

conviction, after a consideration of all the circumstances, that there was no means of saving them. That he descended into the Pyramids is a fable: he stood at his ease on the outside, and let others tell him what they had seen below. In the same way, the tradition that he wore the Eastern dress is inaccurate: he put it on once at home, and appeared in it among his followers to see how it became him; but the turban does not suit such long heads, and he never put on the dress again.

“He really visited those sick of the plague; to prove that he who could vanquish fear could vanquish the plague also. And he was right! I can instance a fact from my own life, when I was inevitably exposed to infection from a putrid fever, and warded off the disease merely by force of will. It is incredible what power the moral will has in such cases. It penetrates the body, and puts it into a state of activity that repels hurtful influences. Fear, on the other hand, is a state of indolent weakness and susceptibility, which makes it easy for every foe to take possession. This Napoleon knew well, and he felt that he risked nothing in giving his army an imposing example.

“But,” continued Goethe, gaily, “pay your respects. What book do you think Napoleon carried in his field library?—my *Werther*!”

“We may see by his levee at Erfurt,” said I, “that he had studied it well.”

“He had studied it as a criminal judge does his documents,” said Goethe, “and in this spirit talked with me about it. In Bourrienne’s work there is a list of the books Napoleon took to Egypt, among which is *Werther*. But what is worth noticing in this list is the way the books are classed under different rubrics. Under the head *Politique*, for instance, we find the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran; by which we see from what point of view Napoleon regarded religious matters.”

He told us many other interesting matters from the book: item, how Napoleon with his army went through part of the dry bed in the narrow part of the Red Sea, at the time of ebb; but was overtaken by the flood, and the last men waded up to their arms in water, so that the exploit nearly ended in Pharaoh’s style. This led Goethe to say much that was new on the rise of the flood. He compared it with that of the clouds, which do not come from a great distance, but arise at once in various parts and pass along uniformly everywhere.

Wednesday, April 8, 1829.

Goethe was already at table when I entered.

"Whence, think you," said he, "have I had a letter?—From Rome. But from whom?—From the King of Bavaria."

"I sympathize in your pleasure," said I. "And is it not odd? Not an hour since, and during my walk, I had been thinking about the King of Bavaria."

"We have often internal intimations of that sort. There is the letter; sit down by me, and read it."

I took the letter, Goethe took the newspaper; and so, undisturbed, I read the royal words. The letter was dated Rome, 26th March, 1829, and was written in a very legible and dignified hand. The King told Goethe that he had bought an estate in Rome, the Villa di Malta, with the adjacent gardens in the neighbourhood of the Villa Ludovisi, at the north-west end of the city. It stands upon a hill, so that he can see over all Rome, and has towards the north-east a full view of St. Peter's.

"It is a prospect," he writes, "worth travelling a long way to enjoy, which I have at my command every hour, from the windows of my own house."

He goes on congratulating himself at being so pleasantly settled at Rome. "I had not seen Rome for twelve years," he writes, "and longed for it as for a mistress; from now on, however, I shall return with tranquil feelings, as to a beloved female friend." He then speaks of the sublime edifices and works of art with the enthusiasm of a connoisseur, keenly sensitive to any departure from good taste. The letter altogether was in a beautiful and thoroughly human vein, not like what is expected from persons of such high rank.

"There," said Goethe, "you see a monarch who retains both his royal majesty and his inborn fine human nature. A rare phenomenon, and the more delightful."

I looked again at the letter. "Here in Rome," writes the King, "I refresh myself from the cares of a throne; Art and Nature are my daily enjoyments—artists my table companions." He also writes how he passed the house where Goethe resided, and how he thought of him at the time. Some passages are cited from the *Roman Elegies*¹; so it may be seen the King keeps them fresh in his memory and likes to read them at Rome from time to time on the spot where they were produced.

"Yes," said Goethe, "he is particularly fond of those elegies. He has teased me a great deal to tell him how far they are

¹ i.e. Goethe's—J. O.

matter of fact; the effect of the poems being so pleasant that it seems as if there must have been really some truth in them. People seldom reflect that a poet can generally make something good out of very little.

“I wish I had the King’s poems by me, that I might allude to them in my answer. I should think they were good, to judge from the little I have read. In form and treatment he has much of Schiller; and, if he has put the substance of a lofty soul into so fine a vase, we should expect much excellence. I am glad the King is so pleasantly settled at Rome. I know the villa—the situation is beautiful, and all the German artists reside in the vicinity.”

The servant changed the plates, and Goethe bade him spread out the large engraving of Rome on the floor of the “covered chamber.” “I will show you on what a beautiful spot the King has settled, that you may have a right notion of the place.”

“Yesterday evening,” said I, “I read *Claudine von Villa Bella*, and was delighted with it. The foundation is so well laid, and it is carried out with such joyous audacity, that I strongly desire to see it on the stage.”

“If it is well played the effect is not bad.”

“I have already cast the piece in my mind,” said I, “and distributed the parts. Herr Genast must be Rugantino; he seems actually made for the part. Herr Franke must be Don Pedro; for he is similarly shaped, and it is good for two brothers to be somewhat alike. Basco should be Herr La Roche; who, with his excellent art and making-up, would give the part the required wildness.”

“Madame Eberwein,” continued Goethe, “would make a very good Lucinde, and Mademoiselle Schmidt would be Claudine.”

“For Alonzo,” said I, “we ought to have a stately figure—rather a good actor than a singer, and I think Herr Oels or Herr Graff would be well placed. But by whom is the opera composed, and what is the music like?”

“By Reichardt, and it is excellent; only, the instrumentation is a little weak, owing to the taste of the time. Something should now be done to make the instrumentation stronger and fuller. With our song, *Cupido loser, eigensinniger Knabe*, the composer has been particularly happy.”

“That song,” said I, “puts me in a pleasant dreamy mood whenever it is recited.”

“From such a mood it proceeded,” said Goethe, “so the effect is right.”

We had finished eating. Frederick came in and told us that he had laid out the engraving of Rome in the "covered chamber." We went in to look at it. Goethe soon found the Villa Ludovisi, and near it the King's new purchase—the Villa di Malta.

"See," said he, "what a superb situation! The whole city is spread out before you, and the hill is so high that you can see over the buildings towards south and east. I have been in this villa, and often enjoyed the view from the windows. Here, where the city extends out in a point towards the north-east beyond the Tiber, lies St. Peter's; and here, hard by, is the Vatican. The King, you see, has from the windows of his villa a full view of these buildings across the river. The long road here, from the north into the city, comes from Germany; that is the Porta del Popolo. I lived in one of these first streets near the gate, in a corner house. They show another in Rome as the place where I lived; but it is not the right one. No matter: such things are quite indifferent; we must let tradition take its course."

We returned to the dining-room.

"The Chancellor," said I, "would be pleased with that letter from the King."

"He shall see it," said Goethe.

"When I read in the Paris newspaper," he continued, "the speeches and debates of the Chambers, I cannot help thinking of the Chancellor, and how truly he would be in his element there. For such a place it is not enough to have talent: there must be an impulse to speak, and a delight in it; both are united in our Chancellor. Napoleon, too, had this impulse to speak; and when he could not he was forced to write or dictate. We find with Blücher, too, that he liked to speak, and spoke well and with emphasis; he had cultivated this talent in the theatre-box. Our Grand Duke, too, liked to speak, though by nature laconic; when he could not speak, he wrote. He has prepared many laws, many treaties, for the most part well; only, princes have not time or quiet to get knowledge of details. Even in his last days he made an order about paying for the restoration of pictures. A happy instance! for, quite like a prince, he had made a mathematical calculation for paying the expenses of restoration by measure: if the restored picture holds twelve square feet, pay twelve dollars; if four feet, four dollars. This was like a prince, but not like an artist; for a twelve-foot picture may be in such a state that it can be cleaned

without much trouble in a day, while a four-foot picture may be in such a condition that the industry and toil of a whole week will scarcely suffice to restore it. But princes, like good military men, are fond of mathematical arrangements."

We then said a great deal about art.

"I possess drawings," said Goethe, "after pictures by Raphael and Domenichino, upon which Meyer made a remarkable observation:

"The drawings," said Meyer, 'evince a want of practice; but it is evident that whoever made them had a delicate and just feeling for the pictures before him; and this has passed into the drawing, so as to bring the originals faithfully before the mind. If an artist of our day copied those pictures, he would draw everything far better, and perhaps more correctly; but I venture to say that he would want this true feeling for the original, and that therefore his superior drawing would be far from giving us so pure and perfect a notion of Raphael or Domenichino.'

"Is not that good?" said Goethe. "And the same may be said of translations. Voss, for instance, has certainly made an excellent translation from Homer; yet I am inclined to think a person might have had and conveyed a more naïve and faithful representation of the original, without being on the whole so masterly a translator as Voss."

As the weather was fine, and the sun was already high, we went a little way down the garden, where Goethe had had some trees, which hung too low upon the path, tied up.

The yellow crocuses were in full vigour. We looked upon the flowers and then upon the path, where we had perfectly violet images. "You were lately of opinion," said Goethe, "that green and red mutually called forth each other better than yellow and blue; inasmuch as the former colours stood at a higher degree, and were therefore more perfect, fuller,¹ and more effective, than the latter. I cannot admit this. Every colour, as soon as it is decidedly exhibited to the eye, acts with equal force for the production of the 'demanded colour.' The only point is, that our eye should be in the right mood, that the sunlight should offer no impediment by overbrightness, and that the ground should not be unfavourable to the reception of the 'demanded' image. Generally, we must take care not to make too subtle distinctions and definitions with respect to colours, as we are too easily exposed to the danger of being led from the

¹ Literally "satiated" (*gesättigt*).—J. O.

essential into the non-essential, from the true into the false, and from the simple into the intricate."

I noted down this as a good doctrine for my studies. Meanwhile, the time for the theatre had arrived, and I prepared to set out. "Mind," said Goethe, laughing, as he took leave of me, "that you are able to get over the horrors of *Thirty Years of a Gamester's Life* this evening."

Friday, April 10, 1829.

"While we are waiting for our soup, I will provide you with refreshment for your eyes."

With these words, Goethe placed before me a volume containing landscapes of Claude Lorraine: the first productions of this great master that I had seen. My surprise and rapture rose with every leaf I turned over.

The power of the shadowy masses on either side; the splendid sunlight from the background; and its reflection in the water, producing a clear and decisive impression—struck me as the always-recurring art-maxim of the great master. I was also delighted to find each picture a little world by itself, in which there was nothing not in conformity with, not advancing, the ruling thought. Whether it was a seaport with vessels at anchor, active fishermen and magnificent buildings on the water's edge; or a lonely barren hill-country, with its grazing goats, little brook and bridge, a few low bushes, and a shady tree, under which a reposing shepherd piped; or a marshy spot with standing pools, which in the powerful summer heat gives a pleasant impression of coolness—there was always complete unity in the picture; nowhere anything that did not belong to its element.

"Here you see, for once, a complete man," said Goethe, "who thought and felt beautifully, and in whose mind lay a world such as you will not easily find out of doors. The pictures have the highest truth, but no trace of actuality. Claude Lorraine knew the real world by heart, down to the minutest details, and used it only as a means to express the world of his beautiful soul. That is the true ideality which can so use real means that the truth evolved produces an illusion of actuality."

"This, I think, is good doctrine," said I, "and would apply as well to poetry as to the plastic arts."

"Even so. Meanwhile, you had better defer the further enjoyment of the admirable Claude till after dinner; for the pictures are too good to be looked at too many at once."

“That is my feeling,” said I; “for a certain fear comes over me when I am about to turn to the following leaf. We have a similar feeling with an excellent book, when a crowd of good passages compel us to stop, and we loiter a little.”

“I have answered the King of Bavaria,” said Goethe, after a pause, “and you shall read my letter. Meanwhile, there is in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* a poem to the King, which the Chancellor read to me yesterday and which you must see.”

I read the poem to myself.

“Now, what do you say to it?”

“These are,” I replied, “the feelings of a dilettante who has more good will than talent; and to whom the high state of literature presents language ready made, which sings and rhymes for him, while he imagines that he himself is speaking.”

“You are perfectly right,” said he; “I also think it very weak. It bears no trace of external observation; it is wholly mental, and that not in the right way.”

“To write a poem well,” said I, “requires great knowledge of the subject; and he who has not, like Claude Lorraine, a whole world at command, will seldom produce anything good, with the best ideal tendencies.”

“And then,” said Goethe, “only an innate talent knows what is really to be done; others go on blundering.”

“The æsthetic teachers,” said I, “are a proof of this. Scarcely one of them knows what should be taught, hence they complete the perplexity of young poets. Instead of treating of the Real, they treat of the Ideal; and instead of helping the young poet to what he has not, they confuse him about what he has. For instance, he that has by nature wit and humour will use these powers to the best advantage if scarcely conscious of his endowment: but he who allows himself to be influenced by the much-lauded treatises upon these high qualities will be disturbed in the innocent use of his powers; consciousness will paralyse them, and, instead of being aided as he desires, he will find himself balked.”

Goethe agreed.

