JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: TRUTH AND FICTION RELATING TO MY LIFE

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Autobiography: Truth and Fiction Relating to My Life

INTRODUCTION

BY THOMAS CARLYLE

It would appear that for inquirers into Foreign Literature, for all men anxious to see and understand the European world as it lies around them, a great problem is presented in this Goethe; a singular, highly significant phenomenon, and now also means more or less complete for ascertaining its significance. A man of wonderful, nay, unexampled reputation and intellectual influence among forty millions of reflective, serious and cultivated men, invites us to study him; and to determine for ourselves, whether and how far such influence has been salutary, such reputation merited. That this call will one day be answered, that Goethe will be seen and judged of in his real character among us, appears certain enough. His name, long familiar everywhere, has now awakened the attention of critics in all European countries to his works: he is studied wherever true study exists: eagerly studied even in France; nay, some considerable knowledge of his nature and spiritual importance seems already to prevail there.[1]

For ourselves, meanwhile, in giving all due weight to so curious an exhibition of opinion, it is doubtless our part, at the same time, to beware that we do not give it too much. This universal sentiment of admiration is wonderful, is interesting enough; but it must not lead us astray. We English stand as yet without the sphere of it; neither will we plunge blindly in, but enter considerately, or, if we see good, keep aloof from it altogether. Fame, we may understand, is no sure test of merit, but only a probability of such; it is an accident, not a property, of a man; like light, it can give little or nothing, but at most may show what is given; often it is but a false glare, dazzling the eyes of the vulgar, lending by casual extrinsic splendour the brightness and manifold glance of the diamond to pebbles of no value. A man is in all cases simply the man, of the same intrinsic worth and weakness, whether his worth and weakness lie hidden in the depths of his own consciousness, or be betrumpeted and beshouted from end to end of the habitable globe. These are plain truths, which no one should lose sight of; though, whether in love or in anger, for praise or for condemnation, most of us are too apt to forget them. But least of all can it become the critic to 'follow a multitude to do evil' even when that evil is excess of admiration; on the contrary, it will behoove him to lift up his voice, how feeble soever, how unheeded soever, against the common delusion; from which, if he can save, or help to save any mortal, his endeavours will have been repaid.

With these things in some measure before us, we must remind our readers of another influence at work in this affair, and one acting, as we think, in the contrary direction. That pitiful enough desire for 'originality' which lurks and acts in all minds, will rather, we imagine, lead the critic of Foreign Literature to adopt the negative than the affirmative with regard to Goethe. If a writer indeed feel that he is writing for England alone, invisibly and inaudibly to the rest of the Earth, the temptations may be pretty equally balanced; if he write for some small conclave, which he mistakenly thinks the representative of England, they may sway this way or that, as it chances. But writing in such isolated spirit is no longer possible. Traffic, with its swift ships, is uniting all nations into one; Europe at large

[1] Witness /Le Tasse, Drame par Duval,/ and the Criticisms on it. See also the Essays in the /Globe,/ Nos. 55, 64 (1826).

is becoming more and more one public; and in this public, the voices for Goethe, compared with those against him, are in the proportion, as we reckon them, both as to the number and value, of perhaps a hundred to one. We take in, not Germany alone, but France and Italy; not the Schlegels and Schellings, but the Manzonis and De Staels. The bias of originality, therefore, may lie to the side of censure; and whoever among us shall step forward, with such knowledge as our common critics have of Goethe, to enlighten the European public, by contradiction in this matter, displays a heroism, which, in estimating his other merits, ought nowise to be forgotten.

Our own view of the case coincides, we confess, in some degree with that of the majority. We reckon that Goethe's fame has, to a considerable extent, been deserved; that his influence has been of high benefit to his own country; nay more, that it promises to be of benefit to us, and to all other nations. The essential grounds of this opinion, which to explain minutely were a long, indeed boundless task, we may state without many words. We find, then, in Goethe, an Artist, in the high and ancient meaning of that term; in the meaning which it may have borne long ago among the masters of Italian painting, and the fathers of Poetry in England; we say that we trace in the creations of this man, belonging in every sense to our own time, some touches of that old, divine spirit, which had long passed away from among us, nay which, as has often been laboriously demonstrated, was not to return to this world any more.

Or perhaps we come nearer our meaning, if we say that in Goethe we discover by far the most striking instance, in our time, of a writer who is, in strict speech, what Philosophy can call a Man. He is neither noble nor plebeian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devotee; but the best excellence of all these, joined in pure union; 'a clear and universal Man.' Goethe's poetry is no separate faculty, no mental handicraft; but the voice of the whole harmonious manhood: nay it is the very harmony, the living and life-giving harmony of that rich manhood which forms his poetry. All good men may be called poets in act, or in word; all good poets are so in both. But Goethe besides appears to us as a person of that deep endowment, and gifted vision, of that experience also and sympathy in the ways of all men, which qualify him to stand forth, not only as the literary ornament, but in many respects too as the Teacher and exemplar of his age. For, to say nothing of his natural gifts, he has cultivated himself and his art, he has studied how to live and to write, with a fidelity, an unwearied earnestness, of which there is no other living instance; of which, among British poets especially, Wordsworth alone offers any resemblance. And this in our view is the result. To our minds, in these soft, melodious imaginations of his, there is embodied the Wisdom which is proper to this time; the beautiful, the religious Wisdom, which may still, with something of its old impressiveness, speak to the whole soul; still, in these hard, unbelieving utilitarian days, reveal to us glimpses of the Unseen but not unreal World, that so the Actual and the Ideal may again meet together, and clear Knowledge be again wedded to Religion, in the life and business of men.

Such is our conviction or persuasion with regard to the poetry of Goethe. Could we demonstrate this opinion to be true, could we even exhibit it with that degree of clearness and consistency which it has attained in our own thoughts, Goethe were, on our part, sufficiently recommended to the best attention of all thinking men. But, unhappily, it is not a subject susceptible of demonstration: the merits and characteristics of a Poet are not to be set forth by logic; but to be gathered by personal, and as in this case it must be, by deep and careful inspection of his works. Nay Goethe's world is everyway so different from ours; it costs us such effort, we have so much to remember, and so much to forget, before we can transfer ourselves in any measure into his peculiar point of vision, that a right study of him, for an Englishman, even of ingenuous, open, inquisitive mind, becomes unusually difficult; for a fixed, decided, contemptuous Englishman, next to impossible. To a reader of the first class, helps may be given, explanations will remove many a difficulty; beauties that lay hidden may be made apparent; and directions, adapted to his actual position, will at length guide him into the proper tract for such an inquiry. All this, however, must be a work of progression and detail. To do our part in it, from time to time, must rank among the best duties of an English Foreign Review.

Meanwhile, our present endeavour limits itself within far narrower bounds. We cannot aim to make Goethe known, but only to prove that he is worthy of being known; at most, to point out, as it were afar off, the path by which some knowledge of him may be obtained. A slight glance at his general literary character and procedure, and one or two of his chief productions which throw light on these, must for the present suffice. A French diplomatic personage, contemplating Goethe's physiognomy, is said to have observed: /Voila un homme qui a eu beaucoup de chagrins./ A truer version of the matter, Goethe himself seems to think, would have been: Here is a man who has struggled toughly; who has /es sich recht sauer werden lassen./ Goethe's life, whether as a writer and thinker, or as a living active man, has indeed been a life of effort, of earnest toilsome endeavour after all excellence. Accordingly, his intellectual progress, his spiritual and moral history, as it may be gathered from his successive Works, furnishes, with us, no small portion of the pleasure and profit we derive from perusing them. Participating deeply in all the influences of his age, he has from the first, at every new epoch, stood forth to elucidate the new circumstances of the time; to offer the instruction, the solace, which that time required. His literary life divides itself into two portions widely different in character: the products of the first, once so new and original, have long either directly or through the thousand thousand imitations of them, been familiar to us; with the products of the second, equally original, and in our day far more precious, we are yet little acquainted. These two classes of works stand curiously related with each other; at first view, in strong contradiction, yet, in truth, connected together by the strictest sequence. For Goethe has not only suffered and mourned in bitter agony under the spiritual perplexities of his time; but he has also mastered these, he is above them, and has shown others how to rise above them. At one time, we found him in darkness, and now he is in light; he was once an Unbeliever, and now he is a Believer; and he believes, moreover, not by denying his unbelief, but by following it out; not by stopping short, still less turning back, in his inquiries, but by resolutely prosecuting them. This, it appears to us, is a case of singular interest, and rarely exemplified, if at all elsewhere, in these our days. How has this man, to whom the world once offered nothing but blackness, denial and despair, attained to that better vision which now shows it to him, not tolerable only, but full of solemnity and loveliness? How has the belief of a Saint been united in this high and true mind with the clearness of a Sceptic; the devout spirit of a Fenelon made to blend in soft harmony with the gaiety, the sarcasm, the shrewdness of a Voltaire?

Goethe's two earliest works are /Götz von Berlichingen/ and the /Sorrows of Werter/. The boundless influence and popularity they gained, both at home and abroad, is well known. It was they that established almost at once his literary fame in his own country; and even determined his subsequent private history, for they brought him into contact with the Duke of Weimar; in connection with whom, the Poet, engaged in manifold duties, political as well as literary, has lived for fifty-four years. Their effects over Europe at large were not less striking than in Germany.

'It would be difficult,' observes a writer on this subject, 'to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe, than these two performances of a young author; his first-fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. /Werter/ appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word, once uttered, was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chaunted through all notes of the gamut, till the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries, and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. The fortune of /Berlichingen with the Iron Hand,/ though less sudden, was by no means less exalted. In his own county, /Götz,/ though he now stands solitary and childless, became the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico- antiquarian performances; which, though long ago deceased, made noise enough in their day and generation: and with ourselves, his influence has been perhaps still more

remarkable. Sir Walter Scott's first literary enterprise was a translation of /Götz von Berlichingen/; and, if genius could be communicated like instruction, we might call this work of Goethe's the prime cause of /Marmion/ and the /Lady of the Lake/, with all that has followed from the same creative hand. Truly, a grain of seed that has lighted on the right soil! For if not firmer and fairer, it has grown to be taller and broader than any other tree; and all the nations of the earth are still yearly gathering of its fruit.

'But overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of /Berlichingen/ and /Werter/, that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals of a great change in modern literature. The former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings deeply important to modern minds, but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from Passion incapable of being converted into Action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated and unbelieving as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in /Werter/ itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it.'

To the same dark wayward mood, which, in /Werter/, pours itself forth in bitter wailings over human life; and, in /Berlichingen/, appears as a fond and sad looking back into the Past, belong various other productions of Goethe's; for example, the /Mitschuldigen/, and the first idea of Faust, which, however, was not realized in actual composition till a calmer period of his history. Of this early harsh and crude, yet fervid and genial period, /Werter/ may stand here as the representative; and, viewed in its external and internal relation, will help to illustrate both the writer and the public he was writing for.

At the present day, it would be difficult for us, satisfied, nay sated to nausea, as we have been with the doctrines of Sentimentality, to estimate the boundless interest which /Werter/ must have excited when first given to the world. It was then new in all senses; it was wonderful, yet wished for, both in its own country and in every other. The Literature of Germany had as yet but partially awakened from its long torpor: deep learning, deep reflection, have at no time been wanting there; but the creative spirit had for above a century been almost extinct. Of late, however, the Ramlers, Rabeners, Gellerts, had attained to no inconsiderable polish of style; Klopstock's /Messias/ had called forth the admiration, and perhaps still more the pride, of the country, as a piece of art; a high enthusiasm was abroad; Lessing had roused the minds of men to a deeper and truer interest in Literature, had even decidedly begun to introduce a heartier, warmer and more expressive style. The Germans were on the alert; in expectation, or at least in full readiness for some far bolder impulse; waiting for the Poet that might speak to them from the heart to the heart. It was in Goethe that such a Poet was to be given them.

Nay, the Literature of other countries, placid, self-satisfied as they might seem, was in an equally expectant condition. Everywhere, as in Germany, there was polish and languor, external glitter and internal vacuity; it was not fire, but a picture of fire, at which no soul could be warmed. Literature had sunk from its former vocation: it no longer held the mirror up to Nature; no longer reflected, in many-coloured expressive symbols, the actual passions, the hopes, sorrows, joys of living men; but dwelt in a remote conventional world in /Castles of Otranto/, in /Epigoniads/ and /Leonidases/, among clear, metallic heroes, and white, high, stainless beauties, in whom the drapery and elocution were nowise the least important qualities. Men thought it right that the heart should swell into magnanimity with Caractacus and Cato, and melt into sorrow with many an Eliza and Adelaide; but the heart was in no haste either to swell or to melt. Some pulses of heroical sentiment, a few /un/natural tears might, with conscientious readers, be actually squeezed forth on such occasions: but they came only from the surface of the mind; nay, had the conscientious man considered the matter, he would have found that they ought not to have come at all. Our only English poet of the period was Goldsmith;

a pure, clear, genuine spirit, had he been of depth or strength sufficient; his /Vicar of Wakefield/ remains the best of all modern Idyls; but it is and was nothing more. And consider our leading writers; consider the poetry of Gray, and the prose of Johnson. The first a laborious mosaic, through the hard stiff lineaments of which little life or true grace could be expected to look: real feeling, and all freedom of expressing it, are sacrificed to pomp, to cold splendour; for vigour we have a certain mouthing vehemence, too elegant indeed to be tumid, yet essentially foreign to the heart, and seen to extend no deeper than the mere voice and gestures. Were it not for his /Letters/, which are full of warm exuberant power, we might almost doubt whether Gray was a man of genius; nay, was a living man at all, and not rather some thousand-times more cunningly devised poetical turning-loom, than that of Swift's Philosophers in Laputa. Johnson's prose is true, indeed, and sound, and full of practical sense: few men have seen more clearly into the motives, the interests, the whole walk and conversation of the living busy world as it lay before him; but farther than this busy, and to most of us, rather prosaic world, he seldom looked: his instruction is for men of business, and in regard to matters of business alone. Prudence is the highest Virtue he can inculcate; and for that finer portion of our nature, that portion of it which belongs essentially to Literature strictly so called, where our highest feelings, our best joys and keenest sorrows, our Doubt, our Love, our Religion reside, he has no word to utter; no remedy, no counsel to give us in our straits; or at most, if, like poor Boswell, the patient is importunate, will answer: "My dear Sir, endeavour to clear your mind of Cant."

The turn which Philosophical speculation had taken in the preceding age corresponded with this tendency, and enhanced its narcotic influences; or was, indeed, properly speaking, the loot they had sprung from. Locke, himself a clear, humble-minded, patient, reverent, nay religious man, had paved the way for banishing religion from the world. Mind, by being modelled in men's imaginations into a Shape, a Visibility; and reasoned of as if it had been some composite, divisible and reunitable substance, some finer chemical salt, or curious piece of logical joinery, – began to lose its immaterial, mysterious, divine though invisible character: it was tacitly figured as something that might, were our organs fine enough, be /seen/. Yet who had ever seen it? Who could ever see it? Thus by degrees it passed into a Doubt, a Relation, some faint Possibility; and at last into a highly-probable Nonentity. Following Locke's footsteps, the French had discovered that 'as the stomach secretes Chyle, so does the brain secrete Thought.' And what then was Religion, what was Poetry, what was all high and heroic feeling? Chiefly a delusion; often a false and pernicious one. Poetry, indeed, was still to be preserved; because Poetry was a useful thing: men needed amusement, and loved to amuse themselves with Poetry: the playhouse was a pretty lounge of an evening; then there were so many precepts, satirical, didactic, so much more impressive for the rhyme; to say nothing of your occasional verses, birthday odes, epithalamiums, epicediums, by which 'the dream of existence may be so highly sweetened and embellished.' Nay, does not Poetry, acting on the imaginations of men, excite them to daring purposes; sometimes, as in the case of Tyrtaeus, to fight better; in which wise may it not rank as a useful stimulant to man, along with Opium and Scotch Whisky, the manufacture of which is allowed by law? In Heaven's name, then, let Poetry be preserved.

With Religion, however, it fared somewhat worse. In the eyes of Voltaire and his disciples, Religion was a superfluity, indeed a nuisance. Here, it is true, his followers have since found that he went too far; that Religion, being a great sanction to civil morality, is of use for keeping society in order, at least the lower classes, who have not the feeling of Honour in due force; and therefore, as a considerable help to the Constable and Hangman, /ought/ decidedly to be kept up. But such toleration is the fruit only of later days. In those times, there was no question but how to get rid of it, root and branch, the sooner the better. A gleam of zeal, nay we will call it, however basely alloyed, a glow of real enthusiasm and love of truth, may have animated the minds of these men, as they looked abroad on the pestilent jungle of Superstition, and hoped to clear the earth of it forever. This little glow, so alloyed, so contaminated with pride and other poor or bad admixtures, was the last which thinking men were to experience in Europe for a time. So it is always in regard to Religious Belief,

how degraded and defaced soever: the delight of the Destroyer and Denier is no pure delight, and must soon pass away. With bold, with skilful hand, Voltaire set his torch to the jungle: it blazed aloft to heaven; and the flame exhilarated and comforted the incendiaries; but, unhappily, such comfort could not continue. Ere long this flame, with its cheerful light and heat, was gone: the jungle, it is true, had been consumed; but, with its entanglements, its shelter and its spots of verdure also; and the black, chill, ashy swamp, left in its stead, seemed for a time a greater evil than the other.

In such a state of painful obstruction, extending itself everywhere over Europe, and already master of Germany, lay the general mind, when Goethe first appeared in Literature. Whatever belonged to the finer nature of man had withered under the Harmattan breath of Doubt, or passed away in the conflagration of open Infidelity; and now, where the Tree of Life once bloomed and brought fruit of goodliest savour there was only barrenness and desolation. To such as could find sufficient interest in the day-labour and day-wages of earthly existence; in the resources of the five bodily Senses, and of Vanity, the only mental sense which yet flourished, which flourished indeed with gigantic vigour, matters were still not so bad. Such men helped themselves forward, as they will generally do; and found the world, if not an altogether proper sphere (for every man, disguise it as he may, has a /soul/ in him), at least a tolerable enough place; where, by one item or another, some comfort, or show of comfort, might from time to time be got up, and these few years, especially since they were so few, be spent without much murdering. But to men afflicted with the 'malady of Thought,' some devoutness of temper was an inevitable heritage; to such the noisy forum of the world could appear but an empty, altogether insufficient concern; and the whole scene of life had become hopeless enough. Unhappily, such feelings are yet by no means so infrequent with ourselves, that we need stop here to depict them. That state of Unbelief from which the Germans do seem to be in some measure delivered, still presses with incubus force on the greater part of Europe; and nation after nation, each in its own way, feels that the first of all moral problems is how to cast it off, or how to rise above it. Governments naturally attempt the first expedient; Philosophers, in general, the second.

The Poet, says Schiller, is a citizen not only of his country, but of his time. Whatever occupies and interests men in general, will interest him still more. That nameless Unrest, the blind struggle of a soul in bondage, that high, sad, longing Discontent, which was agitating every bosom, had driven Goethe almost to despair. All felt it; he alone could give it voice. And here lies the secret of his popularity; in his deep, susceptive heart, he felt a thousand times more keenly what every one was feeling; with the creative gift which belonged to him as a poet, he bodied it forth into visible shape, gave it a local habitation and a name; and so made himself the spokesman of his generation. /Werter/ is but the cry of that dim, rooted pain, under which all thoughtful men of a certain age were languishing: it paints the misery, it passionately utters the complaint; and heart and voice, all over Europe, loudly and at once respond to it. True, it prescribes no remedy; for that was a far different, far harder enterprise, to which other years and a higher culture were required; but even this utterance of the pain, even this little, for the present, is ardently grasped at, and with eager sympathy appropriated in every bosom. If Byron's life-weariness, his moody melancholy, and mad stormful indignation, borne on the tones of a wild and quite artless melody, could pierce so deep into many a British heart, now that the whole matter is no longer new, – is indeed old and trite, – we may judge with what vehement acceptance this /Werter/ must have been welcomed, coming as it did like a voice from unknown regions; the first thrilling peal of that impassioned dirge, which, in country after country, men's ears have listened to, till they were deaf to all else. For /Werter/ infusing itself into the core and whole spirit of Literature, gave birth to a race of Sentimentalists, who have raged and wailed in every part of the world, till better light dawned on them, or at worst, exhausted Nature laid herself to sleep, and it was discovered that lamenting was an unproductive labour. These funereal choristers, in Germany a loud, haggard, tumultuous, as well as tearful class, were named the /Kraftmänner/ or Power-men; but have all long since, like sick children, cried themselves to rest. Byron was our English Sentimentalist and Power-man; the strongest of his kind in Europe; the wildest, the gloomiest, and it may be hoped

the last. For what good is it to 'whine, put finger i' the eye, and sob,' in such a case? Still more, to snarl and snap in malignant wise, 'like dog distract, or monkey sick?' Why should we quarrel with our existence, here as it lies before us, our field and inheritance, to make or mar, for better or for worse; in which, too, so many noblest men have, even from the beginning, warring with the very evils we war with, both made and been what will be venerated to all time?

