately," Goethe began, "that the historian had been of great use to the poet in this novel; but now, in the third volume, I find that the historian hurts the poet, for Signor Manzoni throws off at once the poet's mantle, and stands for some time as a naked historian. This happens in his descriptions of war, famine, and pestilence—things which are repulsive, and are now made insufferable by the circumstantial details of a dry chronicle.

"The German translator must seek to avoid this fault; he must get rid of a great part of the war and famine, and two-thirds of the plague, so as only to leave what is necessary to carry on the action. If Manzoni had had at his side a friendly adviser, he might easily have shunned this fault; but, as a historian, he had too great a respect for reality. This gives him trouble even in his dramatic works; where, however, he helps himself through by adding the superfluous historical

matter in the shape of notes. Here, however, he could not get rid of his historical furniture in the same manner. This is very remarkable. Nevertheless, as soon as the persons of the romance reappear, the poet stands once more before us in all his glory, and compels us to our accustomed admiration."

We rose and walked towards the house.

"You will hardly understand," said Goethe, "how a poet like Manzoni, capable of such admirable compositions, could even for a moment sin against poetry. Yet the cause is simple—it is this: Manzoni, like Schiller, was a born poet; but our times are so bad, that the poet can find no nature fit for his use in the human life that surrounds him. To build himself up, Schiller seized on two great subjects, philosophy and history; Manzoni, on history alone. Schiller's *Wallenstein* is so great that there is nothing else like it of the same sort; yet you will find that even these two powerful helpers—history and philosophy—have injured parts of the work, and hinder a purely poetical success. So Manzoni suffers from too great a load of history."

"Your excellency," said I, "speaks great things, and I am happy in hearing you."

"Manzoni," said Goethe, "helps us to good thoughts."

He was proceeding with his remarks, when the Chancellor met us at the gate of Goethe's house-garden, and the conversation was then interrupted. He joined us as a welcome friend; and we accompanied Goethe up the little stairs, through the chamber of busts, into the long saloon, where the curtains were let down, and two lights were burning on the table near the window. We sat down by the table, and Goethe and the Chancellor talked upon subjects of another kind.

(Sup.) Wednesday, July 25, 1827.

Goethe has lately received a letter from Walter Scott, which has given him great pleasure. He showed it to me to-day; and, as the English handwriting was very illegible to him, he begged me to translate the contents to him. It appears that Goethe had first written to the renowned English poet, and that this letter was in reply.[1]

"I feel myself highly honoured," writes Walter Scott, "that any of my productions should have been so fortunate as to

[1] What follows is a series of retranslations from the German translation of passages in Scott's letter. The original English text is printed (apparently not in full) in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.

attract the attention of Goethe, to the number of whose admirers I have belonged since the year 1798, when, notwithstanding my slight knowledge of the German language, I was bold enough to translate into English the *Goetz von Berlichingen*. In this youthful undertaking, I had quite forgotten that it is not enough to feel the beauty of a work of genius, but that one must also thoroughly understand the language in which it is written before one can succeed in making such beauty apparent to others. Nevertheless, I still set some value on that youthful effort, because it at least shows that I knew how to choose a subject which was worthy of admiration.

"I have often heard of you, through my son-in-law, Lockhart, a young man of literary eminence, who, some years before he became connected with my family, had the honour of being introduced to the father of German literature. It is impossible that you should recollect every individual of the great number of those who feel themselves urged to pay you their respects; but I believe no one is more heartily devoted to you than that young member of my family.

"My friend Sir John Hope, of Pinkie, has lately had the honour of seeing you, and I hoped to write to you by him; I afterwards took this liberty through two of his relations, who designed to travel over Germany; but illness prevented their putting their project into execution, so that after two or three months my letter returned to me. I also, at an earlier period, dared to seek Goethe's acquaintance, and that before the flattering notice which he has been so kind as to take of me.

"It is highly gratifying to all admirers of genius to know that one of the greatest European models enjoys a fortunate and honourable retreat, at an age when he sees himself respected in so remarkable a manner. Poor Lord Byron's destiny did not grant him so fortunate a lot, since it carried him off in the prime of life, and cut short all that had been hoped and expected from him. He esteemed himself fortunate in the honour which you paid him, and felt how much he was indebted to a poet to whom all the writers of the present generation owe so much, that they feel themselves bound to look up to him with child-like veneration.

"I have taken the liberty of requesting MM. Treuttel and Würtz to send to you my attempt at a biography of that remarkable man who for so many years had so terrible an influence in the world which he governed. Besides, I do not know whether I am not under some obligation to him, inasmuch

as he made me carry arms for twelve years, during which time I served in a corps of our militia, and, in spite of a long-standing lameness, became a good horseman, huntsman, and shot. These good qualities have latterly a little forsaken me; rheumatism, that sad torment of our northern climate, having affected my limbs. However, I do not complain; for I see my sons join in the pleasures of the chase, since I have been obliged to give them up.

"My eldest son has a squadron of hussars, which is a great deal for a young man of five-and-twenty. My younger son has lately taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Oxford, and is now going to spend some months at home, before he enters into the world. As it has pleased God to take their mother from me, my youngest daughter manages my domestic affairs. My eldest daughter is married, and has a family of her own.

"This is the domestic condition of a man concerning whom you have so kindly inquired. For the rest, I possess enough to live quite as I wish, notwithstanding some very heavy losses. I inhabit a stately old mansion, where every friend of Goethe's will at all times be welcome. The hall is filled with armour, which would even have suited Jaxthausen; a large bloodhound guards the entrance.

"I have, however, forgotten him who contrived that people should not forget him while alive. I hope you will pardon the faults of the work, whilst you consider that the author was animated by the wish to treat the memory of this extraordinary man as sincerely as his island prejudices would allow.

"As this opportunity of writing to you has suddenly and accidentally been afforded me by a traveller, and admits of no delay, I have not time to say more, excepting that I wish you a continuance of good health and repose, and subscribe myself, with the most sincere and deepest esteem,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"Edinburgh, July 9, 1827."

Goethe was, as I said, delighted with this letter. He was, however, of opinion that it paid him so much respect that he must put a great deal to the account of the courtesy of a man of rank and refined cultivation.

He then mentioned the good and affectionate manner in which Walter Scott spoke of his family connections, which pleased him highly, as a sign of brotherly confidence.

"I am really quite impatient," continued he, "for his *Life*

of Napoleon, which he announces to me. I hear so many contradictions and vehement protestations concerning the book, that I am already certain it will, in any case, be very remarkable."

I asked about Lockhart, and whether he still recollected him.

"Perfectly well!" returned Goethe. "His personal appearance makes so decided an impression that one cannot easily forget him. From all I hear from Englishmen, and from my daughter-in-law, he must be a young man from whom great things in literature are to be expected.

"I almost wonder that Walter Scott does not say a word about Carlyle, who has so decided a German tendency that he must certainly be known to him.[1]

"It is admirable in Carlyle that, in his judgment of our German authors, he has especially in view the mental and moral core as that which is really influential. Carlyle is a moral force of great importance. There is in him much for the future."

Monday, September 24, 1827.

I went with Goethe to Berka. We drove off soon after eight o'clock; the morning was very beautiful. The road is uphill at first; and, as there was nothing in the scenery worth looking at, Goethe talked on literary subjects. A well-known German poet had lately passed through Weimar, and shown Goethe his album.

"You cannot imagine what stuff it contains," said Goethe. "All the poets write as if they were ill and the whole world were a lazaretto. They all speak of the woe and the misery of this earth and of the joys of a hereafter; all are discontented, and one draws the other into a state of still greater discontent. This is a real abuse of poetry, which was given to us to hide the little discords of life and to make man contented with the world and his condition. But the present generation is afraid of all such strength, and only feels poetical when it has weakness to deal with.

"I have hit on a good word," continued Goethe, "to tease these gentlemen. I will call their poetry 'Lazaretto-poetry,' and I will give the name of Tyrtæan-poetry to that which not only sings war-songs, but also arms men with courage to undergo the conflicts of life."

[1] "Carlyle never spoke to Scott, as he hoped to do; nor did Sir Walter even acknowledge his letter."—FROUDE: *Thomas Carlyle: The First Forty Years*, i, 432.

At the bottom of the carriage lay a basket made of rushes, with two handles, which attracted my attention. "I brought it with me from Marienbad," said Goethe, "where there are baskets of the sort of every size; and I am so accustomed to it that I cannot travel without it. You see, when it is empty it folds up, and occupies but little room; but when it is full it stretches out very wide, and holds more than you would imagine. It is soft and pliant, and at the same time so tough and strong that the heaviest things can be carried in it."

"It has a very picturesque and even an antique appearance," said I.

"You are right," said Goethe; "it does approach the antique character: since it is not only as fit for its purpose as possible; but also has the simplest and most pleasing form—so that we may say it stands on the highest point of perfection. During my mineralogical excursions in the Bohemian mountains, I found it especially serviceable; now, it contains our breakfast. If I had a hammer, I should not lack an opportunity to-day to knock off a piece here and there, and bring home the basket full of stones."