“I have,” he continued, “been reading the new epic by Egon Ebert; and you must read it too, that we may help him out a little. He is really a superior talent, but this new poem lacks the proper poetical foundation—reality. The external landscapes, sunset, and sunrise—passages where the external world was his own—could not be better done. But the rest,

which lies in ages gone by, and belongs to tradition, is not painted with truth, and lacks the right kernel. The Amazons, with their life and actions, are described in that general way young people esteem poetic and romantic, which usually passes for such in the æsthetic world."

"This fault," said I, "pervades the whole of our present literature. Special truth is avoided, for fear it should not be poetical, and thus we fall into commonplaces."

"Egon Ebert," said Goethe, "should have adhered to the chronicles; he would then have made something of his poem. When I remember how Schiller studied tradition, what trouble he gave himself about Switzerland when he wrote his *Tell*, and how Shakespeare used the chronicles and took into his plays whole passages word for word, I am inclined to prescribe the same course to a young poet of the present day. I have, in *Clavigo*, made use of whole passages from the *Memoirs* of Beaumarchais."

"But they are so worked up," said I, "that the fact is not observed and the passages do not stand out like an indigested mass."

"If it is so," said Goethe, "that is as it should be. Beaumarchais was a mad fellow, and you must read his *Memoirs*. Lawsuits were his element, in which alone he felt truly at home. There are still in existence speeches from one of his lawsuits, which may be ranked among the most remarkable, the most full of talent, and the boldest, of their kind. However, Beaumarchais lost this same famous lawsuit. As he was going down the stairs from the court, he met the Chancellor coming up. Beaumarchais ought to have given place; but he would not, and insisted that each should take half the stair. The Chancellor, insulted in his dignity, commanded his people to push Beaumarchais aside, which they did. Beaumarchais immediately returned into court, and began an action against the Chancellor, which he gained.

"I have now taken up *My Second Residence in Rome* once more," he went on, "that I may finally get rid of it, and turn my attention to something else. You know my published Italian journey was entirely compiled from letters. But the letters I wrote during my second visit to Rome are not of such a kind that I can make use of them; they contain too many references to home and my connections in Weimar, and show too little of my Italian life. Yet there are many expressions of my inward life. I think of extracting these passages, and

inserting them in my narrative, to which they will give tone and harmony.”

He continued: “It has been said and repeated, that man should strive to know himself: a singular requisition, with which nobody complies, or ever will comply. Man is by all his senses and efforts directed to externals—to the world around him; and he has to know this so far, and to make it so far serviceable, as he requires for his own ends. It is only when he feels joy or sorrow that he knows anything about himself, and only by joy or sorrow is he instructed what to seek and what to shun. Altogether, man is a darkened being; he knows not whence he comes, nor whither he goes; he knows little of the world, and least of himself. I do not know myself, and God forbid I should! But what I wished to say is this: In my fortieth year, while living in Italy, I became wise enough to know thus much of myself—that I had no talent for plastic art, and that this tendency of mine was a false one. If I drew anything, I had not a sufficient inclination for the corporeal. I felt a certain fear lest objects should press too much upon me, and the weak and moderate was more to my taste. If I drew a landscape, and got through the back and middle ground, I never dared to give force enough to the foreground, so that my pictures never produced the proper effect. Then I made no progress except by practice, and was always obliged to begin again if I left off for a while. Yet I was not absolutely destitute of talent—especially for landscape; and Hackert often said, ‘If you will stay with me eighteen months, you will produce something that will give pleasure to yourself and others.’”

“But how,” said I, “can one be sure that one possesses a real talent for plastic art?”

“Real talent,” said he, “has an innate sense for form, relations, and colour, so as soon to manage all that well with but little guidance. Especially, it has a sense for the corporeal, and an inclination to make it palpable by judicious distribution of light. Even in the intervals of practice, it progresses and grows inwardly. Such a talent is not hard to recognize, but is best recognized by a master.

“I visited the palace this morning,” continued he, in a lively tone. “The apartments of the Grand Duchess show great taste; and Coudray, with his Italians, has given another proof of his talent. The painters were still busy with the walls; they were Milanese. I spoke Italian with them, and found I had

not lost the power. The language brings back the atmosphere of the country. They told me they had last painted the château of the King of Würtemberg and had then been summoned to Gotha; where, however, they could not come to any agreement. They had been heard of in Weimar at the same time, and had come here to decorate the apartments of the Grand Duchess. These worthy people have been absent from Italy three years; but, as they tell me, they intend to go hence straight home, when they have finished painting a scene for our theatre by order of Herr von Spiegel. This you will deem good news. They are very clever fellows. One is pupil of the best scene-painter in Milan; and you may therefore expect a good scene."

After Frederick had cleared the table, Goethe had a small plan of Rome laid before him.

"Rome," said he, "would not do for the permanent abode of people like us. He who would settle there must marry and turn Catholic, else would he lead an insupportable existence. Hackert is not a little proud of having lived there so long a Protestant."

Goethe then showed me, on the plan, the most remarkable squares and buildings. "This," said he, "is the Farnese garden."

"Was it not here that you wrote the witch-scene in *Faust*?"

"No," he replied, "in the Borghese garden."

I now refreshed myself with more landscapes by Claude, and we said a great deal about him.

"Could not now a young artist," said I, "model himself upon him?"

"He who had a similar mind," answered Goethe, "would certainly develop great excellence by forming himself on Claude Lorraine. But how hose soul Nature had not endowed with similar gifts would at most only borrow single peculiarities from this master, and use them as mere phrases."

Saturday, April 11, 1829.

I found the table laid to-day in the long hall for several persons. Goethe and Frau von Goethe received me. The guests gradually arrived, viz. Madame Schopenhauer; young Count Reinhard, of the French embassy; his brother-in-law, Herr von D——, who was on his way to enter into the Russian service against the Turks; Fräulein Ulrica; and, lastly, Hofrath Vogel.

Goethe entertained the company before dinner with some good Frankfort jokes, especially relating to Rothschild and

Bethmann, showing how one had spoiled the speculations of the other.

Count Reinhard went to court; the rest of us sat down to dinner. They talked about travelling and the bathing-places; and Madame Schopenhauer especially interested us about the arrangement of her estate on the Rhine, near the Island Nonnenwerth.

At dessert, Count Reinhard reappeared, and was praised for the activity with which during his short absence he had not only dined at court but changed his dress twice. He brought news that the new Pope—a Castiglioni—was elected, and Goethe gave the company an account of the traditional ceremonies observed at the election.

Count Reinhard, who had passed the winter at Paris, was able to give us a great deal of desirable information about celebrated statesmen, *literati*, and poets. We talked about Chateaubriand, Guizot, Salvandy, Béranger, Mérimée, and others.

After dinner, when all except myself had departed, Goethe took me into his work-room, and showed me two very interesting papers: letters written in his youth, in 1770, from Strasburg, to his friend Dr. Horn, at Frankfort; one in July, the other in December. In both spoke a young man who had a presentiment of great things to do. In the second, traces of *Werther* were already visible; the Sesenheim connection had been formed, and the happy youth seemed rocked in an ecstasy of the sweetest feelings, and to be lavishing away his days as if half in a dream. The handwriting of the letters was calm, clear, and elegant; it had already assumed the character it always afterwards preserved.

Sunday, April 12, 1829.

Goethe read me his answer to the King of Bavaria. He had presented himself as if actually ascending the steps of the villa, and expressing his feelings by word of mouth in the King's presence.

"It must be difficult," said I, "to preserve the proper tone and manner for such cases."

"Nobody who has had to do with persons of high rank all his life, as I have, will find it difficult. The only point is not to be perfectly natural, but to keep to a certain conventional propriety."

He then spoke of the compilation of his *Second Residence in Rome*, which now occupied him.

“From the letters I wrote at that period,” said he, “I plainly see we have certain advantages and disadvantages at every time of life, as compared with earlier or later periods. In my fortieth year I was as clear and decided on some subjects as at present, and in many respects superior to my present self; yet now, in my eightieth, I possess advantages I should not like to exchange for those.”

“While you made that remark,” said I, “the metamorphosis of plants came before my eyes. Nobody would return from the period of the flower to that of the green leaf, and from that of the fruit or seed to the flower-state.”

“The simile expresses my meaning perfectly,” said Goethe; and continued, laughing: “Only imagine a perfectly indented leaf; do you think that it would go back from its state of free development to the dull confinement of the cotyledon? And, indeed, it is interesting that we have a plant to serve as symbol of the most advanced age, since, having passed the period of flower and fruit, it still thrives cheerfully without further foundation.

“It is bad, however, that we are so hindered in life by false tendencies, and never know them to be false until we are freed from them.”

“But how,” said I, “shall we know that a tendency is false?”

“A false tendency,” he replied, “is not productive; or if it is, what it produces is of no worth. It is not so difficult to perceive this in others; but with respect to oneself the case is different, and great freedom of mind is required. Even knowledge of the truth is not always of use; we delay, doubt, cannot resolve—just as a man finds it difficult to leave a beloved girl of whose infidelity he has long had repeated proofs. This I say, because I remember how many years were required before I could find out that my tendency to plastic art was false; and how many more to separate myself entirely from it after I was sure of this fact.”

“But that tendency has been of such advantage to you, it can hardly be called false.”

“I gained insight by it,” said he, “and therefore I can make myself easy about it. That is the advantage we draw from every false tendency. He who with inadequate talent devotes himself to music, will never, indeed, become a master, but may learn to know and to value a masterly production. With all my toil, I have not become an artist; but, as I tried every department of art, I have learned to take cognizance of each

stroke, and to distinguish merits from defects. This is no small gain; indeed, false tendencies are rarely without gain. The Crusades, for the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre, manifestly represented a false tendency; but they did this good, they weakened the Turks, and prevented them from becoming masters of Europe."

Goethe spoke to me of a book on Peter the Great, by Ségur, which had interested him, and given him much light.

"The situation of Petersburg," said he, "is quite unpardonable; especially when we reflect that the ground rises in the neighbourhood, and that the Emperor could have had a city free from all this trouble arising from overflow of the stream, if he had but gone a little higher up, and had only had the haven in this low place. An old shipmaster represented this to him, and prophesied that the people would be drowned every seventy years. There stood also an old tree, with various marks from times when the waters had risen to a great height. But all this was in vain; the Emperor stood to his whim, and had the tree cut down, that it might not bear witness against him.

"You will confess such conduct is very strange in so great a man. Do you know how I explain it?—Man cannot cast aside his youthful impressions; and this principle goes so far, that even defects to which he is accustomed in his early years and in the midst of which he has passed his happiest time, remain so dear to him that he is dazzled and cannot perceive any fault. Thus would Peter the Great repeat Amsterdam, so dear to his youth, in a metropolis at the mouth of the Neva; as the Dutch are always tempted to build new Amsterdams over and over again in their new possessions."

Monday, April 13, 1829.

To-day, after Goethe had said many good things to me at dinner, I again refreshed myself at dessert with some of Claude's landscapes.

"The collection," said Goethe, "bears the title *Liber Veritatis*; it might as well be styled *Liber Naturæ et Artis*—for here we find nature and art in the highest state and fairest union."

I asked about the origin of Claude Lorraine, and in what school he had formed himself.

"His immediate master," said Goethe, "was Antonio Tasso. But Tasso was a pupil of Paul Brill, whose school and maxims formed the real foundation of Claude and came to their full blossom in him; for what appeared too earnest and severe in

those masters is, in Claude Lorraine, developed to the most charming grace and loveliest freedom. There was no going beyond him.

“However, it is difficult to say from whom so great a talent, living in so remarkable a time and situation, actually did learn. He looked about, and appropriated everything that nourished his designs. No doubt Claude Lorraine was as much indebted to the Caracci school as to his immediate and nominal masters.

“Thus, it is usual to say Giulio Romano was a pupil of Raphael; but we might just as well say he was the pupil of his age. Guido Reni alone had a pupil who received so entirely into himself the spirit, soul, and art of his master, that he almost was, and did almost exactly, the same. This was a peculiar case, which has scarcely been repeated.

“The Caracci school, on the contrary, was of a liberating kind; each talent was developed in its natural direction; it produced masters all entirely different one from another. The Caracci seemed born to be teachers of art; they lived when the best had already been done on every side, hence they could present their pupils with models in all departments. They were great artists, great teachers; but I could not say they were truly gifted with the spirit (*geistreich*¹). It is a somewhat bold saying, but so it seems to me.”

After I had looked at a few more landscapes of Claude's, I opened an artist's lexicon, to see what is said of this great master. We found—“his chief merit was in his palette.”

We looked at one another, and laughed.

“There, you see,” said Goethe, “how much we learn if we rely on books and take in all we find written.”

Tuesday, April 14, 1829.

When I went in to-day, Goethe was at table with Hofrath Meyer, talking about Italy and art. He ordered to be laid before us a volume of Claude Lorraine, in which Meyer found the landscape for the original of which the newspapers told us that Peel had given four thousand pounds. It is a beautiful picture, and Mr. Peel has made no bad bargain.

On the right side of the picture is a group of people sitting and standing. A shepherd is leaning over a girl, whom he

¹ *Geistreich* frequently means little more than clever or ingenious; but it seems here to have a deeper signification, and the term “gifted with the spirit” has been borrowed from the American.—J. O.

seems to be instructing to play upon the pipe. In the middle is a lake, in the full light of the sun; on the left are cattle grazing in the shade of a grove.

