by order of the Grand Duchess, and hailed it with delight, as may be seen by the following letter to Goethe:

[The letter announced that he had changed his mind about not returning to Weimar, and had accepted an offer, from the Grand Duchess, of the post of tutor to the young Prince.]

On the afternoon of the 20th of November I left Nordheim, and set off for Göttingen, which I reached at dusk.

In the evening, at the *table d'hôte*, when the landlord heard that I had come from Weimar and was on my way back, he calmly told me that the great poet Goethe had had to undergo a severe misfortune in his old age, since, according to the papers of the day, his only son had died of paralysis, in Italy.

I passed a sleepless night. The event which affected me so nearly was constantly before my eyes. The following days and nights, which I passed on the road, and in Mühlhausen and Gotha, were no better. Being alone in the carriage, under the influence of the gloomy November days, and in desert fields, where there was no external object to distract my attention or to cheer me, I in vain endeavoured to fix upon other thoughts. While among the people at the inns, I constantly heard of the mournful event which so nearly affected myself, as one of the novelties of the day.

I reached the last station before Weimar, on Tuesday, the 23rd of November, at six o'clock in the evening.

I just greeted the people at my residence, and then set off at once for Goethe's house. I first went to Frau von Goethe. I found her already in mourning, but calm and collected, and we had a great deal to say to each other.

Thursday, November 25, 1830.

This morning Goethe sent me some books, which had arrived as presents for me from English and German authors.

At noon I went to dine with him. I found him looking at a portfolio of engravings and drawings, which had been offered him for sale. He told me he had had the pleasure that morning of a visit from the Grand Duchess, to whom he had mentioned my return.

Frau von Goethe joined us, and we sat down to dinner. I was obliged to give an account of my travels. I spoke of Venice, Milan, Genoa; and he seemed particularly interested about the family of the English consul there. I then spoke of Geneva; and he asked with sympathy after the Soret family, and Herr

von Bonstetten. He wished for a particular description of the latter, which I gave him as well as I could.

After dinner, I was pleased that Goethe began to speak of my *Conversations*.

"It must be your first work," said he; "and we will not let it go till the whole is complete, and in order."

Still, Goethe appeared to me unusually silent to-day, and often lost in thought, which I feared was no good sign.

Tuesday, November 30, 1830.

Last Friday, we were thrown into no small anxiety. Goethe was seized with a violent hæmorrhage in the night, and was near death all the day. He lost, counting the vein they opened, six pounds of blood, which is a great quantity, considering that he is eighty years old. However, the great skill of his physician, Hofrath Vogel, and his incomparable constitution, have saved him this time; so that he recovers rapidly, has once more an excellent appetite, and sleeps again all night. Nobody is admitted, and he is forbidden to speak; but his ever active mind cannot rest; he is already thinking of his work. This morning, I received from him the following note, written in bed, with a lead pencil:

"Have the goodness, my best doctor, to look once again at the accompanying poems, with which you are familiar, and to rearrange the others which are new, so as to adapt them to their place in the whole. *Faust* shall presently follow.

"In hope of a happy meeting,

"GOETHE.

"Weimar, 30th November, 1830."

On Goethe's complete recovery, which soon followed, he devoted his whole attention to the first act of *Faust*, and to completion of the fourth volume of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

He wished me to examine his short unpublished papers, and to look through his journals and letters, that we might know how to proceed with the new edition.

1831

[The entry for January 1 consists entirely of particulars of Eckermann's scheme for the publication of Goethe's correspondence.]

To-day, after dinner, I discussed this matter with Goethe, point by point, and he gave his assent to my suggestions. "In my will," said he, "I will appoint you editor of these papers, and thus show that we have perfectly agreed as to the method to be observed."

Wednesday, February 9, 1831.

Yesterday I continued reading Voss's *Luise* with the Prince, and made to myself several remarks on the subject of that book.

[These were to the effect that, compared with *The Vicar of Wakefield* (to which it bore resemblance), the poem showed a narrow outlook; and that the hexameter was too pretentious for the subject.]

To-day, at dinner, I talked over this point with Goethe. "The earlier editions of the poem," said he, "are far better in that respect, and I remember that I read it aloud with pleasure. Afterwards Voss touched it up a great deal, and, from his technical crotchets, spoiled the ease and nature of the verse. Indeed, nowadays technicalities are everything, and the critics begin to torment themselves—whether in a rhyme an s should be followed by an s, and not an s by a 'double s.' If I were young and bold enough, I would purposely offend against all these technical whims; I would employ alliteration, assonance, false rhyme, and anything else that came into my head, but I would keep the main point in view, and endeavour to say such good things that everybody would be tempted to read them and to learn them by heart."

Friday, February 11, 1831.

To-day, at dinner, Goethe told me he had begun the fourth act of *Faust*, and thus intended to proceed, which pleased me highly. He then spoke with great praise of Carl Schöne, a young philologist of Leipzig, who had written a work on the

costumes in the tragedies of Euripides, and who, notwithstanding his great learning, had displayed no more of it than was necessary for his purpose.

"I like to see," said Goethe, "how, with a productive sense, he goes to the point at once, while other modern philologists give themselves far too much trouble about technicalities and long and short syllables.

"It is always a sign that a time is unproductive when it goes so much into technical minutiæ; and thus also it is a sign that an individual is unproductive when he occupies himself in a like manner.

"Then there are other faults that act as impediments. Thus, in Count Platen there are nearly all the chief requisites of a good poet—imagination, invention, intellect, and productiveness, he possesses in a high degree; he also shows a thoroughly technical cultivation, and a study and earnestness, to be found in few others. With him, however, his unhappy polemical tendency is a hindrance.

"That amid the grandeur of Naples and Rome he could not forget the miserable trivialities of German literature, is unpardonable in so eminent a talent. The *Romantic Œdipus* shows that, especially with regard to technicalities, Platen was just the man to write the best German tragedy; but as, in this piece, he has used the tragic *motifs* for purposes of parody, how will he write a tragedy in good earnest?

"And then (what is not enough kept in mind) these quarrels occupy the thoughts; the images of our foes are like ghosts that intercept all free production and cause great disorder in a nature already sufficiently susceptible. Lord Byron was ruined by his polemic tendency; and Platen should, for the honour of German literature, quit for ever so unprofitable a path."

Saturday, February 12, 1831.

I have been reading the New Testament, and thinking of a picture Goethe lately showed me: Christ walking on the water, and Peter coming towards him on the waves and beginning to sink in a moment of faint-heartedness.

"This," said Goethe, "is one of the most beautiful legends, and one I love better than any. It expresses the noble doctrine that man, through faith and hearty courage, will come off victor in the most difficult enterprises, while he may be ruined by the least paroxysm of doubt."

Sunday, February 13, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. He told me he was going on with the fourth act of *Faust*, and had satisfied himself with the beginning. "I had," said he, "long since the *what*, as you know, but was not quite satisfied about the *how*; hence it is the more pleasant that good thoughts have come to me.

"I will now go on inventing, to supply the whole gap, from the *Helena* to the fifth act, which is finished, and will write down a detailed plan, that I may work with comfort and security on those parts that first attract me.

"This act acquires quite a peculiar character, so that, like an independent little world, it does not touch the rest, and is only connected with the whole by a slight reference to what precedes and follows."

"It will then," said I, "be perfectly in character with the rest; for, in fact, Auerbach's cellar, the witches' kitchen, the Blocksberg, the Imperial Diet, the masquerade, the paper-money, the laboratory, the classical Walpurgis Night, the *Helena*, are all of them little independent worlds, which, each being complete in itself, do indeed work upon each other, yet come but little in contact. The great point with the poet is to express a manifold world, and he uses the story of a celebrated hero merely as a sort of thread on which he may string what he pleases. This is the case with *Gil Blas* and the *Odyssey*.

"You are perfectly right," said Goethe; "and the only matter of importance is, that the single masses should be clear and significant, while the whole always remains incommensurable—and even on that account, like an unsolved problem, constantly lures mankind to study it again and again."

I then spoke of a letter from a young soldier, whom I and other friends had advised to go into foreign service, and who now, not being pleased with his situation abroad, blames all those who advised him.

"Advice is a strange matter," said Goethe; "and looking about the world long enough to see how the most judicious enterprises fail and the most absurd often succeed, breeds disinclination to give advice to anybody. At bottom, too, there is a confinement with respect to him who asks advice, and a presumption in him who gives it. A person should only give advice in matters where he will co-operate. If anybody asks me for good advice, I say I am ready to give it, but only on condition that he will promise me not to take it."

The conversation turned on the New Testament, and I

mentioned that I had been reading again the passage where Christ walks on the sea, and Peter meets him.

"When a person has not for some time read the Evangelists," said I, "he is always astonished at the moral grandeur of the figures. We find in the lofty demands made upon our moral power of will a sort of categorical imperative."

"Especially," said Goethe, "you find the categorical imperative of faith; which, indeed, Mohammed carried still further."

"Altogether," said I, "the Evangelists, if you look closely into them, are full of differences and contradictions; and the books must have gone through strange revolutions of destiny before they were brought together in the form in which we have them now."

"It is like trying to drink out a sea," said Goethe, "to enter into a historical and critical examination of them. It is the best way, without further ado, to adhere to that which is set down, and to appropriate so much as can be used for moral strengthening and culture. However, it is pleasant to get a clear notion of the localities, and I can recommend to you nothing better than Röhr's admirable book on Palestine. The late Grand Duke was so pleased with this book, that he bought it twice, giving the first copy to the library, after he had read it, and keeping the other always by him."

I wondered that the Grand Duke should take an interest in such matters.

"Therein," said Goethe, "he was great. He was interested in everything of any importance, in whatever department. He was always progressive, and sought to domesticate with himself all the good inventions and institutions of his time. If anything failed, he spoke of it no more. I often thought how I should excuse to him this or that failure; but he always ignored it in the cheerfullest way, and was immediately engaged with some new plan. This was a greatness peculiar to his own nature; not acquired, but innate."

We looked, after dinner, at some engravings after the most modern artists, especially in the landscape department; and we remarked with pleasure that nothing false could be detected.

"For ages there has been so much good in the world," said Goethe, "that there is no reason to wonder when it produces good in its turn."

"The worst of it is," said I, "that there are so many false doctrines, and that a young talent does not know to what saint he should devote himself."

"We have proofs of that," said Goethe. "We have seen whole generations ruined or injured by false maxims, and have also suffered ourselves. Then there is the facility nowadays of universally diffusing every error by means of printing. Though a critic may think better after some years, and diffuse among the public his better convictions, his false doctrine has operated meanwhile, and will in future like a spreading weed continue to work along with what is good. My only consolation is, that a really great talent is not to be led astray or spoiled."

We looked further at the engravings. "These are really good things," said Goethe. "You have before you the works of very fair talents, who have learned something, and have acquired no little taste and art. Still, something is wanting in all these pictures—the *Manly*. Take notice of this word, and underscore it. The pictures lack a certain urgent power; which in former ages was generally expressed, but in which the present age is deficient, and that with respect not only to painting but to all the other arts also. We have a more weakly race, of which we cannot say whether it is so by its origin, or by a more weakly training and diet."

"We see here," said I, "how much in art depends on a great personality, which indeed was common enough in earlier ages. When, at Venice, we stand before the works of Titian and Paul Veronese, we feel the powerful mind of these men, both in their first conception of the subject, and in the final execution. Their great energetic feeling has penetrated all parts of the picture; and this higher power of the artist's personality expands our own nature, and elevates us above ourselves, when we contemplate such works. This manly mind of which you speak is also to be found especially in the landscapes of Rubens. They indeed consist merely of trees, soil, water, rocks, and clouds; but his own bold temperament has penetrated into the forms; and thus while we see familiar nature we see it penetrated by the power of the artist, and reproduced according to his views."