We had now reached the heights, and had a free prospect towards the hills behind which Berka lies. A little to the left we saw into the valley that leads to Hetschburg, and where, on the other side of the Ilm, is a hill which now turned towards us its shadowy side and (on account of the vapours of the valley which hovered before it) seemed blue to my eye. I looked at the same spot through my glass, and the blue was obviously diminished. I observed this to Goethe. "Thus you see," said I, "what a great part the subject plays with these purely objective colours; a weak eye increases the density, while a sharpened one drives it away or at any rate makes it diminish."

"Your remark is correct," said Goethe; "a good telescope dispels the blue tint of the most distant mountains. The subject is, in all the phenomena, far more important than is supposed. Even Wieland knew this very well; for he was wont to say, 'People could easily be amused, if they were only amusable.'"

We laughed at the pleasant meaning of these words. We had meanwhile descended the little valley where the road passes over a roofed wooden bridge, under which the rain-torrents that flow down to Hetschburg had made a channel, which was now dry. Highway labourers were employed in setting up

against the bridge some reddish sandstones, which attracted Goethe's attention. About a stone's throw over the bridge, where the road goes gradually up the hill that separates the traveller from Berka, Goethe bade the coachman stop.

"We will get out here," said he, "and see whether we shall not relish a little breakfast in the open air."

We got out and looked about us. The servant spread a napkin upon a four-cornered pile of stones, such as usually lie by the roadside, and brought the osier basket from the carriage, out of which he took roast partridges, new wheaten rolls, and pickled cucumbers. Goethe cut a partridge, and gave me half; I ate, standing up and walking about. Goethe had seated himself on the corner of a heap of stones. The coldness of the stones, on which the night-dew was still resting, must hurt him, I thought; and I expressed my anxiety. Goethe, however, assured me it would not hurt him at all; and then I felt quite tranquil, regarding it as a new token of the inward strength he must feel. Meanwhile the servant had brought a bottle of wine from the carriage, and filled for us.

"Our friend Schütze," said Goethe, "is right to fly to the country every week; we will take pattern by him; and, if this fine weather continue for a while, this shall not be our last excursion."

I passed, afterwards, with Goethe, a most interesting day, partly in Berka, partly in Tonndorf. He talked much of the second part of *Faust*, on which he was just beginning to work in earnest; I therefore lament so much the more that nothing is noted down in my journal beyond this introduction.

(Sup.) Wednesday, September 26, 1827.

Goethe had invited me to take a drive this morning to the Hottelstedt Ecke, the most westerly summit of the Ettersberg, and thence to the Ettersberg hunting-lodge. The day was very fine, and we drove early out of the Jacob's gate. Behind Lützendorf, where the journey was uphill, and we could only drive leisurely, we had good opportunity for looking round us. Goethe noticed in the hedges a number of birds, and asked me if they were larks. Thou great and beloved one, thought I, though thou hast studied nature as few have, in ornithology thou appearest a mere child!

"These are yellow-hammers and sparrows," returned I, "and some late Gras-Mücken,[1] which, after moulting, come from the

[1] Hedge-sparrows, warblers.

thicket of the Ettersberg down to the gardens and fields, and prepare for their migration; but there are no larks. It is not in the nature of larks to settle upon bushes. The field-larks or sky-larks rise upwards and dart down again to the earth; they also in the autumn fly through the air in flocks, and settle themselves somewhere in a stubble-field—they do not settle upon hedges and bushes. But the tree-lark lives on the summit of high trees; it rises singing into the air, and drops down again to its tree-top. There is still another lark, found in woodland glades, with a soft flute-like, but rather melancholy, song. It is not found on the Ettersberg, which is too lively and too near the dwellings of man; neither does it perch upon bushes."

"Hm!" said Goethe, "you appear to be no novice in these things."

"I have thoroughly studied the subject from boyhood," said I, "and have always had my eyes and ears open. In the whole wood of the Ettersberg there are few spots through which I have not rambled repeatedly. Now, when I hear any note, I can venture to say from what bird it comes. I have also gone so far that, if anyone brings me a bird that has lost its feathers in captivity through bad treatment, I can restore it to health and full feather."

"Tell me something about moulting. You just now spoke of Gras-Mücken, which, after the completion of their moulting, come down into the fields from the thickets of the Ettersberg. Is moulting, then, confined to a certain time, and do all birds moult at once?"

"Most birds," said I, "commence at the end of the breeding season; that is, as soon as the young of the last brood can take care of themselves. But now the question is, whether the bird has time to moult between this period and that of its migration? If it has, it moults, and migrates with fresh feathers; if it has not, it migrates with its old feathers, and moults later in the warm south. Birds do not all return to us at the same time in spring; neither do they migrate at the same time in autumn. And this is because some are less affected by cold and rough weather and can bear it better than others. But a bird that comes to us early migrates late, and a bird that comes to us late migrates early.

"Thus, even amongst the Gras-Mücken, though they belong to one class, there is a great difference. The chattering Gras-Mücke, or the Müller-chen,[1] are heard at the end of March; a

[1] The lesser whitethroats. Literally, "little millers."

fortnight after comes the black-headed one, or the monk (*Mönch*); then, a week afterwards, the nightingale; and quite at the end of April or the beginning of May, the grey one. All these birds moult in August with us, as well as the young of the first brood; wherefore, at the end of August, young monks that have already black heads are caught. The young of the last brood, however, migrate with their first feathers, and moult later in the southern countries; for which reason young monks caught at the beginning of September, especially young male birds, have red heads like their mother."

"Is, then," he asked, "the grey Gras-Mücke the latest bird that returns to us, or are there others later?"

"The so-called yellow *spott-vogel* (mocking-bird), and the magnificent golden Pirol (yellow thrush)," said I, "do not appear till about Whitsuntide. Both migrate in the middle of August, after the breeding season, and moult with their young in the south. If kept in cages, they moult with us in the winter; so that they are very difficult to rear. They require much warmth, yet if we hang them near the stove they pine from the want of fresh air; while, if we place them near the window, they pine in the cold of the long nights."

"It is supposed, then," said Goethe, "that moulting is a disease, or at least is attended by bodily weakness?"

"I would not say that," said I. "It is a state of increased productiveness, which is gone through without difficulty in the open air, and with robust birds perfectly well in a room. I have had Gras-Mücken that have not ceased singing during their moulting, a sign that they were thoroughly well. But if a bird kept in a room appears at all sickly during its moulting, it may be concluded that it has not been properly treated—with respect to food, water, or fresh air. If a bird kept in a room has grown so weak from want of air and freedom that it has not the productive power to moult, and if it is then taken into the fruitful fresh air, the moulting will go on as well as possible. With a bird at liberty, it passes off so gently and gradually that it is scarcely felt."

"But, still, you just now seemed to hint that during their moulting the Gras-Mücken retire into the depths of the forest."

"During that time," said I, "they certainly need shelter; and in this case Nature proceeds with such wisdom and moderation that a bird during its moulting never loses so many feathers at once as to render it incapable of flying well enough to reach its

food. But it may still happen that it loses, for instance, at the same time the fourth, fifth, and sixth principal feathers of the left wing, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth feathers of the right one; so that, although it can still fly very well, it cannot fly well enough to escape from the pursuing birds of prey—especially the swift and active tree falcon—and then a bushy thicket is very useful."

"Good! But does the moulting take place in both wings equally and symmetrically?"

"As far as my observation goes—yes; and that is very beneficial. For if a bird lost, for instance, three principal feathers from the left wing and not so many from the right, the wings would be without equilibrium, and the bird would have no proper control over its movements. It would be like a ship the sails of which are too heavy on one side and too light on the other."

"I see," said Goethe, "we may penetrate into Nature on whatever side we please, and always come to some wisdom."

We were meanwhile continually going uphill, and were now on the edge of a pine wood. We came to a place where some stones had been broken and lay in a heap. Goethe told the coachman to stop, and begged me to alight and see if I could discover any fossils. I found some shells, and also some broken ammonites, which I handed to him when I again took my seat. We drove on.

"Always the old story," said Goethe; "always the old bed of the sea! Looking down from this height upon Weimar, and upon the numerous villages around, it appears wonderful to think that there was a time when whales sported in the broad valley below. And yet there was such a time—at least it is highly probable. But the mew that flew over the sea that then covered this mountain certainly never thought that we two should drive here to-day. And who knows whether, in some thousands of years, the mew may not again fly over this mountain?"

We were now upon the height, and drove quickly along. On our right were oaks, beeches, and other leafy trees: Weimar was behind us, but out of sight. We had reached the western height—the broad valley of the Unstrut, with many villages and small towns, lay before us, in the clearest morning sun.

"This is a good resting-place," said Goethe. "I think we may as well try how a little breakfast would suit us in this good air."