A wide and everyway most important interval divides /Werter/, with its sceptical philosophy and 'hypochondriacal crotchets,' from Goethe's next Novel, /Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship/, published some twenty years afterwards. This work belongs, in all senses, to the second and sounder period of Goethe's life, and may indeed serve as the fullest, if perhaps not the purest, impress of it; being written with due forethought, at various times, during a period of no less than ten years. Considered as a piece of Art, there were much to be said on /Meister/; all which, however, lies beyond our present purpose. We are here looking at the work chiefly as a document for the writer's history; and in this point of view, it certainly seems, as contrasted with its more popular precursor, to deserve our best attention: for the problem which had been stated in /Werter/, with despair of its solution, is here solved. The lofty enthusiasm, which, wandering wildly over the universe, found no resting-place, has here reached its appointed home; and lives in harmony with what long appeared to threaten it with annihilation. Anarchy has now become Peace; the once gloomy and perturbed spirit is now serene, cheerfully vigorous, and rich in good fruits. Neither, which is most important of all, has this Peace been attained by a surrender to Necessity, or any compact with Delusion; a seeming blessing, such as years and dispiritment will of themselves bring to most men, and which is indeed no blessing, since even continued battle is better than destruction or captivity; and peace of this sort is like that of Galgacus's Romans, who 'called it peace when they had made a desert.' Here the ardent high-aspiring youth has grown into the calmest man, yet with increase and not loss of ardour, and with aspirations higher as well as clearer. For he has conquered his unbelief; the Ideal has been built on the Actual; no longer floats vaguely in darkness and regions of dreams, but rests in light, on the firm ground of human interest and business, as in its true scene, on its true basis.

It is wonderful to see with, what softness the scepticism of Jarno, the commercial spirit of Werner, the reposing polished manhood of Lothario and the Uncle, the unearthly enthusiasm of the Harper, the gay animal vivacity of Philina, the mystic, ethereal, almost spiritual nature of Mignon, are blended together in this work; how justice is done to each, how each lives freely in his proper element, in his proper form; and how, as Wilhelm himself, the mild-hearted, all-hoping, all-believing Wilhelm, struggles forward towards his world of Art through these curiously complected influences, all this unites itself into a multifarious, yet so harmonious Whole; as into a clear poetic mirror, where man's life and business in this age, his passions and purposes, the highest equally with the lowest, are imaged back to us in beautiful significance. Poetry and Prose are no longer at variance; for the poet's eyes are opened; he sees the changes of many-colored existence, and sees the loveliness and deep purport which lies hidden under the very meanest of them; hidden to the vulgar sight, but clear to the poet's; because the 'open secret' is no longer a secret to him, and he knows that the Universe is /full/ of goodness; that whatever has being has beauty.

Apart from its literary merits or demerits, such is the temper of mind we trace in Goethe's /Meister/, and, more or less expressly exhibited, in all his later works. We reckon it a rare phenomenon, this temper; and worthy, in our times, if it do exist, of best study from all inquiring men. How has such a temper been attained in this so lofty and impetuous mind, once too, dark, desolate and full of doubt, more than any other? How may we, each of us in his several sphere, attain it, or strengthen it, for ourselves? These are questions, this last is a question, in which no one is unconcerned.

To answer these questions, to begin the answer of them, would lead us very far beyond our present limits. It is not, as we believe, without long, sedulous study, without learning much and unlearning much, that, for any man, the answer of such questions is even to be hoped. Meanwhile, as regards Goethe, there is one feature of the business, which, to us, throws considerable light on

his moral persuasions, and will not, in investigating the secret of them, be overlooked. We allude to the spirit in which he cultivates his Art; the noble, disinterested, almost religious love with which he looks on Art in general, and strives towards it as towards the sure, highest, nay only good.

For a man of Goethe's talent to write many such pieces of rhetoric, setting forth the dignity of poets, and their innate independence on external circumstances, could be no very hard task; accordingly, we find such sentiments again and again expressed, sometimes with still more gracefulness, still clearer emphasis, in his various writings. But to adopt these sentiments into his sober practical persuasion; in any measure to feel and believe that such was still, and must always be, the high vocation of the poet; on this ground of universal humanity, of ancient and now almost forgotten nobleness, to take his stand, even in these trivial, jeering, withered, unbelieving days; and through all their complex, dispiriting, mean, yet tumultuous influences, to 'make his light shine before them,' that it might beautify even our 'rag- gathering age' with some beams of that mild, divine splendour, which had long left us, the very possibility of which was denied; heartily and in earnest to meditate all this, was no common proceeding; to bring it into practice, especially in such a life as his has been, was among the highest and hardest enterprises which any man whatever could engage in. We reckon this a greater novelty, than all the novelties which as a mere writer he ever put forth, whether for praise or censure. We have taken it upon us to say that if such is, in any sense, the state of the case with regard to Goethe, he deserves not mere approval as a pleasing poet and sweet singer; but deep, grateful study, observance, imitation, as a Moralist and Philosopher. If there be any /probability/ that such is the state of the case, we cannot but reckon it a matter well worthy of being inquired into. And it is for this only that we are here pleading and arguing. Meister is the mature product of the first genius of our times; and must, one would think, be different, in various respects, from the immature products of geniuses who are far from the first, and whose works spring from the brain in as many weeks as Goethe's cost him years.

It may deserve to be mentioned here that Meister, at its first appearance in Germany, was received very much as it has been in England. Goethe's known character, indeed, precluded indifference there; but otherwise it was much the same. The whole guild of criticism was thrown into perplexity, into sorrow; everywhere was dissatisfaction open or concealed. Official duty impelling them to speak, some said one thing, some another; all felt in secret that they knew not what to say. Till the appearance of Schlegel's /Character/, no word, that we have seen, of the smallest chance to be decisive, or indeed to last beyond the day, had been uttered regarding it. Some regretted that the fire of /Werter/ was so wonderfully abated; whisperings there might be about 'lowness,' 'heaviness;' some spake forth boldly in behalf of suffering 'virtue.' Novalis was not among the speakers, but he censured the work in secret, and this for a reason which to us will seem the strangest; for its being, as we should say, a Benthamite work! Many are the bitter aphorisms we find, among his Fragments, directed against /Meister/ for its prosaic, mechanical, economical, coldhearted, altogether Utilitarian character. We English again call Goethe a mystic; so difficult is it to please all parties! But the good, deep, noble Novalis made the fairest amends; for notwithstanding all this, Tieck tells us, if we remember rightly, he continually returned to /Meister/, and could not but peruse and reperuse it.

Goethe's /Wanderjahre/ was published in his seventy-second year; /Werter/ in his twenty-fifth; thus in passing between these two works, and over /Meister's Lehrjahre/ which stands nearly midway, we have glanced over a space of almost fifty years, including within them, of course, whatever was most important in his public or private history. By means of these quotations, so diverse in their tone, we meant to make it visible that a great change had taken place in the moral disposition of the man; a change from inward imprisonment, doubt and discontent, into freedom, belief and clear activity; such a change as, in our opinion, must take place, more or less consciously, in every character that, especially in these times, attains to spiritual manhood, and in characters possessing any thoughtfulness and sensibility, will seldom take place without a too painful consciousness, without bitter conflicts, in which the character itself is too often maimed and impoverished, and which end too often not in

victory, but in defeat, or fatal compromise with the enemy. Too often, we may well say; for though many gird on the harness, few bear it warrior-like; still fewer put it off with triumph. Among our own poets, Byron was almost the only man we saw faithfully and manfully struggling, to the end, in this cause; and he died while the victory was still doubtful, or at best, only beginning to be gained. We have already stated our opinion, that Goethe's success in this matter has been more complete than that of any other man in his age; nay, that, in the strictest sense, he may almost be called the only one that has so succeeded. On this ground, were it on no other, we have ventured to say that his spiritual history and procedure must deserve attention; that his opinions, his creations, his mode of thought, his whole picture of the world as it dwells within him, must to his contemporaries be an inquiry of no common interest; of an interest altogether peculiar, and not in this degree exampled in existing literature. These things can be but imperfectly stated here, and must be left, not in a state of demonstration, but at the utmost, of loose fluctuating probability; nevertheless, if inquired into, they will be found to have a precise enough meaning, and, as we believe, a highly important one.

For the rest, what sort of mind it is that has passed through this change, that has gained this victory; how rich and high a mind; how learned by study in all that is wisest, by experience in all that is most complex, the brightest as well as the blackest, in man's existence; gifted with what insight, with what grace and power of utterance, we shall not for the present attempt discussing. All these the reader will learn, who studies his writings with such attention as they merit; and by no other means. Of Goethe's dramatic, lyrical, didactic poems, in their thousandfold expressiveness, for they are full of expressiveness, we can here say nothing. But in every department of Literature, of Art ancient and modern, in many provinces of Science, we shall often meet him; and hope to have other occasions of estimating what, in these respects, we and all men owe him.

Two circumstances, meanwhile, we have remarked, which to us throw light on the nature of his original faculty for Poetry, and go far to convince us of the Mastery he has attained in that art: these we may here state briefly, for the judgment of such as already know his writings, or the help of such as are beginning to know them. The first is his singularly emblematic intellect; his perpetual never-failing tendency to transform into /shape/, into /life/, the opinion, the feeling that may dwell in him; which, in its widest sense, we reckon to be essentially the grand problem of the Poet. We do not mean mere metaphor and rhetorical trope: these are but the exterior concern, often but the scaffolding of the edifice, which is to be built up (within our thoughts) by means of them. In allusions, in similitudes, though no one known to us is happier, many are more copious than Goethe. But we find this faculty of his in the very essence of his intellect; and trace it alike in the quiet cunning epigram, the allegory, the quaint device, reminding us of some Quarles or Bunyan; and in the /Fausts/, the /Tassos/, the /Mignons/, which in their pure and genuine personality, may almost remind us of the /Ariels/ and /Hamlets/ of Shakespeare. Everything has form, everything has visual existence; the poet's imagination /bodies forth/ the forms of things unseen, his pen turns them to /shape/. This, as a natural endowment, exists in Goethe, we conceive, to a very high degree.

The other characteristic of his mind, which proves to us his acquired mastery in art, as this shows us the extent of his original capacity for it, is his wonderful variety, nay universality; his entire freedom from the Mannerism. We read Goethe for years, before we come to see wherein the distinguishing peculiarity of his understanding, of his disposition, even of his way of writing, consists. It seems quite a simple style that of his; remarkable chiefly for its calmness, its perspicuity, in short its commonness; and yet it is the most uncommon of all styles: we feel as if every one might imitate it, and yet it is inimitable. As hard is it to discover in his writings, – though there also, as in every man's writings, the character of the writer must lie recorded, – what sort of spiritual construction he has, what are his temper, his affections, his individual specialties. For all lives freely within him: Philina and Clanchen, Mephistopheles and Mignon, are alike indifferent, or alike dear to him; he is of no sect or caste: he seems not this man or that man, but a man. We reckon this to be the characteristic of a Master in Art of any sort; and true especially of all great Poets. How true is it of Shakespeare

and Homer! Who knows, or can figure what the Man Shakespeare was, by the first, by the twentieth perusal of his works? He is a Voice coming to us from the Land of Melody: his old brick dwelling-place, in the mere earthly burgh of Stratford-on-Avon, offers us the most inexplicable enigma. And what is Homer in the /Ilias/? He is THE WITNESS; he has seen, and he reveals it; we hear and believe, but do not behold him. Now compare, with these two Poets, any other two; not of equal genius, for there are none such, but of equal sincerity, who wrote as earnestly and from the heart, like them. Take, for instance, Jean Paul and Lord Byron. The good Eichter begins to show himself, in his broad, massive, kindly, quaint significance, before we have read many pages of even his slightest work; and to the last he paints himself much better than his subject. Byron may also be said to have painted nothing else than himself, be his subject what it might. Yet as a test for the culture of a Poet, in his poetical capacity, for his pretensions to mastery and completeness in his art, we cannot but reckon this among the surest. Tried by this, there is no writer that approaches within many degrees of Goethe.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born in Frankfort on August 28, 1749. His parents were citizens of that imperial town, and Wolfgang was their only son. His father was born on July 31, 1710. He married, on August 20, 1748, at the age of thirty-eight, Catherine Elizabeth Textor. In December, 1750, was born a daughter, Cornelia, who remained until her death, at the age of twenty-seven, her brother's most intimate friend. She was married in 1773 to John George Schlosser. Goethe's education was irregular. French culture gave at this time the prevailing tone to Europe. Goethe could not have escaped its influence, and he was destined to fall under it in a special manner. In the Seven Years' War, which was now raging, France took the side of the empire against Frederick the Great. Frankfort was full of French soldiers, and a certain Comte Thorane, who was quartered in Goethe's house, had an important influence on the boy.

Goethe, if we may believe his autobiography, experienced his first love about the age of fifteen in the person of Gretchen, whom some have supposed to be the daughter of an innkeeper at Offenbach. He worshipped her as Dante worshipped Beatrice.

In the autumn of 1765 Goethe traveled to Leipsic. On the 19th of October he was admitted as a student. He was sent to Leipsic to study law, in order that he might return to Frankfort fitted for the regular course of municipal distinction. He intended to devote himself not to law, but to belles lettres. He attended Gellert's lectures on literature, and even joined his private class. His real university education was derived from intercourse with his friends. First among these was J. G. Schlosser, who afterwards married his sister. He had a great influence upon him, chiefly in introducing him to a wider circle of German, French, English and Italian poetry.

But the person who had the strongest effect on Goethe's mental development was Adam Frederick Oeser, at this time director of the academy of arts in Leipsic.

Goethe, from his earliest years, was never without a passion, and at Leipsic his passion was Kitty Schönkopf, the Aennchen of the autobiography, the daughter of the host at whose house he dined. She often teased him with her inconstant ways, and to this experience is due his first drama, "Die Laune des Verliebten," "Lovers' Quarrels," as it may be styled. A deeper chord is struck in "Die Mitschuldigen" (The Fellow Sinners), which forms a dismal and forbidding picture both of the time and of the experiences of the youth who wrote it. He had an opportunity of establishing his principles of taste during a short visit at Dresden, in which he devoted himself to the pictures and the antiques. The end of Goethe's stay at Leipsic was saddened by illness. One morning at the beginning of the summer he was awakened by a violent hemorrhage. For several days he hung between life and death, and after that his recovery was slow. He left Leipsic far from well on August 28, 1768.

Goethe made an enforced stay of a year and a half. It was perhaps the least happy part of his life. His cure proceeded slowly, and he had several relapses. His family relations were not pleasant.

His father showed but little sympathy with his aspirations for universal culture, and could imagine no career for him but that of a successful jurist. His sister had grown somewhat harsh and cold during his absence. Goethe's mother was always the same to him – a bright, genial, sympathetic friend. Goethe, during his illness, received great attention from Fräulein von Klettenberg, a friend of his mother's, a pietist of the Moravian school. She initiated him into the mystical writings of those abstracted saints, and she engaged him in the study of alchemy, which served at once to prepare him for the conception of Faust and for the scientific researches of his later days.

He arrived at Strasburg April 2,1770. Goethe stayed in Strasburg till August 28, 1771, his twenty-second birthday, and these sixteen months are perhaps the most important of his life. During them he came into active contact with most of those impulses of which his after life was a development. If we would understand his mental growth, we must ask who were his friends. He took his meals at the house of the Fräulein Lauth in the Kramergasse. The table was mainly filled with medical students. At the head of it sat Salzmann, a grave man of fifty years of age. His experience and his refined taste were very attractive to Goethe, who made him his intimate friend. The table of the Fräulein Lauth received some new guests. Among these was Jung-Stilling, the self-educated charcoal-burner, who in his memoir has left a graphic account of Goethe's striking appearance, in his broad brow, his flashing eye, his mastery of the company, and his generosity. Another was Lerse, a frank, open character, who became Goethe's favorite, and whose name is immortalized in Götz von Berlichingen.

Goethe's stay at Strasburg is generally connected still more closely with another circumstance – his passion for Frederike Brion of Sesenheim. The village lies about twenty miles from Strasburg, and her father was pastor there. Goethe was introduced by his friend Weyland, as a poor theological student. The father was a simple, worthy man, the eldest of the three daughters was married, the two younger remained – Maria Salome, and Frederike, to whom the poet principally devoted himself. She was tall and slight, with fair hair and blue eyes, and just sixteen years of age. Goethe gave himself up to the passion of the moment. During the winter of 1770, Goethe often rode over to Sesenheim. Neither storm, nor cold, nor darkness kept him back. As his time for leaving Strasburg came nearer he felt that his love was merely a dream and could have no serious termination. Frederike felt the same on her side. On August 6th Goethe took his degree as a doctor of law. Shortly afterwards he bade adieu to Sesenheim. Frederike lived till 1813 and died single.

Goethe's return to Frankfort is marked by a number of songs, of which the "Wanderer's Sturmlied" is the most remarkable. He had outgrown many of the friends of his youth. Those with whom he felt most sympathy were the two Schlossers and his sister Cornelia. He found in her one who sympathized with all his aspirations. The work into which he threw all his genius was the dramatization of the history of the imperial knight of the Middle Ages, Gottfried or Götz von Berlichingen. The immediate cause of this enterprise was his enthusiasm for Shakespeare. After reading him he felt, he said, like a blind man who suddenly receives his sight. The study of a dry and dull biography of Götz, published in 1731, supplied the subject for his awakened powers. From this miserable sketch he conceived within his mind a complete picture of Germany in the sixteenth century. The chief characters of his play are creatures of his imagination, representing the principal types which made up the history of the time. Every personage is made to live; they speak in short, sharp sentences like the powerful lines of a great master's drawing. The first sketch of Götz was finished in six weeks, in the autumn of 1771. It ran like wild-fire through the whole of Germany.

Goethe left Frankfort in the spring of 1772 for Wetzlar, a quiet country town on the Lahn, one of the seats of government of the Holy Roman Empire. The emperors lived at Vienna; they were crowned at Frankfort; they held their parliaments at Ratisbon, and at Wetzlar their courts of justice. It was the custom for young lawyers to attend the sittings of these courts for a certain time before they could be admitted to practice on their own account. The company of these students, of the embassies from the component parts of the empire, and of various imperial officials, made the society a pleasant

and lively one. Goethe soon found friends. His favorite house was occupied by one of the officials of the order, by name Buff, an honest man with a large family of children. The second daughter, Lotte, blue-eyed, fair and just twenty years of age, was first met by Goethe, shortly after his arrival, at a ball at Wolpertshausen. She strongly attracted him; he became a constant visitor at the house. He found that Lotte was a second mother to her brothers and sisters. Lotte, was really, though not formally, engaged to Kestner, a man of two-and-thirty, secretary to the Hanoverian legation. The discovery of this relation made no difference to Goethe; he remained the devoted friend to both. But the position was too critical to last. On September 10 they met in the German house for the last time. Goethe and Schlosser went together to Wetzlar in November. Here he heard of the death of Jerusalem, a young man attached to the Brunswick legation. He had been with Goethe at the University of Leipsic. Of a moody temperament, disheartened by failure in his profession, and soured by a hopeless passion for the wife of another, he had borrowed a pair of pistols under pretense of a journey, and had shot himself on the night of October 29.