"Certainly," said Goethe, "personality is everything in art and poetry; yet there are many weak personages among the modern critics who do not admit this, but look upon a great personality in a work of poetry or art merely as a kind of trifling appendage.

"However, to feel and respect a great personality one must be something oneself. All who denied the sublime to Euripides were either poor wretches incapable of comprehending such sublimity, or shameless charlatans who by their presumption

wished to make more of themselves—and really did make more of themselves than they were."

Monday, February 14, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. He had been reading the memoirs of General Rapp; through which the conversation turned upon Napoleon, and the feelings that must have been experienced by Madame Letitia at finding herself the mother of so powerful a family.

Talent is indeed not hereditary, but it requires an apt physical substratum; and then it is by no means unimportant whether one is the first or the last born, nor whether one is the issue of strong and young, or weak and old parents.[1]

"It is remarkable," said I, "that, of all talents, the musical shows itself earliest; so that Mozart in his fifth, Beethoven in his eighth, and Hummel in his ninth year, astonished all near them by their performance and compositions."

"The musical talent," said Goethe, "may well show itself earliest of any; for music is something innate and internal, which needs little nourishment from without, and no experience drawn from life. Really, however, a phenomenon like that of Mozart remains an inexplicable prodigy. But how would the Divinity find everywhere opportunity to do wonders, if He did not sometimes try His powers on extraordinary individuals, at whom we stand astonished and cannot understand whence they come?"

Tuesday, February 15, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. I told him about the theatre; he praised the piece given yesterday—*Henry III*, by Dumas—as very excellent, but naturally found that such a dish would not suit the public.

"I should not," said he, "have ventured to give it, when I was director; for I remember well what trouble we had to smuggle upon the public the *Constant Prince*,[2] which has far more general human interest, is more poetic, and in fact lies much nearer to us, than *Henry III*."

I spoke of the *Grand Cophta*, which I had been lately re-perusing. I talked over the scenes one by one, and at last expressed a wish to see it once on the stage.

[1] This paragraph is not in quotation marks. It is perhaps a summary of what was agreed between the two.

[2] *El Principe Constante*, by Calderon.—J. O.

"I am pleased," said Goethe, "that you like that piece, and find out what I have worked into it. It was indeed no little labour to make an entirely real fact first poetical, and then theatrical. And yet you will grant that the whole is properly conceived for the stage. Schiller also was very partial to it; and we gave it once, when it had a brilliant effect with better-class people. But it is not for the public in general; the crimes of which it treats have about them an *apprehensive* character, which produces an uncomfortable feeling in the people. Its bold character places it, indeed, in the sphere of *Clara Gazul*; and the French poet might really envy me for taking from him so good a subject. I say *so good a subject*, because it is in truth not merely of moral, but also of great historical significance; the fact immediately preceded the French Revolution, and was to a certain extent its foundation. The Queen, through being implicated in that unlucky story of the necklace, lost her dignity, and was no longer respected; so that she lost, in the eyes of the people, the ground where she was unassailable. Hate injures nobody; it is contempt that casts men down. Kotzebue had been hated long; but before the student dared to use his dagger upon him, it was necessary for certain journals to make him contemptible."

Thursday, February 17, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. I brought him his *Residence at Carlsbad*, for the year 1807, which I had finished revising that morning. We spoke of wise passages, which occur there as hasty remarks of the day.

"People always fancy," said Goethe, laughing, "that we must become old to become wise; but, in truth, as years advance, it is hard to keep ourselves as wise as we were. Man becomes, indeed, in the different stages of his life, a different being; but he cannot say that he is a better one, and in certain matters he is as likely to be right in his twentieth as in his sixtieth year.

"We see the world one way from a plain, another way from the heights of a promontory, another from the glacier fields of the primary mountains. We see, from one of these points, a larger piece of world than from the other; but that is all, and we cannot say that we see more truly from any one than from the rest. When a writer leaves monuments on the different steps of his life, it is chiefly important that he should have an innate foundation and good will; that he should, at each step, have seen and felt clearly, and that, without any secondary

aims, he should have said distinctly and truly what has passed in his mind. Then will his writings, if they were right at the step where they originated, remain always right, however the writer may develop or alter himself in after times.

"Lately, I found a piece of waste paper which I read. 'Hm,' said I to myself, 'what is written there is not so bad; you do not think otherwise, and would not have expressed yourself very differently.' But when I looked closely at the leaf, it was a fragment from my own works. For, as I am always striving onwards, I forget what I have written, and soon regard my productions as something foreign."

I asked about *Faust*, and what progress he had made with it.

"That," said Goethe, "will not again let me loose. I daily think and invent more and more of it. I have now had the whole manuscript of the second part stitched together, that it may lie a palpable mass before me. The place of the yet-lacking fourth act I have filled with white paper; and undoubtedly what is finished will allure and urge me to complete what has yet to be done. There is more than people think in these matters of sense, and we must aid the spiritual by all manner of devices."

He sent for the stitched *Faust*, and I was surprised to see how much he had written; for a good folio volume was before me.

"And all," said I, "has been done in the six years that I have been here; and yet, amid so many other occupations, you could have devoted but little time to it. We see how much a work grows, even if we add something only now and then!"

"That is a conviction that strengthens with age," said Goethe; "while youth believes all must be done in a single day. If fortune favour, and I continue in good health, I hope in the next spring months to get a great way on with the fourth act. It was, as you know, invented long since; but the other parts have, in course of execution, grown so much, that I can now use only the outline of my first invention, and must fill out this introduced portion so as to make it of a piece with the rest."

"A far richer world is displayed," said I, "in this second part than in the first."

"I should think so," said Goethe. "The first part is almost entirely subjective; it proceeded entirely from a perplexed impassioned individual, and his semi-darkness is probably highly pleasing to mankind. But in the second part there is scarcely anything of the subjective; here is seen a higher, broader,

clearer, more passionless world, and he who has not looked about him and had some experience will not know what to make of it."

"There will be found exercise for thought," said I; "some learning may also be needful. I am glad that I have read Schelling's little book on the Cabiri, and that I now know the drift of that famous passage in the Walpurgis Night."

"I have always found," said Goethe, laughing, "that it is well to know something."

Friday, February 18, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of different forms of government; and it was remarked what difficulties an excess of liberalism presents, as it calls forth the demands of individuals, and, from the quantity of wishes, raises uncertainty as to which should be satisfied. In the long run, over-great goodness, mildness, and moral delicacy, will not do, while underneath there is a mixed and sometimes vicious world to manage and hold in respect.

It was also remarked that the art of governing is a great *métier*, requiring the whole man, and that it is therefore not well for a ruler to have too strong tendencies for other affairs—as, for instance, a predominant inclination for the fine arts; since thus not only the interest of the Prince but also the powers of the State must be withdrawn from more necessary matters. A predominating love for the fine arts better suits rich private persons.

Goethe told me that his *Metamorphosis of Plants*, with Soret's translation, was going on well; and that, in his supplementary labours on these subjects, particularly on the "Spiral," quite unexpected favourable things had come to his aid from without.

"We have," said he, "as you know, been busy with this translation for more than a year; a thousand hindrances have come in our way; the enterprise has often come to an absolute standstill, and I have often cursed it in silence. But now I can do reverence to all these hindrances; for during these delays things have ripened abroad among other excellent men, so that they now bring the best grist to my mill, advance me beyond all conception, and will bring my work to a conclusion I could not have imagined a year ago. The like has often happened to me in life; and such cases lead to belief in a higher influence, in something dæmonic, which we adore without trying to explain further."

Saturday, February 19, 1831.

Dined at Goethe's, with Hofrath Vogel. A pamphlet on the island of Heligoland had been sent to Goethe; he read it with great interest, telling us what was most important.

After we had talked about this very peculiar locality, conversation took a medical turn; and Vogel told us, as the news of the day, how the natural smallpox, in defiance of all inoculation, had again broken out in Eisenach, and had carried off many in a short time.

"Nature," said Vogel, "plays us a trick every now and then; and we must watch her very closely, if our theory is to keep pace with her. Inoculation was thought so sure and infallible, that a law was made to enforce it. But now this Eisenach affair, where the persons who have been inoculated are nevertheless attacked by the natural smallpox, casts a suspicion on the infallibility of the remedy, and weakens the motive for observing the law."

"Nevertheless," said Goethe, "I am against any departure from the strict law for inoculation, since these trifling exceptions are nothing in comparison with the great benefits it confers."

"I am of the same opinion," said Vogel, "and would even maintain that in all cases where the natural disease is not prevented by the artificial one, the inoculation has been imperfect. For inoculation to have a protective power it must be strong enough to produce fever. Mere irritation of the skin without fever will not suffice. I have this day proposed in council that a stronger inoculation for the smallpox shall be incumbent on all the parties throughout the country who have to perform it."

"I hope that your proposal has been carried," said Goethe. "Indeed I am always for a rigid adherence to a law; especially at a time like ours, when out of weakness and excessive liberality too much is always being conceded."

It was then remarked that we were beginning to be too gentle and lax with regard to the responsibility of criminals, and that medical testimony and opinion often had the effect of making the criminal evade the penalty he had incurred. On this occasion Vogel praised a young physician, who had always shown strength of character in such cases, and who lately, when the court was in doubt whether a certain infanticide was responsible or not, had given his testimony that she unquestionably was so.

Sunday, February 20, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. He told me he had tested my observation on the blue shadows in the snow, viz. that they were produced by the reflection of the blue sky, and that he acknowledged its correctness. "But both causes may, however, co-operate," said he, "and the demand (*Forderung*) excited by the yellowish light may strengthen the appearance of the blue." This I willingly conceded, and rejoiced that Goethe at last agreed with me.

"I am sorry," said I, "that I did not on the spot write down the observations on colour which I made at Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. The chief result, however, was, that at a distance of from eighteen to twenty miles, in the brightest noonday sun, the snow appeared yellow and even reddish—while the dark parts of the mountains, which were free from snow, stood out in the most decided blue. This phenomenon did not surprise me, as I could have predicted that the semi-transparent mass which intervened would give a deep yellow tone to the white snow as it reflected the noonday sun; nevertheless, it pleased me, as it fully confuted the erroneous opinion of some scientific persons, that the air has the property of giving a blue colour. For if the air had been blue of itself, the snow, for a space of twenty miles—that is to say, the distance between me and Monte Rosa—must have appeared bright blue, or a whitish blue, and not yellow and a yellowish red."

"This observation," said Goethe, "is important, and completely confutes every error."

"In fact," said I, "the doctrine of the dense medium is so simple that the belief that it can be communicated to another in a few days is a natural mistake. The difficulty is to apply the law, and to recognize a primitive phenomenon in phenomena that are conditioned and concealed a thousand different ways."

"I would compare it," said Goethe, "to whist, the laws and rules of which are very easy to teach, but which must be played a long time before a player can become a master. Altogether we learn nothing from mere hearing, and he who does not take an active part in certain subjects knows them but half and superficially."

Goethe then told me of the book of a young scientist, which he could not help praising, on account of the clearness of his descriptions, while he pardoned him for his teleological tendency.