We alighted, and walked up and down for a few minutes upon the dry earth, at the foot of some half-grown oaks stunted by many storms; while Frederick unpacked the breakfast we had brought with us, and spread it upon a turfy hillock. The view from this spot, in the clear morning light of the autumn sun, was magnificent: on the south and south-west, the whole range of the Thüringer-wald mountains; on the west, beyond Erfurt, the towering Castle Gotha and the Inselsberg; farther north, the mountains behind Langensalza and Mühlhausen, until the view was bounded on the north by the blue Hartz Mountains. I thought of the verses:

> Far, high, splendid the view,
> Around into life!
> From mountain to mountain,
> Soars the eternal spirit,
> Presaging endless life.

We seated ourselves with our backs against the oak; so that during breakfast we had before us the view over half Thüringia. Meanwhile we demolished a brace of roast partridges, with new white bread, and drank a flask of very good wine out of a cup of pure gold that Goethe carried with him on such excursions in a yellow leather case.

"I have very often been in this spot," said he, "and of late years I have often thought it would be the last time that I should look down hence on the kingdoms of the world, and their glories; but it has happened once again, and I hope that even this is not the last time we shall both spend a pleasant day here. We will in future often come hither. Man shrinks in the narrow confinement of the house. Here he feels great and free—as the great scene he has before his eyes, and as he ought properly always to be.

"From this spot," continued Goethe, "I look down upon many points bound up with the richest recollections of a long life. What have I not, in my youth, gone through yonder in the mountains of Ilmenau? Then, how many adventures have I had down below there, in dear Erfurt! In early times, too, I often liked to be at Gotha; but for many years I have scarcely been there at all."

"While I have been in Weimar, I do not recollect your being there."

"There is a reason for that," he said, laughing. "I am not in the best favour there. When the mother of the present ruler was in the bloom of youth, I was very often there. I was sitting

one evening alone with her at the tea-table, when the two princes, ten and twelve years old—two pretty fair-haired boys—burst in and came to the table. I was audacious enough to put a hand through the hair of each prince, with the words, '*Now, you floury heads, what do you want?*' The boys stared in the greatest astonishment at my boldness, and they have never forgotten the affair! I will not boast of it now; but it was instinctive. I never had much respect for mere princely rank as such, when there was not behind it sound human nature and worth. I felt so satisfied with myself, that if I had been made a prince I should not have thought the change so very remarkable. When the diploma of nobility was given me, many thought I should feel elevated; but, between ourselves, it was nothing to me! We Frankfort patricians always considered ourselves equal to the nobility; and when I held the diploma in my hands I had nothing more, in my own opinion, than I had possessed long ago."

We took another good draught from the golden cup, and then drove round the northern side of the Ettersberg to the Ettersberg hunting-lodge. Goethe had all the chambers that were hung with beautiful tapestry and pictures opened. He told me Schiller had for some time inhabited the chamber at the western angle of the first story.

"In early times," continued he, "we have here spent many a good day, and wasted many a good day. We were all young and wanton: in the summer we had impromptu comedies, and in the winter many a dance and sledge-race by torchlight."

We returned into the open air, and Goethe led me in a westerly direction along a footpath into the wood.

"I will show you the beech," said he, "on which we cut our names fifty years ago. But how it has altered, and how everything has grown! That must be the tree; you see it is still in fullest vigour. Even our names are still to be traced; but confused and distorted, scarcely to be made out. This beech then stood upon a dry open spot. It was quite sunny and pleasant around; and here, in the beautiful summer evenings, we played our impromptu farces. Now the spot is damp and cheerless. What were then only low bushes have now grown up into shady trees, so that in the thicket the magnificent beech of our youth can hardly be distinguished."

We returned to the lodge; and, after we had seen the rich collection of arms, we drove back to Weimar.

(Sup.) Thursday, September 27, 1827.

This afternoon spent a short time with Goethe; when I made the acquaintance of Privy-Councillor Streckfuss of Berlin, who had taken a drive with him in the forenoon and had then stayed to dinner. When Streckfuss went, I accompanied him, and took a walk through the park. On my return across the market-place, I met the Chancellor and Raupach, with whom I went into the "Elephant." In the evening I returned to Goethe, who talked with me about a new number of *Kunst und Alterthum*, and also about a dozen pencil-drawings, in which the brothers Riepenhausen endeavoured to represent the painting of Polygnotus in the Lesche at Delphi, according to the description of Pausanias—an attempt Goethe could not sufficiently praise.

(Sup.) Monday, October 1, 1827.

At the theatre, *Das Bild* (The Picture), by Houwald. I saw two acts, and then went to Goethe, who read to me the second scene of his new *Faust*.

"In the emperor," said he, "I have endeavoured to represent a prince who has all the necessary qualities for losing his land, and at last succeeds in so doing. He does not concern himself about the welfare of his kingdom and his subjects; he only thinks of himself and how he can amuse himself with something new. The land is without law and justice; the judge is on the side of the criminals; atrocious crimes are committed with impunity. The army is without pay, without discipline, and roams about plundering to help itself as it can. The state treasury is empty, and without hope of replenishment. In the emperor's own household, there is scarcity in both kitchen and cellar. The marshal, who cannot devise means to get on from day to day, is already in the hands of the Jews; to whom everything is pawned, so that bread already eaten [1] comes to the emperor's table.

"The counsellor of state wishes to remonstrate with his Majesty upon all these evils, and advises as to their remedy; but the gracious sovereign is very unwilling to lend his sublime ear to anything so disagreeable. Here now is the true element for Mephisto, who quickly supplants the former fool, and is at once at the side of the emperor as fool and counsellor."

Goethe read the scene and the interspersed murmuring of the crowd excellently, and I had a very pleasant evening.

[1] Or "bread eaten in anticipation" ("Vorweggegessenes Brod").

(Sup.) Sunday, October 7, 1827.

This morning, the weather being very beautiful, I found myself in the chariot with Goethe before eight o'clock: on the road to Jena, where he intended to stay until the next evening.

Having arrived there early, we first called at the botanical garden, where Goethe surveyed all the shrubs and plants, and found them all thriving and in beautiful order. We also looked over the mineralogical cabinets and some other collections of natural objects, and then drove to Herr von Knebel's, where we were expected to dinner.

Knebel, who was very old, almost stumbled towards Goethe at the door, to fold him in his arms. At dinner all were very lively and hearty, although there was no conversation of any importance. The two old friends were enough occupied with the pleasure of friendly meeting. After dinner we took a drive in a southerly direction, up the Saale. I had known this charming region in earlier times, but everything appeared as fresh as if I had never seen it before.

When we returned into the streets of Jena, Goethe gave orders to drive along a brook, and to stop at a house whose outside was not very striking.

"This was the dwelling of Voss," said he, "and I will conduct you on this classic ground." We walked through the house, and entered the garden. There were but few traces of flowers and the finer species of culture; we walked on the turf all covered with fruit trees.

"This was something for Ernestine," said Goethe, "who could not even here forget her excellent Eutiner apples, which she told me were incomparable. But they were the apples of her childhood, there was the charm! I have spent many pleasant evenings here with Voss and his excellent Ernestine, and I still like to think of the old time. Such a man as Voss will not soon come again. There are few who have had such influence upon the higher German culture. With him everything was sound and solid; he had, not an artificial, but a purely natural relation to the Greeks, which produced the noblest fruits for us. One so penetrated with his worth as I am scarcely knows how to honour his memory enough."

It was by this time about six o'clock, and Goethe considered it time to go to our night quarters which he had bespoken at the "Bear."

We were accommodated with a roomy chamber, together

with an alcove containing two beds. The sun had not long set—the evening light reposed upon our windows, and it was pleasant to sit for some time without a candle.

Goethe brought the conversation back to Voss. "He was very valuable to me," said he, "and I would willingly have retained him for the University and myself; but the advantages offered from Heidelberg were too important for us, with our limited means, to outweigh them. I was mournfully resigned to let him go. It was fortunate for me that I had Schiller; for, different as our natures were, our tendencies were still towards one point, which made our connection so intimate that one really could not live without the other.

"Schiller was a decided enemy to all the hollow reverence and all the vain idolatry people paid him or wished to pay him. When Kotzebue proposed to get up a public demonstration in his house, it was so distasteful to him that he was almost ill with disgust. It was repulsive to him when a stranger was announced. If he were hindered a moment and made an appointment, at the appointed hour he was ill from mere apprehension: he could now and then be very impatient, sometimes even rude. I was witness of his impetuous conduct towards a foreign surgeon, who entered unannounced to pay him a visit. The poor man, quite put out of countenance, did not know how he could retreat rapidly enough.

"We were, as I have said, very different in our natures—not merely in mental, but also in physical matters. An air beneficial to Schiller acted on me like poison. I called on him one day; and, as I did not find him at home, and his wife told me that he would soon return, I seated myself at his work-table to make some notes. I had not been seated long before I felt queer. The feeling gradually increased, until at last I nearly fainted. At first I did not know to what cause to ascribe this wretched, and to me unusual, state—until I discovered that a dreadful odour issued from a drawer near me. When I opened it, I found to my astonishment it was full of rotten apples. I went to the window and inhaled fresh air, by which I was instantly restored. In the meantime his wife had re-entered, and told me that the drawer was always filled with rotten apples, because the scent was beneficial to Schiller, and he could not live or work without it.