Goethe immediately afterwards began his Werther. Goethe tells us that it was written in four weeks. In October it spread over the whole of Germany. It was enthusiastically beloved or sternly condemned. It was printed, imitated, translated into every language of Europe. Götz and Werther formed the solid foundation of Goethe's fame. It is difficult to imagine that the same man can have produced both works, so different are they in matter and style. Götz was the first manly appeal to the chivalry of German spirit, which, caught up by other voices, sounded throughout the Fatherland like the call of a warder's trumpet, till it produced a national courage, founded on the recollection of an illustrious past, which overthrew the might of the conqueror at the moment when he seemed about to dominate the world. Werther, as soft and melodious as Plato, was the first revelation to the world of that marvelous style which, in the hands of a master, compels a language which is as rich as Greek to be also as musical.

The spring of 1773, which witnessed the publication of Götz, saw him actively employed as an advocate. In November, Goethe's sister Cornelia was married to Schlosser and left Strasburg. Goethe felt the loss deeply. She lived but a short time. Her married life was tortured with suffering, and she died in 1777.

The summer of 1774 was spent in a journey to the Rhine. Goethe returned to Frankfort at the beginning of August. On December 11, Goethe was surprised by the visit of a stranger. It was Karl Ludwig von Knebel, who was traveling with the two princes of Saxe-Weimar, the reigning duke, Karl August, then just seventeen, and his younger brother, Constantine. This meeting decided the future course of Goethe's life.

He now came under the influence of Lili Schönemann, the daughter of a rich banker. This passion seemed to be of a more lasting nature than the others.

Neither family approved of the engagement between the youthful couple.

Goethe tore himself away, and went for a tour in Switzerland.

He returned to Frankfort on July 20. August was spent delightfully with Lili at Offenbach; his letters speak of nothing but her. He wrote some scenes in Faust – the walk in the garden, the first conversation with Mephistopheles, the interview with the scholar, the scene in Auerbach's cellar. Egmont was also begun under the stimulus of the American Rebellion. A way of escaping from his embarrassments was unexpectedly opened to him. The duke of Weimar passed through Frankfort both before and after his marriage, which took place on October 3. He invited Goethe to stay at Weimar. It was not for his happiness or for Lili's that they should have married. She afterwards thanked him deeply for the firmness with which he overcame a temptation to which she would have yielded.

At this time the smaller German courts were beginning to take an interest in German literature. Before the Seven Years' War the whole of German culture had been French. Even now German writers found but scant acceptance at Berlin or Vienna. The princes of the smaller states surrounded

themselves with literature and art. The duke of Brunswick had made Lessing his librarian. The duke of Würtemberg paid special attention to education; he promoted the views of Schubart, and founded the school in which Schiller was educated. Hanover offered a home to Zimmermann, and encouraged the development of Schlegel. Darmstadt was especially fortunate. Caroline, the wife of the landgrave, had surrounded herself with a literary circle, of which Merck was the moving spirit. She had collected and privately printed the odes of Klopstock, and her death in 1774 seemed to leave Darmstadt a desert. Her daughter, Louisa, seemed to have inherited something of her mother's qualities. She married, on October 3,1775, the young duke of Weimar, who was just of age. She was of the house of Brunswick, and after two years of marriage had been left a widow at nineteen, with two sons. She committed their education to Count Görz, a prominent character in the history of the time. She afterwards summoned Wieland to instruct the elder, and Knebel to instruct the younger.

Upon this society Goethe rose like a star. From the moment of his arrival he became the inseparable companion of the grand-duke. The first months at Weimar were spent in a wild round of pleasure. Goethe was treated as a guest. In the autumn, journeys, rides, shooting parties; in the winter, balls, masquerades, skating parties by torch-light, dancing at peasants' feasts, filled up their time. Evil reports flew about Germany. We may believe that no decencies were disregarded except the artificial restrictions of courtly etiquette. In the spring he had to decide whether he would go or stay. In April the duke gave him the little garden by the side of the Ilm. In June he invested him with the title, so important to Germans, of /Geheimlegationsrath/, with a seat and voice in the privy council and an income.

Goethe's life was at no time complete without the influence of a noble- hearted woman. This he found in Charlotte von Stein, a lady of the court, wife of the master of the horse.

The close of 1779 was occupied by a winter journey to Switzerland. Two days were spent at Frankfort with Goethe's parents. Sesenheim was visited, and left with satisfaction and contentment. At Strasburg they found as to Lessing. The repertoire of the Weimar theater was stocked with pieces of solid merit, which long held their place. In August, 1792, he accompanied the duke to the campaign in the Ardennes. In 1793 he went with his master to the siege of Mainz. Goethe took the old German epic of Reynard the Fox, with which he had long been familiar, and which, under the guise of animals, represents the conflicting passions of men, and rewrote it.

Thus far he had produced but little since his return from Italy. His friendship with Schiller was now to begin, an alliance which, in the closeness of its intimacy and its deep effect on the character of both friends, has scarcely a parallel in literary history. If Schiller was not at this time at the height of his reputation, he had written many of the works which have made his name famous. He was ten years younger than Goethe. The Räuber plays the same part in his literary history as Götz plays in that of Goethe. This had been followed by Fiesco and Kabale und Liebe. In 1787 he settled at Weimar. The first effect of Schiller's influence on Goethe was the completion of Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship. It stands in the first rank of Goethe's writings. A more solid result of the friendship between the poets was the production of Hermann und Dorothea.

The latter half of 1798 was occupied with a tour in Switzerland. Before its commencement he visited his mother at Frankfort for the last time, and presented to her his wife and his son. In the beginning of 1805 Goethe was convinced that either he or Schiller would die in that year. In January they were both seized with illness. Schiller was the first to recover, and, visiting Goethe in his sick room, fell on his neck and kissed him with intense emotion. On April 29 they saw each other for the last time. Schiller was on his way to the theater, whither Goethe was too ill to accompany him. They parted at the door of Schiller's house. Schiller died on the evening of the 9th of May. No one dared to tell Goethe the sad news, but he saw on the faces of those who surrounded him that Schiller must be very ill. On the morrow of Schiller's death, when his wife entered his room, he said, "Is it not true that Schiller was very ill yesterday?" She began to sob. He then cried, "He is dead!" "Thou hast

spoken it thyself," she answered. Goethe turned aside and covered his weeping eyes with his hands. Since that time Schiller and Goethe have been inseparable in the minds of their countrymen.

On October 14, 1806, the battle of Jena was fought. The court had fled from Weimar. On the 15th Napoleon and Goethe met. It was at the congress of Erfurt, where the sovereigns and princes of Europe were assembled. Goethe's presence was commanded by the duke. He was invited to an audience on October 2. The emperor sat at a large round table eating his breakfast. He beckoned Goethe to approach him. He asked how old he was, expressed his wonder at the freshness of his appearance, said that he had read Werther through seven times, and made some acute remarks on the management of the plot. Then, after an interruption, he said that tragedy ought to be the school of kings and peoples; that there was no subject worthier of treatment than the death of Caesar, which Voltaire had treated insufficiently. A great poet would have given prominence to Caesar's plans for the regeneration of the world, and shown what a loss mankind had suffered by his murder.

The idea of writing Faust seems to have come to Goethe in his earliest manhood. He was brooding over it at the same time with Götz von Berlichingen. Faust justly stands at the head of all Goethe's works. Founded on a well-known popular tale, indebted for its interest and pathos to incidents of universal experience, it deals with the deepest problems which can engage the mind of man.

In 1809 he finished The Elective Affinities.

It was natural at the beginning of a new course of life that Goethe should write an account of his past existence. The study of his collected poems made it apparent to him how necessary it was to furnish a key by which they might be understood. These various causes led to the composition of /Dichtung und Wahrheit/ (Poetry and Truth), an autobiographical history of the poet's life from his birth till his settlement at Weimar. This work is the cause of much embarrassment to the poet's biographers. Where it ought to be the most trustworthy source of information, it is most misleading.

Once more in his old age Goethe came under the sovereignty of a woman. She was Marianne von Willemer, the newly married wife of a Frankfort banker. Goethe made her acquaintance in a journey which he took in the Rhine country. The correspondence between Goethe and Marianne was published in 1877. It extends almost to the day of his death, and includes letters from Eckermann giving an account of his last moments.

The last twelve years of Goethe's life, when he had passed his seventieth birthday, were occupied by his criticisms on the literature of foreign countries, by the Wanderjahre, and the second part of Faust. He was the literary dictator of Germany and of Europe. The Wanderjahre contains some of Goethe's most beautiful conceptions, The Flight Into Egypt, The Description of the Pedagogic Province, The Parable of the Three Reverences.

The second part of Faust has been a battlefield of controversy since its publication, and demands fuller attention. Its fate may be compared with that of the latest works of Beethoven. For a long time it was regarded as impossible to understand, and as not worth understanding, the production of a great artist whose faculties had been impaired by age. By degrees it has, by careful labor, become intelligible to us, and the conviction is growing that it is the deepest and most important work of the author's life.

He had much to darken his latter days. His wife had died in 1816. He felt her loss bitterly. The Duchess Amalia had died eight years before. He had now to undergo bitterer experiences when he was less able to bear them. Frau von Stein, with whom he had renewed his friendship, if not his love, died in January, 1827; and in June, 1828, he lost the companion of his youth, the Grand Duke Karl August, who died suddenly, away from Weimar.

We must pass to the closing scenes. On Thursday, March 15, 1832, he spent his last cheerful and happy day. He awoke the next morning with a chill. From this he gradually recovered, and on Monday was so much better that he designed to begin his regular work on the next day. But in the middle of the night he woke with a deathly coldness, which extended from his hands over his body,

and which took many hours to subdue. It then appeared that the lungs were attacked, and that there was no hope of his recovery. Goethe did not anticipate death. He sat fully clothed in his arm chair, made attempts to reach his study, spoke confidently of his recovery, and of the walks he would take in the fine April days. His daughter-in-law Ottilie tended him faithfully. On the morning of the 22d his strength gradually left him. He sat slumbering in his arm chair, holding Ottilie's hand. Her name was constantly on his lips. His mind occasionally wandered, at one time to his beloved Schiller, at another to a fair female head with black curls, some passion of his youth. His last words were an order to his servant to open the second shutter to let in more light. After this he traced with his forefinger letters in the air. At half-past eleven in the day he drew himself, without any sign of pain, into the left corner of his arm chair, and went so peacefully to sleep that it was long before the watchers knew that his spirit was really gone. He is buried in the grand-ducal vault, where the bones of Schiller are also laid.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY TRUTH AND FICTION RELATING TO MY LIFE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

As a preface to the present work, which, perhaps, more than another, requires one, I adduce the letter of a friend, by which so serious an undertaking was occasioned.

"We have now, my dear friend, collected the twelve parts of your poetical works, and, on reading them through, find much that is known, much that is unknown; while much that had been forgotten is revived by this collection. These twelve volumes standing before us in uniform appearance, we cannot refrain from regarding as a whole; and one would like to sketch therefrom some image of the author and his talents. But it cannot be denied, considering the vigor with which he began his literary career, and the length of time which has since elapsed, that a dozen small volumes must appear incommensurate. Nor can one forget, that, with respect to the detached pieces, they have mostly been called forth by special occasions, and reflect particular external objects, as well as distinct grades of inward culture; while it is equally clear, that temporary moral and æsthetic maxims and convictions prevail in them. As a whole, however, these productions remain without connection; nay, it is often difficult to believe that they emanate from one and the same writer.

"Your friends, in the mean time, have not relinquished the inquiry, and try, as they become more closely acquainted with your mode of life and thought, to guess many a riddle, to solve many a problem; indeed, with the assistance of an old liking, and a connection of many years' standing, they find a charm even in the difficulties which present themselves. Yet a little assistance here and there would not be unacceptable, and you cannot well refuse this to our friendly entreaties.

"The first thing, then, we require, is that your poetical works, arranged in the late edition according to some internal relations, may be presented by you in chronological order, and that the states of life and feeling which afforded the examples that influenced you, and the theoretical principles by which you were governed, may be imparted in some kind of connection. Bestow this labor for the gratification of a limited circle, and perhaps it may give rise to something that will be entertaining and useful to an extensive one. The author, to the most advanced period of his life, should not relinquish the advantage of communicating, even at a distance, with those whom affection binds to him; and if it is not granted to every one to step forth anew, at a certain age, with surprising and powerful productions, yet just at that period of life, when knowledge is most perfect, and consciousness most distinct, it must be a very agreeable and re-animating task to treat former creations as new matter, and work them up into a kind of Last Part, which may serve once more for the edification of those who have been previously edified with and by the artist."

This desire, so kindly expressed, immediately awakened within me an inclination to comply with it: for if, in the early years of life, our passions lead us to follow our own course, and, in order not to swerve from it, we impatiently repel the demands of others; so, in our later days, it becomes highly advantageous to us, should any sympathy excite and determine us, cordially, to new activity. I therefore instantly undertook the preparatory labor of separating the poems, both great and small, of my twelve volumes, and of arranging them according to years. I strove to recall the times and circumstances under which each had been produced. But the task soon grew more difficult, as full explanatory notes and illustrations were necessary to fill up the chasms between those which had already been given to the world. For, in the first place, all on which I had originally exercised myself were wanting, many that had been begun and not finished were also wanting, and of many that were finished even the external form had completely disappeared, having since been entirely reworked and cast into a different shape. Besides, I had also to call to mind how I had labored in the sciences and

other arts, and what, in such apparently foreign departments, both individually and in conjunction with friends, I had practised in silence, or had laid before the public.

All this I wished to introduce by degrees for the satisfaction of my well-wishers, but my efforts and reflections always led me farther on; since while I was anxious to comply with that very considerate request, and labored to set forth in succession my internal emotions, external influences, and the steps which, theoretically and practically, I had trod, I was carried out of my narrow private sphere into the wide world. The images of a hundred important men, who either directly or indirectly had influenced me, presented themselves to my view; and even the prodigious movements of the great political world, which had operated most extensively upon me, as well as upon the whole mass of my contemporaries, had to be particularly considered. For this seems to be the main object of biography, – to exhibit the man in relation to the features of his time, and to show to what extent they have opposed or favored his progress; what view of mankind and the world he has formed from them, and how far he himself, if an artist, poet, or author, may externally reflect them. But for this is required what is scarcely attainable; namely, that the individual should know himself and his age, – himself, so far as he has remained the same under all circumstances; his age, as that which carries along with it, determines and fashions, both the willing and the unwilling: so that one may venture to pronounce, that any person born ten years earlier or later would have been quite a different being, both as regards his own culture and his influence on others.

In this manner, from such reflections and endeavors, from such recollections and considerations, arose the present delineation; and from this point of view, as to its origin, will it be the best enjoyed and used, and most impartially estimated. For any thing further it may be needful to say, particularly with respect to the half-poetical, half- historic, mode of treatment, an opportunity will, no doubt, frequently occur in the course of the narrative.

PART THE FIRST

FIRST BOOK

On the 28th of August, 1749, at mid-day, as the clock struck twelve, I came into the world, at Frankfort-on-the-Main. My horoscope was propitious: the sun stood in the sign of the Virgin, and had culminated for the day; Jupiter and Venus looked on him with a friendly eye, and Mercury not adversely; while Saturn and Mars kept themselves indifferent; the moon alone, just full, exerted the power of her reflection all the more, as she had then reached her planetary hour. She opposed herself, therefore, to my birth, which could not be accomplished until this hour was passed.

These good aspects, which the astrologers managed subsequently to reckon very auspicious for me, may have been the causes of my preservation; for, through the unskilfulness of the midwife, I came into the world as dead; and only after various efforts was I enabled to see the light. This event, which had put our household into sore straits, turned to the advantage of my fellow-citizens, inasmuch as my grandfather, the /Schultheiss/[2],John Wolfgang Textor, took occasion from it to have an /accoucheur/ appointed, and to introduce, or revive, the tuition of midwives, which may have done some good to those who were born after me.

When we desire to recall what happened to us in the earliest period of youth, it often happens that we confound what we have heard from others with that which we really possess from our own direct experience. Without, therefore, instituting a very close investigation into the point, which, after all, could lead to nothing, I am conscious that we lived in an old house, which, in fact, consisted of two adjoining houses, that had been opened into each other. A winding staircase led to rooms on different levels, and the unevenness of the stories was remedied by steps. For us children, – a younger sister and myself, – the favorite resort was a spacious floor below, near the door of which was a large wooden lattice that allowed us direct communication with the street and open air. A bird-cage of this sort, with which many houses were provided, was called a frame (/Geräms/). The women sat in it to sew and knit; the cook picked her salad there; female neighbors chatted with each other; and the streets consequently, in the fine season, wore a southern aspect. One felt at ease while in communication with the public. We children, too, by means of these frames, were brought into contact with our neighbors, of whom three brothers Von Ochsenstein, the surviving sons of the deceased /Schultheiss/, living on the other side of the way, won my love, and occupied and diverted themselves with me in many ways.

Our family liked to tell of all sorts of waggeries to which I was enticed by these otherwise grave and solitary men. Let one of these pranks suffice for all. A crockery-fair had just been held, from which not only our kitchen had been supplied for a while with articles for a long time to come, but a great deal of small gear of the same ware had been purchased as playthings for us children. One fine afternoon, when every thing was quiet in the house, I whiled away the time with my pots and dishes in the frame, and, finding that nothing more was to be got out of them, hurled one of them into the street. The Von Ochsensteins, who saw me so delighted at the fine smash it made, that I clapped my hands for joy, cried out, "Another." I was not long in flinging out a pot; and, as they made no end to their calls for more, by degrees the whole collection, platters, pipkins, mugs and all, were dashed upon the pavement. My neighbors continued to express their approbation, and I was highly delighted to give them pleasure. But my stock was exhausted; and still they shouted, "More." I ran, therefore, straight to the kitchen, and brought the earthenware, which produced a still livelier spectacle in breaking; and thus I kept running backwards and forwards, fetching one plate after another, as I could reach it from

[2] A chief judge or magistrate of the town.

where they stood in rows on the shelf. But, as that did not satisfy my audience, I devoted all the ware that I could drag out to similar destruction. It was not till afterwards that any one appeared to hinder and forbid. The mischief was done; and, in place of so much broken crockery, there was at least a ludicrous story, in which the roguish authors took special delight to the end of their days.

My father's mother, for it was her house in which we dwelt, lived in a large back-room directly on the ground-floor; and we were accustomed to carry on our sports even up to her chair, and, when she was ill, up to her bedside. I remember her, as it were, a spirit, – a handsome, thin woman, always neatly dressed in white. Mild, gentle, and kind, she has ever remained in my memory.

The street in which our house was situated passed by the name of the Stag-Ditch; but, as neither stags nor ditches were to be seen, we wished to have the term explained. They told us that our house stood on a spot that was once outside the city, and that, where the street now was, there had formerly been a ditch, in which a number of stags were kept. These stags were preserved and fed here because the senate, every year, according to an ancient custom, feasted publicly on a stag, which was therefore always at hand in the ditch for such a festival, in case princes or knights interfered with the city's right of chase outside, or the walls were encompassed or besieged by an enemy. This pleased us much, and we wished that such a lair for tame animals could have been seen in our times.

The back of the house, from the second story particularly, commanded a very pleasant prospect over an almost immeasurable extent of neighboring gardens, stretching to the very walls of the city. But, alas! in transforming what were once public grounds into private gardens, our house, and some others lying towards the corner of the street, had been much stinted; since the houses towards the horse-market had appropriated spacious out-houses and large gardens to themselves, while a tolerably high wall shut us out from these adjacent paradises.