"It is natural to man," said Goethe, "to regard himself as the final cause of creation, and to consider all other things

merely in relation to himself so far as they are of use to him. He makes himself master of the vegetable and animal world; and, while he claims other creatures as a fitting diet, he acknowledges his God, and praises His goodness in this paternal care. He takes milk from the cow, honey from the bee, wool from the sheep; and while he gives these things a purpose which is useful to himself, he believes that they were made on that account. Nay, he cannot conceive that even the smallest herb was not made for him; and if he has not yet ascertained its utility, he believes that he may discover it in future.

"Then, too, as man thinks in general, so does he always think in particular, and he does not fail to transfer his ordinary views from life into science, and to ask the use and purpose of every single part of our organic being.

"This may do for a time, and he may get on so for a time in science; but he will soon come to phenomena where this small view will not be sufficient, and where, if he does not take a higher stand, he will soon be involved in mere contradictions.

"The utility-teachers say that oxen have horns to defend themselves; but I ask, why is the sheep without any—and when it has them, why are they twisted about the ears so as to answer no purpose at all?

"If, on the other hand, I say the ox defends himself with his horns because he has them, it is quite a different matter.

"The question as to the purpose—the question *Wherefore?*—is completely unscientific. But we get on farther with the question *How?* For if I ask *how* has the ox horns, I am led to study his organization, and learn at the same time why the lion has no horns, and cannot have any.

"Thus, man has in his skull two hollows which are never filled up. The question *wherefore* could not take us far in this case; but the question *how* informs me that these hollows are remains of the animal skull, which are found on a larger scale in inferior organization, and are not quite obliterated in man, with all his eminence.[1]

"The teachers of utility would think that they lost their God if they did not worship Him who gave the ox horns to defend itself. But I hope I may be allowed to worship Him who, in the abundance of His creation, was great enough, after making a thousand kinds of plants, to make one more, in which all the rest should be comprised; and after a thousand kinds of animals, a being comprising them all—man.

[1] A glimmering of Darwinism. Possibly derived from Lamarck.

"Let people serve Him who gives to the beast his fodder, and to man meat and drink as much as he can enjoy. But I worship Him who has infused into the world such a power of production, that, when only the millionth part of it comes out into life, the world swarms with creatures to such a degree that war, pestilence, fire, and water cannot prevail against them. That is *my* God!"

Monday, February 21, 1831.

Goethe praised Schelling's last discourse, with which he had calmed the students at Munich.

"It is thoroughly good," said he; "and we rejoice once again at the fine talent we have long known and revered. In this case he had an excellent subject and a worthy purpose, and his success has been as great as possible. If the same could be said of the subject and purpose of his work on the Cabiri, that would claim praise from us also, since also he has displayed in it his rhetorical talent and art."

Schelling's *Cabiri* brought the conversation to the classic Walpurgis Night, and the difference between this and the scenes on the Brocken in the first part.

"The old Walpurgis Night," said Goethe, "is monarchical, since the devil is there respected throughout as a decided chief. But the classic Walpurgis Night is thoroughly republican; since all stand on a plain near one another, so that each is as prominent as his associates, and nobody is subordinate or troubled about the rest."

"Moreover," said I, "in the classic assembly all are sharply-outlined individualities; while, on the German Blocksberg, each individuality is lost in the general witch-mass."

"Therefore," said Goethe, "Mephistopheles knows what is meant when the Homunculus speaks to him of *Thessalian* witches. A connoisseur of antiquity will have something suggested by these words, while to the unlearned it remains a mere name."

"Antiquity," said I, "must be very living to you, else you could not make all these figures step so freshly into life, and treat them with such freedom as you do."

"Without a lifelong occupation with plastic art," said Goethe, "it would not have been possible to me. The difficulty was in observing due moderation amid such plenty, and avoiding all figures that did not perfectly fit into my plan. I made, for instance, no use of the Minotaur, the Harpies, and certain other monsters."

"But what you have exhibited in that night," said I, "is so grouped, and fits so well together, that it can be easily recalled by the imagination and made into a picture. The painters will certainly not allow such good subjects to escape them; and I especially hope to see Mephistopheles among the Phorcyades, when he tries the famous mask in profile."

"There are a few pleasantries there," said Goethe, "which will more or less occupy the world. Suppose the French are the first to perceive *Helena*, and to see what can be done with it for the stage. They will spoil the piece as it is; but they will make a wise use of it for their own purposes, and that is all we can expect or desire. To Phorcyas they will certainly add a chorus of monsters, as is indeed already indicated in one passage."

"It would be a great matter," said I, "if a clever poet of the romantic school treated the piece as an opera throughout, and Rossini collected all his great talent for a grand composition, to produce an effect with the *Helena*. It affords opportunities for magnificent scenes, surprising transformations, brilliant costumes, and charming ballets, which are not easily to be found elsewhere; not to mention that this abundance of sensible material rests on the foundation of an ingenious fable that could scarcely be excelled."

"We will wait for what the gods bring us," said Goethe; "such things are not to be hurried. The great matter is for people to enter into it, and for managers, poets, and composers to see their advantage in it."

Tuesday, February 22, 1831.

Upper-Consistorial Counsellor Schwabe met me in the street. I walked with him a little way; he told me of his manifold occupations, and thus I was enabled to look into the important sphere of action of this distinguished man. He said that he employed his spare hours in editing a little volume of new sermons; that one of his school-books had lately been translated into Danish, that forty thousand copies of it had been sold, and that it had been introduced into the best schools of Prussia. He begged me to visit him, which I gladly promised to do.

At dinner with Goethe, I spoke of Schwabe, and Goethe agreed entirely with my praises of him.

"The Grand Duchess," said he, "values him highly; and, indeed, she always knows what people are worth. I shall have

him drawn for my collection of portraits; and you will do well to visit him, and ask him to permit the inclusion.

"Visit him, and show sympathy in what he is doing and planning. It will be interesting for you to observe a sphere of action that cannot be rightly understood without closer intercourse with such a man."

Wednesday, February 23, 1831.

Before dinner, while walking in the Erfurt road, I met Goethe, who stopped me and took me into his carriage. We went a good way by the fir wood, and talked about natural history.

The mountains and hills were covered with snow; and I mentioned the great delicacy of the yellow, observing that at a distance of nine miles, with some density intervening, a dark surface rather appeared blue than a white one yellow. Goethe agreed with me, and we then spoke of the high significance of the primitive phenomena, behind which we believe the Deity may directly be discerned.

"I ask not," said Goethe, "whether this highest Being has reason and understanding, but I feel that He is Reason, is Understanding itself. Therewith are all creatures penetrated; and man has so much of it that he can recognize parts of the Highest."

At table, there was mention of the efforts of certain inquirers into nature, who, to penetrate the organic world, would ascend through mineralogy.

"This," said Goethe, "is a great mistake. In the mineralogical world the simplest, in the organic world the most complex, is the most excellent. We see, too, that these two worlds have quite different tendencies, and that a stepwise progress from one to the other is by no means to be found."

Thursday, February 24, 1831.

I read Goethe's essay on Zahn in the Viennese *Jahrbücher*, and was filled with admiration when I thought of the premises which the writing of it presupposed.

At dinner Goethe told me that Soret had been with him, and that they had made good progress with the translation of the *Metamorphosis*.

"The difficulty in nature," said Goethe, "is to see the law where it is concealed from us, and not to be misled by phenomena that contradict our senses. For in nature there is much that contradicts our senses and is nevertheless true. That the

sun stands still, that he does not rise and set, but that the earth performs a diurnal revolution with incredible swiftness, contradicts the senses as much as anything; but yet no well-informed person doubts that this is the case. Thus, too, there are in the vegetable kingdom contradictory phenomena, by which we must be very careful not to be led into false ways."

Saturday, February 26, 1831.

[A vague soliloquy, beginning about the *Theory of Colours*, but wandering off into general moralization.]

Monday, February 28, 1831.

[Another diffuse soliloquy (arising out of perusal of the MS. of the fourth volume of Goethe's Life). It touches on the Dæmonic; from connoisseurship of art it ascends to connoisseurship of the universe, and repeats the notion of an aristocracy of intellect necessary for comprehension of the Whole; then it traces the method, through Greek cosmogony and anthropomorphic Christianity, to Spinoza; in whose higher point of view Goethe apparently came to rest.]

Wednesday, March 2, 1831.

I dined with Goethe to-day; and, the conversation soon turning again on the Dæmonic, he added remarks to define it more closely.

"The Dæmonic is that which cannot be explained by Reason or Understanding; it lies not in my nature, but I am subject to it."

"Napoleon," said I, "seems to have been of the dæmonic sort."

"He was so, thoroughly and in the highest degree, so that scarce anyone is to be compared with him. Our late Grand Duke, too, was a dæmonic nature, full of unlimited power of action and unrest; so that his own dominion was too little for him, and the greatest would have been too little. Dæmonic beings of such sort the Greeks reckoned among their demigods."

"Is not the Dæmonic," said I, "perceptible in events also?"

"Particularly, and indeed in all that we cannot explain by Reason and Understanding. It manifests itself in the most varied manner throughout nature—in the invisible as in the visible. Many creatures are of a purely dæmonic kind; in many, parts of it are effective."

"Has not Mephistopheles," said I, "dæmonic traits, too?"

"No, Mephistopheles is much too negative a being. The Dæmonic manifests itself in a thoroughly active power. Among artists it is found more among musicians—less among painters.

In Paganini, it shows itself in a high degree; and it is thus he produces such great effects."

Thursday, March 3, 1831.

At noon with Goethe. He was looking through some architectural designs, and observed it required some courage to build palaces, as we are never certain how long one stone will remain upon another.

"Those are most fortunate," said he, "who live in tents; or who, like some Englishmen, are always going from one city and one inn to another, and find everywhere a good table ready."

Sunday, March 6, 1831.

At dinner talked on various subjects with Goethe. We spoke of children and their naughty tricks; and he compared these to the stem-leaves of a plant, which fall away gradually of their own accord, and which need not be corrected with great severity.

"Man," said he, "has various stages he must go through; and each brings with it its peculiar virtues and faults, which, in their epoch, are to be considered natural, and in a manner right. On the next step he is another man; there is no trace left of the earlier virtues or faults; but others have taken their place. And so on to the final transformation, as to which we know not what we shall be."

After dinner, Goethe read me fragments, which he had kept from 1775, of *Hanswursts Hochzeit* (Hanswurst's Wedding). Kilian Brustfleck opens the piece with a monologue; in which he complains that Hanswurst's education, despite all his care, has come to no good. This scene, and all the rest, were written in the tone of *Faust*. A productive force, powerful even to wantonness, displayed itself in every line; and I could not but lament that it went so far beyond all bounds, that even the fragments cannot be communicated.

Goethe read me the list of the *dramatis personæ*, which nearly filled three pages, and were about a hundred in number. There were all the nicknames imaginable; some of them so comic and ludicrous, that we could not help laughing at them. Many referred to bodily defects, and distinguished a figure so that it came like life before the eye; others indicated the most various follies and vices, and afforded a deep look into the breadth of the immoral world. Had the piece been finished, people must have admired the invention that could combine such various symbolical figures in one single action.

"It was not to be imagined that I could finish the piece," said Goethe; "for it demanded a high degree of wanton daring; which I had at moments, but which did not in fact lie in the serious tenor of my nature, and on which I could not depend. Then in Germany our circles are too limited for one to come forward with such an undertaking. On a broad ground, like Paris, such eccentricities might be ventured—a Béranger being possible there, and quite impossible at Frankfort or Weimar."

Tuesday, March 8, 1831.

Dined to-day with Goethe, who began by telling me that he had been reading *Ivanhoe*.