"To-morrow morning," continued Goethe, "I will also show you where Schiller lived in Jena."

In the meantime lights were brought in; we took a little

supper, and afterwards sat engaged in various conversations and recollections.

I related a wonderful dream of my boyish years, which was literally fulfilled the next morning.

"I had," said I, "brought up three young linnets, which flew about my chamber, and came and settled on my hand as soon as I entered. One day at noon, on my entrance into the chamber, one of the birds flew over me, out of the house. I sought it the whole afternoon, on all the roofs, and was inconsolable when evening came and I had discovered no traces of it. I went to sleep with sad thoughts in my heart, and towards morning I dreamt I was roaming about the neighbouring houses in search of my lost bird. All at once I heard the sound of its voice, and saw it behind the garden of our cottage, upon the roof of a neighbour's house. I called to it, and it approached, moved its wings as if asking for food, but still it could not venture to fly down. I ran through our garden into my chamber, and returned with the cup of soaked rape-seed; I held the favourite food towards it, and it perched upon my hand. Full of joy, I carried it back into my chamber to the other two.

"I awoke; and, as it was then broad daylight, I quickly put on my clothes, and with the utmost haste ran down through our little garden to the house where I had seen the bird. The bird was really there! Everything happened as I had seen it in the dream. I called, it approached, but it hesitated to fly to my hand. I ran back and brought the food; when it flew upon my hand, and I took it back to the others."

"This boyish adventure of yours," said Goethe, "is certainly very remarkable. But there are many such things in nature, though we have not the right key to them. We all walk in mysteries. We do not know what is stirring in the atmosphere that surrounds us, nor how it is connected with our own spirit. So much is certain—that at times we can put out the feelers of our soul beyond its bodily limits; and a presentiment, an actual insight into the immediate future, is accorded to it."

"I have lately experienced something similar," said I. "As I was returning from a walk along the Erfurt road, about ten minutes before I reached Weimar, I had the mental impression that a person whom I had not seen, and of whom I had not even thought for a length of time, would meet me at the corner of the theatre. It troubled me to think that this person might meet me; and great was my surprise when, as I was about to

turn the corner, this very person actually met me, in the same place which I had seen in my imagination ten minutes before."

"That is also very wonderful, and more than chance," said he. "As I said, we are all groping among mysteries and wonders. Besides, one soul may have a decided influence upon another, merely by means of its silent presence, of which I could relate many instances. It has often happened to me that, when I have been walking with an acquaintance, and have had a living image of something in my mind, he has at once begun to speak of that very thing. I have also known a man who, without saying a word, could suddenly silence a party engaged in cheerful conversation, by the mere power of his mind. Nay, he could also introduce a tone which would make everybody feel uncomfortable. We have all some electrical and magnetic forces within us; and we put forth, like the magnet itself, an attractive or repulsive power, as we come in contact with something similar or dissimilar. It is possible, even probable, that if a young girl were, without knowing it, to find herself in a dark chamber with a man who designed to murder her, she would have an uneasy sense of his unknown presence, and that an anguish would come over her, which would drive her from the room to the rest of the household."

"I know a scene in an opera," said I, "in which two lovers who have long been separated by a great distance, find themselves together in a dark room without knowing it; but they do not remain long together before the magnetic power begins to work; one feels the proximity of the other—they are involuntarily attracted towards each other—and it is not long before the girl is clasped in the arms of the youth."

"With lovers," answered Goethe, "this magnetic power is particularly strong and acts even at a distance. In my younger days I have experienced cases enough, when, during solitary walks, I have felt a great desire for the company of a beloved girl, and have thought of her till she has really come to meet me. 'I was so restless in my room,' she has said, 'that I could not help coming here.'

"I recollect an instance during the first years of my residence here, where I soon fell in love again. I had taken a long journey, and had returned some days; but, being detained late at night by court affairs, I had not been able to visit my mistress; besides, our mutual affection had already attracted attention, and I was afraid to pay my visits by day, lest I should increase the common talk. On the fourth or fifth evening,

however, I could resist no longer; and I was on the road to her, and stood before her house, before I had thought of it. I went softly upstairs, and was upon the point of entering her room, when I heard, by the different voices, that she was not alone. I went down again unnoticed, and was quickly in the dark streets—they had no lighting in those days. In an impassioned and angry mood I roamed the town in all directions, for about an hour, and passed the house once more, full of passionate thoughts of my beloved. At last I was on the point of returning to my solitary room, when I once more went past her house, and remarked that she had no light. 'She must have gone out,' said I to myself, 'but whither, in this dark night? and where shall I meet her?' I afterwards went through many streets—I met many people, and was often deceived, as I often fancied I saw her form and size; but, on nearer approach found it was not she. I then firmly believed in a strong mutual influence, and that I could attract her to me by a strong desire. I also believed myself surrounded by invisible beings of a higher order, whom I entreated to direct her steps to me, or mine to her. 'But what a fool thou art!' I then said to myself; 'thou wilt not seek her and go to her again, and yet thou desirest signs and wonders!'

"In the meantime I had gone down the esplanade, and had reached the small house where Schiller afterwards lived, when it occurred to me to turn back towards the palace and then to go down a little street to the right. I had scarcely taken a hundred steps in this direction when I saw coming towards me a female form perfectly resembling her I expected. The street was faintly lighted by weak rays that now and then shone from a window; and, since I had been already often deceived in the course of the evening with an apparent resemblance, I did not feel courage to speak to her. We passed quite close to each other, so that our arms touched. I stood still and looked about me; she did the same. 'Is it you?' said she, and I recognized her voice. 'At last!' said I, and was enraptured even to tears. Our hands clasped each other. 'Now,' said I, 'my hopes have not deceived me; I have sought you with the greatest eagerness; my feelings told me that I should certainly find you; now I am happy, and I thank God that my forebodings have proved true.' 'But, you wicked one!' said she, 'why did you not come? I heard to-day, by chance, that you had been back three days, and I have wept the whole afternoon, because I thought you had forgotten me. Then, an hour

ago, I was seized with a longing and uneasiness on your account, such as I cannot describe. There were two female friends with me, whose visit appeared interminable. At last, when they were gone, I seized my hat and cloak, and was impelled to go out into the air and darkness, I knew not whither; you were constantly in my mind, and I could not help thinking I should meet you.' While she thus spoke truly from her heart, we still held each other's hands and pressed them, and gave each other to understand that absence had not cooled our love. I accompanied her to her door, and into the house. She went up the dark stairs before me, holding my hand and drawing me after her. My happiness was indescribable; both because I at last saw her again, and also because I had not been deluded in my sense of an invisible influence."

(Sup.) Jena, Monday, October 8, 1827.

We arose early. While we were dressing, Goethe related to me a dream of the previous night, in which he imagined himself at Göttingen, where he had pleasant conversations with the professors of his acquaintance.

We drank a few cups of coffee, and then drove to the museum. We saw the anatomical cabinet; various skeletons of animals, modern and primeval; as well as skeletons of men of former ages, on which Goethe remarked that their teeth showed them to have been a very moral race. We then drove to the observatory, where Dr. Schrön showed and explained to us the most important instruments. We also examined the adjacent meteorological cabinet with great interest, and Goethe praised Dr. Schrön for the order in which all was kept.

We then went down into the garden, where Goethe had caused a little breakfast to be laid upon a stone table in an arbour. "You won't guess," said Goethe, "in what remarkable place we are seated. Schiller dwelt here. In this arbour, upon these benches which are now almost broken, we have often sat at this old stone table, and have had great talks. He was then in his thirties, I in my forties; both were full of aspirations, and indeed it was fine. Everything passes away—I am no more what I was: but the old earth still remains; and air, water, and land, are still the same.

"Afterwards you shall go upstairs with Schrön, who will show you the room in the mansarde that Schiller occupied."

In the meantime we relished our breakfast in this pleasant air and on this delightful spot. Schiller was present in our

minds at least; and Goethe had for him many words of affectionate remembrance.

I then went with Schrön to the mansarde, and enjoyed the magnificent prospect from Schiller's windows. The direction was due south; so that there was a view of the beautiful stream, interrupted by thickets and windings, flowing along for miles. There was also a wide expanse of sky. The rising and setting of the planets were admirably observable; and obviously this was the very place for the conception of the astronomical and astrological part of *Wallenstein*.

I returned to Goethe, who drove to Hofrath Döbereiner; whom he highly esteems, and who showed him some new chemical experiments.

It was by this time noon. We were again seated in the carriage.

"I think," said Goethe, "we will not return to the 'Bear,' to dinner; but will enjoy the splendid day in the open air. I think we will go to Burgau. We have wine with us; and in any case we shall find there some good fish, which can be either boiled or broiled."

We did so, and the plan proved splendid. We drove along the bank of the Saale, by the thickets and the windings, the pleasantest way, as I had already seen from Schiller's mansarde. We were soon in Burgau. We alighted at the little inn near the river and the bridge where there is a crossing to Lobeda, a little town close before our eyes across the meadows.