On the second floor was a room which was called the garden-room, because they had there endeavored to supply the want of a garden by means of a few plants placed before the window. As I grew older, it was there that I made my favorite, not melancholy, but somewhat sentimental, retreat. Over these gardens, beyond the city's walls and ramparts, might be seen a beautiful and fertile plain, the same which stretches towards Höchst. In the summer season I commonly learned my lessons there, and watched the thunderstorms, but could never look my fill at the setting sun, which went down directly opposite my windows. And when, at the same time, I saw the neighbors wandering through their gardens, taking care of their flowers, the children playing, parties of friends enjoying themselves, and could hear the bowls rolling and the ninepins dropping, it early excited within me a feeling of solitude, and a sense of vague longing resulting from it, which, conspiring with the seriousness and awe implanted in me by nature, exerted its influence at an early age, and showed itself more distinctly in after-years.

The old, many-cornered, and gloomy arrangement of the house was, moreover, adapted to awaken dread and terror in childish minds. Unfortunately, too, the principle of discipline, that young persons should be early deprived of all fear for the awful and invisible, and accustomed to the terrible, still prevailed. We children, therefore, were compelled to sleep alone; and when we found this impossible, and softly slipped from our beds, to seek the society of the servants and maids, our father, with his dressing-gown turned inside out, which disguised him sufficiently for the purpose, placed himself in the way, and frightened us back to our resting-places. The evil effect of this any one may imagine. How is he who is encompassed with a double terror to be emancipated from fear? My mother, always cheerful and gay, and willing to render others so, discovered a much better pedagogical expedient. She managed to gain her end by rewards. It was the season for peaches, the plentiful enjoyment of which she promised us every morning if we overcame our fears during the night. In this way she succeeded, and both parties were satisfied.

In the interior of the house my eyes were chiefly attracted by a series of Roman views, with which my father had ornamented an ante-room. They were engravings by some of the accomplished predecessors of Piranesi, who well understood perspective and architecture, and whose touches were

clear and excellent. There I saw every day the Piazza del Popolo, the Colosseum, the Piazza of St. Peter's, and St. Peter's Church, within and without, the castle of St. Angelo, and many other places. These images impressed themselves deeply upon me, and my otherwise very laconic father was often so kind as to furnish descriptions of the objects. His partiality for the Italian language, and for every thing pertaining to Italy, was very decided. A small collection of marbles and natural curiosities, which he had brought with him thence, he often showed to us; and he devoted a great part of his time to a description of his travels, written in Italian, the copying and correction of which he slowly and accurately completed, in several parcels, with his own hand. A lively old teacher of Italian, called Giovinazzi, was of service to him in this work. The old man, moreover, did not sing badly, and my mother every day must needs accompany him and herself upon the clavichord; and thus I speedily learned the "Solitario bosco ombroso," so as to know it by heart before I understood it.

My father was altogether of a didactic turn, and in his retirement from business liked to communicate to others what he knew or was able to do. Thus, during the first years of their marriage, he had kept my mother busily engaged in writing, playing the clavichord, and singing, by which means she had been laid under the necessity of acquiring some knowledge and a slight readiness in the Italian tongue.

Generally we passed all our leisure hours with my grandmother, in whose spacious apartment we found plenty of room for our sports. She contrived to engage us with various trifles, and to regale us with all sorts of nice morsels. But, one Christmas evening, she crowned all her kind deeds by having a puppet-show exhibited before us, and thus unfolding a new world in the old house. This unexpected drama attracted our young minds with great force; upon the boy particularly it made a very strong impression, which continued to vibrate with a great and lasting effect.

The little stage, with its speechless personages, which at the outset had only been exhibited to us, but was afterwards given over for our own use and dramatic vivification, was prized more highly by us children, as it was the last bequest of our good grandmother, whom encroaching disease first withdrew from our sight, and death next tore away from our hearts forever. Her departure was of still more importance to our family, as it drew after it a complete change in our condition.

As long as my grandmother lived, my father had refrained from changing or renovating the house, even in the slightest particular; though it was known that he had pretty large plans of building, which were now immediately begun. In Frankfort, as in many other old towns, when anybody put up a wooden structure, he ventured, for the sake of space, to make, not only the first, but each successive, story project over the lower one, by which means narrow streets especially were rendered somewhat dark and confined. At last a law was passed, that every one putting up a new house from the ground, should confine his projections to the first upper story, and carry the others up perpendicularly. My father, that he might not lose the projecting space in the second story, caring little for outward architectural appearance, and anxious only for the good and convenient arrangement of the interior, resorted to the expedient which others had employed before him, of propping the upper part of the house, until one part after another had been removed from the bottom upwards, and a new house, as it were, inserted in its place. Thus, while comparatively none of the old structure remained, the new one merely passed for a repair. Now, as the tearing down and building up was done gradually, my father determined not to quit the house, that he might better direct and give his orders; as he possessed a good knowledge of the technicalities of building. At the same time, he would not suffer his family to leave him. This new epoch was very surprising and strange for the children. To see the rooms in which they had so often been confined and pestered with wearisome tasks and studies, the passages they had played in, the walls which had always been kept so carefully clean, all falling before the mason's hatchet and the carpenter's axe, – and that from the bottom upwards; to float as it were in the air, propped up by beams, being, at the same time, constantly confined to a certain lesson or definite task, – all this produced a commotion in our young heads that was not easily settled. But

the young people felt the inconvenience less, because they had somewhat more space for play than before, and had many opportunities of swinging on beams, and playing at see-saw with the boards.

At first my father obstinately persisted in carrying out his plan; but when at last even the roof was partly removed, and the rain reached our beds, in spite of the carpets that had been taken up, converted into tarpaulin, and stretched over as a defense, he determined, though reluctantly, that the children should be intrusted for a time to some kind friends, who had already offered their services, and sent to a public school.

This transition was rather unpleasant; for, when the children, who had all along been kept at home in a secluded, pure, refined, yet strict manner, were thrown among a rude mass of young creatures, they were compelled unexpectedly to suffer every thing from the vulgar, bad, and even base, since they lacked both weapons and skill to protect themselves.

It was properly about this period that I first became acquainted with my native city, which I strolled over with more and more freedom, in every direction, sometimes alone, and sometimes in the company of lively companions. To convey to others in any degree the impression made upon me by these grave and revered spots, I must here introduce a description of my birthplace, as in its different parts it was gradually unfolded to me. What I liked more than any thing was, to promenade on the great bridge spanning the Main. Its length, its firmness, and its fine appearance, rendered it a notable structure; and it was, besides, almost the only memorial left from ancient times of the precautions due from the civil government to its citizens. The beautiful stream above and below bridge attracted my eye; and, when the gilt weathercock on the bridge-cross glittered in the sunshine, I always had a pleasant feeling. Generally I extended my walk through Sachsenhausen, and for a /Kreutzer/ was ferried comfortably across the river. I was now again on this side of the stream, stole along to the wine-market, and admired the mechanism of the cranes when goods were unloaded.

But it was particularly entertaining to watch the arrival of the market- boats, from which so many and such extraordinary figures were seen to disembark. On entering the city, the Saalhof, which at least stood on the spot where the castle of Emperor Charlemagne and his successors was reported to have been, was greeted every time with profound reverence. One liked to lose one's self in the old trading-town, particularly on market-days, among the crowd collected about the church of St. Bartholomew. From the earliest times, throngs of buyers and sellers had gathered there; and the place being thus occupied, it was not easy in later days to bring about a more roomy and cheerful arrangement. The booths of the so-called /Pfarreisen/ were very important places for us children, and we carried many a /Batzen</> to them in order to purchase sheets of colored paper stamped with gold animals; though one could but seldom make his way through the narrow, crowded, and dirty market-place. I call to mind, also, that I always flew past the adjoining meat-stalls, narrow and disgusting as they were, in perfect horror. On the other hand, the Roman Hill (/Romerberg/) was a most delightful place for walking. The way to the New-Town, along by the new shops, was always cheering and pleasant; yet we regretted that a street did not lead into the Zeil by the Church of Our Lady, and that we always had to go a roundabout way by the /Hasengasse/ or the Catherine Gate. But what chiefly attracted the child's attention, were the many little towns within the town, the fortresses within the fortress; viz., the walled monastic enclosures, and several other precincts, remaining from earlier times, and more or less like castles, – as the Nuremberg Court, the Compostella, the Braunfels, the ancestral house of the family of Stallburg, and several strongholds, in later days transformed into dwellings and warehouses. No architecture of an elevating kind was then to be seen in Frankfort; and every thing pointed to a period long past and unquiet, both for town and district. Gates and towers, which defined the bounds of the old city, – then, farther on again, gates, towers, walls, bridges, ramparts, moats, with which the new city was encompassed, – all showed, but too plainly, that a necessity for guarding the common weal in disastrous times had induced these arrangements, that all the squares and streets, even the newest, broadest, and best laid out, owed their origin to chance and caprice, and not to any regulating mind. A certain liking for the antique was thus implanted in the

boy, and was specially nourished and promoted by old chronicles and woodcuts, as, for instance, those of Grave relating to the siege of Frankfort. At the same time a different taste was developed in him for observing the conditions of mankind in their manifold variety and naturalness, without regard to their importance or beauty. It was, therefore, one of our favorite walks, which we endeavored to take now and then in the course of a year, to follow the circuit of the path inside the city-walls. Gardens, courts, and back buildings extend to the /Zwinger/; and we saw many thousand people amid their little domestic and secluded circumstances. From the ornamental and show gardens of the rich, to the orchards of the citizen, anxious about his necessities; from thence to the factories, bleaching-grounds, and similar establishments, even to the burying-grounds, – for a little world lay within the limits of the city, – we passed a varied, strange spectacle, which changed at every step, and with the enjoyment of which our childish curiosity was never satisfied. In fact, the celebrated Devil-upon-two-sticks, when he lifted the roofs of Madrid at night, scarcely did more for his friend than was here done for us in the bright sunshine and open air. The keys that were to be made use of in this journey, to gain us a passage through many a tower, stair, and postern, were in the hands of the authorities, whose subordinates we never failed to coax into good humor.

But a more important, and in one sense more fruitful, place for us, was the city-hall, named from the Romans. In its lower vault-like rooms we liked but too well to lose ourselves. We obtained an entrance, too, into the large and very simple session-room of the council. The walls as well as the arched ceiling were white, though wainscoted to a certain height; and the whole was without a trace of painting, or any kind of carved work; only, high up on the middle wall, might be read this brief inscription: —

"One man's word is no man's word:
Justice needs that both be heard."

After the most ancient fashion, benches were ranged around the wainscoting, and raised one step above the floor for the accommodation of the members of the assembly. This readily suggested to us why the order of rank in our senate was distributed by benches. To the left of the door, on the opposite corner, sat the /Schöffen/; in the corner itself the /Schultheiss/, who alone had a small table before him; those of the second bench sat in the space to his left as far as the wall to where the windows were; while along the windows ran the third bench, occupied by the craftsmen. In the midst of the hall stood a table for the registrar (/Protoculführer/).

Once within the /Römer/, we even mingled with the crowd at the audiences of the burgomasters. But whatever related to the election and coronation of the emperors possessed a greater charm. We managed to gain the favor of the keepers, so as to be allowed to mount the new gay imperial staircase, which was painted in fresco, and on other occasions closed with a grating. The election-chamber, with its purple hangings and admirably fringed gold borders, filled us with awe. The representations of animals, on which little children or genii, clothed in the imperial ornaments and laden with the insignia of the empire, made a curious figure, were observed by us with great attention; and we even hoped that we might live to see, some time or other, a coronation with our own eyes. They had great difficulty to get us out of the great imperial hall, when we had been once fortunate enough to steal in; and we reckoned him our truest friend, who, while we looked at the half- lengths of all the emperors painted around at a certain height, would tell us something of their deeds.

We listened to many a legend of Charlemagne. But that which was historically interesting for us began with Rudolph of Hapsburg, who by his courage put an end to such violent commotions. Charles the Fourth also attracted our notice. We had already heard of the Golden Bull, and of the statutes for the administration of criminal justice. We knew, too, that he had not made the Frankforters suffer for their adhesion to his noble rival, Emperor Gunther of Schwarzburg. We heard Maximilian praised, both as a friend to mankind, and to the townsmen, his subjects, and were also told that it had been prophesied of him he would be the last emperor of a German house, which unhappily came to pass,

as after his death the choice wavered only between the king of Spain (/afterwards/), Charles V., and the king of France, Francis I. With some anxiety it was added, that a similar prophecy, or rather intimation, was once more in circulation; for it was obvious that there was room left for the portrait of only one more emperor, – a circumstance which, though seemingly accidental, filled the patriotic with concern.

Having once entered upon this circuit, we did not fail to repair to the cathedral, and there visit the grave of that brave Gunther, so much prized both by friend and foe. The famous stone which formerly covered it is set up in the choir. The door close by, leading into the conclave, remained long shut against us, until we at last managed, through the higher authorities, to gain access to this celebrated place. But we should have done better had we continued as before to picture it merely in our imagination; for we found this room, which is so remarkable in German history, where the most powerful princes were accustomed to meet for an act so momentous, in no respect worthily adorned, and even disfigured with beams, poles, scaffolding, and similar lumber, which people had wanted to put out of the way. The imagination, for that very reason, was the more excited and the heart elevated, when we soon after received permission to be present in the city-hall, at the exhibition of the Golden Bull to some distinguished strangers.

The boy then heard, with much curiosity, what his own family, as well as other older relations and acquaintances, liked to tell and repeat; viz., the histories of the two last coronations, which had followed close upon each other; for there was no Frankforter of a certain age who would not have regarded these two events, and their attendant circumstances, as the crowning glory of his whole life. Splendid as had been the coronation of Charles Seventh, during which particularly the French ambassador had given magnificent feasts at great cost and with distinguished taste, the results were all the more afflicting to the good emperor, who could not preserve his capital Munich, and was compelled in some degree to implore the hospitality of his imperial towns.

Although the coronation of Francis First was not so strikingly splendid as the former one, it was dignified by the presence of the Empress Maria Theresa, whose beauty appears to have created as much impression on the men as the earnest and noble form and the blue eyes of Charles Seventh on the women. At any rate, both sexes vied with each other in giving to the attentive boy a highly favorable opinion of both these personages. All these descriptions and narratives were given in a serene and quiet state of mind; for the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had, for the moment, put an end to all feuds: and they spoke at their ease of past contests, as well as of their former festivities, – the battle of Dettingen for instance, and other remarkable events of by-gone years; and all that was important or dangerous seemed, as generally happens when a peace has been concluded, to have occurred only to afford entertainment to prosperous and unconcerned people.

Half a year had scarcely passed away in this narrow patriotism before the fairs began, which always produced an incredible ferment in the heads of all children. The erection, in so short a time, of so many booths, creating a new town within the old one; the roll and crush, the unloading and unpacking of wares, – excited from the very first dawn of consciousness an insatiable active curiosity, and a boundless desire for childish property, which the boy with increasing years endeavored to gratify, in one way or another, as far as his little purse permitted. At the same time, he obtained a notion of what the world produces, what it wants, and what the inhabitants of its different parts exchange with each other.

These great epochs, which came round regularly in spring and autumn, were announced by curious solemnities, which seemed the more dignified because they vividly brought before us the old time, and what had come down from it to ourselves. On Escort Day, the whole population were on their legs, thronging to the /Fahrgasse/, to the bridge, and beyond /Sachsenhausen/; all the windows were occupied, though nothing unusual took place on that day; the crowd seeming to be there only for the sake of jostling each other, and the spectators merely to look at one another; for the real

occasion of their coming did not begin till nightfall, and was then rather taken upon trust than seen with the eyes.

The affair was thus: in those old, unquiet times, when every one did wrong according to his pleasure, or helped the right as his liking led him, traders on their way to the fairs were so wilfully beset and harassed by waylayers, both of noble and ignoble birth, the princes and other persons of power caused their people to be accompanied to Frankfort by an armed escort. Now, the burghers of the imperial city would yield no rights pertaining to themselves or their district: they went out to meet the advancing party; and thus contests often arose as to how far the escort should advance, or whether it had a right to enter the city at all. But as this took place, not only in regard to matters of trade and fairs, but also when high personages came, in times of peace or war, and especially on the days of election; and as the affair often came to blows when a train which was not to be endured in the city strove to make its way in along with its lord, – many negotiations had from time to time been resorted to, and many temporary arrangements concluded, though always with reservations of rights on both sides. The hope had not been relinquished of composing once for all a quarrel that had already lasted for centuries, inasmuch as the whole institution, on account of which it had been so long and often so hotly contested, might be looked upon as nearly useless, or at least as superfluous.

Meanwhile, on those days, the city cavalry in several divisions, each having a commander in front, rode forth from different gates, and found on a certain spot some troopers or hussars of the persons entitled to an escort, who, with their leaders, were well received and entertained. They staid till towards evening, and then rode back to the city, scarcely visible to the expectant crowd, many a city knight not being in a condition to manage his horse, or keep himself in the saddle. The most important bands returned by the bridge-gate, where the pressure was consequently the strongest. Last of all, just as night fell, the Nuremberg post-coach arrived, escorted in the same way, and always containing, as the people fancied, in pursuance of custom, an old woman. Its arrival, therefore, was a signal for all the urchins to break out into an ear-splitting shout, though it was utterly impossible to distinguish any one of the passengers within. The throng that pressed after the coach through the bridge-gate was quite incredible, and perfectly bewildering to the senses. The houses nearest the bridge were those, therefore, most in demand among spectators.

Another more singular ceremony, by which the people were excited in broad daylight, was the Piper's Court (/Pfeifergericht/). It commemorated those early times when important larger trading-towns endeavored, if not to abolish tolls altogether, at least to bring about a reduction of them, as they increased in proportion with trade and industry. They were allowed this privilege by the emperor, who needed their aid, when it was in his power to grant it, but commonly only for one year; so that it had to be annually renewed. This was effected by means of symbolical gifts, which were presented before the opening of St. Bartholomew's Fair to the imperial magistrate (/Schultheiss/), who might have sometimes been the chief toll-gatherer; and, for the sake of a more imposing show, the gifts were offered when he was sitting in full court with the /Schöffen/. But when the chief magistrate afterwards came to be no longer appointed by the emperor, and was elected by the city itself, he still retained these privileges; and thus both the immunities of the cities from toll, and the ceremonies by which the representatives from Worms, Nuremberg, and old Bamberg, once acknowledged the ancient favor, had come down to our times. The day before Lady Day, an open court was proclaimed. In an enclosed space in the great Imperial Hall, the Schöffen took their elevated seats; a step higher, sat the /Schultheiss/ in the midst of them; while below, on the right hand, were the procurators of both parties invested with plenipotentiary powers. The /Actuarius/ begins to read aloud the weighty judgments reserved for this day: the lawyers demand copies, appeal, or do whatever else seems necessary. All at once a singular sort of music announces, if we may so speak, the advent of former centuries. It proceeds from three pipers, one of whom plays an old /shawm/, another a /sackbut/, and the third a /pommer/, or oboe. They wear blue mantles trimmed with gold, having the notes made fast to their sleeves, and their heads covered. Having thus left their inn at ten o'clock, followed by the deputies and

their attendants, and stared at by all, natives and strangers, they enter the hall. The law proceedings are stayed, the pipers and their train halt before the railing, the deputy steps in and stations himself in front of the /Schultheiss/. The emblematic presents, which were required to be precisely the same as in the old precedents, consisted commonly of the staple wares of the city offering them. Pepper passed, as it were, for every thing else; and, even on this occasion, the deputy brought a handsomely turned wooden goblet filled with pepper. Upon it lay a pair of gloves, curiously slashed, stitched, and tasselled with silk, – a token of a favor granted and received, – such as the emperor himself made use of in certain cases. Along with this was a while staff, which in former times could not easily be dispensed with in judicial proceedings. Some small pieces of silver money were added: and the city of Worms brought an old felt hat, which was always redeemed again; so that the same one had been a witness of these ceremonies for many years.

After the deputy had made his address, handed over his present, and received from the /Schultheiss/ assurance of continued favor, he quitted the enclosed circle, the pipers blew, the train departed as it had come, the court pursued its business, until the second and at last the third deputy had been introduced. For each came some time after the other, partly that the pleasure of the public might thus be prolonged, and partly because they were always the same antiquated /virtuosi/ whom Nuremburg, for itself and its co-cities, had undertaken to maintain, and produce annually at the appointed place.