"Walter Scott," said he, "is a great talent; he has not his equal; and we need not wonder at the effect he produces on the whole reading world. He gives me much to think of; and I discover in him a wholly new art, with laws of its own."

We spoke then of the fourth volume of the biography, and came upon the subject of the Dæmonic before we were aware.

"In poetry," said Goethe, "especially in what is unconscious, before which reason and understanding fall short, and which therefore produces effects far surpassing all conception, there is always something dæmonic.

"So is it with music, in the highest degree; for it stands so high that no understanding can reach it, and an influence flows from it which masters all, and for which none can account. Hence, religious worship cannot dispense with it; it is one of the chief means of working upon men miraculously. Thus the Dæmonic loves to throw itself into significant individuals, especially when they are in high places, like Frederick and Peter the Great.

"Our late Grand Duke had it to such a degree, that nobody could resist him. He had an attractive influence upon men by his mere tranquil presence, without needing even to show himself good-humoured and friendly. All that I undertook by his advice succeeded; so that, in cases where my own understanding and reason were insufficient, I needed only to ask him what was to be done; he gave me an answer instinctively, and I could always be sure of happy results.

"He would have been enviable indeed if he could have possessed himself of my ideas and higher strivings; for when the dæmonic spirit forsook him, and only the human was left, he knew not how to set to work, and was much troubled at it.

"In Byron, also, this element was probably active in a high

degree; so that he possessed great powers of attraction, and women especially could not resist him."

"Into the idea of the Divine," said I, by way of experiment, "this active power which we name the Dæmonic would not seem to enter."

"My good friend," said Goethe, "what do we know of the idea of the Divine? and what can our narrow ideas tell of the Highest Being? Should I, like a Turk, name it with a hundred names, I should still fall short, and, in comparison with such boundless attributes, have said nothing."

Wednesday, March 9, 1831.

Goethe continued to speak of Sir Walter Scott with the highest acknowledgment.

"We read far too many poor things," said he; "thus losing time, and gaining nothing. We should only read what we admire; as I did in my youth, and as now with Sir Walter Scott. I have just begun *Rob Roy*, and will read his best novels in succession. All is great—material, import, characters, execution; and then what infinite diligence in the preparatory studies! what truth of detail in the execution! We see, too, what English history is; and what a thing it is when such an inheritance falls to the lot of a clever poet. Our German history, in five volumes, is, on the other hand, sheer poverty; so that, after *Goetz von Berlichingen*, writers went immediately into private life, giving us an *Agnes Bernauerin*, and an *Otto von Wittelsbach*,[1] which was really not much."

I said that I had been reading *Daphnis and Chloe*, in Courier's translation.

"That, also," said Goethe, "is a masterpiece, which I have often read and admired; in which Understanding, Art, and Taste, appear at their highest point, and beside which the good Virgil retreats somewhat into the background. The landscape is quite in the Poussin style, and appears behind the personages, finished with a very few strokes.

"You know Courier found, in the Florentine Library, a new manuscript, containing the principal passage of the poem which was not in the preceding editions. Now, I must acknowledge that I have always read and admired the poem in its imperfect state, without observing or feeling that the proper apex was wanting. But this may be a proof of the excellence of the

[1] These are two plays written after the manner of *Goetz*: the first is by Count Joseph von Törring; the second, by Francis Babo.—J. O.

poem, since what we possessed satisfied us so completely that we never thought of what was lacking."

After dinner, Goethe showed me a drawing by Coudray, of a fine door for the Dornburg Castle, with a Latin inscription —signifying that he who entered should find friendly reception and entertainment and that to the passer-by a happy journey was wished.

Goethe had translated this inscription into a German distich, and placed it as a motto over a letter he had written in the summer of 1828, after the death of the Grand Duke, during his residence at Dornburg, to Colonel von Beulwitz. I had heard much in public of this letter, and was very glad when Goethe showed it me to-day, with the drawing of the door. . .

Thursday, March 10, 1831.

I read to-day, with the Prince, Goethe's novel of the Tiger and the Lion [1]; and while he was highly pleased, feeling the effect of a great art, I was no less so at taking a clear view of a finished composition. . . . . . .

Friday, March 11, 1831.

At dinner with Goethe, talked on various subjects. "It is a peculiarity of Walter Scott's," said he, "that his great talent in representing details often leads him into faults. Thus, in *Ivanhoe*, there is a scene where they are seated at a table in a castle-hall, at night, and a stranger enters. Now, he is quite right in describing the stranger's appearance and dress; but it is a fault that he goes to the length of describing his feet, shoes, and stockings. When we sit down in the evening, and someone comes in, we see only the upper part of his body. If I describe the feet, daylight enters at once, and the scene loses its nocturnal character."

Goethe then continued to speak with great admiration of Sir Walter Scott. I requested him to put his views on paper; which he refused to do, remarking that Scott's art was so high that it is hard to give a public opinion about him.

Monday, March 14, 1831.

Dined with Goethe, and talked of several subjects. I had to tell him of the *Dumb Girl of Portici*, which had been represented the day before yesterday; when we said that a properly-grounded motive for a revolution was not shown at all, and that this very

[1] *Die Novelle.*—J. O.

circumstance pleased people, since everybody could fill up the gap with something offensive in his own city and country.

"The whole opera," said Goethe, "is, in fact, a satire upon the people; for, when it makes a public matter of a fisher-girl's amour, and calls the prince a tyrant because he marries a princess, it appears as absurd and ridiculous as possible."

After dinner, Goethe showed me some drawings illustrative of Berlin phrases, in which the liveliest subjects were represented; and we praised the moderation of the artist, in approaching caricature without actually going into it.

Tuesday, March 15, 1831.

[The first part of this entry is a statement of Eckermann's editorial work on *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. The rest is an account of what he said about Goethe's *Novelle* at a dinner-party at the Prince's where Soret was present. Not inspired.]

Wednesday, March 16, 1831.

Dined with Goethe, to whom I brought back the fourth volume of his Life, and conversed much about it.

We also spoke of the conclusion to *William Tell*; and I expressed my wonder that Schiller should have committed the fault of lowering his hero by his unworthy conduct to the fugitive Duke of Suabia, whom he judges severely while he boasts of his own deed.

"It is scarcely conceivable," said Goethe; "but Schiller, like others, was subject to the influence of women; and, if he committed such a fault, it was rather on account of this influence than from his own fine nature."

Friday, March 18, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. I brought him *Daphnis and Chloe*, which he wished to read once more.

We spoke of higher maxims, whether it was good or possible to communicate them to others. "The capacity of apprehending what is high," said Goethe, "is very rare; and therefore in common life a man does well to keep such things for himself, and only to give out so much as is needful to have some advantage against others."

We touched upon the point that many men, especially critics and poets, wholly ignore true greatness, while they assign extraordinary value to mediocrity.

"Man," said Goethe, "recognizes and praises only what he

himself is capable of doing; and as certain people have their proper existence in the mediocre, they get a trick of thoroughly depreciating in literature anything that, while faulty, may have good points; so as to elevate the mediocre, which they praise, to a greater eminence."

We then spoke of the Theory of Colours, and of certain German professors who continue to warn their pupils against it as a great error.

"I am sorry, for the sake of many a good scholar," said Goethe; "but, for myself, it is quite indifferent; my theory is as old as the world, and cannot always be repudiated and set aside."

Goethe then told me that he was making good progress with his new edition of the *Metamorphosis of Plants*, and Soret's translation—which was more and more felicitous.

"It will be a remarkable book," said he, "as the most varied elements are worked up into one whole. I have inserted passages from some important young German naturalists; and it is pleasing to see that such a good style has been formed among the better writers in Germany, that we cannot tell whether one or the other is speaking. However, the book gives me more trouble than I expected; and I was at first led into the undertaking almost against myself—but something dæmonic prevailed, which was not to be resisted."

"You did well," said I, "in yielding to such influences, for the dæmonic seems to be so powerful, that it is sure to carry its point at last."

"Only," replied Goethe, "man, in his turn, must endeavour to carry his point against the Dæmonic; and in the present case I must try by all industry and toil to make my book as good as lies in my power, and as circumstances will allow. Such matters are in the same predicament as the game which the French call *codille*, where a great deal is decided by the dice which are thrown, but where it is left to the skill of the player to place the men well on the board."

Sunday, March 20, 1831.

Goethe told me at table that he had been lately reading *Daphnis and Chloe*.

"The book," said he, "is so beautiful, that, amid the bad circumstances in which we live, we cannot retain the impression we receive from it, but are astonished anew every time we read it. The clearest day prevails in it, and we think we are looking

at nothing but Herculanean pictures; while these paintings react upon the book, and assist our fancy as we read."

"I was much pleased," said I, "at a certain isolation in which the whole is placed. There is scarcely a foreign allusion to take us out of those happy regions. Of the deities, Pan and the nymphs are alone active; any other is scarcely named, and still we see that these are quite enough for the wants of shepherds."

"And yet, notwithstanding all this isolation," said Goethe, "a complete world is developed. We see shepherds of every kind: agriculturists, gardeners, vine-dressers, sailors, robbers, and warriors; besides genteel townsmen, great lords, and serfs."

"We also see man," said I, "in all his grades of life, from his birth to his old age; and all the domestic circumstances occasioned by changes of season pass before our eyes."

"Then the landscape," said Goethe—"how clearly it is given with a few touches! We can see vineyards, fields, and orchards, rising behind the persons; below, the meadow and the stream; and, in the distance, the broad sea. Then there is not a trace of gloomy days, of mists, clouds, and damp; but always the clearest, bluest sky, a charming air, and the driest soil—so that naked limbs would readily be stretched anywhere.

"The whole poem,"[1] continued Goethe, "shows the highest art and cultivation. It has been so well considered, that not a motive is wanting: all are of the best and most substantial kind; as, for instance, that of the treasure near the dolphin on the shore. Then there is a taste, and a perfection, and a delicacy of feeling, which cannot be excelled. Everything that is repulsive and disturbs from without the happy condition the poem expresses—such as invasion, robbery, and war—is got rid of as quickly as possible, so that scarcely a trace of it is left. Then vice appears in the train of the townsmen; even there not in the principal characters, but in a subordinate personage. All this is of the highest beauty."

"Then," said I, "I was much pleased to see how well the relation between master and servant is expressed. On one hand, there is the kindest treatment; on the other—in spite of all naïve freedom—great respect, and an endeavour to gain in any way the favour of the master. Thus the young townsman, who has rendered himself odious to Daphnis, endeavours, when the latter is recognized as his master's son, to regain his favour by boldly rescuing Chloe from the cowherds, and bringing her back to him."

[1] "Gedicht" has a wider meaning than the English word "poem."—J. O.

"All these things," said Goethe, "show great understanding; it is excellent also that Chloe preserves her innocence to the end—and the motives for this are so well contrived that the greatest human affairs are brought under notice. It would need a whole book to estimate properly all the great merits of this poem; and it would be well to read it every year, to be instructed by it again and again, and to receive anew the impression of its great beauty."

Monday, March 21, 1831.

We talked on political subjects—of the incessant disturbances at Paris, and the fancy of young people to meddle in the highest affairs of state.

"In England, also," said I, "the students some time ago tried to obtain an influence on the decision of the Catholic question by sending in petitions; but they were laughed at, and no further notice was taken of them."

"The example of Napoleon," said Goethe, "has, especially in the young people of France who grew up under that hero, excited a spirit of egotism; and they will not rest until a great despot once again rises up among them, in whom they may see the perfection of what they themselves wish to be. The misfortune is, that a man like Napoleon will not so soon again be born; and I almost fear that some hundred thousands of human lives will be wasted before the world is again tranquillized.