[Conversation led by Meyer: beginning about the King of Bavaria's place at Rome and who occupied it before him; then about its distance from the Vatican and the shortest route thereto; and concluding with an account of how Bury, Hirt, Lips, and Meyer, in their youth got into a dispute in the Tiber ferry-boat, as to the respective merits of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and, resolving to settle it before landing, made the ferryman row them backwards and forwards most of the night.]

Hofrath Meyer continued to tell us about Rome.

"This dispute about Raphael and Michael Angelo," said he, "was introduced whenever a number of artists large enough to take the two sides met together. It generally began at an inn, where we drank cheap good wine. Pictures, and parts of pictures, were referred to; and when the opposition party would not concede this or that, an immediate inspection of the pictures was found requisite. We left the inn and hurried to the Sistine Chapel, the keys of which were in the hands of a shoemaker, who would always open the door for a few groschen. When we were before the pictures the work of demonstration began; and after the dispute had lasted long enough we returned to the inn, to make up our differences over a bottle of wine, and to settle all controversies. Thus we went on every day, and the shoemaker by the Sistine Chapel received many a fee of four groschen."

Mention was then made of another shoemaker, who generally hammered his leather on an antique marble head. "It was the portrait of a Roman emperor," said Meyer; "the antique work stood before the shoemaker's door, and we often saw him engaged in this laudable occupation."

Wednesday, April 15, 1829.

We talked of people who, without having any real talent, are excited to productiveness, and of others who write about things they do not understand.

"What seduces young people," said Goethe, "is this—we live in a time when so much culture is diffused that it has communicated itself to the atmosphere a young man breathes. Poetical and philosophic thoughts live and move within him, he has sucked them in with his very breath; but he thinks they are his own property, and utters them as such. But after he

has restored to the time what he has received from it, he remains poor. He is like a fountain that plays awhile with water supplied but ceases to flow as soon as the liquid treasure is exhausted."

Tuesday, September 1, 1829.

I told Goethe of a person now travelling through Weimar who had heard a lecture of Hegel's on the proof of the existence of a God. Goethe agreed with me that the time for such lectures was gone by.

"The period of doubt," said he, "is past; men now doubt as little the existence of a God as their own¹; though the nature of the divinity, the immortality, the peculiarities of our own souls, and their connection with our bodies, are eternal problems, with respect to which our philosophers take us no further. A French philosopher of the most recent times begins his chapter confidently thus:

"It is acknowledged that man consists of two parts, body and soul; so we will begin with the body, and then speak of the soul."

"Fichte went a little further, and extricated himself somewhat more cleverly from the dilemma, by saying, 'We shall treat of man regarded as a body, and of man regarded as a soul.' He felt too well that a whole so closely combined could not be separated. Kant has unquestionably done the best service, by drawing the limits beyond which human intellect is not able to penetrate, and leaving at rest the insoluble problems. What a deal have people philosophized about immortality!—and how far have they got? I doubt not of our immortality, for Nature cannot dispense with the entelechy. But we are not all in like manner immortal; and he who would manifest himself in future as a great entelechy must be one now.

"While the Germans are tormenting themselves with philosophical problems, the English, with their great practical understanding, laugh at us and win the world. Everybody knows their declamations against the slave-trade; and while they have palmed upon us all sorts of humane maxims as the foundation of their proceedings, it is at last discovered that their true motive is a practical object, which the English always notoriously require in order to act, and which should have been known before. In their extensive domains on the west coast of Africa they themselves use the blacks, and it is against their interest

¹ This is a statement that seems to have periodicity. We are familiar with it to-day.

for blacks to be carried off. They have founded large colonies of negroes in America, which are very productive, and yearly return a large profit in blacks. From these they can supply the demand in North America; and since they thus carry on a highly profitable trade, an importation from without would be against their commercial interests: so they preach with a practical view against the inhuman African slave-trade. Even at the Congress of Vienna, the English envoy denounced it with great zeal; but the Portuguese envoy had the good sense to reply quietly that he did not know they had come together to sit in judgment on the world or to decide upon principles of morality. He well knew the object of England; and he had also his own, which he knew how to plead for and to obtain."

Sunday, December 6, 1829.

To-day after dinner, Goethe read me the first scene of the second act of *Faust*.¹ The effect was great. We are once more transported into Faust's study, where Mephistopheles finds all as he had left it. He takes from the hook Faust's old study-gown, and a thousand moths and insects flutter out from it. By the directions of Mephistopheles as to where these are to settle down, the locality is brought very clearly before our eyes. He puts on the gown, intending to play the master once more, while Faust lies behind a curtain in a state of paralysis. He pulls the bell, which gives such an awful tone among the old solitary convent-halls that the doors spring open and the walls tremble. The servant rushes in, and finds in Faust's seat Mephistopheles, whom he does not recognize but for whom he has respect. In answer to inquiries he gives news of Wagner, who has now become a celebrated man, and is hoping for the return of his master—he is, we hear, at this moment very busy in his laboratory, trying to make a Homunculus. The servant retires, and the Bachelor enters—the same whom we knew some years before as a shy young student when Mephistopheles (in Faust's gown) made game of him. He is now a man, and so full of conceit that even Mephistopheles can do nothing with him, but moves his chair farther and farther and at last addresses the pit.

Goethe read the scene to the end. I was pleased with his youthful productive strength, and with the closeness of the whole. "As the conception," said Goethe, "is so old—for I

¹ That is, the second act of the second part of *Faust*, which was not published entire till after Goethe's death.—J. O.

have had it in my mind for fifty years—the materials have accumulated to such a degree that the difficulty is to separate and reject. The invention of the second part is really as old as I say; but it may be an advantage that I have not written it down till now when my knowledge of the world is so much clearer. I am like one who in his youth has a great deal of small silver and copper money; which in the course of his life he constantly changes for the better, so that at last the property of his youth stands before him in pieces of pure gold.”

We spoke about the character of the Bachelor. “Is he not meant,” said I, “to represent a certain class of ideal philosophers?”

“No,” said Goethe, “the arrogance peculiar to youth, of which we had such striking examples after our war for freedom, is personified in him. Indeed, everyone believes in his youth that the world really began with him, and that all merely exists for his sake.

“Thus, in the East, there was a man who every morning collected his people about him, and would not go to work till he had commanded the sun to rise. But he was wise enough not to command till the sun of its own accord was on the point of appearing.”

Goethe remained awhile absorbed in silent thought; then he began as follows:

“When old, we think of worldly matters otherwise than when young. Thus I cannot but think that the dæmons, to tease and make sport with men, have placed among them single figures so alluring that everyone strives after them, and so great that nobody reaches them. Thus they set up Raphael with whom thought and act were equally perfect; some distinguished followers have approached him, but none have equalled him. Thus, too, they set up Mozart as something unattainable in music; and thus Shakespeare in poetry. I know what you can say against this thought; but I only mean natural character, the great innate qualities. Thus, too, Napoleon is unattainable. That the Russians were so moderate as not to go to Constantinople is indeed very great; but we find a similar trait in Napoleon, he had the moderation not to go to Rome.”

Much was associated with this copious theme; I thought in silence that the dæmons had intended something of the kind with Goethe—he is a form too alluring not to be striven after, and too great to be reached.

Wednesday, December 16, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the second scene of the second act of *Faust*, where Mephistopheles visits Wagner, who is on the point of making a human being by chemical means. The work succeeds; the Homunculus appears in the phial, as a shining being, and is at once active. He repels Wagner's questions upon incomprehensible subjects; reasoning is not his business; he wishes to *act*, and begins with our hero, Faust, who, in his paralysed condition, needs a higher aid. As a being to whom the present is perfectly clear and transparent, the Homunculus sees into the soul of the sleeping Faust; who, enraptured by a lovely dream, beholds Leda visited by swans, while she is bathing in a pleasant spot. The Homunculus, by describing this dream, brings a most charming picture before our eyes. Mephistopheles sees nothing of it, and the Homunculus taunts him with his northern nature.

"Generally," said Goethe, "you will perceive that Mephistopheles appears to disadvantage beside the Homunculus; who is like him in clearness of intellect, and so much superior in his tendency to the beautiful and to a useful activity. He styles him cousin; for such spiritual beings as this Homunculus, not yet saddened and limited by a thorough assumption of humanity, were classed with the dæmons, and thus there is a sort of relationship between the two."

"Certainly," said I, "Mephistopheles here appears a subordinate; yet I cannot help thinking he has had a secret influence on the production of the Homunculus. We have known him in this way before; and, indeed, in the *Helena* he always appears as secretly working. Thus he again elevates himself with regard to the whole, and in his lofty repose he can well afford to put up with a little in particulars."

"Your feeling of the position is very correct," said Goethe; "indeed, I have doubted whether I ought not to put some verses into the mouth of Mephistopheles when he goes to Wagner and when the Homunculus is still in a state of formation, so that his co-operation may be expressed."

"It would do no harm," said I. "Yet this is intimated by the words with which Mephistopheles closes the scene:

'Am Ende hängen wir doch ab
Von Creaturen die wir machten.'

We are dependent, after all,
On creatures that we make.

“True,” said Goethe, “that would be almost enough for the attentive; but I will think about some additional verses.”

“But those concluding words are very great, and will not easily be penetrated to their full extent.”

“I think,” said Goethe, “I have given them a bone to pick. A father who has six sons is a lost man, let him do what he may. Kings and ministers, too, who have raised many persons to high places, may have something to think about from their own experience.”

Faust’s dream about Leda again came into my head, and I regarded this as a most important feature.

“It is wonderful to me,” said I, “how the several parts of such a work bear upon, perfect, and sustain one another! By this dream of Leda, *Helena* gains its proper foundation. There we have a constant allusion to swans and the child of a swan; but here we have the act itself, and when we come afterwards to *Helena*, with the sensible impression of such a situation, how much more clear and perfect does all appear!”

Goethe said I was right.

“You will see,” said he, “that in these earlier acts the chords of the classic and romantic are constantly struck; so that, as on a rising ground, where both forms of poetry are brought out and in some sort balance one another, we may ascend to *Helena*.”

“The French,” continued Goethe, “now begin to think aright on these matters. Classic and romantic, say they, are equally good: the only point is to use these forms with judgment, and to be capable of excellence—you can be absurd in both, and then one is as worthless as the other. This, I think, is rational enough, and may content us for a while.”

Sunday, December 20, 1829.

Dined with Goethe. We spoke of the Chancellor; and I asked whether he brought any news of Manzoni, on his return from Italy.

“He wrote to me about him,” said Goethe. “The Chancellor paid Manzoni a visit; he lives on his estate near Milan, and is (I am sorry to say) always ill.”

“It is odd,” said I, “that persons of distinguished talents, especially poets, have so often weak constitutions.”

“Their extraordinary achievements,” said Goethe, “presuppose a very delicate organization, which makes them susceptible to unusual emotions and capable of hearing celestial

voices. Such an organization, in conflict with the world and the elements, is easily disturbed and injured; he who does not, like Voltaire, combine with great sensibility an equally uncommon toughness, is liable to constant illness. Schiller was always ill. When I first knew him, I thought he could not live a month; but he too had a certain toughness; he kept going for many years, and would have done so longer if he had lived in a healthier way."

We spoke of the theatre, and how far a certain performance had been successful.

"I have seen Unzelmann in the part," said Goethe. "It was always a pleasure, on account of his perfect mental freedom, which he conveyed to us; for it is with acting as with all other arts—what the artist does or has done excites in us the mood he was in when he did it. A free mood in the artist makes us free; a constrained one makes us uncomfortable. We usually find this freedom of the artist where he is fully equal to his subject. It is for this we are so pleased with Dutch pictures; the artists painted the life around them, of which they were perfect masters. If we are to feel this freedom of mind in an actor, he must—by study, imagination, and natural disposition—be perfect master of his part, must have all bodily requisites at his command, and must be upheld by a certain youthful energy. But study is not enough without imagination, and study and imagination together are not enough without natural disposition. Women do the most through imagination and temperament; thence came the excellence of Madame Wolff."

We pursued this subject, talking of the chief actors of the Weimar stage, and their performance in several parts.

Meanwhile, *Faust* came once more into my head, and I talked of the way to render the Homunculus clear on the stage. "If we do not see the little man himself," said I, "we must see the light in the bottle, and his important words must be uttered in a way that would surpass the capacity of a child."

"Wagner," said Goethe, "must not let the bottle go out of his hands, and the voice must sound as if it came from the bottle. It would be a part for a ventriloquist such as I have heard. A man of that kind would solve the difficulty."

We then talked of the Grand Carnival, and the possibility of representing it upon the stage. "It would be a little more than the market-place at Naples," said I.

“It would require a very large theatre,” said Goethe, “and is hardly to be imagined.”

“I hope to see it some day,” was my answer. “I look forward especially to the elephant, led by Prudence, and surmounted by Victory, with Hope and Fear in chains on each side. This is an allegory that could not easily be surpassed.”