We children were particularly interested in this festival, because we were not a little flattered to see our grandfather in a place of so much honor; and because commonly, on the self-same day, we used to visit him, quite modestly, in order that we might, when my grandmother had emptied the pepper into her spice-box, lay hold of a cup or small rod, a pair of gloves, or an old /Räder Albus/.[3] These symbolical ceremonies, restoring antiquity as if by magic, could not be explained to us without leading us back into past times, and informing us of the manners, customs, and feelings of those early ancestors who were so strangely made present to us by pipers and deputies seemingly risen from the dead, and by tangible gifts which might be possessed by ourselves.

These venerable solemnities were followed, in the fine season, by many festivals, delightful for us children, which took place in the open air, outside the city. On the right shore of the Main, going down, about half an hour's walk from the gate, there rises a sulphur-spring, neatly enclosed, and surrounded by aged lindens. Not far from it stands the Good-People's-Court, formerly a hospital erected for the sake of the waters. On the commons around, the herds of cattle from the neighborhood were collected on a certain day of the year; and the herdsmen, together with their sweethearts, celebrated a rural festival with dancing and singing, with all sorts of pleasure and clownishness. On the other side of the city lay a similar but larger common, likewise graced with a spring and still finer lindens. Thither, at Whitsuntide, the flocks of sheep were driven: and, at the same time, the poor, pale orphan children were allowed to come out of their walls into the open air; for the thought had not yet occurred that these destitute creatures, who must some time or other help themselves through the world, ought soon to be brought in contact with it; that, instead of being kept in dreary confinement, they should rather be accustomed to serve and to endure; and that there was every reason to strengthen them physically and morally from their infancy. The nurses and maids, always ready to take a walk, never failed to carry or conduct us to such places, even in our first years; so that these rural festivals belong to the earliest impressions that I can recall.

Meanwhile, our house had been finished, and that too in tolerably short time; because every thing had been judiciously planned and prepared, and the needful money provided. We now found ourselves all together again, and felt comfortable; for, when a well-considered plan is once carried out, we forget the various inconveniences of the means that were necessary to its accomplishment. The building, for a private residence, was roomy enough, light and cheerful throughout, with broad

[3] An old silver coin.

staircases, agreeable parlors, and a prospect of the gardens that could be enjoyed easily from several of the windows. The internal completion, and what pertained to mere ornament and finish, was gradually accomplished, and served at the same time for occupation and amusement.

The first thing brought into order was my father's collection of books, the best of which, in calf and half-calf binding, were to ornament the walls of his office and study. He possessed the beautiful Dutch editions of the Latin classics, which, for the sake of outward uniformity, he had endeavored to procure all in quarto; and also many other works relating to Roman antiquities and the more elegant jurisprudence. The most eminent Italian poets were not wanting, and for Tasso he showed a great predilection. There were also the best and most recent Travels, and he took great delight in correcting and completing Keyssler and Nemeiz from them. Nor had he omitted to surround himself with all needful aids to learning, such as dictionaries of various languages, and encyclopædias of science and art, which, with much else adapted to profit and amusement, might be consulted at will.

The other half of this collection, in neat parchment bindings, with very beautifully written titles, was placed in a separate attic. The acquisition of new books, as well as their binding and arrangement, he pursued with great composure and love of order; and he was much influenced in his opinion by the critical notices that ascribed particular merit to any work. His collection of juridical treatises was annually increased by some volumes.

Next, the pictures, which in the old house had hung about promiscuously, were now collected, and symmetrically hung on the walls of a cheerful room near the study, all in black frames set off with gilt mouldings. It was my father's principle, to which he gave frequent and even passionate utterance, that one ought to employ the living masters, and to spend less upon the departed, in the estimation of whom prejudice greatly concurred. He had the notion that it was precisely the same with pictures as with Rhenish wines, which, though age may impart to them a higher value, can be produced in any coming year of just as excellent quality as in years past. After the lapse of some time, the new wine also becomes old, quite as valuable and perhaps more delicious. This opinion he chiefly confirmed by the observation that many old pictures seemed to derive their chief value for lovers of art from the fact that they had become darker and browner, and that the harmony of tone in such pictures was often vaunted. My father, on the other hand, protested that he had no fear that the new pictures would not also turn black in time; though whether they were likely to gain any thing by this he was not so positive.

In pursuance of these principles, he employed for many years the whole of the Frankfort artists, – the painter Hirt, who excelled in animating oak and beech woods, and other so-called rural scenes, with cattle; Trautmann, who had adopted Rembrandt as his model, and had attained great perfection in enclosed lights and reflections, as well as in effective conflagrations, so that he was once ordered to paint a companion piece to a Rembrandt; Schutz, who diligently elaborated landscapes of the Rhine country, in the manner of Sachtlebens; and Junker, who executed with great purity flower and fruit pieces, still life, and figures quietly employed, after the models of the Dutch. But now, by the new arrangement, by more convenient room, and still more by the acquaintance of a skilful artist, our love of art was again quickened and animated. This artist was Seekatz, a pupil of Brinkmann, court-painter at Darmstadt, whose talent and character will be more minutely unfolded in the sequel.

In this way the remaining rooms were finished, according to their several purposes. Cleanliness and order prevailed throughout. Above all, the large panes of plate-glass contributed towards a perfect lightness, which had been wanting in the old house for many causes, but chiefly on account of the panes, which were for the most part round. My father was cheerful on account of the success of his undertaking; and if his good humor had not been often interrupted because the diligence and exactness of the mechanics did not come up to his wishes, a happier life than ours could not have been conceived, since much good partly arose in the family itself, and partly flowed from without.

But an extraordinary event deeply disturbed the boy's peace of mind for the first time. On the 1st of November, 1755, the earthquake at Lisbon took place, and spread a prodigious alarm over the

world, long accustomed to peace and quiet. A great and magnificent capital, which was at the same time a trading and mercantile city, is smitten without warning by a most fearful calamity. The earth trembles and totters; the sea foams; ships dash together; houses fall in, and over them churches and towers; the royal palace is in part swallowed by the waters; the bursting land seems to vomit flames, since smoke and fire are seen everywhere amid the ruins. Sixty thousand persons, a moment before in ease and comfort, fall together; and he is to be deemed most fortunate who is no longer capable of a thought or feeling about the disaster. The flames rage on; and with them rage a troop of desperadoes, before concealed, or set at large by the event. The wretched survivors are exposed to pillage, massacre, and every outrage; and thus on all sides Nature asserts her boundless capriciousness.

Intimations of this event had spread over wide regions more quickly than the authentic reports: slight shocks had been felt in many places; in many springs, particularly those of a mineral nature, an unusual receding of the waters had been remarked; and so much the greater was the effect of the accounts themselves, which were rapidly circulated, at first in general terms, but finally with dreadful particulars. Hereupon the religious were neither wanting in reflections, nor the philosophic in grounds for consolation, nor the clergy in warnings. So complicated an event arrested the attention of the world for a long time; and, as additional and more detailed accounts of the extensive effects of this explosion came from every quarter, the minds already aroused by the misfortunes of strangers began to be more and more anxious about themselves and their friends. Perhaps the demon of terror had never so speedily and powerfully diffused his terrors over the earth.

The boy, who was compelled to put up with frequent repetitions of the whole matter, was not a little staggered. God, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, whom the explanation of the first article of the creed declared so wise and benignant, having given both the just and the unjust a prey to the same destruction, had not manifested himself by any means in a fatherly character. In vain the young mind strove to resist these impressions. It was the more impossible, as the wise and scripture-learned could not themselves agree as to the light in which such a phenomenon should be regarded.

The next summer gave a closer opportunity of knowing directly that angry God, of whom the Old Testament records so much. A sudden hail-storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, violently broke the new panes at the back of our house, which looked towards the west, damaged the new furniture, destroyed some valuable books and other things of worth, and was the more terrible to the children, as the whole household, quite beside themselves, dragged them into a dark passage, where, on their knees, with frightful groans and cries, they thought to conciliate the wrathful Deity. Meanwhile, my father, who was the only one self- possessed, forced open and unhinged the window-frames, by which we saved much glass, but made a broader inlet for the rain that followed the hail; so that, after we were finally quieted, we found ourselves in the rooms and on the stairs completely surrounded by floods and streams of water.

These events, startling as they were on the whole, did not greatly interrupt the course of instruction which my father himself had undertaken to give us children. He had passed his youth in the Coburg Gymnasium, which stood as one of the first among German educational institutions. He had there laid a good foundation in languages, and other matters reckoned part of a learned education, had subsequently applied himself to jurisprudence at Leipzig, and had at last taken his degree at Giessen. His dissertation, "Electa de aditione Hereditatis," which had been earnestly and carefully written, is still cited by jurists with approval.

It is a pious wish of all fathers to see what they have themselves failed to attain realized in their sons, as if in this way they could live their lives over again, and at last make a proper use of their early experience. Conscious of his acquirements, with the certainty of faithful perseverance, and distrusting the teachers of the day, my father undertook to instruct his own children, allowing them to take particular lessons from particular masters only so far as seemed absolutely necessary. A pedagogical / dilettantism/ was already beginning to show itself everywhere. The pedantry and heaviness of the masters appointed in the public schools had probably given rise to this evil. Something better was

sought for, but it was forgotten how defective all instruction must be which is not given by persons who are teachers by profession.

My father had prospered in his own career tolerably according to his wishes: I was to follow the same course, only more easily, and much farther. He prized my natural endowments the more, because he was himself wanting in them; for he had acquired every thing only by means of unspeakable diligence, pertinacity, and repetition. He often assured me, early and late, both in jest and earnest, that with my talents he would have deported himself very differently, and would not have turned them to such small account.

By means of a ready apprehension, practice, and a good memory, I very soon outgrew the instructions which my father and the other teachers were able to give, without being thoroughly grounded in any thing. Grammar displeased me, because I regarded it as a mere arbitrary law: the rules seemed ridiculous, inasmuch as they were invalidated by so many exceptions, which had all to be learned by themselves. And if the first Latin work had not been in rhyme, I should have got on but badly in that; but, as it was, I hummed and sang it to myself readily enough. In the same way we had a geography in memory-verses, in which the most wretched doggerel best served to fix the recollection of that which was to be retained; e.g., —

"Upper-Yssel has many a fen, Which makes it hateful to all men."

The forms and inflections of language I caught with ease; and I also quickly unravelled what lay in the conception of a thing. In rhetoric, composition, and such matters, no one excelled me; although I was often put back for faults of grammar. Yet these were the attempts that gave my father particular pleasure, and for which he rewarded me with many presents of money, considerable for such a lad.

My father taught my sister Italian in the same room in which I had to commit Cellarius to memory. As I was soon ready with my task, and was yet obliged to sit quiet, I listened with my book before me, and very readily caught the Italian, which struck me as an agreeable softening of Latin.

Other precocities, with respect to memory and the power to combine, I possessed in common with those children who thus acquire an early reputation. For that reason, my father could scarcely wait for me to go to college. He very soon declared that I must study jurisprudence in Leipzig, for which he retained a strong predilection; and I was afterwards to visit some other university and take my degree. As for this second one he was indifferent as to which I might choose, except that he had for some reason or other a disinclination to Göttingen, to my disappointment, since it was precisely there that I had placed such confidence and high hopes.

He told me further, that I was to go to Wetzlar and Ratisbon, as well as to Vienna, and thence towards Italy; although he repeatedly mentioned that Paris should first be seen, because after coming out of Italy nothing else could be pleasing.

These tales of my future youthful travels, often as they were repeated, I listened to eagerly, the more so as they always led to accounts of Italy, and at last to a description of Naples. His otherwise serious and dry manner seemed on these occasions to relax and quicken, and thus a passionate wish awoke in us children to participate in the paradise he described.

Private lessons, which now gradually multiplied, were shared with the children of the neighbors. This learning in common did not advance me: the teachers followed their routine; and the rudeness, sometimes the ill nature, of my companions, interrupted the brief hours of study with tumult, vexation, and disturbance. Chrestomathies, by which learning is made pleasant and varied, had not yet reached us. Cornelius Nepos, so dry to young people; the New Testament, which was much too easy, and which by preaching and religious instructions had been rendered even common-place; Cellarius and Pasor, – could impart no kind of interest: on the other hand, a certain rage for rhyme and versification, a consequence of reading the prevalent German poets, took complete possession of us. Me it had seized much earlier, as I had found it agreeable to pass from the rhetorical to the poetical treatment of subjects.

We boys held a Sunday assembly where each of us was to produce original verses. And here I was struck by something strange, which long caused me uneasiness. My poems, whatever they might be, always seemed to me the best. But I soon remarked that my competitors, who brought forth very lame affairs, were in the same condition, and thought no less of themselves. Nay, what appeared yet more suspicious, a good lad (though in such matters altogether unskilful), whom I liked in other respects, but who had his rhymes made by his tutor, not only regarded these as the best, but was thoroughly persuaded they were his own, as he always maintained in our confidential intercourse. Now, as this illusion and error was obvious to me, the question one day forced itself upon me, whether I myself might not be in the same state, whether those poems were not really better than mine, and whether I might not justly appear to those boys as mad as they to me? This disturbed me much and long, for it was altogether impossible for me to find any external criterion of the truth: I even ceased from producing, until at length I was quieted by my own light temperament, and the feeling of my own powers, and lastly by a trial of skill, – started on the spur of the moment by our teachers and parents, who had noted our sport, – in which I came off well, and won general praise.

No libraries for children had at that time been established. The old had themselves still childish notions, and found it convenient to impart their own education to their successors. Except the "Orbis Pictus" of Amos Comenius, no book of the sort fell into our hands; but the large folio Bible, with copperplates by Merian, was diligently gone over leaf by leaf; Gottfried's "Chronicles," with plates by the same master, taught us the most notable events of universal history; the "Acerra Philologica" added thereto all sorts of fables, mythologies, and wonders; and, as I soon became familiar with Ovid's "Metamorphoses," the first books of which in particular I studied carefully, my young brain was rapidly furnished with a mass of images and events, of significant and wonderful shapes and occurrences; and I never felt time hang upon my hands, as I always occupied myself in working over, repeating, and reproducing these acquisitions.

A more salutary moral effect than that of these rude and hazardous antiquities was produced by Fenelon's "Telemachus," with which I first became acquainted in Neukirch's translation, and which, imperfectly as it was executed, had a sweet and beneficent influence on my mind. That "Robinson Crusoe" was added in due time, follows in the nature of things; and it may be imagined that the "Island of Falsenberg" was not wanting. Lord Anson's "Voyage round the Globe" combined the dignity of truth with the rich fancies of fable; and, while our thoughts accompanied this excellent seaman, we were conducted over all the world, and endeavored to follow him with our fingers on the globe. But a still richer harvest was to spring up before me, when I lighted on a mass of writings, which, in their present state, it is true, cannot be called excellent, but the contents of which, in a harmless way, bring near to us many a meritorious action of former times.

The publication, or rather the manufacture, of those books, which have at a later day become so well known and celebrated under the name Volkschriften, Volksbucher (popular works or books), was carried on in Frankfort. The enormous sales they met with led to their being almost illegibly printed from stereotypes on horrible blotting-paper. We children were so fortunate as to find these precious remains of the Middle Ages every day on a little table at the door of a dealer in cheap books, and to obtain them at the cost of a couple of Kreutzer. "The Eulenspiegel," "The Four Sons of Haimon," "The Emperor Octavian," "The Fair Melusina," "The Beautiful Magelone," "Fortunatus," with the whole race down to "The Wandering Jew," were all at our service, as often as we preferred the relish of these works to the taste of sweet things. The greatest benefit of this was, that, when we had read through or damaged such a sheet, it could soon be reprocured, and swallowed a second time.

As a family picnic in summer is vexatiously disturbed by a sudden storm, which transforms a pleasant state of things into the very reverse: so the diseases of childhood fall unexpectedly on the most beautiful season of early life. And thus it happened with me. I had just purchased "Fortunatus with his Purse and Wishing-hat," when I was attacked by a restlessness and fever which announced the small-pox. Inoculation was still with us considered very problematical; and, although it had already

been intelligibly and urgently recommended by popular writers, the German physicians hesitated to perform an operation that seemed to forestall Nature. Speculative Englishmen, therefore, had come to the Continent, and inoculated, for a considerable fee, the children of such persons as were opulent, and free from prejudices. Still, the majority were exposed to the old disease: the infection raged through families, killed and disfigured many children; and few parents dared to avail themselves of a method, the probable efficacy of which had been abundantly confirmed by the result. The evil now invaded our house, and attacked me with unusual severity. My whole body was sown over with spots, and my face covered; and for several days I lay blind and in great pain. They tried the only possible alleviation, and promised me heaps of gold if I would keep quiet, and not increase the mischief by rubbing and scratching. I controlled myself, while, according to the prevailing prejudice, they kept me as warm as possible, and thus only rendered my suffering more acute. At last, after a woeful time, there fell, as it were, a mask from my face. The blotches had left no visible mark upon the skin, but the features were plainly altered. I myself was satisfied merely with seeing the light of day again, and gradually putting off my spotted skin; but others were pitiless enough to remind me often of my previous condition, especially a very lively aunt, who had formerly regarded me with idolatry, but in after-years could seldom look at me without exclaiming "The deuce, cousin, what a fright he's grown!" Then she would tell me circumstantially how I had once been her delight, and what attention she had excited when she carried me about; and thus I early learned that people very often subject us to a severe atonement for the pleasure which we have afforded them.

I escaped neither measles nor chicken-pox, nor any other of the tormenting demons of childhood; and I was assured each time that it was a great piece of good luck that this malady was now past forever. But alas! another again threatened in the background, and advanced. All these things increased my propensity to reflection; and as I had already practised myself in fortitude, in order to remove the torture of impatience, the virtues which I had heard praised in the stoics appeared to me highly worthy of imitation, and the more so, as something similar was commended by the Christian doctrine of patience.

While on the subject of these family diseases, I will mention a brother about three years younger than myself, who was likewise attacked by that infection, and suffered not a little from it. He was of a tender nature, quiet and capricious; and we were never on the most friendly terms. Besides, he scarcely survived the years of childhood. Among several other children born afterwards, who, like him, did not live long, I only remember a very pretty and agreeable girl, who also soon passed away; so that, after the lapse of some years, my sister and I remained alone, and were therefore the more deeply and affectionately attached to each other.

These maladies, and other unpleasant interruptions, were in their consequences doubly grievous; for my father, who seemed to have laid down for himself a certain calendar of education and instruction, was resolved immediately to repair every delay, and imposed double lessons upon the young convalescent. These were not hard for me to accomplish, but were so far troublesome, that they hindered, and, to a certain extent, repressed, my inward development, which had taken a decided direction.

From these didactic and pedagogic oppressions, we commonly fled to my grandfather and grandmother. Their house stood in the Friedberg Street, and appeared to have been formerly a fortress; for, on approaching it, nothing was seen but a large gate with battlements, which were joined on either side to the two neighboring houses. On entering through a narrow passage, we reached at last a tolerably wide court, surrounded by irregular buildings, which were now all united into one dwelling. We usually hastened at once into the garden, which extended to a considerable length and breadth behind the buildings, and was very well kept. The walks were mostly skirted by vine-trellises: one part of the space was used for vegetables, and another devoted to flowers, which from spring till autumn adorned in rich succession the borders as well as the beds. The long wall, erected towards the south, was used for some well-trained espalier peach-trees, the forbidden fruit of which ripened

temptingly before us through the summer. Yet we rather avoided this side, because we here could not satisfy our dainty appetites; and we turned to the side opposite, where an interminable row of currant and gooseberry bushes furnished our voracity with a succession of harvests till autumn. Not less important to us was an old, high, wide-spreading mulberry-tree, both on account of its fruits, and because we were told that the silk-worms fed upon its leaves. In this peaceful region my grandfather was found every evening, tending with genial care, and with his own hand, the finer growths of fruits and flowers; while a gardener managed the drudgery. He was never vexed by the various toils which were necessary to preserve and increase a fine show of pinks. The branches of the peach-trees were carefully tied to the espaliers with his own hands, in a fan-shape, in order to bring about a full and easy growth of the fruit. The sorting of the bulbs of tulips, hyacinths, and plants of a similar nature, as well as the care of their preservation, he intrusted to none; and I still with pleasure recall to my mind how diligently he occupied himself in inoculating the different varieties of roses. That he might protect himself from the thorns, he put on a pair of those ancient leather gloves, of which three pair were given him annually at the Piper's Court; so that there was no dearth of the article. He wore also a loose dressing-gown, and a folded black velvet cap upon his head; so that he might have passed for an intermediate person between Alcinous and Laertes.