At the inn we found all as Goethe had said. The hostess apologized for having nothing prepared; but said we should have some soup and some good fish.

In the meantime we walked in the sunshine, up and down the bridge, amusing ourselves by looking at the river, which was animated by raftsmen; who, upon planks of pine-wood bound together, glided under the bridge and were very noisy and merry over their troublesome wet work.

We ate our fish in the open air, and then remained sitting over a little wine, and had all sorts of pleasant conversation. A small hawk, which in flight and form bore a strong resemblance to the cuckoo, flew past.

"There was once," said Goethe, "a universal belief that the cuckoo was a cuckoo only in summer, and in winter a bird of prey."

"This opinion still exists amongst the people," said I. "And it is also laid to the charge of this good bird, that as soon as it

is full grown it devours its own parents. It is therefore used as a metaphor for shameful ingratitude. I know people at the present moment who will not allow themselves to be talked out of these absurdities, and who cling to them as firmly as to any article of their Christian belief."

"As far as I know," said Goethe, "the cuckoo is classed with the woodpecker."

"That is sometimes done, probably because two of the toes of its weak feet have a backward inclination. I, however, should not so class it. For the woodpecker's life it has neither the strong beak capable of breaking the decayed bark of a tree, nor the sharp and very strong tail-feathers to support it during the operation. Its toes, also, want the sharp claws necessary to sustain it; so I consider its small feet as not actually but only apparently made for climbing."

"The ornithologists," added Goethe, "are probably delighted when they have brought any peculiar bird under some head; still, Nature carries on her own free sport, without troubling herself with the classes marked out by limited men."[1]

"The nightingale, too," I continued, "is numbered amongst the Gras-Mücken; whilst in the energy of its nature, its movements, and its mode of life, it bears far more resemblance to the thrush. Still, I would not class it among the thrushes. It is a bird between the two; a bird by itself, as the cuckoo is a bird by itself, with a strongly-marked individuality."

"All that I have heard concerning the cuckoo," said Goethe, "excites in me a great interest in this wonderful bird. It is a manifest mystery, but not the less difficult to interpret because it is so manifest. And with how many things do we not find ourselves in the same predicament? We stand in mere wonderment, and the best part of things is closed to us. Let us take the bees. We see them fly for miles after honey, and always in a different direction. Now they fly westward for a week, to a field of flowering rape-seed; then, for a long time, northward, to a flowering heath; then in another direction to the blossom of the buckwheat; then somewhere else, to a flowering clover-field; and at last, in some other direction, to a blossoming lime. But who has said to them, 'Now fly thither, there is something for you'? and 'Now thither, there is something fresh'? And who has led them back to their village and their cell? They go hither and thither, as if in invisible leading-strings;

[1] If this is correctly reported, Goethe had no idea of any connection between classification and the determination of common ancestry.

but what these really are we do not know. It is the same with the lark. She rises, singing, from a cornfield; she soars over a sea of corn, which the wind blows backwards and forwards, and in which one wave looks like the other; she then returns to her young, and drops down, without fail, on the little spot where her nest is placed. All these outward things are as clear as the day to us; but their inward, spiritual tie is concealed."

"The same with the cuckoo," said I. "We know it does not brood itself, but lays its egg in the nest of some other bird. We know, furthermore, that it lays it in the nest of the Gras-Mücke, the yellow wagtail, the monk; also in the nests of the Braunelle, the robin, and the wren. We also know that these are all insect-eating birds; and must be so, because the cuckoo itself is an insect-eating bird and the young cuckoo cannot be brought up by a seed-eating bird. But how does the cuckoo find out that these are all actually insect-eating birds? For all the above-mentioned birds differ extremely from each other, in both form and colour, and also in song and call-note. Further, how comes it that the cuckoo can trust its egg and its tender young to nests as different as possible in structure, temperature, dryness, and moisture? The nest of the Gras-Mücke is built so lightly, with dry hay and horsehair, that all cold penetrates into it, and every breeze blows through it; it is also open at the top, and without shelter; still, the young cuckoo thrives in it excellently. The nest of the wren, on the other hand, is on the outside built firmly and thickly, with moss, straw, and leaves, and carefully lined within with wool and feathers; so that not a breeze can pierce through. It is also covered at the top, and arched over, only a small aperture being left for the very small birds to slip in and out. It might be thought that in the hot days of June the heat in such an enclosed hole must be suffocating; but the young cuckoo thrives there best. Then how different is the nest of the yellow wagtail. This bird lives by brooks and in various damp places. It builds its nest upon damp commons, in a tuft of rushes. It scrapes a hole in the moist earth, and lines it scantily with some blades of grass—so that the young cuckoo is hatched, and must grow up, in the damp and cold; and still it thrives excellently. But what a bird this must be, to which, at the most tender age, varieties of heat and cold, dryness and damp, which would be fatal to any other bird, are indifferent. And how does the old cuckoo know that they are so, when it is so susceptible to damp and cold at an advanced age?"

"This is a mystery," said Goethe; "but tell me, if you have observed it, how the cuckoo places its egg in the nest of the wren, when this has so small an opening that she cannot enter and sit upon it."

"The cuckoo lays it upon a dry spot, and takes it to the nest with her beak. I believe, too, that she does this not only with the wren's nest, but with every other. For the nests of the other insect-eating birds, even when they are open at the top, are still so small or so closely surrounded by twigs that the great long-tailed cuckoo cannot sit upon them. But how it happens that the cuckoo lays so unusually small an egg, so small that it might be the egg of a small insect-eating bird, is a new riddle which one may silently admire without being able to guess. The egg of the cuckoo is only a little larger than that of the Gras-Mücke; indeed, it ought not to be larger, as it has to be hatched by the small insect-eating birds. That Nature should deviate from a great pervading law according to which there exists a certain proportion between the size of the egg and that of the bird—from the humming-bird to the ostrich—is astonishing."

"It certainly astonishes us," said Goethe, "because our point of view is too small to allow us to comprehend. If more were revealed, we should probably find that these apparent deviations are really within the compass of the law. But go on, and tell me something more. Is it known how many eggs the cuckoo lays?"

"Whoever tried to say anything definite on that point would be a great blockhead. The bird is very fleeting. She is now here, now there; there is never more than one of her eggs found in a single nest. She certainly lays several; but who knows where these are, and who could look for them? But, supposing that she lays five eggs, and that all these are properly hatched and brought up by affectionate foster-parents, we must still wonder that Nature can resolve to sacrifice at least fifty of the young of our best singing birds for five young cuckoos."

"As elsewhere," returned Goethe, "Nature does not seem very scrupulous. She has a good fund of life to lavish, and does so now and then without much hesitation. But how does it happen that so many young singing birds are lost for a single young cuckoo?"

"In the first place," I replied, "the first brood is generally lost; for even if it should happen that the eggs of the singing bird are hatched at the same time with that of the cuckoo,

which is very probable, the parents are so much delighted with the larger bird, and show it such fondness, that they think of and feed that alone, whilst their own young are neglected, and vanish from the nest.[1] Besides, the young cuckoo is always greedy, and demands as much nourishment as the little insect-eating birds can procure. It is a very long time before it attains its full size and plumage, and before it is capable of leaving the nest, and soaring to the top of a tree. And even long after it has flown, it requires to be fed continually; so that the whole summer passes away, while the affectionate foster-parents constantly attend upon their great child, and do not think of a second brood. It is on this account that a single young cuckoo causes the loss of so many other young birds."

"That is very convincing," said Goethe. "But is the young cuckoo, as soon as it has flown, fed also by other birds which have not hatched it? I fancy I have heard something of the kind."

"It is so. As soon as the young cuckoo has left its lower nest, and has taken its seat on the top of a tall oak, it utters a loud sound, which says that it is there. Then all the small birds in the neighbourhood that have heard it come up to greet it. The Gras-Mücke and the monk come; the yellow wagtail flies up; and even the wren, whose nature it is constantly to slip into low hedges and thick bushes, conquers its nature, and rises towards the beloved stranger to the top of the tall oak. But the pair that has reared it is more constant with food, whilst the rest only occasionally fly to it with a choice morsel."

"There also appears to be," said Goethe, "a great affection between the young cuckoo and the small insect-eating birds."

"The affection of the small insect-eating birds for the young cuckoo," said I, "is so great, that if any person approaches a nest, the little foster-parents do not know how to contain themselves for terror and anxiety. The monk especially expresses the deepest despair, and flutters on the ground almost as if it were in convulsions."

"This is wonderful enough," said Goethe; "but it can be readily conceived. Still it appears very problematical to me, that a pair of Gras-Mücken, for instance, on the point of hatching their own eggs, should allow the old cuckoo to approach their nest, and lay her egg in it."

"That is truly very enigmatical; but not quite inexplicable.

[1] Eckermann seems not to have known that the young cuckoo throws them out.