"Of literary influence there can be no thought at present; nothing further can be done than quietly to prepare good things for a more peaceful time."

After these few political remarks, we spoke again of *Daphnis and Chloe*. Goethe praised Courier's translation as perfect.

"Courier did well," said he, "to respect and retain Amyot's old translation; and only in parts to improve, to purify, and bring it nearer the original. The old French is so naïve, and suits the subject so perfectly, that it will not be easy to make in any language a more perfect translation of this book."

We then spoke of Courier's own works—of his little fugitive pieces, and the defence of the famous ink-spot on the manuscript at Florence.

"Courier," said Goethe, "is a great natural talent. He has features of Lord Byron, as also of Beaumarchais and Diderot. He is like Byron in command over all things that may serve him as argument—like Beaumarchais in his adroitness as an advocate—like Diderot in dialectic skill—and it is not possible

to be more spirited and witty.[1] However, he seems not entirely to clear himself from the ink-spot accusation, and is, in his whole tendency, not sufficiently positive to claim unqualified praise. He is at variance with all the world, and we cannot but suppose that some fault is on his side."

We spoke of the difference between the German notion *Geist*, and the French *esprit.*

"The French *esprit*," said Goethe, "means nearly the same with our German word *Witz.* Our *Geist* might, perhaps, be expressed in French by *esprit* and *âme.* It includes the idea of productivity, which is not in the French *esprit.*"

"Voltaire," said I, "had nevertheless what we name *Geist* in the German sense of the word. And as *esprit* does not suffice, what word do the French use?"

"In such a lofty instance," said Goethe, "they say *génie.*"

"I am now reading," said I, "a volume of Diderot, and am astonished by the extraordinary talent of the man. And what knowledge! what a power of language! We look into a great animated world, where one constantly stimulated another, and mind and character were kept in such constant exercise that both must be flexible and strong. But it seems to me extraordinary to see what men the French had in their literature in the last century. I am astonished when I only look at it."

"It was the metamorphosis of a hundred-year-old literature," said Goethe, "which had been growing ever since Louis XIV, and stood now in full flower. But it was really Voltaire who excited such minds as Diderot, D'Alembert, and Beaumarchais; for to be *somewhat* near him a man needed to be *much,* and could take no holidays."

Goethe then told me of a young professor of the Oriental languages and literature at Jena, who had lived a long time at Paris—so highly cultivated that he wished I would make his acquaintance.

As I went, he gave me an essay, by Schrön, on the expected comet, that I might not remain entirely a stranger to such matters.

Tuesday, March 22, 1831.

After dinner, Goethe read to me passages from the letter of a young friend, at Rome. Some German artists appeared there with long hair, moustachios, shirt-collars turned over on old-

[1] The words "spirited and witty" are used by the American translator as an equivalent for the untranslatable "geistreich." The remarks which immediately follow touch upon this most difficult word.—J. O.

fashioned German coats, tobacco-pipes, and bull-dogs. They do not seem to visit Rome for the sake of the great masters, or to learn anything. To them Raphael seems weak, and Titian merely a good colourist.

"Niebuhr," said Goethe, "was right when he saw a barbarous age coming. It is already here, we are in the midst of it; for wherein does barbarism consist, unless in not appreciating what is excellent!"

Our young friend gave an account of the carnival, the election of the new Pope, and the revolution that broke out immediately afterwards.

We see Horace Vernet armed like a knight; while some German artists stay quietly at home, and cut off their beards—which seems to intimate that they have not, by their conduct, made themselves very popular among the Romans.[1]

We discussed whether the errors now perceptible in some young German artists had proceeded from individuals and spread abroad by intellectual contagion, or whether they had their origin in the general tendency of the time.

"They come," said Goethe, "from a few individuals, and have now been in operation for forty years. The doctrine was, that the artist chiefly needs piety and genius to be equal to the best. Such a doctrine was very flattering, and was eagerly snatched up. For, to become pious, a man need learn nothing, and genius each one inherited from his mother. You need only utter something that flatters indolence and conceit, to be sure of plenty of adherents among commonplace people."

Friday, March 25, 1831.

Goethe showed me an elegant green elbow-chair, which he had lately bought at an auction.

"However," said he, "I shall use it but little, or not at all; for all kinds of commodiousness are against my nature. You see in my chamber no sofa; I always sit in my old wooden chair, and never till a few weeks ago have I had a leaning-place put for my head. If I am surrounded by convenient tasteful furniture, my thoughts are absorbed, and I am placed in an agreeable but passive state. Unless we are accustomed to them from early youth, splendid chambers and elegant furniture are for people who neither have nor can have any thoughts."

[1] This paragraph, although not in quotation marks in the German, appears to be an extract from the young friend's letter describing the Carnival.

Sunday, March 27, 1831.

After long expectations, the finest spring weather has come. On the perfectly blue heaven floats only some little white cloud now and then, and it is warm enough to resume summer clothing.

Goethe had the table covered in a pavilion in the garden, and so we dined once more in the open air. We talked of the Grand Duchess; how she is quietly at work in all directions, doing good, and making the hearts of all her subjects her own.

"The Grand Duchess," said Goethe, "has as much intellect and sweetness as good will; she is a true blessing to the country. And as men are everywhere quick to feel whence they receive benefits, worshipping the sun and kindly elements, I wonder not that all hearts turn to her with love, and that she is speedily appreciated, as she deserves to be."

I mentioned that I had begun *Minna von Barnhelm* with the Prince, and observed how excellent this piece appeared to me.

"Lessing," said I, "has been spoken of as a cold man of understanding; but I find in this drama as much heart, soul, charming naturalness, and free world-culture of a fresh, cheerful, living man, as could be desired."

"You may imagine," said Goethe, "what an effect that work produced on us young people when it came out in that dark time. Truly it was a glittering meteor. It taught us to perceive that there was something higher than anything the weak literary epoch gave any notion of. The first two acts are a model in the art of introduction; from which much has been learned, and much may be learned still. Nowadays, indeed, writers are not curious about this art: the effect, which was once expected in the third act, they will now have in the first scene: and they do not reflect that it is with poetry as with going to sea, where we should push from the shore, and reach a certain elevation, before we unfurl all our sails."

Goethe had some excellent Rhine wine brought; it had been sent by his Frankfort friends, as a present, on his last birthday. He told some stories about Merck, and how he could not pardon the Grand Duke for having once, in the Ruhl near Eisenach, praised an ordinary wine as excellent.

"Merck and I," he continued, "were always to one another as Mephistopheles to Faust. Thus he scoffed at a letter written by my father from Italy, containing a complaint of the miserable way of living—the heavy wine, the food to which he was unaccustomed, and the mosquitoes. Merck could not forgive

him, in that delicious country and surrounded by such magnificence, for being troubled about such little matters as eating, drinking, and flies.

"All Merck's tauntings, no doubt, proceeded from a high state of culture; only, as he was not productive, but had, on the contrary, a decidedly negative tendency, he was ever more inclined to blame than to praise, and was involuntarily always seeking for means to gratify this inclination."

We talked of Vogel, and his ministerial talents; of ——, and his character.

"——," said Goethe, "is a man by himself—a man who can be compared with no other. He was the only one who sided with me in opposing the freedom of the press: he stands fast; he is trustworthy; he will always abide by what is legitimate."

After dinner, we walked up and down in the garden, taking our pleasure in the white snowdrops and yellow crocuses, now in full flower. The tulips, too, were coming out; and we talked of the splendour and costliness of this growth of Holland.

"A great flower-painter," said Goethe, "is not now to be expected: we have attained too high a degree of scientific truth; and the botanist counts the stamens after the painter, while he has no eye for picturesque lights and grouping."

Monday, March 28, 1831.

To-day I again passed some very delightful hours with Goethe. "My *Metamorphosis of Plants,*" said he, "is as good as finished. What I have to say about the spiral and Herr von Martius is also as good as done; and I have this morning resumed the fourth volume of my Autobiography, and drawn up a scheme of what I have yet to do. I may almost say I find it enviable to be allowed, at my advanced age, to write the history of my youth, and to describe an epoch in many ways highly significant."

We talked over the particulars, which were present to my mind as well as to his.

"In the description of your love-affair with Lili," said I, "we never miss your youth, but these scenes bear the perfect breath of early years."

"That is because such scenes are poetical," said Goethe, "and I was able to compensate by the force of poetry for the feeling of youthful love in which I was deficient."

We then talked of the remarkable passage wherein Goethe describes his sister's situation. "This chapter," said he, "will

be read with interest by many ladies of education; for there will be many like my sister in this respect, that, with superior mental and moral endowments, they are without the advantage of personal beauty."

"That, when a ball or festival was at hand," said I, "she was generally afflicted with an eruption in the face, is so odd that it may be ascribed to the influence of something dæmonic."

"She was a remarkable being," said Goethe; "she stood morally very high, and had not a trace of sensuousness about her. The thought of resigning herself to a man was repulsive to her, and we may imagine that this peculiarity caused many unpleasant hours in marriage. Women who have a similar aversion, or do not love their husbands, will feel the force of this. On this account I could never look upon my sister as married; she would have been much more in her place as an abbess in a convent.

"Although she was married to one of the best of men, she was still unhappy in a married life, and hence it was that she so passionately opposed my projected union with Lili."

Tuesday, March 29, 1831.

We talked to-day about Merck, and Goethe told me some more of his ways.

"The late Grand Duke," said he, "was very fond of Merck, so that he once became his security for a debt of four thousand dollars. Before long, Merck, to our astonishment, sent the bond back. His circumstances had not improved, and we could not divine what sort of a negotiation he had made. When I saw him again, he explained the enigma thus:

"'The Duke,' said he, 'is an excellent, generous man, who trusts and helps men whenever he can. Now I said to myself, "If you cheat him out of his money, that will prejudice a thousand others; for he will lose his precious trustfulness, and many unfortunate but worthy men will suffer, because one was a rascal." Well now—what have I done? I have made a speculation, and borrowed the money from a scoundrel, for if I cheat him it will be no matter; but if I had cheated our good lord, it would have been a pity.'"

We laughed at the whimsical greatness of the man.

"Merck had a habit," continued Goethe, "of continually shouting *hè, hè*, as he talked. This habit grew upon him with advancing years, till at length it was like the bark of a dog. He fell at last into a deep hypochondriacal gloom, the

consequence of his many speculations, and finished by shooting himself. He imagined he must become bankrupt; but it was found that his affairs were by no means in so bad a state as he had supposed."

Wednesday, March 30, 1831.

We talked again of the Dæmonic.

"It throws itself willingly into figures of importance," said Goethe, "and prefers somewhat dark times. In a clear prosaic city, like Berlin, for instance, it would scarcely find occasion to manifest itself."

In this remark Goethe expressed what I had been thinking some days since. This gave me pleasure, as we always feel delight in finding our thoughts confirmed.

Yesterday and this morning I had been reading the third volume of his Biography, and felt as in experience with a foreign language, when, after making some progress, we again read a book that we thought we understood before but which we now first perceive in its minutest touches and delicate shades.

"Your Biography," said I, "is a book that greatly helps our culture."

"Those are merely results from my life," said he; "and the particular facts related serve only to confirm a general reflection—a higher truth."

"What you state about Basedow," said I, "how, in order to attain his higher ends, he stood in need of persons, and would have gained their favour, but never reflected that he would spoil all by such a totally reckless utterance of his offensive religious views, and by making men regard with suspicion what they adhered to with love—these and similar traits appear highly important."