All this work in the garden he pursued as regularly and with as much precision as his official business; for, before he came down, he always arranged the list of cases for the next day, and read the legal papers. In the morning he proceeded to the city-hall, dined after his return, then took a nap in his easy-chair, and so went through the same routine every day. He conversed little, never exhibited any vehemence; and I do not remember ever to have seen him angry. All that surrounded him was in the fashion of the olden time. I never perceived any alteration in his wainscoted room. His library contained, besides law-works, only the earliest books of travels, sea-voyages, and discoveries of countries. Altogether I can call to mind no situation more adapted than his to awaken the feeling of uninterrupted peace and eternal duration.

But the reverence we entertained for this venerable old man was raised to the highest degree by a conviction that he possessed the gift of prophecy, especially in matters that pertained to himself and his destiny. It is true he revealed himself to no one distinctly and minutely, except to my grandmother; yet we were all aware that he was informed of what was going to happen by significant dreams. He assured his wife, for instance, at a time when he was still a junior councillor, that, on the first vacancy, he would obtain the place left open on the bench of the /Schöffen/; and soon afterwards, when one of those officers actually died of apoplexy, my grandfather gave orders that his house should be quietly got ready prepared on the day of electing and balloting, to receive his guests and congratulators. Sure enough, the decisive gold ball was drawn in his favor. The simple dream by which he had learned this, he confided to his wife as follows: He had seen himself in the ordinary full assembly of councilmen, where all went on just as usual. Suddenly the late /Schöff/ rose from his seat, descended the steps, pressed him in the most complimentary manner to take the vacant place, and then departed by the door.

Something similar occurred on the death of the /Schultheiss/. They make no delay in supplying this place; as they always have to fear that the emperor will, at some time, resume his ancient right of nominating the officer. On this occasion, the messenger of the court came at midnight to summon an extraordinary session for the next morning; and, as the light in his lantern was about to expire, he asked for a candle's end to help him on his way. "Give him a whole one," said my grandfather to the ladies: "he takes the trouble all on my account." This expression anticipated the result, – he was made /Schultheiss/. And what rendered the circumstance particularly remarkable was, that, although his representative was the third and last to draw at the ballot, the two silver balls first came out, leaving the golden ball at the bottom of the bag for him.

Perfectly prosaic, simple, and without a trace of the fantastic or miraculous, were the other dreams, of which we were informed. Moreover, I remember that once, as a boy, I was turning over

his books and memoranda, and found, among some other remarks which related to gardening, such sentences as these: "To-night N. N. came to me, and said," – the name and revelation being written in cipher; or, "This night I saw," – all the rest being again in cipher, except the conjunctions and similar words, from which nothing could be learned.

It is worthy of note also, that persons who showed no signs of prophetic insight at other times, acquired, for the moment, while in his presence, and that by means of some sensible evidence, presentiments of diseases or deaths which were then occurring in distant places. But no such gift has been transmitted to any of his children or grandchildren, who, for the most part, have been hearty people, enjoying life, and never going beyond the actual.

While on this subject, I remember with gratitude many kindnesses I received from them in my youth. Thus, for example, we were employed and entertained in many ways when we visited the second daughter, married to the druggist Melber, whose house and shop stood near the market, in the midst of the liveliest and most crowded part of the town. There we could look down from the windows pleasantly enough upon the hurly-burly, in which we feared to lose ourselves; and though at first, of all the goods in the shop, nothing had much interest for us but the licorice, and the little brown stamped cakes made from it, we became in time better acquainted with the multitude of articles bought and sold in that business. This aunt was the most vivacious of all the family. Whilst my mother, in her early years, took pleasure in being neatly dressed, working at some domestic occupation, or reading a book, the other, on the contrary, ran about the neighborhood to pick up neglected children, take care of them, comb them, and carry them about in the way she had done with me for a good while. At a time of public festivities, such as coronations, it was impossible to keep her at home. When a little child, she had already scrambled for the money scattered on such occasions; and it was related of her, that once when she had got a good many together, and was looking at them with great delight in the palm of her hand, it was struck by somebody, and all her well-earned booty vanished at a blow. There was another incident of which she was very proud. Once, while standing on a post as the Emperor Charles VII. was passing, at a moment when all the people were silent, she shouted a vigorous "Vivat!" into the coach, which made him take off his hat to her, and thank her quite graciously for her bold salutation.

Every thing in her house was stirring, lively, and cheerful; and we children owed her many a gay hour.

In a more quiet situation, which was, however, suited to her character, was a second aunt, married to the Pastor Stark, incumbent of St. Catharine's Church. He lived much alone, in accordance with his temperament and vocation, and possessed a fine library. Here I first became acquainted with Homer, in a prose translation, which may be found in the seventh part of Herr Von Loen's new collection of the most remarkable travels, under the title, "Homer's Description of the Conquest of the Kingdom of Troy," ornamented with copperplates in the theatrical French taste. These pictures perverted my imagination to such a degree, that, for a long time, I could conceive the Homeric heroes only under such forms. The incidents themselves gave me unspeakable delight; though I found great fault with the work for affording us no account of the capture of Troy, and breaking off so abruptly with the death of Hector. My uncle, to whom I mentioned this defect, referred me to Virgil, who perfectly satisfied my demands.

It will be taken for granted, that we children had among our other lessons a continued and progressive instruction in religion. But the Church-Protestantism imparted to us was, properly speaking, nothing but a kind of dry morality: ingenious exposition was not thought of, and the doctrine appealed neither to the understanding nor to the heart. For that reason, there were various secessions from the Established Church. Separatists, Pietists, Herrnhuter (Moravians), Quiet-in-the-Land, and others differently named and characterized, sprang up, all of whom are animated by the same purpose of approaching the Deity, especially through Christ, more closely than seemed to them possible under the forms of the established religion.

The boy heard these opinions and sentiments constantly spoken of, for the clergy as well as the laity divided themselves into /pro/ and /con/. The minority were composed of those who dissented more or less broadly; but their modes of thinking attracted by originality, heartiness, perseverance, and independence. All sorts of stories were told of their virtues, and of the way in which they were manifested. The reply of a pious master-tinman was especially noted, who, when one of his craft attempted to shame him by asking, "Who is really your confessor?" answered with great cheerfulness, and confidence in the goodness of his cause, "I have a famous one, – no less than the confessor of King David."

Things of this sort naturally made an impression on the boy, and led him into similar states of mind. In fact, he came to the thought that he might immediately approach the great God of nature, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, whose earlier manifestations of wrath had been long forgotten in the beauty of the world, and the manifold blessings in which we participate while upon it. The way he took to accomplish this was very curious.

The boy had chiefly kept to the first article of belief. The God who stands in immediate connection with nature, and owns and loves it as his work, seemed to him the proper God, who might be brought into closer relationship with man, as with every thing else, and who would take care of him, as of the motion of the stars, the days and seasons, the animals and plants. There were texts of the Gospels which explicitly stated this. The boy could ascribe no form to this Being: he therefore sought him in his works, and would, in the good Old-Testament fashion, build him an altar. Natural productions were set forth as images of the world, over which a flame was to burn, signifying the aspirations of man's heart towards his Maker. He brought out of the collection of natural objects which he possessed, and which had been increased as chance directed, the best ores and other specimens. But the next difficulty was, as to how they should be arranged and raised into a pile. His father possessed a beautiful red-lacquered music-stand, ornamented with gilt flowers, in the form of a four-sided pyramid, with different elevations, which had been found convenient for quartets, but lately was not much in use. The boy laid hands on this, and built up his representatives of nature one above the other in steps; so that it all looked quite pretty and at the same time sufficiently significant. On an early sunrise his first worship of God was to be celebrated, but the young priest had not yet settled how to produce a flame which should at the same time emit an agreeable odor. At last it occurred to him to combine the two, as he possessed a few fumigating pastils, which diffused a pleasant fragrance with a glimmer, if not with a flame. Nay, this soft burning and exhalation seemed a better representation of what passes in the heart, than an open flame. The sun had already risen for a long time, but the neighboring houses concealed the east. At last it glittered above the roofs: a burning-glass was at once taken up and applied to the pastils, which were fixed on the summit in a fine porcelain saucer. Every thing succeeded according to the wish, and the devotion was perfect. The altar remained as a peculiar ornament of the room which had been assigned him in the new house. Every one regarded it only as a well-arranged collection of natural curiosities. The boy knew better, but concealed his knowledge. He longed for a repetition of the solemnity. But unfortunately, just as the most opportune sun arose, the porcelain cup was not at hand: he placed the pastils immediately on the upper surface of the stand; they were kindled; and so great was the devotion of the priest, that he did not observe, until it was too late, the mischief his sacrifice was doing. The pastils had burned mercilessly into the red lacquer and beautiful gold flowers, and, as if some evil spirit had disappeared, had left their black, ineffaceable footprints. By this the young priest was thrown into the most extreme perplexity. The mischief could be covered up, it was true, with the larger pieces of his show materials; but the spirit for new offerings was gone, and the accident might almost be considered a hint and warning of the danger there always is in wishing to approach the Deity in such a way.

SECOND BOOK

All that has been hitherto recorded indicates that happy and easy condition in which nations exist during a long peace. But nowhere probably is such a beautiful time enjoyed in greater comfort than in cities living under their own laws, and large enough to include a considerable number of citizens, and so situated as to enrich them by trade and commerce. Strangers find it to their advantage to come and go, and are under a necessity of bringing profit in order to acquire profit. Even if such cities rule but a small territory, they are the better qualified to advance their internal prosperity; as their external relations expose them to no costly undertakings or alliances.

Thus the Frankforters passed a series of prosperous years during my childhood; but scarcely, on the 28th of August, 1756, had I completed my seventh year, than that world-renowned war broke out which was also to exert great influence upon the next seven years of my life. Frederick the Second, King of Prussia, had fallen upon Saxony with sixty thousand men; and, instead of announcing his invasion by a declaration of war, he followed it up with a manifesto, composed by himself as it was said, which explained the causes that had moved and justified him in so monstrous a step. The world, which saw itself appealed to, not merely as spectator, but as judge, immediately split into two parties; and our family was an image of the great whole.

My grandfather, who, as /Schöff/ of Frankfort, had carried the coronation canopy over Francis the First, and had received from the empress a heavy gold chain with her likeness, took the Austrian side along with some of his sons-in-law and daughters. My father having been nominated to the imperial council by Charles the Seventh, and sympathizing sincerely in the fate of that unhappy monarch, leaned towards Prussia, with the other and smaller half of the family. Our meetings, which had been held on Sundays for many years uninterruptedly, were very soon disturbed. The misunderstandings so common among persons related by marriage, found only now a form in which they could be expressed. Contention, discord, silence, and separation ensued. My grandfather, generally a cheerful, quiet man, and fond of ease, became impatient. The women vainly endeavored to smother the flames; and, after some unpleasant scenes, my father was the first to quit the society. At home we now rejoiced undisturbed at the Prussian victories, which were commonly announced with great glee by our vivacious aunt. Every other interest had to give way to this, and we passed the rest of the year in perpetual agitation. The occupation of Dresden, the moderation of the king at the outset, his slow but secure advances, the victory at Lowositz, the capture of the Saxons, were so many triumphs for our party. Every thing that could be alleged for the advantage of our opponents was denied or depreciated; and, as the members of the family on the other side did the same, they could not meet in the streets without disputes arising, as in "Romeo and Juliet."

Thus I also was then a Prussian in my views, or, to speak more correctly, a Fritzian; since what cared we for Prussia? It was the personal character of the great king that worked upon all hearts. I rejoiced with my father in our conquests, readily copied the songs of triumph, and almost more willingly the lampoons directed against the other party, poor as the rhymes might be.

Being their eldest grandson and godchild, I had dined every Sunday since my infancy with my grandfather and grandmother; and the hours so spent had been the most delightful of the whole week. But now I relished not a morsel, because I was compelled to hear the most horrible slanders of my hero. Here blew another wind, here sounded another tone, than at home. My liking and even my respect for my grandfather and grandmother fell off. I could mention nothing of this to my parents, but avoided the matter, both on account of my own feelings, and because I had been warned by my mother. In this way I was thrown back upon myself; and as in my sixth year, after the earthquake at Lisbon, the goodness of God had become to me in some measure suspicious: so I began now, on account of Frederick the Second, to doubt the justice of the public. My heart was naturally inclined to reverence, and it required a great shock to stagger my faith in any thing that was venerable. But

alas! they had commended good manners and a becoming deportment to us, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the people. What will people say? was always the cry; and I thought that the people must be right good people, and would know how to judge of any thing and every thing. But my experience went just to the contrary. The greatest and most signal services were defamed and attacked; the noblest deeds, if not denied, were at least misrepresented and diminished; and this base injustice was done to the only man who was manifestly elevated above all his contemporaries, and who daily proved what he was able to do, – and that, not by the populace, but by distinguished men, as I took my grandfather and uncles to be. That parties existed, and that he himself belonged to a party, had never entered into the conceptions of the boy. He, therefore, believed himself all the more right, and dared hold his own opinion for the better one; since he and those of like mind appreciated the beauty and other good qualities of Maria Theresa, and even did not grudge the Emperor Francis his love of jewellery and money. That Count Daun was often called an old dozer, they thought justifiable.

But, now that I look more closely into the matter, I here trace the germ of that disregard and even disdain of the public, which clung to me for a whole period of my life, and only in later days was brought within bounds by insight and cultivation. Suffice it to say, that the perception of the injustice of parties had even then a very unpleasant, nay, an injurious, effect upon the boy; as it accustomed him to separate himself from beloved and highly valued persons. The quick succession of battles and events left the parties neither quiet nor rest. We ever found a malicious delight in reviving and resharpening those imaginary evils and capricious disputes; and thus we continued to tease each other, until the occupation of Frankfort by the French some years afterwards brought real inconvenience into our homes.

Although to most of us the important events occurring in distant parts served only for topics of hot controversy, there were others who perceived the seriousness of the times, and feared that the sympathy of France might open a scene of war in our own vicinity. They kept us children at home more than before, and strove in many ways to occupy and amuse us. With this view, the puppet-show bequeathed by our grandmother was again brought forth, and arranged in such a way that the spectators sat in my gable-room; while the persons managing and performing, as well as the theatre itself as far as the proscenium, found a place in the room adjoining. We were allowed, as a special favor, to invite first one and then another of the neighbor's children as spectators; and thus at the outset I gained many friends, but the restlessness inherent in children did not suffer them to remain long a patient audience. They interrupted the play; and we were compelled to seek a younger public, which could at any rate be kept in order by the nurses and maids. The original drama, to which the puppets had been specially adapted, we had learned by heart; and in the beginning this was exclusively performed. Soon growing weary of it, however, we changed the dresses and decorations, and attempted various other pieces, which were indeed on too grand a scale for so narrow a stage. Although this presumption spoiled and finally quite destroyed what we performed, such childish pleasures and employments nevertheless exercised and advanced in many ways my power of invention and representation, my fancy, and a certain technical skill, to a degree which in any other way could not perhaps have been secured in so short a time, in so confined a space, and at so little expense.

I had early learned to use compasses and ruler, because all the instructions they gave me in geometry were forthwith put into practice; and I occupied myself greatly with paste-board-work. I did not stop at geometrical figures, little boxes, and such things, but invented pretty pleasure-houses adorned with pilasters, steps, and flat roofs. However, but little of this was completed.

Far more persevering was I, on the other hand, in arranging, with the help of our domestic (a tailor by trade), an armory for the service of our plays and tragedies, which we ourselves performed with delight when we had outgrown the puppets. My playfellows, too, prepared for themselves such armories, which they considered to be quite as fine and good as mine; but I had made provision, not for the wants of one person only, and could furnish several of the little band with every requisite, and thus made myself more and more indispensable to our little circle. That such games tended to

factions, quarrels, and blows, and commonly came to a sad end in tumult and vexation, may easily be supposed. In such cases certain of my companions generally took part with me, while others sided against me; though many changes of party occurred. One single boy, whom I will call Pylades, urged by the others, once only left my party, but could scarcely for a moment maintain his hostile position. We were reconciled amid many tears, and for a long time afterwards kept faithfully together.

To him, as well as other well-wishers, I could render myself very agreeable by telling tales, which they most delighted to hear when I was the hero of my own story. It greatly rejoiced them to know that such wonderful things could befall one of their own playfellows; nor was it any harm that they did not understand how I could find time and space for such adventures, as they must have been pretty well aware of all my comings and goings, and how I was occupied the entire day. Not the less necessary was it for me to select the localities of these occurrences, if not in another world, at least in another spot; and yet all was told as having taken place only to-day or yesterday. They therefore had to form for themselves greater illusions than I could have palmed off upon them. If I had not gradually learned, in accordance with the instincts of my nature, to work up these visions and conceits into artistic forms, such vain-glorious beginnings could not have gone on without producing evil consequences for myself in the end.

Considering this impulse more closely, we may see in it that presumption with which the poet authoritatively utters the greatest improbabilities, and requires every one to recognize as real whatever may in any way seem to him, the inventor, as true.

But what is here told only in general terms, and by way of reflection, will perhaps become more apparent and interesting by means of an example. I subjoin, therefore, one of these tales, which, as I often had to repeat it to my comrades, still hovers entire in my imagination and memory.

THE NEW PARIS

A BOY'S LEGEND

On the night before Whitsunday, not long since, I dreamed that I stood before a mirror engaged with the new summer clothes which my dear parents had given me for the holiday. The dress consisted, as you know, of shoes of polished leather, with large silver buckles, fine cotton stockings, black nether garments of serge, and a coat of green baracan with gold buttons. The waistcoat of gold cloth was cut out of my father's bridal waistcoat. My hair had been frizzled and powdered, and my curls stuck out from my head like little wings; but I could not finish dressing myself, because I kept confusing the different articles, the first always falling off as soon as I was about to put on the next. In this dilemma, a young and handsome man came to me, and greeted me in the friendliest manner. "Oh! you are welcome," said I: "I am very glad to see you here." – "Do you know me, then?" replied he, smiling. "Why not?" was my no less smiling answer. "You are Mercury – I have often enough seen you represented in pictures." – "I am, indeed," replied he, "and am sent to you by the gods on an important errand. Do you see these three apples?" He stretched forth his hand and showed me three apples, which it could hardly hold, and which were as wonderfully beautiful as they were large, the one of a red, the other of a yellow, the third of a green, color. One could not help thinking they were precious stones made into the form of fruit. I would have snatched them; but he drew back, and said, "You must know, in the first place, that they are not for you. You must give them to the three handsomest youths of the city, who then, each according to his lot, will find wives to the utmost of their wishes. Take them, and success to you!" said he, as he departed, leaving the apples in my open hands. They appeared to me to have become still larger. I held them up at once against the light, and found them quite transparent; but soon they expanded upward, and became three beautiful little ladies about as large as middle-sized dolls, whose clothes were of the colors of the apples. They

glided gently up my fingers: and when I was about to catch them, to make sure of one at least, they had already soared high and far; and I had to put up with the disappointment. I stood there all amazed and petrified, holding up my hands, and staring at my fingers as if there were still something on them to see. Suddenly I saw a most lovely girl dance upon the very tips. She was smaller, but pretty and lively; and as she did not fly away like the others, but remained dancing, now on one finger-point, now on another, I regarded her for a long while with admiration. And, as she pleased me so much, I thought in the end I could catch her, and made, as I fancied, a very adroit grasp. But at the moment I felt such a blow on my head that I fell down stunned, and did not awake from my stupor till it was time to dress myself and go to church.