“The elephant would not be the first on the stage,” said Goethe. “At Paris there is one, which forms an entire character. He belongs to a popular party, and takes the crown from one king and places it on another, which must indeed have an imposing effect. Then, when he is called at the end of the piece, he appears quite alone, makes his bow, and retires. So you see we might reckon on an elephant for our carnival. But the whole scene is much too large, and requires an uncommon kind of manager.”

“Still, it is so brilliant and effective that a stage will scarcely allow it to escape. Then how it builds itself up, and becomes more and more striking! First, there are the beautiful gardeners, male and female; who decorate the stage, and at the same time form a mass, so that the various objects as they increase in importance are never without spectators and a background. Then, after the elephants, there is the team of dragons, coming from the background, through the air, and soaring overhead. Then the appearance of the great Pan; and how at last all seems afire, until put out by the wet clouds that roll to the spot. With all this carried out as you have conceived, the public will, in its amazement, confess that it has not senses and intellect enough to appreciate such spectacular riches.”

“Pray, no more about the public,” said Goethe; “I wish to hear nothing about it. The chief point is, that the piece is written; the world may now do with it as it pleases and use it as far as it can.”

We then talked of the Boy Lenker.

“That Faust is concealed under the mask of Plutus, and Mephistopheles under that of Avarice, you will have already perceived. But who is the Boy Lenker?”

I hesitated, and could not answer.

“It is Euphorion,” said Goethe.

“But how can he appear in the carnival here, when he is not born till the third act?”

“Euphorion,” replied Goethe, “is not a human, but an allegorical being. In him is personified poetry; which is bound

to neither time, place, nor person. The same spirit who afterwards chooses to be Euphorion appears here as the Boy Lenker, and is so far like a spectre that he can be present everywhere and at all times."

Sunday, December 27, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the scene of the paper-money.¹

"You recollect," said he, "that at the imperial assembly the end of the song is that there is a want of money and that Mephistopheles promises to provide some. This theme continues through the masquerade; when Mephistopheles contrives that the Emperor, while in the mask of the great Pan, shall sign a paper, which, thus endowed with a money-value, is multiplied a thousandfold and circulated. Now, in this scene the affair is discussed before the Emperor, who does not know what he has done. The treasurer hands over the bank-notes, and makes everything clear. The Emperor is at first enraged; but afterwards, on a closer inspection of his profit, makes splendid presents of paper-money to those around him. As he retires, he drops some thousand crowns; the fat court-fool picks these up, and goes off at once to turn his paper into land."

While Goethe read this fine scene, I was pleased with the happy notion of deducing the paper-money from Mephistopheles, and thus so strikingly bringing in and immortalizing one of the main interests of the present day.

Scarcely had the scene been read and discussed, when Goethe's son came down and seated himself with us at the table. He told us of Cooper's last novel; which he had read, and which he now described in his graphic manner. We made no allusion to the scene we had just read; but he began of his own accord to tell a great deal about Prussian treasury-bills, and to say that they were paid for above their value. While young Goethe went on talking in this way, I looked at the father with a smile, which he returned; and thus we gave each other to understand how very apropos was the subject of the scene.

Wednesday, December 30, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the next scene.

"Now they have got money at the imperial court," said he, "they want to be amused. The Emperor wishes to see Paris and Helen; and through magical art they are to appear in

¹ In the second part of *Faust*.—J. O.

person. However, since Mephistopheles has nothing to do with Greek antiquity, and has no power over such personages, this task is assigned to Faust, who succeeds in it perfectly. The scene showing the means Faust must adopt to render the apparition possible is not complete yet, but I will read it to you next time. The actual appearance of Paris and Helen you shall hear to-day."

[This section closes with a rhapsody upon the reading of the scene of this "command performance"—with Mephisto as prompter and with Faust and the astrologer right and left of the stage: Faust rather inclined to get among the "characters" when the real Helen appears.]

1830

Sunday, January 3, 1830.

GOETHE showed me the English annual, *The Keepsake*, for 1830, with very fine engravings, and some extremely interesting letters from Lord Byron, which I read after dinner. He himself had taken up the latest French translation of his *Faust*, by Gérard; which he turned over, and seemed occasionally to read.

"Some singular thoughts pass through my head," said he. "This book is now read in a language over which Voltaire ruled fifty years ago. You cannot understand my thoughts upon this subject, and have no idea of the influence Voltaire and his great contemporaries had in my youth, and how they governed the whole civilized world. My biography does not clearly show the influence of these men in my youth, and what pains it cost me to defend myself against them and to maintain my own ground in a true relation to nature."

We talked further about Voltaire; and Goethe recited to me his poem *Les Systèmes*, from which I perceived how he must have studied and appropriated such things in early life.

He praised Gérard's translation as very successful, although mostly in prose.

"I do not like," he said, "to read my *Faust* any more in German; but in this French translation all seems again fresh, new, and spirited. *Faust* is, however, quite incommensurable, and all attempts to bring it nearer to the understanding are vain. Also, the first part is the product of a rather dark state in the individual. However, this very darkness has a charm for men's minds; and they work upon it till they are tired, as upon all insoluble problems."

Sunday, January 10, 1830.

This afternoon, Goethe afforded me great pleasure by reading the scene in which Faust visits the Mothers.

The novelty and unexpectedness of the subject, and Goethe's manner of reading the scene, struck me so forcibly that I felt

myself wholly transported into the situation of Faust when he shudders at the communication from Mephistopheles.

Although I had heard and felt the whole, yet so much remained an enigma to me that I asked Goethe for some explanation. But he, as usual, wrapped himself up in mystery, as he looked on me with wide-open eyes and repeated the words:

“Die Mütter! Mütter! ’s klingt so wunderbarlich.”

The Mothers! Mothers! nay, it sounds so strange.

“I can reveal to you no more,” said he, “except that I found in Plutarch that in ancient Greece mention was made of the Mothers as divinities. This is all that I owe to others, the rest is my own invention. Take the manuscript home with you, study it carefully, and see what you can make of it.”

I was very happy while studying this remarkable scene once more in quiet; and took the following view of the peculiar character and influence, the abode and outward circumstances, of the Mothers:

Could we imagine that that huge sphere our earth had an empty space in its centre, so that hundreds of miles might be travelled in one direction without coming in contact with anything corporeal, this would be the abode of those unknown goddesses to whom Faust descends. They live, as it were, beyond all place; for nothing stands firm in their neighbourhood: they also live beyond all time; for no heavenly body, that can rise or set and mark the alternation of day and night, shines upon them.¹

Dwelling in eternal obscurity and loneliness, these Mothers are creative beings; they are the creating and sustaining principle from which proceeds everything that has life and form on the surface of the earth. Whatever ceases to breathe returns to them as a spiritual nature, and they preserve it until there arises occasion for its renewed existence. All souls and forms of what has been, or will be, hover about like clouds in the vast space of their abode. So are the Mothers surrounded; and the magician must enter their dominion, if he would obtain power over the form of a being and call back former existences to seeming life.

[He goes on to admit that this is a poetic anthropomorphism.]

¹ In our own century, also, it has been seriously advanced, as one of the reasons for discrediting the reality of Time, that our methods of measuring it are probably incurably defective. This school of thought might be termed the *Struthionic*.

Sunday, January 24, 1830.

"I have lately received a letter from a celebrated salt-miner at Stotternheim," said Goethe, "which opens in a remarkable manner, and which I must read to you.

"'I have had an experience,' he writes, 'that will not be lost on me.' But what follows this introduction? Nothing less than a loss of at least a thousand dollars. The shaft by which you go down twelve hundred feet to the rock-salt, through a soft soil and stone, he has incautiously neglected to prop up at the sides. The soft soil has detached itself, and has so filled up the pit that an extremely expensive operation is required to get it out again. He will, then, at a depth of twelve hundred feet, put in metal tubes, to be secure against a similar mischance. He should have done this at first; and he certainly would have done it, were there not in such people a degree of rashness of which we have no notion and which is requisite for such enterprises. He is very easy about his misfortune, and writes, 'I have had an experience that will not be lost on me.' This is the sort of man that we like; who, without complaining, is at once active again, and always on his feet. What say you to it? Is it not good?"

"It reminds me of Sterne, who complains that he had not used his sorrows like a reasonable man."

"It is something similar," said Goethe.

"I am also reminded of Behrisch," continued I, "when he tells you what experience is. I have lately been reading the chapter for renewed edification.¹ 'Experience,' says he, 'is nothing but that a person experiences by experience what he would not willingly have experienced.'"

"Yes," said Goethe, smiling, "such are the old jokes with which we so shamefully wasted our time."

"Behrisch," said I, "seems to have been a man of grace and elegance. How pleasant is the joke in the wine-cellar, where in the evening he tries to prevent the young man from visiting his mistress, and does it in the happiest way, fastening on his sword—now this way, now that—till he makes everybody laugh, and the young man forget the appointed time."

"Yes," said Goethe, "that was pleasant; it would have been one of the best scenes on the stage; indeed, Behrisch was a good all-round character for the theatre."

We then talked over all the oddities told of Behrisch in

¹ That is to say, in Goethe's Autobiography (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*), Part II, Book vii.—J. O.

Goethe's *Life*; his grey clothes—where silk, satin, and wool, made strong contrasts one with another—and his constant care always to dress himself in a new grey. Then how he wrote poems, imitated the compositor, and extolled the dignity of the penman; and how it was his favourite pastime to lie at the window, to observe the dress of the passers-by, and in his thoughts so to alter it as to make the people highly ridiculous.

“Then his customary joke with the postman; how do you like it? is not *that* droll?”

“I do not know it,” said I; “there is nothing about it in your memoirs.”

“Strange!” said Goethe, “then I will tell it you. When we were lying together at the window, and Behrisch saw the letter-carrier coming up the street, and going from one house to another, he would take out a groschen, and lay it by him on the window-sill.

“‘Do you see the letter-carrier?’ said he, turning to me. ‘He is coming nearer and nearer, and will be over here immediately, I can see: he has a letter for you; and what a letter! no ordinary affair, but a letter with a cheque in it; with a cheque for—I will not say how much; see, he is coming in. No! but he will come immediately. There he is again. Now! Here! here, friend! this is the place! He goes by—how stupid! O, how stupid! how can he be so stupid, and act so badly! Badly in two respects! Badly towards you, to whom he does not bring the cheque he had in his hands; and badly towards himself, to lose this groschen, which I had taken out for him, and which I now put up again.’ Then, with the greatest dignity, he would put the groschen again into his pocket, and we had something to laugh at.”

I asked Goethe whether he had ever seen Behrisch in later days.

“I saw him again,” said Goethe, “soon after my arrival at Weimar, about the year 1776, when with the Duke I made a visit to Dessau, whither Behrisch had been invited as tutor of the Crown Prince. I found him the same as ever—a polished courtier of the best humour.”

“What did he say,” asked I, “about your becoming so famous in the interval?”

“‘Did I not tell you so?’ were his first words. ‘Was it not right that you did not get your verses printed then, and that you waited till you had done something really good? The things were indeed not so bad, or I should not have written them out.

If we had remained together, you should not have had even the others printed. I would have copied them out for you, and they would have gone off quite as well.' You see he was the same as ever. He was liked at court. I always saw him at the Prince's table. I saw him for the last time in the year 1801, when he had become old but was still in the best of spirits. He occupied some very handsome apartments in the castle; one of which he completely filled with geraniums, which were then all the rage. Now the botanists had made some distinctions and divisions among the geraniums, and had given a certain class the name of pelargoniums. This the old gentleman could not bear, and he abused the botanists sorely. 'The blockheads!' said he, 'I think I have filled my room with geraniums, and now they come in and tell me they are pelargoniums. What have I to do with them if they are not geraniums? and what have I to do with pelargoniums?' Thus he would go on for the half-hour together—you see that he kept up his old character."

We then talked about the classical Walpurgis Night,¹ the beginning of which Goethe had lately read me.

"The mythological figures that crowd upon me," said he, "are innumerable; but I restrain myself, and select those that produce the proper pictorial effect. Faust has now met Chiron, and I hope I shall be successful with the scene. If I work hard I shall have done the Walpurgis Night in a couple of months. Nothing more shall take me off *Faust*; for it will be odd enough if I live to finish it, and yet it is possible. The fifth act is as good as done, and the fourth will almost write itself."

Goethe then talked about his health, and congratulated himself on keeping so constantly well. "My good state of preservation," said he, "I owe to Vogel—without him I should have gone off long ago. Vogel was born a physician, and is one of the most decided geniuses I ever knew. However, we will not say how good he is, for fear he should be taken away from us."

(Sup.) Wednesday, January 27, 1830.

I dined very happily with Goethe. He spoke with great commendation of Herr von Martius. "His discovery of the spiral tendency," said he, "is of the highest importance. If I had anything more to desire in him, it would be that he should

¹ In the second part of *Faust*.—J. O.

maintain his discovered primitive phenomenon (*Urphänomen*) with decided boldness, and have the courage to announce a fact as a law, without too much seeking its confirmation far and wide."

He then showed me the transactions of the scientific assembly at Heidelberg, with facsimiles of the handwriting printed on the back; which we observed, forming our conclusions upon the character.

"I know very well," said Goethe, "that science does not derive so much benefit from these meetings as might be imagined; but they are excellent, as people learn to know and esteem one another—whence it follows that a new doctrine of a distinguished man gains currency, and he in his turn becomes inclined to acknowledge and assist us in our aims in another department. In every circumstance we see that something happens, and nobody can tell what may come of it."