"I imagine," said Goethe, "that there are in the book some symbols of human life. I called it *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Poetry and Truth), because it raises itself by higher tendencies from the region of a lower Reality. Now Jean Paul, in the spirit of contradiction, has written *Wahrheit aus meinem Leben* (Truth out of my Life), as if the *truth* from the life of such a man could be any other than that the author was a Philistine. But the Germans do not easily understand how to receive anything out of the common course, and what is of a high nature often passes by them without their being aware. A fact of our lives is valuable, not so far as it is true, but so far as it is significant."

Thursday, March 31, 1831.

[A dinner at the Prince's, with Soret and Meyer. Meyer gives his impression of his first sight (in Goethe's company) of Schiller, at Jena: "a crucified Christ." Then talks of Jean Paul.

Friday, April 1, 1831.

At table talked with Goethe on various subjects. He showed me a water-colour drawing by Herr von Reutern, representing a young peasant, who stands in the market-place of a small town near a female basket-seller. The young man is surveying the baskets, which lie before him; while two females seated, and a stout lass who stands by them, regard his comely youthful face with satisfaction. The picture is so prettily composed, and there is such *naïveté* and truth in the expression of the figures, that you cannot look at it enough.

"Water-colour painting," said Goethe, "is brought to a very high degree in this picture. There are some silly folks who say that Herr von Reutern is indebted to nobody in his art, but has everything from himself—as if a man could have anything from himself but clumsiness and stupidity. If this artist has had no master so-called, he has nevertheless had intercourse with excellent masters; and from these, as well as from great predecessors and ever-present nature, he has got what he now possesses. Nature has given him an excellent talent, and nature and art together have perfected him. He is excellent, and in many respects unique; but we cannot say that he has everything from himself. Of a thoroughly crazy and defective artist, we may, indeed, say he has everything from himself; but of an excellent one, never."

Goethe then showed me a work by the same artist, a frame richly painted with gold and various colours, with a place left in the middle for an inscription. At the top there was a building in the Gothic style; rich arabesques, with landscapes and domestic scenes interwoven, ran down the two sides; at the bottom was a pleasant woodland scene, with the freshest grass and foliage.

"Herr von Reutern," said Goethe, "wishes I would write neatly in the blank space; but his frame is such a splendid work of art, that I dread to spoil the picture with my handwriting. I have composed some verses for the purpose, and think it will be better to have them inserted by the hand of a calligrapher. I would then sign them myself. What do you advise in this matter?"

"If I were Herr von Reutern," said I, "I should be grieved to have the poem in the hand of another; happy, if it were written in your own. The painter has displayed art enough in the frame—none is needed in the writing; it is only important that it should be genuine—in your own hand. I advise you, too, to use not the Roman, but the German text; for your hand has in that a more peculiar character—besides, it harmonizes better with the Gothic design in the frame."

"You may be right," said Goethe; "and in the end it will be the shortest way. Perhaps to-day will bring a courageous moment, in which I may venture upon it. But if I make a blot on the beautiful picture," he added, laughing, "you shall answer for it."

"Write only," said I, "and it will be well, however it may be."

Tuesday, April 5, 1831.

At noon with Goethe. "In Art," said he, "we do not easily meet a talent that gives us more pleasure than that of Neureuther. Artists seldom confine themselves to what they can do well; most are always trying to do more than they can, and are too fond of going beyond the circle in which Nature has placed their talent. But of Neureuther we can say that he stands *above* his talent. Objects from all departments of nature are at his command; he draws ground, rocks, and trees, as well as men or animals; and, while he lavishes such wealth on slight marginal drawings, he seems to play with his capabilities, and the spectator feels that pleasure which is ever wont to accompany a free, easy libation from abundant means.

"Nobody has gone so far as he in marginal drawings; even the great talent of Albert Dürer has been to him less a pattern than an incitement. I will send a copy of these drawings to Scotland, to Mr. Carlyle, and hope thus to make no unwelcome present to that friend."

Monday, May 2, 1831.

Goethe delighted me with the news that he had lately succeeded in almost finishing the fifth act of *Faust*, hitherto wanting.

"The purport of these scenes," said he, "is above thirty years old; it was of such importance that I could not lose my interest in it, but so difficult to carry out that it frightened me. By various arts I am now in the right train again; and, if fortune favours, I shall write off the fourth act at once."

Goethe then mentioned a well-known author. "He is a talent," said he, "to whom party-hatred serves as an alliance, and who would have produced no effect without it. We find frequent instances in literature, where hatred supplies the place of genius, and where small talents appear important, by coming forward as organs of a party. Thus too, in life, we find a multitude of persons, who have not character enough to stand alone; these in the same way attach themselves to a party, by which they feel themselves strengthened, and can at last make some figure."

Sunday, May 15, 1831.

Dined alone with Goethe in his work-room. After much cheerful talk he at last turned the conversation to his personal affairs, by rising and taking from his desk a written paper.

"Anybody who, like myself," said he, "has passed the age of eighty, has hardly a right to live, but ought each day to hold himself ready to be called away, and think of setting his house in order. I have, as I lately told you, appointed you in my will editor of my literary remains; and I have this morning drawn up, as a sort of contract, a little paper, which I wish you to sign with me."

He placed before me the paper, in which I found mentioned by name the works, both finished and unfinished, which were to be published after his death. I had come to an understanding with him upon essentials, and we both signed the contract.

The material, which I had already from time to time been busy revising, I estimated at about fifteen volumes. We then talked of certain matters of detail not yet decided.

"It may be," said Goethe, "that the publisher will be unwilling to go beyond a certain number of sheets, and that hence some part of the material must be omitted. In that case, you may omit the polemic part of my *Theory of Colours*. My peculiar doctrine is contained in the theoretical part; and, as the historical part is already of a polemic character (the leading errors of the Newtonian theory being discussed there), you will almost have polemics enough. I by no means disavow my severe dissection of the Newtonian maxims; it was necessary at the time, and will also have its value hereafter; but, at bottom, all polemic action is repugnant to my nature, and I can take but little pleasure in it."

We next talked about the *Maxims and Reflections*, which had been printed at the end of the second and third volumes of the *Wanderjahre*.

When he began to remodel and finish this novel, which had previously appeared in one volume,[1] Goethe intended to expand it into two, as indeed is expressed in the announcement of the new edition of his entire works. But, as the work progressed, the manuscript grew beyond expectation; and, as his secretary wrote widely, Goethe was deceived, and thought that he had enough not only for two but for three volumes, and accordingly the manuscript went in three volumes to the publishers. However, when the printing had reached a certain point, it was found that Goethe had made a miscalculation, and that the last two volumes especially were too small. They sent for more manuscript; and, as the course of the novel (*Roman*) could not be altered, and it was impossible to invent, write, and insert a new tale (*Novelle*) in the hurry of the moment, Goethe was really in some perplexity.

In these circumstances he sent for me, told me the state of the case, and mentioned at the same time how he thought to help himself out of the difficulty, laying before me two large bundles of manuscript, which he had caused to be fetched for that purpose.

"In these two parcels you will find various papers hitherto unpublished, detached pieces, finished and unfinished, opinions on natural science, art, literature, and life, all mingled together. Suppose you were to make up, from these, six or eight printed sheets to fill the gaps in my *Wanderjahre*? Strictly speaking, they have nothing to do with it, but the proceeding may be justified by the fact that mention is made of an archive in Makaria's house, in which such detached pieces are preserved. Thus we shall not only get over a great difficulty for the moment, but also find a fitting vehicle for sending a number of very interesting things into the world."

I approved of the plan, set to work at once, and soon completed the desired arrangement. Goethe seemed well satisfied. I had put together the whole in two principal parts, one under the title—*From Makaria's Archive*; the other, under the head—*According to the Views of the Wanderer*. And as Goethe, at this time, had just finished two important poems, one—*On*

[1] This original shorter *Wanderjahre* is the one translated by Mr. Carlyle, and inserted in his *Specimens of German Romance*. The larger novel, which appears in Goethe's collected works, has not, to my knowledge, been translated.—J. O.

Since Mr. Oxenford wrote, the enlarged edition has been translated into English by A. H. Gunlogson and published in Bohn's Standard Library, 1882.

Schiller's Skull, and the other—*Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen* (No Being can fall away to Nothing), he was desirous to bring out these also, and we added them at the close of the two divisions.

But when the *Wanderjahre* came out, nobody knew what to make of it. The progress of the romance was seen to be interrupted by a number of enigmatical sayings, the explanation of which could be expected only from men of certain departments—such as artists, *literati,* and scientists—and which greatly annoyed all other readers, especially female readers. Then, as for the two poems, people could as little understand them as they could guess how they got into such a place. Goethe laughed at this.

"What is done is done," said he to-day; "and all you have to do is, when you edit my literary remains, to insert these things in their proper places; so that when my works are republished they may be distributed in proper order and the *Wanderjahre* may be reduced to two volumes, according to the original intention."

We agreed that I should hereafter arrange all the aphorisms relating to Art in a volume on subjects of art, all relating to Nature in a volume on natural science in general, and all the ethical and literary maxims in a volume adapted for them.

Wednesday, May 5, 1831.

We talked of *Wallenstein's Camp.* I had often heard that Goethe had assisted in the composition of this piece, and in particular that the Capuchin sermon came from him. To-day, at dinner, I asked him, and he replied:

"At bottom, it is all Schiller's work. But, as we lived in such a relation that Schiller not only told me his plan, and talked it over with me, but also communicated what he did from day to day, hearing and using my remarks, I may be said to have had some share in it. For the Capuchin sermon, I sent him a discourse by Abraham a Sancta Clara, from which he immediately composed his with great skill.

"I scarcely remember that any passages came from me except the two lines:

'Ein Hauptmann den ein andrer erstach
Liess mir ein paar glückliche Würfel nach.'

A captain, whom another slew,
Left me a pair of lucky dice.

Wishing to give some motive for the peasant's possession of the false dice, I wrote down these lines in the manuscript with my own hand. Schiller had not troubled himself about that, but, in his bold way, had given the peasant the dice without inquiring much how he came by them. A careful linking together of motives was, as I have said, not in his way; that is probably why his pieces had so much the greater effect on the stage."

Sunday, May 29, 1831.

Goethe told me of a boy who could not console himself after he had committed a trifling fault.

"I was sorry to observe this," said he, "for it shows a too tender conscience, which values so highly its own moral self that it will excuse nothing in it. Such a conscience makes hypochondriacal men, if it is not balanced by great activity."

A nest of young hedge-sparrows, with one of the old birds which had been caught with bird-lime, had lately been brought me. I saw with admiration that the bird not only continued to feed its young in my chamber, but even, when set free through the window, returned to them again. Such parental love, superior to danger and imprisonment, moved me deeply, and to-day I expressed my surprise to Goethe.

"Foolish man!" he replied, with a meaning smile; "if you believed in God, you would not wonder.

'Ihm ziemt's, die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,
Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dass, was in Ihm lebt, und webt, und ist,
Nie Seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermisst.'

He from within glories to move the world,
To foster Nature in Himself, Himself
In Nature, so that all that lives in Him
Is ne'er without His spirit and His strength.

"Did not God inspire the bird with this all-powerful love for its young, and did not similar impulses pervade all animate nature, the world could not subsist. But thus is the divine energy everywhere diffused, and divine love everywhere active."

Goethe made a similar remark a short time ago, when a model from Myron's cow, with the suckling calf, was sent him by a young sculptor.