All small insect-eating birds feed the cuckoo after it has flown, and it is fed even by those that did not hatch it; so there arises a sort of affinity between the two—they continue to know each other, and to consider each other members of one large family. Indeed, it may happen that the same cuckoo that was hatched and reared by a pair of Gras-Mücken last year may this year bring her egg to them."

"There is something in that," said Goethe, "little as one can comprehend it. But it still appears to me a wonder that the young cuckoo is fed by those birds that have neither hatched it nor reared it."

"That is, indeed, a wonder," said I; "but still it is not without analogy. I divine, in this direction, a great law pervading all nature.

"I once caught a young linnet, too big to be fed by man, but still too young to eat by itself. I took great trouble about it for half a day; but, as it would not eat anything at all, I placed it with an old linnet, a good singer, which I had kept for some time in a cage, and which hung outside my window. I thought, if the young bird sees how the old one eats, perhaps it will go to its food and imitate it. However, it did not do so, but opened its beak towards the old one, and fluttered its wings, uttering a beseeching cry; whereupon the old linnet at once took compassion on it, and, adopting it as a child, fed it as if it had been its own.

"Afterwards, someone brought me a grey Gras-Mücke, and three young ones which I put together in a large cage and which the old one fed. On the following day, someone brought me two young nightingales already fledged, which I put in with the Gras-Mücke, and which the mother bird likewise adopted and fed. Some days afterwards, I added a nest of young Müller-chen nearly fledged, and then a nest with five young Platt-Mönchen. The Gras-Mücke adopted all these and fed them, and tended them like a true mother. She had her beak always full of ants' eggs, and was now in one corner of the roomy cage, and now in the other, so that whenever a hungry throat opened, there she was. Still more: one of the young Gras-Mücken, which had grown up in the meantime, began to feed some of the smaller ones. This was, indeed, done in rather a playful, childish manner; but still with a decided inclination to imitate the excellent mother."

"There is certainly something divine in this," said Goethe, "which gives me a pleasing sense of wonder. If it were a

fact that this feeding by strangers was a universal law of nature, it would unravel many enigmas, and it could be said with certainty that God pities the deserted young ravens that call upon Him."

"It certainly appears to be a universal law," said I; "for I have observed this assistance in feeding and this pity for the forlorn, even in a wild state.

"Last summer, in the neighbourhood of Tiefurt, I took two young wrens—which had probably only just left their nest, for they sat on a twig with seven other young ones in a row, and the old bird was feeding them. I put the young birds in my silk pocket-handkerchief, and went towards Weimar, as far as the shooting-house; I then turned to the right towards the meadow, down along the Ilm, and passed the bathing-place, and then again to the left to the little wood. Here I thought I had a quiet spot to look once more at the wrens. But when I opened my handkerchief they both slipped out, and disappeared in the bushes and grass, so that I sought them in vain. Three days afterwards, I returned by chance to the same place, and hearing the note of a robin, guessed there was in the neighbourhood a nest; which, after looking about for some time, I really found. But how great was my astonishmen, when I saw in this nest, besides some young robins nearly fledged, my two young wrens, which had established themselves very comfortably and allowed themselves to be fed by the old robins!"

"That is one of the best ornithological stories I have ever heard," said Goethe. "I drink success to you, and good luck to your investigations. Whoever hears that, and does not believe in God, will not be aided by Moses and the prophets. That is what I call the omnipresence of the Deity, who has everywhere spread and implanted a portion of His endless love, and has intimated even in the brute, as a germ, that which only blossoms to perfection in noble man."

While we thus conversed on good and deep matters over our dinner in the open air, the sun had declined towards the summit of the western hills. We drove quickly through Jena; and after we had settled our account at the "Bear," and had paid a short visit to Frommann, we drove rapidly to Weimar.

(Sup.) Thursday, October 18, 1827.

Hegel—whom Goethe esteems very highly as a person, though he does not much relish some of the fruits produced

by his philosophy—is here. In his honour, Goethe this evening gave a tea-party, at which was also present Zelter, who intended to depart to-night.

A great deal was said about Hamann; with respect to whom Hegel was chief spokesman, displaying a deep insight into this extraordinary mind, such as could only have arisen from a most earnest and scrupulous study of the subject.

The discourse then turned upon the nature of dialectics. "They are, in fact," said Hegel, "nothing more than the regulated, methodically-cultivated spirit of contradiction which is innate in all men, and which shows itself great as a talent in the distinction between the true and the false."

"Let us only hope," interposed Goethe, "that these intellectual arts and dexterities are not frequently misused, and employed to make the false true and the true false."

"That certainly happens," said Hegel; "but only with people who are mentally diseased."

"I therefore congratulate myself," said Goethe, "upon the study of nature, which preserves me from such a disease. For here we have to deal with the infinitely and eternally true, which throws off as incapable everyone who does not proceed purely and honestly with the treatment and observation of his subject. I am also certain that many a dialectic disease would find a wholesome remedy in the study of nature."

We were still discoursing in the most cheerful manner, when Zelter arose and went out, without saying a word. We knew that it grieved him to take leave of Goethe, and that he chose this delicate expedient for avoiding a painful moment.

1828

(Sup.) Tuesday, March 11, 1828.

For several weeks I have not been quite well. I sleep badly, and from night to morning have the most harassing dreams; in which I see myself in the most various states, carry on all sorts of conversation with known and unknown persons, get into disputes and quarrels—and all this in such a vivid manner that I am perfectly conscious of every particular next morning. But this dreamy life consumes the powers of my brain, so that I feel weak and unnerved in the daytime, and without wish or thought for intellectual activity.

I had frequently complained of my condition to Goethe, and he had repeatedly urged me to consult my physician. "Your malady," said he, "is certainly not very serious; it is probably nothing but a little stagnation, which a glass or two of mineral water or a little salts would remove. But do not let it linger; attack it at once."

Goethe may have been right, and I said to myself that he was right; but my indecision was such that I again allowed many restless nights and wretched days to pass, without making the least attempt at a cure.

As I did not seem to Goethe very gay and cheerful to-day after dinner, he lost patience, smiling at me ironically, and bantering me a little.

"You are a second Shandy," said he, "the father of that renowned Tristram, who was annoyed half his life by a creaking door, and who could not come to the resolution of removing the daily annoyance with a few drops of oil. But so it is with us all! The darkening and illuminating of man make his destiny. The dæmon ought to lead us every day in leading-strings, and tell us what we ought to do on every occasion. But the good spirit leaves us in the lurch, and we grope about in the dark.

"Napoleon was the man! Always illuminated, always clear and decided, and endowed at every hour with energy enough to carry out whatever he considered necessary. His life was the stride of a demigod, from battle to battle, and from victory

to victory. It might well be said that he was in a state of continual illumination. On this account, his destiny was more brilliant than any the world had seen before him, or perhaps will ever see after him.

"Yes, yes, my good friend, that was a fellow we cannot imitate!"

Goethe paced up and down the room. I had placed myself at the table, which had been already cleared, but upon which there was left some wine with some biscuits and fruit. Goethe filled for me, and compelled me to partake of both. "You have, indeed," said he, "not condescended to be our guest at dinner to-day; but still a glass of this present from good friends ought to do you good."

I did not refuse these good things; and Goethe continued to walk up and down the room, murmuring to himself in an excited state of mind, and from time to time uttering unintelligible words.

What he had just said about Napoleon was in my mind, and I endeavoured to lead the conversation back to that subject. "Still it appears to me," I began, "that Napoleon was especially in that state of continued illumination when he was young, and his powers were yet on the increase—when, indeed, we see at his side divine protection and a constant fortune. In later years this illumination appears to have forsaken him, as well as his fortune and his good star."

"What would you have? I did not write my love songs, or my *Werther*, a second time. That divine illumination, whence everything proceeds, we shall always find in connection with youth and productiveness; as in the case of Napoleon, who was one of the most productive men that ever lived.

"Yes, yes, my good friend, one need not write poems and plays to be productive; there is also a productiveness of deeds, which in many cases stands an important degree higher. The physician himself must be productive, if he really intends to heal; if he is not so, he will succeed only now and then, as if by chance; but on the whole he will be only a bungler."

"You appear," added I, "to call productiveness that which is usually called genius."

"One lies very near the other," said Goethe. "For what is genius but that productive power by which arise deeds that can display themselves before God and nature, and are therefore permanent and produce results? All Mozart's works are of this kind; there lies in them a productive power that operates

upon generation after generation and still is not wasted or consumed.

"It is the same with other great composers and artists. What an influence have Phidias and Raphael had upon succeeding centuries! And Dürer and Holbein also! The inventor of the forms and proportions of old German architecture, which led in course of time to Strasburg Minster and Cologne Cathedral, was also a genius; his thoughts operate even to the present hour. Luther was a genius of a very important kind; he has already gone on with influence for many a long day, and we cannot count the days when he will cease to be productive. Lessing would not allow himself the lofty title of a genius; but his permanent influence bears witness against him. On the other hand, we have in literature other names, and those of importance, the possessors of which while they lived were deemed great geniuses, but whose influence ended with their life and who were therefore less than they and others thought. As I said before, there is no genius without a productive power of permanent influence; furthermore, genius does not depend upon the business, the art, or the trade a man follows, but may be alike in all. Whether a man shows himself a genius in science, like Oken and Humboldt; or in war and statesmanship, like Frederick and Peter the Great and Napoleon; or whether he composes a song like Béranger—it all comes to the same thing; the only point is, whether the thought, the discovery, the deed, is living and can live on.