Goethe then showed me a letter from an English author, with the address—To his Highness the Prince Goethe. "For this title I have probably to thank the German journalists," said Goethe, laughing, "who, out of too great love, have named me the prince of German poets. And the consequence of the innocent German error is the equally innocent English one."

Goethe then returned to Herr von Martius, and praised him for possessing imagination. "In fact, a great scientist without this high gift is impossible. I do not mean an imagination that goes into the vague and imagines things that do not exist; I mean one that does not abandon the actual soil of the earth, and steps to supposed and conjectured things by the standard of the real and the known. Then it may prove whether this or that supposition be possible, and whether it is not in contradiction with known laws. Such an imagination presupposes an enlarged tranquil mind, which has at its command a wide survey of the living world and its laws."

While we were speaking, there arrived a packet containing a translation of *Die Geschwister* (The Brother and Sister) into Bohemian, which appeared to give Goethe great pleasure.

Sunday, January 31, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Milton.

"I have lately," said Goethe, "read his *Samson*, which has more of the antique spirit than any production of any other modern poet. He is very great, and his own blindness enabled him to describe with so much truth the situation of Samson.

Milton was really a poet, to whom we owe all possible respect."¹

The newspapers were brought in, and we saw in the Berlin theatrical intelligence that whales and sea-monsters had been introduced on the stage there.

Goethe read in the French paper *Le Temps* an article on the enormous revenue of the English clergy, which amounts to more than that of all the rest of Christendom put together.

"It has been maintained," said Goethe, "that the world is governed by pay; I know that from pay we can find out whether it is well or ill governed."

Wednesday, February 3, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Mozart.

"I saw him," said Goethe, "when he was seven and gave a concert while travelling our way. I myself was about fourteen, and remember perfectly the little man with his frisure and sword."

I stared; it seemed to me almost wonderful that Goethe was old enough to have seen Mozart when a child.

(Sup.) Saturday, February 6, 1830.

Dined with Frau von Goethe. Young Goethe related of his grandmother, "Frau Rath Goethe," of Frankfort, whom he had visited twenty years before as a student, and with whom he was one day invited to dine at the Prince Primate's—that as the Prince wore his usual clerical costume, she took him for an abbé, and paid him no particular respect; until she gradually perceived, from the deportment of the rest of the guests, that he was the Primate.

Sunday, February 7, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. A great deal of conversation about the Prince Primate—that he had contrived to defend him by a skilful turn at the Empress of Austria's table; the Prince's deficiency in philosophy; his dilettante love of painting, without taste; the picture given to Miss Gore; his goodness of heart and weak liberality, which at last brought him to poverty. Conversation on nature of the *Discourteous*. After dinner young Goethe, with Walter and Wolf, appeared in his masquerade dress, in the character of Klingsohr, and then went to court.

¹ This recalls the Collector of Stamps, whose bumps Charles Lamb took a candle to examine.

Wednesday, February 10, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. He spoke with real gratification of the poem written by Riemer for the festival of the 2nd of February, saying, "All that Riemer does is fit to be seen by both master and journeyman."

We talked also of the classical Walpurgis Night, and he said that he came to things that surprised even himself. The subject, too, had become more diffuse than he had expected.

"I am not half through it," said he, "but I will keep to it, and hope to finish it by Easter. You shall see nothing more of it before; but as soon as it is done I will give it to you to take home, that you may examine it quietly. If you made up the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth volumes,¹ so that we might send off the last part at Easter, it would be a good arrangement, and we should have the summer open for something great. I would occupy myself with *Faust*, and endeavour to get over the fourth act."

I promised every assistance.

Goethe then sent his servant to inquire after the Grand Duchess Dowager, who had been very ill and seemed in a dangerous state.

"She ought not to have seen the masquerade," said he; "but princes are accustomed to have their own way, and thus all the protests of the court and the physicians were in vain. With the same strong will with which she once confronted Napoleon, she now resists her bodily weakness; and I can see already that she will go off, like the Grand Duke, in the full vigour and mastery of her mind, although her body may have ceased to obey it."

Goethe seemed in low spirits, and remained silent for a while. Soon, however, we again conversed on cheerful subjects; and he told me of a book written in defence of Sir Hudson Lowe.

"It contains," he said, "most valuable traits, which can only have been derived from eye-witnesses. You know that Napoleon ordinarily wore a dark-green uniform. It was at last so much worn and sun-burnt as to lose its colour entirely, and it became necessary to supply its place with another. He wished for the same dark-green colour, but no article of the sort was to be found in the island. There was indeed a green cloth; but the colour was not pure, and ran into a yellowish tinge. The lord of the world found it intolerable to put such a colour on his body; and nothing was left but to turn his old uniform, and wear it in that way.

¹ That is, of Goethe's complete works.—J. O.

“What do you say to that? Is it not a perfectly tragic trait? Is it not touching to see the master of kings so reduced at last that he must wear a turned uniform? And yet, when we reflect that such an end befell a man who had trampled under foot the life and happiness of millions, his fate appears after all very mild. Fate is here a Nemesis, who, in consideration of the hero's greatness, cannot avoid being a little generous. Napoleon affords an example of the danger of elevating oneself to the Absolute and sacrificing everything to the carrying out of an idea.”

We said a good deal more on this subject, and I then went to the theatre to see the *Star of Seville*.

Sunday, February 14, 1830.

To-day, on my way to Goethe, who had invited me to dinner, I heard of the Grand Duchess Dowager's death, which had just happened. I entered the house with some apprehension. The servants said his daughter-in-law was gone to him to tell him the sad news.

“For more than fifty years,” thought I, “he was attached to this princess, and blessed with her especial favour and friendship; her death must deeply move him.”

I entered his room; to find him in his usual cheerfulness and vigour, taking his soup with his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, as if nothing had happened.

We went on talking cheerfully of indifferent things. Presently all the bells began to toll; Frau von Goethe looked at me, and we talked louder, that the tone of the death-bells might not shock him; for we thought he felt like us. However, he did not feel like us. He sat before us like a being of a higher order, inaccessible to earthly woes.

Hofrath Vogel was announced. He sat down, and told us all the circumstances of the last hours of the noble dead; to which Goethe listened with the same perfect calmness and composure. Vogel went away, and we continued our conversation on other subjects.

We talked a great deal about the *Chaos*, and Goethe praised the “Reflections on Play,” in the last number. When Frau von Goethe retired with her children, I was left alone with Goethe.

He talked to me of his classical *Walpurgis Night*; saying he was getting forward in it every day, and effecting wonderful things, beyond his expectation.

He then showed me a letter he had to-day received from the

King of Bavaria. The King's true and noble turn of mind was manifest in every line.

Hofrath Soret was now announced, and joined us; he came with a message of condolence from her Imperial Highness to Goethe, which contributed to make him even more cheerful. He spoke of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos; who, in her sixteenth year, and in all her beauty, lay apparently on her death-bed, and with the most perfect composure comforted those who stood around it, saying, "What is it, after all? I leave mere mortals behind me!" However, she lived to the age of ninety; after having to her eightieth year made happy or desperate hundreds of lovers.

Goethe then talked of Gozzi; and his theatre at Venice, where the actors had merely subjects given them and filled up the details impromptu. Gozzi said there were only six-and-thirty tragic situations. Schiller thought there were more, but could never succeed in finding even so many.

Then many interesting things were said about Grimm; his life and character, and his distrust of paper-money.

Wednesday, February 17, 1830.

We talked of the theatre—of the colour of the scenes and costumes. The result was as follows:

Generally, the scenes should have a tone favourable to every colour of the dresses; like Beuther's scenery, which has more or less of a brownish tinge, and brings out the colour of the dresses with perfect freshness. But if the scene-painter is obliged to depart from so favourable an undecided tone, and to represent a red or yellow chamber, a white tent or a green garden, the actors should be clever enough to avoid similar colours in their dresses. If an actor in a red uniform and green breeches enters a red room, the upper part of his body vanishes, and only his legs are seen; if, with the same dress, he enters a green garden, his legs vanish, and the upper part of his body is conspicuous. I saw an actor in a white uniform and dark breeches, the upper part of whose body completely vanished in a white tent, while the legs disappeared against a dark background.

"Even when the scene-painter is obliged to have a red or yellow chamber," said Goethe, "or a green garden or wood, these colours should be somewhat faint and hazy, that every dress in the foreground may be relieved and produce the proper effect."

We talked about the *Iliad*, and Goethe called my attention to the following beautiful *motif*—viz. that Achilles is put into a state of inaction for some time, that the other characters may appear and develop themselves.

Of his *Wahlverwandtschaften*, he says there is not a touch in it that he had not experienced, and at the same time not a touch just as he had experienced it. He said the same thing of the Sesenheim story.¹

After dinner we looked through a portfolio of the Netherland school. A view of a harbour, where on one side men are taking in fresh water, and on the other some are playing dice on a barrel, gave occasion for some remarks as to how the real must be avoided, so as not to injure the effect of a work of art. The principal light falls on the top of the barrel; the dice are thrown, as may be seen by the gestures of the men; but they are not marked on the surface of the barrel, as they would have intercepted the light, and thus have marred the effect.

Ruysdael's studies for his "Churchyard" were then looked over, and we saw what pains even such a master had taken.

Sunday, February 21, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. He showed me the air-plant (*Luftpflanze*), which I looked at with great interest. I remarked therein an effort to continue its existence as long as possible, before permitting its successor to manifest itself.

"I have determined," said Goethe, "to read neither the *Temps* nor the *Globe*, for a month to come. Things are in such a position that some event of importance must happen within that time; I will wait till the news comes to me from without. My classical Walpurgis Night will gain from this abstinence; besides, nothing is got from such interests—a consideration too often left out of mind."

He then showed me a letter written by Boisserée, from Munich. Boisserée spoke especially of the *Second Residence in Rome*, and on some points in the last number of *Kunst und Alterthum* (Art and Antiquity). His judgment showed equal good will and profundity.

Goethe then spoke of a new picture, by Cornelius, as being very fine in conception and execution; and the remark was made, that the real occasion for the good colouring of a picture lay in the composition.

¹ The story of Frederica in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.—J. O.

Wednesday, February 24, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Homer. I remarked that the interposition of the gods immediately borders on the Real.

“That is infinitely delicate and human,” said Goethe, “and I thank Heaven the times are gone by when the French called this interposition of the gods *machinery*. But really to learn to appreciate merits so vast required some time, for it demanded a complete regeneration of their culture.”

He said that to enhance the beauty of the apparition of Helena he had given it a new touch, suggested by a remark of mine, which did honour to my perceptions.

After dinner, Goethe showed me a sketch from a picture by Cornelius—Orpheus, before the throne of Pluto, supplicating for the release of Eurydice. The picture seemed to us well considered, and the details excellent; yet it did not quite satisfy or yield a genuine pleasure to the mind. Perhaps, we thought, the colouring may bring with it greater harmony; or perhaps the following moment, when Orpheus has conquered the heart of Pluto, and Eurydice is restored to him, would have been more favourable—the situation would in that case not have been fraught with excitement and expectation, but rather with complete satisfaction.

Monday, March 1, 1830.

Dined at Goethe's, with Hofrath Voigt, of Jena. The conversation turned entirely on subjects of natural history, in which Hofrath Voigt displayed the most various and comprehensive knowledge.

Goethe mentioned that he had received a letter, containing this objection to his system—that the cotyledons are not leaves, because they have no eyes behind them. But we satisfied ourselves, by examining various plants, that the cotyledons *have* eyes, as well as all the following leaves.

Voigt says the *aperçu* of the *Metamorphosis of Plants* is one of the most fruitful discoveries that researches into natural history have given to modern times.

We spoke of collections of stuffed birds; and Goethe told us how an Englishman kept several hundreds of living birds in large cages. Some of these died, and he had them stuffed. The stuffed birds pleased him so well, that he thought it would be better to kill them all and have them stuffed; and this whim he at once carried out.

Voigt mentioned that he was about to translate Cuvier's

Natural History and to publish it with some additions of his own.

After dinner, when Voigt had gone, Goethe showed me the manuscript of his *Walpurgisnacht*, and I was astonished to see to what a bulk it had grown.

Wednesday, March 3, 1830.

Went to walk with Goethe before dinner. He spoke favourably of my poem on the King of Bavaria, observing that Lord Byron had had a favourable influence upon me, but that I still lacked what is called *convenance*, in which Voltaire was so great; and he recommended me to take him as my model.

At table we talked of Wieland, particularly of his *Oberon*; and Goethe was of opinion that the foundation was weak, and that the plan had not been sufficiently thought over before the execution was begun. It was not well judged, he thought, to let a spirit procure the hairs and teeth, because the hero is thus left inactive. But the pregnant, graceful, ingenious treatment of this great poet, makes the book so attractive to the reader that he never thinks of the foundation, but reads on.

We continued talking till we came to the entelechy.

"The obstinacy of the individual, and the fact that man shakes off what does not suit him," said Goethe, "is a proof to me that something of the kind exists."

"Leibnitz," he continued, "had similar thoughts about independent beings, and indeed what we term an entelechy he called a monad."