During the service I often called those images to mind, and also when I was eating dinner at my grandfather's table. In the afternoon I wished to visit some friends, partly to show myself in my new dress, with my hat under my arm and my sword by my side, and partly to return their visits. I found no one at home; and, as I heard that they were gone to the gardens, I resolved to follow them, and pass the evening pleasantly. My way led towards the intrenchments; and I came to the spot which is rightly called the Bad Wall, for it is never quite safe from ghosts there. I walked slowly, and thought of my three goddesses, but especially of the little nymph, and often held up my fingers in hopes she might be kind enough to balance herself there again. With such thoughts I was proceeding, when I saw in the wall on my left hand a little gate which I did not remember to have ever noticed before. It looked low, but its pointed arch would have allowed the tallest man to enter. Arch and wall had been chiselled in the handsomest way, both by mason and sculptor; but it was the door itself which first properly attracted my attention. The old brown wood, though slightly ornamented, was crossed with broad bands of brass wrought both in relief and intaglio. The foliage on these, with the most natural birds sitting in it, I could not sufficiently admire. But, what seemed most remarkable, no keyhole could be seen, no latch, no knocker; and from this I conjectured that the door could be opened only from within. I was not in error; for, when I went nearer in order to touch the ornaments, it opened inwards; and there appeared a man whose dress was somewhat long, wide, and singular. A venerable beard enveloped his chin, so that I was inclined to think him a Jew. But he, as if he had divined my thoughts, made the sign of the holy cross, by which he gave me to understand that he was a good Catholic Christian. "Young gentleman, how came you here, and what are you doing?" he said to me, with a friendly voice and manner." I am admiring," I replied," the workmanship of this door; for I have never seen any thing like it, except in some small pieces in the collections of amateurs." – "I am glad," he answered, "that you like such works. The door is much more beautiful inside. Come in, if you like." My heart, in some degree, failed me. The mysterious dress of the porter, the seclusion, and a something, I know not what, that seemed to be in the air, oppressed me. I paused, therefore, under the pretext of examining the outside still longer; and at the same time I cast stolen glances into the garden, for a garden it was which had opened before me. Just inside the door I saw a space. Old linden-trees, standing at regular distances from each other, entirely covered it with their thickly interwoven branches; so that the most numerous parties, during the hottest of the day, might have refreshed themselves in the shade. Already I had stepped upon the threshold, and the old man contrived gradually to allure me on. Properly speaking, I did not resist; for I had always heard that a prince or sultan in such a case must never ask whether there be danger at hand. I had my sword by my side too; and could I not soon have finished with the old man, in case of hostile demonstrations? I therefore entered perfectly re-assured: the keeper closed the door, which bolted so softly that I scarcely heard it. He now showed me the workmanship on the inside, which in truth was still more artistic than the outside, explained it to me, and at the same time manifested particular good will. Being thus entirely at my ease, I let myself be guided in the shaded space by the wall, that formed a circle, where I found much to admire. Niches tastefully adorned with shells, corals, and pieces of ore, poured a profusion of water from the mouths of tritons into marble basins. Between them were aviaries and other lattice-work, in which squirrels frisked about, guinea-pigs ran hither and thither,

with as many other pretty little creatures as one could wish to see. The birds called and sang to us as we advanced: the starlings, particularly, chattered the silliest stuff. One always cried, "Paris, Paris!" and the other, "Narcissus, Narcissus!" as plainly as a schoolboy can say them. The old man seemed to continue looking at me earnestly while the birds called out thus; but I feigned not to notice it, and had in truth no time to attend to him, for I could easily perceive that we went round and round, and that this shaded space was in fact a great circle, which enclosed another much more important. Indeed, we had actually reached the small door again, and it seemed as though the old man would let me out. But my eyes remained directed towards a golden railing, which seemed to hedge round the middle of this wonderful garden, and which I had found means enough of observing in our walk; although the old man managed to keep me always close to the wall, and therefore pretty far from the centre. And now, just as he was going to the door, I said to him, with a bow, "You have been so extremely kind to me that I would fain venture to make one more request before I part from you. Might I not look more closely at that golden railing, which appears to enclose in a very wide circle the interior of the garden?" – "Very willingly," replied he, "but in that case you must submit to some conditions." – "In what do they consist?" I asked hastily. "You must leave here your hat and sword, and must not let go my hand while I accompany you." – "Most willingly," I replied; and laid my hat and sword on the nearest stone bench. Immediately he grasped my left hand with his right, held it fast, and led me with some force straight forwards. When we reached the railing, my wonder changed into amazement. On a high socle of marble stood innumerable spears and partisans, ranged beneath each other, joined by their strangely ornamented points, and forming a complete circle. I looked through the intervals, and saw just behind a gently flowing piece of water, bounded on both sides by marble, and displaying in its clear depths a multitude of gold and silver fish, which moved about now slowly and now swiftly, now alone and now in shoals. I would also fain have looked beyond the canal, to see what there was in the heart of the garden. But I found, to my great sorrow, that the other side of the water was bordered by a similar railing, and with so much art, that to each interval on this side exactly fitted a spear or partisan on the other. These, and the other ornaments, rendered it impossible for one to see through, stand as he would. Besides, the old man, who still held me fast, prevented me from moving freely. My curiosity, meanwhile, after all I had seen, increased more and more; and I took heart to ask the old man whether one could not pass over. "Why not?" returned he, "but on new conditions." When I asked him what these were, he gave me to understand that I must put on other clothes. I was satisfied to do so: he led me back towards the wall into a small, neat room, on the sides of which hung many kinds of garments, all of which seemed to approach the Oriental costume. I soon changed my dress. He confined my powdered hair under a many-colored net, after having to my horror violently dusted it out. Now, standing before a great mirror, I found myself quite handsome in my disguise, and pleased myself better than in my formal Sunday clothes. I made gestures, and leaped, as I had seen the dancers do at the fair-theatre. In the midst of this I looked in the glass, and saw by chance the image of a niche which was behind me. On its white ground hung three green cords, each of them twisted up in a way which from the distance I could not clearly discern. I therefore turned round rather hastily, and asked the old man about the niche as well as the cords. He very courteously took a cord down, and showed it to me. It was a band of green silk of moderate thickness, the ends of which, joined by green leather with two holes in it, gave it the appearance of an instrument for no very desirable purpose. The thing struck me as suspicious, and I asked the old man the meaning. He answered me very quietly and kindly, "This is for those who abuse the confidence which is here readily shown them." He hung the cord again in its place, and immediately desired me to follow him; for this time he did not hold me, and so I walked freely beside him.

My chief curiosity now was, to discover where the gate and bridge, for passing through the railing and over the canal, might be; since as yet I had not been able to find any thing of the kind. I therefore watched the golden fence very narrowly as we hastened towards it. But in a moment my sight failed: lances, spears, halberds, and partisans began unexpectedly to rattle and quiver; and the

strange movement ended in all the points sinking towards each other just as if two ancient hosts, armed with pikes, were about to charge. The confusion to the eyes, the clatter to the ears, was hardly to be borne; but infinitely surprising was the sight, when, falling perfectly level, they covered the circle of the canal, and formed the most glorious bridge that one can imagine. For now a most variegated garden parterre met my sight. It was laid out in curvilinear beds, which, looked at together, formed a labyrinth of ornaments; all with green borders of a low, woolly plant, which I had never seen before; all with flowers, each division of different colors, which, being likewise low and close to the ground, allowed the plan to be easily traced. This delicious sight, which I enjoyed in the full sunshine, quite riveted my eyes. But I hardly knew where I was to set my foot; for the serpentine paths were most delicately laid with blue sand, which seemed to form upon the earth a darker sky, or a sky seen in the water: and so I walked for a while beside my conductor, with my eyes fixed upon the ground, until at last I perceived, that, in the middle of this round of beds and flowers, there was a great circle of cypresses or poplar-like trees, through which one could not see, because the lowest branches seemed to spring out of the ground. My guide, without taking me exactly the shortest way, led me nevertheless immediately towards that centre; and how was I astonished, when, on entering the circle of high trees, I saw before me the peristyle of a magnificent garden-house, which seemed to have similar prospects and entrances on the other sides! The heavenly music which streamed from the building transported me still more than this model of architecture. I fancied that I heard now a lute, now a harp, now a guitar, and now something tinkling which did not belong to any of these instruments. The door for which we made opened soon on being lightly touched by the old man. But how was I amazed when the porteress who came out perfectly resembled the delicate girl who had danced upon my fingers in the dream! She greeted me as if we were already acquainted, and invited me to walk in. The old man staid behind; and I went with her through a short passage, arched and finely ornamented, to the middle hall, the splendid, dome-like ceiling of which attracted my gaze on my entrance, and filled me with astonishment. Yet my eye could not dwell on this long, being allured down by a more charming spectacle. On a carpet, directly under the middle of the cupola, sat three women in a triangle, clad in three different colors, – one red, the other yellow, the third green. The seats were gilt, and the carpet was a perfect flower-bed. In their arms lay the three instruments which I had been able to distinguish from without; for, being disturbed by my arrival, they had stopped their playing. "Welcome!" said the middle one, who sat with her face to the door, in a red dress, and with the harp. "Sit down by Alerte, and listen, if you are a lover of music."

Now only I remarked that there was a rather long bench placed obliquely before them, on which lay a mandolin. The pretty girl took it up, sat down, and drew me to her side. Now also I looked at the second lady on my right. She wore the yellow dress, and had the guitar in her hand; and if the harp-player was dignified in form, grand in features, and majestic in her deportment, one might remark in the guitar-player an easy grace and cheerfulness. She was a slender blonde, while the other was adorned by dark-brown hair. The variety and accordance of their music could not prevent me from remarking the third beauty, in the green dress, whose lute-playing was for me at once touching and striking. She was the one who seemed to notice me the most, and to direct her music to me: only I could not make up my mind about her; for she appeared to me now tender, now whimsical, now frank, now self-willed, according as she changed her mien and mode of playing. Sometimes she seemed to wish to excite my emotions, sometimes to tease me; but, do what she would, she got little out of me; for my little neighbor, by whom I sat elbow to elbow, had gained me entirely to herself: and while I clearly saw in those three ladies the sylphides of my dream, and recognized the colors of the apples, I conceived that I had no cause to detain them. I should have liked better to lay hold of the pretty little maiden if I had not but too well remembered the blow she had given me in my dream. Hitherto she had remained quite quiet with her mandolin; but, when her mistresses had ceased, they commanded her to perform some pleasant little piece. Scarcely had she jingled off some dance-tune, in a most exciting manner, than she sprang up: I did the same. She played and danced; I was hurried

on to accompany her steps; and we executed a kind of little ballet, with which the ladies seemed satisfied; for, as soon as we had done, they commanded the little girl to refresh me with something nice till supper should come in. I had indeed forgotten that there was any thing in the world beyond this paradise. Alerte led me back immediately into the passage by which I had entered. On one side of it she had two well- arranged rooms. In that in which she lived she set before me oranges, figs, peaches, and grapes; and I enjoyed with great gusto both the fruits of foreign lands and those of our own not yet in season. Confectionery there was in profusion: she filled, too, a goblet of polished crystal with foaming wine; but I had no need to drink, as I had refreshed myself with the fruits. "Now we will play," said she, and led me into the other room. Here all looked like a Christmas fair, but such costly and exquisite things were never seen in a Christmas booth. There were all kinds of dolls, dolls' clothes, and dolls' furniture; kitchens, parlors, and shops, and single toys innumerable. She led me round to all the glass cases in which these ingenious works were preserved.

But she soon closed again the first cases, and said, "That is nothing for you, I know well enough. Here," she said, "we could find building- materials, walls and towers, houses, palaces, churches, to put together a great city. But this does not entertain me. We will take something else, which will be amusing to both of us." Then she brought out some boxes, in which I saw an army of little soldiers piled one upon the other, of which I must needs confess that I had never seen any thing so beautiful. She did not leave me time to examine them in detail, but took one box under her arm, while I seized the other. "We will go," she said, "to the golden bridge. There one plays best with soldiers: the lances give at once the direction in which the armies are to be opposed to each other." We had now reached the golden, trembling floor; and below me I could hear the waters gurgle and the fishes splash, while I knelt down to range my columns. All, as I now saw, were cavalry. She boasted that she had the queen of the Amazons as leader of her female host. I, on the contrary, found Achilles and a very stately Grecian cavalry. The armies stood facing each other, and nothing could have been seen more beautiful. They were not flat, leaden horsemen like ours; but man and horse were round and solid, and most finely wrought: nor could one conceive how they kept their balance; for they stood of themselves, without a support for their feet.

Both of us had inspected our hosts with much self-complacency, when she announced the onset. We had found ordnance in our chests; viz., little boxes full of well-polished agate balls. With these we were to fight against each other from a certain distance; while, however, it was an express condition that we should not throw with more force than was necessary to upset the figures, as none of them were to be injured. Now the cannonade began on both sides, and at first it succeeded to the satisfaction of us both. But when my adversary observed that I aimed better than she, and might in the end win the victory, which depended on the majority of pieces remaining upright, she came nearer, and her girlish way of throwing had then the desired result. She prostrated a multitude of my best troops, and the more I protested the more eagerly did she throw. This at last vexed me, and I declared that I would do the same. In fact, I not only went nearer, but in my rage threw with much more violence; so that it was not long before a pair of her little centauresses flew in pieces. In her eagerness she did not instantly notice it, but I stood petrified when the broken figures joined together again of themselves: Amazon and horse became again one, and also perfectly close, set up a gallop from the golden bridge under the lime- trees, and, running swiftly backwards and forwards, were lost in their career, I know not how, in the direction of the wall. My fair opponent had hardly perceived this, when she broke out into loud weeping and lamentation, and exclaimed that I had caused her an irreparable loss, which was far greater than could be expressed. But I, by this time provoked, was glad to annoy her, and blindly flung a couple of the remaining agate balls with force into the midst of her army. Unhappily I hit the queen, who had hitherto, during our regular game, been excepted. She flew in pieces, and her nearest officers were also shivered. But they swiftly set themselves up again, and started off like the others, galloping very merrily about under the lime-trees, and disappearing against the wall. My opponent scolded and abused me; but, being now in full play, I stooped to pick

up some agate balls which rolled about upon the golden lances. It was my fierce desire to destroy her whole army. She, on the other hand, not idle, sprang at me, and gave me a box on the ear, which made my head ring. Having always heard that a hearty kiss was the proper response to a girl's box of the ear, I took her by the ears, and kissed her repeatedly. But she uttered such a piercing scream as frightened even me. I let her go; and it was fortunate that I did so, for in a moment I knew not what was happening to me. The ground beneath me began to shake and rattle. I soon remarked that the railings again set themselves in motion; but I had no time to consider, nor could I get a footing so as to fly. I feared every instant to be pierced; for the partisans and lances, which had lifted themselves up, were already slitting my clothes. It is sufficient to say, that, I know not how it was, hearing and sight failed me; and I recovered from my swoon and terror at the foot of a lime-tree, against which the pikes in springing up had thrown me. As I awoke, my anger awakened also, and violently increased when I heard from the other side the gibes and laughter of my opponent, who had probably reached the earth somewhat more softly than I. Therefore I jumped up; and as I saw the little host with its leader Achilles scattered around me, having been driven over with me by the rising of the rails, I seized the hero first, and threw him against a tree. His resuscitation and flight now pleased me doubly, a malicious pleasure combining with the prettiest sight in the world; and I was on the point of sending all the other Greeks after him, when suddenly hissing waters spurted at me on all sides, from stones and wall, from ground and branches, and, wherever I turned, dashed against me crossways.

In a short time my light garment was wet through. It was already rent, and I did not hesitate to tear it entirely off my body. I cast away my slippers, and one covering after another. Nay, at last I found it very agreeable to let such a shower-bath play over me in the warm day. Now, being quite naked, I walked gravely along between these welcome waters, where I thought to enjoy myself for some time. My anger cooled, and I wished for nothing more than a reconciliation with my little adversary. But, in a twinkling, the water stopped; and I stood drenched upon the saturated ground. The presence of the old man, who appeared before me unexpectedly, was by no means welcome. I could have wished, if not to hide, at least to clothe, myself. The shame, the shivering, the effort to cover myself in some degree, made me cut a most piteous figure. The old man employed the moment in venting the severest reproaches against me. "What hinders me," he exclaimed, "from taking one of the green cords, and fitting it, if not to your neck, to your back?" This threat I took in very ill part. "Refrain," I cried, "from such words, even from such thoughts; for otherwise you and your mistresses will be lost." – " Who, then, are you," he asked in defiance, "who dare speak thus?" – "A favorite of the gods," I said, "on whom it depends whether those ladies shall find worthy husbands and pass a happy life, or be left to pine and wither in their magic cell." The old man stepped some paces back. "Who has revealed that to you?" he inquired, with astonishment and concern. "Three apples," I said, "three jewels." – "And what reward do you require?" he exclaimed. "Before all things, the little creature," I replied, "who has brought me into this accursed state." The old man cast himself down before me, without shrinking from the wet and miry soil: then he rose without being wetted, took me kindly by the hand, led me into the hall, clad me again quickly; and I was soon once more decked out and frizzled in my Sunday fashion as before. The porter did not speak another word; but, before he let me pass the entrance, he stopped me, and showed me some objects on the wall over the way, while, at the same time, he pointed backwards to the door. I understood him: he wished to imprint the objects on my mind, that I might the more certainly find the door, which had unexpectedly closed behind me. I now took good notice of what was opposite me. Above a high wall rose the boughs of extremely old nut-trees, and partly covered the cornice at the top. The branches reached down to a stone tablet, the ornamented border of which I could perfectly recognize, though I could not read the inscription. It rested on the top-stone of a niche, in which a finely wrought fountain poured water from cup to cup into a great basin, that formed, as it were, a little pond, and disappeared in the earth. Fountain, inscription, nut-trees, all stood perpendicularly, one above another: I would paint it as I saw it.

Now, it may well be conceived how I passed this evening, and many following days, and how often I repeated to myself this story, which even I could hardly believe. As soon as it was in any degree possible, I went again to the Bad Wall, at least to refresh my remembrance of these signs, and to look at the precious door. But, to my great amazement, I found all changed. Nut-trees, indeed, overtopped the wall; but they did not stand immediately in contact. A tablet also was inserted in the wall, but far to the right of the trees, without ornament, and with a legible inscription. A niche with a fountain was found far to the left, but with no resemblance whatever to that which I had seen; so that I almost believed that the second adventure was, like the first, a dream, for of the door there is not the slightest trace. The only thing that consoles me is the observation, that these three objects seem always to change their places. For, in repeated visits to the spot, I think I have noticed that the nut-trees have moved somewhat nearer together, and that the tablet and the fountain seem likewise to approach each other. Probably, when all is brought together again, the door, too, will once more be visible; and I will do my best to take up the thread of the adventure. Whether I shall be able to tell you what further happens, or whether I shall be expressly forbidden to do so, I cannot say.

This tale, of the truth of which my playfellows vehemently strove to convince themselves, received great applause. Each of them visited alone the place described, without confiding it to me or the others, and discovered the nut-trees, the tablet, and the spring, though always at a distance from each other; as they at last confessed to me afterwards, because it is not easy to conceal a secret at that early age. But here the contest first arose. One asserted that the objects did not stir from the spot, and always maintained the same distance; a second averred that they did move, and that, too, away from each other; a third agreed with the latter as to the first point of their moving, though it seemed to him that the nut-trees, tablet, and fountain rather drew near together; while a fourth had something still more wonderful to announce, which was, that the nut-trees were in the middle, but that the tablet and the fountain were on sides opposite to those which I had stated. With respect to the traces of the little door, they also varied. And thus they furnished me an early instance of the contradictory views men can hold and maintain in regard to matters quite simple and easily cleared up. As I obstinately refused the continuation of my tale, a repetition of the first part was often desired. I took good care not to change the circumstances much; and, by the uniformity of the narrative, I converted the fable into truth in the minds of my hearers.