"It is not the *mass* of creations and deeds proceeding from a person, that indicates productivity. We have, in literature, poets considered very productive because volume after volume of their poems has appeared. But in my opinion these people ought to be called thoroughly unproductive; for what they have written is without life and durability. Goldsmith, on the contrary, has written so few poems that their number is not worth mentioning; nevertheless, I must pronounce him a thoroughly productive poet—indeed, even on that account; because the little he has written has an inherent life which can sustain itself."

Goethe continued to pace up and down. I was desirous of hearing something more on this weighty matter, and therefore endeavoured to arouse him once more.

"Does this productiveness of genius," said I, "lie merely in the mind of an important man, or does it also lie in the body?"

"The body," said Goethe, "has at least a mighty influence

upon it. There was indeed a time when, in Germany, a genius was always thought of as short, weak, or hunchbacked; but commend me to a genius who has a well-proportioned body.

"When it was said of Napoleon that he was a man of granite, this applied particularly to his body. What was it he could not and did not venture? From the burning sands of the Syrian deserts to the snowy plains of Moscow, what incalculable marches, battles, and nightly bivouacs did he go through? And what fatigues and bodily privations was he forced to endure? Little sleep, little nourishment, and yet always in the highest mental activity. After the awful exertion and excitement of the eighteenth Brumaire, it was midnight, and he had not tasted anything during the whole day; and yet, without thinking of strengthening his body, he felt power enough in the depth of the night to draw up the well-known proclamation to the French people. When what he accomplished and endured is considered, it might be imagined that when he was in his fortieth year not a sound particle was left in him; but even at that age he still occupied the position of a perfect hero.

"But you are quite right; the real focus of his lustre belongs to his youth. And it is something to say that a man of obscure origin, at a time that set all capacities in motion, so distinguished himself as to become, in his seven-and-twentieth year, the idol of a nation of thirty millions! Yes, yes, my good friend, one must be young to do great things. And Napoleon is not the only one!"

"His brother Lucien," remarked I, "also did a great deal at an early age. We see him as President of the Five Hundred, and afterwards as Minister of the Interior, when scarce five-and-twenty."

"Why name Lucien?" interposed Goethe. "History presents to us hundreds of clever people who while still young have superintended with distinction the most important matters, both in the cabinet and in the field.

"If I were a prince," continued he, with animation, "I would never place in the highest offices people that have gradually risen by mere birth and seniority, who in their old age move on leisurely in their accustomed track; for in this way little talent is brought to light. I would have young men; but they must have capacities—clearness, energy, the best will, and the noblest character. Then there would be pleasure in governing and improving one's people. But where is there a prince who would like this, and who would be so well served?

"I have great hopes of the present Crown Prince of Prussia. From all that I hear and know of him, he is a very distinguished man; and this is necessary for the recognition and choice of qualified and clever people. For, say what we will, like can only be recognized by like; only a prince who himself possesses great abilities can properly acknowledge and value great abilities in his subjects and servants. 'Let the path be open to talent' was the well-known maxim of Napoleon; who really had a particular tact in the choice of his people, who knew how to place every outstanding ability where it seemed in its proper sphere, and who therefore during his lifetime was served in all his great undertakings as scarcely anyone was served before."

Goethe delighted me particularly this evening. The noblest part of his nature appeared alive in him, while the sound of his voice and the fire of his eyes were as powerful as if he were inflamed by a fresh blazing-up of his youth.

It was remarkable to me that he, who at so great an age himself superintended an important post, should speak so decidedly in favour of youth, and should desire the first offices in the state to be filled by men still young. I could not forbear mentioning some Germans of high standing who at an advanced age did not appear to want the necessary energy and youthful activity.

"Such men are natural geniuses," he said. "Their case is peculiar; they experience a renewed puberty, whilst other people are young but once.

"Every *Entelechy* [1] is a piece of eternity, and the few years during which it is bound to the earthly body do not make it old. If this *Entelechy* is of a trivial kind, it will exercise but little sway; the body will predominate, and when this grows old the *Entelechy* will not hold and restrain it. But if the *Entelechy* is of a powerful kind, as with all men of natural genius, then it will, with its animating penetration of the body, not only strengthen and ennoble the organization, but also endeavour with its spiritual superiority to confer the privilege of perpetual youth. Thence it comes that in men of superior endowments, even during their old age, we constantly perceive fresh epochs of singular productiveness; they seem constantly to grow young again for a time, and that is what I call a repeated puberty.

[1] If for this Aristotelian word the reader substitutes the popular expression "soul," he will not go far wrong as far as this passage is concerned.—J. O.

An Aristotelian *Entelechy* is the condition by which a potentiality becomes an actuality.

Still—youth is youth; and, however powerful an *Entelechy* may prove, it will never become quite master of the corporeal; and it makes a wonderful difference whether it finds in the body an ally or an adversary.

"There was a time when I had to furnish a printed sheet every day, and I did it easily. I wrote my *Geschwister* (Brother and Sister) in three days; my *Clavigo*, as you know, in a week. Now it seems I can do nothing of the kind, and still I can by no means complain of want of productiveness even at my advanced age. But whereas in my youth I succeeded daily and under all circumstances, I now succeed only periodically and under favourable conditions. When, ten or twelve years ago, in the happy time after the war of independence, the poems of the *Divan* had me in their power, I often composed two or three in a day; and it was all the same to me whether I was in the open air, in the chariot, or in an inn. Now, I can only work at the second part of my *Faust* during the early part of the day, when I feel refreshed and revived by sleep and have not been perplexed by the trifles of daily life. And after all, what is it I achieve? In the most favourable circumstances, a page of writing: but generally only so much as could be written in the space of a hand-breadth; and often, when in an unproductive humour, still less."

"Are there, then, no means," said I, "to call forth a productive mood, or, if it is not powerful enough, of increasing it?"

"No productiveness of the highest kind," said Goethe, "no remarkable discovery, no great thought that bears fruit and has results, is in the power of anyone; such things are above earthly control. Man must consider them as an unexpected gift from above, as pure children of God which he must receive and venerate with joyful thanks. They are akin to the dæmon, which does with him what it pleases, and to which he unconsciously resigns himself whilst he believes he is acting from his own impulse. In such cases, man may often be considered an instrument in a higher government of the world—a vessel worthy to contain a divine influence. I say this when I consider how often a single thought has given a different form to whole centuries, and how individual men have imprinted a stamp upon their age which has remained uneffaced and operated beneficially for generations.

"However, there is a productiveness of another kind: one subject to earthly influences, one that man has more in his power—although here also he finds cause to bow before some-

thing divine. In this category I place all that appertains to the execution of a plan, all the links of a chain of thought, the ends of which already shine forth; I also place there all that constitutes the visible body of a work of art.

"Thus, Shakespeare was inspired with the first thought of his *Hamlet* when the spirit of the whole presented itself to his mind as an unexpected impression; and when he surveyed the several situations, characters, and conclusion, in an elevated mood, as a pure gift from above on which he had no immediate influence—although the possibility of such a conception certainly presupposed a mind like his. But the individual scenes, and the dialogue of the characters, he had completely in his power, so that he might produce them daily and hourly and work at them for weeks if he liked. And, indeed, we constantly see in all that he has achieved the same power of production; and in all his plays we never come to a passage of which it could be said 'This was not written in the proper humour, or with the most perfect faculty.' Whilst we read him, we receive the impression of a man thoroughly strong and healthy in both mind and body.

"Supposing, however, that the bodily constitution of a dramatic poet were not so strong and excellent, and that he were subject to frequent illness and weakness—the productiveness necessary for the daily construction of his scenes would very frequently cease, and would often fail him for days. If now, by alcohol, he tried to force his failing productiveness, the method would certainly answer; but it would be discoverable in all the scenes he had written under such an influence, to their great disadvantage. My counsel is, to force nothing, and rather to trifle and sleep away all unproductive days and hours, than on such days to compose something that will afterwards give no pleasure."

"That," said I, "is what I myself have very often experienced and felt. Still, it appears to me that a person might by natural means heighten his productive mood without exactly forcing it. I have often been unable to arrive at any right conclusion in complicated circumstances; but if I have drunk a few glasses of wine I have at once seen clearly what was to be done, and have come to a resolution on the spot. The adoption of a resolution is, after all, a species of productiveness; and, if a glass or two of wine will bring about this good effect, such means are surely not to be rejected altogether."