Sunday, March 7, 1830.

Went to Goethe about twelve, and found him remarkably fresh and strong. He told me that he had been forced to lay aside the classical *Walpurgis Night*, to finish the last number.¹

"I have shown my wisdom," said he, "in leaving off when I was in a good vein and had much to say that I had already invented. In this way, it is much easier to resume my subject than if I had gone on writing till I came to a standstill."

We had intended to take a drive before dinner, but we both found it so pleasant in the room that the horses were countermanded.

¹ Of his entire works.—J. O.

Meanwhile, Frederick the servant had unpacked a large chest, arrived from Paris. It was a present from the sculptor David, of bas-relief portraits in plaster of fifty-seven celebrated persons. Frederick brought in the casts in the different drawers, and we were much amused in looking at all the persons of distinction. I was particularly curious about Mérimée; the head appeared as powerful and bold as his talent, and Goethe remarked that he had something humorous about him. Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Emile Deschamps, appeared with clear, free, cheerful faces. We were also pleased to see Mademoiselle Gay, Madame Tastu, and other young female writers. The powerful head of Fabvier reminded us of the men of earlier ages; we felt delight in looking at it again and again.

Thus we went on from one eminent person to another, Goethe saying repeatedly he could not sufficiently thank the admirable artist. He would not fail to show this collection to travellers, and in that way obtain verbal information about some of those personages who were unknown to him.

There had also been packed up in the chest some books, which he had ordered to be taken into the front rooms. We followed them, and sat down to dine. We were in good spirits, and spoke of works and plans of works.

“It is not good for man to be alone,” said Goethe, “and especially to work alone. He needs sympathy and suggestion to do anything well. I owe to Schiller the *Achilleis*, and many of my ballads, to which he urged me; and you may take the credit to yourself if I complete the second part of *Faust*. I have often told you so before, but I must repeat it.”

After dinner, Goethe opened one of the packets: it contained the poems of Emile Deschamps, accompanied by a letter. I saw with delight what influence was attributed to Goethe over the new life of French literature, and how the young poets loved and revered him as their intellectual head.

“You see there the spring-time of a beautiful mind,” said Goethe.

We found also a leaf that David had sent, with drawings of Napoleon’s hat in various positions.

“That is something for my son,” said Goethe, and sent him the leaf immediately. Young Goethe soon came down full of glee, and declared that these hats of his hero were the *ne plus ultra* of his collection. Five minutes had not passed before the leaf, under glass and in a frame, was in its place among other emblems and mementoes of the hero.

(Sup.) Sunday, March 14, 1830.

This evening, at Goethe's, he showed me all the treasures, now put in order, from the chest he had received from David. The plaster medallions, with the profiles of the principal young poets of France, he had laid side by side upon tables. He spoke once more of the extraordinary talent of David, as great in conception as in execution. He showed me a number of the newest works, presented to him through the medium of David, as gifts from the most distinguished talents of the romantic school. I saw works by Sainte-Beuve, Ballanche, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Alfred de Vigny, Jules Janin, and others.

"David," said he, "has prepared happy days for me by this present. The young poets have already occupied me the whole week, and give me new life by the fresh impressions I get from them. I shall make a separate catalogue of these fine portraits and books, and give them both a special place in my art-collection and my library."

He then read something from the *Studies*, by Emile Deschamps. He praised the translation of the *Bride of Corinth*, as faithful, and very successful.

"I possess," said he, "the manuscript of an Italian translation of this poem; which gives the original, even to the rhymes."

The *Bride of Corinth* induced Goethe to speak of the rest of his ballads. "I owe them, in a great measure," said he, "to Schiller, who impelled me to them, because he always wanted something new for his *Horen*. I had carried them in my head for many years; they occupied my mind as pleasant images, beautiful dreams, which came and went and by playing with which my fancy made me happy. I unwillingly resolved to bid farewell to these brilliant visions, which had so long been my solace, by embodying them in poor inadequate words. When I saw them on paper, I regarded them with some sadness. I felt as if I were about to be separated for ever from a beloved friend.

"At other times, it has been totally different with my poems. They have been preceded by no impressions or forebodings, but have come suddenly upon me, and have insisted on being composed immediately, so that I have felt an instinctive and dreamy impulse to write them down on the spot. In such a somnambulistic condition, it has often happened that I have had a sheet of paper lying before me all aslant, and I have not discovered it till all has been written, or I have found no room to write any more. I have possessed many such sheets written

diagonally; but they have been lost one after another, and I regret that I can no longer show any proofs of such poetic abstraction."

The conversation returned to French literature, and the modern ultra-romantic tendency of some not unimportant talents. Goethe was of opinion that this poetic revolution, still in its infancy, would be very favourable to literature, but very prejudicial to the individual authors who effect it.

"Extremes are never to be avoided in any revolution," said he. "In a political one, nothing is generally desired in the beginning but the abolition of abuses; but before people are aware, they are deep in bloodshed and horrors. Thus the French, in their present literary revolution, desired nothing at first but a freer form; however, they will not stop there, but will reject the traditional contents with the form. They begin to declare tedious the representation of noble sentiments and deeds, and attempt to treat of all sorts of abominations. Instead of the beautiful subjects from Grecian mythology, there are devils, witches, and vampires, and the lofty heroes of antiquity must give place to jugglers and galley slaves. This is piquant! This is effective! But after the public has once tasted this highly seasoned food and become accustomed to it, it will always long for more and stronger. A young man of talent, who would produce an effect and be acknowledged, and who is not great enough to go his own way, must accommodate himself to the taste of the day—nay, must seek to outdo his predecessors in the horrible and frightful. But in this chase after outward means of effect, all profound study, and all gradual and thorough development of the talent and the man from within, is neglected. And this is the greatest injury that can befall a talent, although literature in general will gain by this tendency of the moment."

"But how can an attempt that destroys individual talents be favourable to literature in general?"

"The extremes and excrescences I have described," said Goethe, "will gradually disappear; but at last this great advantage will remain—besides a freer form, richer and more diversified subjects will have been attained, and no object of the broadest world and the most manifold life will be any longer excluded as unpoetical. I compare the present literary epoch to a state of violent fever; which is not in itself good and desirable, but of which improved health is the happy consequence. That abomination that now often constitutes the

whole subject of a poetical work will in future only appear as a useful expedient; aye, the pure and the noble, which is now abandoned for the moment, will soon be resought with additional ardour."

"It is surprising to me that even Mérimée, who is one of your favourites, has entered upon this ultra-romantic path, through the horrible subjects of his *Guzla*."

"Mérimée," replied Goethe, "has treated these things very differently from his fellow-authors. These poems certainly are not deficient in various horrible *motifs*—such as churchyards, nightly crossways, ghosts, and vampires; but the repulsive themes do not touch the intrinsic merit of the poet. He treats them from a certain objective distance, and, as it were, with irony. He goes to work with them like an artist, to whom it is an amusement to try anything of the sort. He has, as I have said before, quite renounced himself—he has even renounced the Frenchman; and that to such a degree, that at first these poems of *Guzla* were deemed real Illyrian popular poems, and thus little was wanting for the success of the imposition he had intended.

"Mérimée is a thorough fellow! More power and genius are required for the objective treatment of a subject than is generally supposed. Thus Lord Byron, notwithstanding his predominant personality, has sometimes had the power of renouncing himself altogether—as may be seen in some of his dramatic pieces, particularly in his *Marino Faliero*. In this piece we quite forget that Lord Byron, or even an Englishman, wrote it. We live entirely in Venice, and entirely in the time when the action takes place. The personages speak from themselves, and from their own condition, without having any of the subjective feelings, thoughts, and opinions of the poet. That is as it should be. Of our young French romantic writers of the exaggerating sort, nobody can say as much. What I have read of them—poems, novels, dramatic works—have all borne the personal colouring of the author; none of them ever make me forget that a Parisian—that a Frenchman—wrote them. Even in the treatment of foreign subjects we are still in France and Paris, quite absorbed in all the wishes, necessities, conflicts, and fermentations of the present day."

"Béranger also," I threw in experimentally, "has only expressed the situation of the great metropolis, and his own interior."

"Béranger," said Goethe, "is a nature most happily endowed,

firmly grounded in himself, purely developed from himself, and quite in harmony with himself. He has never asked—what would suit the times? what produces an effect? what pleases? what are others doing?—in order that he might do the like. He has always worked only from the core of his own nature, without troubling himself what the public or this or that party expects. He has certainly, at different critical epochs, been influenced by the mood, wishes, and necessities of the people; but that has only confirmed him in himself, by proving to him that his own nature is in harmony with that of the people; it has never seduced him into expressing anything but what already lay in his heart.

“You know that on the whole I am no friend to what is called political poems, but such as Béranger has composed I can tolerate. With him there is nothing snatched out of the air, nothing of merely imagined or imaginary interest; he never shoots at random; he has always the most decided, the most important subjects. His affectionate admiration of Napoleon, and his reminiscences of the great warlike deeds performed under him, and that at a time when these recollections were a consolation to the somewhat oppressed French; his hatred of the domination of priests, and of the darkness that threatened to return with the Jesuits: these are things to which we cannot refuse hearty sympathy. And masterly is his treatment on all occasions! How he turns about and rounds off every subject in his own mind before he expresses it! And then, when all is matured, what wit, spirit, irony, and persiflage, and what heartiness, naïveté, and grace, are unfolded at every step! His songs have every year made millions of joyous men; they always flow glibly from the tongue, even with the working-classes; while they are so far elevated above the level of the commonplace, that the populace, in converse with these pleasant spirits, becomes accustomed and compelled to think itself better and nobler. What more would you have? and, altogether, what higher praise could be given to a poet?”

“He is excellent, unquestionably!” said I. “You know how I have loved him for years, and can imagine how it gratifies me to hear you speak of him thus. But if I must say which of his songs I prefer, his amatory poems please me more than his political, in which the references and allusions are not always clear to me.”

“That happens to be your case,” said Goethe; “the political poems were not written for you: but ask the French, and they

will tell you what is good in them. On the whole, a political poem, in the most fortunate circumstances, is the organ of a single nation, and in most cases only of a certain party; but it is seized with enthusiasm by this nation and this party when it is good. Again, a political poem should always be looked upon as the mere result of a certain state of the times; which passes by, and with respect to succeeding times takes from the poem the value it derived from the subject. As for Béranger, his was no hard task. Paris is France. All the important interests of his great country are concentrated in the capital, and there have their proper life and their proper echo. Besides, in most of his political songs he is by no means to be regarded as the mere organ of a single party; the things he writes against are for the most part of so universal and national an interest that the poet is almost always heard as a great *voice* of the people. With us in Germany, such a thing is not possible. We have no city, nay we have no country, of which we could decidedly say—*Here is Germany!* If we inquire in Vienna, the answer is—This is Austria! and if in Berlin, the answer is—This is Prussia! Only when we tried to get rid of the French, sixteen years ago, was Germany everywhere. *Then* a political poet could have had a universal effect; but there was no need of one! The universal necessity, and the universal feeling of disgrace, had seized upon the nation like something dæmonic; the inspiring fire the poet might have kindled was already burning everywhere of its own accord. Still, I will not deny that Arndt, Körner, and Rückert, have had some effect.”

“You have been reproached,” remarked I, rather inconsiderately, “for not taking up arms at that great period, or at least co-operating as a poet.”

“Let us leave that point alone, my good friend,” returned Goethe. “It is an absurd world, which does not know what it wants, and which must be allowed to have its own way. How could I take up arms without hatred, and how could I hate without youth?¹ If such an emergency had befallen me when twenty years old, I should certainly not have been the last; but it found me as one who had already passed the first sixties.

“Besides, we cannot all serve our country in the same way; each does his best, as God has endowed him. I have toiled hard enough during half a century. I can say, that in those things

¹ This is about the funniest objection to military service ever offered. Yet the war record of kinema-drama reminds us that recognition of the need of artificial stimulus to hate was not confined to Goethe's country.

which Nature has appointed for my daily work, I have permitted myself no repose or relaxation night or day; but have always striven, investigated, and done as much, and that as well, as I could. If everyone can say the same of himself, it will prove well with all."

"The fact is," said I, by way of conciliation, "that you should not be vexed at that reproach, but should rather feel flattered at it. For what does it show, but that the opinion of the world concerning you is so great, that it desires that he who has done more for the culture of his nation than any other should at last do everything!"

"I will not say what I think," returned Goethe. "There is more ill-will towards me hidden beneath that remark than you are aware of. I feel therein a new form of the old hatred with which people have persecuted me and endeavoured quietly to wound me for years. I know very well that I am an eyesore to many; that they would all willingly get rid of me; and that, since they cannot touch my talent, they aim at my character. Now, it is said, I am proud; now, egotistical; now, full of envy towards young talents; now, immersed in sensuality; now, without Christianity; and now, without love for my native country, and my own dear Germans. You have now known me well for years, and you feel what all that talk is worth. But if you would learn what I have suffered, read my *Xenien*; and it will be clear to you, from my retorts, how people have from time to time sought to embitter my life.