"Here," said he, "we have a subject of the highest sort—the nourishing principle that upholds the world and pervades all nature is here brought before our eyes by a beautiful symbol. This, and similar images, I call the true symbols of the omnipresence of God."

Monday, June 6, 1831.

Goethe showed me to-day the beginning of the fifth act of *Faust*, hitherto wanting. I read to the place where the cottage of Philemon and Baucis is burned, and Faust, standing by night on the balcony of his palace, smells the smoke, which is borne to him by a light breeze.

"These names, Philemon and Baucis," said I, "transport me to the Phrygian coast, reminding me of the famous couple of antiquity. But our scene belongs to modern days, and a Christian landscape."

"My Philemon and Baucis," said Goethe, "have nothing to do with that renowned ancient couple or the tradition connected with them. I gave this couple the names merely to elevate the characters. The persons and relations are similar, and hence the use of the names has a good effect."

We then spoke of Faust, whom the hereditary portion of his character—discontent—has not left even in his old age, and who, amid all the treasures of the world, and in a new dominion of his own making, is annoyed by a couple of lindens, a cottage, and a bell, which are not his. He is therein not unlike Ahab, King of Israel, who fancied he possessed nothing, unless he could also make the vineyard of Naboth his own.

"Faust," said Goethe, "when he appears in the fifth act, should, according to my design, be exactly a hundred years old, and I rather think it would be well expressly to say so in some passage."

We then spoke of the conclusion, and Goethe directed my attention to the passage:

Delivered is the noble spirit [1]
From the control of evil powers;
Who ceaselessly doth strive will merit
That we should save and make him ours:
If *Love* celestial never cease
To watch him from its *upper sphere*;
The children of eternal peace
Bear him to cordial welcome there.

"In these lines," said he, "is contained the key to Faust's salvation. In Faust himself there is an activity that becomes constantly higher and purer to the end, and from above there is eternal love coming to his aid. This harmonizes perfectly with our religious views; according to which we can obtain heavenly bliss, not through our own strength alone, but with the assistance of divine grace.

[1] This is Mrs. Fuller's version, with a slight alteration.—J. O.

"You will confess that the conclusion, where the redeemed soul is carried up, was difficult to manage; and that, amid such supersensual matters about which we scarcely have even an intimation, I might easily have lost myself in the vague—if I had not, by means of sharply-drawn figures, and images from the Christian Church, given my poetical design a desirable form and substance."

In the following weeks Goethe finished the fourth act, which had been wanting; so that in August the whole second part was sewed together quite complete. Goethe was extremely happy in having at last attained this object, towards which he had been striving so long.

"My remaining days," said he, "I may now consider a free gift; and it is now, in fact, of little consequence what I now do, or whether I do anything."

(Sup.) Monday, June 20, 1831.

This afternoon a short half-hour at Goethe's, whom I found still at dinner.

We conversed upon some subjects of natural science; particularly upon the imperfection and insufficiency of language, by which errors and false views which afterwards could not easily be overcome were spread abroad. "The case is simply this," said Goethe. "All languages have arisen from surrounding human necessities, human occupations, and the general feelings and views of man. If, now, a superior man gains an insight into the secret operations of nature, the language which has been handed down to him is not sufficient to express anything so remote from human affairs. He ought to have at command the language of spirits to express adequately his peculiar perceptions. But as this is not so, he must, in his views of the extraordinary in nature, always grasp at human expressions; with which he almost always falls too short, lowering his subject, or even injuring and destroying it."

"If *you* say this," said I, "you who always pursue your subjects very closely, and, as an enemy to phrases, can always find the most fitting expressions for your higher perceptions, there is something in it. But I should have thought that, generally, we Germans might be contented. Our language is so extraordinarily rich, elaborated, and capable of progress, that even if we are obliged sometimes to have recourse to a

trope, we can still arrive pretty nearly at the proper expression. The French are at a great disadvantage when compared with us. With them the expression for some higher view of nature by a trope, generally borrowed from a technicality, is at once material and vulgar, so that it is by no means adequate to a higher view."

"How right you are," said Goethe, "has appeared to me lately, on the occasion of the dispute between Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire has certainly a great insight into the spiritual workings of nature; but his French language, so far as he is forced to use traditional expressions, leaves him quite in the lurch. And this not only in mysteriously spiritual, but also in visible, purely corporeal subjects and relations. If he would express the single parts of an organic being, he has no other word but *material*: thus, for instance, the bones, which, as homogeneous parts, form the organic whole of an arm, are placed upon the same scale of expression as the stones and planks with which a house is built.

"In the same inappropriate way, the French use the expression *composition*, in speaking of the productions of nature. I can certainly put together the individual parts of a machine made of separate pieces, and, upon such a subject, speak of a composition; but not when I have in my mind the individual parts of an organic whole, which produce themselves with life, and are pervaded by a common soul."

"It appears to me," added I, "that the expression *composition* is also inappropriate and degrading to genuine productions of art and poetry."

"It is a thoroughly contemptible word," returned Goethe, "for which we have to thank the French, and of which we should endeavour to rid ourselves as soon as possible. How can one say, Mozart has *composed* [*componirt*] *Don Juan*! Composition! As if it were a piece of cake or biscuit, which had been stirred together out of eggs, flour, and sugar! It is a spiritual creation, in which the details, as well as the whole, are pervaded by *one* spirit, and by the breath of *one* life; so that the producer did not make experiments, and patch together, and follow his own caprice, but was altogether in the power of the dæmonic spirit of his genius, and acted according to his orders."

(Sup.) Thursday, December 1, 1831.

Passed a short hour with Goethe, in varied conversation. We then came to Soret.

"I have lately been reading a very pretty poem of his," said Goethe, "a trilogy—the first two parts of which possess an agreeable rusticity; but the last, under the title *Midnight*, bears a sombre character. In this *Midnight* he has succeeded. In reading it, you actually breathe the breath of night; almost as in the pictures of Rembrandt, in which you also seem to feel the night-air. Victor Hugo has treated similar subjects, but not with such felicity. In the nocturnal scenes of this indisputably great man, it is never actually night; on the contrary, the subjects remain always as distinct and visible as if it were still day and the represented night were merely a deception. Soret has unquestionably surpassed the renowned Victor Hugo, in his *Midnight*."

I was pleased at this commendation, and resolved to read the trilogy by Soret as soon as possible. "We possess, in our literature, very few trilogies," remarked I.

"This form," said Goethe, "is very rare amongst the moderns generally. It sometimes happens that a subject seems naturally to demand a treatment in three parts; so that in the first there is a sort of introduction, in the second a sort of catastrophe, and in the third a satisfying *dénouement*. In my poem of *The Youth and the Fair Miller*, these requisites are found, although when I wrote it I by no means thought of making a trilogy. My *Paria*, also, is a perfect trilogy; and, indeed, it was as a trilogy that I intentionally treated this cycle. My *Trilogie der Leidenschaft* (Trilogy of Passion), as it is called, was, on the contrary, not originally conceived as a trilogy; but became a trilogy gradually, and to a certain extent incidentally. At first, as you know, I had merely the elegy, as an independent poem. Then Madame Szimanowska, who had been at Marienbad with me that summer, visited me, and by her charming melodies awoke in me the echo of those youthful happy days. The strophes I dedicated to this fair friend are therefore quite in the metre and tone of the elegy, and suit very well as a satisfactory conclusion. Then Weygand wished to prepare a new edition of my *Werther*, and asked me for a preface; which to me was a very welcome occasion to write my *Poem to Werther*. But as I had still a remnant of that passion in my heart, the poem as it were formed itself into an introduction to the elegy. Thus it happened that all the three poems that now stand together are pervaded by the same love-sick feeling; and the *Trilogie der Leidenschaft* formed itself I knew not how.

"I have advised Soret to write more trilogies; and indeed he should do it as I have described. He should not take the trouble to seek a particular subject for a trilogy; but should rather select, from the rich store of his unprinted poems, one that is especially pregnant with meaning, and, when occasion offers, add a sort of introduction, and conclusion—yet still so that the three productions are separated by a perceptible gap. In this manner the end is attained far more easily, and much thinking (which is notoriously, as Meyer says, a very difficult thing) is spared."

We then spoke of Victor Hugo, remarking that his too great fertility had been highly prejudicial to his talent.

"How can a writer help growing worse, and destroying the finest talent in the world," said Goethe, "if he has the audacity to write in a single year two tragedies and a novel; and further, when he appears to work only in order to scrape together immense sums of money? I do not blame him for trying to become rich, and to earn present renown; but if he intends to live long in futurity, he must begin to write less and to work more."

Goethe then went through *Marion de Lorme*, and endeavoured to make it clear to me that the subject contained only sufficient material to make one single good and really tragical act; but that the author had allowed himself, for quite secondary considerations, to be misled into stretching out his subject to five long acts. "In these circumstances," said Goethe, "we have merely the advantage of seeing that the poet is great in the representation of details; which certainly is something, and that no trifle."

Wednesday, December 21, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of the reason why his Theory of Colours had been so little diffused.

"It is very hard to communicate," said he, "for, as you know, it requires not only to be read and studied, but to be *done*—and this is difficult. The laws of poetry and painting may likewise be communicated to a certain extent; but to be a good poet and painter genius is required, which is not to be communicated. To receive a simple primitive phenomenon, to recognize it in its high significance, and to go to work with it, requires a productive spirit, which is able to take a wide survey, and is a rare gift only to be found in very superior natures

"And even this is not enough. For, as every rule and all genius do not make a painter, uninterrupted practice being still

required—so with the Theory of Colours it is not enough to know the chief laws and to have a suitable mind; it is necessary to be constantly occupied with the several single phenomena (which are often very mysterious) and with their deductions and combinations.

"Thus, for instance, we know well enough the general proposition that a green colour is produced by a mixture of yellow and blue; but before a person can say that he comprehends the green of the rainbow, or of foliage, or of sea-water, there will be requisite a thorough investigation of the whole region of colour, with a consequent acme of acuteness which scarcely anyone has yet attained."

After dinner, we looked at some landscapes by Poussin.

"Those places on which the painter throws the principal light," observed Goethe, "do not admit of detail in the execution; and therefore water, masses of rock, bare ground, and buildings, are most suitable subjects to bear the principal light. Things that on the contrary require more detail in the drawing cannot well be used by the artist in those light places.

"A landscape-painter should possess various sorts of knowledge. It is not enough for him to understand perspective, architecture, and the anatomy of men and animals; he must also have some insight into botany and mineralogy, that he may know how to express properly the characteristics of trees and plants, and the character of the different sorts of mountains. It is not indeed necessary that he should be an accomplished mineralogist—since he has to do chiefly with lime, slate, and sandstone mountains; and only needs know in what forms they lie, how they are acted upon by the atmosphere, and what sort of trees thrive, and are stunted, upon them."

He showed me then some landscapes, by Hermann von Schwanefeld, making remarks upon the art and personality of that eminent man.

"We find in him," said he, "art and inclination more completely identified than in any other. He has a deep love for nature, and a divine tranquillity which communicates itself to us when we look upon his pictures. He was born in the Netherlands, and studied at Rome under Claude Lorraine. On this master he formed himself to the highest perfection, and developed his fine capacities in the freest manner."

We looked into an *Artist's Lexicon*, to see what was said of Hermann von Schwanefeld, and found him censured for not equalling his master.

"The fools!" said Goethe; "von Schwanefeld was a different man from Claude Lorraine, and the latter could not boast of being the better of the two. If there were nothing more in one's life than is told by our biographers and lexicon writers, it would be a bad business, not worth the trouble it costs."