Yet I was averse to falsehood and dissimulation, and altogether by no means frivolous. Rather, on the contrary, the inward earnestness, with which I had early begun to consider myself and the world, was seen, even in my exterior; and I was frequently called to account, often in a friendly way, and often in raillery, for a certain dignity which I had assumed. For, although good and chosen friends were certainly not wanting to me, we were always a minority against those who found pleasure in assailing us with wanton rudeness, and who indeed often awoke us in no gentle fashion from that legendary and self-complacent dreaming in which we – I by inventing, and my companions by sympathizing-were too readily absorbed. Thus we learned once more, that, instead of sinking into effeminacy and fantastic delights, there was reason rather for hardening ourselves, in order either to bear or to counteract inevitable evils.

Among the stoical exercises which I cultivated, as earnestly as it was possible for a lad, was even the endurance of bodily pain. Our teachers often treated us very unkindly and unskilfully, with blows and cuffs, against which we hardened ourselves all the more as obstinacy was forbidden under the severest penalties. A great many of the sports of youth depend on a rivalry in such endurances: as, for instance, when they strike each other alternately with two fingers or the whole fist, till the limbs are numbed; or when they bear the penalty of blows incurred in certain games, with more or less firmness; when, in wrestling or scuffling, they do not let themselves be perplexed by the pinches of a half-conquered opponent; or, finally, when they suppress the pain inflicted for the sake of teasing, and even treat with indifference the nips and ticklings with which young persons are so active toward each other. Thus we gain a great advantage, of which others cannot speedily deprive us.

But, as I made a sort of boast of this impassiveness, the importunity of the others was increased; and, since rude barbarity knows no limits, it managed to force me beyond my bounds. Let one case suffice for several. It happened once that the teacher did not come for the usual hour of instruction. As long as we children were all together, we entertained ourselves quite agreeably; but when my adherents, after waiting long enough, had left, and I remained alone with three of my enemies, these took it into their heads to torment me, to shame me, and to drive me away. Having left me an instant in the room, they came back with switches, which they had made by quickly cutting up a broom. I noted their design; and, as I supposed the end of the hour near, I at once resolved not to resist them till the clock struck. They began, therefore, without remorse, to lash my legs and calves in the cruellest fashion. I did not stir, but soon felt that I had miscalculated, and that such pain greatly lengthened the minutes. My wrath grew with my endurance; and, at the first stroke of the hour, I grasped the one who least expected it by the hair behind, hurled him to the earth in an instant, pressing my knee upon his back; the second, a younger and weaker one, who attacked me from behind, I drew by the head under my arm, and almost throttled him with the pressure. The last, and not the weakest, still remained; and my left hand only was left for my defense. But I seized him by the clothes; and, with a dexterous twist on my part and an over-precipitate one on his, I brought him down and struck his face on the ground. They were not wanting in bites, pinches, and kicks; but I had nothing but revenge in my limbs as well as in my heart. With the advantage which I had acquired, I repeatedly knocked their heads together. At last they raised a dreadful shout of murder, and we were soon surrounded by all the inmates of the house. The switches scattered around, and my legs, which I had bared of the stockings, soon bore witness for me. They put off the punishment, and let me leave the house; but I declared, that in future, on the slightest offence, I would scratch out the eyes, tear off the ears, of any one of them, if not throttle him.

Though, as usually happens in childish affairs, this event was soon forgotten, and even laughed at, it was the cause that these joint instructions became fewer, and at last entirely ceased. I was thus again, as formerly, kept more at home; where I found my sister Cornelia, who was only one year younger than myself, a companion always growing more agreeable.

Still, I will not leave this topic without telling some more stories of the many vexations caused me by my playfellows; for this is the instructive part of such moral communications, that a man may learn how it has gone with others, and what he also has to expect from life; and that, whatever comes to pass, he may consider that it happens to him as a man, and not as one specially fortunate or unfortunate. If such knowledge is of little use for avoiding evils, it is very serviceable so far as it qualifies us to understand our condition, and bear or even to overcome it.

Another general remark will not be out of place here, which is, that, as the children of the cultivated classes grow up, a great contradiction appears. I refer to the fact, that they are urged and trained by parents and teachers to deport themselves moderately, intelligently, and even wisely; to give pain to no one from petulance or arrogance; and to suppress all the evil impulses which may be developed in them; but yet, on the other hand, while the young creatures are engaged in this discipline, they have to suffer from others that which in them is reprimanded and punished. In this way the poor things are brought into a sad strait between the natural and civilized states, and, after restraining themselves for a while, break out, according to their characters, into cunning or violence.

Force may be warded off by force; but a well-disposed child, inclined to love and sympathy, has little to oppose to scorn and ill-will. Though I managed pretty well to keep off the assaults of my companions, I was by no means equal to them in sarcasm and abuse; because he who merely defends himself in such cases is always a loser. Attacks of this sort consequently, when they went so far as to excite anger, were repelled with physical force, or at least excited strange reflections in me which could not be without results. Among other advantages which my ill- wishers saw with envy, was the pleasure I took in the relations that accrued to the family from my grandfather's position of /Schultheiss/; since, as he was the first of his class, this had no small effect on those belonging to him.

Once when, after the holding of the Piper's Court, I appeared to pride myself on having seen my grandfather in the midst of the council, one step higher than the rest, enthroned, as it were, under the portrait of the emperor, one of the boys said to me in derision, that, like the peacock contemplating his feet, I should cast my eyes back to my paternal grandfather, who had been keeper of the Willow Inn, and would never have aspired to thrones and coronets. I replied, that I was in no wise ashamed of that, as it was the glory and honor of our native city that all its citizens might consider each other equal, and every one derive profit and honor from his exertions in his own way. I was sorry only that the good man had been so long dead; for I had often yearned to know him in person, had many times gazed upon his likeness, nay, had visited his tomb, and had at least derived pleasure from the inscription on the simple monument of that past existence to which I was indebted for my own. Another ill- wisher, who was the most malicious of all, took the first aside, and whispered something in his ear; while they still looked at me scornfully. My gall already began to rise, and I challenged them to speak out. "What is more, then, if you will have it," continued the first, "this one thinks you might go looking about a long time before you could find your grandfather." I now threatened them more vehemently if they did not more clearly explain themselves. Thereupon they brought forward an old story, which they pretended to have overheard from their parents, that my father was the son of some eminent man, while that good citizen had shown himself willing to take outwardly the paternal office. They had the impudence to produce all sorts of arguments: as, for example, that our property came exclusively from our grandmother; that the other collateral relations who lived in Friedburg and other places were alike destitute of property; and other reasons of the sort, which could merely derive their weight from malice. I listened to them more composedly than they expected, for they stood ready to fly the very moment that I should make a gesture as if I would seize their hair. But I replied quite calmly, and in substance, "that even this was no great injury to me. Life was such a boon, that one might be quite indifferent as to whom one had to thank for it; since at least it must be derived from God, before whom we all were equals." As they could make nothing of it, they let the matter drop for this time: we went on playing together as before, which among children is an approved mode of reconciliation.

Still, these spiteful words inoculated me with a sort of moral disease, which crept on in secret. It would not have displeased me at all to have been the grandson of any person of consideration, even if it had not been in the most lawful way. My acuteness followed up the scent, my imagination was excited, and my sagacity put in requisition. I began to investigate the allegation, and invented or found for it new grounds of probability. I had heard little said of my grandfather, except that his likeness, together with my grandmother's, had hung in a parlor of the old house; both of which, after the building of the new one, had been kept in an upper chamber. My grandmother must have been a very handsome woman, and of the same age as her husband. I remembered also to have seen in her room the miniature of a handsome gentleman in uniform, with star and order, which after her death, and during the confusion of house-building, had disappeared, with many other small pieces of furniture. These and many other things I put together in my childish head, and exercised that modern poetical talent which contrives to obtain the sympathies of the whole cultivated world by a marvellous combination of the important events of human life.

But as I did not venture to trust such an affair to any one, or even to ask the most remote questions concerning it, I was not wanting in a secret diligence, in order to get, if possible, somewhat nearer to the matter. I had heard it explicitly maintained, that sons often bore a decided resemblance to their fathers or grandfathers. Many of our friends, especially Councillor Schneider, a friend of the family, were connected by business with all the princes and noblemen of the neighborhood, of whom, including both the ruling and the younger branches, not a few had estates on the Rhine and Main, and in the intermediate country, and who at times honored their faithful agents with their portraits.

These, which I had often seen on the walls from my infancy, I now regarded with redoubled attention; seeking whether I could not detect some resemblance to my father or even to myself, which too often happened to lead me to any degree of certainty. For now it was the eyes of this, now the nose

of that, which seemed to indicate some relationship. Thus these marks led me delusively backward and forward: and though in the end I was compelled to regard the reproach as a completely empty tale, the impression remained; and I could not from time to time refrain from privately calling up and testing all the noblemen whose images had remained very distinct in my imagination. So true is it that whatever inwardly confirms man in his self-conceit, or flatters his secret vanity, is so highly desirable to him, that he does not ask further, whether in other respects it may turn to his honor or disgrace.

But, instead of mingling here serious and even reproachful reflections, I rather turn my look away from those beautiful times; for who is able to speak worthily of the fulness of childhood? We cannot behold the little creatures which flit about before us otherwise than with delight, nay, with admiration; for they generally promise more than they perform: and it seems that Nature, among the other roguish tricks that she plays us, here also especially designs to make sport of us. The first organs she bestows upon children coming into the world, are adapted to the nearest immediate condition of the creature, which, unassuming and artless, makes use of them in the readiest way for its present purposes. The child, considered in and for himself, with his equals, and in relations suited to his powers, seems so intelligent and rational, and at the same time so easy, cheerful, and clever, that one can hardly wish it further cultivation. If children grew up according to early indications, we should have nothing but geniuses; but growth is not merely development: the various organic systems which constitute one man spring one from another, follow each other, change into each other, supplant each other, and even consume each other; so that after a time scarcely a trace is to be found of many aptitudes and manifestations of ability. Even when the talents of the man have on the whole a decided direction, it will be hard for the greatest and most experienced connoisseur to declare them beforehand with confidence; although afterwards it is easy to remark what has pointed to a future.

By no means, therefore, is it my design wholly to comprise the stories of my childhood in these first books; but I will rather afterwards resume and continue many a thread which ran through the early years unnoticed. Here, however, I must remark what an increasing influence the incidents of the war gradually exercised upon our sentiments and mode of life.

The peaceful citizen stands in a wonderful relation to the great events of the world. They already excite and disquiet him from a distance; and, even if they do not touch him, he can scarcely refrain from an opinion and a sympathy. Soon he takes a side, as his character or external circumstances may determine. But when such grand fatalities, such important changes, draw nearer to him, then with many outward inconveniences remains that inward discomfort, which doubles and sharpens the evil, and destroys the good which is still possible. Then he has really to suffer from friends and foes, often more from the former than from the latter; and he knows not how to secure and preserve either his interests or his inclinations.

The year 1757, which still passed in perfectly civic tranquillity, kept us, nevertheless, in great uneasiness of mind. Perhaps no other was more fruitful of events than this. Conquests, achievements, misfortunes, restorations, followed one upon another, swallowed up and seemed to destroy each other; yet the image of Frederick, his name and glory, soon hovered again above all. The enthusiasm of his worshippers grew always stronger and more animated; the hatred of his enemies more bitter; and the diversity of opinion, which separated even families, contributed not a little to isolate citizens, already sundered in many ways and on other grounds. For in a city like Frankfort, where three religions divide the inhabitants into three unequal masses; where only a few men, even of the ruling faith, can attain to political power, – there must be many wealthy and educated persons who are thrown back upon themselves, and, by means of studies and tastes, form for themselves an individual and secluded existence. It will be necessary for us to speak of such men, now and hereafter, if we are to bring before us the peculiarities of a Frankfort citizen of that time.

My father, immediately after his return from his travels, had in his own way formed the design, that, to prepare himself for the service of the city, he would undertake one of the subordinate offices, and discharge its duties without emolument, if it wore conferred upon him without balloting. In the

consciousness of his good intentions, and according to his way of thinking and the conception he had of himself, he believed that he deserved such a distinction, which, indeed, was not conformable to law or precedent. Consequently, when his suit was rejected, he fell into ill humor and disgust, vowed that he would never accept of any place, and, in order to render it impossible, procured the title of Imperial Councillor, which the /Schultheiss/ and elder /Schöffen/ bear as a special honor. He had thus made himself an equal of the highest, and could not begin again at the bottom. The same impulse induced him also to woo the eldest daughter of the /Schultheiss/, so that he was excluded from the council on this side also. He was now of that number of recluses who never form themselves into a society. They are as much isolated in respect to each other as they are in regard to the whole, and the more so as in this seclusion the character becomes more and more uncouth. My father, in his travels and in the world which he had seen, might have formed some conception of a more elegant and liberal mode of life than was, perhaps, common among his fellow-citizens. In this respect, however, he was not entirely without predecessors and associates.

The name of Uffenbach is well known. At that time, there was a Schöff von Uffenbach, who was generally respected. He had been in Italy; had applied himself particularly to music; sang an agreeable tenor; and, having brought home a fine collection of pieces, concerts and oratorios were performed at his house. Now, as he sang in these himself, and held musicians in great favor, it was not thought altogether suitable to his dignity; and his invited guests, as well as the other people of the country, allowed themselves many a jocose remark on the matter.

I remember, too, a Baron von Hakel, a rich nobleman, who, being married, but childless, occupied a charming house in the Antonius Street, fitted up with all the appurtenances of a dignified position in life. He also possessed good pictures, engravings, antiques, and much else which generally accumulates with collectors and lovers of art. From time to time he asked the more noted personages to dinner, and was beneficent in a careful way of his own; since he clothed the poor in his own house, but kept back their old rags, and gave them a weekly charity, on condition that they should present themselves every time clean and neat in the clothes bestowed on them. I can recall him but indistinctly, as a genial, well-made man; but more clearly his auction, which I attended from beginning to end, and, partly by command of my father, partly from my own impulse, purchased many things that are still to be found in my collections.

At an earlier date than this, – so early that I scarcely set eyes upon him, – John Michael von Loen gained considerable repute in the literary world as well as at Frankfort. Not a native of Frankfort, he settled there, and married a sister of my grandmother Textor, whose maiden name was Lindheim. Familiar with the court and political world, and rejoicing in a renewed title of nobility, he had acquired reputation by daring to take part in the various excitements which arose in Church and State. He wrote "The Count of Rivera," a didactic romance, the subject of which is made apparent by the second title, "or, The Honest Man at Court." This work was well received, because it insisted on morality, even in courts, where prudence only is generally at home; and thus his labor brought him applause and respect. A second work, for that very reason, would be accompanied by more danger. He wrote "The Only True Religion," a book designed to advance tolerance, especially between Lutherans and Calvinists. But here he got in a controversy with the theologians: one Dr. Benner of Giessen, in particular, wrote against him. Von Loen rejoined; the contest grew violent and personal, and the unpleasantness which arose from it caused him to accept the office of president at Lingen, which Frederick II. offered him; supposing that he was an enlightened, unprejudiced man, and not averse to the new views that more extensively obtained in France. His former countrymen, whom he had left in some displeasure, averred that he was not contented there, nay, could not be so, as a place like Lingen was not to be compared with Frankfort. My father also doubted whether the president would be happy, and asserted that the good uncle would have done better not to connect himself with the king, as it was generally hazardous to get too near him, extraordinary sovereign as he undoubtedly was; for it had been seen how disgracefully the famous Voltaire had been arrested in Frankfort, at

the requisition of the Prussian Resident Freitag, though he had formerly stood so high in favor, and had been regarded as the king's teacher in French poetry. There was, on such occasions, no want of reflections and examples to warn one against courts and princes' service, of which a native Frankforter could scarcely form a conception.

An excellent man, Dr. Orth, I will only mention by name; because here I have not so much to erect a monument to the deserving citizens of Frankfort, but rather refer to them only in as far as their renown or personal character had some influence upon me in my earliest years. Dr. Orth was a wealthy man, and was also of that number who never took part in the government, although perfectly qualified to do so by his knowledge and penetration. The antiquities of Germany, and more especially of Frankfort, have been much indebted to him: he published remarks on the so-called "Reformation of Frankfort," a work in which the statutes of the state are collected. The historical portions of this book I diligently read in my youth.

Von Ochsenstein, the eldest of the three brothers whom I have mentioned above as our neighbors, had not been remarkable during his lifetime, in consequence of his recluse habits, but became the more remarkable after his death, by leaving behind him a direction that common workingmen should carry him to the grave, early in the morning, in perfect silence, and without an attendant or follower. This was done; and the affair caused great excitement in the city, where they were accustomed to the most pompous funerals. All who discharged the customary offices on such occasions rose against the innovation. But the stout patrician found imitators in all classes; and, though such ceremonies were derisively called ox-burials,[4] they came into fashion, to the advantage of many of the more poorly provided families; while funeral parades were less and less in vogue. I bring forward this circumstance, because it presents one of the earlier symptoms of that tendency to humility and equality, which, in the second half of the last century, was manifested in so many ways, from above downward, and broke out in such unlooked-for effects.

Nor was there any lack of antiquarian amateurs. There were cabinets of pictures, collections of engravings; while the curiosities of our own country especially were zealously sought and hoarded. The older decrees and mandates of the imperial city, of which no collection had been prepared, were carefully searched for in print and manuscript, arranged in the order of time, and preserved with reverence, as a treasure of native laws and customs. The portraits of Frankforters, which existed in great number, were also brought together, and formed a special department of the cabinets.

Such men my father appears generally to have taken as his models. He was wanting in none of the qualities that pertain to an upright and respectable citizen. Thus, after he had built his house, he put his property of every sort into order. An excellent collection of maps by Schenck and other geographers at that time eminent, the aforesaid decrees and mandates, the portraits, a chest of ancient weapons, a case of remarkable Venetian glasses, cups and goblets, natural curiosities, works in ivory, bronzes, and a hundred other things, were separated and displayed; and I did not fail, whenever an auction occurred, to get some commission for the increase of his possessions.

I must still speak of one important family, of which I had heard strange things since my earliest years, and of some of whose members I myself lived to see a great deal that was wonderful, – I mean the Senkenbergs. The father, of whom I have little to say, was an opulent man. He had three sons, who, even in their youth, uniformly distinguished themselves as oddities. Such things are not well received in a limited city, where no one is suffered to render himself conspicuous, either for good or evil. Nicknames and odd stories, long kept in memory, are generally the fruit of such singularity. The father lived at the corner of Hare Street (/Hasengasse/), which took its name from a sign on the house, that represented one hare at least, if not three hares. They consequently called these three brothers only the three Hares, which nickname they could not shake off for a long while. But as great endowments often announce themselves in youth in the form of singularity and awkwardness, so

[4] A pun upon the name of Ochsenstein. – Trans.

was it also in this case. The eldest of the brothers was the /Reichshofrath/ (Imperial Councillor) von Senkenberg, afterwards so celebrated. The second was admitted into the magistracy, and displayed eminent abilities, which, however, he subsequently abused in a pettifogging and even infamous way, if not to the injury of his native city, certainty to that of his colleagues. The third brother, a physician and man of great integrity, but who practised little, and that only in high families, preserved even in his old age a somewhat whimsical exterior. He was always very neatly dressed, and was never seen in the street otherwise than in shoes and stockings, with a well- powdered, curled wig, and his hat under his arm. He walked on rapidly, but with a singular sort of stagger; so that he was sometimes on one and sometimes on the other side of the way, and formed a complete zigzag as he went. The wags said that he made this irregular step to get out of the way of the departed souls, who might follow him in a straight line, and that he imitated those who are afraid of a crocodile. But all these jests and many merry sayings were transformed at last into respect for him, when he devoted his handsome dwelling-house in Eschenheimer Street, with court, garden, and all other appurtenances, to a medical establishment, where, in addition to a hospital designed exclusively for the citizens of Frankfort, a botanic garden, an anatomical theatre, a chemical laboratory, a considerable library, and a house for the director, were instituted in a way of which no university need have been ashamed.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.