"A German author is a German martyr! Yes, my friend, you will not find it otherwise! And I myself can scarcely complain; none of the others have fared better—most have fared worse; and in England and France it is quite the same as with us. What did not Molière suffer? What Rousseau and Voltaire? Byron was driven from England by evil tongues; and would have fled to the end of the world, if an early death had not delivered him from the Philistines and their hatred.

"And if it were only the narrow-minded masses that persecuted noble men! But no! one gifted man and one talent persecutes another; Platen scandalizes Heine, and Heine Platen, and each seeks to make the other hateful; while the world is wide enough for all to live and to let live; and everyone has an enemy in his own talent, which gives him quite enough to do.

"To write military songs, and sit in a room! That forsooth was my duty! To have written them in the bivouac, when the horses at the enemy's outposts are heard neighing at night,

would have been well enough; however, that was not my life and not my business, but that of Theodore Körner. His war-songs suit him perfectly. But to me, who am not of a warlike nature, and who have no warlike sense, war-songs would have been a mask fitting my face very badly.

"I have never affected anything in my poetry. I have never uttered anything I have not experienced, which has not urged me to production. I have only composed love-songs when I have loved. How could I write songs of hatred without hating! And, between ourselves, I did not hate the French, although I thanked God that we were free from them. How could I, to whom culture and barbarism alone are of importance, hate a nation that is among the most cultivated of the earth, to which I owe so great a part of my own cultivation?"

"Altogether," continued Goethe, "national hatred is something peculiar. You will always find it strongest and most violent where there is the lowest degree of culture. But there is a degree where it vanishes altogether, and where a person stands to a certain extent *above* nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighbouring people as if it had happened to his own. This degree of culture was conformable to my nature,¹ and I had become strengthened in it long before I had reached my sixtieth year."

(Sup.) Monday, March 15, 1830.

This evening, passed a short hour at Goethe's. He spoke a great deal of Jena, and of the arrangements and improvements he had made in the different branches of the University. For chemistry, botany, and mineralogy, formerly treated only so far as they belonged to pharmacy, he had introduced special chairs. Above all, he had done much good for the museum of natural history and the library. He again related to me, with much self-satisfaction and good humour, the history of his violent seizure of a room adjoining the library, of which the medical faculty had taken possession, and which they would not give up.

"The library," said he, "was in very bad condition. The situation was damp and close, and by no means fit to contain its treasures; particularly as, through the purchase of the Büttner library on the part of the Grand Duke, thirteen thousand additional volumes lay in large heaps upon the floor. An

¹ A statement that, however true, completely justifies the "persecutors" he complained of. Goethe seems to have desired credit both for being patriotic and for being superior to patriotism.

addition should have been made to the building, but for this the means were wanting; besides, this addition could easily be avoided, since adjoining the library there was a large room standing empty, and well calculated to supply all our necessities. However, this room was not in possession of the library; but was occupied by the medical faculty, who sometimes used it for conferences. I therefore applied to these gentlemen, civilly requesting that they would give up this room to me for the library. They would not agree. They said they were willing to give it up if I would have a new room built for their conferences, and that immediately. I replied that I should be very ready to have another place prepared for them but could not promise them a new building immediately. This answer did not appear to satisfy; for when I sent the next morning for the key, I was told that it could not be found!

“There now remained no other course but to enter as conqueror. I sent for a bricklayer, and took him into the library, to the wall of the said adjoining room. ‘This wall, my friend,’ said I, ‘must be very thick, for it separates two different parts of the dwelling: just try how strong it is.’ The bricklayer went to work, and scarcely had he given five or six hearty blows, when bricks and mortar fell in, and we could see, through the opening, some venerable¹ perukes with which the room had been decorated. ‘Go on, my friend,’ said I; ‘I cannot see clearly enough yet. Act just as if you were in your own house.’ This friendly encouragement so animated the bricklayer, that the opening was soon large enough to serve for a door; when my library attendants rushed into the room, each with an armful of books, which they threw upon the ground as a sign of possession.

“Benches, chairs, and desks vanished in a moment; and my assistants were so quick and active, that in a few days all the books were arranged in the most beautiful order along the walls of their repository. The doctors, who soon afterwards entered their room, *in corpore*, through their usual door, were confounded by the great and unexpected change. They did not know what to say, and retired in silence; but they all harboured a secret grudge against me. Still, when I see them singly, and particularly when I have any one of them to dine with me, they are quite charming, and my very dear friends. When I related

¹ Houben's reissue of the *Gespräche* (Leipzig, 1925) notes a printer's omission here. The phrase ought to be “some venerable portraits of old perukes.”

to the Grand Duke the course of this adventure, which was certainly achieved with his consent and perfect approbation, it amused him right royally, and we have very often laughed at it since.

“We had our share of trouble in doing good. Afterwards, when, on account of the great dampness in the library, I wished to take down and remove the whole of the old city-wall, which was quite useless, I found no better success. My entreaties, good reasons, and rational representations, found no hearing, and I was at last obliged here also to go to work as a conqueror. When the city authorities saw my workmen at work upon their old wall, they sent a deputation to the Grand Duke, who was then at Dornburg, with the humble request that his highness would be pleased, by a word of command, to check my violent destruction of their venerable city-wall. But the Grand Duke, who had secretly authorized me to take this step, answered very wisely—‘I do not intermeddle with Goethe’s affairs. He knows what he has to do, and must act as he thinks right. Go to him, and speak to him yourself, if you have the courage!’

“However, nobody made his appearance at my house,” continued Goethe, laughing; “I went on pulling down as much of the old wall as was in my way, and had the happiness of seeing my library dry at last.”

Tuesday, March 16, 1830.

This morning Herr von Goethe paid me a visit, and informed me his long-contemplated tour to Italy had been decided on; his father had allowed the necessary money; and he wished me to accompany him. We were both highly pleased, and talked a great deal about our preparations.

When I passed Goethe’s house at noon, Goethe beckoned me at the window, and I hastened up to him. He was in the front apartments, and began to talk about his son’s tour; saying that he approved of it, thought it very rational, and was glad that I would accompany him.

“It will be a good thing for you both,” said he, “and your cultivation in particular will receive no small advantage.”

He then showed me a Christ with twelve Apostles, and we talked of the poverty of these forms as subjects for sculpture.

“One Apostle,” said Goethe, “is always much like another, and very few have enough life and action connected with them to give them character and significance. I have amused myself with making a cycle of twelve biblical figures, in which every

one is significant and distinct from the rest and therefore a grateful subject for the artist.

“First comes Adam—the most beautiful of men, as perfect as can be imagined. He may have his hand upon a spade, as a symbol that man is to till the earth.

“Next Noah, with whom a new creation begins. He cultivates the vine, and therefore this figure may have something of the character of the Indian Bacchus.

“Next Moses, as the first lawgiver.

“Then David, as warrior and king.

“Next to him, Isaiah as prince and prophet.

“Then Daniel, who points to the *future* Christ.

“Christ.

“Next to him John, who loves the *present* Christ. Thus Christ would be placed between two youthful figures; one of whom, viz. Daniel, should be painted with a mild expression and long hair, while the other should be impassioned and with short curly hair. But who shall come after John?

“The Captain of Capernaum, as a representation of the faithful who expect immediate aid.

“Then the Magdalen, as a symbol of penitent man urging forgiveness and eager for reformation. In these two figures the idea of Christianity would be contained.

“Then there may follow Paul, who most vigorously propagated the new doctrine.

“After him James, who went to the remotest nations, and represents missionaries.

“Peter would conclude the whole. The artist should place him near the door, giving him an expression as if he examined those who entered, to see whether they were worthy to tread the sanctuary.

“What do you say to this cycle? I think it would be richer than that of the twelve Apostles, where all look like each other. Moses and the Magdalen I would represent sitting.”

I requested Goethe to write it down, which he promised to do. “I will think it over again,” he said, “and then give it with other new things for the thirty-ninth volume.”

Wednesday, March 17, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. I asked him respecting a passage in his poems, whether it should be read, “As thy priest Horace in his rapture promised,” as it stands in all the older editions—or, “As thy priest Propertius,” etc., as it stands in the new edition.

“I allowed myself,” said Goethe, “to be seduced by Götting into this last reading. ‘Priest Propertius’ sounds badly, and therefore I am for the earlier reading.”

“In the manuscript of your *Helena*,” said I, “it was written that Theseus carries her off as a slim roe of *ten* years. In consequence of Götting’s suggestions, you have printed, ‘a slim roe of *seven* years’; which is too young both for the beautiful girl herself, and for the twin-brothers Castor and Pollux, who rescue her. Mythology is so pliant, that we may use things just as we find most convenient.”

“You are right,” said Goethe; “I also am in favour of her being ten years old when Theseus carries her off, and hence I have written afterwards, ‘From her *tenth* year she has been good for naught.’ In the future edition you may again make the roe of seven years into one of ten.”

After dinner Goethe showed me two new numbers by Neureuther, after his ballads; and we admired above everything the free cheerful mind of this amiable artist.

Sunday, March 21, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. He spoke first about his son’s journey, saying we ought not to have illusions as to the result.

“People usually come back as they have gone away,” said he; “indeed, we must take care not to return with thoughts that unfit us for after-life. Thus, I brought from Italy the idea of fine staircases, and have consequently spoiled my house, making the rooms all smaller than they should have been. The most important thing is to learn to rule oneself. If I allowed myself to go on unchecked, I could easily ruin myself and all about me.”

We talked then about ill health, and the interplay of body and mind.

“It is incredible,” said Goethe, “how much the mind can do to sustain the body. I suffer often from a disordered state of the bowels; but my will, and the strength of the upper part of my body, keep me up. The mind must not yield to the body. I work more easily when the barometer is high than when it is low: so I endeavour, when the barometer is low, to counteract the injurious effect by great exertion—and my attempt is successful.”

“But there are in poetry things that cannot be forced; we must await favourable hours to give us what we cannot get by mental determination. Thus I now take my time with my

Walpurgis Night, that there may be the proper strength and grace throughout. I have advanced a good way, and hope to finish it before your departure.

“Everything in it derived from pique, I have so separated from the particular circumstances, and made so general, that, though the reader has no want of allusions, he cannot tell what they are really aimed at. I have, however, endeavoured to mark out everything in distinct outline, in the antique style, so that there may be nothing vague or undecided—which might suit the romantic style well enough.

“The distinction between classical and romantic poetry, which is now spread over the whole world and occasions so many quarrels and divisions, came originally from Schiller and myself. I laid down the maxim of objective treatment in poetry, and would allow no other; but Schiller, who worked quite in the subjective way, deemed his own fashion right, and to defend himself against me, wrote the treatise upon *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*. He proved to me that I, against my will, was romantic, and that my *Iphigenia*, through the predominance of sentiment, was by no means so classical and so much in the antique spirit as some people supposed.

“The Schlegels took up this idea, and carried it further, so that it has now been diffused over the whole world; and everybody talks about classicism and romanticism—of which nobody thought fifty years ago.”

I turned the conversation again upon the cycle of the twelve figures, and Goethe made some explanatory remarks.

“Adam must be represented as I have said—but not quite naked, because I best conceive him after the Fall; he should be clothed with a thin deer-skin; and, at the same time, in order to express that he is the father of the human race, it would be well to place by him his eldest son, a fearless boy, looking boldly about him—a little Hercules stifling a snake in his hand.

“And I have had another thought about Noah, which pleases me better than the first. I would not have him like an Indian Bacchus; I would represent him as a vintager: this would give the notion of a redeemer, who, as the first fosterer of the vine, made man free from the torment of care and affliction.”

Goethe then showed me the engraving of Neureuther, for his legend of the horseshoe.

“The artist,” said I, “has given the Saviour only eight disciples.”

“And even these eight,” replied Goethe, “are too many; and

he has very wisely endeavoured to divide them into two groups, and thus to avoid the monotony of an unmeaning procession."

Wednesday, March 24, 1830.

The liveliest conversation at table to-day with Goethe. He told me about a French poem which had come in manuscript, in the collection of David, under the title *Le Rire de Mirabeau*.

"The poem is full of spirit and boldness," said Goethe, "and you must see it. It seems as if Mephistopheles had prepared the ink for the poet. It is great if he wrote it without having read *Faust*, and no less great if he had read it."

(Sup.) Monday, March 29, 1830.

This evening for some moments at Goethe's. I found him between his grandson Wolf and the Countess Caroline Egloffstein, his intimate friend. Wolf gave his dear grandfather a great deal of trouble. He climbed about him, and sat now upon one shoulder, and now upon another. Goethe bore all with the utmost gentleness, inconvenient as the weight of this boy of ten must have been to so old a man.

"But, dear Wolf," said the Countess, "do not torment your good grandfather so terribly! He must be quite tired with your weight."

"That doesn't matter!" said Wolf, "we shall soon go to bed, and then grandfather will have time to recover."

"You see," rejoined Goethe, "that love is always somewhat impertinent."

The conversation turned upon Campe, and his writings for children.