At the close of this, and in the beginning of the next year, Goethe turned again to his favourite studies, the natural sciences. At the suggestion of Boisserée, he occupied himself with deeper inquiries into the laws of the rainbow; and also, from sympathy with the dispute between Cuvier and Saint-Hilaire, with subjects referring to the metamorphoses of the plant and animal world. He likewise revised with me the historical part of the *Theory of Colours*; taking also lively interest in a chapter on the blending of colours, which I, by his desire, was arranging to be inserted in the theoretical volume.

During this time, there was no lack of interesting conversation between us, or of valuable utterances on his side. But, as he was daily before my eyes, fresh and energetic as ever, I fancied this must always be the case, and was too careless of recording his words till it was too late, and, on March 22, 1832, I, with thousands of noble Germans, had to weep for his irreparable loss.

1832

(Sup.) Sunday, March 11, 1832.

THIS evening for an hour with Goethe, talking of various interesting subjects. I had bought an English Bible, in which I found, to my great regret, that the apocryphal books were not contained. They had been rejected, because they were not considered genuine and of divine origin. I greatly missed the noble Tobias, that model of a pious life, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Jesus Sirach—all writings of such high mental and moral elevation, that few others equal them. I spoke to Goethe of my regret at the very narrow view by which some of the writings of the Old Testament are looked upon as immediately proceeding from God; while others, equally excellent, are not so. As if there could be anything noble and great which did not proceed from God, and which was not a fruit of His influence.

"I am thoroughly of your opinion," returned Goethe. "Still, there are two points of view from which biblical subjects may be contemplated. There is the point of view of a sort of primitive religion, of pure nature and reason, which is of divine origin. This will always be the same, and will last and prevail as long as divinely endowed beings exist. It is, however, only for the elect, and is far too high and noble to become universal. Then there is the point of view of the Church, which is of a more human nature. This is defective and subject to change; but it will last, in a state of perpetual change, as long as there are weak human beings. The light of unclouded divine revelation is far too pure and brilliant to be suitable and supportable to poor weak man. But the Church steps in as a useful mediator, to soften and to moderate, by which all are helped, and many are benefited. Through the belief that the Christian Church, as the successor of Christ, can remove the burden of human sin, it is a very great power. To maintain themselves in this power and in this importance, and thus to secure the ecclesiastical edifice, is the chief aim of the Christian priesthood.

"This priesthood, therefore, does not so much ask whether this or that book in the Bible greatly enlightens the mind, and

contains doctrines of high morality and noble human nature. It rather looks upon the books of Moses with reference to the fall of man and the origin of a necessity for a Redeemer; it searches the prophets for repeated allusions to Him—the Expected One—and, in the Gospels, regards His actual earthly appearance and His death upon the cross as the atonement for our human sins. You see that for such purposes, and weighed in such a balance, neither the noble Tobias, nor the Wisdom of Solomon, nor the sayings of Sirach, can have much weight. Still, with reference to things in the Bible, the question whether they are genuine or spurious is odd enough. What is genuine but that which is truly excellent, which stands in harmony with the purest nature and reason, and which even now ministers to our highest development! What is spurious but the absurd and the hollow, which brings no fruit—at least, no good fruit! If the authenticity of a biblical book is to be decided by the question—whether something true throughout has been handed down to us, we might on some points doubt the authenticity of the Gospels; since those of Mark and Luke were not written from immediate presence and experience, but, according to oral tradition, long afterwards; and the last, by the disciple John, was not written till he was very old. Yet I look upon all four Gospels as thoroughly genuine; for there is in them the reflection of a greatness which emanated from the person of Jesus, and which was of as divine a kind as ever was seen upon earth. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him devout reverence, I say—certainly! I bow before Him as the divine manifestation of the highest principle of morality. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to revere the Sun, I again say—certainly! For he is likewise a manifestation of the highest Being, and indeed the most powerful that we children of earth are allowed to behold. I adore in him the light and the productive power of God; by which we all live, move, and have our being—we, and all the plants and animals with us. But if I am asked whether I am inclined to bow before a thumb-bone of the Apostle Peter or Paul, I say—'Spare me, and stand off with your absurdities!'

"'Quench not the spirit,' says the Apostle. There are many absurdities in the propositions of the Church; nevertheless, rule it will—so it must have a narrow-minded multitude, which bows its head and likes to be ruled. The high and richly-endowed clergy dread nothing more than the enlightenment of the lower orders. They withheld the Bible from them as long

as it was possible. Besides, what can a poor member of the Christian Church think of the princely magnificence of a richly-endowed bishop; when he sees in the Gospels the poverty and indigence of Christ, who, with His disciples, travelled humbly on foot, whilst the princely bishop rattles along in his carriage drawn by six horses!

"We scarcely know what we owe to Luther, and the Reformation in general. We are freed from the fetters of spiritual narrow-mindedness; we have, in consequence of our increasing culture, become capable of turning back to the fountain head, and of comprehending Christianity in its purity. We have, again, the courage to stand with firm feet upon God's earth, and to feel ourselves in our divinely-endowed human nature. Let mental culture go on advancing; let the natural sciences go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human mind expand as it may—it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it glistens and shines forth in the Gospel!

"But the better we Protestants advance in our noble development, so much the more rapidly will the Catholics follow us. As soon as they feel themselves caught up by the ever-extending enlightenment of the time, they must go on, do what they will, till at last the point is reached where all is but one.

"The mischievous sectarianism of the Protestants will also cease, and with it the hatred and hostile feeling between father and son, sister and brother; for as soon as the pure doctrine and love of Christ are comprehended in their true nature, and have become a vital principle, we shall feel ourselves as human beings, great and free, and not attach special importance to a degree more or less in the outward forms of religion. Besides, we shall all gradually advance from a Christianity of words and faith, to a Christianity of feeling and action."

The conversation turned upon the great men who had lived before Christ—among the Chinese, the Indians, the Persians, and the Greeks; and it was remarked, that the divine power had been as operative in them as in some of the great Jews of the Old Testament. We then came to the question how far God influenced the great natures of the present world in which we live?

"To hear people speak," said Goethe, "you would almost believe they were of opinion God had withdrawn into silence since those old times, and man was now placed quite upon his own feet and had to see how he could get on without God and

His daily invisible breath. In religious and moral matters, a divine influence is indeed still allowed; but in matters of science and art it is believed that they are merely earthy, and nothing but the product of human powers.

"Let anybody only try, with human will and human power, to produce something that may be compared with the creations that bear the names of *Mozart*, *Raphael*, or *Shakespeare*. I know very well that these three noble beings are not the only ones, and that innumerable excellent geniuses have worked in every province of art, and produced things as perfect. But if they were as great as those, they rose above ordinary human nature, and in the same proportion were as divinely endowed as they.

"And after all what does it all come to? God did not retire to rest after the well-known six days of creation, but is constantly active as on the first. It would have been for Him a poor occupation to compose this heavy world out of simple elements, and to keep it rolling in the sunbeams from year to year, if He had not had the plan of founding a nursery for a world of spirits upon this material basis. So He is now constantly active in higher natures to attract the lower ones."

Early in March 1832.[1]

Goethe mentioned at table that he had received a visit from Baron Carl von Spiegel, and that he had been pleased with him beyond measure.

"He is a very fine young man," said Goethe; "in his mien and manners he has something by which the nobleman is seen at once. He could as little dissemble his descent as anyone could deny a higher intellect; for birth and intellect both give to their possessor a stamp no incognito can conceal. Like beauty, these are powers that cannot be approached without the feeling that they are higher."

Some days later.

We talked of the tragic idea of Destiny among the Greeks.

"It no longer suits our way of thinking," said Goethe; "it is obsolete, and is also in contradiction with our religious views. If a modern poet introduces such antique ideas into

[1] In the original book this conversation follows immediately the one of December 21, 1831, and with the remainder of the book is prefaced thus: "The following I noted down shortly afterwards (that is, after they took place) from memory."—J. O.

a drama, it always has an air of affectation. It is a costume long since out of fashion; which, like the Roman toga, no longer suits us.

"It is better for us moderns to say with Napoleon, 'Politics are Destiny.' But let us beware of saying, with our latest *literati*, that politics are poetry, or a suitable subject for the poet. The English poet Thomson wrote a very good poem on the Seasons, but a very bad one on Liberty; and that not from want of poetry in the poet, but from want of poetry in the subject.

"If a poet would work politically, he must give himself up to a party; and so soon as he does that, he is lost as a poet—he must bid farewell to his free spirit, his unbiased view, and draw over his ears the cap of bigotry and blind hatred.

"The poet, as a man and citizen, will love his native land; but the native land of his *poetic* powers and poetic action is the good, noble, and beautiful, which is confined to no particular province or country, and which he seizes upon and forms wherever he finds it. Therein is he like the eagle, which hovers with free gaze over whole countries, and to whom it is of no consequence whether the hare on which he pounces is running in Prussia or in Saxony.

"And, then, what is meant by love of one's country? what is meant by patriotic deeds? If the poet has employed a life in battling with pernicious prejudices, in setting aside narrow views, in enlightening the minds, purifying the tastes, ennobling the feelings and thoughts of his countrymen, what better could he have done? how could he have acted more patriotically?

"To make such ungrateful and unsuitable demands upon a poet is just as if we required the captain of a regiment to show himself a patriot by taking part in political innovations and thus neglecting his proper calling. The captain's country is his regiment; and he will show himself an excellent patriot by troubling himself about political matters only so far as they concern him, and bestowing all his mind and all his care on the battalions under him, trying so to train and discipline them that they may do their duty if ever their native land should be in peril.

"I hate all bungling like sin; but, most of all, bungling in state affairs, which produces nothing but mischief to thousands and millions.

"You know that, on the whole, I care little what is written about me; but yet it comes to my ears, and I know well enough

that, hard as I have toiled all my life, all my labours are as nothing in the eyes of certain people, just because I have disdained to mingle in political parties. To please such people I must have become a member of a Jacobin club, and preached bloodshed and murder. However, not a word more upon this wretched subject, lest I become unwise in railing against folly."

In the same manner he blamed the political course, so much praised by others, of Uhland.

"Mind," said he, "the politician will devour the poet. To be a member of the States, and to live amid daily jostlings and excitements, is not for the delicate nature of a poet. His song will cease, and that is in some sort to be lamented. Swabia has plenty of men, sufficiently well educated, well meaning, able, and eloquent, to be members of the States; but only one poet of Uhland's class."

The last stranger whom Goethe entertained as his guest was the eldest son of Frau von Arnim; the last words he wrote were some verses in the album of this young friend.

The morning after Goethe's death, a deep desire seized me to look once again upon his earthly garment. His faithful servant, Frederick, opened for me the chamber in which he was laid out. Stretched upon his back, he reposed as if asleep; profound peace and security reigned in the features of his sublimely noble countenance. The mighty brow seemed yet to harbour thoughts. I wished for a lock of his hair; but reverence prevented me from cutting it off. The body lay naked, only wrapped in a white sheet; large pieces of ice had been placed near it, to keep it fresh as long as possible. Frederick drew aside the sheet, and I was astonished at the divine magnificence of the limbs. The breast was powerful, broad, and arched; the arms and thighs were full, and softly muscular; the feet were elegant, and of the most perfect shape; nowhere, on the whole body, was there a trace either of fat or of leanness and decay. A perfect man lay in great beauty before me; and the rapture the sight caused made me forget for a moment that the immortal spirit had left such an abode. I laid my hand on his heart—there was a deep silence—and I turned away to give free vent to my suppressed tears.

THE END

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