"I will not contradict you," said Goethe; "but what I said

before is also correct, by which you see that truth may be compared to a diamond, the rays of which dart not to one side, but to many. Since you know my *Divan* so well, you know also that I myself have said:

When we have drunk
We know what 's right;

and therefore that I perfectly agree with you. Productive-making [1] powers of a very important kind certainly are contained in wine; still, all depends upon time and circumstance, and what is useful to one is prejudicial to another. Productive-making powers are also contained in sleep and repose; but they are also contained in movement. Such powers lie in the water, and particularly in the atmosphere. The fresh air of the open country is our proper element; it is as if the breath of God were there wafted immediately to men, and a divine power exerted its influence. Lord Byron, who daily passed several hours in the open air—now riding on horseback along the sea-shore; now sailing or rowing in a boat; now bathing in the sea, and exercising his physical powers in swimming—was one of the most productive men who ever lived."

Goethe had seated himself opposite to me. We again dwelt upon Lord Byron, and the many misfortunes that had embittered his later life—until at last a noble will, but an unhappy destiny, drove him into Greece, and entirely destroyed him.

"You will find," continued Goethe, "that in middle age a man frequently experiences a change; and that, while in his youth everything has favoured him, and has prospered with him, all is now completely reversed, and misfortunes and disasters are heaped one upon another.

"But do you know what I think about it? Man must be ruined again! Every extraordinary man has a certain mission to accomplish. If he has fulfilled it, he is no longer needed upon earth in the same form, and Providence uses him for something else. But as everything here below happens in a natural way, the dæmons keep tripping him up till he falls at last. Thus it was with Napoleon and many others. Mozart died in his six-and-thirtieth year. Raphael at the same age. Byron only a little older. But all these had perfectly fulfilled their missions; and it was time for them to depart, that other people might still have something to do in a world made to last a long while."

[1] "Productivmachende." Probably he meant "production-stimulating."

It was now late; Goethe gave me his dear hand, and I departed.

(Sup.) Wednesday, March 12, 1828.

After I had quitted Goethe yesterday evening, the important conversation I had carried on with him remained in my mind. The discourse had also been upon the sea and sea air; and Goethe had expressed the opinion that all islanders and inhabitants of the seashore in temperate climates were far more productive, and possessed of more active force, than the people in the interior of large continents.

[Eckermann relates a dream he had: of being on the north coast of the Mediterranean amid Arcadian company which got left on a rock and had to swim ashore—a feat for which he was unwilling because of the comparative uncomeliness of his form; which was at length kindly appropriated in exchange by one of the comelier young men. Eckermann, feeling conscience-stricken for having left an unlovely body on his friend's hands, was astonished to see that the young man had, in the effort to swim ashore in a second-rate body, imparted to it a new youthfulness.]

"That is a very pretty dream," said Goethe, when, after dinner to-day, I related the principal incidents. "We see," continued he, "that the muses visit you even in sleep, and indeed with particular favour; for you must confess that it would be difficult for you to invent anything so peculiar and pretty in your waking moments."

"I can scarcely conceive how it happened to me; for I had felt so dejected all day that the contemplation of so fresh a life was far from my mind."

"Human nature possesses wonderful powers," said Goethe, "and has something good in readiness for us when we least hope for it. There have been times when I have fallen asleep in tears; but in my dreams the most charming forms have come to console and to cheer me, and I have risen the next morning fresh and joyful.

"There is something more or less wrong among us old Europeans; our relations are far too artificial and complicated, our nutriment and mode of life are unnatural, and our social intercourse is without proper love and good will. Everyone is polished and courteous; but nobody has the courage to be hearty and true; so that an honest man, with natural views and feelings, stands in a very bad position. Often we are tempted to wish that we had been born upon one of the South

Sea Islands, in a so-called savage state, so as to have thoroughly enjoyed human existence without adulteration.

"If in a depressed mood we reflect deeply upon the wretchedness of our age, it often occurs to us that the world is approaching the last day. And the evil accumulates from generation to generation! It is not enough that we have to suffer for the sins of our fathers; we hand down to posterity these inherited vices increased by our own."

"I have often thought so," answered I; "but if I see a regiment of German dragoons ride by me, and observe the beauty and power of these young people, I am again consoled, and say to myself that the durability of mankind is after all not in such a desperate plight."

"Our country people," said Goethe, "have certainly kept up their strength, and I hope will long be able not only to furnish good horsemen, but also to secure us from total decay and destruction. The rural population is a magazine, from which the forces of declining mankind are always recruited and refreshed. But just go into our great towns, and you will feel quite differently. Just take a turn by the side of a second *diable boiteux*, or a physician with a large practice; and he will whisper to you tales that will horrify you at the misery, and astonish you at the vice, with which human nature is visited and from which society suffers.

"But let us banish these hypochondriacal thoughts. How are you going on? What are you doing? What else have you seen to-day? Tell me, and inspire me with good thoughts."

"I have been reading Sterne, where Yorick is sauntering about the streets of Paris and remarks that every tenth man is a dwarf. I thought of that when you mentioned the vices of great towns. I also remember seeing, in Napoleon's time, among the French infantry, one battalion consisting entirely of Parisians, who were all such puny diminutive people that nobody could imagine what could be done with them in battle."

"The Scotch Highlanders under the Duke of Wellington," rejoined Goethe, "were doubtless heroes of another description."

"I saw them in Brussels a year before the battle of Waterloo. They were indeed fine men; all strong, fresh, and active, as if just from the hand of their Maker. They all carried their heads so freely and gallantly, and stepped so lightly along with their strong bare legs, that they seemed uncontaminated by either original sin or ancestral failing."

"There is something peculiar in this," said Goethe. "Whether

it lies in the race, in the soil, in the free political constitution, or in the healthy tone of education—certainly, the English in general appear to have certain advantages over many others. Here in Weimar, we see only a few of them, and probably by no means the best; but what fine handsome people they are! And however young they come here, they feel no embarrassment in this foreign atmosphere; their deportment in society is as easy as if they were lords everywhere and the whole world belonged to them. This it is which pleases our women, and by which they make such havoc in the hearts of our young ladies. As a German father of a family, who is concerned for the tranquillity of his household, I often feel a slight shudder when my daughter-in-law announces to me the expected arrival of some fresh young islander. I already see in my mind's eye the tears that will one day flow when he takes his departure. They are dangerous young people; but this very quality of being dangerous is their virtue."

"Still," said I, "I would not assert that the young Englishmen in Weimar are more clever, more intelligent, better informed, or more excellent at heart than other people."

"The secret does not lie in these things," returned Goethe. "Neither does it lie in birth and riches; it lies in the courage that they have to be what nature has made them for. There is nothing vitiated or spoilt about them, there is nothing half-way or crooked; but such as they are, they are thoroughly complete men. That they are also sometimes complete fools, I allow with all my heart; but that is still something, and has still always some weight in the scale of nature.

"The happiness of personal freedom, the consciousness of an English name and of the importance attached to it by other nations, is an advantage even to the children; for in their own family, as well as in school, they are treated with far more respect, and enjoy a far freer development, than is the case with us Germans.

"In our own dear Weimar, I need only look out at the window to discover how matters stand with us. Lately, when the snow was lying on the ground, and my neighbour's children were trying their little sledges in the street, the police were immediately at hand, and I saw the poor little things fly as quickly as they could. Now, when the spring sun tempts them from the houses, and they would like to play with their companions before the door, I see them always constrained, as if they were not safe and feared the approach of some despot

of the police. Not a boy may crack a whip, or sing or shout; the police are immediately at hand to forbid it. This has the effect of taming youth prematurely, and of driving out all originality and all wildness, so that in the end nothing remains but the Philistine.

"You know that scarcely a day passes when I am not visited by some travelling foreigner. But if I were to say that I took great pleasure in the personal appearance especially of young learned Germans from a certain north-eastern quarter, I should lie.

"Short-sighted, pale, narrow-chested, young without youth; that is a picture of most of them. And if I enter into conversation with any of them, I immediately see that the things in which one of *us* takes pleasure seem to them vain and trivial, that they are entirely absorbed in the Idea, and that only the highest problems of speculation are fitted to interest them. Of sound senses or delight in the sensuous, there is no trace; all youthful feeling and all youthful pleasure are driven out of them, and that irrecoverably; for if a man is not young in his twentieth year, how can he be so in his fortieth?"

Goethe sighed and was silent.

I thought of the happy time in the last century, in which Goethe's youth fell; the summer air of Seesenheim passed before my soul, and I reminded him of the verses:

In the afternoon we sat,
Young people, in the cool.

"Ah," sighed Goethe, "those were indeed happy times. But we will drive them from our minds, that the dark foggy days of the present may not become quite insupportable."

"A second Redeemer," said I, "would be required to remove from us the seriousness, the discomfort, and the monstrous oppressiveness of the present state of things."

"If He came," answered Goethe, "He would be crucified a second time. Still, we need nothing so great. If we could only alter the Germans after the model of the English, if we could only have less philosophy and more power of action, less theory and more practice, we might obtain a good share of redemption without waiting for the personal majesty of a second Christ. Much may be done from below by the people by means of schools and domestic education; much from above by the rulers and those in immediate connection with them.

"Thus, for instance, I cannot approve the requirement, in