"I have met Campe only twice," said Goethe. "After forty years, I saw him at Carlsbad. I then found him very old, withered, stiff, and formal. He had, during a long life, written only for children—not even for great children of twenty. He could not endure me. I was an eyesore, a stumbling-block, and he did all he could to avoid me. Chance, however, one day brought me to him unexpectedly; and he could not help saying some words to me. 'I have,' said he, 'great respect for the capabilities of your mind! You have attained extraordinary eminence in various departments. But things of that sort do not affect me, and I cannot set the value upon them that others do.' This rather uncivil candour by no means offended me, and I said all sorts of obliging things in return. Besides, I really have a high opinion of Campe. He has conferred incredible

benefits upon children; he is their delight, and, so to speak, their gospel. I should like to see him a little corrected—merely on account of two or three terrible stories he has had the indiscretion not only to write but also to introduce into his collection for children. Why should we burden the cheerful, fresh, innocent fancy of children with such horrors?”

(Sup.) Monday, April 5, 1830.

It is well known that Goethe is no friend to spectacles.

“It may be a mere whim of mine,” said he, on various occasions, “but I cannot overcome it. Whenever a stranger steps up to me with spectacles on his nose, a discordant feeling comes over me, which I cannot master. It annoys me so much, that on the very threshold it takes away a great part of my benevolence, and so spoils my thoughts, that unconstrained natural play of my own nature is impossible. It ever gives me the impression of the *Discourteous*, as if a stranger would say something rude to me at the first greeting. I feel this still stronger, since it has been impressed upon me for years how obnoxious spectacles are. If a stranger now comes with spectacles, I think immediately, ‘He has not read my latest poems!’ and that is of itself a little to his disadvantage; or ‘He has read them, knows their peculiarity, and sets them at naught,’ and that is still worse. The only man with whom spectacles do not annoy me, is Zelter; with all others they are horrible. It always seems to me as if I am to serve strangers as an object for strict examination, and as if with their armed glances they would penetrate my most secret thoughts and spy out every wrinkle of my old face. But while they thus endeavour to make my acquaintance, they destroy all fair equality between us, as they prevent me from compensating myself by making theirs. For what do I gain from a man into whose eyes I cannot look when he is speaking, and the mirror of whose soul is veiled by glasses that dazzle me?”

“Someone has remarked,” added I, “that wearing spectacles makes men conceited, because spectacles raise them to a degree of sense-perfection which is far above the power of their own nature, but through which at last creeps in the delusion that this artificial eminence is the force of their own nature after all.”

“The remark is very good,” returned Goethe, “it appears to have proceeded from a scientist. However, it is not tenable. For if this were actually the case, all blind men would of necessity be very modest; and, on the other hand, all endowed with

excellent eyes would be conceited. But this is not the case; we rather find that all men endowed mentally and bodily are the most modest, while all who have some peculiar mental defect think a great deal more of themselves. It appears that bountiful Nature has given, to all those whom she has not enough endowed in higher respects, imagination and presumption by way of compensation and complement.

“Besides, modesty and presumption are moral things, of so spiritual a nature that they have little to do with the body. With narrow-minded persons, and those in a state of mental darkness, we find conceit; while with mental clearness and high endowments we never find it. In such cases there is generally a joyful feeling of strength; but since this strength is actual, the feeling is anything else you please, only not conceit.”

We still conversed on various other subjects, and came at last to the *Chaos*—the Weimar journal conducted by Frau von Goethe—in which not only the German gentlemen and ladies of the place take part, but also the young English, French, and other foreigners who reside here; so that almost every number presents a mixture of nearly all the best-known European tongues.

“It was a good thought of my daughter,” said Goethe, “and she should be praised and thanked for having achieved this highly original journal, and kept the individual members of our society in such activity that it has now lasted nearly a year. It is certainly only a dilettante pastime, and I know very well that nothing great and durable will proceed from it; but still it is very neat, and to a certain extent a mirror of the intellectual eminence of our present Weimar society. Then (the principal thing) it gives employment to our young gentlemen and ladies, who often do not know what to do with themselves; through this too they have an intellectual centre which affords them subjects for discussion and conversation and preserves them from mere empty hollow chat. I read every sheet just as it comes from the press; and on the whole I have met with nothing stupid, but occasionally something very pretty. What, for instance, could you say against the elegy by Frau von Bechtolsheim upon the death of the Grand Duchess Dowager? Is not the poem very pretty? The only thing that could be said against it, or indeed against most that is written by our young ladies and gentlemen, is, that (like trees too full of sap, which have a number of parasitical shoots) they have

a superabundance of thoughts and feelings which they cannot control, so that they often do not know how to restrain themselves or to leave off in the right place. This is so with Frau von Bechtolsheim. In order to preserve a rhyme, she had added another line, which was completely detrimental to the poem, and in some measure spoiled it. I saw this fault in the manuscript, and was able to strike it out in time.

“It takes an old practitioner,” he added, laughing, “to understand striking out. Schiller was particularly great in that. I once saw him, on the occasion of his *Musen Almanach*, reduce a pompous poem of *two-and-twenty* strophes to *seven*; and no loss resulted from this terrible operation. Those seven strophes contained all the good and effective thoughts.”

Wednesday, April 21, 1830.

To-day I took my leave of Goethe, as I was to set out with his son for Italy to-morrow morning. We said a great deal in reference to the journey; and he especially recommended me to observe well, and now and then to write to him.

I felt some emotion at leaving Goethe, but was consoled by his strong healthy appearance and the confident hope that I should see him again.

When I took my departure he gave me an album, in which he had written these words:

TO THE TRAVELLERS

Es geht vorüber eh' ich's gewahr werde,
Und verwandelt sich eh' ich's merke.—Job.¹

Weimar, 21st April, 1830.

[Here Eckermann inserts an account, by way of journal, of his travels. He was at Frankfort on the 24th and 25th of April. At Milan, on the 28th of May, he writes: “I have now been here for three weeks.” From Geneva on the 12th of September he wrote to Goethe: it appears that from Milan the two travellers paid a visit to Venice; and that, on their return to Milan, Eckermann had a fever. On his recovery they went to Genoa; where, as previously arranged, they parted—young Goethe going to Leghorn, and Eckermann to Turin: this on the 25th of July. Eckermann crossed the Alps at Mont Cenis on the 2nd of August, to Chambéry; on the 7th he was at Aix; and late on the 8th, amid rain and darkness, he reached Geneva and put up at the “Crown.”]

¹“Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.”—Job.—J. O.

This inn was thronged with Englishmen; who, having just come from Paris, and having been eye-witnesses of the extraordinary scenes that had taken place there,¹ had a great deal to tell. You may imagine what an effect the first experience of these world-shaking events had upon me—with what interest I read the newspapers, which had been suppressed in Piedmont; and how eagerly I listened to the narratives of the newcomers who arrived every day, and to the gossip and disputes of the politicians at the *table d'hôte*. Everybody was in a state of the greatest excitement, and an endeavour was made to trace the consequences that might result to the rest of Europe from such violent measures. I visited our fair friend Sylvester, and Soret's parents and brother.

[On the 15th of August he heard from his friend Sterling, who was at Geneva, that young Goethe had, through a carriage accident, broken his collar-bone the very day he parted from Eckermann. On the 28th, however, he had reassuring news.—The rest of his letter is about himself and his decision not to return to Weimar because he wished to busy himself writing out the Conversations, etc., and feared distraction.

On the 14th of September he writes again from Geneva, in answer to a letter from Goethe. He says:]

The Rhone, as it narrows itself to pass through Geneva, divides itself into two arms, which are crossed by four bridges, from which the colour of the water may be well observed by all who are coming or going.

Now it is remarkable that one arm is blue—as was perceived by Byron, while the other is green. The arm in which the water appears blue flows more rapidly, and has so deep a channel that no light can penetrate it, consequently there is perfect darkness below. The very clear water acts as a dense medium, and from our well-known laws the finest blue is produced. The water of the other arm is not so deep, the light reaches the bottom, so that we see the pebbles; and as it is not dark enough to become blue, but at the same time is not smooth, and the ground is not sufficiently pure, white, and shining, to be yellow, the colour remains between the two extremes, and appears green.

¹ The "Revolution of July"—which had resulted in the deposition of Charles X of France and the proclamation of Louis-Philippe as King of the French. When the news of this reached Weimar on 2nd August, Soret called upon Goethe, who asked him what he thought "of the great event." Soret assumed that the Revolution was referred to; but it appeared that Goethe meant a contest between two scientists, Cuvier and Saint-Hilaire.

If, like Byron, I had a taste for mad pranks, and the means to play them off, I would make the following experiment:

In the green arm of the Rhone, near the bridge, where people pass by thousands every day, I would fasten a large black board, or something of the kind, so far below the surface that a pure blue would be produced; and, not far from this, a very large piece of white shining tin, at such a depth that a clouded yellow would appear in the sunshine. When the people as they passed saw the yellow and blue spots in the green water, they would be teased by a riddle, which they would not be able to solve. All sorts of pleasantries occur to travellers; but this seems to me good of its kind—there is some sense in it, and it might be of some use.

[On the 21st of September he left Geneva for Berne; and after two days there he went to Strasburg.]

Here, as I passed a hairdresser's window, I saw a small bust of Napoleon, which, viewed from the street against the darkness of the room, exhibited all the gradations of blue, from a pale milky hue to a deep violet. I suspected that this bust, seen from the interior of the room against the light, would exhibit all the gradations of yellow; and I could not resist the impulse of the moment to rush into the house, though the owners were unknown to me.

My first glance was at the bust, which to my great delight shone upon me with the most brilliant colours on the *active* side from the palest yellow to a dark ruby-red. I asked eagerly whether it was not to be disposed of. The master replied that, from a similar respect for the Emperor, he had lately brought it from Paris; but that since my affection seemed, from my enthusiastic joy, greatly to exceed his own, the right of possession belonged to me.

[He sent the image to Goethe.]

Afterwards, at Frankfort, I received the following letters:

FIRST LETTER

I write to tell you as briefly as possible that both your letters from Geneva arrived safe, though not before the 26th of September. I have only to say in haste—remain in Frankfort till we have thoroughly considered how you are to pass next winter.

I enclose a letter for Herr Geheimrath von Willemer and his

lady, which you will be kind enough to deliver as soon as possible. You will find in them two friends, who are united with me in the fullest sense, and will render your abode at Frankfort useful and agreeable.

So much for the present. Write to me as soon as you have received this letter.

Yours faithfully,
GOETHE.

Weimar, 26th September, 1830.

SECOND LETTER

I send you the heartiest greetings, my dearest friend in my native city, and hope that you will have passed the few days there in social enjoyments with my excellent friends. If you wish to go to Nordheim, and to remain there for a short time, I have nothing to object. If you intend in your quiet hours to occupy yourself with the manuscript that is in Soret's hands, I shall be all the better pleased, as I do not wish it to be published soon, but shall be glad to go through it with you and correct it. Its value will be increased if I can attest that it is conceived perfectly in my spirit. More I do not say, but leave the rest to yourself, and expect to hear further. Of your other friends I have not spoken to one since the receipt of your letter.

Your hearty well-wisher,
J. W. VON GOETHE.

Weimar, 12th October 1830.

THIRD LETTER

The lively impression which you received from the remarkable bust, and the colours it produced—the desire to obtain it—the pleasant adventure you achieved on that account, and the kind thought of making me a present of it,—all this shows how thoroughly you are penetrated with the grand primitive phenomenon which here appears thoroughly revealed. This idea—this feeling, with all its fruitfulness, will accompany you through your whole life, and will manifest itself in various productive ways. Error belongs to libraries, truth to the human mind—books may be increased by books, while the intercourse with living primitive laws gratifies the mind that can embrace the simple, disentangle the perplexed, and enlighten the obscure.

If your Dæmon again brings you to Weimar, you shall see the image standing in a strong clear sun, where beneath the calm blue of the transparent face the thick mass of the breast and the epaulettes go through the ascending and descending scale of every shade from the strongest ruby-red. As the granite head of Memnon utters sounds, so does this glass figure produce a coloured halo. Here we see the hero victorious even for the Theory of Colours. Receive my warmest thanks for this unexpected confirmation of a doctrine I have so much at heart.

With your medal, too, you have doubly and trebly enriched my cabinet. My attention has been called to a man called Dupré, an excellent sculptor, brassfounder, and medallist. He it was who modelled and cast the likeness of Henry IV on the Pont-Neuf. Being stimulated by the medal you sent me, I looked over the rest of my collection, and found some very excellent ones of the same name, and others probably by the same hand, so that your gift has afforded me a pleasant impulse.

As for my *Metamorphosis* with Soret's translation, we have only reached the fifth sheet, and I long doubted whether I should curse or bless this undertaking, but now I again find myself forced back to the contemplation of organic nature; I am pleased, and willingly pursue my task. The maxims I have entertained for forty years are still valid—they serve as guide through the whole labyrinth of the comprehensible to the very limit of the incomprehensible, where, after much profit, one may reasonably stop. No philosopher of the old or new world has been able to reach any further. More can scarcely be said in writing.

J. W. VON GOETHE.

During my stay at Nordheim, which I did not reach till the end of October, having stopped some time at Frankfort and Cassel, every circumstance combined to make my return to Weimar desirable.

Goethe had not approved of a speedy publication of my *Conversations*, hence a successful opening of a purely literary career was not to be thought of.

Then the sight of her whom I had ardently loved for many years, and the feeling of her great qualities, which was every day renewed, excited in me the desire of a speedy union, and the wish for a secure subsistence.

Under these circumstances I received a message from Weimar,